



An Examination of the Socio-Economic Representation of American Women in Ottoman Women's Periodicals*

Osmanlı Kadın Dergilerinde Amerikalı Kadınların Sosyo-Ekonomik Temsilinin Bir İncelemesi

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Abstract

Articles published in the Ottoman press about other countries are of great significance in describing the perspective of the Ottoman society towards the outside world. These articles, which may sometimes be only unbiased news articles or sometimes statements of positive or negative criticism, were employed as a model to shed light on numerous questions about women in the Ottoman Empire. Articles published in newspapers and journals for women shed light not only on the Ottoman Women's Movement but also on women's movements in other parts of the world and offer evaluations of these issues from an Ottoman perspective. In this context, these publications portray women's achievements and/or attempted achievements worldwide in social, cultural, economic, and political spheres, while comparatively discussing what the position of Ottoman women was or should have been from different perspectives of the period. In this study, through selected articles on the socio-economic status of American women in Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete, Kadınlar Dünyası, Siyanet, Bilgi Yurdu Işığı, Türk Kadını and Genç Kadın magazines published at different intervals between 1895 and 1921, it is examined how and for what purposes the American woman model for the Ottoman woman were handled in the context of Ottoman women's rights, with a special emphasis on working life. These articles were analyzed through document review and discourse analysis methods.

Keywords: Ottoman Women's Periodicals, Ottoman Women, American Women, Women's Rights, Working Life.

Öz

Osmanlı basınında yabancılarla ilgili yayınlanan yazılar Osmanlı toplumunun dış dünyaya bakışını tasvir etmeleri açısından önem taşımaktadır. Kimi zaman tarafsız, sadece bir haber yazısı niteliğinde olan, kimi zaman da olumlu ya da olumsuz eleştirel kalemle ele alınan bu yazılar Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda kadına dair pek çok soruyu aydınlatmak için bir model olarak kullanılmıştır. Kadınlara yönelik gazete ve dergilerde yayınlanan yazılar, sadece Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi'ne değil aynı zamanda dünyanın diğer ülkelerinde ortaya çıkan kadın hareketlerine ve bu hareketlerin Osmanlı bakış açısı ile nasıl değerlendirildiğine ışık tutmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, söz konusu yayımlar, dünya kadınlarının sosyal, kültürel, iktisadî ve siyasî alanlarda elde ettikleri ya da etmeye çalıştıkları kazanımları incelerken, dönemin farklı bakış açılarından Osmanlı kadınının konumunun ne olduğunu veya olması gerektiğini karşılaştırmalı bir şekilde tartışmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, 1895-1921 yılları arasında farklı aralıklarda yayınlanmış Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete, Kadınlar Dünyası, Siyanet, Bilgi Yurdu Işığı, Türk Kadını ve Genç Kadın dergilerindeki Amerikalı kadınların sosyo-ekonomik durumlarına ilişkin seçilmiş yazılar üzerinden, Osmanlı kadını için Amerikalı kadın modelinin Osmanlı kadın hakları bağlamında nasıl ve hangi amaçlarla ele alındığı, çalışma hayatına özel bir vurgu yapılarak incelenmektedir. İlgili yazılar doküman incelemesi ve söylem analizi yöntemleriyle analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Kadın Dergileri, Osmanlı Kadınları, Amerikalı Kadınlar, Kadın Hakları, Çalışma Hayatı.



Introduction

As of the late eighteenth century with various breaking points such as the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism, there have been social, cultural, economic, and political transformations. Women have been an important part and sometimes even the focal point of these transformations. Women, having started to play an active role as agents in the new economic order brought about by industrial capitalism¹ and liberalism as well as in the discourse of rights and freedoms brought about by the French Revolution, found themselves left behind when it came to being granted the actual rights and freedoms. As a result, they started to raise their voices louder in questioning their roles, significance, and rights in social, economic, and political life.

Starting in the late 18th century and especially from the mid-19th century onward, women increasingly began to defend their rights in many parts of the world, and the women's movement gained momentum, making *the woman question* a significant agenda issue. The publication of Olympe de Gouges' "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the [Female] Citizen" published in France in 1791 and the "Declaration of Sentiments" in the United States by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her peers in Seneca Falls in 1848 are notable as some of the important turning points² in women's movements.³ During this period, not only women but all marginalized groups took action against the injustices they faced, and women's movements were intertwined with anti-slavery and anti-racial discrimination movements. Olympe de Gouges and Stanton also advocated women's rights and the emancipation of slaves. Because witnessing the economic ascent of the middle class in the 18th and 19th centuries led to the formation of a new pattern of social relations, the 19th century, characterized by imperialist colonialism and the rise of evolutionary science, became a century of "self-identification" and "drawing lines between the white male "self" and all the "others" (lesser races and classes, and women)".⁴ Douglas H. Maynard stated that the exclusion of female abolitionists in the "General Anti-Slavery Convention" held in London in 1840 was effective in Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's decision to organize a women's rights convention and that this was the starting point of the women's suffrage movement.⁵ And "*women question, as Sarah Grimke and thousands of abolitionists termed the controversy over women's rights, became a major issue within the anti-slavery movement between 1837 and 1840.*"⁶ In the second half of the 19th

¹ For the socio-economic and political effects of industrial capitalism on women, see Julie A. Matthei, *An Economic History of Women in America: Women's Work, the Sexual Division of Labor, and the Development of Capitalism*, (New York: Schocken Book, 1982); Edward Shorter, "Women's Work: What Difference Did Capitalism Make?" *Theory and Society* 3:4 (Winter 1976); Gerda Lerner, *The Woman in American History*, (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1971).

² For the beginning of the idea of women's rights, most sources cite the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's book "Vindication of the Rights of Women" in 1792. However, recent research takes the debate back to Christine de Pizan's "The Book of the City of Ladies," published in 1405, as cited in Arvonne S. Fraser, "Becoming Human: The Origins and Development of Women's Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 21:4 (1999), 855.

³ Sophie Mousset, *Women's Rights and the French Revolution A Biography of Olympe de Gouges*, trans. Joy Poirel, (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2007); William L. O'Neill, *The Woman Movement Feminism in the United States and England*, (Quadrangle Books, 1971); Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996); Marilyn Ziebarth, "MHS Collections: Woman's Rights Movement," *Minnesota History* 42:6 (1971), 225–30.

⁴ Fatmagül Berktaş, "The Construction of Woman As 'Other' in 19th Century English Popular Culture," *Kadın Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2 (1994), 85.

⁵ Douglas H. Maynard, "The World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47:3 (1960), 452–71.

⁶ Keith E. Melder, *Beginnings of Sisterhood: The American Woman's Rights Movement, 1800-1850*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 95.

century, the first feminists tried to convey their struggle to women all over the world through international meetings and attempted to create a “common politics.” At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the politics of international cooperation of North Atlantic feminism began to demand “gender equality” against inequalities that excluded women from the public spheres of citizenship and identified them with family and motherhood.⁷ The technical and technological advancements in communication and transportation during the 19th century, along with the impact of globalization, the spread of material and intellectual advancements related to women began to spread much faster and increased the interactions between societies. Thus, the issue has begun to be scrutinized by many societies at both national and international levels as it was in the Ottoman Empire.

The Edict of Tanzimat declared in the 19th century in the Ottoman Empire brought on many changes not only in the administrative, political, and economic fields but also in social and cultural areas. One of the prominent developments was the publication of periodicals. Printing and publications, which held significant importance in the late Ottoman cultural and intellectual history, were among the areas most profoundly affected by the changes brought about by the Tanzimat.⁸ The 19th century was the century when the Ottoman press emerged and flourished.⁹ It was also a century when women and the woman question were analyzed, discussed, and written about by female and male writers in women's and public journals. The second half of the century witnesses the beginning of “first-wave feminism.” During this period, which Yaprak Zihnioğlu refers to as the Early Period,¹⁰ women began establishing women's associations and publishing periodicals as an extension of the Ottoman Women's Movement. Poet Nigâr Hanım (1862-1918), Fatma Aliye (1862-1936), Halide Edip (1882-1964), Nezihe Muhittin (1889-1958), and Emine Semiye (1868-1944) were the women who left their mark on the period. Influenced by the ideals of freedom that developed in the Ottoman Empire, these women, especially Fatma Aliye and Emine Semiye, advocated for women through their writings and speeches, thus contributing to the path leading to the Second Constitutional Period¹¹ when the real breakthrough occurred.¹²

The rapid dissemination of new ideas by private presses and publishing houses, whose numbers increased dramatically after the Second Constitutional Period, brought about a “*late period Ottoman press capitalism*.” This phenomenon, which encouraged Turkish nationalism, also contributed to the redefinition of various social norms, especially with regards to gender and sexuality.¹³ Especially as women's voices began to be heard in the social and cultural spheres and women's issues were written not only by male writers but also by female writers from a female perspective, the women's story, which had been ignored in many societies throughout history, was addressed in a way that

⁷ Serpil Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti Erkekler Devlet Kadınlar Aile Kurar*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 37.

⁸ Johann Strauss, “‘Kütüp ve Resail-i Mevkute’ Printing and Publishing in a Multi-Ethnic Society” in *Late Ottoman Society the Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga, (London and New York: Routledge 2005), 227.

⁹ For the development of the Ottoman press and printing house, see İrvın Cemil Schick, *Bedeni, Toplumunu, Kâinatı Yazmak İslâm, Cinsiyet ve Kültür Üzerine*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011); N. Serpil Altunek, “İlk Türk Matbaasının Kuruluşu ve İbrahim Müteferrika,” *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 10 (1993), 191-204; M. Kazım Benek, “Osmanlı’da Basının Doğuşu ve II. Meşrutiyete Kadarki Gelişimi,” *Siirt Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 6:7 (2016), 27; Nesimi Yazıcı, “Vakayi-i Mısıriye Üzerine Birkaç Söz,” *OTAM* 2 (1991 March), 267-278.

¹⁰ Yaprak Zihnioğlu (2003: 20-21) categorizes first-wave feminism in three stages: The Early Period (1868-1908), The Second Constitutional Period (1908-1922), and The Republican Period “First Wave Republican Feminism” (1923-1935).

¹¹ Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 50; Sancar, *Türk Modernleşmesinin Cinsiyeti*, 37.

¹² Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları), 2016, 74.

¹³ Schick, *Bedeni, Toplumunu, Kâinatı Yazmak*, 216-218.

was relatively free from patriarchal value judgments. Despite the existence of Ottoman women's press dating back to the Tanzimat period, it was not until after 1908 that women could assert their agenda and challenge the male monopoly on public discourse significantly.¹⁴ In addition, the Ottoman women's press experienced a noticeable diversification of views in the Second Constitutional Era. Women's press adopted a distinctly politicized style, unlike the homogeneous and apolitical stance of the Hamidian era and the emergence of “feminism” as a central term in discussions on women's issues is also notable after the declaration of the Second Constitution.¹⁵

There were numerous articles published in the late Ottoman Empire, both in the form of reviews and the form of informative texts about women's working life, their position in social and economic life, education, their rights and duties, women's organizations, and meetings, as well as topics such as being a housewife, motherhood, raising children, housework, recipes, fashion, health and so on. The articles included information about Ottoman women¹⁶ and women from all over the world, including the United States of America (the U.S.), England, Germany, Japan, India, and more. While some of these articles were in the form of unbiased news articles, others occasionally portrayed foreign women as positive models and sometimes criticized them in line with their ideas and ideologies. In addition to the distinction between feminist pieces predominantly characterized by familial feminism and anti-feminist pieces largely built upon critiques of Western feminism, it is also observed that the movements such as Nationalism, Westernism, and Islamism, which influenced the intellectual environment of the period, played a role in shaping different models through similar examples. In addition, the socio-cultural norms, and political and economic conditions of the relevant period also affect the discourses. This situation has led to the emergence of different and contradictory discourses in the same journal and sometimes even in articles written by the same author.

The study is structured around the hypothesis that the time's technological, socio-cultural, political, economic, and ideological factors influenced the portrayal of American women's socio-economic status in Ottoman women's periodicals. This portrayal was a model for discussing Ottoman women's rights and shaping different perspectives on women's roles. These factors played a significant role in evaluating this model positively or negatively. The main question that arises in this context is whether the use of the American model in women's magazines, significant sources for the Ottoman Women's Movement, aimed to adopt a Western model (in this case the American model) as a positive example for the Ottoman women's movement or to reject it as a negative example. Or was the American model used to support the different ideas and ideologies embraced by writers on the woman question, taking into account the conditions of the period and socio-cultural norms? While the study seeks answers to this question, it also gives some clues on the following topics: First, the study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the position of American women and Ottoman women in economic life, based on the clues collected from the articles about the U.S. In addition, the study seeks answers to the questions regarding what professions women were able

¹⁴ Serpil Atamaz-Hazar, “Reconstructing the History of the Constitutional Era in the Ottoman Turkey through Women's Periodicals,” *Aspasia* 5:1 (2011), 103.

¹⁵ Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, “Debating Progress in a ‘Serious Newspaper for Muslim Women’: The Periodical *Kadın* of the Post-revolutionary Salonica, 1908-1909,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 30:2 (Nov 2003), 155.

¹⁶ The term “Ottoman Woman,” mentioned in the studied articles refers to the Muslim-Turkish woman. As Aynur Demirdirek (1993:10) stated, what is described with the word “Ottoman” in these publications is actually “Muslim-Turk.”

to work in the relevant period, what the traditional and cultural similarities and/or differences were in terms of having women in the working life, whether the economic and social transformations that took place in the 19th and early 20th century were influential on the qualitative and quantitative changes in women's labor. Third, the study focuses on how the American women's position in socio-economic life is evaluated from an Ottoman point of view, the aims of these evaluations, and the influences of the American model on the Ottoman Women's Movement. In this context, a comparison is made between the work lives of American and Ottoman women. By examining the developments mentioned in the pieces about the U.S., the study aims to build an understanding of the standpoint of Ottoman society in terms of women's rights.

1. The Method, Sources, and Limitations of the Study

Various databases, catalogs, transcription projects, published indexes, bibliographies, and secondary literature were utilized to find the answers to the questions mentioned above.¹⁷ The magazines and articles relevant to the study were analyzed using document review and discourse analysis methods. *“Document review includes the analysis of written materials containing information about the phenomenon or phenomena targeted to be investigated. In qualitative research, document review can be a stand-alone data collection method or used in conjunction with other data collection methods.”*¹⁸ In this study, document review and discourse analysis methods were used together. Before starting the analysis, it is determined which documents are important for the research and can be accepted as data sources.¹⁹ At this stage, the focus was on articles about working life. To conduct a discourse analysis of these articles, care was taken to select journals, authors, and articles that included different perspectives and discourses on the subject, in other words, embraced different ideologies. Thus, data collection aimed to support discourse analysis, which examines words, phrases, expressions, and sentences necessary for successful communication and the organizational patterns within texts, considering the relationship between language and its social and cultural contexts.²⁰ Within this framework, this study utilized articles selected from Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete “Newspaper for Ladies” (1895-1908), Kadınlar Dünyası “Women’s World” (1913-1921), Siyanet “Guard” (1914), Bilgi Yurdu Işığ “Light of the Homeland of Knowledge” (1917-1918), Türk Kadını “Turkish Woman” (1918-1919), Genç Kadın “Young Woman” (1919).

¹⁷ The study benefited from works published with the new alphabet (transcribed from Ottoman Turkish into Latin Alphabet) within the scope of the project “Kadınların Belleği Dizisi Çeviri Yazım Projesi” undertaken by the Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı. The articles utilized in the study from original Ottoman Turkish sources were accessed through the Periodicals Collection of Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, Koç University Digital Collections and Hakkı Tarık Us Collection. The collections of Harvard University Libraries and indices prepared in the studies on Ottoman women's periodicals were also utilized in the study. See for the indices: Zehra Toska et al., *İstanbul Kütüphanelerindeki Eski Harfli Türkçe Kadın Dergileri Bibliyografyası (1869-1927)*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1993) and Ayşe Zeren Enis, *Everyday Lives of Ottoman Muslim Women: Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895-1908)*, (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2013). Also, secondary sources related to the study has been utilized and mentioned in the text.

¹⁸ Ali Yıldırım and Hasan Şimşek, *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri* (Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2013), 217.

¹⁹ Yıldırım and Şimşek, *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri*, 217-232; Türker Baş and Ulun Akturan, *Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri Nvivo ile Nitel Veri Analizi, Örnekleme, Analiz, Yorum* (Ankara: Seçkin, 2013), 117-126.

²⁰ Brian Paltridge, *Discourse Analysis* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 19-20; Susan Strauss and Parastou Feiz, *Discourse Analysis Putting Our Worlds into Words* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014); Baş and Akturan, *Nitel Araştırma*, 25-40; James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis Theory and Method* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

The majority of the selected magazines and articles were published during the Second Constitutional Period when the Ottoman Women's Movement gained momentum and witnessed more heated debates on women's rights. Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete was chosen for its more extensive and detailed coverage of American women than other magazines and its importance as a source for the Ottoman Women's Movement pre-1908. The magazine, owned by İbnül Hakkı Tahir Bey and directed by Şadiye Hanım after the first years,²¹ is still the longest-running women's magazine.²² Although loyalty/devotion to Sultan Abdulhamid II was frequently expressed in the magazine, it does not seem possible to make a clear judgment about the magazine's political preferences due to the inclusion of writings by authors who held diverse opinions and did not converge on a single political line.²³

Another publication used in the study is Kadınlar Dünyası, which was a media outlet of Osmanlı Müdâfaa-ı Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti (Ottoman Society for the Defense of Women's Rights), which Serpil Çakır (2016) defines as “*perhaps the only association among the women's associations during the Second Constitutional Period that can be defined as a feminist one.*”²⁴ The magazine was published by the founder of the society, Ulviye Mevlan. This magazine was included in the study due to its feminist discourses and important role in the Ottoman Women's Movement.²⁵ In addition to the feminist dimension of Kadınlar Dünyası, its nationalist context²⁶ makes the magazine even more interesting for analysis.

Another source, Siyanet, was produced by a team consisting exclusively of Muslim women. Siyanet, the publication of the İstihlak-ı Milli Kadınlar Cemiyeti (Women's Organization for National Consumption) founded by Melek Meliha to encourage the use of domestic goods, emphasizes the identity of Turkish and especially Muslim women.²⁷ Bilgi Yurdu Işığı magazine, which can be shown among the Turkist women's magazines like Siyanet,²⁸ is the publishing organ of Bilgi Yurdu Dershanesi (Homeland School of Knowledge) whose aim was “*to educate women to become literate, skilled professionals, and to raise healthy, educated mothers who would contribute to society and raise generations beneficial to society.*” The magazine was started to be published in 1917 by Ahmet Edip and Macit Şevket Bey and ceased publication in 1918 after World War I ended in defeat for the Ottoman Empire.²⁹

²¹ Demirdirek, *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı*, 19.

²² Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 46.

²³ Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap*, 50.

²⁴ Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 107.

²⁵ Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 37-38.

²⁶ Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği Kız Enstitülerinin Uzun Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 126-131.

²⁷ *Yeni Harflerle Siyanet (1914)*, *Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Kadın Dergileri Talepler, Engeller, Mücadele*, eds. Akgül Zorbay and Arzu Atik (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2020), 23 and Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, *Milli Üretim- Milli Tüketim ve Kadınlar*, in *Yeni Harflerle Siyanet (1914)*, 28.

²⁸ Şefika Kurnaz lists Türk Kadını, Siyanet, Bilgi Yurdu Işığı, and Genç Kadın magazines among the Turkist women's magazines in her work titled “Osmanlı Kadınının Yükselişi (1908-1918).” Also, according to Ümüt Akagündüz (2013: 70), after the Balkan Wars, nationalism began to gain a stronger foothold in women's and intellectual magazines of the Second Constitutional Period.

²⁹ *Yeni Harflerle Bilgi Yurdu Işığı (1917-1918) Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Kadın Dergileri Talepler, Engeller, Mücadele*, ed. Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2019), 14, 21.

Türk Kadını, published by Muallim Ahmed in Istanbul and circulated from the late period of World War I to the early months of the occupation period, featured its nationalist discourse.³⁰ Genç Kadın magazine, which “hesitates to describe itself as a feminist,”³¹ was used in the study due to its discourses in different tones regarding women's rights. The publisher of the magazine was Fuat Şükrü from Karahisar, its editor-in-chief was Fatma Fuat and its responsible manager was Süleyman Tevfik.³²

The publishing place of all the magazines is Istanbul.³³ The study didn't separate male and female publishers or writers, except for some brief details provided. Instead, the study focused on how America-oriented approaches were handled. In some studies, sometimes the United States and Europe are positioned side by side, leading to a homogeneous perception of the West. However, most of the existing literature tends to focus solely on Europe. However, some articles in Ottoman women's magazines exclusively focus on America without standardizing Europe and America under the same umbrella. In addition to making use of these articles, the study aims to contribute to the literature by discussing the American model within its own subjectivity through articles that cover both European and American examples. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will make a significant contribution to the literature by analyzing six periodicals spanning a wide period and covering different perspectives and viewpoints, thus providing a nuanced understanding of the Ottoman Women's Movement through the lens of the American woman model.

2. The American Woman Model for the Ottoman Woman

As in many parts of the world, women's roles, status, and rights were among the notable and discussed issues in the 19th and early 20th centuries, marked by the emergence and acceleration of the Ottoman women's movement. There are numerous articles on women's social, economic, educational, or cultural life as well as their legal and political rights. In this context, Ottoman women's periodicals published numerous articles not only about locals but also about foreigners. Elizabeth Brown Frierson (2000) states that the excessive number of news articles about people from different countries in the late Ottoman women's periodicals may give the impression that Ottoman readers were obsessed with foreigners. However, she suggests that the situation is quite different and both positive and negative perspectives in these articles may prove that there is no desire to adopt the qualities of the West as a whole.³⁴ According to Frierson, in many articles on foreigners, Ottoman women discovered that their concerns were also present in other societies. They used them in foreign and domestic models to define what was ambivalent, negative, and positive. In this context, they used the foreign women sometimes as a warning and sometimes as an

³⁰ Elif Mahir-Metinsoy, “Kadın Tarihi Araştırmaları Açısından Türk Kadını Dergisi,” in *Türk Kadını (1918-1919) (Yeni Harflerle)*, eds. Birsen Talay Keşoğlu and Mustafa Keşoğlu, (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı Yayınları, 2010), xxvii.

³¹ *Genç Kadın 1919 Ocak / Mayıs (Yeni Harflerle)*, ed. Çiçek İlgiz, (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2011), xxxiv.

³² Kurnaz, *Osmanlı Kadınının Yükselişi (1908-1918)*, (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2013), 263.

³³ Neslihan Kılıç, “Batı Kültürünün Osmanlı Toplumuna Taşınmasında Önemli Bir Unsur Olarak Kadın Dergileri,” *Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 20:3 (Sept 2020), 712.

³⁴ Elizabeth Brown Frierson, “Mirrors Out, Mirrors In: Domestication and Rejection of the Foreign in Late Ottoman Women's Magazines, 1875-1908,” *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, ed. D. Fairchild Ruggles (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 177-179.

encouragement in the progress of Ottoman women.³⁵ The women's periodicals discussed in this study also show that the American model was employed for similar purposes.

In her evaluation, Birsen Talay Keşoğlu (2019), referring to *Türk Kadını* and *Bilgi Yurdu Işığı* magazines, suggests that it is either the American or the German women that can be shown as examples to the Turkish women in the women's magazines published in the Second Constitutional Period.³⁶ Talay Keşoğlu notes that in the first issue of the *Bilgi Yurdu Işığı* magazine, an article titled "Family Life in the United States" mentions that "*as the conservative nature of the United States is closer to the Turkish people, it does not resemble the 'light living' in Europe.*" However, despite the emphasis on the uniqueness of Turkish women in the women's magazines of the period, the 10th issue of the magazine points out that the example model in terms of housewifery and child raising is that of the German woman: "*American women were praised due to their modern, civilized but conservative nature, and German women were also shown as examples as in addition to those, they have a strong notion of motherhood, regarding raising healthy generations as a social duty.*" French women and Levantine women were depicted as bad examples to Turkish women.³⁷

In her study on *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (Progress of Women) and *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, Beyhan Kanter (2021) argues that *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* forms a perception of both positive and negative role models through examples regarding Europe and the U.S.³⁸ Seda Uyanık (2013), who has investigated American images through Ottoman scientific narratives, states that Ottoman intellectuals strived to discover the U.S. as well as Europe in the 19th century, and tried to follow their social, legal, and economic orders. She points out that the narrative about the American images was both positive and negative in pieces in Ottoman literature about sciences in the late 19th and early 20th century.³⁹ It can be said that women's periodicals follow a similar trend. There are many both positive and negative articles, and comparisons regarding various topics such as American women's education, work, cultural, social, family lives, and politics.

Fatma Aliye, an influential figure of her time and an important author of *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, in her article titled "Let Us Take Warning from the Bas-bleus!" emphasizes the need for Islamic women to emulate the exemplary Islamic women of the past, negating the adoption of Western models. In her sentence "*We cannot be successors to the bluestockings (bas-bleus)! We must be successors to the famous women from the previous Muslims!*" she underscores the notion that Islamic women do not need Western models and largely presents the "bluestockings" as a negative example.⁴⁰ In her study examining three different styles of Ottoman feminism, Elif Ekin Akşit focuses on Fatma Aliye. Akşit observes that both the magazine and Fatma Aliye herself are

³⁵ Frierson, "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In," 182-183.

³⁶ Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, "Hakiki Feminist Kimdir?" *Yeni Harflerle Bilgi Yurdu Işığı (1917-1918) Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Kadın Dergileri Talepleri, Engeller, Mücadele*, ed. Birsen Talay Keşoğlu, (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2019), 26.

³⁷ Talay Keşoğlu, "Hakiki Feminist Kimdir?" 26.

³⁸ Beyhan Kanter, "Terakki-i Muhadderat ve Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete'de Öteki ya da Rol Model: Avrupalı ve Amerikalı Kadınlar," *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları*, 13:26 (2021 Dec).

³⁹ Seda Uyanık, *Osmanlı Bilim Kurgusu: Fennî Edebiyat* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 59-62.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Brown Frierson, "Unimagined Communities: State, Press, and Gender in the Hamidian Era" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1996), 118; Fatma Aliye, "Bablölerden İbret Alalım," *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, 2 (Sept 5, 1895), 2-3. The transcription from Ottoman to Latin alphabet of this article is used from Mustafa Çiçekler and M. Fâtiğ Andı, *Yeni Harflerle Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete, 1895-1908: Seçki*. (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 27-31. From this quotation onwards, similar citations will be briefly indicated as "The transcription used from."

often categorized as conservative due to their Islamic concerns. According to Akşit, Fatma Aliye, like the New Ottomans she was close to, who tended to combine Islam and feminism, desired the advancement of Ottoman women. Nevertheless, Fatma Aliye thinks this desire does not mean a complete contempt for the existing situation.⁴¹

Even when American or other foreign models are presented as a positive example and inspiration in women's periodicals, the general tendency is to evaluate these examples within the boundaries of their own societies' manners, customs, and morals. An article in *Kadınlar Dünyası* reflects this tendency with the following words:⁴²

Women in Europe and America publish many books and booklets on the nature of women. They carry out important discussions regarding women's rights. They want to explain that even women can have a position and a right to life within a civilized society and the sphere of humanity. In short, just as women have physical differences from men, they are trying to determine whether they may even have legal differences. We, Ottoman women, want to enter this effort of our class, this path they have opened, within the framework of our upbringing, manners, and customs.

Although Europe and the U.S. are given as positive examples here, it is evident that Ottoman women have no desire to fully adopt the developments in the West. However, the aim of following the developments in the West is clearly stated in the 101st issue of the magazine. The article expresses the importance of everyone in the world, men and women alike, being informed about the progress, rise, misery, prosperity, and all their deeds and actions. For Ottoman women to be successful in their steps toward freedom, they should be informed, at least briefly, about what is happening in the world. Therefore, *“the paths followed by suffragettes in England and feminists in Europe and America, the causes they put forward every day, and the general politics on which these causes are based should be known and followed. Because each element has its unique revolution. In order to convey this with knowledge, it is necessary to understand it thoroughly.”*⁴³ The same approach but with a stronger emphasis on America can be seen in a survey conducted by *Kadınlar Dünyası* in 1921. The responses to questions such as *By which means can our women obtain their rights more quickly? What are their thoughts about the current position of women in the family? Which profession should our women choose? What are their ideas about women's participation in social life? How should our women educate their children? What books should our women read?*, they expressed a preference for *“following the methods of American feminists.”*⁴⁴

In comparative articles examining women's rights and feminism, the subject is typically discussed within civil rights, the right to work, and political rights. While the articles suggest that women in the U.S. and Europe substantially attained these rights, Ottoman women primarily focused on civil rights and the right to work, with a notable refrain from pursuing political rights. Y. Naciye from Sultanahmet (Istanbul), a reader of the periodical, discusses the right to work and political

⁴¹ Elif Ekin Akşit, “Osmanlı Feminizmi, Uluslararası Feminizm ve Doğu Kadınları,” *Doğudan* 7 (Eylül 2008), 84-91.

⁴² *Kadınlar Dünyası*, “Hukuk-ı Nisvan: Mukaddime,” 1 (April 17, 1913), 1. The transcription used from *Kadınlar Dünyası 1.-50. Sayılar Yeni Harflerle (1913-1921)*, eds. Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz and Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu, (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2009), 3.

⁴³ *Kadınlar Dünyası*, “Havadis-i Dünya,” 101 (August 3, 1913), 15. The transcription used from *Yeni Harflerle Kadınlar Dünyası (Sayı 101-110), Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Kadın Dergileri Talepler, Engeller, Mücadele*, ed. Birsan Talay Keşoğlu, (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2021), 150.

⁴⁴ *Kadınlar Dünyası*, “Hemşirelerimiz Ne Düşünüyorlar?” 194/4 (January 22, 1921), 13. The transcription used from Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 213.

rights in her letter to Kadınlar Dünyası. She emphasizes the necessity of the right to work by comparing it with the U.S. and Europe and states that the time for political rights has not yet come. Therefore she prioritizes the right to work of Ottoman women:⁴⁵

Don't our men see the millions of women in Europe and America who work side by side with their men and serve national production? ... Don't they know that Europe will soon grant women the right to politics? In this way, humanity will gain another strong population, women's voices will be heard in the parliamentary chairs, there will be women in the courts and municipalities, and among them, there will be governors, mutasarrifs, and district governors. As a result, everything will change. There will be brave commanders like Joan of Arc and Kara Fatma in the armies, lawyers, manufacturers, workers, in short, women in every job!... We, Ottoman women, do not go to such extremes because we know the theory of evolution. But don't we have the right to demand our human rights? Why should men harass us on the streets? Why shouldn't a woman be left to work to live honorably? What we want is not political rights, but human rights like these for now.

The stress on the theory of evolution (in the original text *Tekamül Nazariyesi*) is important. In this context, the author emphasizes human rights because she knows that all rights will be obtained gradually. Her emphasis on what could happen as a result of giving political rights to women in Europe reflects admiration. While the author tries to raise awareness and motivate women with examples from Europe and America, she also challenges men. Berika Süeda from Aksaray (Istanbul), another reader of Kadınlar Dünyası, wrote a realistic fiction on the subject in her letter published in the magazine in 1913. Through the fictionalization of a conference given by the president of the Müdâfaa-yı Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti on May 1, 1920, she mentions the efforts of the feminist and suffragettes in Europe and the U.S. have borne fruit, and emphasizes that it is now the turn of Ottoman women. Stating that Ottoman women also achieved their goals, albeit with difficulty, and that they will now be considered equal and equivalent to men in all respects, that they will be able to act in the same way in their professions and working styles, and that they will finally have the right to vote and be elected.⁴⁶ This fiction represents the hope and faith of Ottoman women in obtaining all their rights in a short period of time.

In her conference on feminism published in the 20th and 21st issues of *Türk Kadını*, Müfide Ferid, a nationalist author, tries to explain the matter within the context of civil rights, the right to work, and political rights. She defines feminism as “*The profession of demanding equality for women with men in civil, social, and political rights.*” She points out that Ottoman women do not request “participation in political rights” like their counterparts in European states; however, due to the economic conditions of the society⁴⁷ everyone needs to work, and hence, Turkish feminism currently aims to achieve “the right to work.” Besides, according to the author, humanity consists of half men and half women, and it isn't possible to leave half of the whole idle. Müfide Ferid emphasizes that women in Anglo-Saxon societies want the right to politics, which is the ultimate goal of feminism. In essence, in these societies, women have civil and social rights in many aspects. They are accepted into every profession and work as journalists, bankers, traders, architects, doctors, lawyers, and judges. She illustrates this with the example of Anne Scally, who was a justice of the

⁴⁵ Y. Naciye, “Erkekler Hakikaten Hürriyet-perver midirler? Kadınlar Ne İstiyor?” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, 7 (April 23, 1913), 3. The transcription used from *Kadınlar Dünyası 1.-50. Sayılar*, eds. Büyükkaracı Yılmaz and Gençtürk Demircioğlu, 68.

⁴⁶ Berika Süeda, “İstikbalde Bir Gün 1 Mayıs 1336,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, 101 (August 3, 1913), 6-7. The transcription used from *Yeni Harflerle Kadınlar Dünyası (Sayı 101-110)*, ed. Talay Keşoğlu, 121-124.

⁴⁷ The year 1919, when the article was published, coincided with the Mütareke period marked by economic and political problems.

peace in Wyoming, stating that all the plaintiffs want to choose her and emphasizing how fair of a judge she is. The writer finds it natural that in such societies, women seek the right to politics which is the final goal of feminism. She supports women's quest for political rights by saying, “*If women in society have to obey political laws like men, why shouldn't women have the right to speak on this issue?*”⁴⁸ These words are reminiscent of the sentence “*He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice*” which was stated by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the first women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls in 1848.⁴⁹ However, although there is no objection to Europe or America-oriented feminism in her article, she emphasizes that Turkish women have not yet reached the civilized and social level of women in those societies, and therefore they should seek equal rights to work with men and be educated accordingly before pursuing political rights. However, she also states “*Our goal will be to make women a good mother and a perfect person. We no longer want women who constantly rely on someone else to live.*” Because, one day they will become women and mothers, and maybe another day they will have to make a living.⁵⁰ The emphasis on empowering women to be self-sufficient is thought to be due to the difficulties women experienced during World War I when they had to support themselves and their families due to hunger, famine, disease, and inadequate aid to the families of men who went to war. And the reason for the emphasis on making women good mothers may be the need to recover the population after the war.⁵¹

Necmeddin Sadık, sociologist, journalist, and politician, also discusses women's rights and feminism, noting that despite some objections, women had begun to gain rights such as education and work, although it was just the beginning. Defining feminism as women having full political and civil rights in the European sense, the writer says, “*It has been years since this movement emerged; today, just as there are civil servant women in Europe and America, there are women who are doctors, lawyers, engineers in every specialization, and those who have entered every branch of commerce. Everything from primary schools to the highest professions, all are open to women.*” According to the writer, these examples prove that women can do these jobs just as well as men, and he believes that women will do no worse than men in political matters. However, he notes that it is not right to accept every claim of feminism indiscriminately. He doesn't present an objection to women's progress and uses Western examples positively. However, by pointing out that the two most important and sacred duties of women are family and morality, he emphasizes that true feminism never neglects these two goals of womanhood and that no other duty can take precedence over women's responsibilities within the family.⁵²

⁴⁸ Müfide Ferid, “Feminism,” *Türk Kadını*, 20 (April 17, 1919). The transcription used from *Türk Kadını (1918-1919) (Yeni Harflerle)*, 531-536; Müfide Ferid, “Feminism,” *Türk Kadını*, 21 (May 8, 1919). The transcription used from *Türk Kadını (1918-1919) (Yeni Harflerle)*, 563-569.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments,” *The Women's Rights Convention*, United States 1848, printed on hand-made, flower-inlaid paper and bound in decorated boards by M. Cole, 1995. (Harvard University Schlesinger Library)

⁵⁰ Müfide Ferid, “Feminism,” 21. The transcription used from *Türk Kadını (1918-1919) (Yeni Harflerle)*, 568.

⁵¹ For the effects of wars on women's issues, see Şefika Kurnaz, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Kadını*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1996), Tiğınçe Oktar, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kadının Çalışma Yaşamı Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i İslamiyesi*, (İstanbul: Bilim Teknik Yayınevi, 1998), Yavuz Selim Karakışla, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Savaş Yılları ve Çalışan Kadınlar: Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti (1916-1923)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), Elif Mahir-Metinsoy, *Ottoman Women during World War I*, (Cambridge University Press: 2017); Suraiya Faroqhi, *Women in the Ottoman Empire. A Social and Political History*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2023).

⁵² Necmeddin Sadık, “İctimaiyat: Bizde Feminizm,” *Türk Kadını*, 1 (May 22, 1918), 2-4. The transcription used from *Türk Kadını (1918-1919) (Yeni Harflerle)*, 4-7.

Although Müfide Ferid and Necmeddin Sadık support the advancement of women, the familial feminism in the Ottoman Women's Movement mentioned by Nicole A.N.M. Van Os can be read in both authors' articles. Van Os (2001) states that the Ottoman Women's Movement had characteristics resembling those of familial feminism, which accepts the patriarchal society, aims to elevate the status of women within the social structure, advocates the idea that men and women are different but complementary, and emphasizes equivalence rather than equality. Unlike political feminism in the West, which advocates equality of men and women and aims to change the patriarchal social structure, the Ottoman Women's Movement's stance was to prioritize women's duties and roles within the family and society above all else.⁵³

Some writers fiercely object to foreign models, warning that adopting or imitating the West would bring regression, not progress. Abdülaziz Çaviş, an Islamic scholar, journalist, and author, in his article titled "Scientific and Social: The New Attitude of Ottoman Woman" published in *Siyaset*, wrote the following statement:⁵⁴

The degree to which the Western woman has reached in her activities and campaigns has left Europe and America in astonishment and admiration. It is seen many congresses are being held all over the world to examine how it is possible to reform women, to understand what kind of programs should be adopted and implemented to ensure that they become a true mother and a proper wife, a manager, and governesses in their household, and a teacher worthy of the first schools that her children will attend from the time they are born until they reach the age of seven. They are constantly engaged in this work to reach the hopes of people everywhere and to create and implement useful and beneficial programs for their daughters, provided that their morals, customs, and sects, the virtues of their nations, and their national character are preserved. As for us, the total of what we have done in this regard consists of importing and translating curricula from Europe into our language and training and educating young Ottoman women according to them. However, there is a religious and moral difference between us and Western societies. We even know that the secret and wisdom in Europe's progress lies neither in the European woman's involvement with law and philosophy nor in that woman's ability to compete with men in the fields of diplomacy.

The author notes that American and European women engage in work and organize conventions to determine the types of education necessary to fulfill roles as devoted mothers, capable spouses, efficient household managers, and educators of their children, all while preserving the national characteristics and qualities of their nations. The writer opposes the imported curriculums from Europe due to the religious and moral differences between the Ottoman and Western societies. In this context, he also proposes a limited education program of introductory courses, religious education, and training for Ottoman women to enable them to fulfill the aforementioned duties.

According to Serpil Çakır, the magazine *Genç Kadın*, which rejects feminism on account of its European origin, can be used as another example that objects to foreign models.⁵⁵ In the article titled "Our Profession" published under the signature of *Müdüriyet* (directory) in the first issue of the magazine, those who had discussed women's issues until then were criticized for imitating European

⁵³ Nicole A.N.M. van Os, "Osmanlı Müslümanlarında Feminizm," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Cumhuriyet'e Devreden Düşünce Mirası, Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, ed. Mehmet Ö. Alkan, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 347.

⁵⁴ Abdülaziz Çaviş, "İlmî ve İçtimai: Osmanlı Kadının Tavr-ı Cedidi," *Siyaset*, 4 (April 16, 1914). The transcription used from *Yeni Harflerle Siyaset (1914)*, 151-152.

⁵⁵ Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, 81.

feminism. The reason is explained with the following statement: “*An Islamic, especially a Turkish woman, is not a French, English, German, and certainly not an American woman. Because every race and nation have its own hereditary, social, religious, political, legal rules and traditions, neglecting them would be a great mistake.*”⁵⁶ As can be understood from the statement, the article points out that imitating the West won’t elevate womanhood, on the contrary, will lead to regression. However, there is no explanation as to why the expression “certainly not an American woman” was used. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to perceive the opposition towards American-originated feminism in the text.

Some articles criticize Turkish women based on the lives of American women, trying to motivate Turkish women to emulate them. For example, in his article, Ethem Nejad, an educationist, criticizes Turkish and Islamic mothers through examples of motherhood of American women.⁵⁷ The writer states that in the U.S., educated women who are also mothers take care of their children heartily, not giving this pleasure to a stranger by hiring a nanny. As an example, he cites the women who take their children to New York Central Park after finishing their household chores and closely take care of them. He states that many parks he visited in Turkey were empty. Turkish and Islamic mothers generally consider child-raising as exhausting and hard work, and many women leave their children in the care of nannies to go out or to the movies. He notes that women’s neglect of childcare disrupts the welfare of society, causing a gradual decrease in population and advanced unhappiness in family life. The general tendency of *Türk Kadını* magazine to focus on upper and middle-class women and its limited feminist discourse that excludes women’s socio-economic rights with some mention of political rights, but mainly focuses on issues such as education, marriage, spouse selection, and clothes can be observed in this article.⁵⁸ In the article, by deliberately choosing an American mother studying philosophy as an example, the writer aims to show that education isn’t an obstacle to maternal and household duties. In the relevant dialogue, the writer asks the question “Why do you tire yourselves, is that not a pity? Why don’t you get your maids to take care of your children?,” and the American woman responds, “*Aside from being a mother’s duty, don’t you know that looking after a child is an tremendous pleasure. Why give this pleasure to a stranger?*” This response also represents the opinion that the primary duty of a woman is motherhood. According to Mahir Metinsoy, in addition to the conservative tendencies in society, increasing social expectations due to the decrease in population during and after the war caused the magazine to present the role of being a good mother and a good wife as the main duties and social function of Turkish women.⁵⁹ In her study on marriage and family, Songül Keçeci Kurt mentions that the perspectives of male and female writers of the Second Constitutional Period towards the institution of family and marriage

⁵⁶ Müdüriyet, “Mesleğimiz,” *Genç Kadın*, 1 (January 4, 1919). The transcription used from *Genç Kadın 1919 Ocak / Mayıs (Yeni Harflerle)*, ed. Çiçek İlgiz, (İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2011), 2.

⁵⁷ Ethem Nejad, “Evlâdsız Anneler,” *Türk Kadını*, 4 (July 4, 1918). The transcription used *Türk Kadını (1918-1919) (Yeni Harflerle)*, 88-89.

⁵⁸ In her review article, Elif Mahir-Metinsoy (2010) states that *Türk Kadını* magazine is nationalist and that both the people who publish the magazine and its readers have bourgeois roots. According to Mahir-Metinsoy, *Türk Kadını* magazine does not mention “*the problems of the society, the socio-economic reality created by the war, and the life struggles of lower-class women who have to work,*” but only deals with women’s rights in their cultural dimension, highlighting women’s responsibilities towards their homes, spouses, and children, and it limits women’s activities in the public sphere to education, association membership, and charitable activities. Elif Mahir-Metinsoy, “Kadın Tarihi Araştırmaları Açısından Türk Kadını Dergisi,” *Türk Kadını 1918/1919 (Yeni Harflerle)*, ed. Birsen Talay Keçoğlu – Mustafa Keçoğlu, İstanbul: Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı, 2010, xx-xxxvii.

⁵⁹ Mahir-Metinsoy, “*Kadın Tarihi Araştırmaları,*” xxiv.

were influenced by the social and political problems of the period. The author argues that women's identity as mother and wife is usually emphasized, and even writers who defend women's rights emphasize women's identity while underlining their maternal qualities.⁶⁰

It is clear that the progress made by American and European women considerably attracted the interest of the Ottoman press. However, when considered within the context of the Ottoman Women's Movement, the attention was always directed to the difference in manners, religion, and morals. It is seen that many publications find common ground in the idea of preserving national characteristics, customs, and ethical values while supporting the advancement of women. However, when it comes to using the American model as a positive or negative example, they appear with different nuances in line with their ideological views and under the conditions of the period in which they lived.

3. Articles on Working Life

Changing socio-economic conditions and structures in the 19th and early 20th centuries caused an increase in the participation of women in the labor force, and each achievement brought forward new demands. In the pre-industrial period, when the agricultural sector and family economy dominated in both economies, women mainly worked unpaid at home. Some women contributed to industry and commerce through home production. At the beginning of industrialization, women generally worked in unskilled jobs for less money than men. They first wanted to do the same jobs as men, work for the same wages, and practice professional jobs.⁶¹ The articles published in the *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, when industrialization and women's movements gained momentum, provide important information about the labor rights and employment of American and Ottoman women in the relevant period.

Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete, one of the publications extensively covering American women and their working lives, declared its aim as “*to raise Muslim women who love to read and write, who are religious, educated, have good morals, who have the qualities of a good wife and a good mother,*” and like many other publications, is opposed the direct transfer of everything in the West to the Ottoman society and emphasized the importance of compatibility with manners of the nation.⁶² According to Beyhan Kanter (2021), the hesitant, contradictory attitudes and different opinions in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* are revealed when it is emphasized that women in Europe and America are involved in all professions and that the number of women who go on long journeys, who run an administration alone, and who are engaged in commerce and the arts is increasing. She also states that the emphasis on the common interests of humanity and motherhood when European women are presented as role models indicates the existence of social reservations.⁶³ However, the fact that numerous articles about the working lives of American women examined in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* within the scope of our study were reported without comment or with exclamatory

⁶⁰ Songül Keçeci Kurt, “II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Osmanlı Kadın Dergilerinde Aile ve Evlilik Algısı,” *Belleten*, 79:286 (2015 Dec), 1093.

⁶¹ Sema Keleş Yıldız, “Osmanlı Devleti’nde ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’nde Ekonomik Yaşamda Kadın,” *Disiplinlerarası Yaklaşımlarla Kadın Çalışmaları 2*, ed. İnci Erdoğan Tarakçı (İstanbul: Efe Akademi Yayınları, 2023), 351-391.

⁶² *Yeni Harflerle Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895-1908) (Sayı 14-25) Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Kadın Dergileri Talepler, Engeller, Mücadele*, ed. Cavide Pala, İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2022, 18-19.

⁶³ Kanter, “Terakki-i Muhadderât,” 46.

expressions suggests that the reason for this may be to present their working lives as role models. Kanter makes a similar interpretation of the magazine *Terakk-i Muhadderat* in her study.⁶⁴

Despite the occasional use of exclamation points to express opinions, some pieces are mostly in the format of unbiased newspaper articles. Many articles mention women with a wide range of occupations such as workers, captains, guides, lawyers, judges, bank directors, bank tellers, civil servants, clerks, writers, sculptors, dentists, doctors, reporters, inventors, entrepreneurs, and so on. One of the most frequent statements in these articles is that “*American women are now engaged in all kinds of industry, commerce, and professions.*” Examples can be given such as: “*Sergeant. And a police sergeant... In America. – Always in America! – Just like there are women in every profession, there is also Sergeant Mary!*”⁶⁵ “*In Europe and especially in America, women are gradually entering every job and becoming part of the industry. Although women who are lawyers, doctors, painters, writers, poets, and postal workers are not rare, this time, according to the statement of a newspaper from America, women have even started working as drivers,*”⁶⁶ “*It has now become customary in America for women to be involved in all kinds of industries and services, and it is heard at every moment that women work and earn their bread like men. However, until now, among women, no one had ever heard of anyone making a living by being a reporter and reporting all kinds of news and events,*”⁶⁷ “*What else!.. Indeed, women can be everything, so why can't they be a military commander!*”⁶⁸

Articles about women entering professional jobs for the first time and their stories are frequently encountered in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*. An article titled “*Women's News: A Woman Reporter,*” explains that even though it is heard that American women engage in all kinds of jobs, it was the first time when a woman worked as a reporter. As reported by a European newspaper, Miss Banks, who works as a reporter, disguises herself in various ways, bravely goes into hospitals, and worst neighborhoods, and does her best for the newspaper for which she works. The piece also mentions that she writes articles tasteful to read.⁶⁹ There is another news from an American newspaper about a 23 year-old-girl who became the first police commissioner in the U.S., stating that she does her job with diligence and skill, showing extraordinary insight and courage.⁷⁰ Another article emphasizes that 182 women officers are working in different positions in the Chicago Municipality, and the city chief refers to these women as “*the most beautiful and active employees of the municipality.*”⁷¹ The articles also included different occupations that women were engaged in. One

⁶⁴ Kanter, “*Terakki-i Muhadderât,*” 45.

⁶⁵ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, “*Mary Çavuş,*” 319-117 (July 11, 1901), 5. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/F/A/F/B/say%C4%B1%20319.pdf> (March 11, 2023).

⁶⁶ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, “*Havâdis-i Nisâiye: Arabacı Kadın,*” 11 (May 18, 1903), 254. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/F/E/D/D/E/say%C4%B1%2011.pdf> (March 18, 2023).

⁶⁷ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, “*Havâdis-i Nisâiye: Muhâbir Bir Kadın,*” 14 (June 18, 1903), 323. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/B/B/C/B/say%C4%B1%2014.pdf> (12 April 2023).

⁶⁸ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, “*Kadından Asker Kaymakamı,*” 312-110 (May 23, 1901), 6. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/A/F/A/A/F/say%C4%B1%20312.pdf> (May 10, 2023).

⁶⁹ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, “*Muhâbir Bir Kadın,*” 323.

⁷⁰ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, “*Polis Komiseri Bir Kız,*” 241-39 (Dec 15, 1899), 4. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/F/A/D/F/say%C4%B1%20241.pdf> (March 27, 1923).

⁷¹ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, “*Kadın Belediye Memurları,*” 322-120 (Aug 1, 1901), 6. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/B/B/C/B/say%C4%B1%20322.pdf> (28 April 2023).

piece discusses Mrs. Wallihan's successful career as a wildlife photographer,⁷² another one relayed from American newspapers highlights Mrs. Harris, the only female customs collector in the U.S. appointed after her husband's passing, and her superiors were very happy with the work she did.⁷³

Some articles emphasize how good women are at their jobs, that they do their jobs as well as, and sometimes even better than, men, and that they can work for the same pay. An article titled "A Woman Chopping Wood" can be given as an example:⁷⁴

An Italian woman named Madame Joseph Marc, who lives within the boundaries of the Massachusetts government of America, chops wood in a lumber shop with her husband from morning till evening every day. According to the rumor, this virtuous woman's daily wage is no less than that of the men she works with, and her work is reported to be equal to and more careful than theirs.

Even though most of these articles were quoted from foreign newspapers, the inclusion of the praises may suggest that these pieces were not only newspaper articles, but also intended to function as encouragement or to present as role models for Ottoman women. However, there were also articles expressing the belief that women shouldn't work in every job. The article titled "Americans" mentions that American women no longer consider getting married, as they can now work in every profession and provide for themselves, and it is feared that this situation will spread to Europe. The article also notes that many men remain unemployed and hungry due to the entry of women into various crafts and professions.⁷⁵ On the other hand, in his article published 16 years later in the magazine *Bilgi Yurdu Işığı*, Ahmed Emin mentions the positive effects on family life of women in the U.S. being well educated and not being economically dominated by men. According to the author, neither women feel obliged to marry only for financial support, nor do men see women as financially dependent partners, but rather as equals in a mutually desirable and equal relationship free from financial pressures.⁷⁶

The news also included statistics on women's employment. Four such articles were encountered in the *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*. Two of them contain statistics for the years 1870 and 1890, one was from European newspapers and the other published by the U.S. Government. The numbers are the same for both statistics. Below are the statistics published by the U.S.:⁷⁷

⁷² *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Para Kazanmanın Bir Yolu Daha," 330 (Sept 26, 1901), 3. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/E/C/A/B/say%C4%B1%20330.pdf> (April 23, 2023).

⁷³ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Kadından Gümrük Tahsildarı," 330 (Sept 26, 1901), 3. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/E/C/A/B/say%C4%B1%20330.pdf> (April 23, 2023).

⁷⁴ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Odun Yaran Bir Kadın," 318-116 (July 4, 1901), 6. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/E/E/C/say%C4%B1%20318.pdf> (March 27, 1923).

⁷⁵ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Amerikalılar," 319-117 (July 11, 1901), 6. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/B/F/A/F/B/say%C4%B1%20319.pdf> (April 2, 2023).

⁷⁶ Ahmed Emin, "Amerika Aile Hayatı," The transcription used from *Yeni Harflerle Bilgi Yurdu Işığı*, 61-62.

⁷⁷ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Şuûn-ı Nisvân: Amerika'da Yirmi Senelik Terakkiyât-ı Nisvâniyye," 326 (Sept 1, 1901), 5. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/F/B/D/D/D/say%C4%B1%20326.pdf> (March 27, 2023).

Jobs	Year 1870	Year 1890
Actress	692	3949
Architect	1	22
Painter and Sculptor	412	10810
Science or Literary Author	159	2725
Dentist	24	337
Engineer	0	127
Journalist	35	888
Lawyer	5	208
Musician	5753	34518
Civil Servant	414	4875
Physician and Surgeon	527	4555
Theatre Director	100	634
Clerk and Accountant	0	27777
Copying Clerk etc.	8016	64048
Stenographer and Typographer	7	21185

These numbers demonstrate the increasing presence of American women in professional jobs towards the end of the 19th century. In addition to employment statistics, American women's inventions and patent ownership are among the interesting topics reflected in the articles. An article mentions that the number of female inventors increased after 1828, stating that 70 women got patents (ihtirâ' berâtı) in 1870, 92 in 1880, and 200 in 1890 and that in the year 1895 when the article was published, 280 women applied for a patent. However, it is mentioned that most inventions by women had to do with clothes, house gadgets, kitchen, and washing appliances, and they mostly improved existing inventions rather than invent something from scratch.⁷⁸ In addition to women inventors there is also news about women entrepreneurs. The story of two women in New York, who started a mining company with a capital of one billion dollars,⁷⁹ a farmer woman from California who effectively manages her expansive 4,200-acre farm and demonstrates her extraordinary knowledge and skill in agriculture⁸⁰ can be shown as examples.

Another article titled "What Do Women Do?" by Mustafa Asım also provides comparative statistics for various countries and discusses women's progress and feminism. The article, published at the beginning of the 20th century, when industrialization had spread widely in Europe and America, focuses on the preference for employing female workers in factories, as it is cheaper. According to the author, due to the advancement of women and particularly the influence of feminism, women are gradually establishing their independence from men and shaping their own lives, prompting men to reconsider traditional gender roles. One concerning reason for men is that despite performing the same job, women often receive lower wages "because of their femininity." Consequently, many factory managers prefer to employ women. Additionally, it is suggested that

⁷⁸ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Hâricî Havâdis," 11 (Oct 8, 1895), 7. Transcription used from *Yeni Harflerle Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895-1908) (Sayı 1-13) Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Kadın Dergileri Talepler, Engeller, Mücadele*, ed. Cavide Pala, İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2022, 455-458, 458.

⁷⁹ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Bir Milyar Dolar Sermaye," 336 (Nov 7, 1901), 6. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/D/B/D/D/D/say%C4%B1%20336.pdf> (May 10, 2023).

⁸⁰ *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, "Cesim Bir Çiftlik," 364 (June 6, 1902), 6. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/A/C/B/D/B/say%C4%B1%20364.pdf> (May 10, 2023).

women are preferred due to their natural abilities. According to the author, women initially encouraged by men, eventually surpassed them and secured their livelihoods. As women gained momentum in various fields, men became concerned about their increased employment opportunities and the rapid advancement they achieved in a relatively short period. As a result, men started to ask questions like who would take care of their children and manage their homes if women were busy. Then they began to publish volumes and volumes of books with expressions such as *“they cannot do as much work as we do,” “their bodies are weak,” “they cannot handle rough work,” “their minds and bodies are especially not as strong as ours,” “they cannot comprehend everything,” “they are not complete human beings.”* Nevertheless, it seems that the author does not view women's progress in the economic field very positively, as he concludes his article with the following sentence: *“We can only say that the experts of reason and wisdom, who are unbiased on the issue, see women coming to this level of prominence as detrimental to the happiness of society.”*⁸¹

When examining the articles published in the Second Constitutional Era, during which the Ottoman Women's Movement accelerated and the number of women's periodicals increased, it is observed that there was a more pronounced debate, particularly for Muslim Ottoman women, regarding the right to work, rather than giving just news articles about working women. In the articles of Müfide Ferid and Necmeddin Sadık published in *Türk Kadını* magazine, discussed in the section titled *“The American Woman Model for the Ottoman Woman,”* Ottoman women's right to work was emphasized. Especially in Müfide Ferid's statements, the effects of the war are observed in the determination of Ottoman women to obtain the right to work. Indeed, during World War I, the employment of women and *“training and protecting them to earn income so that they can live with honor by directing them to the jobs they can do”* became an important issue.⁸² And Western women continued to be used as examples on the matter.

During the Second Constitutional Era, in addition to the increasing discourse on the right of Ottoman women to work in magazines, there was also a noticeable shift in the range of professions that women were encouraged to pursue. In her letter published in the magazine *Kadınlar Dünyası*, a reader named Zekiye from Keçeciler (Istanbul) explains her joy about the publication of *Kadınlar Dünyası* and also says, *“I could not help feeling sad when I saw that the women of Europe and especially America were coming to the fore in important matters such as medicine, legal representation, and all.”* One can infer the sadness felt by the writer in her expression about how Ottoman women fell behind when compared to the progress of European and particularly American women in professional fields such as medicine and law.⁸³ A similar sorrow can also be found in another article in *Kadınlar Dünyası* on the story of Belkıs Şevket, the first Turkish woman to board an airplane. Addressing the progress in the field of aviation, it is mentioned that not only men but also women in Europe and America have participated in this important and courageous profession. The article points to the regret that Ottoman women could only watch this achievement. However, the article stated that *Müdâfaa-yı Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti* considered the issue and started negotiations for women to become pilots and mentions the success of Belkıs Şevket, *“a Muslim*

⁸¹ Mustafa Asım, “Kadınlar Ne İş Görüyor?” *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, 317-115 (June 27, 1901), 3-5. Access Link and Date: <http://kutuphane.puktacloud.com/veriler/cokluortam/cokluortam/F/B/E/F/B/say%C4%B1%20317.pdf> (April 28, 2023).

⁸² Oktar, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kadının*, 103-104.

⁸³ Zekiye, “Efendim,” *Kadınlar Dünyası*, 9 (May 8, 1913), 4. The transcription used from *Kadınlar Dünyası 1.-50*, 90.

Ottoman woman,” proudly with the words “*The first great success will be shown by an Ottoman Islamic girl in the east.*”⁸⁴ Serpil Atamaz (2014) mentions that women's right to work initially focused on “feminine professions” like teaching, nursing, and midwifery. However, after the declaration of the Second Constitution and the wars that followed, changing political, economic, and social conditions led to a widespread debate over women's right to work in women's magazines.⁸⁵ As evident from the examples above, there is a shift in the demand for women's right to work. Examples now include American women employed in medicine, law, and aviation, reflecting evolving opportunities and aspirations for women across diverse fields.

Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, developments in transportation and communication and the global expansion of the press network paved the way for a comparative discussion of women's issues within the socio-economic structure using foreign models. These foreign models were utilized effectively in discussions on the position of Ottoman women in socio-economic life. The industrialization period towards the 19th century led to changes in social and economic life. In the United States, women began to be isolated from higher education and hence from professional occupations in law, medicine, and sciences in the early 19th century.⁸⁶ However, the articles analyzed in this study show that they gained their rights relatively rapidly and American women could work freely in all kinds of professions towards the end of the century. It also seems that these efforts of American women encouraged Ottoman women. Through women's publications, one of the most important tools of the Ottoman Women's Movement, the American example was used as an incentive and role model in the achievement of women's rights. However, the importance of women's roles in motherhood and the family is often emphasized in the articles. These roles and their importance are highlighted in articles that use the American woman model from both negative and positive perspectives. In most of these writings, even those that use women's efforts to gain rights in the United States as an encouragement for Ottoman women, it is suggested that the issue be approached within the framework of social and cultural norms.

The material and intellectual conditions of the period played a significant role in the emergence of differences and contradictions in the use of the American woman model. Especially in the magazines following the Second Constitutional Period, there were discussions on topics such as the contribution of women to the national economy and the fact that the female workforce, which constitutes half of the population, should not be left idle. In this context, providing women's rights was crucial for economic development. As the need for labor increased during World War I and women who were left without husbands and fathers had to support themselves and their families as well as the national economy, it became even more important for women to acquire a profession. Due to the economic conditions of the period, unlike their American or European counterparts, who had acquired civil rights and the right to work and naturally demanded the right to politics, Ottoman women pursued civil rights and the right to work, which they had not yet fully achieved. On the other hand, the conditions during and after the war were also influential in women's prioritization

⁸⁴ *Kadınlar Dünyası*, “Belkıs Şevket Hanımefendi'nin Tayeranı,” 118 (Nov 29, 1913), 2. The transcription used from *Yeni Harflerle Kadınlar Dünyası (Sayı 111-120) Osmanlı ve Erken Cumhuriyet Kadın Dergileri Talepler, Engeller, Mücadele*, ed. Şeyda Aysun Oğuz, (Istanbul: Libra Kitap, 2022), 444.

⁸⁵ Serpil Atamaz, “The Formation of a Counter Public Through Women's Press in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *İletişim: Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12:2 (2014), 51.

⁸⁶ Lerner, *The Woman*, 45.

of motherhood and family duties due to reasons such as population decline and the deterioration of the family structure.

The rapid progress made by women in America regarding their position in socio-economic life has led some writers to use them as a positive example for Ottoman Women. However, while using this model, attention was often drawn to differences in family, motherhood, morality, customs, and religion, and it was emphasized that the advancement of Ottoman women should be within the framework of these values. While some authors viewed the American woman model positively, regarding these differences in socio-cultural norms only as cautionary reminders against uncritical admiration of American women's progress, others presented the same differences as reasons for the complete rejection of the American model and/or any other Western models. In addition, the influence of the ideas and ideologies of the periodicals and writers can also be observed in the articles. Authors who examine the issue from various perspectives such as feminist, anti-feminist, nationalist, westernist, or Islamist tend to interpret similar examples differently in the context of their own ideological frameworks, even though they find some common points. Sometimes contradictory statements can be found even in the same publications or articles by the same author. This leads to the use of American examples as both positive and negative examples and plays an important role in the differences and contradictions in the use of the American woman model. This contrast reflects the complex interplay of ideologies that shaped the discourse on the advancement of Ottoman women.

To summarize, the advancement of Ottoman women in socio-economic life and the diverse and sometimes conflicting discourses regarding the use of the American woman model have been shaped by three factors: The rapid dissemination of information through global developments in communication and transportation since the 19th century, the national and international political, economic, and social conditions of the period, and the socio-cultural norms and ideologies of the Ottoman realm during that era. Based on the analyzed writings, it can be inferred that the purpose behind utilizing the American woman model for the Ottoman woman extends beyond simply importing a Western women's movement. Whether positive or negative, authors used American examples to express and even validate their ideas and ideologies within the social, economic, and political context that shapes the environment. While some seek to impose patriarchal patterns by adjusting American examples to the conditions of the period and creating appropriate new discourses, others use them as a tool on the moderate path chosen toward women's emancipation.

This study is significant as it provides a comparative analysis of the socio-economic status of women during the relevant period in both countries, using Ottoman women's periodicals as primary sources. The analyzed articles show that American women progressed faster in socio-economic life than Ottoman women. Studying American examples in the research not only has helped to understand how social, economic, religious, and cultural differences between the two countries affected the socio-economic status and progress of women but also highlighted the different approaches taken by the Ottoman Women's Movement and the women's movement in the United States. The Ottoman Women's Movement had a structure that reflected the characteristics of familial feminism and adopted a more moderate, slow, and gradual approach compared to the women's movement in the United States. The reasons for these differences should be examined in more detail as the main question of a different study.

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