KOC UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

# ENGENDERING CITIZENSHIP: AUTONOMOUS WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN TUNISIA AND TURKEY

by

GİZEM TÜRKARSLAN

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## *Abstract*

During the last several decades, citizenship rights of women have been expanded through the collective action of women's movements in Turkey and in Tunisia. This study aims at understanding the different trajectories through which women's movements shape citizenship regimes in Turkey and in Tunisia from a multi-level perspective, one which encompasses simultaneously the macro-terrain of law making and political system design; meso-terrain of collective mobilization and the micro-terrain of individual lived experiences and the interactions in between. The central question of this dissertation is: What is the relationship between the women's rights movements and the citizenship regimes in which they are positioned? It engages in a dialogue with feminist citizenship literature by explaining the dynamic unfolding of institutions and processes of citizenship through women's collective mobilization. In this study, I argue that such processes can be captured by looking at the ways in which feminist activists make previously unrecognized grievances into legitimate and localized rights claims while employing a universalist language of rights. By studying dissent and resistance to existing laws and practices for citizenship rights, the dissertation demonstrates how acts of citizenship by women's movements shape the contours of citizenship regimes in terms of spaces of political participation, rebuilding of collective identities and resignification of the common good. By taking its cases as Turkey and Tunisia, the study highlights the agency of women's organizations in the call for full citizenship rights even in the absence of democratic regimes.

## Özetçe

Türkiye ve Tunus'taki kadınların yurttaşlık hakları son birkaç on yıldır toplu eylemler üzerinden gelişme göstermektedir. Bir makro alan olarak kanun yapma ve siyasi sistem biçimleri, mezo alan olarak kolektif hareketler ve mikro alan olarak bireysel deneyimleri ve bunların arasındaki etkileşimleri gözeten bu çalışma çok düzeyli bir çalışma olup, Türkiye ve Tunus'taki kadın hareketlerinin yurttaşlık rejimlerini hangi yol ve yöntemlerle değiştirdiklerini ele almaktadır. Çalışmanın ana sorusunsal olarak kadın hakları hareketlerinin içinde bulundukları yurttaşlık rejimleriyle ilişkisine bakmaktadır. Tez feminist yurttaşlık literatürüyle ilişkilenerek kolektif kadın hareketlerinin siyasi kurum ve süreçlere nasıl etki ettiğini açıklamaktadır. Çalışmada kurum ve süreçlerdeki değişimi feminist aktivistlerin meşru ve yerelleşmiş hak talepleri üzerinden anlaşılabileceği savunulmaktadır. Kadın hareketlerinin varolan yurttaşlık rejimlerini siyasi katılım alanlarını, kolektif kimlikleri ve ortak yarar kavramlarını yeniden yorumlayarak değiştirdikleri gösterilmektedir. Tez vaka olarak aldığı Türkiye ve Tunus örnekleri ile demokratik rejimlerin bulunmadığı dönemlerde de eşit yurttaşlık taleplerinin olabileceğini göstermektedir.

# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT II
LIST OF FIGURES VI
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS VII

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 RESEARCHING GENDERED CITIZENSHIP REGIMES IN TURKEY AND IN TUNISIA 6
1.2 MAIN ARGUMENT, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 7
1.3 FEMINIST RESEARCH AND EPISTEMOLOGIES: RESEARCH STRATEGY 11
1.4 NOTES FROM THE FIELDWORK 15
1.5 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION 19

CHAPTER 2 STUDYING WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND GENDERED CITIZENSHIP REGIMES 21

2.1 LINKING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORIES WITH CITIZENSHIP STUDIES 22
2.2 CITIZENSHIP IS ALWAYS GENDERED 23
2.3 REFRAMING POLITICAL SPACES THROUGH ACTIVISM: EXTENT OF CITIZENSHIP 31
2.4 RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S SPECIFIC IDENTITIES: DEPTH OF CITIZENSHIP 36
2.5 DEFINING THE COMMON GOOD: CONTENT OF CITIZENSHIP 41
2.6 CONCLUSION 43

CHAPTER 3 CITIZENSHIP AS RIGHTS, INSTITUTIONS AND NORMS: WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON EQUAL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR WOMEN 44

3.1 CITIZENSHIP IN THE NEW REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA AND TURKEY 46
3.2 THE 'WOMEN'S QUESTION' AND WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS 48
3.3 THE EMERGENCE OF THE AUTONOMOUS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN 1980S IN TURKEY 55
3.4 THE EXPANSION AND CONSEQUENT RETRACTION OF THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN TURKEY 59
3.5 THE EMERGENCE OF THE AUTONOMOUS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN TUNISIA 70
3.6 THE EXPANSION OF TUNISIA'S CITIZENSHIP REGIMES AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS 74
3.7 CONCLUSION 79

CHAPTER 4 REFRAMING SPACES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: THE EXTENT OF CITIZENSHIP REGIMES 82

4.1 WOMEN'S AUTONOMY AND ENGAGEMENT 83
4.2 FROM COOPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT TO CONFLICTUAL AUTONOMY: THE CASE OF TURKEY 87
4.3 FROM CONFLICTUAL AUTONOMY TO COOPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT: THE CASE OF TUNISIA 95
4.4 CONCLUSION 100

CHAPTER 5 BUILDING AND SHIFTING SECULAR AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES: DEPTH OF CITIZENSHIP 102

5.1 HEADSCARF BAN AS A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY MARKER 104
5.2 THE HEADSCARF BAN IN TURKEY 105
5.3 POST-ISLAMIST IDENTITIES 114
5.4 THE HEADSCARF BAN IN TUNISIA 118
5.5 THE CASE OF THE KURDISH WOMEN ACTIVISTS 124
5.6 CONCLUSION 129

CHAPTER 6 DEFINING THE 'COMMON GOOD': THE CONTENT OF CITIZENSHIP REGIMES 131

6.1 LANGUAGE OF UNIVERSAL RIGHTS AGAINST RISING CONSERVATISM AND RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES 132
6.2 LOCAL WAYS: POLITICS OF CULTURE VS NEEDS 139
6.3 CONCLUSION 145

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION 147

7.1 LINKING WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND CITIZENSHIP REGIMES 149
7.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY 154
7.3 MISSING LINKS, AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 156

ANNEXES 161

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND AFFILIATIONS 161
INTERVIEW FORMS 163
SAMPLE INTERVIEWS 168
CODING TREE 184

BIBLIOGRAPHY 186

## *List of Figures*

Figure 1 Axes of gendered citizenship .................................................................. 10
Figure 2 Three axes of citizenship ......................................................................... 31
Figure 3 Methods of feminist activism and engagement with institutions ........... 86

## *List of Abbreviations*

| | |
|---|---|
| *AFTURD* | L'Association des Femmes Tunisiennes pour la Recherche sur le Développement |
| *AKP* | Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi |
| *ANAP* | Anavatan Partisi |
| *ATFD* | Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates |
| *CEDAW* | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| *CME 95* | Le Collectif Maghreb-Égalité 95 |
| *CREDIF* | Le Centre de recherche et d'étude pour la diffusion du français |
| *CSP* | Le Code du Statut Personnel |
| *DEVAW* | Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women |
| *GOC-DER* | Göç Edenler Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Derneği |
| *GONGO* | Governmental Non-government Organization |
| *HADEP* | Halkın Demokrasi Partisi |
| *HEP* | Halkın Emek Partisi |
| *IMF* | International Monetary Fund |
| *KADEM* | Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği |
| *KADER* | Kadın Adayları Destekleme Derneği |
| *KAMER* | Kadın Merkezi |
| *KSGM* | Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü |
| *KSSGM* | Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü |
| *LET* | La Ligue des Electrices Tunisiennes |
| *PKK* | Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê |
| *LGBTQ+* | Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Plus |
| *MTI* | Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique |
| *NGO* | Non-governmental organization |
| *NWM* | National Women's Machinery |
| *POS* | Political Opportunity Structure |
| *RCD* | Le Rassemblement constitutionnel démocratique |
| *SAP* | Structural Adjustment Programs |
| *SHCEK* | Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu |
| *SMT* | Social Movement Theories |
| *TKDF* | Türkiye Kadın Dernekleri Federasyonu |
| *UN* | United Nations |
| *UNFT* | L'Union National de la Femme Tunisienne |
| *VAKAD* | Van Kadın Derneği |
| *WID* | Women in Development |
| *WWHR-NW* | Women for Women's Human Rights – New Ways |
| *YPJ* | Yekîneyên Parastina Jin |

# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The central question of this study is the following: *What is the relationship between the women's rights movements and the citizenship regimes in which they are positioned?* My work analyzes the different trajectories through which women's movements shape citizenship regimes, and how they are shaped in return. To do so, the study builds on existing feminist literature which argues that citizenship is always a gendered institution and process. It engages in a dialogue with the feminist citizenship literature by taking the dynamic unfolding of institutions and processes of citizenship through women's collective mobilization. Seeing citizenship as a dynamic concept, rather than a mere marker of membership in a polity, it shows how citizenship is contested, navigated and negotiated through resistance.

The study takes place in Tunisia and Turkey, in two countries with similar citizenship regimes established at the foundation of their republican regimes but with different dynamics of democratization. Through a comprehensive field study of the women's movements in both countries, it looks at the practices of the women's movements since the 1980's and how these practices have influenced the citizenship regimes at large. It argues that through daily acts of citizenship (Isin and Nielsen 2008) women's movements have expanded not only citizenship in terms of status and rights for women, but also in terms of reducing exclusions, redefining collective identities and the imaginations of the common good. It also argues that these practices are embedded within larger political structures such as the regime type and other new social movements such as Islamism. Taking its cases as such, it adds to the critical citizenship studies by showing that claims for equal citizenship in undemocratic regimes can broaden our understanding of citizenship.

Located at the intersection of the debates on social movements theories and critical citizenship studies, this study adopts a perspective which views social movements as claims for equal citizenship rights. I make the choice of studying citizenship as a strategic process with bottom-up and top-down dynamics, more than an active national membership in a nation-state such as voting for representation. I contend that by mobilizing collectively, women are making universal claims to democratic citizenship and change how it is practiced in a given territory. In addition, I see women's mobilizations as a struggle for political subjectivity; as claiming the 'right to claim rights' (Isin and Nyers 2014, 8) in order to resist and change the politically constructed and institutionally practiced discriminations. As such, my study traces how citizenship is a dynamic process in the making rather than a static institution established at the foundation of specific regime formations.

The study of citizenship and resistance arises as a timely pursuit; in relation to the chain of events ranging from popular mobilizations in the Middle East to citizens' reactions to crises of the neoliberal forms of governance in the developed nations. These social struggles suggest that we are living in a historical moment of mass challenges to existing social contracts between the citizens and their state, as well as proving potentials for change. These developments make it an important endeavor to systematically study the dynamics of citizenship as an institutional practice.

Within this context of demanding equal citizenship through social movements, women's movements provide an excellent case for studying how the boundaries of citizenship have changed in the 20th century. Women's movements[1] are one of the oldest, most articulated as well as continuous social movements of the 20th century, despite the fact that social movements theories see movements as cyclical, meaning with a beginning and with an end. As such, women's collective action as an agent of social change has been subject of scholarly literature at the intersection of feminist theory and political science over the past forty years, challenging some of the basic premises of the social

[1] By women's movements, I mean the "range of activities in which women engage to better the circumstances of their lives" (Ray and Korteweg 1999a, 48). I only adopt the term 'feminist' when the actors themselves choose to employ this term.

movements theories and citizenship studies (Joni Lovenduski and Norris 1993). Despite the claim that social movements occur through cycles (Snow and Benford 1992), women's movements have been one of the most persistent social movements of the past several decades (Taylor 1989). Through their continuous action, they have not also not only addressed the state, but also other social institutions such as the media, religion, family and citizenship.

The gendered nature of any citizenship regime is also profoundly relevant today. In the case of the Middle East, the notion of gender-equality itself has been subject of significant debate. In this region, as well as elsewhere, discourses of cultural authenticity have sometimes trumped over gender-equality claims (Al-Ali 2004; Badran 2001; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Kandiyoti 1996). Activist women have been participants in social struggles over the past century, gaining a stronger momentum by becoming autonomous from the state and other social movements, continuously challenging the discourses and practices disguised under cultural authenticity (Berkovitch and Moghadam 1999; Diner and Toktaş 2010; Khalil 2014b; V. M. Moghadam 2007; Ray and Korteweg 1999b; Mary Ann Tétreault, Meyer, and Rizzo 2009). Women all over the world have been demanding new rights and have well proven their potential to transform gendered power relations in political, economic and social life (Buechler 1990; Friedman 1995; Kumar 1997; Levitt and Merry 2009; J. Nelson 2003). Given the relatively recent conservative backlash over the achievements of this movement, especially towards the notions of gender, gender-equality and bodily and sexual rights of women, the question of women's resistance to gendered citizenship regimes constitute both a contemporary and a historical question, one that needs further theorizing. This dissertation contributes to the studies which theorize on the link between women's movements and their gender-equality outcomes in political rights of women, hence citizenship rights in Tunisia and Turkey.

Women's movements which have flourished globally therefore constitute one of the sites of resistance to understanding modern citizenship regimes beyond their legal limits as a status of membership in a given nation-state, and rather as a socially defined concept with focus on norms, practices, meanings and identities (Fernández 2005; Isin 2013; Lapayese 2003; Percy-Smith 2015; Sieder 1999; Stasiulis and Bakan 1997; Wiener and Della Sala 1997). By doing so, not only do they change norms and meanings which

they build through social collective action, but also extend to institutional sphere by changing legal and regulatory practices. In my work, I propose that we need to study citizenship as a multi-layered concept, one which encompasses simultaneously the macro-terrain of law making and political system design; meso-terrain of collective mobilization and the micro-terrain of individual lived experiences and the interactions in between. With such an exercise, this dissertation builds a theory of how contemporary rights-based movements of organized women make an impact on larger citizenship regimes by bringing together the studies of gendered citizenship and social movements theories.

Following women's movements' resistances to these gendered regimes however also requires recognizing some tensions. In order to understand how citizenship is made and how it changes over time and contexts, we should develop an appropriate vocabulary to recognize the multiplicity of structures, institutions and agents involved in the process (Isin 2009). The framework of this research essentially takes the interplay between structure and agency , which is mainly interested in discovering how agents and their actions, i.e. how different types of women and their agency influences institutions by challenging the status quo and in return and how do women activists shape their strategies to advance their claims under existing structural limitations or opportunities. I define the agency of women through their daily resistance practices which challenge power hierarchies and demand equality and justice for women. Structural limits or opportunities refer to macro political institutions such as markets, laws, formal political institutions i.e. regime types, political parties and political movements as well as social institutions such as religion, family and cultural traditions .

Not only the gendered citizenship regimes have been a subject of women's resistance but also how to understand gender-equality itself has been subject to significant divisions. In critical social theory, the notion of equality has been defined in three intersecting and competing layers; first one has been the fair redistribution of sources to correct economic and class inequalities while the second layer is the recognition of differences in cultural identities from an intersectional perspective (Deranty 2003; N Fraser and Honneth 2003; Nancy Fraser 1995, 2005; Fredman 2007; Gouws 2014; Kymlicka and Banting 2006; Lazzeri 2009; Rai 2004). The final layer is the equal and political representation of particular interests and standpoints (Nancy Fraser 2005). These

theoretical insights have led to the necessity of the recognition of different cultural identities as well as bringing down power hierarchies between different groups. The emergence of a multiple inequalities agenda complicates the conceptualization of equality, since recognition and representation of different groups as well as the demands for a fair redistribution of resources sometimes conflict and contradict one another. This led to the notion that patterns of inequality and resistance can only be understood in their diverse and contextually specific ways. In this context, feminist critical theory contends that we need to pay attention to the production of specific and contextual knowledge via dialogue rather than abstract norms that are more typical of a liberal notion of egalitarianism (Squires 2007).

When we look at the context of the study of women's movement as an force of social change, we see that it has been subject of scholarly literature at the intersection of feminist theory and political science since the 1950s (Joni Lovenduski and Norris 1993). Originally, this literature mainly focused on the cases of the developed countries and established democracies (Beckwith 2000) rather than in regimes in which formal and informal channels of political participation are not entirely open. Throughout this dissertation, I aim to highlight the agency of women's organizations in the call for full citizenship rights even in the absence of democratic regimes. At a time where the social contract between citizens and their state is at crisis, it is important to focus on cases where the change in citizenship regimes is less conspicuous to get a better understanding of what citizenship means. Not only what citizenship means, but also how it evolves not only in democratic but also semi-democratic and authoritarian contexts is important since mechanisms of this change are less visible, marginalized and are more contentious; even risking being labelled as illicit and illegitimate.

A grounded analysis (Charmaz and Belgrave 2007) of the agency of women's movements in relation to the citizenship regimes therefore can tell us from a new perspective that the claim for universal citizenship and universal rights can be place-specific and bound to context specific inequalities (Altan-Olcay 2015, 13). I claim that as long as research on women's agency situates itself away from the primacy of universal principles and a liberal egalitarianism from an ahistoric perspective, we should be able to grasp the grievances of localized resistances among groups that are in fact contextually bound. In contrast to universalistic theories which articulate principles before actually

taking social or political action; I position myself more with how collective individuals, more specifically in the case of organized women, build social and political action to resist the domination of institutions listed upon them.

### *1.1 Researching gendered citizenship regimes in Turkey and in Tunisia*

The specific cases of this study are Turkish and Tunisian contexts over a period of four decades (1980s-present) where since the 1980s, women's movements represent two of the strongest women's movements in the Middle East region. In terms of scholarly interest, political and social studies on Turkey are generally studied as a single-case studies in political science and area studies, or in relation to some European countries, such as France and Egypt or Israel and other Middle Eastern countries, but not with Tunisia (Cady and Hurd 2010; Hashmi 2010; Jamal 2009; Sarfati 2013). Tunisia on the other hand is generally studied as an exceptional single-case (Masri 2017), or in comparison with other North African countries such as Algeria and Morocco (Charrad 2001). The Tunisian case has garnered more traction in the post-2011 context whereby it stands to be the only country which has transitioned into a democracy and in which women's rights was one of the most salient issues on the political agenda.

The cases of Turkish and Tunisian women have been studied as 'exceptions' in the Muslim world for living under a secular regime compared to the rest of the Muslim countries in the Middle East region ruled by religious codes (Y. Arat 1994, 2000a; Charrad 2007; Khalil 2014b; Starr 1989; Tchaicha and Arfaoui 2017; Turam 2008). They are individually cited as one of the most successful women's movements in achieving legal reforms as well as gender-equality outcomes despite the strength of institutions which work in favor of sustaining gender inequalities such as laws, bureaucracy, religion and family. These two movements have significantly altered gendered citizenship regimes in their own contexts. By comparing these two major movements, in this dissertation I aim to uncover the process through which they enable social change under in contexts, often demarcated as the non-West, in constant negotiation with the so-called West, while struggling with contextually specific political arrangements. Tunisia on the other hand was a post-colonial state whereas Turkey was a post-imperial one. Looking at Turkey and Tunisia together where one was colonized and in other where official colonialization did not happen "allows us to explore more deeply the common denominators between colonial and nationalizing projects" (Altan-Olcay 2009, 166) as

well as "points of intersection, dialogue and confrontation" from distinct socio-historical locations other than the West (Kandiyoti 1996).

The success of these movements is partially built during the foundational period of the two citizenship regimes, (Tunisia-1956 and Turkey-1923) where both regimes granted certain civil, social, economic rights during the reform period, but the participation of women in oppositional and contentious politics was not allowed (Arfaoui 2007; Toprak 1988; Zihnioğlu 2003). Questions around equal citizenship were determined by a top-down approach where the political elite did not allow collective political struggles, where cultural identity was based on the nationalistic and homogeneous formulations of Turkish or Tunisian ethnicity (Kirişçi 2000; Masri 2017), and where the initial social contract allowed for an authoritarian bargain; economic rights of citizens was prioritized but not their political or civil rights (Achy 2011; Albrecht 2010).

Despite these apparent similarities in their foundational citizenship regimes, women's movements have achieved gains for women's rights under authoritarian and semi-democratic periods after 1980s by employing different strategies under different political structures (Charrad 2007; Sirman 1989; Tekeli 1990). The political regimes of Turkey and Tunisia move in opposite directions; while Tunisia started off with authoritarian rule, following the 2011 revolution, its political regime is democratizing (Stepan 2012; Yardımcı-Geyikçi and Tür 2018). On the contrary, Turkey's regime, which has been semi-democracy for decades has recently been moving towards authoritarianism (Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Kalaycıoğlu 2018; Öniş 2015). I argue that these two countries make an interesting comparison when we see them from their gendered citizenship regimes due to their similarities in established citizenship regimes but differences in their political opportunity structures. This difference allows me to show the different trajectories through which women's movements shape citizenship regimes under different political structures and contexts.

## *1.2 Main argument, research questions and theoretical framework*

The evidence and literature on women's movements in both Turkey and Tunisia tell us that that their actions have resulted in concrete changes in citizenship rights, laws, practices and institutions (Htun and Weldon 2010; Kumar 1997; Viterna and Fallon 2008; Waylen 2007). The main aim of this dissertation is to unpack how this happens; how

organized women change the practices of citizenship, how the political context shape their strategies and how we should understand the outcome of their actions in conceptualizing citizenship at large.

However, these processes do not take place in a contextual vacuum. I further argue that all of these processes have been in a dialectic relationship with the political structures and contexts within which they practice their agency. I contend that we can capture these change by looking at a specific type of civic activism, called "acts of citizenship" within their specific political contexts[2] (Isin and Nielsen 2008). Through a systematic analysis of their "acts of citizenship" I argue that we can understand how women activists make previously unrecognized grievances into legitimate and localized rights claims.

I contend that the relationship between women's social mobilization and citizenship regimes can be captured by studying simultaneously the following three related questions:

- What are the acts of citizenship employed by organized women in expanding citizenship regimes?
- How do social and political structures shape these mobilizations and the practice of full citizenship rights and how do these inform women's agencies in return?
- How does the interplay between the agency of women and social and political structures impact the gendered nature of citizenship regimes?

By studying dissent and resistance to existing laws and practices for citizenship rights, my dissertation therefore demonstrates how the contours of citizenship regimes change through following everyday practices (acts) by women's movements. The main argument of my study is that women's movements not only expand citizenship regimes in terms of rights given due to a status within a polity, but through their bottom-up mobilizations they alter citizenship regimes at large. By citizenship regimes I mean the way in which state approaches citizenship both discursively and institutionally through which it governs society (E. F. Keyman and Kanci 2011). When I refer to "gendered

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[2] To illustrate what acts of citizenship means we can think of acts of dissent and civil disobedience, including vigils, resistances, and protests which publicly contest practices and laws through embodied practices.

citizenship regimes" I refer to how the state approaches its women citizens differently, usually under exclusionary ways, and by "engendering citizenship" I mean how this gendered citizenship regime is extended to include women as equal citizens. I argue that women's movements engender citizenship regimes in three distinct ways: 1) by building new and expanding existing political spaces 2) by constructing and reconstructing collective identities and 3) by redefining the common good from a local perspective.

In order to conceptualize what I mean by citizenship regimes and demands for equal citizenship rights I use three different dimensions (Figure 1).[3] The first layer of my argument sees how women reshape political spaces in which they participate. Seeing it as the extent of citizenship regulates whether citizens, and which type of citizens, are excluded or included in political decision making. This axis relates to the processes through which citizens are made part of the creation and drawing boundaries of their citizenship regimes (Faulks 2013; Meijer and Butenschøn 2017). For an equal citizenship regime, all different groups, including women, and other minorities, must be represented equally in the political sphere. Representation refers to equal access to all groups of citizens within the political spheres where citizenship is practiced. Therefore, the question of inclusion or exclusion of women in the political sphere and seeing citizenship as equal representation in the political sphere constitutes my first axis of citizenship regimes. I argue more specifically in Chapter 4 that women invent new spaces to participate in politics, given their exclusion from formal politics. I also argue that the political context determines how women participate in contentious politics; during times of political openings, organized women choose less conflictual ways of participating in politics, such as through lobbying and advocacy while during authoritarian times they prefer street politics and conflictual discourses against the regime.

[3] The three fold dimensions is an adaptation of the model brought forward in Keith Faulks (2013) also employed in Butchenson and Meijer (2017) and in Isin and Turner (2002)

| Acts of citizenship outcomes… | Axes of gendered citizenship regimes |
|---|---|
| 1. Expanding political participation by opening new spaces | ***Extent***: inclusion vs. exclusion of women in the political sphere |
| 2. Shifting and rebuilding collective identities | ***Depth:*** the scope of recognition for differences between and among women |
| 3. Resignifying the common good of a community | ***Content***: The balance of rights vs duties given in a political community |

*Figure 1 Axes of gendered citizenship*

The second axis is the depth of a citizenship regime. While each regime claims a certain type of universality among its citizens, given the collection of rights and duties to its citizens this claim to universality is not real on the ground, and that some particular identities and group rights have been demanded through social movements especially since the 1980s with new social movements. Therefore, the depth of citizenship regimes denotes the variety of particular claims recognized (Kymlicka and Norman 1994). Understanding citizenship as particular identity claims, one must look at whether or not these rights claims are recognized and represented for a full equal regime. I argue in Chapter 5 that women reconstruct collective identities through their acts of citizenship in relation and in contradiction to other social movements in their local contexts. I show how different groups of women challenge the established boundaries of the ideal citizenship at the level of their nation-states and reconstruct its secular and in the case of Turkey, ethnic Turkish identity over a period of four decades.

The content of citizenship, the third axis, addresses the balance of the rights and duties given in a political community; the balance between liberal and civic republicanism (Isin and Turner 2002; Lister 1997). It refers to the dilemma of how we define the common good, and what is good for women. Each citizenship regime allocates certain rights and duties upon citizens, therefore granting them a status from which a balance of these rights and duties arise. How do the content of these rights are justified remain open to contestation? How do we define the limits and basis of rights for women? Is it through international treaties or through more localized practices of culture and religion? In Chapter 6 I take these discussions under how the common good defined either international norms or through cultural codes from a communitarian perspective and how these are reinterpreted by organized women for a pluralistic and inclusive citizenship regime. I show in this chapter that claims for justice and common good represent a tension

in between claims for a just redistribution of resources and cultural/symbolic recognition of women's rights. I capture the tendency in women's movements to reject the universal and local dichotomy in defining what is best for women, and to focus on women's daily needs.

In order to answer my research question, I focus on the collective political struggles of organized women at different levels such as laws, institutions, collective identities and communities. As such, I build a three-dimensional comprehensive conceptualization of citizenship regimes based on their extent, depth and content and analyze the different impact organized women have on these different levels. In the remainder of this dissertation, I discuss the different opportunities, strategies and tensions which women face in order to expand these three different axes. I also show how these changes are dependent on the different political structures such as national political regimes, other local collective struggles, different inequality structures such as ethnicity and religion, and tensions between local and universal feminisms.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, I ask: *How does the autonomous women's movement in Turkey and Tunisia change the citizenship regimes in which they are embedded?* In order to answer this question from a multilevel perspective, I have employed a comparative research design executed with qualitative research methods to further our understanding on this issue. The following section talks in detail about my research design, epistemological approach and consequent empirical work.

### *1.3 Feminist research and epistemologies: research strategy*

Throughout my work, I adopted a feminist research methodology and epistemology, given the plethora of studies and methodologies developed in researching women's activism. A feminist epistemology and research design require developing a strategy which would take at its core women's own experiences. In order to provide a critical analysis of the topic of this research, standpoint epistemologists choose to take women's lives and the histories of other excluded people as a starting point of research. As such, taking a historical, local and subjective account of excluded groups is for advancing a critique of hegemonic knowledge claims put forward by elites (Andrijasevic 2013). I therefore take into accounts of critique of failed objectivity and universality of

dominant knowledge production around positivist methods, and rather take a 'situated' position, which is not detached from one's own location and experience (Harding 2004).

Feminist researchers have also argued that research should not just be on women but for women and where possible, with women (Doucet and Mauthner 2006). For this, they have actively engaged with new methods and challenging existing methods of collecting and presenting data. This involved undoing the biases in mostly positivist frameworks and dominance of quantitative methods in political and natural sciences, choosing rather to document and represent women's own experiences. In doing so, they have aimed to uncover the power differentials in a research between the researcher and the 'researched'. The question is not whether there are power inequalities, which they argue are always inherent in social research, but how these power inequalities influence knowledge production and construction processes (Doucet and Mauthner 2006).

In response to the questions posed above, my research strategy was twofold: the first step was to review the literature and available information on their activities. I did an exploratory research into the field of women's organizations and their activities in both countries through literature review and a collection of publications and websites. I prepared a sample of women's rights organizations which would be representative of each different current within the movement. The literature already notes the different currents within the women's movement, and I have based my selection based on the existing divisions within this literature (Çağatay 2018; Diner and Toktaş 2010; G. A. Marshall 2005; Sirman 1989; Turam 2008). The second step was to contact the women who were involved in undertaking the acts of citizenship and understand these acts through their lenses. Through semi-structured interviews, I gained an understanding into how these activist women viewed their activities in broader relationship with citizenship regimes in their countries. Therefore, most of my data collection comes from personal interviews with women who have been active in the feminist mobilizations at some point in their lives, in addition to participant observation in their activities and reviewing their own publications, websites and periodicals.

Interviews with women's rights organizations and activists provides insight into their on-the-ground realities. It shows how different actors within the women's movement understand the social change processes, such as citizenship regimes and their role in

advancing gender equality and women's rights. The women I interviewed in both countries were influenced by different historical and cultural contexts and their work each emphasize a different aspect of citizenship regimes. Through adopting a consistent set of questions for all activists, I aimed to understand how these women resisted social structures in which they were deeply embedded. By taking into their own narratives about change in their societies, I aimed to discover the different trajectories in which they shaped the citizenship regimes in their own countries.

In this section I would like to offer a transparent view of my research process and experience before moving onto my literature review and analytical chapters. This means that I myself as the researcher cannot escape my own social embeddedness or propose a more objective or neutral analysis. However, just as most feminist research openly reflects and acknowledges their own social location and experience in collecting and producing data, I would like to offer the reader a more personal account of my research journey in hoping to make a better sense of the following chapters.

I began my work by reviewing information that was available in secondary resources to identify who could be included in a potential research as to reflect the widest possible views which exist in women's movements in both countries. After getting a sense of the actors and institutions which were involved in the women's movements in both countries, I started listing possible names and associations to contact and represent a wide variety of voices within the movement. I contacted my target list through mostly email or through phone calls, requesting an interview for my project. Most of these contacts were successful with the exception of a few which I explain in the following paragraphs.

To prepare for the field work, I made a short trip to Tunis in October 2016 to get to know the field and prepare and establish initial contacts for my following visit, since I was completely foreign to the country. The actual fieldwork took place in between January and May 2017, which took three months in Turkey and two months in Tunisia. I conducted a total of 47 interviews, 27 in Tunisia and 20 in Turkey. Except for the independent feminists I interviewed, these 47 interviewees represented a total of 23 associations and/or feminist groups (13 in Tunisia and 10 in Turkey, list available in the annex).

Before the interviews, I asked each interviewee whether I had their consent to use this material in my dissertation as well as quote their names. The interviews were semi-structured in nature; I prepared interview forms both in Turkish and in French which consisted of 8 different groups of questions. These questions (also available in the annexes) started off with personal questions about the interviewee's history of activism, followed by their perception of what citizenship means and about the mechanisms of change. These questions were followed by organizational questions about their activities, such as their internal structures, funding and regular activities. These questions were followed by questions on their relationship with other civil society actors and political actors. I finished the interviews with a section aimed at understanding their perceptions about the women's movement in general and the impact of local and international politics on their movement. I concluded with open questions about what they thought about the future of the movement, where it was headed and how they saw the future of women's rights. Sometimes the conversation was geared towards my perception of Tunisian politics and women's movements by my Turkish respondents and vice versa in Tunisia but I mainly restricted the conversation to women's rights in each context.

Upon finishing my interviews, I transcribed all my recordings, translating simultaneously the conversations in French and in Turkish. I used a coding software, MaxQDA to code my interviews in order to trace out patterns, similarities, as well as contradictions and tensions. Using the first 10 interviews, and my notes from the field, I built a coding tree similar but different to my 8 topics I designed in my interview form (available in the annexes) I divided the coding tree into 5 categories, starting from the micro to the macro level. I began by the activist's biographical history of introduction to feminism, followed by a group of codes to denote the organization's vision, mission, funding and activities. These codes were followed by the organizations' relations with other actors such as other civil society organizations, political parties, and local bureaucracies. These were followed by the meso level codes, which related to comments about politics of the women's movement, tensions and possibilities within. Fourth level consisted of comments on macro politics within first local politics and second regional and global politics and actors. Final level of codes were related to normative descriptions about women's rights, citizenship and feminist movement.

After having transcribed the interviews, I marked each relevant comment with a corresponding tag(s). The software was helpful in determining the weight and frequency of each subject and grouping together comments under the same topic. Subsequently, I was able to group different activities of women's movements, different types of relations with the state actors, and general influence of macro politics on women's movements. Before I move onto literature review and the consequent the analytical chapters of the dissertation however, I would like to offer some notes from the field.

## *1.4 Notes from the fieldwork*

My fieldwork began in Turkey, which allowed me greater flexibility in terms of time and logistics. I conducted most of my interviews in Istanbul where a great number of women's rights organizations are based. I also travelled to Bodrum, Ankara, and Van to meet with my respondents. Most of my sample consisted of secular and Turkish women that I had gathered either through cold contacts or from snowballing technique. I however included Kurdish and Islamist women in my sample, as much as I possibly could. My respondents also self identified differently, ranging from republican/modernist, radical, socialist, Marxist and liberal however the women with official political affiliations, such as party members or parliamentary members are not included in my sample.

In general, I did not run into any major difficulty accessing and meeting with these women. However, despite my efforts, especially for the case of Tunisia, I had difficulty reaching women identifying as Islamist women. While my respondents included women from an Islamic feminist perspective, they were mostly secular, regardless of whether they were pious or unveiled. What was mostly interesting was the fact that my Tunisian correspondents were insisting that I did not need to talk to Islamist and Ennahda women since they carried out an Islamist agenda rather than an autonomous feminist agenda. Similar concerns were made explicit to me among my Turkish correspondents; that women attached to the AKP movement which represents a hegemonic view of the Islamist movement currently in Turkey would not be entirely willing to speak their own minds other than their larger Islamist cause. After a while, and I am afraid this was rather late into my field work, I realized in Tunisian Islamists did not usually work in French from other resarchers who were more familiar with the field and had access to Arabic-only speaking communities, and I would need either a local guide or be speaking Arabic to actually reach them myself. In addition, there were not many autonomous Islamist

organizations in both countries, but rather women's divisions connected to Ennahda or AKP. This realization took me a while since I was skeptical to most of my interviewees in Tunisia when they told me that there weren't really any Islamist feminists in Tunisia, and their organized activities were all conducted in tight connection to Ennahda. I acknowledge that out of my 47 respondents, only three were from an Islamist background. However, I still hold onto my decision of not including women from political parties in my sample, and just sticking to autonomous feminists and women from the movement since organized women from political parties would mean that I would have to take into a whole different set of interviewees with different agendas and positionalities with respect to political structures.

The length of my interviews varied greatly, depending on the time available and the flow of the conversation. My interviews ranged from 30 minutes to four hours. I always met with my interviewees at their place of choice. These locations ranged from coffee houses, libraries, parks, homes, universities, shopping malls, pubs, personal offices, home offices and NGO premises. I recorded most of my interviews with the consent of my interviewees. Out of the 47 interviewees only one of them preferred that I do not record them and use their real names in my work, citing her public personality and the delicacy of the topics she was about to disclose to me. The rest of them seemed rather at ease to allow me to use the interview material, as they were mostly activist women spending their lives to make their cause heard by larger masses; and they welcomed the attention from a young academic in their own subject.

Not to say that I was the first person to have interviewed them on similar topics; most of my interviewees had been accustomed to welcome inquiries from the scholarly community; to the extent that at some points they were telling me that they were growing weary of these interviews and questioning their outcome. I made sure that I would send them the finalized manuscript of my dissertation once I was done with it and thanked personally and through a follow up email for their contribution. However, I did not find this enough to break the 'hygenic' bond between the researcher and the researched (Oakley 1981). Responding to the feminist critique against 'objective instruments of data production to be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias' (Oakley 1981) I decided to join a women's group. So towards the end of my fieldwork, with the aims of becoming more acquainted with the movement as well as

my willingness to contribute back to their work and make the relationship more personal rather than sterile, I became involved in a locally based Turkish women's group, called Purple Solidarity (Mor Dayanisma). With these women, I am currently both friends and fellow feminists, these relationships I established during my work has continued beyond the duration of my fieldwork.

Going back to the specificities of the interviews, each of the interview localities had a different dynamic. While public places gave me the opportunity to be at a more neutral level with my respondents, meaning that the conversation flowed as easily as possible, the logistics of conducting an interview in a public space sometimes made communication difficult due to interruptions and commotion. In more private spaces such as personal offices or homes I mostly was welcomed as a 'guest' but this I felt had built a hierarchical relation with my respondent and myself. This feeling was particularly pertinent with my older interviewees where sometimes I had the feeling that they regarded my research agenda or my abilities as a researcher with suspicion. With younger respondents I rarely had this feeling and the interviews mostly were more amicable.

Given the nature of semi-structured interviews, I mostly allowed my respondents to freely respond to my questions, sometimes causing me to get answers that were rather disconnected from the spirit of the questions asked. In retrospect, I would have liked to have had more control over the course of the interviews and guided my respondents better in the direction of citizenship regimes. Having the chance to conduct a few interviews in English, my professional working language, I could immediately see my ease in controlling the flow of the conversation.

My personal subjectivity as an unveiled Turkish 32-year-old woman scholar had a great impact on my interview sample and the relationship I built with my interviewees. In general, I had the feeling that secular women in general were rather open to me. In contrast, one interviewee from a newly established Islamist NGO in Tunis kept our interview rather short and she referred to me to their already published works; supporting the skepticism I had received from my secular informants in Tunis. I felt strongly that if I did not have a secular background that my respondent would talk to me more openly.

The age gap also proved problematic at some cases. Communication was easier with younger respondents since both in Turkish and Tunisian cultures, talking to older

people requires a certain extent of rapport, which shows itself in issues like not interrupting the other person while they are talking, and not being able to openly confront them directly with some of the conflictual or provocative statements they made. As an example, one of my respondents in Tunisia referred to a veiled woman walking by us in a café with rather hostile comments, which I felt I should have made a comment but rather chose to keep silent in order not to break the flow of the conversation; but which put me in a rather uncomfortable situation. Or there were other times where my respondents would make openly critical comments about women I had already spoke to or women's organizations I had seen or was planning to see, which shed further light into the politics of women's movements.

Being an insider in Turkey and somewhat a semi-insider but also outsider in Tunisia also had a significant impact in my interviews. My interviewees in Tunisia generally showed great interest in my work as a secular Turkish academic working on similar issues in Turkey. They seemed already rather interested in the general state Turkish politics, going through similar tensions between secularist and Islamist camps. I ended up spending the time I had allocated for interviews talking about domestic Turkish politic given the interest of my interviewees on the subject matter. It was also remarkable to see that most encounters I had in Tunisia revolved around this question of Turkish local politics. I ended up feeling rather connected to the country and its people given the similar political histories and the state of women in the society.

On the contrary, in Turkey, most of my respondents were bewildered about my choice to compare Turkey and Tunisia. It seemed that most of the respondents, except those who had previous contact and collaboration with the ATFD women, were quite uninformed about Tunisian politics and women's movements around the region. In Turkey in turn, I had to spend some time during my interviews talking about Tunisia and how women's movements emerged and developed in a predominantly Muslim society with specific tensions around fundamentalist Islamists and secularists.

This tension in my field work led me to ask further questions on why Turkish politics still had such influence in a distant context such as Tunisia, but not the other way around. It was a rather remarkable experience seeing Turkish commercial products being boycotted by seculars in Tunisia due to the increasingly authoritarian Islamist regime in

Turkey, who allegedly had links to the Ennahda movement in Tunisia. The Turkish government's policies in the MENA region seemed to have a large impact on how my correspondents and acquaintances I made during the field trips view Turkish foreign and domestic politics as well as gender issues.

### *1.5 Outline of the dissertation*

Chapter 2 of this dissertation provides a literature review and my theoretical framework, in which I heavily borrow from critical citizenship studies, social movements theories and feminist theories. I discuss citizenship regimes under my three main axes, laying the theoretical foundation of the following chapters.

Before moving onto my analytical chapters, Chapter 3 provides the context of women's movements' emergence in both countries and how they link to the changes in the institutional sphere, meaning how they expanded citizenship regimes understood as a collection of rights. I provide contextual information in this chapter to present my review from secondary literature on women's movements and how they have achieved changes in laws, regulations and institutions in Turkey and in Tunisia. This chapter builds as a transition to my analytical chapters, by talking about the emergence of the women's movements in both countries and how they have subsequently impacted change through engaging in local and international networks of activism.

As my main argument suggests, organized women do not only change citizenship regimes in terms of rights, but also in other specific dimensions. Following my three-dimensional conceptualization of the citizenship regimes, my three analytical chapters each focus on an individual axis. In my first analytical chapter, seeing citizenship as equal political participation, Chapter 4, the *extent* of citizenship regimes looks from a macro perspective how organized women trespass the structural barriers against their political participation in shaping citizenship regimes. In this chapter, I show how through creating transnational and national networks of lobbying and advocacy as well as street protests, organized women in these two countries have pushed for legal and bureaucratic reforms which enabled inclusion of women in the citizenship regimes; claiming for equal regimes for women. In return, these strategies were deeply influenced by the political regimes in place and changed according to whether the regimes were open or closed to influence from women's movements.

Chapter 5, will take on the notion of the *depth* of citizenship, understood at the tension between the universality claims of citizenship regimes, and claims of particularity coming from different groups of women. Through a review of their acts of citizenship, I show how different groups of women challenge the established boundaries of ethnic and secular constructions of the ideal citizens in their nation-states, and how they reconstruct and shift the boundaries of these identity claims such as Kurdish or Muslim women over a period of four decades.

In terms of the *content* of regimes, Chapter 6, through my interviews and a review of women's activities, I look at how they negotiate claims for justice for different groups of women in order to create an inclusive representation of their communities. I show in this chapter that the justification of the claims for justice and common good represent a tension in between redistribution of resources and cultural/symbolic recognition of women's rights. Through an analysis of the interview material from both countries, the chapter shows how groups each take different positions with regards to reinterpreting the common good for women, from either universalist or cultural terms, and a third position which does an on-going translation between these two positions.

The final chapter concludes my study by reviewing the main arguments and the contributions of this study, followed by sections on limitations of the study and further avenues for research.

# CHAPTER 2 STUDYING WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND GENDERED CITIZENSHIP REGIMES

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework of the study. In order to answer the main questions of the research; "What is the relationship between the women's rights movements and the citizenship regimes in which they are embedded?" it will conceptualize citizenship regimes and the agency of women under activist citizenship. It will do so by taking on the following critique from feminist citizenship, that has been long debated in the feminist citizenship community that the gendered nature of citizenship, and women's systematic exclusion from citizenship despite the formal rights in place, calls for a broadening of the concept of citizenship in terms of political spaces, political identities and practices (Durish 2002). As such, feminists call for a reconceptualization of citizenship through looking at everyday practices and seeing citizenship as a political identity rather than looking seeing citizenship as a politico-legal status exclusively concerned with gaining rights in the formal sphere.

The chapter will first start by explaining how and why I link social movements theories with citizenship studies and how this link contributes to our broader understanding of questions about women's citizenship. Secondly, it will shortly explain what the study means by citizenship regimes and followed by a section on how citizenship regimes have always been gendered with a specific focus on the case of the Middle East. However, these regimes have been expanded through bottom up mobilizations by organized women in terms of their extent, depth and content. The final three sections will focus on how the literature looks at three distinct dimensions of citizenship regimes; its extent, depth and content. Finally, it will work out three different dimensions of citizenship regimes separately; i) how political spaces are reframed ii) how differences between identities are accommodated and iii) how definitions of the common good are reinterpreted by collective action by organized women.

## 2.1 Linking social movements theories with citizenship studies

The conceptual framework of this study comes from feminist and critical citizenship studies. For critical citizenship studies, the notion of citizenship is not only a legal institution which denotes a person's membership in a community but is also a dynamic institution. Citizenship as a dynamic concept means that making rights claims in itself is practicing actual citizenship, irrelevant of the status of the actor making the claim, thus changing the contours of citizenship through practice (Isin 2017). Seeing citizenship as a dynamic concept requires that we look at the agency dimension of how citizens change the contours of citizenship; hence social movements theories.

In this regard, there are two components to studying women's movements' equal citizenship demands. First component is the collective mobilizations by women as a social group and second is framing them as equal citizenship demands despite the persistence of exclusionary citizenship regimes. To begin with, social movements theories can answer questions like why women act collectively outside of formal political institutions and what kind of organizational strategies and structural opportunities enable these movements, how they create identities and common interests and how they are related to larger political contexts (Beckwith 2001). As shown by social movement theories, rights claims are dependent on the context they are built and they are collectively built and framed over time according to the context in which they emerge (Goodwin and Jasper 2009; Tilly 2018). Yet, citizenship studies has the "advantage" since its main focus is the core object of politics in terms of looking at how does the state impinge on the civil, political, social and cultural rights of the citizen from a long term view (Meijer 2014).

While citizenship traditionally refers to individual dimension of social and political acting, and social movement theories refer to the collective mobilizations. How citizens engage with the state have often been looked under formal processes of elections, parties, deliberative spaces, while not from a social movement view which use extra institutional channels to express their demands. On the other hand, social movement theories focused on how and why participants engage in rights claims, but not necessarily on their contribution to realizing substantive citizenship rights or building more democratic forms of governance (Van der Heijden 2014). As Isin and Turner observe, one of the very reasons for needing citizenship studies has been the emergence of new social movements and their struggles for recognition and redistribution (Isin and Turner 2002). Major social

issues have increasingly been expressed through the language of rights and obligations as a strategic and powerful weapon to the struggle against injustices.

Linking social movements theories with the citizenship acts literature helps us see that acts coming from citizens are strategic, planned actions which are catalyzed through political opportunity structures, even though their creative and provocative in nature, instead of claiming that they are extraordinary and unstrategic events. Seeing citizenship acts in connection with the larger social movement theories help us see the role of the state and other political structures in the creation and evolution of the movement which enact these acts of citizenship. Without the larger political context, I argue that we cannot fully understand how these acts come about and impact broader citizenship regimes.

While social movement theories tell us when and why a social group come together to voice their demands and how larger structures have an impact on their strategies, framing them as citizenship rights does something else. The literature on feminist citizenship argues that "(re)appropriating strategic concepts such as citizenship… is an invaluable strategic theoretical concept for the analysis of women's subordination and a potentially powerful political weapon in the struggle against it (Lister 1997)." At this point, linking the women's movement with critical citizenship literature will enable us to see the impact of demands made by women on how equality is defined and practiced in the larger political sphere. In this context, we will be able to understand the demands for equal citizenship even in the absence of democratic institutions in place. Seeing political action as citizenship, I link organized women's agency with theories of citizenship.

My study therefore contributes to the studies which take new social movements as equal citizenship demands, addressing the gap in between women's movements and their impact on substantive citizenship, taking a multilevel approach to individual experiences of rights and duties of citizenship with the meso-level collective action of women's movements.

## *2.2 Citizenship is always gendered*

Feminist scholars and activists for over a century have focused on the issue of women's exclusion from citizenship. They began by doing so by taking a stock of women's historical exclusion from citizenship and the consequences of the history of exclusion has on liberal claims of universality and equality (Durish 2002). More recent

forms of this endeavor have shown how despite the fact that most western nations gave formal citizenship rights to women in the early 20th century, gender equalities stayed permanent. Changing circumstances such as the access to more rights have entrenched and transformed these inequalities rather than to alleviate them (Durish 2002). The conceptualization and the theory of women's exclusion from citizenship has led to scholars and activists alike to broaden the concept of citizenship to include spaces, identities and practices (Miraftab 2004a). As such, feminist citizenship literature calls for a grounded and localized approach, instead of abstract and universalist theorizing which has been the focus of liberal scholars, and rather take into the everyday lives of women acting as citizens.

Initially, feminist theories have discussed citizenship as a patriarchal institution which poses a limit to women's full citizenship (Walby 1990). The primary critique was that women's accession to full citizenship rights was inherently problematic, because citizenship itself was a gendered construct; even if women achieved equal citizenship rights in a given regime, they would still be discriminated (Pateman 1988; Walby 1994). The private/public divide which enabled men to exercise their rights did not exist for women because rights regimes were established according to a male-headed household model (Walby 1994). These accounts have destabilized the universalist assumption of citizenship as equal treatment for all (I. M. Young 1989).

In order to link claims of women's exclusion from citizenship with the larger political context, I first turn to political opportunities framework which suggests that citizenship rights of women are due to change under certain political alignments. Social movement theories have argued that movements, including the women's movement, emerge as a result of certain conducive political opportunity structures; a combination of enabling factors in a political system that constituted the driving force behind a movement (McAdam 1982). While it is generally understood as political party realignments and changing coalitions and alliances between parties, it is also important to include political opportunities structure as an analytical tool to developing countries where looking at political parties or other democratic institutions may prove to be problematic due to the continuous oppressive nature of the state. This can be overcome by looking at "more fundamental changes in the nature of the state" such as post-colonial independence

periods, transitions or democratization waves (Ray and Korteweg 1999a, 53). These moments signify the periods in which gendered citizenship regimes were established

These different periods were all gendered processes, also for the cases of Turkey and Tunisia, as they have both provided women with rights as well as reversed these rights to their detriment (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Moghadam 2013). Under the context of women's movements, the rise in the demand for full citizenship by women has close links to the modern nation/state building periods.

There is an extensive literature on women's citizenship the Middle Eastern states which has accumulated since the late 1990s which has generated an ample number of case studies and a relatively few comparative studies, focusing on how women's citizenship rights have been limited through various social, economic and political processes such as nation-state building. Feminist claims stretch back to the formation of modern nation-states, as well as other moments of transition such as revolutions. The post-colonial perspective in social sciences has been largely instrumental in portraying how women's movements were associated with movements of national independence and modernization, and how during the post-colonial era women were crucial instruments in social reform (Jayawardena 1975; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991). While women have been an integral part of these national and anti-colonial struggles, organized women were marginalized from public space after independence was achieved (Y. Arat 2010a; Khalil 2014a). Similar instances have been recorded for women in Egypt (Langohr 2011), Algeria (Charrad 2001), Tunisia (Charrad 1997), and Palestine (Al-Ali 2012). This literature on political transitions and revolutions and women's citizenship rights also signals to a pattern in which the previous contributions of women's movements are systematically suppressed and forgotten in the post-transitional stages, regardless of whether these stages were led by liberal, socialist or elite forces (M A Tétreault 1994). The new regimes employed certain structures such as religion, social policy, civil and personal law, family law and in the labor market as both emancipatory and oppressive practices on women (Joseph 2000; Kandiyoti 1991a). This literature was followed by a general interest in how women have been challenging these exclusionary structures through various discursive and practical mechanisms (Joseph and Slyomovics 2011; El Said, Meari, and Pratt 2015).

The second largest structural change which had an impact on women's rights was modernization. The wave of women's movements which spread across the globe, was a product of modernization; and more specifically the state feminism of some of the secular post-colonial regimes (Al-Ali 2012; Brand 1998; Hatem 1992). The fact that more women wanted to vote, earn money and make a living, receive an education, find better jobs, get divorced, and break free of the social norms in doing so, resulted in gendered tensions in the public sphere. The impacts of modernization on women have therefore made discriminatory practices within each of these spheres more visible, resulting in the demand to reform labor, civil, penal and family laws (Cherif 2015). The impact of modernization and state feminism was not just a positive contribution to women's citizenship; it also gave rise to further problems of achieving equality under labor markets, education, workforce as well as the rise of counter forces such as Islamist fundamentalism and ethno-national separatism, which had also direct consequences for the women's movement (Moghadam 1994).

The claims made by women's movements were varied in response to modernizing dynamics. Liberal feminists argued that women should reform political, social and economic institutions through higher representation of women in politics. Liberal theories have subsequently investigated how to lift barriers against women's participation in politics (e.g., through quotas, egalitarian electoral codes, etc.). In order to achieve democratic citizenship, a "politics of presence" was required, which meant that women need to be present in the political structures to begin with (Phillips 1995). They have consistently fought against discrimination against women in politics and in the work place, seeking gender equality in equal civil, social, economic and political rights (L. Young 2000). Accordingly in this view, the patriarchal character of political power can be challenged when men share their power with women (Vickers 1980). As such, the best course for expanding citizenship regimes to include women can be through participating in formal institutions, such as through political parties and parliaments and local governments.

As experience has shown, however, an increase in descriptive representation does not automatically translate into an increase in substantive representation of women's interests and hence expand their rights. Different studies have looked into how political party systems, election systems, party structures and political regimes have impacted the

women's demands and argued that close relations with the state holds risks of co-optation and incorporation of their demands and resources (Andrew 2010; Yildiz Ecevit 2007; Jaquette 1994; Levin 2007; Waylen 1996; Yuval-Davis 1999). In contrast political parties have sometimes expanded women's political room for maneuvering, increased their impact, advocated for common interests, and have protected feminist gains when under attack (Beckwith 2007; Randall and Waylen 1998).

As a political institution, political parties have been both an important structural barrier and a facilitator to women's participation in politics (B. J. Nelson, Chowdhury, and Caudhurī 1994). It is not common to see a "feminist" party nor has a political party's commitment to women's issues been standard across the board. The feminist literature has commonly argued that the best allies to feminists have come from leftist parties and unions (Krook 2010). While some studies have shown that leftist parties have had the best record for including women candidates, recent developments in Turkey and Tunisia have seen the increase of women's participation within conservative and Islamist parties and political networks, albeit not as leaders but as recruiters and serving on women's commissions (Ayata and Tütüncü 2008; Joline 2012). Other studies point out that conservative parties have generally excluded women from politics (Bashevkin 1998), and leftist governments have had a better record for pro-women policies (Beckwith 2007). In the same vein, women's movements have more frequently allied with socialist, communist, social-democrat and labor movements (Beckwith 1987) but have nevertheless sometimes ended up being co-opted by them (J Lovenduski and Randall 1993).

Instead of formal political participation, we know from feminist interventions to political science that political action taken by women in the public sphere mainly occurs outside of formal institutions and as part of community-based activism or as participation in organized social movements (Strolovitch and Townsend-Bell 2013). By definition, looking at acts of dissent and resistance outside of formal institutions is a valuable approach to study women's rights claims which generally occur in sites that are not considered conventional by mainstream political science literature (Sparks 2016). Since it is in the interest of formal political actors to label acts of dissent as "disruptive," (L. Young 2000) it is critical that through research we make acts of dissent visible and focus on how they change the citizenship practices and rights from outside of formal politics.

An alternative approach to see dissident activity of mobilized women is radical feminism, an umbrella term to capture the alternative approach to demanding full citizenship rights, bringing together ideas from both socialist and post-structural feminism. According to this approach, political institutions are inherently patriarchal. The state has been working to maintain the patriarchy, including patriarchal family structures and society since its inception. According to Young, just as the state has defended men's rights over women's, other public institutions such as political parties are working to reinforce men's role in the hierarchy (I. M. Young 2002). Therefore, full citizenship rights are only possible through disassembling and reconstructing these structures. In the formal sphere, women's interests have been only represented inasmuch as they were aligned to the general interests of the political parties and the descriptive representation of women within political structures has faced less resistance (L. Young 2000).

While in theory there are several approaches to demand full citizenship rights from the state as articulated by different feminisms and how they view the state institutions, in practice, feminist activists employ strategies that belong to either of these approaches. Through empirical evidence and experience, women activists are aware that political opportunities available show great divergence over context and time which have forced them to choose between strategies of autonomy and participation in political institutions (Berkovitch and Moghadam 1999). According to Waylen, for example, there is a positive correlation between the autonomy of women's movements and their ability to have an impact on public policy (Waylen 2007). Autonomous women's movements are better able to avoid state co-optation and avoid being labelled "collaborators."

The impact of formal political structures to women's citizenship has been mixed. While nation-state building and modernization granted women with rights (Chapter 3), women still remain excluded from citizenship rights. The liberal argument which suggests equality in access for women in formal spheres have been criticized heavily by more critical approaches which suggests that we should be looking women's impact in citizenship regimes in more informal spaces; expanding the notion of citizenship to include political spaces, political identities and political practices.

Therefore, feminist critiques have expanded the way we understand citizenship through several claims: first, citizenship is and has always been gendered and women's

exclusion from the public sphere has been central in the construction of citizenship. Secondly, by creating a false universalism of the category of 'citizen', equal citizenship has glossed over differences among different groups and individuals who have different levels of access to rights and resources. Thirdly, they challenged the universalism of citizenship by addressing the tension between differences among gender and other social lines (Kennedy-macfoy 2014). These feminist debates have reconstructed the meaning of citizenship to include power inequalities along different types of social exclusions, and have shown how new social movements engaged with citizenship rights as a political tool to further women's rights (Abraham et al. 2014).

With respect to the question of equal citizenship, feminists have developed different responses focusing on the rights and duties dimensions for citizenship. For liberal feminists, rights are central to any social struggle. For other feminists closer to a Marxist tradition, the rights-based discourses advance bourgeois interests designed to make economic and social class decisions invisible by posing a false equality (Dietz 1987). Some feminists have criticized the concept of citizenship altogether for its failure in vesting rights "to meet the needs of women and other marginalized groups" (D. Taylor 1989, 29 cited in Lister, 2003). Other critiques of liberal views included its individualism as well as exclusions, due to the strict separation of public and private spheres in which rights come to life only within in the public sphere. Post-structuralist approach on the other hand tend to reject outright a universal concept of rights since rights are context specific and do not apply to different contexts. Nonetheless, in this study I argue that we need to approach the rejection of universal citizenship altogether carefully and see its potential for emancipation. This potential, the potential of a citizenship discourse for the advancement of rights, creates new possibilities to extend rights to new categories, such as cultural, reproductive and other bodily rights to facilitate free and equal participation of women in full citizenship. In addition, citizenship is not only about rights but is also a dynamic concept in which rights and duties are reallocated, new practices are developed and new bonds between citizen and the polity. It is a dynamic concept and thus should not be understood as simple as a set of rights but as a process which realizes the possibility of expanding rights, regardless of whether the political regime is a democracy or not.

An example of this lies at what is termed as critical, non-Western or non-Eurocentric citizenship studies (Butenschøn, Davis, and Hassassian 2000; Isin 2012b;

Isin and Nyers 2014; Joseph 2000; Meijer and Butenschøn 2017). These studies are important terms of showing how citizens are claimants as well as barer of rights under authoritarian contexts where the juridico-political institutions are constantly under transformation and where democratic citizenship is absent or highly problematic. However, some recent trajectories in this field have also tended to dismiss rights-based discourses and movements as a liberal project. This has led some studies to move towards the risky territory of cultural relativism by rejecting the universality of right regimes. Moving towards in the direction of cultural specificities, and by leaving women's rights in the realm of 'unspoken culture' is problematic since they can render issues of gender-based equality and freedom invisible (Candas and Silier 2014). This study claims differently; that focusing on rights demands in their plurality, even though they might be very similar to liberal and social democracies of the Western world, uncovers an important debate of localized and authentic demands put forward by local actors.

Given this debate, I employ the term 'citizenship regimes', which at its core signifies the gendered relationship between the state and the citizen. Citizenship itself is a complex and multilayered concept with regards to the citizens' relationship to the state and society (Lister 1997). I use the term 'citizenship regimes' to capture the combination of three fundamental questions which citizenship addresses through its extent, depth and content (Figure 2). First, its extent relates to "how the boundaries of membership within a polity and between polities should be defined", referring to the tensions between inclusion vs. exclusion of individuals from equal citizenship and questions about equal participation and representation within a polity (Isin and Turner 2002, 4). Its depth relates to the tensions between universalism and particularism, i.e. "how the 'thickness' of identities of members should be comprehended and accommodated", referring to questions of recognition of different identities and groups within a polity (Isin and Turner 2002, 4). The content of citizenship relates to the balance of rights and duties in a given polity and how they are allocated among different groups and the process through which how a polity determines the common good. Each of these spheres for citizenship is critical in understanding how women are positioned within these axes and how they challenge their positions within each axis.

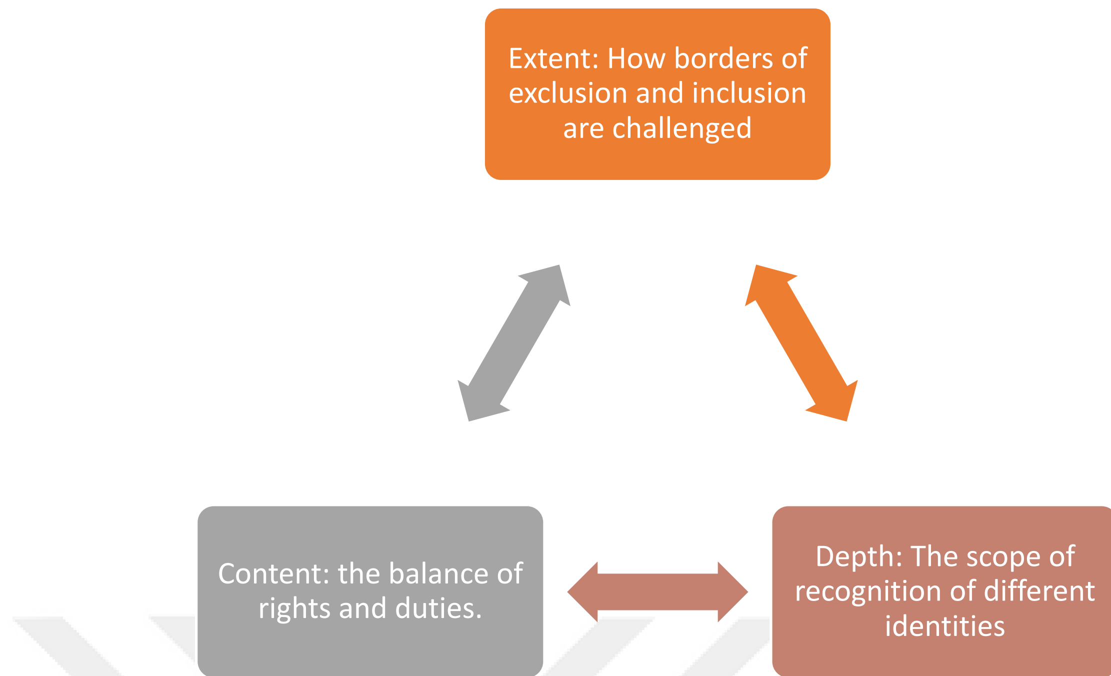


*Figure 2 Three axes of citizenship*

## *2.3 Reframing political spaces through activism: extent of citizenship*

Starting with the extent of citizenship, citizenship regimes determine who is excluded or included to participate and practice rights within a polity. Under this conceptualization, participation in a polity was both seen as a duty and a right, which were synthesized under the term "active citizenship" (Lister 1997; Miraftab and Wills 2005; Sparks 1997). In this way, the idea of individual and group agency and activism became central to the understanding of citizenship. A type of "good citizen" emerged, as the "good" citizen who takes on responsibilities and effectuates their duties against the state, e.g., paying taxes, voting and membership in community based or civil society organizations or local governments.

Citizenship as active participation in the public sphere and as representing interests of different groups of women has been picked up by a strong feminist literature (Lister 1997; Mouffe 2013; Phillips 1995; Voet 1998; I. M. Young 1989, 2002; Yuval-Davis 2006). This approach claims that active political participation is a value in itself, in contrast to the passive citizenship which sees citizenship only as a status and citizens only as bearers of rights. The idea mainly comes from the work of Hannah Arendt as a reaction against the rights-based individualism of the liberal paradigm (Lister 1997). Accordingly,

it is by participation and active engagement in social and economic concerns in the public sphere that feminists will “be able to claim a fully liberatory politics of their own” (Dietz 1987, 15).

The rise of new social movements in the 1960’s resulted in a reconceptualization of citizenship as “the right to claim rights” (Isin and Wood 1999) as opposed to having the “status” of rights in a passive and receptive manner. New social movements have emerged as women, LGBTQ+, and racial and ethnic minorities, challenging the narrative of universal nature of citizenship and equality before the law, and demanding a corrective to laws that have marginalized and oppressed through forms of differentiated and divided citizenry (Yuval-Davis 1997b). When people engage in social mobilizations for the rights of the LGBTQ+, or demand social housing or rally against welfare cuts, they are performing citizenship in their own terms (Isin and Nyers 2014).

Yet, active citizenship on its own does not suffice to change the contours of the established citizenship regimes. For that, I adopt the distinction between active and activist citizenship. Active citizen is one who does not challenge the functioning of the established citizen regime. An activist citizen, on the other hand, acts to interrupt the given political order, while active citizens only perform already written rules and practices. As such, an act of citizenship is defined as the enduring moments in which individuals, groups, or people whose capacity to claim rights has not yet been recognized claim rights that have not been granted in the law and other social institutions (Isin and Nielsen 2008). Acts ultimately constitute new ways of acting politically. In addition, acts produce specific tensions and paradoxes within and across them which makes their struggle a contested process. For example, some acts can be illegal or stretch the boundaries of what is legal and not legal in a given order. Acts of civil disobedience can be interpreted as such acts when the actors call for justice, yet their acts break the law (Isin 2012a, 2017; Isin and Nielsen 2008). To illustrate, we can think of acts of dissent and civil disobedience, including vigils, resistances, and protests which publicly contest practices and laws through embodied practices, by people who are playing apart in a polity regardless of whether or not conventional participation methods are open to them (Sparks 2016).

Feminist literature shows clearly that that active citizenship is not confined to the public sphere and what is understood as 'political' happens also in the private sphere, inventing new spaces to be political. General patterns for women activists have been noted in the literature on women's political participation during state building and transition periods. While women have been an integral part of the national and anti-colonial struggles as well as democratic transitions and revolutions as activist citizens, organized women were marginalized from public space after these national movements gained independence, forcing them back to private spheres, most notably to their domestic duties (Y. Arat 2010a; Khalil 2014a; M A Tétreault 1994). Nonetheless, organized women have been present since their emergence in 1980's in Turkey and Tunisia despite the changes in the political regimes. It was the spaces in which they were active that went through changes.

While all feminist theories acknowledge that "the personal is political"(Hanisch 1969), they have not reached a consensus over what is the distinguishing feature of the private/public divide, or whether they are divided to begin with. As one of the key debates in this literature, one must be careful about a strict public/private dividing social spheres into private and public which disadvantage women. Feminist scholars reconstructed the notion of public sphere understood as a domain exclusively occupied by male citizens and argue instead that it is where "citizens gather together to make political decisions" (Pateman 1989, 110 cited in Lister, 2003). This can be done both around issues which emanate from the private sphere, and issues which have a more public presence.

While rejecting the public/private divide, I also contend that for citizenship to have an analytical use, it must draw a line between daily and private actions of women with those that take place collectively in the public sphere or have a public consequence by creating new spaces of political action. All action that resists power inequalities can be considered as political, but not all political action is an act of citizenship. Citizenship acts are those that have a public presence, which can cut across issues of both public and private life, such as domestic violence as well as sexual and bodily rights, but they are expressed in public activities which signify a power struggle over the distribution of power, understood as political, economic, social and cultural. Examples would include protesting about domestic violence in a public space, filing a court case against an incidence of domestic violence with the police, or expressing domestic violence through

different forms of art. Otherwise, if we take political action that takes place outside of the public realm, meaning in between individuals in private spaces such as family or intimate relationships, we will no longer be speaking of citizenship.

There can be different sites in which feminist politics have an impact, private or public. In seeing women's resistance through citizenship lenses however, we must delineate the sites in which they take place since otherwise all action which challenges power inequalities can be considered as acts towards citizenship making. Therefore, I see the benefit in demarcating public and private spheres of actions for citizenship but am carefully reconstructing it from an agency perspective of organized women. My definition of private vs. public does not rest on an understanding of issues that emanate from home/family vs. outside in collective life but instead looks at where women's agency takes place as in political spaces.

In addition to public nature of citizenship acts, I also distinguish the spaces in which they challenge the extent of citizenship in relation to the state power. Seeing women's political engagement under the extent of citizenship requires that we "pay closer attention to the other spaces", new as well as more traditional arenas of formal politics (Cornwall and Goetz 2005). Not only under 'democratizing democracies' (Cornwall and Goetz 2005), in order to understand women's collective participation and their participation in making the political circumstances under which they live, we need to look beyond regimes that are ostensibly recognized as liberal democratic and expand our lenses to include contexts where politics on a spectrum between authoritarianism to democratic impulses. In seeing the participation of women through the lenses of new 'spaces' is significant to the extent that women as a traditionally marginalized actor from formal politics, especially in the cases of Turkey and Tunisia, can be made visible.

The good governance agenda which turned to promote civil society activity in the 1990's aimed to expand the public sphere to create actors who would hold state accountable and advance democratization (Cornwall and Goetz 2005). Civil society, as a distinct space from formal political institutions refer to a variety of organizations including women's organizations, community organizations, faith-based organizations, charity organizations, advocacy groups and NGOs (Doyle 2017). While the exponential growth of civil society organizations offered women with the possibility of expanding the

spaces of political participation outside of formal political institutions, it also led to the NGO-ization of collective action (Jad 2002). Therefore we need to go one step further in distinguishing the spaces through which women act collectively.

The strategies employed by feminist activists with respect to whether to engage or collaborate with the state have been construed in binary insider-outsider terms; when feminists enter the state, they become insiders which runs the risk of co-optation, or when they remain outside in activist, advocate or service delivery positions within the women's movement, risking losing contact with macro political actors (Chappell 2013). Despite the fact that it has been a constant debate in feminist circles whether or not to engage with state institutions, it has been commonly argued that the state must be engaged with the most effective strategies to gain gender-equality outcomes for women in general. In addition, it has been stated in the literature that in order for women's political participation to be efficient, there needs to be a combination of autonomous grass-roots feminist activism with women's participation in state (Randall and Waylen 1998, 203; Toktaş and Diner 2011).

Women activists have differed over whether collaborating with the state and its institutions is beneficial to the movement, and if so, what the nature of this collaboration should be. Women's movements have persistently operated under authoritarian regimes with repressive environments on civic activism. Certainly, in the context of the Third World states, the state and civil society are 'complex terrains - fractured, oppressive, threatening while at the same time providing spaces for struggle and negotiation' (Randall and Waylen 1998, 201).

Yet, the literature notes how feminist civil society plays a critical role in creating 'subaltern counterpublics' (Nancy Fraser 1990) which constitute 'parallel discursive arenas' through which marginalized groups can participate by organizing under informal spaces. Given the discussions of NGO-ization of political activity, we can draw a distinction between those that work within the given system of institutions and those that challenge and open up new spaces within the system through contention. Here I adopt the distinction between invited and invented spaces which is used to distinguish between two types of informal participation in political sphere (Miraftab 2004b). While it is a contextually dependent distinction, invited spaces are those that are occupied with actors

that are “legitimized by donors and government interventions” aiming to provide coping mechanisms to support the adverse effects of the existing social and political hierarchies (Miraftab 2004b). Invented spaces on the other hand are those claimed by collective action which directly confronts the authorities and the status quo, creating forms of resistance against exploitation and oppression. The distinction at the theoretical level expands further our notion of where activist politics take place.

It is thus highly contextual which strategies activists employ at a given time; they may employ both strategies of action within invited and invented spaces of mobilization. Chapter 4 will demonstrate how depending on the available opportunities, they can also make the transition from one to another. Sometimes, as I will demonstrate with the case of Turkey and Tunisia, depending on the changing regime types, these spaces can shift over time and may have hierarchies within them. The same type of activities which were seen legitimate in the eyes of the regime can become labeled as marginal and illicit acts, moving them in the sphere of invented spaces. Or just the opposite, the grassroots activities which were seen as disruptive and unwelcome, may become legitimized over time. By inventing new spaces of citizenship practice therefore women transcend citizenship seen as just a legal status; but also, they make it into a performative action through which we can see changes in spaces of participation in politics under authoritarian periods as well as democratization periods.

This concludes my review of the first dimension of citizenship regimes; seeing it as exclusion vs inclusion as well as invention of new spaces to make political and public claims. The diversity of women’s interests may be at heads with a simple collectivization of perceived common interests derived from simple sexual difference. Women’s subjectivities do not only happen along the lines of their gender but through also other social categories. The next section delves into the recognition of women’s specific identity claims.

### *2.4 Recognition of women’s specific identities: depth of citizenship*

The focus on participatory politics raises the question of how to accommodate differences in a democratic polity while retaining the universalistic claims of citizenship without glossing over different perspectives and identities. Talking about women’s exclusion from political spaces and how they challenge these exclusions also requires

understanding the basis on which they have been excluded. This takes us to the second axis of citizenship, the one between universalism and particularism; signifying the depth of citizenship. Depth of citizenship in theory stands for the ways in which women have been excluded from citizenship under the universalist guise of the abstract, male, white and heterosexual citizen.

In addition to problematizing the exclusion of women from citizenship, this literature also exposed women's exclusion from citizenship along different social cleavages such as class, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and age (Lister 2003, 68). The feminists' master frame of the social world, is one that sees gender as the "central organizing feature to the social world" while celebrating solidarity among women and challenging patriarchy (Whittier and Taylor 1995, 169). Yet, the creation of group identities and building common interests from the common identity of women has been difficult within the women's movements. This was due to the fact that a recurring theme in the women's movements has been the idea of what constitutes a "woman".

In more recent waves of feminist activism and theory, singularity of what constitutes a woman and her oppression was challenged by the paradigms of intersectionality and situatedness (Hancock 2007; Haraway 1988). These two notions signify that a person's social embeddedness, including identity networks, cultural capital and religion, ethnicity, class, race, gender etc. which all play a role in how they perceive and experience exclusions. Intersectional analysis requires analyzing multiple and intersecting sources of oppression and argues that the subordinations may be multiple and varied depending on the combination of other sources of privilege and/or subordination (Denis 2008). The intersectionality paradigm coming from also new social movements have subsequently led to organizational and practical tensions within these movements. In fact, it seems increasingly difficult to rally around a fixed collective identity in order to undertake political action. In addition, they raise questions regarding the feasibility of forming coalitions across different excluded and marginalized identities.

Another recent issue with the constructed nature of a shared identity among women activists has been noted by the post-structuralist literature. The rejection of a fixed category of womanhood and gender identity raised a number of difficulties with respect to organizing among women. The most debated question is how the feminist political

project can find its own subject while deconstructing the essentialist, binary and heteronormative understandings of what a "woman" is (Motta et al. 2011).

How then are frames and identities formed in a movement whose subject is being constantly redefined? In order to locate them and how they change over time and context, one can look at practices, such as acts, gestures, appearances, and discourses, including speeches, symbols and texts, through which participants conduct their activities (Whittier and Taylor 1995, 174). These practices and discourses in return reinforce, change and draw the boundaries of the collective identity of the group in question. How these differences in practices and the multiple subjectivities under the collective category of womanhood should be represented and accommodated has been an important debate in the feminist citizenship literature.

Despite the claims of classical citizenship studies which note that citizenship is "a status bestowed on those who are full members to a national community" and "all who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (T. H. Marshall 1950, 28–29), the feminist citizenship literature has demonstrated that this has never been the case. Similarly, the Third World feminisms' perspective have been largely instrumental in portraying how during the post-colonial era women were crucial instruments in social and political reform (Jayawardena 1975; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991). Under these new nation-states, women were universally recognized as political citizens, yet unequal to their male counterparts most notably with regards to social and civil rights. Secular reforms have been made in family law in some Muslim countries, but all of them have retained aspects of sharia law to a certain point, with the exception of Turkey and, to a lesser extent, Tunisia. They were placed with the crucial role in the biological, cultural and political reproduction of national and other collectivities (Yuval-Davis 1997a). The liberation movements did not guarantee women's emancipation, and women citizens were faced with new forms of oppressions in the name of customs and tradition, all to different extents for different social groups.

These arguments towards women's new position was built on the understanding that women and men naturally had different qualities. Women have therefore been limited to the private realm of the family from an essentialist perspective (Lister 1997). As such,

women have been used as the symbolic markers of the nation itself (Joseph 2000). This had significant implications for how women were positioned in laws which created the boundaries of their citizenship regime. Laws regulating women's reproductive and maternal rights, naturalization, marriage, inheritance and property rights are among the most common institutions which regulated the boundaries of their communities.

According to these new laws and the ideology behind the reforms, women were seen as the bearers and carers of future generations of the nation in the private sphere; and in the public sphere, those that came from an urban and upper middle class and middle classes would take part in economic and social development and the nation's path to modernization (Z. F. Arat 1994). However, citizenship's stress on rationality, individuality and rule of law has been in tension with nationalisms' appeal to communal solidarities and the primordial sentiments of soil and blood (Yuval-Davis 1997b). Coined as the "women's question", these tensions established a long lasting heritage for gender studies and women's mobilization in the region, not only for those who were colonized but also including post-imperial societies, drawing parallels in the histories of Turkey, Egypt, Iran and Tunisia, among others (Kandiyoti 1991a).

The women's question in this context mainly entailed the citizenship duties of women rather than her individual rights, while at the same time differentiating between different women, such as urban, elite, religious, secular, and ethnic and religious minorities. Studies on critical citizenship have deconstructed the category of 'woman' to show that the interests and concerns of women are plural, and not all issues highlighted by first wave of feminists are important for all women without considering other exclusions created by citizenship regimes along different social cleavages.

The plurality of women's exclusions note the depth – or the lack thereof- of citizenship regimes. The plurality of women's positionalities created tensions within the women's movement as well. The representation of different interests of different groups of women at the transnational and nation levels is not a smooth process. Against the divisive nature of identity politics, organized women had to prioritize the issues and organize explicitly around them (Einhorn 1993). Issue-based cooperation has been the mechanism with which competing women's movements have been able to pass certain legislation/policy. However, finding a common interest to rally different groups of

women did not prove to be an easy task. Based on the experiences of many organized women who participated in women's movements starting from 1980s, it become clear that there were power hierarchies within organized movements (Motta et al. 2011). Creating a language of solidarity has been especially difficult in the times of emerging identity politics. The differences among women across the globe led scholars to think about a gendered analysis within a broader framework of diversity, plurality and exclusionary inequalities. The question at the heart of these discussions was whether the universalism of citizenship project was capable of accommodating these differences. In practice, women's movements have sought to reconcile this dilemma through a politics of building solidarity networks through cooperation on issue basis at the national level (Fisher Onar and Paker 2012). The conditions under which these solidarity networks are established and nurtured happen in relation to how civil society is positioned within the broader network of political actors in a specific context, such as the level of openness towards contentious politics in a given regime.

As I will demonstrate through the examples of Turkey and Tunisia, different women's group establish different rapports with the state institutions and new social movements and these rapports are subject to change over time, meaning different groups of women have a more dominant position within the movement with respect to the state institutions under changing political contexts. In certain periods where identity politics are more heightened, the cooperation and universal claims between different groups of women become harder to sustain. Collective identities and the different claims arising from intra-group differences show fundamental tensions in approaching complex issues such as domestic violence, women's reproductive rights and bodily rights; making the sustenance of solidarity networks among women all the more difficult.

Nevertheless, different women's movements have articulated differences through universalist terms especially through transnational networks of women's movements. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, different groups of women have emerged within Turkish and Tunisian contexts which challenged the universal terms of citizenship identities. To that end, I take up women activists connected to Kurdish and Islamist movements and describe the conundrums their activism face. However, larger identity movements such as the coopt women's identity claims under certain periods. Connecting these movements

to the larger identity movements within their contexts, I argue that the degree of autonomy they can carve out has significant impact on the outcome of their struggles.

## *2.5 Defining the common good: content of citizenship*

To understand the basis of these differences, we must turn also to the content of these demands. This dimension relates to how women can live together despite their differences. While there is a call for attention to particularistic identities as I have underlined in the previous section, the challenge is to develop a common framework of citizenship that accommodates plural, particularistic and sometimes antagonistic identities (Fisher Onar and Paker 2012).

Within this framework, the understanding of civic republicanism raises the controversial issue of culture. Culture has been a controversial issue in the discussions of women's rights, drawing a line between traditional practices and beliefs which are often seen as obstacles to "progress", "enlightenment" and "emancipation" and those of cosmopolitan values. Cosmopolitan citizenship, which has been posed in direct contrast with particularism and recognition signify the idea of a mutual recognition of difference which can serve as the basis of a common identity (Fisher Onar and Paker 2012). These cosmopolitan values underline the importance of "universal" values which typically include respect for women's rights as "human rights" (Hernández-Truyol 1996). However, differences among women suggest that cosmopolitanism is experienced on a local level and the practice of cosmopolitanism should take differences among women into consideration (Baban 2006).

In the cases of Turkey and Tunisia, the polarization between culture and rights is especially pronounced. Women activists within the women's movement have been deeply divided over the issue of how to incorporate local culture into their activities. As one of the practices of organized women in overcoming the binary of cosmopolitan/universal rights vs. local cultures has been the vernacularization of international treaties in different localities (Levitt and Merry 2009). Feminist literature on the vernacularization of international norms to local cultures suggest that activists have been translating these norms into their own local circumstances. Through intermediaries such as community leaders, NGO participants and activist strategies, organized women play a critical role in translating ideas from the global to the local (Merry 2006). Seeing women's rights as

human rights in practice requires exploring how they circulate around different locations, how they are adopted and used by local activists with transnational links and what forms of resistance they encounter when they come into contact with other ideologies such as religious ideology. Merry and Levitt (2017) suggest for example that in their research, they find that activists take a strategic view of the human rights language and use it in limited ways. In their research they devise three different types of vernacularization, through local forms of activism by paying attention to specific cultural issues, through international allies and claiming women's rights are human rights, and through practicing them on new institutional settings. As such, rather than seeing human rights opposed to culture, they acknowledge that human rights frameworks are cultural repertoires themselves that are open to adaptation and use by people with a wide variety of background (Levitt and Merry 2011).

I suggest in Chapter 6 an additional way employed by feminists in both countries to overcome this culture vs. rights divide. I show in this section that there are two tendencies, one is through a strong attachment to international treaties are those who adhere to a more universalist position of the two-sided coin. They claim that the rising conservativism and religious attitudes within the institutions of the state has served to the delegitimization of the universal treaties recognized within laws. Therefore the struggle should be focused against rising conservativism within the state institutions. As Razavi and Jenichen (2017) ask in their work whether the presence of religion within the political arena make it harder for women to pursue equality. They argue in their edited volume, that gender equality issues related especially to the private sphere, such as family, sexuality and reproduction, have become sites of intense public contestation between feminists and human rights advocates from this universalist position and the more conservative religious actors basing their principles on religious morality.

The second one of these positions reflect a more culturalist view, without falling into a cultural relativist position, are those women who simply ask for the consideration of cultural terms such as those of religion, and traditions into the activities of organized women's movements. Under this view, I underline how some women opt for a more localized approach, which focuses on the daily and immediate needs of women, instead of arguing what may be best for women from two conflicting views of culture vs. universal rights. This way, I argue that the universalist framework which adopts the

international norms for a basis of gender equality gets employed at the local level through daily practices of women.

## *2.6 Conclusion*

Citizenship has been seen as a bundle of rights and duties which define a status of one's membership in a polity. As such, the hegemonic position of liberalism suggested that by giving every citizen an equal status would automatically lead to the practice of equal citizenship. However, seeing citizenship not only as a bundle of rights and duties, but rather as a dynamic institution which is open to change and agency of right claiming citizens, will help us to see the different tensions within citizenship. Rights can be claimed through the creation of a collective identity through which a group of citizens create a common understanding of values and narrative to see the world and under conducive political opportunities.

Women's movements in this regard have framed women's oppression as a common grievance and demanded gender-equality as a shared norm. Despite the different positions and strategies of doing so, they have expanded not only rights of women but also the citizenship regimes at large for women. Through expanding and inviting new spaces for political action, they have advanced women's representation in the political community. Through building collective identities, they have been able to demand recognition for their differences. And finally, through public activity as activist citizens, they have created a pluralistic notion of the 'common good' as inclusive and pluralistic political values.

These claims however need to be contextualized. While contextualizing, they will also reveal their potentials for further change, cases of tensions and paradoxes as well as reversibilities. Starting from the next chapter, I will employ this theoretical framework in the cases of Turkish and Tunisian women's movements. Chapter 3 will review the rights expansions as a back ground chapter to lay the foundation for the remaining analytical chapters 4-6 which explain different trajectories through which women have been impacting citizenship regimes.

# CHAPTER 3 CITIZENSHIP AS RIGHTS, INSTITUTIONS AND NORMS: WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON EQUAL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

This chapter takes at its center the emergence of the autonomous women's movements and their impact on citizenship regimes in Turkey and in Tunisia after the 1980s. It does so by first examining the citizenship regimes established during the nation-building period in each country, second by drawing the outline of the political contexts during which the autonomous women's movements emerged and third by following their influence in the institutional sphere in terms of rights, norms and practices. Despite the fact that the link between women's movements and their influence on legislation, institutions and policy have already been made in the existing literature (Aldikaçti Marshall 2013; Y. Arat 2010b; Charrad and Zarrugh 2014; Yıldız Ecevit 2007; Sancar 2011), it is important to bring them together under the rubric of citizenship rights and see how they transform under changing political opportunity structures over the past forty years.

As a preliminary chapter before discussing my findings in subsequent analytical chapters (4-6), in this chapter I view citizenship as a bundle of rights, which have been expanded in favor of women through mobilizations by organized women but sometimes have been limited, and even retrenched by political structures. The first argument of the chapter which follows a close reading of local and international political developments

along gender equality outcomes[4] is that: the changes in terms of women's citizenship rights come especially during times of democratization (late 1990s and early 2000s in Turkey, and in 1987-1993 and post-2011 in Tunisia) when the political system becomes more open to the influence from multiple political actors. Policy gains become especially prevalent during times of political competition between Islamist and secular actors, which create a window of opportunity for women to push for policy changes since women's rights become most salient during these periods. Yet, during times of authoritarian rule, the window of opportunity for policy changes tend to disappear, and there is a backlash in terms of attacking the previous gains by women's movements and an increase in the political discourses which underline communitarian and conservative views of women's role in public life.

In addition to this first argument, the comparison of the two cases shows us a second argument; that the collective identities of the women's movement are shaped by the historical and political conditions in which they emerge. Despite the controversial claim in the conservative societies that feminist women represent 'foreign' and 'Western' values and norms, this section shows otherwise. While they emerged and pushed for changes under similar opportunity structures, these two movements take off under different historical and socio-political conditions, which lead to a lasting difference in terms of their collective identities. By looking at their acts of citizenship I can argue that Turkish women define their master frames around explicitly feminist claims and to demand corrections which oppress women in the domestic sphere such as violence against women and inequalities within the civil and penal codes, Tunisian women build their initial collective identity in terms of an autonomous, postcolonial, secular and democratic Tunisian citizenship, in response to the regional and domestic political developments such as authoritarian political rule, armed conflicts in the Middle East and neoliberal policies implemented through structural adjustment plans, and the rise of an Islamist movement in Tunisia.

[4] Positive changes in laws and regulations on women's rights, an increase national and transnational institutions and civil society organizations which work on women's rights and adoption of international norms on gender-equality and women's human rights.

The chapter will start by providing a historical background section on the emergence of the women's question and citizenship regimes in both countries, followed by two sections which look at the emergence of the modern women's movements after 1980s and women's movements' impact on gender-equality outcomes through the establishment of new legal codes, institutions, norms and practices in each country.

### *3.1 Citizenship in the new republic of Tunisia and Turkey*

In Tunisia, the legacy of colonialism in the region was a mixed legal framework and rule by a constitution that granted "limited rights and a basis for authoritarian rule" (Gorman 2017). "Nationalism" became an alternative to "citizenship," where an imagined national identity became the common bond between citizens and the state. At the same time as ethnic identities were invented, each citizen was granted social rights, as could be seen in terms of access to public education, health services and bureaucratic or other subsidized industry jobs; these rights, however, were not followed by civil rights. Some political rights, such as voting, were granted, but under dictatorial regimes these were only meaningful on paper. Also referred to as the "authoritarian bargain," this model collapsed in the 1980s when the state had to stop subsidizing industries and providing public services due to structural adjustment programs. No longer having access to social or political and civil rights, citizenship reached a deep crisis in the region (Meijer and Butenschøn 2017). Despite waves of mobilization against the withdrawal of rights, states within the region have generally responded to the benefit of the political elite rather than the general interest (Meijer 2014).

The Tunisian authoritarian bargain signified an "unwritten deal between the postcolonial state and the citizen in which social and economic rights were promoted while political rights were curtailed" (Zemni 2017, 133). In the second half of the 20$^{th}$ century, Habib Bourguiba abolished colonial rule and established constitutional rule in place of the centuries old *beylicate,* creating a "demos" as opposed to an "ethnos," promoting the importance of citizenship ties over kinship ties. His neo-Destour party made economic development a priority, while at the same time civil and political rights were curtailed. He established a "corporatist" compromise that depended on: i) efficient state structure; ii) a centralized bureaucratic state; and iii) a classless society and the homogeneity of the Tunisian people. The efficient state structure was centralized and corporatist in the sense that, in order to contain any political contention, five national

organizations representing the interests of workers (UGTT), industrialists and merchants (UTICA), farmers (UNAT), women (UNFT) and youth (UTO) were created. These institutions were to represent the "general interest" of the people within the contained boundaries of the state (Zemni 2017). In this new social contract, social upward mobilization was encouraged through state-controlled structures, while political and civil liberties were restricted.

In the 1960s, Tunisia established a social welfare state with social rights for its eligible citizens (Zemni 2017), a model which collapsed around the global South in the 1980s with states declaring bankruptcy and falling to the hands of international financial institutions for the rescue. This epoch, which was led by Ben Ali, did little to extend citizenship rights; instead, crony capitalism and corruption became wide-spread in Tunisia, emptying social rights and the authoritarian bargain of their significance. The gap in terms of development between the country's rural and coastal areas widened as the new state party, *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique* (RCD), turned social policies into "social favors," establishing a system which favors particular groups instead of a universally inclusive regime (Zemni 2017, 136). Beginning with the post-Arab Spring era, Tunisian society has been renegotiating its terms for an inclusive citizenship by deconstructing the old regime's institutions and establishing new ones in their place, which has been a nonlinear process so far.

Very similar to the Tunisian model, the Turkish citizenship model is seen as a combination of a universalistic/republican model with a state-centric and passive regime that has a top down structure and is based on the center-periphery conflict and rejection of differences (F. Kardam and Cengiz 2011). The advent of the citizen in modern Turkey, understood as the birth of an autonomous and free political individual, has been traditionally linked to the *Tanzimat* era reforms in the 1830s. Until the 1869-1876 period, during which the first civil code, the *Mecelle*, was codified, citizenship was not institutionalized in the governing order (Ünsal 1998). Studies also argue that these early attempts paved the way for the modern laws of the Republic, established in 1923, and the new and more secularized civil code of 1926 (Aybay 1999).

The new framework established by the new republic determined who would be included in the majority and who would be given a minority status. The new republic

established the new citizenship regime with a strict nationalistic rhetoric that emphasized Turkish-ness to ensure unity and a classless society. This form of citizenship was guaranteed through a centralized government, which laid the foundations for its future. This regime followed the republican traditions of citizenship, which emphasized its citizens' duties over their rights (E. Fuat Keyman and Icduygu 2003).

According to this model of Turkish republicanism, the good citizen does not challenge the state politically and the state sees to the general interests of its citizens (Ustel 2004). Similar to the Tunisian case, rhetoric regarding unity was employed in order to erase social cleavages; in the case of Turkey these were most noticeably multicultural, and multiethnic. Other studies on Turkish citizenship focus on specific themes such as ethnicity, gender, refugees and migration, the urban/rural divide and the like (Y. Arat 2000b; Icduygu 2005; Yeğen 2004). The next section aims to go deeper into the aspect of gender within the citizenship regimes of the post-colonial era. The comparison of the two citizenship regimes as one which erased differences and as one which emphasized the citizens' duties over their rights lay the foundations of the women's question and the women's citizenship rights in both contexts.

### *3.2 The 'women's question' and women's citizenship rights*

The politics of citizenship and the emergence of the women's question in this context date back to moments of post-colonialism and post-imperialism in the region which set up a mixed legal framework by a constitution that granted limited rights and a basis for authoritarian rule (Gorman 2017). As ethnic identities were invented in both Turkey and Tunisia, each citizen was granted social rights, as could be seen in terms of access to public education, health services and bureaucratic or other subsidized industry jobs; these rights, however, were not followed by political rights especially for women's groups which were coopted by the new regimes. Some political rights, such as voting, were granted, but under dictatorial regimes these were only meaningful on paper. During these foundational moments in early 20$^{th}$ century, ethnic nationalism became an alternative to equal citizenship, where an imagined national identity became the common bond between citizens and the state, instead of an equal rights regime. A hegemonic system was established, depending on a military oligarchy, with a strong central power and an authoritarian rule with precedents in the Ottoman era (Butenschøn, Davis, and Hassassian 2000).

Women's question however was a product of modernization; the question around how to modernize the state and the society, which emerged prior to the nation-state building. The issue of modernization both in Tunisia and Turkey dates back to the 19$^{th}$ century when the Ottoman Empire enacted a series of reforms known as *Tanzimat* starting from the 1830s. The *Tanzimat* period coincided with the Reformist movement of the Tunisian *beys* who introduced a series of reforms, particularly in the military, education and law, by adopting a certain level of Western norms and practices. This period lead to the creation of two conflicting models of social change between Islam and the West as the traditional and the modern. The larger women's question emerged in this clash, with both sides making claims on women's status and rights and the terms of their legal, political and social practices. It was also during this period where the first women-friendly norms were introduced as well as improvements for women in public sphere such as access to education and work in public offices for some urban women. For example, in 1917 a group of secular members of the army, also referred to as *Jeunes Turcs* (Young Turks), passed a progressive Family Law Decree[5] that introduced provisions to improve the conditions of marriage for women (Y. Arat 2008). This was an attempt to secularize the civil code and to curb the influence of religious laws over women's lives as the new code secularized marriage, allowing the state to oversee marriage and divorce. The code also discouraged polygamy, giving women the right to reject it.

The new Turkish state emerged from this context in the late 1920s to the 1930s which later on was a source of inspiration to Habib Bourguiba, the founding father of Tunisia, as well as Houari Boumedienne of Algeria, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt with their own national revolutions during the anti-colonial movements. These new regimes were based on the idea of the legitimacy of the popular sovereign rather than the previous dynastic or religious authority (Butenschøn, Davis, and Hassassian 2000). In both Turkish and in the North African states, the new popular authority embraced Islam as religion was not easily decoupled from the national identity and its influence in political and legal institutions have been preserved up to a limit.

[5] Hukuk-i Aile Kararnâmesi, 27/10/1917

Both Tunisian and Turkish citizenship regimes were established as hegemonic systems based on a singular identity where citizenship was based on ethnic and linguistic identity. In the case of Tunisia, this identity was more marked with religion as discussions of the new Tunisian identity went together with the Islamic reformist movement which unlike in Turkey did not entirely aim to secularize the society and the state but sought to reform it within an Islamic framework. These hegemonic systems upheld community values over individual values, as the citizens' duty against their new nation-state was prioritized over individual rights. As unitary systems, discriminatory practices vis-à-vis individual differences who were not members of the single hegemonic group such as religious and ethnic minorities were common as opposed to a universal system which protects the rights of individuals rather than the collective good. More specifically, the modern Turkish and Tunisian citizenship models was constructed as a combination of a republican model with a heavily state-centric and passive regime that has a top-down structure which is primarily based on the rejection of differences (F. Kardam and Cengiz 2011; Zemni 2017).

During this period, the role of attributed to the culturally appropriate and modernized woman was instrumental in the Turkish republican elite's embracing of the Western model of secularism and distancing itself from the Islamic Ottoman legacy (Kandiyoti 1991a). This vision placed an emphasis on the duties of women within the new citizenship regime. Discursive analyses from the period for example reveal how "women were culturally constructed to justify efforts of Westernization and to curb the threat of excessive westernization"(Altan-Olcay 2009, 183). While making the appropriate republican woman, nationalist discourses also created moral others of who could and could not be included in such image.

According to the literature which examine the role of women's organizations during this era show that despite the discouragement of their political participation, their consistent determination to achieve political rights was crucial in this period. (Abadan-Unat 1986; S. Çakır 1994; Kandiyoti 1991b). Under the new republican regime, women's educational, professional and legal opportunities were expanded (Ecevit 2007). Free primary education was made mandatory for both sexes and in 1926, the new regime replaced the old Islamic civil code, secularizing several articles in relation to women's rights within the family. Polygamy was outlawed, equality in inheritance and divorce was

granted, and the minimal age for girls was increased. Also, marriage by proxy was abolished and the custody of a child in case of a divorce was to be awarded to either parent. In 1930s, the Turkish Grand National Assembly granted women the right to vote and be elected.

These developments resulted in Turkish women's as ideal; as 'the most emancipated' in the Muslim world. As such, the woman's question was 'resolved' early on during state building by the political elite. However, it was only a small group of women whose conditions have been improved as a result of the republican reforms (İ. İlkkaracan and İlkkaracan 1998) and these were seen as a republican duty rather than expansion of rights. According to this model of Turkish republicanism, the good citizen did not challenge the state politically and in return, the state saw to the general interests of its citizens. This rhetoric of national unity was employed in order to gloss over social cleavages; which were most noticeably multicultural and multiethnic. Given this authoritarian take on citizenship regimes, the initial women's movements which had a great impact on the secular reforms of the republic was co-opted by the Kemalist regime and was no longer allowed to challenge the regime (Zihnioğlu 2003).

Similarly, in Tunisia, women's emancipation had become part of the public debate by the time the nationalist struggle against colonialism emerged. The first Tunisian women activists had a double commitment: within the national movement and for women's rights. Since they were mostly urban, educated and from privileged families, they have been able to escape the social control suffered by other women and have a certain margin of freedom (Mahfoudh and Mahfoudh 2014). They began by using the spaces they controlled to create clubs and literary circles. By the 1930s, Tahar Haddad, a reformist scholar at the University of Zaitouna, was publicly arguing for gender equality; in his work, "Our Women in Law and Society," where he denounced polygamy, the obligation of wearing the veil, compulsory marriage, child marriages, repudiation and unequal inheritance laws.

In addition to Tahar Haddad's works, contributions from the Muslim Union of Women and the secular and leftist Union of Women of Tunisia – which later became a member of the International Federation of Democratic Women – heightened the debate on women's acceptance into public life (Marzouki 1993). On the secular front, the Union

of Women of Tunisia was created in 1944 which would later on become the National Union of Tunisian Women, UNFT. This association launched in Tunisia the fight for the social and political rights of women (right to work, equal pay for women and men), supported women's strikes (for example, the weavers of Kairouan in 1948), created medical offices and provided literacy classes. These activists fought to obtain the right to vote of Tunisian women, who will succeed in the following year in 1957 (Mahfoudh and Mahfoudh 2014).

Most importantly in terms of women’s citizenship rights; the modernizing faction of Habib Bourguiba promulgated a reformist family law in 1956 (*Code de Statut Personnel* – CSP), granting Tunisian women rights within the family. The reforms made improvements to women’s rights, including the abolition of polygamy, creation of a secular judicial procedure for divorce, requirement of the consent of both the man and woman for marriage, establishment of a minimum age for marriage and inception of women’s equal rights to education and participation in the work force, in addition to voting rights, though the latter didn’t have much significance in a single-party regime. However, the reforms left some sharia-based discourses intact in order not to provoke the conservative society, such as unequal inheritance laws.

The Tunisian reformist movement of Habib Bourguiba not only was revolutionary for the women’s rights but also for the broader citizenship regimes. In the second half of the 20th century, Habib Bourguiba abolished the colonial rule and established a constitutional rule in place of the centuries old *beylicate,* promoting the importance of citizenship ties over kinship ties Bourguiba’s model, labelled as the “authoritarian bargain” by some scholars, which signified an “unwritten deal between the postcolonial state and the citizen” in which social and economic rights were allocated while political rights were coopted (Zemni 2017, 133). This authoritarian bargain also included cooptation of women’s question under the state’s authority. Bourguiba’s Neo-Destour party made economic development, and hence modernization, a priority, while at the same time civil and political rights were curtailed, establishing a corporatist compromise that depended on the, efficient state structure; a centralized bureaucratic state; and a classless society and the homogeneity of the Tunisian people (Zemni 2017), very similar to the post-imperial Turkish state.

The efficient state structure was centralized and corporatist in the sense that, in order to contain any political contention, national organizations representing the interests of workers, industrialists and merchants, farmers, women and youth were created. These institutions were to represent the 'general interest' of the people within the contained boundaries of the state (Zemni 2017, 134). Consequently, the women's issues were subsumed under the National Union of Tunisian Women. Bourguiba's political rule constrained most civil society organizations, including women's organizations after the reforms (Gilman 2007). In this new contract, social upward mobilization was encouraged through state-controlled structures, while political and civil liberties were restricted.

During the 1960s, Tunisia established a social welfare state with social rights for its eligible citizens. In this period most women's organizations served as loyal regime representatives, similar to most women's organizations under the Kemalist tutelage in Turkey. Their policies were largely determined by the priorities set by the existing regime according to the ideals established by the reforms of the previous era, such as education for girls, development goals in health and the workforce, and welfare provisions (Moghadam 2003).

This developmentalist model collapsed around the global South in the 1980s with states declaring bankruptcy and falling to the hands of international financial institutions for the rescue. The epoch, which was led by Ben Ali (1987-2011), did little to extend citizenship rights. Instead, crony capitalism and corruption became wide-spread in Tunisia, emptying social rights of their significance. The model of authoritarian bargain collapsed in the 1980s when the state had to stop subsidizing industries and providing public services due to structural adjustment programs. No longer having access to full social, political or civil rights, citizenship regimes reached a deep crisis in the region. Despite waves of mobilization against the withdrawal of rights in the 1980s, states within the region have generally responded to the benefit of the political elite rather than the general interest (Gorman, 2017). During the 1980s, the gap in terms of development between the country's rural and coastal areas widened as the new state party, *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique* (RCD) turned social policies into 'social favors', establishing a system which favors particular groups instead of a universally inclusive regime (Zemni 2017, 136).

During the same period in Turkey, the women's question and the women's rights movement went into abeyance during the 1940s and the 1960s whose activities were focused mostly on charity and philanthropic activities and which were tightly loyal to the Kemalist ideals. As the women's question was 'resolved' with the Kemalist reforms, women's rights groups of the early 1920s were disbanded and were replaced by Kemalist women's groups (Z. F. Arat 1994). Given the heightened mass activity in the informal political scene in terms of right- and left-wing political fractions following the 1971 coup, women also started participating social movements in large numbers. Starting with the 1970s, women started organizing under the leftist movement and reached impressive size in membership by the end of 1970s under the Progressive Women's Association[6] before the autonomous movement of the 1980s (Yıldız Ecevit 2007). During these years, the successive governments also did not pay any attention to women's issues as there was no Islamist or conservative opposition within the political sphere and women's rights was not a salient issue on the political agenda[7].

As Turkey moved to 1980s, a great number of scholars have pointed to this period as a breaking point in the republican citizenship regime in Turkey (Kadioğlu 1996; E Fuat Keyman and Öniş 2007; F. Keyman and Icduygu 2013). The 1980s symbolize a transformation of the universalist understandings of citizenship which erased differences in the name of a unified nation. This period saw the emergence of multiple identity-based claims in Turkey such as ethnicity and religion (E Fuat Keyman 2013). Kadioglu argues that with the pluralization of identity-based claims in addition to the EU accession process, the nation-based understanding of citizenship has become 'denationalized' (Kadioglu 2007). This process went in hand with 'Europeanization' of citizenship in Turkey (Rumelili, Keyman, and Isyar 2011), opening up new avenues to practice citizenship, moving towards a multi-layered practice. However, the state-centric and nationalistic dimensions of citizenship which assigns the first-class status to secular-

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[6] İlerici Kadınlar Derneği. This association followed a strict Marxist-feminist discourse and believed that women's emancipation could be achieved through the breaking down of the exploitative capitalist system.

[7] The only exception in this period was the Family Planning Law which was passed as a population control policy rather than an emancipatory measure (Nawaat 2017).

Sunni and Turkish-speakers still remained as an obstacle to democratic citizenship in Turkey (Çakmaklı 2015; Fisher Onar and Paker 2012).

### *3.3 The emergence of the autonomous women's movement in 1980s in Turkey*

Until the 1980s, the women's question was dominated by the official discourse which suggested that women's rights were already 'given' by the Kemalist reforms and that the new Republic eliminated the 'women's question'. This official discourse was especially embraced by urban, educated and professional women who have been able to access these rights (P. İlkkaracan 2003).

The autonomous feminist movement surged in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup which subsequently suppressed all forms of political activity, both in the civil and formal spheres. Many of the feminists of this wave attribute their ability to organize without much government interference to the fact that "they were not being taken seriously as a handful of women" by authorities who were busy with other issues[8].

While leftist movement participants and activities were largely outlawed, feminist women began organizing around consciousness raising groups. These women came from mostly other political movements such as the leftist movement of the 1970s, which through embedded patriarchal practices did not allow room for women to take active leadership roles under their political organizations and confined them in smaller administrative roles.[9] These consciousness raising activities, despite in small numbers, lead to the publication of two periodicals, *Feminist* and *Kaktüs*. Their demands were explicitly feminist in nature, understood as a normative stance against women's oppression by patriarchal social institutions such as law, judiciary, bureaucracy, religion and family. Consciousness raising circles which formed around private spaces such as

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[8] Interview with Sule Aytaç, Istanbul, 31 January 2017
[9] Interview with Sirin Tekeli, Bodrum, 16 February 2017

homes and cafes led primarily to the identification of their common grievance as 'women's oppression by patriarchy'[10].

During the entire 1980s, this energy accumulated into a larger movement which became public through a series of acts of citizenship. The women's movement's demands were framed in terms of increasing public awareness on sexual harassment and domestic violence as well as gender-equal reforms to the civil and penal codes. These women were attributed the name of 'radical feminists', mainly looking from the viewpoint of the Kemalist women who called themselves 'egalitarian feminists and who had been active in modernist activities during the interim period of 1940s to 1970s'[11]. The emerging movement signified a re-politicization of women's question in the hands of these autonomous actors, challenging the Republican ideological stand which suggested that women had been "emancipated by Kemalist reforms".

As one of the first instances in which this collective energy became public was in March 1986, when they initiated a petition drive to press for the implementation of the CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)[12], to which Turkey had become a party by ratifying it in 1985. Around 7,000 signatures were collected for this petition which was later on submitted to the national parliament (Yildiz Ecevit 2007). However, Turkish parliament had ratified the Convention with reservations. Articles of the civil law regulating marriage and family life of the convention were deemed contradictory to existing Turkish laws.[13] The subsequent reforms made by Turkish legislators to improve women's rights in Turkey prior to the 1990s were therefore limited in nature. Significant changes in laws were not initiated until the late 1990s. Ultimately, all reservations to the convention were removed in 1999, and a number of important steps were taken toward the full implementation of the Convention

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[10] Interview with Stella Ovadia, Istanbul, 22 March 2017

[11] Interview with Sirin Tekeli, Bodrum, 16 February 2017

[12] The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and entered into force in 1981, during the UN Women's Decade (1976–1985). Given its comprehensiveness and legally binding nature, the Convention has often been called a milestone for the world's women (Pietilä and Vickers 1990).

[13] For example, the Turkish Civil Code proclaims that the husband is the head of the family and decides on the place of residence of the family, which was in contradiction with the articles of the treaty.

(Levin 2007). Nonetheless, activist women in the 1980s have been able to benefit from CEDAW as a levy to push for further reforms in national laws and bureaucratic practices.

Following the CEDAW petition campaign; a public protest against domestic violence in 1987 was a turning point in the emergence of the feminist movement. On 17th of May, thousands of women gathered at the Yogurtcu Park in Kadikoy, Istanbul to raise their voices against the normalization of domestic violence by legal and law enforcement institutions. Women from different ideologies and backgrounds participated in this protest, such as feminists, Marxists, socialists, as well as a small group of LGBT individuals, in addition to those who did not self-identify as feminists. Most of these women had previously participated in demonstrations with leftist groups, but they noted that this was the first time they marched in public with an explicitly feminist agenda.[14]

What triggered the decision to stage a public protest was a court decision by a judge in the Ankara province named Mustafa Durmus who denied a woman's plea for divorce on the grounds of domestic violence. In the judicial ruling, the judge argued that it was not unusual to have some conflict between the spouses, quoting a Turkish proverb which says "One should always keep a child in a woman's belly and a bat on her back."(Koçali 2003) A small group of activist women initially planned to stage the protest a week earlier on Mother's Day to draw further public attention, however their request was denied by the Istanbul governorate. Later at a larger meeting among feminists, they decided to organize a march in Yogurtcu Park to make their voices heard. The decision to hold a protest was taken by a group of women who gathered regularly for several years as part of a book club, *Kadın Çevresi* (Women's Circle). Their call evoked much interest; archives of the event indicate that around 2000 women joined the protest (Tulun 2017). They were unsure of whether other women would participate but decided to proceed regardless. Testimonies given years after the event state that this protest marked the beginning of a new period for the feminist movement (Koçali 2003).

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[14] Interview with Handan Koc, Istanbul, 4 February 2017

Essentially, the protest against domestic violence made it visible in the public sphere and problematized how it was normalized within the family. It brought together several grassroots feminist groups, made the feminist movement visible and enhanced women's solidarity for future collaborations. The effects could be seen both in the media and intellectual circles; feminists from that period note that they started being invited to talks and their opinions were being solicited on women's issues (Koçali 2003). Public interest in feminist publications of the era such as *Feminist* and *Kaktus* increased, as seen by the fact that they started receiving reader's letters from all around the country.[15]

The protest also created an invented space in which women could claim equal treatment despite their social differences. It was followed by a series of creative acts of citizenship. For example, the Purple Needle Campaign, which women wore purple needles as a weapon for self-protection against sexual harassment on the streets, was held in three metropolitan cities: Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. The Kariye Festival in Istanbul was an event making women's domestic work visible through an interactive activity (Tahaoğlu 2017). Women's Library', which collects works on women's and feminist's movements as well as academic and literary sources, was established in 1990 in Istanbul with the collaboration of the local municipality. Again, in the same year, Mor Çatı (Purple Roof), an association for fighting against violence against women was established Later in 1995, Mor Çatı opened the first shelter for women who were subjugated to domestic violence. The number of women's organizations was around 10 in between 1973 and 1982. In between 1983-1992 they increased to 64 and by the year 2004, there were more than 350 women's rights organizations in Turkey (Diner and Toktaş 2010). In addition, women's studies departments were established in universities around the country such as in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Adana. Women's periodicals, discussing women's issues, increased in number from 44 between 1980 and 1990 to 63 between 1990 and 1996 (Altınay and Arat 2007).

The movement also questioned the common assumption among the more educated that domestic violence was a product of ignorance and lack of education and revealed that

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[15] Interview with Handan Koc

all women, regardless of background, can be subjected to domestic violence.[16] In line with the "personal is political" slogan of second wave feminism in the West, women presented the issue of domestic violence as a political matter that was a structural issue rather than individual instances of violence, and that should concern the entire society. These new spaces of political activity resulted in changes in legal codes, adopted norms and institutions working towards gender equality in Turkey which the next section outlines in detail.

### *3.4 The expansion and consequent retraction of the women's rights in Turkey*

In this section I aim to show how this grassroots mobilization by feminist women have translated into concrete gains in first institutionalization of the movement within the state (an imperfect process in the early 1990s) and later on with rights under new civil and penal codes (in the early 2000s). I also contend here that these changes have a two-level explanation: at the domestic level political contestations between the secular and conservative/Islamist forces, both present in Turkey and in Tunisia and at the international level the effect of the EU process, specific for the case of Turkey. By using the window of opportunities through their protests, organized women have enlarged citizenship regimes in terms of rights and a specific political subjectivity as 'feminist women' and brought pro-woman changes in terms of women's citizenship rights.

In order to move forward with economic neoliberalization and join the EU markets, the first civilian government following the 1980 coup, the first Özal government (1983-1987) made women's rights into a politically salient issue. It was during this time when Özal government applied for full membership in the EU in 1987. At the domestic level, this period was also highlighted with the emergence of contemporary Islamism in Turkey. For the first time in Turkish history, Islamist political actors rose to power within the ranks of the first civilian government of the Motherland Party (ANAP) alongside with secular elites. As such, there was an increasing visibility of the Islamist elite from the National Vision movement which found an opportunity following the military

[16] Interview with Sirin Tekeli

establishment's hard blow over the leftist movement of the 1970s. These processes created a political opportunity structure which enabled for independent women to push for changes during the civilian Motherland Party period, (1987-1991).

In this period, particularly important was the role of the international context; there were two important instances of international influence: one in 1985 after CEDAW was ratified, and the second being the possibility of Turkey's official candidacy to EU; although this would play a bigger role in 2004 once its official candidacy was accepted. In order to prove Turkey's commitment to this project, the government recognized the jurisdiction of the European Human Rights Court in 1987 (Z. Arat 2010). At the international level, with the UN Decade for Women (1976-85) and the Women in Development (WID) regime, women in the developing world started building transnational links to the global feminist movement (Z. Arat 2012). They benefited from CEDAW and other international human's rights covenants, such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) in 1993, pressuring the state to implement these treaties and improve women's status (Acuner 2002).

The United Nations Decade for Women encouraged an independent and autonomous feminist civil society to flourish in many developing countries (Hatem 1993). Representatives from this newly established women's rights groups traveled to international conferences and advocated the dissemination of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) principles, as well as the Beijing Platform for Action. This was when the Turkish women's movement employed feminist discourse for the first time, despite the shortcomings of its limited inclusiveness of differences between women (Sirman 1989).[17]

These processes enabled for independent women to push for changes during the civilian Motherland Party period, (1987-1991). The signature of these international covenants and treaties were therefore a part of the Motherland Party government's plan to appear more 'Western' in the eyes of the European community since they were signed

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[17] Also commented during the interview with Islamist Feminist Hidayet Tuksal.

but not efficiently enforced.[18] Not coincidentally, this was when the women's issue was co-opted by a government with Islamist leanings to appear secular in the eyes of the Western world and its domestic constituents. Özal's nationalist-conservative ANAP was a coalition between right-wing nationalists and fundamentalist Muslims, as well as including centrist seculars who were sensitive to women's grievances and ultimately to their vote when it began losing their support. In order not to lose the support of this central base, both Özal and his wife launched a public campaign to showcase their liberal and secular values. In 1986, Semra Özal, the wife of Turgut Özal, established the Foundation to Promote and Strengthen Turkish Women, which was not a highly functional organization and acted as the women's branch of the party (Tekeli 1992).

Initially, the grassroots mobilization of women's movement was followed by its institutionalization and establishment of national women's machineries (NWMs) during period in the early 1990s. With the initiative of Imren Aykut, a Motherland Party member and the Minister for Labor and Social Security at the time, the government established the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women (KSSGM) first under the Ministry of Labor in 1990, then directly under the prime minister as a directorate general in 1991. Subsequently, the number of public institutions and new practices on women's rights issues rose exponentially. Also in 1990, Women's shelters were established under the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK), as well as individual cases of local governments opening shelters for women. In 1993, the Community Centers were opened to establish collaboration between state offices, local governments, universities and civil society as well as Family Consultancy Committees in order to bring a preventative measure to domestic violence. As such, they have made collaborations with several NGOs such as Women's Human Rights – New Solutions[19]. However, none of these agencies have functioned fully to their potential, as they were established just in form and not in substance. From their inception, they had a rather limited number of staff, organizational and financial capacity (Acuner 2002; Y. Arat and Altinay 2015).

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[18] Interview with Sirin Tekeli
[19] Interview with Zelal Ayman, Istanbul, 7 April 2017

From the accounts of women involved in the process, it appears that the emerging gender equality regime in the Turkish national scene was beneficial due to its reputational effects and not as much so for its contribution to the emancipation of women (Acuner 2002)[20]. This was particularly a result of the transnational trends which highlighted a wave of women's rights in the global agenda. Some from the feminist movement has been skeptical of state agencies taking on women's issues due to the risk of being co-opted by the state given the experience of 1920-30's state feminism (Yıldız Ecevit 2007; Tekeli 1990), but later on most women's organizations supported these changes (Y. Arat and Altinay 2015).

Towards the end of 1990s, both the influence of the EU candidacy and the political competition between the emergent political Islam movement, and existing political actors was heightened. Predecessors to the current Islamist AKP, new religious actors such as the Islamist Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) and the right-wing Doğru Yol (True Path) Party rose to power taking roles in the central state power in 1996, which was a short-lived experience due to the military intervention of February 1998 which resulted in the stepping down of Refah-Yol government. By the end of 1990s, the women's movement lost its links to the claim for a full democratic citizenship regime inclusive of all identities and divided by the internal political factions of rising Kurdish nationalism and Islamist movement.[21]

Meanwhile, despite the rise of the religious actors and Kurdish nationalism in the political scene, the women's movement in Turkey was able to achieve major reforms in penal and civil codes by focusing on specific issues such as discrimination in laws and domestic violence. In 1998 Law No. 4320 on the Protection of the Family was promulgated. In addition, new reforms to the Civil Code in 2001, under a coalition government, and to the Penal Code in 2004 brought many positive legal changes in women's equality. The amendment to the Law on Municipalities in 2005, which requires municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to open women's shelters, and the

[20] Interview with Canan Arin, Istanbul, 14 February 2017
[21] Interview with Zelal Ayman

formation of the Parliamentary Commission for Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men in 2009 are among other gender-sensitive policies of this period (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu 2011). This was due to the effect of international treaties on gender equality at the time.

As one of these documents, Turkey ratified CEDAW in 1985, although with some reservations. However, necessary changes in laws were not initiated until the late 1990s, in addition to the significant problems due to the lack of its enforcement. This text, which consisted of a preamble and 30 articles, was considered to be an international bill of rights for women around the globe. According to the bill, discrimination against women has been described as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the *political, economic, social, cultural, civil* or any other field." (Emphasis mine). As such, it enshrined women's equal rights to citizenship in political, economic, and civil terms as well as basic human rights in an international text by a globally recognized institution. The text went into force in 1981 for the ratification of national governments. When governments accept the Convention, they commit themselves to undertake measures to end discrimination against women in all forms (UN n.d.).

It was following the emergent women's movement which became active in the 1980s that necessary changes in laws to harmonize national laws to CEDAW recommendations came into force. Organized women have benefited extensively from the emergent global feminism wave to push for these changes. The second half of the 1990s saw the emergence of a global feminism under the impact of United Nations (Z. F. K. Arat 2012). At this juncture, the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 and the Habitat Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey the following year were particularly important for allowing different NGOs including the emerging feminist activists from different parts of the world to participate in the global norm making, revise their strategies and acquire pro-feminist perspectives. In addition to women's organizations, there was a significant growth of the number of civil society organizations working on human rights, good governance, development and environment issues which contributed to the growth of women's organizations around the globe.

Subsequently in 1995, Turkey participated in the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 with an all-women delegation (Levin 2007). The Beijing Platform was an agenda to further underline the need for women's empowerment through "removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making" (UN 1995). Furthermore, in December 1997, Turkey convened a parliamentary commission to ensure full implementation of CEDAW. Finally, in 2002, Turkey the lifted the reservations regarding the CEDAW, by ratifying the Optional Protocol in 2002. By ratifying the Optional Protocol, the Turkish government recognized "the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - the body that monitors states parties' compliance with the Convention - to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction." (Levin 2007).

The initial impact of the CEDAW treaty was felt at the Constitutional Court and the Turkish National Parliament. In 1990, the Constitutional Court decided that the Article 159, which necessitated a husband's permission for his wife's professional activity, was annulled with reference to the legal equality between men and women in CEDAW. Also in 1990, the Article 438 of the Turkish Penal Code which reduced the sentence of a rapist by one-third if the victim was a prostitute was annulled by the Grand National Assembly. In 1996, the court annulled the Articles 440 and 441 of the Turkish Penal Code on the grounds that the act of adultery was defined differently between married men and women, and thus violated the principle of equality before the law as outlined in CEDAW (Acar 2000, 4 cited in Levin 2007). At the time, adultery was a crime stipulated by the Turkish Penal Code however, the grounds for men's and women's adultery were different; it was enough for a woman to be with a man on one occasion to be considered adulterous under the law while establishing a man's adultery was dependent on many other factors; such that he should have to be living or having invited his mistress to live with his wife.[22] As a result of these annulments in the Penal Code, adultery was no longer defined as a crime.

[22] Interview with Canan Arin

Enacted in 2004, the new Penal Code was an outcome of these efforts. The new code included amendments to advance gender equality and the protection of sexual and bodily rights of women, such as criminalization of marital rape, broadening the definition of rape, addressing domestic violence as a crime in addition to recognizing increased sentences for sexual crimes. Attempting to address patriarchal issues in the Turkish society which threaten the well-being of women and girls, it also abolished “previously existing discriminations against non-virgins and unmarried women”. (Anıl et al. 2005). It redefined crimes against women as individuals rather than crimes against public decency.[23]

In 1997, in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, Turkey devised a National Action Plan for: the education and training of women; the rights of the girl-child; women and health; violence against women; women and the economy; women in power and decision making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; and women and the media (Levin 2007). Also, in line with the 1997 Action Plan, the Grand National Assembly gathered a special parliamentary investigative commission for gender discrimination in 1998. It was following this commission’s report which recommended that Turkey should withdraw its reservations to CEDAW, implement gender mainstreaming into its national policies and that temporary measures to be taken to improve girls’ and women’s access to education, workforce and politics to ensure equality (Acar, Acuner, and Senol 1999 cited in Levin 2007).

The CEDAW agenda also was a levy for activist women to amend the discriminatory clauses on the Turkish Civil Code. Activist women launched a national campaign, collecting 100,000 signatures starting from 1992 to raise awareness for a revision of the Civil Code which reinforced men’s domination over women (Ekren 1993 cited in Levin 2007). They formed a working group including the Directorate General on Women’s Status and the Women’s Research Center which was established in 1994 which prepared an alternative draft bill to be sent to the parliament. The advocacy efforts continued in the early 2000s with women rallying protests against the conservative

[23] Interview with Canan Arin.

attitude of the parliament members who opposed the draft. The parliament approved the new Civil Code on 22 November 2002, within the first term of the newly elected conservative AKP government. Except for practice of adopting the husband's name as the family name, the new Civil Code recognized to a large extent equality between men and women in a marriage contract. This reform included the annulment of the Article 152 of the 1926 Civil Code appointed the husband as the "the head of the conjugal union".

The most radical change brought by the new Civil Code was with regards to the nature of the property regimes under a marriage contract. Before the amendment, the default property regime between spouses was the 'separation of property' which was in harmony with the principle of equality between husband and wife. However, given the structural inequalities which cause a large number of women not to have an income, the property earned during a marriage was registered under the husband. In addition, wives who economically supported their husbands' labor outside the family with their domestic labor was rendered invisible (Y. Arat 2005). The amendment to the Civil Code recognized a new property regime under which in case of a divorce, all property earned during the marriage, regardless of who earned it, was to be shared equally between the husband and wife. However, the amendment did not include the divorced women at the time of the reform in 2002, despite much criticism and protest from the feminist activists.[24] Also in 2003, Turkish Labor Code recognized gender-equality and elimination of discriminatory practices against women, including those that relate to their marital status or family responsibilities (Yildiz Ecevit 2007).

Finally, with respect to amendments to the Constitution, two changes came in 2004 which stipulated that "Women and men have equal rights. The state is obliged to realize this equality in life" (Z. Arat 2004, cited in Levin 2007) in addition to Article 90 which was amended to recognize the powers of international human rights treaties ratified by the parliament to supersede Turkish laws in case of a conflict.

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[24] Interview with Canan Arin.

While Turkey's candidacy to the EU was one of the major driving forces of these amendments, it was also the success of 'consensus politics' strategy followed by the women's movement (Sancar 2011). Despite their differences in terms of political ideology and ethnicity (more of which will be explained under the following chapters), women gathered under platforms to better advocate the necessary changes under the laws. With such a coalition, women activists have taken on the strength from international treaties and transformed institutions such as national laws to bring gender-equality in legal norms. Using a liberal framework of CEDAW to fight for gender-equality, they were able to enact 'radical' outcomes, such as the recognition of women's sexual and bodily rights under the Penal Code, or recognition of women's invisible work at the private sphere into the Civil Code.

These developments happened despite the rising nationalist and conservative governments. During its first term starting in 2002, newly founded AKP's electoral base was less consolidated, and the party was open to civil society influence and collaborations with other actors. The AKP's first term was a coalition of different forces, including other Islamist groups, the largest of which was the Gülen Movement (Taş 2018). Similar to the Özal government, the coalitional character of the first years of the AKP rule between seculars and Islamist party elites, a secular discourse with respect to women's issues was enacted; which led to further reforms and showed an unwillingness to disrupt the status quo with respect to the ban on veils.[25] The lifting of the veil ban in public institutions was one of the main promises of the government, however, they preferred to stay quiet during the first term with respect to this issue, fearing to raise concerns from the secular parties and institutions dominant over the hegemonic political ideology and practices in Turkey.[26]

The experience of the conservative Özal government and the first terms of the AKP governments show that political elite, regardless of whether they are conservative or secular, had to adapt to the republican and secularist legacy of the state apparatus. Despite being challenged by peripheral Islamist actors, the center was still composed of strong

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[25] Interview with Fatma Bostan Unal, Ankara, 22 February 2017
[26] Interview with Fatma Bostan Unal

secular gatekeepers such as the military, higher courts and bureaucracy, as well as the classes with capital. Therefore, these conservative actors had to allow secular demands in order to establish themselves in the central state power. This was also coupled with the AKP's need for legitimacy within the EU candidacy period.[27] This trajectory shows the tensions within the women's movement as well; the fact that only the rights demanded by secular feminists were heard, but the Kurdish and Islamist women's demands did not result in concrete gains in legal reforms, showing the strength of the hegemonic citizenship regime established since the early republican period.

After 2008, the political regime in Turkey became increasingly competitive authoritarian (see Esen and Gumuscu 2016) during which the state's policies on women also took an authoritative nature. AKP's third term which began in 2011, and during the following switch to presidential system in 2016, the previous period of extensive reforms on women's rights came to an end. In this period, not only were women's issues subsumed under the conservative authoritarian frame, but with a tight grip on all issues, the AKP has been "monopolizing the center" with respect to all associational dissident activities (Öniş 2014).

Within this context, the AKP increasingly expressed its lack of interest in meeting feminist demands and instead opted for a conservative political stance with respect to upholding family values and deindividualization of women (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu 2011). In 2011 the Women's and Family was reduced into Ministry of Family and Social Policies and attacked women's shelters as they were "damaging family values". Women's economic dependence increased as neoliberal policies contributed to privatization of child care and policies which reinforced women's roles as mothers, such as a discourse on "at least three children" was adopted by the prime minister Erdogan himself (Candas and Silier 2014). At the same time, women's access to c-sections and abortions are being increasingly limited at public institutions and attacks at the women's right to alimony after divorce is being challenged by conservative circles. Numerous empirical studies explain these changes in detail within different institutional spheres and practices such as

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[27] Interview with Pinar Ilkkaracan, Phone interview, 1 February 2017

the labour market, family, population policies, and democracy (see Altunok 2016; Cindoglu and Unal 2017; Göksel 2013; Kandiyoti 2016; Korkut and Eslen-Ziya 2011).

Therefore in this period, not only did the gender-equality reforms come to a halt, but a counter-discourse on women's equality became the norm. Women's movements have lost their capacity to influence policy-making and have had to resort to street politics to make their voices heard[28]. The only associations that have been able to maintain any influence over the government are those classified as governmental non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) such as KADEM. While organized women have been able to raise their concerns regarding limitations on abortion or violence against women and children during this consolidated period, it is typically not until a pro-government women's group reacts to legislation that we see the government adopt a gender-sensitive stance. An example of this is the draft proposal to provide amnesty for child marriages in 2016 and its subsequent retraction (Karakas 2016). Having ousted its rivals around the state apparatus, the international conventions, including the Istanbul Convention of 2011 of which Turkey is one of the first signatory states, no longer constitute a pressure point for the government and therefore AKP found the opportunity to become increasingly authoritarian conservative in its policies regarding women.

Under the presidential system which came into force in 2017, AKP's monopolistic stance in the government started being challenged by both the rising Kurdish movement, as well as the Islamist Gulenist movement which attempted a coup against the state in July 2016. Having announced martial law and oppressing all forms of dissident movements, women's groups became increasingly repressed with respect to their activities, while most of the Kurdish women's associations in the Eastern parts of the country were closed down as well as the marginalization of most secular Turkish women's organizations from policy-making circles. Given the extreme forces of repression, in 2018, women started organizing around loose issue-based networks and platforms, taking to the streets with an increasingly inclusive discourse for all types of cleavages, rallying around the common practices of AKP against gender-equality. A

[28] Interviews with multiple WROs representatives, explained in further detail in the following chapter.

similar period in the post 1980 coup is visible in the women's movement, with efforts to include all types of women, calling for solidarity and union among women to counter act against the repressive policies of AKP government which affect women on all fronts. The pattern of the trajectory suggests that AKP's hegemonic grip is fading and therefore is giving different groups of women more motive to unite under a more feminist ideology. As a major example for this; more than 160 WROs and LGBT rights organizations joined in a meeting on January 5 in Istanbul under the rubric "Women Are Strong Together". Despite their differences in terms of capacity, ideology, activities and geographic locations, the women's movement works together through this network against the increasing backlash on women's gains in the past decade.

Following the outline of the Turkish women's movement and its links to power structures and institutional changes, the next section will draw out the developments in Tunisia and the link of domestic political regimes and the emergence of women's movement and their subsequent role in expanding citizenship regimes through pushing for women's rights in different windows of political opportunity under two waves of democratization (1987-1993 and post 2011).

### *3.5 The emergence of the autonomous women's movement in Tunisia*

Similar to the trajectory of the autonomous movement in Turkey, Tunisian women were also influenced by the spread of second wave feminism around the globe. The "authoritarian bargain" which gave economic and social rights to citizens in return for the lack of political rights, lead to the inclusion of women in the public sphere. The emergence of independent women's organizations was coupled with structural changes that affected women's agency, such as increases in women's literacy, education and labor force participation. Like several Arab countries, Tunisia's female literacy and education, employment lead to an increasingly empowered women population albeit with limits (Moghadam 2018). The rate of female illiteracy went from 96% in 1956 to 48.3% in 1989 (Charrad 1997). There were also improvements in women's education; the state-led policies resulted in the enrolment of school age girls of 93.76% and boys of 97.42 percent by 1992 (Charrad 1997). Also in higher education, the proportion of female students went from 21.5% in 1955 to 47.2% in 1992-93 (CREDIF 1994). Women's labor force participation went from 6.6% in 1966 to 24.2% in 1989 (UNDP 1995). However, the persistent economic crises in developing economies followed by structural adjustment

programs and the decline of the welfare state also added to their cause. The economic situation consequently gave rise to the feminization of poverty and to radical ideologies such as Islamic fundamentalism (Moghadam 2005).

As such, a small group consisting of well-educated, urban, leftist, activist, student, francophone women started gathering in the Club Tahar Haddad, located in the historical Medina in Tunis in 1978. Escaping the repressive rule of Bourguiba, these women started study groups on the condition of women in Tunisia, first time as independent women from the Bourguiban ideology. However, the Club was controlled by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and was also supervised by the women of Union Nationale de la Femme Tunisienne (UNFT) (Brand 1998). Their existence was a challenge to the UNFT as the sole existing representative of the government on women's issues.

As one of the first times women came out to the public as a group of political opposition was in the summer of 1982[29]. A call from Lebanese and Palestinian women against the invasion of Lebanon by Israel, led to a gathering in front of the headquarters of the Arab League in Tunis. Women called to stand in solidarity with Palestinian and Lebanese women and to denounce the inertia of official women's associations, i.e., the UNFT in Tunisia. This would be the first time that the Tunisian public heard about a group of women who called themselves the *femmes democrats* (Women Democrats). This protest included hundreds of women, some of whom had nothing to do with the first women's issue group, the Club Tahar Haddad and even some of who rejected their "feminist" cause. Yet, these women all felt the need to act as women and find an alternative to their existing networks within leftist circles because nobody else was speaking up (Ghanmi 1993).

When Israel attacked refugee camps in Sabra and Chatila in September 1982, *femmes democrates* went out to protest again, this time in front of the United Nations delegation in Tunis. At that time, among the groups who had shown solidarity with the Palestinian people, *femmes democrates* was the only group that went as far as denouncing

[29] Interview with Noura Boursali, Tunis, 3 May 2018

not only Israel but also the massacres organized by Syria in 1985 and the complicity of other Arab countries with regard to the Palestinian issue. The most "courageous" call made by Arabic countries only called for a ceasefire, without naming anyone responsible (Ghanmi 1993, 64).

*Femmes democrates* were not only vocal about international issues; they also took part in crucial moments in the history of Tunisian social movements. In 1984, they raised their voice for a domestic political cause, this time against the harsh sentences given by the regime courts to young protestors that participated in the events which later came to be known as the "bread revolts". The price of grains was increased overnight because the government had decided to abolish subsidies for strategic goods, such as bread and flour. As a response to the government's decision to double the price of grains due to the Structural Adjustment Plans (SAPs) promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in developing countries in the 1980s, mass protests broke out first in rural, then in urban parts of Tunisia, at which a lot of women were present.

According to the archives attesting to the birth of the movement, the organized women released a public statement, which for the first time listed the "*femmes democrats"* in a document opposing the Ben Ali regime. This declaration and the series of protests which followed were the first time in Tunisian modern history that women stepped out *as women* in the public sphere and voiced their concerns in political matters (Marzouki 1993, 266). In their public appearances, by taking a courageous political stance against injustices toward Palestinians and for local teenagers in justified mass revolts, they created a new political subject during a time when most other actors stayed silent. For the *femmes democrates*, the core of citizenship was the right for women to express their way of being and thoughts within spaces that were traditionally considered masculine, such as work, the streets, culture and politics (Jrad 1996, 88).

These first-generation feminists not only became involved in politics as women but were also involved in feminist consciousness-raising activities. In 1985, the *femmes democrates* started publishing a feminist magazine called *Nissa (*Women), edited by Emna Bel Haj Yahia. *Nissa* focused on issues such as the death penalty, rape, children's rights, the right to live, the campaign against CSP, feminism and syndicalism. The

magazine, however, was short lived and published its last issue on March 8, 1987 (Marzouki 1993, 295).

Shortly after the regime change in 1987, The Club Tahar Haddad, the women's consciousness-raising group formed in 1978, transformed into a more formal establishment: Association Tunisienne des Femmes Democrates (ATFD) and its sister Association des Femmes Tunisiennes sur le Recherche et le Developpement (AFTURD) in 1989. In a transnational collaboration, these women also joined the organized women in North Africa in a feminist network, called Collectif 95 Maghreb-Egalité. This Collectif held meetings and published reports on studying their national family laws (Moghadam 2018). In the 1990s, a woman-owned publishing house based in Casablanca started publishing books on women's status in laws in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. This collective also represented their countries in the UN's Fourth World Conference in Beijing 1995, in collaboration with other women's rights groups to demand further amendments to women's rights. They created new spaces for political participation which will be discussed in the following chapter.

However, this foundational period shows us of a very distinct difference within the two movements. While the Turkish movement's emergence was directed against 'patriarchy' in general, and mobilized during the EU accession period, the Tunisian women's emergence was more motivated by issues which concerned a postcolonial and pan-Arabic perspective. The Tunisian women's solidarity with other women in the Arab region, such as in Lebanon, and their subsequent cooperation with Algeria and Morocco shows a clear distinction of a post-colonial identity (Abbassi 2008) in the making for Tunisian feminists. Fayad (2000) argues that the adoption of a postcolonial identity as opposed to a national identity allows women in North Africa to escape the restricted boundaries of the role given to Arab women within national narratives. These national narratives consist of either taking up a Western stance, thereby losing their national identity, or the opposite, they remain captured within an Islamic tradition that in its essence restricts the freedom of women. This dichotomy, the one between Western and Islamic traditions of citizenship roles attributed to Arab women was redefined through the Tunisian *femmes democrates* as a postcolonial identity, which gives them a chance to escape Westerner and foreigner labels and instead construct themselves as local and

authentic. This tension between the Western and local creates a basis for the discussions in the upcoming chapters, 5 and 6.

### *3.6 The expansion of Tunisia's citizenship regimes and women's rights*

In this section, in parallel with the section on Turkish institutions, I trace the influence of women's movements in Tunisian gender reforms by placing them into the national and international political context. During the post-1970 period, Tunisian political history saw two major waves of liberalization. While there was a very limited attempt in the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was short lived. The first major liberalization wave was in 1987 when Bourguiba was ousted by a peaceful coup and was replaced by Ben Ali. The second was in 2011 when due to popular mobilizations Ben Ali was ousted and a parliamentary democracy was established. These two regime changes also allowed autonomous women organizing outside of the state governed UNFT, leading them to play major roles in debates and struggles over women's issues (Brand 1998).

Bourguiba gave first signs of political liberalization in 1981, which gave way to a limited experience with a multiparty regime and the gathering of a few women's groups including the Club Tahar Haddad. However, these groups required the state's approval in order to become official associations. Bourguiba was peacefully ousted in 1987 and replaced by Ben Ali who had to consolidate his own position against the state party, the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique (RCD), the Islamists and the secular opposition. He abolished the presidency for life and limited the term to three 5-year periods. Following public calls from Islamists for a constitutional amendment which would acknowledge Islam as the official religion, Ben Ali argued publicly for the protection of the *Code de Statut Personel* (CSP) but also did not appear to approve any further reforms. By the 1990s, the power of the Islamist Ennahda movement put Tunisian women on the defense as they gathered support as the largest opposition group in the country (Brand 1998).

Despite the authoritarian rule of Bourguiba since the 1950s, the 1980s brought structural openings to various social forces in Tunisia. During this period Islamism slowly started to gain ground with the Mouvance de la Tendance Islamique (MTI), formed in 1979 as a coherent organization. The years between 1980 and 1986 saw initial attempts at political liberalization under Prime Minister Muhammad Mzali; during his premiership

Islamists were able to publicly oppose many aspects of the established regime, including secularism and the CSP, putting women at the forefront of the struggle to defend their gains of the republican era while the government ally UNFT remained silent (Brand 1998).

Following the establishment of the ATFD and AFTURD in 1989 by the *femmes democrates*, the Tunisian women's movement achieved on a new level of influence and became one of the most critical actors within civil society, advocating for pluralism and liberalism. They brought together women from the Club Tahar Haddad and others under the banner of democracy, human rights and a voice for women in local and international politics. The Ben Ali government took steps to further women's rights by creating national centers and commissions on gender issues. The Center for Research, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) was founded in 1991, a Consultative Commission on Women and Development was established, and the Commission on Women's legislation brought about amendments to the CSP.

In 1992-1993, the new government reformed the 1956 CSP law. These amendments eliminated the clause that required a woman's obeisance to her husband, gave more rights to mothers over their children after divorce, and established a National Fund for child support to divorced women. Once Ben Ali was able to consolidate his power and eliminate his political rivals however, the reform trend in women's rights was curbed, despite the years of pressure from women's movements with regard to eliminating violence against women, sexual harassment and further equal civil rights such as equal inheritance (Charrad 1997).

Contrary to the Turkish case however, the international level did not play any major roles for the advancement of women's cause in the case of Tunisia (Powel and Sadiki 2010). Tunisia as part of the neighboring policy of the European Union received no conditionalities in terms of democratization or the support of civil society organizations, except for some individual country contributions such as Germany (Moghadam 2018). In place of the EU as an anchor, Tunisian women's transnational activism in North Africa was a major force in the women's movement.

Since its creation in 1992 by associations and feminist intellectuals and activists from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, the Collectif Maghreb-Égalité 95 (CME 95) has put

equality between women and men among its primary objectives. Its ambition was to provide activists and human rights associations with resources and tools for reflection and advocacy with policy-makers and the public in order to change laws and put it into practice a culture of equality, freedom and non-discrimination. For more than a decade, the member associations of the CME 95 have fought against discrimination in inheritance laws, and the persistence of the patriarchal and patrilineal family practices. Taking into account the changes in the family model in the three Maghreb countries and the role of women in wealth creation, feminists engaged in a struggle at the legislative and practical levels to create an awareness of women's rights.

One of the pioneering tools of this work was a codification of an egalitarian law of personal status and family law, the "One hundred measures and provisions for egalitarian codification" (1995). The latter has been accompanied by numerous alternative reports and diagnostic studies that reflect, in terms of representations and practices, the state of equality in the three countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) involved in the CME 95 as well as the degree of acceptability of the principle of equality. In its strategy, the CME 95 produced a guide, The Dalil for Equality in the Family in the Maghreb (2003), to promote the principle of equality to a wider audience and to build the capacity for mobilization and negotiation of human rights defenders through legal and sociological arguments supporting equality in the family. Through these international networks, Tunisian women's movement also began taking an explicitly feminist stance in the 1990s.

Over the years, the CME 95 has become more experienced thanks to the numerous studies carried out by academics, intellectuals and activists committed to the rights of women. During the 2000s, a number of comparative studies were conducted in the three countries on issues such as women's and men's adherence to egalitarian values, women's work, gender relations, and gender balance and violence (Mahfoudh 2014). These analyses gave the CME 95 advocacy credibility and effectiveness on very sensitive issues at the level of public opinion  (Mahfoudh 2014). In the guide for equality in the family, the CME 95 has even used a religious doctrine argument, in addition to scientific and legal arguments, to better arm advocates and advocates of equality and raise awareness among institutions concerned. The debate on the use of religious arguments, an argument absent in the Turkish feminist movement, shows how Tunisian feminists have tried to

mitigate their position between the foreign and the local, a debate which will be expanded in chapter 6.

As a witness and a dynamic component of the women's movement in the Maghreb, the CME 95 aimed to consolidate the solidarity between the different activists confronted with socio-political challenges related to the contexts of each country. In 2003, a collective self-portrait was produced, *Self portrait of a movement*: *Women for Equality in the Maghreb*, which reflects the rich debates and horizontal discussions on central themes such as autonomy, succession and diversity, within the forty or so associations that make up the collective.

In the three Maghreb countries, studies and activities of the CME 95 contributes to strengthening national strategies for the struggle for equality and against violence against women, among which economic violence is stressed. The studies and evaluations constitute a basis for work and discussion for the actions of associations and institutions concerned with gender and women's rights in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In addition, the CME 95 proposed to combat the inequality of inheritance considered as a system of male dominance and impoverishment of women. As such, it aims to raise a societal debate around this issue and to initiate a reform of the legislation. As a first step, research was carried out to understand the evolution of the role of women in access to property and the constitution of heritage, changes in the distribution of estates between women and men, as well as the resistance and the strategies of circumvention of the law that some use to try to guarantee a more egalitarian sharing, whereas others, on the contrary, use it to aggravate the inequalities established by the law.

In Tunisia, where, despite advanced legislation on the emancipation of women, the Islamic law on inheritance could not be affected, ATFD set up a commission in 1999 for the inequality in the inheritance. The latter launched the first petition and asked to open a national debate to end this discrimination (the call collected 1000 signatures, mostly women). In 2009, ATFD organized an inter-associational Maghreb seminar on equality in inheritance with several NGOs from Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. In 2002 The Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development (AFTURD) established another commission for the production of tools for analysis and advocacy, which culminated in 2006 with the publication of a multidisciplinary study in two volumes:

history, law and anthropology of inheritance Equality in inheritance, for full citizenship, and advocacy in fifteen arguments for equality in inheritance.

However, these efforts did not culminate into concrete gains for women until after the 2011 revolution which ousted the oppressive Ben Ali regime. As testified by Souad Triki, a member and former president of ATFD, their activities were continuously repressed by the Ben Ali regime. She notes, "Even though on legal terms we were the country who was the most advanced in terms of women's rights in the Arab world, in fact we were reprimanded from taking any civil action." (Personal interview, Tunis, 2017)

Therefore, despite the persisting efforts from women's groups, the late 1990s and 2000s saw no advances in terms of women's rights reforms. In contrast, with the ousting of Ben Ali from power and the democratization period that followed after the 2011 revolution, Tunisian political sphere witnessed important changes. The post-2011 politics was especially marked by a heightened competition between Islamist and secular parties during the writing of the new constitution and establishing the new democratic state (Grami 2014), as well as a wave of reforms in women's rights. Grami argues that this competition became increasingly visible especially around questions of gender in the post-2011 period given the heightened competition between the new comer Islamist parties and the former secular establishment.

As part of this competition, Rachid Gannouchi's Islamist Ennahda party won the first elections after the revolution, but they were replaced by the secular Nida Tounes in the consecutive election of 2014. Led by Beji Caid Essebsi, an 87-year-old politician of both the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes, Nida Tounes represents many different factions who are united under the same goal of opposing Ennahda and other Islamist groups. Critics of the secular front fear that the Bourguiban model of governance brought by Essebsi marks a return to the one-man paternalistic rule of the old regime: narrowing the political sphere by putting pressure on the opposition and giving prerogatives to politicians from the old regime. His government has suffered the same challenges as Ennahda's post-revolutionary rule, namely security, economic growth and judicial reform.

Not only the political scene, but also the civil society opened up to new political actors, in which Islamist women's organizations and a new generation of women's

NGO's were established in addition to many other secular civil society organizations. This meant that instead of the mostly top-down policy reforms of the previous regime, the new regime in Tunisia started acknowledging demands coming from the civil society as well as the political elite. At the time of the writing of this chapter, next on the parliament's agenda is the equal inheritance laws for women. This period therefore marks a great rupture with the past decades in which a feminist movement was present but gender-sensitive policy was never a priority for the political elite, with the wave of democratization and women's groups sustained pressure on policy makers.

### *3.7 Conclusion*

This chapter tells the story of how women's movements emerged and their consequent impact on gendered citizenship rights regimes for women from a multi-level perspective. It mainly shows how rights expanded in both countries through women's pressure both from above and below. While state feminism was the main paradigm until the 1980s, which saw little improvement on women's rights regimes after the republican reforms. With the emergence of women's autonomous movements built on explicitly feminist demands have made clear changes in political institutions after 1980s, especially successful during times of political contention between Islamist and secular forces.

At the domestic level, I tried to underline for both cases how the power competition between elites led to gender reforms. While for the cases of Turkey and Tunisia, political opportunity structures enabled organized women to push for these changes, Turkish case was more influenced by international structures as well as domestic structures to carry out these changes, which gave it a stronger anchor to move ahead with gender equality reforms. However, it was again both through bottom-up pressure from the civil society that created these reforms.

I claimed in this chapter that women's rights norms which have been advanced at the international level in the 1960 and 70s and which became globally spread after the 1980s have provided local women in both countries with tools that challenge existing inequalities in the spaces of political participation and helped them create invented spaces to change unequal norms and practices. Given the international norms on gender equality at the global level, local feminists develop strategies and specific courses of action which are informed by global norms and transform the existing power structures in the

advantage of women. However, despite the transnational character of these norms and practices, women's movements have constructed their specific collective identities; in Tunisia with a more post-colonial and secular identity whereas in Turkey it was explicitly feminist but also divided along different ideological lines.

The literature on gender reforms and women's movements in both countries has not always been as explicit in making these connections. Therefore, this chapter was necessary to set the initial context for further looking into how organized women's acts of citizenship specifically impact the citizenship regimes in these countries. Starting with the following chapters, from Chapter 4 to 6, I trace the impacts on citizenshp regimes and how these influence women's organized agency in return in terms of extent, depth and content. The table below provides a thematic summary of the analysis provided in this chapter and signals the themes in the following chapters.

*Table 1 Comparing Turkish and Tunisian gendered citizenship regimes*

| **Citizenship as …** | **Similarities** | **Differences** | **Citizenship regimes and acts of citizenship** |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Extent of participation* in the political sphere: exclusion and inclusion of women in the political sphere** | Authoritarian bargain: limited political rights, more stress on economic and social rights; state-feminism<br>Women's limited formal political participation since the new republics<br>Autonomous women's movement as informal participation | TR: The influence of EU as a candidate state on Turkish democratization<br>TN: Democratization post-2011 revolution | Requires looking at how women trespass the structural barriers to their political participation<br>Through:<br>Advocacy, lobbying, Transnational activism Political trainings, street mobilizations |
| **Depth of recognized Identities of a new nation-state** | Turkish/Tunisian secular citizens with claims of universal citizenship among particular differences | TR: Rupture from the Ottoman past.<br>Ethnic and religious cleavages between Turkish and Kurdish women and secular and Islamist women<br>TN: Continuity between Arabo-Muslim identity.<br>Homogenous society claims | Requires looking at how women challenge the established boundaries of ethnic and secular constructions of the ideal citizen<br>Claiming differences, by addressing hegemonic constructions of nation-state in terms of identity.<br>Through:<br>Organizing under separate NGOs and street activism |
| ***Content of rights vs duties* given in a political community** | Hegemonic regimes: duties weigh over individual rights<br>Establishing gendered boundaries for the 'good citizen'<br>Democratization periods where individual rights gain more traction | TR: Democratic regime throughout its history, with limited rights for women and other minorities.<br>Democratization in early 2000s had gendered impacts to women's rights, providing women with gains on individual rights of women.<br>TN: One-man rule until 2010 after which democratization sees more stress over women's rights rather than duties. | Requires looking at how women challenge the discourses on duties of women and emphasize women's individual rights within social institutions<br>Through:<br>Feminist consciousness-raising circles, shelters, psychological support, community centers, rights trainings, Legal support |

# CHAPTER 4 REFRAMING SPACES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: THE EXTENT OF CITIZENSHIP REGIMES

This chapter is about the extent of citizenship; i.e. the spaces of political participation of the women's movements in both countries and how these spaces shift depending on the political structures and in return how they shape women activists' strategies. I focus on how organized women are *reframing political participation,* by which I refer to the opening up new spaces for political action (Cornwall and Goetz 2005). The chapter essentially treats the question of "how do women make feminist politics?" in an exclusive citizenship regime which discriminates against women's political participation at several different levels. As one of the domains in which citizenship regimes are exercised, spaces of political participation are essentially gendered, and women's movements target these gendered spaces to render them more inclusive; expanding the extent of citizenship towards more inclusion by employing various strategies. The chapter will be talking about justice claims by feminist organizations for equal voice for women not only in already constituted political communities, but also at the invented spaces (Miraftab 2004b).

In this chapter I look at the acts of citizenship from women's movements collectively in relation to the state. In Chapter 2, I made the distinction between active and activist citizen, the latter of which signifies acts to interrupt the given the political order while active citizens perform already written rules and practices. I argue in this chapter that when governments are more receptive to pressure from civil society and other social forces, feminist activism strategies lean towards engaging with the state in terms

of law making and policy implementation within invited spaces of political action. Engaging refers to lobbying, advocacy, and cooperation with state institutions. During times of political repression, where political authority is consolidated under one-man rule, engagement becomes ineffective or impossible and therefore advocacy moves towards less institutional forms such as street activism and loose networks among women's organizations.

My argument here shows that whether under democratization or authoritarian periods, women's movement finds a way to open up political spaces as citizens claiming rights to influence political institutions and they always target the state as an institution to address their claims. It does not lead to the end of the movement cycle, but instead causes a change in its strategies. When they are denied access to participation through civil society and formal mechanisms during times of authoritarianism, they resort to street politics and take a conflictual position in order to participate in a regime which has lost its legitimacy and connection with its citizens. In times where invited spaces are no longer accessible, they invent spaces in which they continue influencing policy makers, spaces such as blogs, cooperation networks, issue-based networks, campaigns and street protests (Miraftab 2004a). During times of democratization however, when the regime becomes more open to influence from its citizens, they establish themselves through mostly invited spaces of networks of advocacy and policy making in cooperation with the state institutions. It is also better to underline again that the acts here come from autonomous women's movements and not from women who have a position in formal political sphere, as their activities require a different set of analytical tools.

In what follows, I will first explain more in detail the concepts of engagement, autonomy, conflictual and cooperative relations with the state. This division is important to understand the nature of the collectivity of acts of citizenship which are enacted by organized women because they tend to shift according to political opportunity structures. In the following sections, I will continue by presenting my field findings from Turkey and in Tunisia in the subsequent sections in which I make my argument through employing my interview data conducted in January-June 2017.

## *4.1 Women's autonomy and engagement*

Given the plurality of women's movement and feminist activism and how they address the state and its institutions, there are several different methods of feminist activism at play at the same time. By adopting a typology in which I divide the nature of this relationship with the state institutions along two axes, I aim to understand first the different nature of engagement with the state and second the level of political contestations women's organizations hold with regards to the state.

These methods can vary along two axes; the first one of these axes is along the continuum of engagement and detachment, which denotes the degree of engagement with or disengagement from the state. While most of the feminist activist claim to stay autonomous from the state in terms, the nature of this detachment varies; from the most engaged with the state from putting the state in a position to respond to their demands, to the least detached method of addressing other institutions such as patriarchal norms within the society, women, labor market, media, education, family and alike. The second axe of is one that describes the nature of the relationship with the states and their institutions is one that varies along a conflictual or a cooperative political positioning. Feminists can either engage in dissident activism, positioning themselves in a political opposition with the state policies (Sparks 1997), holding a conflictual with the state institutions through grassroots organizing and/or consciousness raising circles at lower levels such as the community level. The other end of this axis relates to where they collaborate with the state policies under cooperative projects, through in project-feminism, lobbying or advocacy.

Four different fields of activity emerge within this picture (Figure 3); the two quadrants on the right hand side of the figure relates to invited spaces of action, while the left two quadrants refer to invented spaces of activity. The first one the invited spaces is 'project-feminism' in which NGOs who are professionalized and have sustained relationship with state institutions for capacity, organization and funding as well as a cooperative relation with these actors for conducting activities in partnership. While conducting projects in cooperation with the state institutions, such as national ministries and local governments, they remain 'apolitical', meaning that they remain 'neutral' to some of the problematic issues and tensions which are borne from laws, norms and practices which still maintain hierarchical gendered relations of power. Projects level works such as those addressed at increasing women's access to existing institutions such

as the labor market, political participation, education and health belong to this quadrant. This is therefore the quadrant which is the least detached and conflictual method for engaging with the state institutions.

The second quadrant, as an invented space, is the less institutionalized form of grass-roots activism which can be undertaken by NGOs too but their relationship with the state institutions can be more problematic and conflictual. They still engage with the state institutions such as through demanding service provisions, social rights, legal assistance but they retain their political position by addressing issues of patriarchy that are sustained by political and social institutions. Activities of this type include protecting women from domestic violence through support systems which include state mechanisms such as the judiciary and the police forces, demanding shelters, nursing homes, childcare centers, and community centers for women. Through these activities women still have to cooperate with local and national governments for service provisioning, holding them liable to providing services for women, but they demand more transformative remedies for women.

The third quadrant relates to a more disengaged relationship with the state from project-feminism but a relatively more cooperative relationship than grass-roots activism. As stated earlier, this quadrant also falls under invited spaces. Examples of this quadrant would be the activities such as lobbying and advocacy for gender-equality outcomes in policy, laws and regulations. Organized women cooperate with the state from an autonomous and detached position during lobbying and advocacy activities, while still holding a political stance for their demands but engaging with state institutions by networking and being included in the policy making circles.

The fourth area of activity pertains to the conflict and detachment quadrant; for activities which are largely conflictual against the state institutions and are autonomous and require no engagement with institutions under invented spaces; such as street protests, loose-based networks for raising consciousness raising among the masses and for creating a public opinion on political matters. During these activities, organized women still hold their political autonomy from the state institutions by devising their own politics, as well as staying mostly detached from formal political institutions.

*Figure 3 Methods of feminist activism and engagement with institutions*

Once again, I argue that this distinction is important to make because while they may exist all together within a women's movement, the main strategy employed during a certain period can be subject to change according to political opportunity structures. According to my field work and survey of the Tunisian and Turkish women's movement since the 1980's, I observe that activist citizens from women's movement who work under unstable and authoritarian periods, choose conflictual and detached methods such as street protests and less institutional forms of activism; while during democratization periods where civil society activity can be sustained, feminist activists lean towards more cooperative and engaging forms of activity such as lobbying and advocacy. Given the relatively low political risks of engaging at the community level or through NGO projects, these activities remain constant throughout the movement histories.

The following sections will demonstrate through two case studies that different type of activisms become the main strategy at different times and contexts depending on the political structures which are available to organized women. During times of authoritarian regimes, detached and conflictual activism under invented spaces become more efficient for feminist activists as the regime gets more conservative and halts progressive agendas for women. However, during democratization periods; lobbying and advocacy, activities which are still autonomous but aims to create an issue-based cooperation with the state institutions yield concrete results for feminist activists.

## 4.2 *From cooperative engagement to conflictual autonomy: The case of Turkey*

As explained in detail in the previous chapter, the women's question in Turkey was dominated by the official discourse which suggested that women's rights were already 'given' by the republican reforms in the earlier century and that there were no issues to discuss with respect to women's rights until the 1980s (Y. Arat 2010b). During this time, most of the women's groups and associations formed during the post-Republican era have concentrated on 'helping' or 'educating' women living in the rural areas, instead of questioning their own status or advocating for further rights. Moreover, the dichotomy they perceived between the urban and the rural women limited their understanding of the problems, whom they were trying to 'help' (Ilkkaracan 2007).

It was during this decade that the autonomous feminist movement emerged, in the after math of the military coup in 1980 which caused a major shock in Turkish politics. Given the repressive environment against all dissident activity within formal politics as well as informal politics, there was a political opportunity structure for the emergence of the feminist movement. Pinar Ilkkaracan, a founding member of the Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) – New Ways stated her curiosity about this condition in our interview:

> "Academia writes a lot about how [Turkish] women's movement was the first civil movement after the 1980 coup. What I realized afterwards is that the story is not simple and goes beyond; there a more global structure at play. The same thing happens in Pakistan, Chile and Yemen, the women's movement came about after a military coup. Women are not being taken seriously and there is a structural opening for women, a window of opportunity. After 1980, there was martial law in place; how come this window opened? And now we have an authoritarian government, and this window of opportunity is closed."[30]

Activists from this period regularly noted that it was both the influence of the second wave of feminism which spread around the globe as well as the fact that they were not yet being taken seriously by the political elite. The repressive environment towards other movements allowed them not to face the repression which other movements such as the leftist movement of the 1970s faced from the government. While they were

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[30] Phone interview with Pinar Ilkkaracan, 1 February 2017.

detached from the state and its institutions at the time, they were openly in a conflictual relationship with the state. Through street protests and other creative acts of citizenship under invented spaces, they have targeted patriarchal institutions such as the judiciary and the bureaucracy. This period was the period in which the feminist movement was in the making.

The period which followed was a period which lasted until about 2000 was the crucial moment in the Turkish women's movement where the movement became very influential to make extensive reforms in laws and raising public awareness for the equal rights of women as well as the problem of domestic violence (Altınay and Arat 2009). The previous decades of the Kemalist regime had granted women with some rights, but the feminist claims showed that there were no preventive measures in the laws to prevent domestic violence. Despite the regime's claims of being a champion in women's rights, perpetrators of domestic violence were being tried with unequal laws under the penal code. As such, the period of late 1990s was when women's movement started to organize against these codes. In the words of an independent feminist, Zelal Ayman:

> After developing an understanding, we attacked laws. The Protection Order, preventive measures, Law No.4320, the 1998 campaign were all a result of this effort. So, our first step was to make sure we had laws against violence in place. That is how we achieved Law No.4320. So many drafts were made, so many correspondences with parliamentary members, government members, pressuring commissions... 14 years later in 2012 the law No.6284 was approved and we managed to extend the changes to 25 articles. This was a great gain. We changed the civil code which said, 'man is the head of family'. Or like in the penal code, we added the clause which recognizes marital rape. Marital rape was not a crime in the past; you could gang rape a woman, and if one of the perpetrators married the woman, the others were pardoned. This has changed. If they bring it back, we will fight again; violence against women became a public action."31

As testified by Ayman, the main strategy employed during this period was lobbying and advocacy, and engagement with the state authorities to enact the reforms that were necessary to improve women's condition from all parts of social life under invited spaces. Two major codes have been reformed through consistent pressure from women's groups during this period which coincided with the democratization wave, lasting until about mid

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[31] Interview with Zelal Ayman, independent Kurdish feminist, also working in Women for Women's Rights – New Ways NGO, January 2017, Istanbul

2000s. A pioneer among Turkish feminists, academic and activist Sirin Tekili also attested:

> "During this period lobbying was more popular rather than street protests. Both the civil and penal code reforms happened during when right wing politicians were in power. Lobbying was very successful around the parliament."[32]

The said period saw extensive institutionalization of gender-equality norms despite the presence of right-wing and conservative governments in power. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this was because the period in between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s was a period whereby Turkey was enacting reforms as part of the EU accession process (N. Kardam 2005). In December 1999, Turkey was accepted as a candidate for membership by the EU. Consequently, Turkey was required to prepare a national program in order to bring its legal, political and economic system in line with EU requirements. The so-called ‘National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis’, a long list of reforms promised by Turkey in preparation for its accession to the EU was prepared and made public in 2001, and included a planned reform of the Turkish codes (Ilkkaracan 2007).

One of the main reasons that lobbying and advocacy had yielded successful gains for women during this period was the role of individual bureaucrats who were personally aware of the need to advance women’s condition, active within the bureaucrats and politicians who had some influence on the policy making. Pinar Ilkkaracan explains:

> "As for the state institutions, K*SGM*[33] was recently founded at the time. We visited Selma Acuner[34], the day she was removed from duty and replaced by Işılay Saygın[35]. This was such a pity because Selma worked personally very hard to establish KSGM. Until AKP, we had a very warm relation with them and had an influencing power.

Similar comments have been made with respect to the importance of individual bureaucrats during that time. For example, on the civil code reform, Ayse Ayata, a

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[32] Interview with Sirin Tekeli, February 2017, Bodrum

[33] Directorate General for Women’s Issues (KSGM); the government branch for issues of gender-equality, established in mid-1990s. The directorate was placed under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2011, a move which was largely critiqued by the autonomous women’s movement due to its conservative nature.

[34] The director general of KSGM

[35] Isilay Saygin was a right-wing politician, serving as the minister in charge of women’s affairs in addition to several other roles under the right-wing Refah-Yol government in late 1990s.

professor on gender and politics at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara commented;

> "The Civil Code was reformed as a whole and it was the family law section that concerned the women the most. Hikmet Sami Turk[36] was personally very involved and influential. He was a law professor specialized on trade law, but he has been intellectually involved in women's issues."[37]

The presence of feminist friendly bureaucrats during this period was a major levy through which organized women could put pressure on policy makers. Despite the presence of right-wing and conservative governments in power, and the feminist dislike against bureaucratic institutions (Ferguson 1984), women's groups during this period were able to communicate and establish a network with bureaucrats within conservative institutions. This was because during the democratization period, bureaucrats could push for independent agendas on their own as citizens, rather than obeying complete authority of the one-man rule seen under authoritarian regimes. This shows how invited spaces play a crucial role in expanding women's citizenship rights as well as the importance of invented spaces in creating new spaces of political action.

However, cooperation with bureaucrats came with its caveats, one of which was to hold a less 'marginal' position and to settle with a more mainstream position. A feminist lawyer active in the women's movement for decades, Canan Arin explained how they were able to gather the attention of right-wing politicians on the necessity of protective measures for eradicating domestic violence:

> "One example is No. 4320 Protection order (or the U.S. version as restraining order, Turkish name of the law is the 'protection of family'). The parliamentary debate during the making of this law is very interesting. A male MP claimed that these unruly feminists were trying to destroy the family institution, and things like these should be kept in private, and not made public. Isilay Saygin in a cunning way named the law as 'the law on protection of the family', since the family is holy, and women are unimportant."

Naming the law under the discourse of protection of the family was a strategy for women to 'bargain with patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988), given the dominance of right-wing

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[36] The minister of justice at the time.
[37] Interview with Ayse Ayata, independent feminist academic, 22 February 2017, Ankara

politicians around the state. Right-wing politicians have traditionally sought to promote the values of 'family' rather than women's individual rights within the family (Mayer, Ajanovic, and Sauer 2014; Meret and Siim 2013). Therefore, labelling the protection order as 'family protection' was became a successful strategy for lobbying activists.

Through engagement and cooperation with both the state institutions and with other women's groups under invited spaces, the women's movement achieved major reforms outlined in the previous chapter. All of these reforms have been gained as a result of as the result of a successful advocacy campaigns led by a platform of women's and LGBT organizations. During AKP's third term which began in 2011, and the new presidential system in 2016, the previous period of extensive reforms on women's rights came to an end. My interviewees shared the sentiments voiced by Pinar Ilkkaracan for the motivations of this turn:

> "Until 2007 AKP held back. There was a certain level of political correctness. The Director General on Women's Issues mentioned to me once that they were under a lot of pressure because femicides were becoming very visible. It's a different story whether they believed these or not, but they felt pressured, to make these changes in order to gain votes. The 2007 referendum was a turning point for Turkey. I think after winning 2007 they launched their complete agenda and turned 180 degrees. 2007-2010 was the implementation years of this agenda and after 2010 we (the women's movement) completely lost touch. Others who are in good relations with the government keep getting favored."[38]

Attested by other interviewees, there was a major change in the political environment of the government towards civil society following 2010. Feminist activists generally believe that AKP government was acting within a certain 'political correctness' in their first two terms in power. Once the government policies turned more authoritarian, this had an impact on the links the women's movement had with the state. Several others commented for example, at the lack of contact they had with the bureaucrats following 2010, which a decade ago they enjoyed to a great extent. They contended that bureaucrats could no longer speak their minds and any dissident voice within the state institutions would be penalized; and was therefore silenced. This was true within the civil society as well; the only associations that have been able to maintain any influence over the

[38] Interview with Pinar Ilkkaracan, January, 2017.

government are those classified as governmental non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) such as KADEM[39].

Having ousted their rivals around the state apparatus, the international conventions, including the Istanbul Convention of 2011 of which Turkey is one of the first signatory states, no longer constitute a pressure point for the AKP government. Within this context, the AKP increasingly expressed its lack of interest in meeting feminist demands and instead opted for a conservative political stance with respect to upholding family values and deindividualization of women (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu 2011). In 2011 the Women's and Family was reduced into Ministry of Family and Social Policies, women's shelters were a target of criticism as they were 'damaging family values'. In this recent period, not only did the gender-equality reforms come to a halt, but a counter-discourse on women's equality became the norm. As an example, in 2012, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister of Turkey at the time asserted that "abortion is equivalent to murder" (Acar and Altunok 2013). Another example of this was the draft proposal to provide amnesty for child marriages in 2016 and its subsequent retraction from the women's movement (Karakas 2016). During this time, women's groups have lost their capacity to influence policy-making and have had to resort to street politics under invented spaces to make their voices heard[40].

Given the extreme forces of repression on associations and NGOs, women started organizing around loose issue-based networks and platforms, taking to the streets with an increasingly inclusive discourse for all types of cleavages, rallying around the common practices of AKP against gender-equality. However, this new repressive environment created a cleavage between younger women who have joined the larger movement after 2000, and more experienced women who have lived through the success of lobbying and advocacy. The newcomers to the women's movement tend to choose against cooperation and engagement with state institutions and prefer a conflictual stance given the increasing

[39] Association for Women and Democracy
[40] Interviews with multiple WROs representatives

number of human rights violations committed by the AKP regime. Cigdem Aydin, a former president of KA-DER[41], explains this cleavage among the women's movement:

> "For a long time, young women thought it is more important to be on the street. We on the contrary, especially speaking of KA-DER, we choose lobbying, desk work, academic production. I think these are complementary tactics. Another idea is to have KA-DER on the complete opposition of political actors, but this is not really helpful. KA-DER principles are based on transforming gendered perceptions and attitudes and without any communication and interaction, how are you supposed to do this with no contact?"

Aydin here explains how they see it necessary for a women's rights NGO to engage with state institutions in order to create changes in their practices and discourses. Adopting a conflictual strategy with no engagement would hinder their cause of mass influence. In addition, doing this on more empirical grounds, basing their arguments on the 'expertise' provided by research and training, would give them more power in the eyes of the state actors. The fact that so many feminists rely on feminist theory can been seen as 'ideological' and invoke a partisan reaction from bureaucrats who prefer to stay neutral. A constitutional law professor who has been involved in many training programs for bureaucrats, Bertil Emrah Oder explains the benefits of this strategy:

> "When you do not vulgarize and popularize your issues, and come in with an academic and technical approach, you have a higher chance to get taken seriously. Even though at the beginning some bureaucrats may not be very involved, when things move along within a well-structured program, after a point you may reach an outstanding achievement. There is already a group of people within the state institutions with certain interest in the subject, but the majority is not like this. They either stay neutral, or never reflected upon these issues, or the contrary, support typical gender roles, which usually tend to be the loudest ones in a group. But the benefit of this academic trainings and well-structured and non-personalized approach can lead to success."

Clearly standing against political and conflictual approaches, Oder's sentiments towards a 'technical' and 'expert' method of engagement with the state institutions under invited spaces help creating a certain kind of hierarchy between the trainer and the trainee. Oder stated in addition that when the bureaucrats see an academic in a training rather than an 'activist' who has a conflictual relationship with the state institutions, it becomes easier to gain their attention, as well as their respect. This type of technical approach to women's

[41] Association for Supporting Women Candidates

issues shows once again that the bureaucrats can act more in cooperation with the women's movement under a repressive environment since they do not have to take a conflictual political position against the government.

However, under the current repressive environment in which AKP regime has closed all channels of informal political participation, engagement and cooperation become less and less supported by the women's movement. The NGOs who chose engaging and cooperating with the state under repressive conditions are being excluded from the current mainstream movement; which choses street protests and grass-roots mobilizing, inventing new spaces of political participation instead of NGO project activism or lobbying. Attempts of engaging with the state is seen as 'cooperating with the enemy'. Reinforcing her stance on the issue, Cigdem Aydin acclaims:

> "During the last debate over our attendance with the meeting of the ministers, we were told we should not have even sat down with them. I do not agree with this. When we went to the recent 8th of March organization meetings, we were also not understood, our opinions were not even taken seriously. Their memories only capture that the draft law on the child marriages amnesty, which was stopped by their street protests. They forget how in the past through lobbying and associations many legal reforms have been achieved."

Given Aydin's testimony claiming that the methods of engagement such as lobbying and advocacy with the state institutions are no longer accepted within the women's movement, women have increasingly opted for street protests, calls of which are made within loose networks among women's organizations which have been mobilized in the recent years. In terms of strategies of engagement, a similar period in the post-1980 coup is visible in the women's movement, with efforts to include all types of women under new invented spaces, calling for solidarity and union among women to counter act against the repressive policies of AKP government which affect women on all fronts. These strategies tend to focus on grassroots activism which support service delivery for women as well as conflictual street protests where women activists regularly face police repression for their activities. While a number of associations and NGOs have been shut down during the martial law period following the coup attempt of July 2016, many activists who used to be included in circles of policy making are no longer seen welcome.

In this section, I showed that while Turkish feminists have achieved great gains by pushing for reforms in discriminatory laws in the early 2000s when the Turkish state was

more open to collaborate with outside actors, they have chosen a strategy to focus on grass-roots and street activism since lobbying and advocacy channels were closed to them after especially 2010. During the period of democratic openings, they were able to engage with the state, and make demands through advocacy and lobbying despite the fact that this meant that their political stance had to be moderated in order to pass some laws.

### *4.3 From conflictual autonomy to cooperative engagement: The case of Tunisia*

While Turkish feminist activists face increasing repression and exclusion from state institutions in the recent years, the opposite trajectory is the case for Tunisia following the 2011 revolution which toppled down the old dictatorial regime with a new democratic one. Despite troubles which exist during the democratization process, the space for maneuver of the civil society has expanded, in which women activists find opportunities to influence policy and law making around state institutions. It is during this time that women activists enjoy a privileged position around public institutions and increasingly focus on lobbying and advocacy activities by engaging the new regime.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, *Femmes democrates* were vocal about international and local issues; they also took part in crucial moments in the history of Tunisian social movements and performed their own street protests in new invented spaces. In 1984, during the "bread revolts" which came as a response to the government's decision to double the price of grains due to the Structural Adjustment Plans promoted by the IMF in developing countries in the 1980s. As one of the leading ATFD women, Souad Triki says:

> "This (the political decision) was a political error and there were mass revolts, then death penalties for those who rebelled. As *femmes democrates*, we took to the streets to say "no" to death penalties, we visited some ministries, such as the Minister of Women. We were more or less involved nationally."

Following the establishment of the ATFD and AFTURD in 1989 by the *femmes democrates*, the Tunisian women's movement achieved on a new level of influence and became one of the most critical actors within civil society, advocating for pluralism and liberalism. They brought together women from the Tahar Haddad Club and others under the banner of democracy, human rights and a voice for women in local and international

politics. The current president of the ATFD, Monia Ben Jamia explains the dictatorship years and about their efforts to stay autonomous:

> "All during the dictatorship years we were suppressed…But as a civil society organization we have had to address to the state all the time. When we had to direct women to ministry of social affairs or to hospitals or child protection, we address authorities. We were politically disconnected, we were in opposition to the regime but on the other hand we continued because we had no other means to collaborate with the state in the case of violence or which law to pass."

According to the testimonies of several *femmes democrates* during the dictatorship years, ATFD women were suppressed during the dictatorship years. They were subjected to various censorships on their campaigns and they were surveyed 24 hours while conducting their activities. They held street protests but were severely repressed by the police. Their phone calls were tapped and they were banned from the media. These measures made it difficult for them to pass their message, but their inefficient existence also constituted a showcase for the regime. As a grassroots NGO, they had to engage with the state as well. They had to negotiate between strategies of engagement and detachment while also trying to strike a balance between cooperation and conflict. The ambiguous attitude of the regime against their activities, while being a source of showcase for the regime's legitimacy in the eyes of foreign actors, put *femmes democrates* in a difficult situation whereby they had to navigate between staying in touch with the state officials while at the same time being repressed by them. One of the means for repression was through blocking their funds coming from the state or from abroad. Souad Triki of *femmes democrates* explains:

> "We were always on the opposition, we were never supported financially by the government, except the first time that we established ATFD, the presidency made a donation, and that was it. When it finished, we repeated our demand and the adviser to the president told us that 'Independence comes with a price', because we were independent of the government and we were on the opposition."

Despite persisting efforts from women's groups who navigated the murky waters of the one-man rule for three decades, the 1990s and 2000s saw little advance in terms of women's rights reforms. The relationship of the ATFD with the state was that they were somewhat tolerated but never really accepted as an independent autonomous organization. As secular women, they helped the regime to present a good image abroad,

while at the same time the women from Islamist movement were being severely repressed by the authoritarian and secular Ben Ali regime[42].

In contrast, with the ousting of Ben Ali from power and the democratization period that followed after the 2011 revolution, Tunisian political sphere witnessed significant changes. The post-2011 politics was especially marked by a heightened competition between Islamist and secular parties during the writing of the new constitution and establishing the new democratic state (Bennoune 2015), as well as a wave of reforms in women's rights. This competition became increasingly visible especially around questions of gender in the post-2011 period given the competition between the new comer Islamist parties and the former secular establishment (Bennoune 2015).

Not only the political scene, but also the civil society opened up to new political actors, in which Islamist women's organizations and a new generation of women's NGO's were established in addition to many other secular civil society organizations. This meant that instead of the mostly top-down policy reforms of the previous regime, the new regime in Tunisia started acknowledging demands coming from the civil society as well as the political elite. Their status was further reinforced which allowed for this already experienced group of women to take part in gender equality agenda and policy-making. A representative from a new NGO, Aswat Nissa (Voice of Women) after the 2011 revolution claims when asked about their relationship with the state institutions:

> "We don't have any problems, we do not really work with anyone from the state at the moment. The state does not really come into our work, we are independent as organization."[43]

When I asked her about their approach to the political climate of the country, she responded, "I cannot really comment on that, as we are 'apolitical'. I cannot officially give an answer it's not my place." When describing their activities, she commented that they were mainly conducting trainings for women's political participation and raising awareness for gender equality but that they were again 'apolitical' and neutral which meant that they had equidistant relationship with all the parties and state institutions. A

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[42] Interviews with multiple WRO representatives

[43] Interview with the NGO representative of Aswat Nissa, 26 April, 2017 Tunis.

similar comment was made by Meriem Mechti, a young worker at the Women and Leadership, an NGO established after the revolution, she criticized political party and NGO relations as being partisan and said that their NGO was 'apolitical, as all the NGOs should be"[44].

However, the political atmosphere after the revolution was particularly polarized and complex which pushed many NGOs to actively take sides. During the post revolution period, women in Tunisia took to the streets especially for the first three years after the revolution. Following the ouster of Ben Ali in 2011, on August 13, 2012 when the new Tunisian National Constituent Assembly was discussing the draft law based on the principle of "women's complementarity to men," thousands of women protested on social media and on the streets to declare that "women are citizens just like men, and they should not be defined based on men" (Tajine 2017). Consequently, many Tunisian women's associations took to the streets of Tunis to advocate for the withdrawal of the article. They affirmed that they would continue to mobilize as long as the constitution did not guarantee the objectives of the revolution: freedom, dignity, equality and social justice (Boitiaux 2012). This protest was a crucial point within the Tunisian women's rights movement against an increasingly conservative government and suggested a reversal of women's rights in the country.

Women took to the streets every time they felt that their rights were being under attack by the Salafist movement. However, despite this high visibility of women's presence on the streets for the first several years after the revolution, organized women started undertaking many efforts in lobbying and advocacy in the following period. Torkia Chebbi, the president of a new NGO in Tunis called Ligue des Electrices Tunisiennes (LET) commented on the period;

> "Women were behind the writing of the constitution. We have a constitution that now respects women's rights. We made lobbying and protests so that our rights wouldn't be sanctioned or touched."[45]

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[44] Interview with Meriem Mechti from Femmes et Leadership, April, 2017, Tunis.
[45] Interview with Torkia Chebbi, president of LET, April 2017, Tunis.

Six years following the revolution however, some activists confided in me that street protests required too much energy and that they were tired after protesting for so long in the first years after the revolution. Instead, they were telling me now that they had a special position with respect to state institutions, and that they were now being consulted on issues on gender equality which they were perceived as experts by politicians. For example, in addition to the constitution writing period, Tunisian parliament adopted in July 2017 a law for eliminating violence against women (MEE 2017). The law corrected some discriminatory provisions of the penal code and requires state institutions to have a comprehensive approach to prevention and assistance for victims of violence. This law was also the main effort of years-long campaigns by the leading associations in the women and human rights areas. The next on the agenda is to bring equality to inheritance laws, for which organized women have been lobbying for years. Nadia Hakimi, the general secretary of ATFD explains;

> "We also have been carrying a campaign since 2000, for equality in inheritance. We wrote down and published many of our arguments. We went to deputies and explained them our recommendations for the law. It went to the parliament I hope they will take it in consideration."

While the women activists, mainly organized around ATFD have been enjoying close, sometimes organic, relations with especially secular parties in the government, some of the newer generation of women find their methods out of touch with the real demands of women in their everyday lives, and not politically dissident. A young activist and feminist Lina Ben Mhenni explained:

> "What is important in my opinion is to get in touch with people. Many organizations tend to use methods like lobbying, it is true that it's important to change laws, to convince politicians as well but we have to be in touch with people to understand problems and also to spread awareness about different issues. I always go meet people, they have a problem because they think their representatives, politicians, deputies are not listening them, and it creates a problem of miscommunication."

The younger generation of grassroots activists take part in not only feminist struggle but find it also important to help country to build its new regime by taking a conflictual stance against the state institutions through collaborating with all civil society institutions who are in the struggle for a democratic rule in Tunisia. There is a shared sentiment among these activists that the ATFD women come from personally privileged backgrounds which help them gain a privileged position within the women's movement. They find grass-roots activities and street protests more important because it helps them

to keep in touch with the local communities and keep up the struggle for a new Tunisia. Some have confessed that while the ATFD women enjoy their networks among the new parliament and public institutions, media and transnational circles, younger activists on the street still continue to feel the pressure of an oppressive regime.

### *4.4 Conclusion*

By focusing on different political episodes since the post-1980 context in which autonomous women's movements have emerged in both countries, this chapter traced the dynamic relationship between various macro political developments and women's movements' acts of citizenship in Tunisia and in Turkey. It explored the different types of engagement with the state and through a typology, divided the acts of citizenship into four different categories along two axes; engagement-detachment from the state and conflict-cooperation with the state, differentiating between invited and invented spaces evoked in chapter 2.

It argued that when the regimes were more authoritarian, cooperation with the state became more difficult for women's movements and they took more detached, and conflictual positions against the authoritarian and conservative politics of the regime. This shows how women's movements expand citizenship regimes through its extent despite being under an authoritarian regime through promoting activism within invented spaces. During times of regime change towards democracy, when governments allowed influence from outside actors as in civil society; women's movements achieved greater results through engaging and cooperating with the state through lobbying for changes in unequal laws and policies under invited spaces.

The two stories of Turkish and Tunisian women's movements acts of citizenship are far more complicated and diverse as one could explain in one single chapter. However, looking at the main strategy employed by the women's movements at different times and contexts reveal an interesting story. In both cases, the dictatorship years push the activists for more conflictual modes of participation, as they felt their own activities as well as other social groups were severely repressed, yet they chose to participate in street protests and grassroots activism for the cost of which were high under authoritarian rule. This was because during authoritarian times, the link between the citizen and the state was severely cut off, so women's groups opted for other measures to make their demands heard under

politically risky conditions. On the contrary, when the political regime was open for influence from outsiders, they engaged and cooperated with them through lobbying and advocacy. During these times they found it easier to cooperate with ally bureaucrats who could act sometimes in opposition to the conservative government in power. This shows how invited and invented spaces are employed differently according to the larger political structures. In addition it shows that under repressive periods, when political spaces of participation in governmental decision shrinks, there is a shift toward more contentious and autonomous civil society activism.

This analysis however also suggests another argument. As can be seen from both cases, lobbying and advocacy, as well as project feminism are acts of citizenship which require more institutional and organizational capacity than compared to street and grassroots politics. These activities have a certain barrier for newcomer activists, who may have a more conflictual and radical approach to feminist politics and therefore seem like co-opted by the regime when lobbying activists establish contact and dialogue with the state institutions. From this, it can be argued that activities that are more conflictual and grassroots may have higher risks for facing state oppression, but have lower costs for entrance for new comers. Lobbying and advocacy, engaging in project feminism and with other state public institutions require a certain level of preexisting 'capital' in the Bordieuan sense such as connections within political elite at the national and transnational level, speaking foreign languages, having expertise in project writing and funding. Requiring this certain level of capital renders these activities as exclusionary for some groups.

Next chapters will delve deeper into the differences and tensions between women's groups in both countries and talk about how they rebuild and shift collective identities; the depth of citizenship regimes, and finally the content of citizenship regimes in terms of defining what is the common good for women they represent.

# CHAPTER 5 BUILDING AND SHIFTING SECULAR AND ETHNIC IDENTITIES: DEPTH OF CITIZENSHIP

This chapter is about the *depth* of citizenship regimes; which denotes the ways in which women have been excluded from equal citizenship regimes under the universalist promise of being an equal citizen. The universalist accounts of citizenship as equal treatment of all citizens have been problematized through feminist literature, which has uncovered the ways in which women have been excluded from full citizenship regimes due to their gender. In addition to exclusions based on gender, later intersectional literature on feminist citizenship argued that gender was not in itself a comprehensive social category but had to be also seen in junction with other social categories such as race, ethnicity, religiosity, age, ability and the like (Denis 2008; Hancock 2007; Haraway 1988). I show in this chapter that through their practices (Whittier and Taylor 1995), women's groups have reinterpreted the universal category of women to include other identities at the intersection of gender and religion and ethnicity.

In order to demonstrate how women's movements expand the depth of citizenship regimes, I first focus on the relationship between secularism as a nation-state identity and the acts of Islamist women against this construction as a common denominator in both Turkey and Tunisia. In the first part of the chapter, I aim to show how Islamist women deconstruct the hegemonic identities built by their founding ideology; the strict and authoritarian secular ideology by which the state controls religious affairs and symbols. Islamist women have reconstructed the strict and monolithic practice of secularism through their acts against the headscarf ban which limited religious women's presence within the private sphere and excluded them from the public sphere.

In the first part of the chapter, in place of arguing that Islamist women created an anti-secular stance, I argue that secularism is continuously *reinterpreted* through counter-hegemonic acts. More specifically, through their collective action, I show how different

groups of women challenge the interpretations of secularism by the nation-state, and reconstruct its secular identity over a period of four decades. This way, I show how intersectional approach to social justice movements overlap and result in the emergence of new identities, such as Islamist and post-Islamist women within the larger women's movements and how in return they get co-opted by these larger movements.

In the second part of the chapter, I focus on the case of the women activists within the Kurdish minority in Turkey. Seen under the specific historical and political context of the Kurdish movement, I show how different types of subjectivities were enacted by Kurdish women who by separating from the rest of the Turkish women's movement have navigated the spaces available for them in formal and informal politics; in the parliament, as dissident activists in invented spaces. The case of Kurdish women's movement shows how citizenship regimes, built on an exclusive understanding of Turkish ethnicity in Turkey, have been challenged by a minority group, who have termed their rights claims from both an ethnicity and gender perspective.

Furthermore, I also aim to show in this chapter that the process of deconstruction and reconstruction the counter-hegemonic identity claims of organized Islamist women and the Kurdish women interact with larger political movements. The grievances and demands for recognition for the Islamist women became an instrument in the hands of formal political groups belonging to the political Islam movement who instrumentalized women's grievances for gains in terms of electoral support. The Kurdish women on the other hand have been tolerated by the state at times when the government had a more cooperative relationship with the Kurdish movement, and they have been delegitimized when the government had a more hostile relationship with the Kurdish movement.

The comparison of Turkey and Tunisia show in this chapter that the challenge to established narratives around identity occur differently in each context because the Islamist movement which began in the 1980s was largely suppressed by the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia. Given the recent emergence of Islamists in political sphere in the post-2011 Tunisia, we see signs from Islamist women who began to talk in favor of veiled women in public spaces through transitional justice committees and advocacy. More specifically, only after the revolution we see signs of collective demands around the issue of headscarf ban and the question of the presence of veiled women in the public sphere,

whereas Turkish women have challenged the headscarf ban since the 1980s. I attribute this difference to the given the success of political movements such as political Islam's claims of recognition of their different identities and the political opportunity structures which were available in the case of Turkey but not in Tunisia until after 2011.

### *5.1 Headscarf ban as a collective identity marker*

As one of the most debated difference claims of women, the headscarf issue has been a collective debate in both countries around which organized Islamist women have rallied (Y. Arat 2010a; G. A. Marshall 2005). I start this section by showing how the headscarf ban in both Turkey and Tunisia has led to the emergence of a new collective identity around conservative women. This collectivization occurred through the adoption of a human's rights discourse, rather secular at its core, by the Islamist women, indicating that they have reinterpreted secular identity rather than outright rejecting it. Furthermore, I underline that in both cases, demands coming from organized women have been co-opted by the larger Islamist movement who gained increasing importance in the political scene. This outcome for citizenship regimes shows once again that citizenship regimes change through grassroots mobilizations but once they become affiliated with and co-opted by central political power, patriarchal and exclusionary practices return and lead to the emergence of new counter-hegemonic acts of citizenship.

As indicated above, the headscarf debate has taken many forms in different contexts. There is a great accumulation of scholarly work on the headscarf issue around Muslim women around the globe (Falah and Nagel 2005; Gole and Göle 1996; Lyon and Spini 2004; Olson 1985; Salem and Ben 2010). This literature has focused on different ways in which women have been excluded, repressed or emancipated through the Islamic practice of veiling under different political and social contexts. Linking women's agency and the headscarf issue around the world has led to the blurring of the boundaries between submission and resistance (Cindoglu and Zencirci 2008). Seeing this debate through women's collective action removed the debate from the infertile ground of absolute and ahistorical cultural truth claims around whether women are emancipated or suppressed by continuing a supposedly patriarchal practice; and moved it into the territory of historical and contextual analysis by looking at the demands of grassroots women's mobilizations and how they were later on co-opted by the Islamist movement within a specific historical political practice.

In the context of Turkey and Tunisia, the headscarf debate has been linked to the modernization and secularization reforms of the late Ottoman and early republican reforms (Badran 2005; Göle 1997). Regulations on citizens' clothing was an essential component of the modernization project in both countries. The new ideal woman of the republic was constructed in contrast to the ideal of the backward and traditional woman, the former taking the role of urban, socially progressive but still appropriately Muslim and most significantly, unveiled. Nonetheless, women wearing headscarves in public buildings was not an issue in either Turkish or Tunisian politics until the 1980s. The republican secularism was comprehensive and radical, encouraging women to remove their headscarf in public sphere (see Y. Arat 2010a for detail in Turkey; and Salem and Ben 2010 for Tunisia).

However, following the rise of political Islam in the region in the 1980s, the headscarf also was included within political debates between secularist and Islamist camps. The secular (laique in fr.) state in Turkey and Tunisia banned women from wearing the headscarf in public institutions around the same time; for Turkey this was in 1982 with an administrative decision for universities and in Tunisia, there was a presidential law which imposed this ban through the Circular 108 in 1981. In the following sections, I individually take up the cases of Turkey and Tunisia's headscarf ban and how it led to the construction of acts of citizenship by a new collective of women by Islamist women and the recent challenges from a 'post-Islamist' perspective (Bayat 2010).

## *5.2 The headscarf ban in Turkey*

Given the relative success of women's modernization and urbanization policies in Turkey, an increasing number of women students began attending universities starting from the second half of the 1980s, some of whom were veiled. This development made the practice of wearing the headscarf noticeable in the new urban sphere, outside of provincial areas where a large majority of women already practiced some type of veiling. Subsequently, a new word was coined to differentiate between the traditional and urban styles of covering – *başörtüsü* for the former and *türban* for the latter. *Türban* would be used by secular circles in reference to the politicization of the issue, which would denote a type of different veil for women who wore it differently than the 'traditional' way and who symbolized the role of political Islam (Turam 2008). Instead, the word *başörtüsü*

would be employed by religious activists to reject the political connotation of the word *türban*. As such, the debate was moved to a political level whereby the political and bureaucratic elite took explicit sides either for or against women's choice to wear which type of headscarf and this became an issue concerning citizenship regimes as the elites debated what the appropriate citizen should look like and how they should practice their religious beliefs.

Ambiguous actions by the government complicated the issue; there was no general ban on wearing the headscarf, however it was restricted by administrative decisions regarding universities. These decisions were ad hoc, taken individually by university administrations. The start of the ban goes back to 1982, to a decision taken by the Council of Higher Education Board (YÖK)[46] when women students who refused to take off their headscarves were no longer allowed to enter universities. This action led a group of religious women to initiate a series of public protests, demonstrations and legal action for the lifting of the ban starting in 1984. Over the years, veiled women were forced to take off their headscarves, some stopped attending classes and those who were fortunate continued their education abroad. Resisting YÖK's ban, some women continued to attend classes with headscarves.

The ban was reintroduced more forcefully during what became to be famously known as the 28 February 1997 period in Turkey, during which the state under military tutelage took a number of provisionary measures to oppress the Islamist politics. The issue became more pronounced in 1998 when YÖK issued a declaration and universities started to implement the headscarf ban. During this period, universities created "persuasion rooms" to convince veiled women to remove their headscarves; and sometimes, security forces forcefully removed students from classrooms (Elver 2012). During the 28 February 1997 period the state agency in charge of the national security agenda in Turkey (MGK) reversed the moderate approach adopted earlier by Özal government and took a stricter stance against the headscarf. Through what has been called

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[46] YÖK was established by the 1982 Constitution after the 1980 military coup to establish state control over universities.

a 'soft coup', the MGK, led by army officials, advised the True Path and Welfare Party coalition government to protect laicism[47] which subsequently meant to strictly enforce the headscarf ban among other repression of religious activities. Afterwards, YÖK began enforcing the headscarf ban more strictly. As part of these measurements, veiled students were once again faced the oppression from the university managements to unveil.

First veiled woman to enter a public university was Hatice Babacan in 1967. When the university administration has banned Babacan from entering classes, a mass student protest was held after which Babacan was expelled from the school and those students who supported her were subjected to disciplinary action (Akyılmaz and Köksalan 2016). By the 1980s, women wearing headscarves had already begun publicly protesting the ban that was imposed on wearing headscarves in public institutions. One of the first protests by veiled women, which also found a place on the mainstream media, was held in December 1986 when a group of university students sent a telegram to President Kenan Evren, Prime Minister Turgut Özal and head of the YÖK İhsan Doğramacı, requesting the lift of the ban.[48] Numerous demonstrations were held by veiled students in front of university buildings and other political institutions such as the parliament building in the late 1980s. Some students had to face disciplinary action because of their insistence on wearing the headscarf on the university premises. Various boycotts and protests continued in the following years.

This political visibility of the Islamist women and concentration of their activities over the ban led to the institutionalization of their demands. Subsequently, the Welfare Party established a Women's Commission in 1990; ever since, women have been an active element of the political Islam movement. The ban has caused many women students to politicize and organize ad hoc protests, campaigns and legal pleas as well as

[47] Derived from its French equivalent, the concept of 'laicism' is different from secularism in the sense that it indicates "not only the 'official disestablishment of religion' from the state, but also the 'constitutional control of religious affairs' by the state" (E Fuat Keyman 2007).

[48] Milliyet Newspaper, 30.12.1986, p.1 "*Turban Eylemi*"

various support associations such as the Capital Women's Platform (Diner and Toktaş 2010).

With the rise of political Islam marked by the victory of the Welfare Party in local elections in 1994 and in general elections in 1995, they have become a more vocal and an integral part of the Islamist movement (Akman 2014). The ban, also exercised in other public institutions such as courts, primary and secondary schools, hospitals and public offices, ultimately led a group of Islamist women from various backgrounds to found associations like AK-DER (Women Against Discrimination) in 1999 in order to act in solidarity with other veiled women who were discriminated against due to their Islamic clothing (Sancar 2011). With the words of Islamist feminist Hidayet Tuksal;

> During the 28 February period the headscarf ban became an issue. Previously we were involved with the ban on a theoretical level, but after the ban our activities took a completely different turn. Legal battles, psychological support, looking for jobs for our friends, we got into an intense struggle. This was how we became identified with the headscarf issue.[49]

The transformation from a theoretical debate to lived experiences attests to how lived experiences are a source of motivation for women's acts. Before the strict enforcement of the ban, these women gathered in private spaces in which they discussed patriarchal practices which limited their autonomy, similar to the secular feminist consciousness raising circles. They debated how they were oppressed both through traditions from their own social circles as well as the strict enforcement of *laique* citizenship regime enacted by the state. When the headscarf ban became stricter, their actions became public. Organized women from the Islamist movement, given their previous acts of protest in 1980s reacted stronger in the 28 February 1997 period, taking their cause to the streets through continuous sit-ins and boycotts. While the ban on the headscarf gave these women a cause to mobilize publicly, it also caused them to be only identified with the ban which limited their previous activities which resembled the consciousness raising activities of secular feminists.

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[49] Interview with Hidayet Tuksal, Ankara, 4 April 2017

The Islamist party at the time, Welfare Party, whom were the targets of the 'soft coup' mentioned earlier (Ömer Aslan 2016), took the headscarf ban among their causes during the coup period. These protests were largely supported by the newly emerging political Islamist movement while at the same time ignored by the emerging autonomous feminist movement. In an interview published in the feminist *Pazartesi* magazine, Sibel Erarslan, a very vocal activist in the Islamist movement, noted that their protests against the veiling ban in the 1980s was what made them visible in the Islamist movement and was initially the reason behind the Islamist Welfare Party's decision to accept women members. In this interview she says that;

> "The Islamist movement defined itself for the first time through a protest… We received incredible support from the public which we hadn't anticipated before for the headscarf issue. Even young girls from the age of 17-18 were doing something. They supported us. Women had opened a door and the Islamic circles started writing and talking about it. It created a political stance, it owned it (Pazartesi, No.6)."

Despite the existence of an emerging autonomous feminist movement around the same period, the headscarf bans and the subsequent demonstrations by Islamist women were not included in the movement's agenda which largely focused instead on violence against women. According to Aldikacti-Marshall (2005), in the issue of headscarves, most feminists ally themselves with secular groups in Turkey, and against Islamist women who claimed a wider acceptance of head covering in the public sphere[50]. This exclusion led Islamist women to organize separately under newly invented spaces both against the larger patriarchal views regarding women's role in a traditional society, and the other against the secular women's movement which did not see the headscarf ban as a gendered issue, but rather as an extension of the Islamist movement's larger critical stance against one of the founding principles of the republic; laicism (Ozcetin 2009). Their exclusion led Islamist women to fight a battle on two fronts; one against their own

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[50] Despite this exclusion in 1990s and early 2000s, more recent literature shows that the situation has changed; in Turkey, most feminist activists see the question of the headscarf debate as an issue of individual rights beyond the definitions of the secular state (Fisher Onar and Paker 2012; Simga and Goker 2017). Still, according to my interviews, there is an ongoing cleavage between the Islamist and secular feminists in Turkey, mostly due to the deep cleavages of the past has not been easy to recover from.

oppression by the patriarchal institutions and the other as a legitimate group within the women's movement.[51]

> One side had a discourse which subordinated women, burdening women with the all the responsibilities of a family life, a discourse that expected too much from women, based on religion and tradition. The other discourse was also exclusionary, both discourses saw us unworthy, one in the name of religion, the other was through exclusion, by seeing your presence as a problem, by disregarding you, by offending you, etc. We gave the same struggle for our existence against these two fronts.

In terms of how these women had been excluded from the larger women's movement, my interviewees have expressed during our interviews that their presence within the international Beijing and Habitat conferences were not seen welcome by the rest of the women within the Turkish feminist movement, by the mere fact that they wore a headscarf. Despite the fact that their discourse was not based on religious arguments, but rather secular arguments around their rights, their existence was seen as foreign and unacceptable within the larger women's movement. Aldikacti Marshall (2005) also notes that despite the fact that both movements come together in such meetings, none of these encounters have resulted in a common framework for working together on women's issues during this period. According to the comments from multiple interviewees, the 1990s saw the clear split between the Islamist and secular women within the feminist movement in Turkey while at the same time political Islam was gaining more political power within larger political sphere with a relatively moderate position.

This split between the secular and Islamist women and politics at large provided AKP one of its strongest argument against the secular front; that religious women were being victims of the secular state and hence was instrumentalized in strengthening their rule. Instead of a united front among feminists and Islamist women which would be instrumental in challenging gendered citizenship regimes, they were divided along the secular-Islamist cleavage within the larger political scene. As one example, Islamist women have established alternative committees to represent conservative women in transnational networks, such as the Habitat II meeting held by the United Nations in 1996

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[51] Interview with Fatma Bostan Unal, Ankara, 22 February 2017

in Istanbul or by issuing alternative shadow reports to CEDAW committees. As explained by Fatma Bostan Unal:

> During the CEDAW reports we were also pushing our agenda, but it was never accepted. In 2000, we went to the UN ourselves to push an alternative view. We gave an alternative report to the alternative report, 7 of us traveled to the US. This can be better understood now, since the republic was founded this exclusionary mentality was present. I was the first in my class to wear the headscarf. We were the first ones to go against the mainstream agenda. Maybe they are egalitarian, but their discourse was exclusionary.

Tuksal and Bostan claimed during our interviews that if they were not polarized within the women's movement, they would have been able to achieve stronger gains and would be able to create a united front against women's oppression. Through the symbolization of the headscarf as a political marker, Islamist women were not feel welcome within the larger women's movement, accused of being an extension of the political Islam rather than an autonomous group. However, Islamist women stood at a distance from both groups, as they have reinterpreted secularism of the Turkish state from a new standpoint.

In general, during their protests, Islamist women claimed that the ban on wearing the headscarf was an *infringement of their human rights*. They appealed to the Parliament's Commission on Human Rights as well as the European Commission on Human Rights starting from the early 1990s. When the European court of Human Rights superseded the European Commission, many women repeated their pleas against the ban (Elver 2012; İnce 2014). The statement below explains this further:

> During the headscarf ban, we debated among ourselves whether to defend it through human rights or it is as a religious obligation. Some opposed to human rights discourse, saying this was very secular concept. Despite this, we preferred the human rights discourse because we believed that; 'Okay, Islam gave some rights but the rights concept we have today conceptualized by the human rights discourse is more just.' So, there is no harm to accept it as a Muslim, we can accept better concepts.[52]

The fact that Islamist women have chosen to frame their claims around a human rights discourse rather than a religious obligation or an issue of freedom of religious beliefs suggests that Islamist women have adopted a reinterpreted version of a secular

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[52] Interview with Hidayet Tuksal, Ankara, 4 April 2017

discourse. Instead of making the argument of basing their arguments on a religious discourse, they have created a distinct political subjectivity which adopted a new understanding of secularism which would be expanded to include to accommodate the claims of Islamist women as the interviews with most feminist activists claim. Especially second-generation feminists noted in my interviews that they see the headscarf as an issue of choice and autonomy rather than taking a side as a norm for or against it.

In fact, it appears from the accounts of women who have been active in this period that initially they had other concerns than the bans on the headscarf, similar to the case of secular feminist activists. They started organizing through small groupings in private spaces in which they discussed how patriarchal practices coming from within their social circles and traditions have been limiting their own agency. Most of them referred to the fact that the headscarf ban became an issue for them following the rise of the issue in the political sphere, and that their movement became to be known through the headscarf issue only. However, the issue of the headscarf ban became co-opted during the 28th of Feburary period in 1997 in Turkey and was no longer under the agency of Islamist women and was being coopted by the Welfare Party (Akman 2014). In our interviews, they explicitly mentioned that they have also tried to stay autonomous from the main groups of Islamist politics within the larger political sphere, but that political elite benefited from their exclusion.

Referring to the AKP period, Fatma Bostan Unal shared her concerns that other NGOs and platforms who work in cooperation with the party are supported financially with offices and funds for projects while their platform tries to exist under difficult conditions because they try to keep an autonomous stance with regards to the political parties. Unal herself was one of the founding members of the AKP but later due to her critical stance to the party politics, she has been expelled from the university in which she has been teaching and removed from her duties within the party:

> Those organizations who worked in cooperation with Ak Party[53] are supported financially, they have offices, funds for projects etc. Our platform is in Maltepe[54] in an apartment paid by us, existing under difficult conditions. Some of our friends envied those organizations and questioned why we had to oppose the government. But it never happened, they never got engaged with us. So, we are all independent… When Ak Party was established, I became one of their founding partners, after Ak Party's establishment most of us became involved with it somehow. But we never gave an unconditional support. We were even criticized during our protests, during this government we were criticizing their policies and because we were raising our voices, we became *persona non grata*.[55]

Despite sustained activity from Muslim women in terms of advocating the lift of the ban through these new institutions, it wasn't until 2013 that the ban on veiling for public personnel was lifted with the democratization package by AKP, the successor of Welfare Party which rules Turkey since 2002 (Y. Arat 2010a). Through this amendment, restrictive provisions were lifted in Article 5 of the dress code. I was told by Fatma Bostan Unal that it took AKP a very long time to lift the ban because they were also taking the position to protect the status quo of the secular citizenship regimes in their first two terms and ignored the demands of the activist women within both within and outside the party. Diner and Toktas (2010) argue that it was mostly the political elite, who are mostly composed of men, who have discussed the issue of the headscarf ban in the public sphere, and they argued that Islam treats women justly and no further discussion on the question of women was necessary. Despite the fact that AKP took a very strong position on a discursive level against the ban, it took them almost a decade to lift it. Once the ban was lifted, the Islamist women, whose agenda became mostly limited to the issue of the headscarf ban grew weaker, while their discourse was co-opted by the Welfare Party first, and AKP later on. For example, Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Welfare Party, once claimed that when they would rise to power, "the university presidents would have to salute these women" (R. Çakır 2000), putting these women at the center of the conflict between secular and Islamist political actors. As such, the Islamist women's agency and their demands to wear the headscarf became the object of a larger struggle of their male counterparts who sometimes collaborated with the state powers.

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[53] The successor of Welfare Party, referred in this dissertation as AKP, as it is the more common terminology used within the scholarly community.

[54] A modest district in Ankara

[55] Interview with Fatma Bostan Unal

In this section I tried to show how through their acts of citizenship, Islamist women in Turkey have created a new political subjectivity position which had a rather complex relationship with the emerging Islamist and secular feminist movement. They have kept an institutionally autonomous and critical distance to the Islamist movement which nonetheless co-opted their discourse while at the same time removing them from their own circles. Through their agenda, they have reinterpreted the secular identity and public spaces of the Turkish nation-state and challenged the main position of the 'modern' woman in place for a more traditional and conservative position. They have criticized the strictly secular identity established by the state which kept religious women out of universities and public offices; hence developing a critical approach to Kemalist ideology which has defined freedom on its own terms (Diner and Toktaş 2010) In the next section, I will be looking at a new emerging identity; the post-Islamist identities, which aim to challenge the new hegemonic status of political Islam as well as the previous limits on conservative women's agency and the limited version of their understanding of gender-equality.

### *5.3 Post-Islamist identities*

As mentioned above, following the abolishment of the headscarf ban, the most salient issue around which the Islamist women had rallied, the Islamist women's movement grew apart and became less influential[56]. This was in part due to the fact that they have failed to adopt other issues such as gender-based violence and women's autonomy within the family and society as well as more taboo issues such as birth control, sexual emancipation and divorce. At the same time, the party in power, AKP grew more hostile against the feminist movement and their positions and adopted a more patriarchal stance against gender-equality (Kandiyoti 2016).

In the most recent years, we see a new collective and political subjectivity coming from a feminist and pious position at the same time. An increasing number of pious women from the younger generation and coming from mostly good education backgrounds developed "a critique of the masculine understanding and interpretation of

[56] Multiple interviews with WROs.

gender relations in Islam"(Ozyegin 2015). These new women have built a new collective identity around questions of class, privilege, exclusion of gender-based discrimination during the AKP rule, a stance that is more inclusive of gender-based issues compared to the headscarf ban of the earlier religious women's acts of citizenship. In order to demonstrate the emergence of this new identity group, I will focus on the case of the Reçel blog.

"Reçel" (Jam – as in preserve), is an online blog which regularly publishes short pieces centered on the theme of dilemmas and conflicts that conservative young women have in their daily lives. The blog was founded in 2014 and has had increasing popularity ever since. Despite the fact that their founders and editors have noted on multiple occasions that they are open to contributions from anyone, their pieces exclusively talk about young, urban and conservative women's predicaments. Some of the editors embrace the feminist identity while others do not; however, their discourse appears to be heavily influenced by feminist theories and practices, especially of the Third World branch. They have also indicated in multiple interviews that they do not condone the use of the label "feminist" as a derogatory term but do not explicitly refer to themselves as "feminists" in order to escape the negative connotation of "feminists" as opposed to traditional values such as building a family or having kids, in favor of replacing men in society, or being uncompromising in their views.[57]

The women of *Reçel* represent a new generation of conservative women that come from a highly educated and urban background and face a multitude of tensions in their lives due to their "traditional" beliefs and "modern" lives.[58] They frequently talk about issues and ideas that might be considered taboo among conservatives and are sometimes excluded by secular feminists, such as the right to be a stay at home mother or how to balance responsibilities towards one's family and career aspirations; some topics can be considered typically feminist, such as sexual harassment, or novel, such as the problems that pious women may face in the mosque.[59] The main idea is to write about any topic

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[57] Fitrat TV interview http://www.fitrat.tv/yolculuk-muzik-ve-recel-blog-rumeysa-camdereli/
[58] Personal correspondence with Rumeysa Camdereli, a founding member of Recel
[59] http://recel-blog.com/

that represents the discrimination and suffering women are exposed to because of their gender, including the taboo subjects for the previous generation of Islamist women.

The blog germinated from the idea that there was a deep personal desire for these women to write about their own truth: since their teenage years they have been under pressure from both their own conservative social environment and strictly secular groups. They simply wanted to start a blog where they could share these grievances and show people that there were also different voices of Muslim women, which they felt was usually treated as a monolithic group (Estukyan 2015). After some time, however, the blog became very popular among young conservative women and took on a life of its own as the contributions kept pouring in from anonymous writers. They serve to bring similar women together for real life activities as well, which provides them a safe space to vent and share similar experiences and grievances (Ekmekçi 2017).

The point that differentiates the contributors of *Reçel* from previous Islamist women is the fact that they problematize more than the headscarf issue, which nevertheless still plays a central role in their daily lives. Their discourse appears heavily influenced by a post-modernist and post-Islamist[60] discourse and while at the same time is strictly critical of modernist ideals of the previous decades. The blog specifically tries to be as inclusive as possible and recognize that there is more than one "truth": everyone has their own truth and should voice this truth as long as it does not impede the discussion. With this stance, they have garnered the attention of conservative circles as well as leftist and progressive activists within the women's movement. Their interviews are published in left-wing progressive media outlets such as Agos and Medyascope, as well as conservative outlets such as Fitrat TV and Hilal TV.

These women function as a consciousness-raising group, just like the first secular feminists of the 1980s. They do not necessarily work towards policy making but instead function as an outlet through which women can express their emotions. The editors, some

[60] Bayat (Bayat 2013) uses the term post-Islamist to signify a broad range of orientation of a new Arab public in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, noting a group of young, educated, post-Ideological and variously marginalized youth who employed electronic communication to initiate uprisings.

of which identify as "feminists" do not target a certain group as their audience, but they are also aware that they can only reach urban and young women. They also note that they could not have known beforehand what a hit their blog would be. In an interview on Fitrat TV (a religious local news outlet), Rumeysa Camdereli, one of the founding members of the group, was asked repeatedly by the host whether she is a "feminist," if she thinks this is compatible with Islam, and whether she thinks it is ok that feminists try to act like men and take up every task and position that men have in society. Rumeysa replied that there are many different factions in feminism; yes, there are basic principles, but what the interviewer was specifically asking about could be classified as "enlightenment feminism," referring to the modernist ideas which, according to her own interpretation, is not real feminism.

Because they publish rather controversial pieces, the editors of *Reçel* have also faced criticism. They have been accused of being too secular or too feminist, especially by Islamists and men. There was even a counter-blog started by Islamist men called "*Turşu"* (Pickle), which accused these women of not being true Muslims. They note in interviews that they face a lot of "mansplaining" from people who want to teach them the "right" way. As such, through their activities, these women have been challenging the gendered citizenship regimes, through demanding to be recognized as a particular collective whose grievances deserve to be heard by other groups.

*Reçel* is now being used colloquially to describe women with this feminist attitude and come from young and conservative circles (Ekmekçi 2017). As such, a new post-Islamist group of women has recently come to the attention of secular feminists and there are instances of collaboration within the two, as they are inviting each other to their own meetings, or come together under protests for women's choice of clothing. Once such evidence of this is "Kiyafetime Karisma" (Do not mess with my outfit) which took place in Istanbul in July 2017 and which gathered women from both sides rallying for the right to choose their clothing; be it headscarves or miniskirts.

This evolution of the women's agency and their acts of citizenship shows us multiple things. One is the fact that religious identity has become a political subjectivity which challenged the hegemonic constructions of the secular state ideology. Two is that through their acts which resemble the secular feminist movement, they have reinterpreted

the secular public space to accommodate their own version of lifestyles and choices. Third is the fact that they have created these identities by staying autonomous from the larger Islamist movement and they have lost influence once their discourses and positions were co-opted by the larger Islamist movement. Fourth is that once the previous Islamist women's claims were co-opted by the hegemonic state actors, this led to the emergence of a new counter-hegemonic group, acclaiming a more radical and marginal feminist position than the previous generation. I will now look at the Tunisian case which bares importance similarities with the Turkish case.

### *5.4 The headscarf ban in Tunisia*

Tunisian case of the headscarf issue bares remarkable resemblance to the Turkish case. Similar to the Turkish case, the Tunisian modernization project during the first half of the century included the removal of the religious clothing, most notably women's headscarves. This period also saw a small number of women activists in 1920s who have raised their voices to defend the rights of women such as the refusal of the headscarf, denouncing exclusion of girls from school, confinement of women and forced marriages (Daoud 1993). As a famous example, in 1924, Manoubia Ouertani gave a public lecture on feminism where she appeared without a veil. In the same context, in 1929, Habiba Menchari gave a lecture on "The Muslim Woman of Tomorrow: For or against the veil."

The efforts were not only from civil society but were also debated between the political elite. As mentioned before, the Personal Status Code, promulgated in 1956, was a pioneering project in the Arab-Muslim region (with the exception of Turkey and Iran). In an effort to modernize the society and Islam, the founding father of the republic Habib Bourguiba encouraged women to remove their veils.[61] Bourguiba encouraged Tunisian women to reject certain customs while Tunisian women's participation in the public sphere was also encouraged during his rule. In doing so, Bourguiba referred to the veil as a "miserable rag" or "awful shroud" (Bessis 1999). As such, we see that the debate around

[61] Interview with Aya Chebbi, Tunis, 6 May 2017

the headscarf became a public debate in the early 20th century Tunisia which continues until today.

Similar to the Turkish case, there was no general ban on wearing the headscarf until the 1980s. Veiling became an instrument of Islamist protest in the late 1970s, which was accompanied by a return of the headscarf in the larger society. In order to undermine the foundation of the Islamist movement, the Circular 108 was issued to ban veiled women from accessing public education and public-sector jobs in 1981 (Ketelaars 2018). The circular referred to the headscarf as a “sectarian dress” which was employed as the politically loaded term.

A similar path was pursued by the subsequent President Ben Ali who, while rehabilitating Islam, was keen to safeguard the modernizing achievements built by his predecessor (Salem and Ben 2010). Exclusion of veiled women from the public services continued under the Ben Ali regime. The ban on headscarves was renewed under the Ben Ali regime first in December 1991 then in February 1992, banning it for civil servants in education sector and later in 2003 in public health sector. Ben Ali differed from Habib Bourguiba in the sense that he claimed that the state should be in charge of the official interpretation of Islam, and any other interpretation which challenged the official view should be outlawed (Mccarthy 2014). Nevertheless, there was a resurgence of the headscarf as a distinct challenge to state’s control over religious affairs (Mccarthy 2014). In addition to these "legal" measures, other exclusionary practices such as abusive arrests, verbal and sometimes physical violence by law enforcement officials were of common nature. Veiled women were expelled from schools, were facing harassment from the police on streets and discriminated against in private sector (Belghith 2018). A common infringement under the dictatorship years was to have the veiled women arrested and sign a pledge to give up their veil, similar to the “persuasion rooms” in Turkey.

The 2011 revolution in the country, being a path breaking development in many areas of social and political life, has also changed the position of Islamists in Tunisian society. The revolution had immediate consequences for the headscarf ban as well. In this period, Tunisia began a process of transitional justice which initiated a public debate focusing on citizen’s own stories of repression and abuse around the country. The Truth and Dignity Commission (TDC) was established in 2014 to address human rights abuses

under the dictatorial regime. The initial applications to the commission included very few women; as low as 5% of the applicants were women, however towards the end of the process, this number increased to 20% (Belhassine 2016). Having recognized the lack of women's participation in the process, a coalition of 11 women's organizations gathered to establish the "Transitional Justice is also for Women", a network born in 2014, to encourage women to take part in the transitional justice process. Most of the members of the network were victims of the dictatorship years themselves. According to testimonies of the process, women from the Transitional Justice is also for Women network have carried out efforts to reach women from different regions of the country, efforts including field trips, seminars and meetings such as in formal and less formal settings. The work resulted in a 140-testimony document submitted to the TDC in May 2016 (El Gantri 2016).

As a result of this process, the headscarf debate was once again made public, as the veiled women was one of the most targeted groups during the dictatorship years. They were considered as Islamist opponents of the secularist government just by the mere fact that they chose to wear the headscarf. The network focused on the impact of the Circular 108 during the testimonies collected. Some activists and journalists have also brought the issue to public attention through their work.

However, this process has been far from neutral or unproblematic. Gray and Coonan (2013) noted as early as 2013 that the majority Ennahda Party at the time established a Ministry of Human Rights and Transitional Justice but this process could nonetheless be "captured by political agendas". In her research on the transitional justice process in Tunisia, Ketalaars most importantly noted that;

> In this regard the key critique of feminist activists on the current approach of the Women's Committee is that it has almost exclusively focused on Islamist women, particularly when it comes to defining who counts as 'indirect' victims. This means that even though a broader category of harms has been acknowledged due to the inclusion of 'indirect victims,' this still results in a limited and *politically colored* (emphasis mine) understanding of the nature of gendered oppression under the former regime (Ketelaars 2018).

Ketalaars' observation about the exclusive focus on the Islamist women during the transitional justice process was also shared by my secular feminist interviewees in Tunisia. When I inquired about the works of Islamist women's organizations for example my respondent Bochra Bel Hadj Hamida, one of the leading femmes democrates, told me

that they were exclusively focusing on the transitional justice process. In our interview with the president of the Tounissiet (Tunisian women), as the only organization I was able to talk to during my field trip which included conservative and veiled women, their president Hend Bouziri explained to me that the dictatorship years were very harsh on Islamist activists and they were focusing on 'indirect victims' which meant that nonactivist women were also indirectly affected through their husbands and male family members who were political prisoners. Their activity brochures also suggested that their main focus was indirect violence born from the dictatorship years.

Despite initial high hopes for the transitional justice process as a chance to face the rights infringements of the ancient regime, the fact that it was carried out as a 'politically colored' process as Ketalaars mentioned, and the fact that it focused only on the Islamist women's problems, rather than adopting an inclusive position for all women who suffered under the dictatorship, the process had been dismissed by the secular Nida Tounes party and Essebsi, the country's president. Essebsi actually proposed a very controversial 'reconciliation bill' which passed in 2017, granting amnesty to civil servants accused of corruption claiming that Tunisian society should close the chapter on the previous regime and look into the future (Aboueldahab 2018).

Not only the secularist state and the secular women have been critical of this process, some of the *femmes democrates* I interviewed still hold an exclusionary attitude against veiled women and Islamists in general. As independent feminist Amal Grami explained:

> For the issue of veiling, it's amazing, at the aftermath of the revolution, AFTURD and *femmes democrates* were fearful, now they accept but there is a crisis of confidence. Each time they freely talk, some group of veiled women are there, maybe they are coming to report, this new environment is a new challenge for them. You cannot close your door or exclude some woman because they are veiled.

This tension has been exclusively on the rise following the revolution which allowed a number of Islamist women's organizations to join the civil society. Similar to the complaints I heard from the Islamist women in Turkey and how they were treated by the rest of the feminist organizations, veiled women in Tunisia go through the same struggle today. Despite the fact that Grami's position reflects a general perception within the rest of the Tunisian society with regards to how the secular women are 'elite' and disconnected from the rest of the society, Hamida's views, a *femme democrate* herself,

sheds light on the complicated nature of this tension between the secular and the veiled women. Bochra Bel Hadj Hamida from *femmes democrates* noted:

> For example, the question of veiling, even the association[62] is divided. I support freedom of veiling; we have had many discussions. This is a very controversial issue, there are those who believe that even just by wearing the veil it is an attack on women's rights, that they are submissive etc. and others like me think it's a right. We cannot impose women to be 'free'. They are free to wear whatever they like. So, we cannot say it's a debate just between feminists and Islamists, even within feminists there is a conflictual debate which is sometimes difficult to manage, it sometimes even causes breaks, which is one of the most difficult problems.

As previously noted, after the ousting of the *ancien* regime, Tunisia has seen an explosion in the number and content of actors and institutions expressing different forms of creativity in the civil space. With this liberty to express new ideas and positions, a new generation of women began organizing around consciousness-raising groups and in alternative cultural spaces, such as new arts festivals and social media. This newfound feminist voice focuses on the daily struggles of young women in an increasingly patriarchal society and representing an alternative to the dominant image of the Tunisian feminist found in the mainstream media that is staunchly secular, "emancipated," enlightened, Francophile and patriotic.

One of these groups, the Chaml Collective (from Chez Amal in French), is a group of young generation feminists who have no institutional affiliation with the existing women's movement in Tunisia. Started by a young woman named Amal as a literary group, members moved on to regular gatherings and eventually started an online blog very similar to the *Reçel* blog in Turkey; members have been posting their pieces since 2014. There is a remarkable similarity between this group of women and the *Reçel* women in Turkey. In fact in an interview, Amal expressed her concerns about the established women's movement and how excluded and marginalized they feel. Additionally, in one of her trips to Turkey to talk about new generation feminists in Tunisia, Amal met with *Reçel* bloggers and realized that their predicaments were very similar.[63] The welcome message on the Chaml website demonstrates this similarity: "The Chaml blog is the

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[62] ATFD
[63] Interview in Tunis, April, 2017

product of meetings between young Tunisian women wishing to change the society's perception of women and to deconstruct the myth of "The Tunisian Woman."[64] Contributors are a group of young women who got to know each other through social media. They come from different backgrounds, such as professors, social researchers, journalists, students, artists, actors, poets and photographers, who wish to help empower women through artistic creations and cultural expression, especially through writing. Through their pieces, they aim to "create an independent platform, vernacularize culture, arts and knowledge, democratize the publication and voices of all Tunisian women, deconstruct the image of 'The Tunisian Woman' which is laden with clichés, and have women contribute to the production of a new cultural society in which they can express their aspirations."[65]

The demands of the younger generation resemble that of the Turkish movement, claiming inclusivity, a broadening of issues that have been made problematic by the established women's movement and a stronger network with the other justice movements, not only that of the feminist movement as well as a more localized network and issue-based participation instead of an internationally imposed "project feminism". This position rejects the high political cleavages fixed around the issues of secularism and Islamism and rather focusing on the problems of all excluded women from the citizenship regimes. Young activist and blogger Aya Chebbi underlined this problem during our interview, referring to the lack of pluralism within the women's movement:

> You cannot call yourself progressive if you are not inclusive. I think it's a problem with the entire Tunisian society. The faces you see on the media, in the parliament… are always the same. For example, no black people. Being elitist in the topics, but also in terms of language; they all speak French, even on the media when everyone is Tunisian, they will speak French. Their meetings will be in French and accessible only by invitation. We refused many invitations because of this.

Chebbi's comments note a certain level of hypocrisy within the progressive left of the Tunisian political elite, not only the feminist movement but the larger civil society. By taking a critical stance against the lack of plurality within the justice movement, most

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[64] https://collectifchaml.wordpress.com/
[65] https://collectifchaml.wordpress.com/

younger activists challenge the new regime established after the revolution in Tunisia which still has a limited access to those who have a privileged position within the society in terms of education, income, class, race and age. Coming back to the issue of the exclusion of veiled women within the movement, another young activist I interviewed, Feryal Charfeddine noted:

> I don't see why we should not be under the same umbrella[66]. Since 2011 we have many women involved in activities, veiled or not, some of them are conservatives, and that is the beauty of it. That's what dialogue is. We as Tunisia, we claim to be the country of consensus. If we never talked to the people who don't think like us, we would never have such a progressive constitution. Because it goes back to the understanding of definition. We never had a discussion about the definitions. How do you define womanhood, how do *I* define womanhood? We need to redefine our terms for the progression of the country.

Feryal's comments on going back to the definitions note a certain level of challenge against the established discourses of the modernist approach regarding the status, role and the rights of women citizens. The claims of inclusivity and justice for all Tunisian citizens was a direct demand of the social mobilizations during the protests, but this period never saw a debate on how the new Tunisian citizen should be. According to my interviews, the regime established after the revolution still continues to hold the values of the dictatorship regime which are exclusionary towards certain sections of the society. New generation activists call for a citizenship that is inclusive of all different identities, further from the existing cleavages especially between the secularist and Islamist politics.

Before I move on to the next chapter, I want to focus on a different type of counterhegemonic acts of citizenship which challenge this time the ethnic constructions of the national identity; the case of Kurdish women and feminists. Just like the Islamist women have challenged the hegemonic citizenship regimes from a secularism perspective; Kurdish women have done a similar job in expanding the depth of citizenship regimes through their acts claiming recognition for their separate ethnicity.

### *5.5 The case of the Kurdish women activists*

[66] With the veiled women

In this section of the chapter, I focus on the non-violent acts of citizenship by the Kurdish women, generally under the framework of a double discrimination, first due to their gender and second due to their ethnicity. In the context of the Kurdish question that has troubled the country since the early 1980s, and the repeated denial of Kurdish identity within the Turkish public sphere as well as within the feminist movement, a separate women's movement emerged in the 1990s (Çaha 2011; Diner and Toktaş 2010). Bans on the Kurdish language, the notorious cases of torture inflicted on Kurdish political prisoners in prisons in the 1980s and the unidentified murders in the region have caused Kurdish women to politicize over the years and, in some cases, even led them towards radicalization. Subsequently, the Kurdish nationalist movement began including women's emancipation among its causes (Mojab 2000, 89). Kurdish women started to appear in public with their own demands of ending violence and the repressive policies of the state against the Kurds (Y. Arat 2000a). They began participating in the national movement in various ways, as politicians, militant fighters, activists, and mothers and began organizing around institutions such as pro-Kurdish associations, political parties and journals such as *Roza, Jin û Jiyan* and *Yaşamda Özgür Kadın* (Çağlayan 2016) .

The Kurdish nationalist movement was born in the 1970s which saw the rise of PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party) an armed non-state actor whose initial objective was to call for an independent and socialist Kurdish state within and across the borders of current Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. The PKK rallied for this objective through violent means since the 1980s. Despite the fact that there have been two attempts at settling the conflict peacefully, one in 1993 and the other in 2009, both processes have been interrupted by the hardliners taking over power in Turkey.

The 1990s mark a symbolic turn in the organizational power of Kurdish women as they began to appear in larger numbers in public spaces. Certain scholars have argued this was due to a switch in the gender discourse within the Kurdish movement. Caglayan, for example, problematizes the Kurdish women's involvement in the national movement through the axis of male dominated political structures and the terms of dependence or independence (cited in Özlem Aslan 2007). She argues that during the 1990s, Kurdish women began emphasizing women's significance in the national movement and also began questioning patriarchal structures.

However, this mobilization of Kurdish women cannot be seen as monolithic. Kurdish women have politicized in different ways; the first one was considered the less "political" and more "emotional" group of "Saturday Mothers" and the "Peace Mothers" who, without allegiance to a political party, put forward their identity and grievances as mothers of the missing Kurds and unidentified murder victims. Their discourse was built on the notion of 'motherhood', inventing a new space in the political and military conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdish minority in Turkey (Goker 2016).

The second subject position that came out of this group was women who made their way into local and national party politics, actively working as part of women's commissions and then ultimately became co-leaders of the Kurdish political movement. These women are also largely part of the feminist women's movement, such as the first co-mayor of Diyarbakir Gultan Kisanak and are now recognized within the larger women's movement as an important part of the feminist struggle against all patriarchal institutions.

The third group are several women's organizations which work for the autonomy of women from an autonomous feminist perspective, such as in the cases of KAMER and VAKAD who work against the patriarchal tribal system dominant in Kurdish society and culture (Diner and Toktaş 2010). Practices such as domestic violence, arranged or forced marriages and honor killings are common phenomena in Kurdish societies and Kurdish women do not usually have access to legal protection against these practices (Y. Arat and Altinay 2015). I will be talking about the autonomous feminist organizations and mobilized Kurdish feminists in the following chapter as their claims also fall under the content of citizenship in chapter 6.

The first one of these acts are those organized by the mothers of the lost or the unidentified murder victims who have been gathering in public squares since 1995 (Goker 2016). Similar to the *Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* from Argentina, these women protested the disappearance of their children in a weekly vigil on Saturdays in Galatasaray Square in Istanbul. For 200 weeks, the Saturday Mothers demanded the state to hold the perpetrators responsible for the murders of their loved ones. They also demanded that the government sign the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. However, on week number 200 in 1999, the mothers decided to

stop the vigils due to increasing police pressure. They started meeting again in 2009 following the *Ergenekon* trials, which was investigating an armed organization composed of military and other social elites that allegedly plotted coup d'états against the AKP government (Karaman 2016). By 2011 when the government initiated the peace process, the Mothers had gained legitimacy in the eyes of the state and were invited to support and give their opinion on the peace process.

In contrast to the Saturday Mothers, the Peace Mothers had a more "political" demand: ending the Kurdish conflict. They came together in 1996 with the aim of raising their voice for a peaceful solution to the armed conflict between Kurdish militants and the Turkish state. They first became visible on the 5th of October 1999, when a group of 40 women arrived in Ankara from Diyarbakir, from where "the pain is most strongly experienced to the city where the source of the pain is" with their white headscarves, holding red roses and aiming to hand the parliament a letter that contained their demands for peace and solidarity. They chanted slogans such as "*Geride kalanlar aşkına*" (For the Sake of Survivors) and "*Biz anayız barıştan yanayız*" (We are mothers, we are for peace). However, their bus was stopped at the entrance of the capital by the police and they were not allowed to enter the city.[67]

These women were the mothers of armed militants who had joined the ranks of the Kurdish ethnic-separatist group PKK. They were mostly housewives and spoke Kurdish as their mother tongue (Özlem Aslan 2007). Aslan also notes that most of the women she had interviewed had prior civil association experience. Before they established the Peace Mothers, members had also taken part in the activities of GÖÇ-DER, Başak Kültür and HADEP. These mothers attached the language of motherhood to the ethnic conflict and have argued that the impact of war is gendered and position women as the most vulnerable victims while attaching a biological importance to femininity in terms of life-giving and life preservation (Aslan, 2007). They continued to hold more protests in Istanbul around Galatasaray Square and staged another march to Ankara to visit the Commander in Chief Hilmi Özkök in 2004, which was again banned by the Turkish police forces. Their

[67] Milliyet newspaper, 5.Oct.1999

activities were generally covered by pro-Kurdish newspapers or independent news sites such as Bianet; however, these two marches were even covered by the mainstream *Milliyet* newspaper, despite the condescending tone. They published their own periodical in Turkish, *Barış* (Peace) writing on issues around peace. Despite these acts, the Turkish state, as well as the majority of the Turkish public, viewed them as "pawns" of the PKK and they were delegitimized through their organic connections to a "terrorist organization." In the media, they were constantly unfavorably compared to the suffering mothers of fallen soldiers within the Turkish military who were represented as "real mothers" who raised "good sons" that were ready to sacrifice themselves in the name of their country (Özlem Aslan 2007). In June 2006, Peace Mother activists Müyesser Güneş and Sakine Arat were sentenced to one year in prison along with a fine totaling 600 YTL by Turkish courts on charges of promoting a separatist organization after their visit to the Commander in Chief. The following month, 24 Peace Mothers were also sentenced to one year in prison for the same charges

Despite this difference of tolerance between the Saturday and Peace mothers, Turkish state have taken an intolerant stance against both groups in the recent years. In August 2018, during the 700th meeting of the Saturday Mothers, the police forces dispersed a group of protestors who have been gathering at the same spot every Saturday for over two decades. The Minister of Interior, Suleyman Soylu made comments, inferring that the mothers were being supported by the terrorist groups, questioning the activities of the lost victims by asking whether they got lost during a walk in the bazaar (Alkaç 2018). Similarly, in April 2019, Peace Mothers of the Kurdish jailed activists who were on a hunger strike to protest the isolation of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in prison, protested outside of prisons to draw attention to their children's hunger strike, but they were faced with police violence once again. Two cases drew much public criticism from public opinion.

As such, through their protests, these mothers have challenged the proper image Turkish motherhood and citizenship. These acts by the mothers of the victims of state and armed militant violence also mark a turning point in the feminist movement in Turkey. They created a separate subject position for Kurdish women who felt excluded from the rest of the movement. Despite being marginal to mainstream politics, these acts by mothers of the Kurdish people created a new political space in which a collective identity

emerged and in which alternative information about the war in Southeastern Turkey was shared. Issues of sexual violence and human rights violations came to light through a group of women who became activists despite their lack of social privilege.

The initial tolerance for Saturday Mothers and the exclusion of Peace Mothers, and the consequent delegitimization of both groups coming from the state leads me to make similar arguments to the first section of the chapter. The perception of the pro-government circles with regards to the Kurdish mother activists have changed over the years; due to the developments in the larger political sphere. The mothers became a legitimate group in 1990s through their protests which framed motherhood as an 'apolitical' category which aimed at legitimization of their causes under the eyes of the largely politicized and polarized Turkish public opinion regarding the Kurdish issue. They were being tolerated during the peace process launched in 2009 and which was a very short-lived experience (SEE Kirisci 2011 for further details). The authorities had allowed the Saturday Mothers to rally every week for years after 2009, and the police usually coordinated with the group to minimize disruptions (Gall 2018). The government largely ignored the protests, which, even under the state of emergency of the last two years, were allowed to continue as others were stopped. The crackdown on Saturday and Peace Mothers in 2018 and 2019 must be seen as part of the larger turn for authoritarianism in Turkish regime, which is led by AKP and its leader Erdogan after the July 2016 coup and the continuous election campaign periods which swept the country since 2015. As noted in other sections, the country's president Erdogan has been tightening his grip on all types of dissident activity, in order to consolidate his voter base due to the declining electoral results.

## *5.6 Conclusion*

In this chapter, I aimed to show how in both Turkey and Tunisia Islamist women deconstructed the hegemonic identities built by their founding ideology, the strict and authoritarian secular ideology by which the state controls religious affairs and symbols and reconstructed the strict and monolithic practice of secularism through their acts of citizenship. In place of arguing that Islamist women created an anti-secular stance, I argued that they continuously *reinterpreted* secularism as a counter-hegemonic act.

More specifically, through their collective action, I showed how different groups of women challenge the established boundaries of secular constructions of the ideal

citizens at the level of their nation-states, reconstruct its secular identity over a period of four decades. Counterhegemonic claims of the initial Islamist women became co-opted by the larger Islamist movement and became fixed around the unproductive cleavages between secular and Islamist political elite such as the Welfare and its successor AKP regime in Turkey or Ennahda in Tunisia. The Kurdish women's claims to deconstruct the ethnic singularity over couple decades have been also caught between the broader Kurdish issue and the AKP regime's reactions towards them. As such, I showed how a new collective identity rose within the new generation who rejected both the secular and ethnically singular readings of gendered citizenship and engaged in counterhegemonic acts of citizenship within a feminist framework which denies exclusive lines around political positions and hegemonic identities.

So far, I have touched upon two different aspects of citizenship regimes; one through inventing new political spaces, women's groups navigate their exclusion in terms of participation in the larger political sphere. This chapter focused on two specific examples of recognition claims through identity politics. It showed that these claims are in a dialogical relationship with the political opportunity structures and are included or excluded according to the larger movement's influence on the governing regime. The next chapter focuses on the last field of citizenship of my theoretical framework; the one that focuses on the content of citizenship regimes, and how women's groups come to represent what is best for women and how their demands are framed in terms of determining the common good.

# CHAPTER 6 DEFINING THE 'COMMON GOOD': THE CONTENT OF CITIZENSHIP REGIMES

The current chapter shapes my last sphere of equal citizenship regimes and how women's movements' agency responds to the gendered citizenship regimes in place. In the two previous chapters, I studied how equal citizenship rights demands of women's movements through first reshaping political *spaces* in which they decide on different strategies of activism in order to participate in the political sphere given different political opportunity structures (Chapter 4). Given so, I analyzed how women, being unequally represented in the formal and informal political spheres shape their strategies to become a part of the political decision making and agenda setting. In the following chapter, (Chapter 5) I showed how demands for recognition of different identities among women have been defined, co-opted and redefined in relation with the political context. I argued that through representation of their differences in their collective identities, women have been challenging the hegemonic and monolithical identities built by existing citizenship regimes.

The debate of this chapter refers to the dilemma of how we define the common good, and what is good for women; i.e. the content of citizenship regimes. Each citizenship regime allocates certain rights and duties upon citizens, therefore granting them a status from which a balance of these rights and duties arise. How the content of these rights are justified remain open to contestation. How do we define the limits and basis of rights for women? Is it through international treaties or through more localized practices of culture and religion? How do organized women overcome this binary? In this chapter, I take these discussions under how the common good defined by different groups of women from universalist or localist perspectives. These two conflicted positions exist in both countries whereby discourses around what is culturally (in terms of religious traditions and cultural codes) acceptable and appropriate appeal to a large majority of the society. In the following analysis, I first look at how the language of universal rights have

been undermined by the rise of conservatism in the recent years under both contexts. As already stated in the literature (Razavi and Jenichen 2017), the rise of religious conservatism has challenged feminist groups since the content of citizenship are based on different ideas about what constitutes the common good. One position relates to how religion, in this case Islam, can provide a moral framework for women's position in the society, and the other position basis its ideal on the international norms. While universalist position defines the content of women's citizenship through the enactment of these international norms, the other position which is based on cultural codes suggest that the organized women should take into consideration local conditions of the women they work with.

Given this dilemma, I capture the tendency in women's movements to reject the universal and local dichotomy in defining what is best for women, and which focuses on women's daily needs. In this final analytical chapter, I show how women's movement understand and make claims for the "common good", how the rights and duties given in a polity are represented by the women's movements and what the tensions and debates around this important political question are through a rejection of the grand debates around universalist and localist positions and instead opt for a more practical approach which takes in consideration the women's immediate needs for access to further rights and liberties. The chapter starts with how rising religion has impacts on women's movements in both countries and continues by discussions on how to overcome this problem.

## *6.1 Language of universal rights against rising conservatism and religious discourses*

This section takes at its center the rising conservatism in political sphere and the consequent populist discourses centered around essentialist cultural arguments and how they interact with the content of women's equal citizenship claims. I will first contextualize what I mean by the rise of conservatism in both countries and then present my findings through my interviews with feminist activist women again in both countries.

Many studies have looked at conservatism and rising levels of religiosity and Islamist grass roots movements in the literature of political science and sociology at different levels; from macro to micro levels (Carkoglu 2009; Debuysere 2016; Göksel

2013; Kalaycioğlu 2007; Tchaïcha and Arfaoui 2012; Wolf 2013; Yeşilada and Noordijk 2010). Here, however; I want to focus on the rising conservatism at the macro political level, due to several reasons. First, rising conservatism continuously shapes citizenship regimes. Policies and discourses generated at the macro political level which determine the rights and duties of citizens indicate what is more desirable from its citizens and who are 'othered' according to the ideal citizen model. Political agency of citizens which fall outside of the conservative ideal are marginalized and sometimes reprimanded or penalized through legal, discursive or social practices.

Second, it is directly through engaging with the conservatism at the macro level that feminist groups challenge and create their own counter discourses (see eg Razavi and Jenichen 2017). Women's movements, despite the examples from small groups in the past such as supporting the headscarf ban, generally have no direct agenda with women's individual and religious conservatism at the micro level as they see it as a matter of individual freedom. They instead explicitly target the exclusionary behaviors from the state and its agents and institutions for a more pluralistic citizenship regime.

Since the 1980s, one of the biggest support for rising conservatism came from the emergent political Islam. In the case of Turkey, political Islam was a sidelined movement until the rise of AKP to power, which subsequently positioned a conservative and Islamist view at the center of politics (Öniş 2015). During its conservative regime, AKP addressed a wide range of people across the Sunni majority, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, excluding the Alevi and non-Muslims (Kaya 2015). Another major sign of AKP's rising Islamization was its political-economic and fiscal policies in support of green capital, creation of a new conservative bourgeois class, increasing trade links with the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iran as well as anti-inflation and anti-interest policies (Kirişçi and Kaptanoğlu 2011).

There were also various cultural/symbolic aspects to AKP's rising conservatism, such as the multiplication of neo-Ottoman and Islamic aesthetics in shopping malls, and gated communities, and new alcohol regulations. Moreover, AKP's claim that it represents the *millet,* meaning excluded social classes who adhere to Islamic and conservative cultural codes and values was one of its strongest arguments against the secular tradition within Turkish politics. There were also signs in the political sphere; in

which AKP continuously appointed individuals who openly practiced religion to various positions within its bureaucratic institutions. In addition, its' increasing support to the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) (Turkmen 2009) and increasing influence of Islamic teachings within the national education curricula can be counted as evidence to AKP's evident Islamization of the political and social institutions.

As explained in Chapter 3, AKP's increasingly conservative and authoritarian position especially after 2010 influenced its stance in gender equality and women's rights. Policies aimed at curbing women's access to abortions, discourses on the importance of family, motherhood and childbearing, women's modesty and chastity; against contraception, women's participation in the workforce and empowerment in general as well as a continuous anti-LGBTQ position have been noted in multiple studies looking at AKP's stance regarding gender-equality norms.

This rise in conservative discourses and political practices against women's emancipation over the last four decades have also had its influence in constitutional court decisions, according to my interviewee Professor Ayse Ayata, of Gender Studies at Middle East Technical University. When comparing the early years of feminist activism with the political situation today, she made the remark that the Constitution Court, which used to rule on the basis of international treaties and norms, no longer take this position especially with issues regarding women's emancipation. She stated,

> "We can speak of an institutional weakening due to a systematic legitimization crisis in a way. But important thing here is, in the past the Constitutional Court would as much as possible rule around the constitutional and universal norms. Now they are moving further from this. As a result, rights which are tightly and problematically linked to cultural norms, such as women's rights, they are distancing themselves away from international norms by ruling decisions that are further from the demands of the women's movement. Some norms do not clash with cultural norms such as environmental norms. Some norms are in serious clash with our cultural norms, and women's rights is a prime example of this."[68]

In this statement, Ayata makes two important observations. First is the fact that with increasing conservatism and authoritarianism, national courts no longer rule according to the international norms and treaties which are binding for the Turkish courts, but which

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[68] Interview with Ayse Ayata, Ankara, 22 February 2017

are also suppressed given the politicization of the judiciary branch in Turkey. The judiciary, which should be ruling according to these treaties, no longer takes it as a basis for judgement but instead gives in to the pressure coming from political power. This has to do with the institutional weakening she mentions arising from the increasingly one-man rule of the AKP regime which blurs the principle of separation of powers between political executive and judiciary branches. As such, the rising authoritarianism in Turkey has direct consequences on the achievements of women's movement and women in general.

Second, Ayata makes a distinction with women's rights versus other progressive issues such as environmental norms which do not clash with the cultural reality of the society as much as they do in the case of women's rights. She asserts that issues which are culturally bound such as women's rights are more susceptible to political pressure and thus requires an additional protection from state institutions no matter what cultural practices claim to dictate. This constitutes one of the central dilemmas of this chapter. This is an example of the universalist political identity I aimed to underline in my introduction to this chapter. Most of the women's movement representatives I have spoken to have underlined the importance of the protection of international treaties and laws to advance women's rights. This attitude is present in women in all walks of life within the women's movement; Kurdish, Islamist and secular alike.

For example, in our interview, Islamist scholar and women's rights activist Hidayet Tuksal uncovered the paradox of political conservative discourses against universal norms among the high political officials within the AKP ranks. She noted how it was contradictory that women within these circles have access to most of the rights which party officials oppose:

> "In some of Ak Party executives, or in general in religious sections of the society, there is a schizophrenic view. They lead a life that goes beyond traditions, Erdogan's daughters speak English and went to school in the US. They drive, they chose their husbands themselves, and they both have higher status than their husbands. Most women around Erdogan are either single or divorced. They don't fit Erdogan's profile; they went to good schools they speak English. On the one hand you choose these women as consultants, none of these women are ordinary, they are all qualified people. But on the other hand, your discourse on women expects all

> women to stay at home and care for their children. This is a contradiction, a dilemma. But as part of a discourse, he will flatter his male constituents. It's a male hegemonic tactic."[69]

Tuksal here pays attention to how the political elite's actions and discourses conflict each other when it comes to discourses on gender equality and equal citizenship. The role attributed by the AKP political elite for women as complimentary to men is seen as a voting tactic. Her observation on the contradictory nature of the political discourses and the reality is crucial to underline the importance of breaking with the cultural and essentialist boundaries against women's emancipation in a conservative society such as the Turkish society. Fatma Bostan Unal, a similar Islamist activist and formerly a founding member of AKP underlines this issue as an issue of class, making the observation that the lower classes of the society buy into these conservative discourses but the women among the political elite, she also continues:

> "They don't approve this for their own daughters but see it ideal or possible for others. This is a conformist attitude. This is what has been said for a long time and they don't want to disturb the status quo. This has to do with the clash between the West and Islam, "we should take West's technology but not their culture" they say, and the culture relates to women. When they say, 'women aren't equal with men', this is the same thing. This has been their differentiating feature, so they don't let it go."[70]

Unal's comments shows us how conservativism and women's inequality go in parallel for upper class politicians and discourses on the appropriate Turkish culture has a direct link for women's rights. According to her, and also for Tuksal, conservative politicians benefit from such a position which sees women's rights as a "foreign" discourse which does not fit the 'local' realities. This is one of the reasons why most women's rights activists in Turkey (and as we shall subsequently see, also in Tunisia) are being attributed the label as promoters of a "foreign" ideology, a discourse which has been on the rise in parallel to the rise of the right wing ideologies around the globe. With the rise of the far right, issues such as 'cultural authenticity' and gender equality has become even more salient among the discourses of the political elite. As testified by the interviewees, their attachment to more traditional readings on gender equality is one of their distinguishing features from other progressive parties, and hence creates an extra

[69] Interview with Hidayet Tuksal, Ankara, 4 April 2017
[70] Intervew with Fatma Bostan Unal, Ankara, 22 February 2017

challenge for the feminists who advocate a universal position on women's rights and gender equality.

Similarly, as for the case of Tunisia, the rise of Islamism has been a remarkable feature in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution. The electoral success of religious conservatism with the rise of the Islamist Ennahda party and the creation of new Islamist based civil society has challenged the perception of Tunisia having a secular regime and society. Many secular Tunisians, and especially the women's rights activists, viewed the rise of Islamism as an essential threat to country's modernist legacy, which would lead subsequently to a return to conservative laws and practices. In addition to the rise of Ennahda, the rise of Salafism as a radical religious ideology has been particularly important, especially since the assassination of opposition politician Chokri Belaid by Salafist forces. While Ennahda adopted a moderate approach to Islamism in politics, such as rejecting references to Islamic law in the Constitution and adoption of democratic principle, the aftermath of the 2011 in Tunisia saw increasingly alarming rates of radicalization of the youth towards more conservative trends (Wolf 2013).

Given the rise of Islamism in the country, the issue of gender-equality and women's rights became a fundamental debate, as shown elsewhere in this dissertation. A similar debate within the women activist community with regards to the additional risks posed by rising conservativism and discourses against the internationally acclaimed norms and treaties was also seen in Tunisia. As a feminist and a scholar of Islamic teachings, Neila Sellini summarized the situation;

> "When we were talking about the CEDAW convention, we had enormous problems. Tunisia still has this problem because Ennahda opposes it. For them, women cannot be equal, they even have women arguing this, like Farida Labidi etc. She says women cannot be equal to men, they are complementary. This is very disturbing for us. "

The rise of Islamism came with a new phenomenon, with the participation of conservative and Islamist women in the social and political scene. This new wave of conservative politics challenged the exiting feminist practices which were seen again as "foreign" to the real Tunisian culture. The new debate called for a more 'culturally appropriate' view on gender-equality and women's place in the society. While similar to the Turkish case, the political elite of Ennahda did not have any problems including women among their ranks, and hence women's political participation, women's rights in

terms of bodily and sexual rights, or civil rights became an issue which separated the feminist secular community and the conservative Islamist community. All of the interviews I have conducted with ATFD members have underlined the significance of international norms on the work they do and how important it was to transform existing cultural essentialist discourses which stood in the way for women's emancipation. In response to the critiques on the elitism of the women's movement, Bochra Bel Hadj Hamida responded:

> "If I can summarize, the difference between us and not just the Islamists but the society in general, is that we are avant-gardists, progressives. We want to evolve the society and we want to revolutionize it. For the Islamists, and even for progressive parties, who want to respect the public opinion. If the public isn't ready, we don't do it, we say no to that. We must sometimes shock the public opinion, ask questions that public opinion is not used to debate, today we have freedom to express, and we should ask all questions without taboos. This is our role as 'elites' to evolve the society and not obey it."

In our conversation, Hamida further contended that conservative politicians who criticize them generally for "being elitist, out of touch with reality and the needs of real women of Tunisia", does not do much when it comes to issues on women's rights. According to her, the conservative critique against the practices of feminist movement is an empty signifier, since they do not shoulder any responsibility off of women's organizations.

Hamida's comments underline an important feature of the universalist position. She hereby positions herself within progressive politics and explains their mission as transforming the society from 'outside' and 'above' while their counterparts fail to take any action. This is a deliberate position taken by feminists in both countries alike. Taking such a position puts them in direct conflict with conservative and male-oriented politics since this is a conflict of power between these two groups, in which feminists challenge the established hegemony of the gendered citizenship regimes.

There is however an alternative approach to the universalist approach of the feminist movement, which has been taken up by some new generation organizations in both countries. Even though I will present this localist position in opposition to the universalist position, it should be noted that as in most distinctions, I use it as a heuristic separation where in reality most organizations have at least at a discursive level, represent both positions in some time or another. The localist version held by some women's groups

show how they take on the universalist norms and translate them at a local level, creating a cross-cultural vernacularization of the universalist norms from a localized perspective (Ackerly 2001).

## 6.2 *Local ways: politics of culture vs needs*

Several chapters and sections of this dissertation have discussed the different ways in which the universal conventions, norms and rights treaties enabled local movements to press for improvements of existing citizenship regimes as well as introducing new concepts and rights for women, especially in the case of sexual and bodily rights and violence against women. Despite the leverage and the moral authority the universalist position provides for the feminist movement, this position has been far from critique. Not only the far-right conservative critique but also this position is being criticized by feminist activists and thinkers who believe in a more 'localized' version of feminism. How they perceive what 'local' is changes from person to person, but in general it represents a general discomfort of relying on the concepts and notions which have been developed in other parts of the world where sometimes the exclusions faced by women do not really go in parallel with their own local conditions.

This second position directs a critique against the language of universal rights in several different ways. One of the first reasons is hidden in the quote from Tunisian feminist Noura Boursali:

> "ATFD is dedicated to universal values, but I think there is also culture. To defend women's rights, we could argue with two things, the universal arguments, and also the culture, for example, there has been a reject of Muslim culture. There have been positive aspects of this culture which should have been developed. For example, Tahar Haddad wrote a book in 1930s titled "Notre Femme dans la legislation and le Sharia", in Zeitouna[71]. He was at the same time a unionist and joined the communist party. But the path of Tahar Haddad is not a secular path, he was a reformist Muslim, like Qasim Amin in Egypt. He even went as far as supporting equal inheritance by referring to religious laws.[72]

Similar to Unal's comments in Turkey about the place of 'culture' in contradiction with universal values, Boursali also places local and regional culture codes in opposition

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[71] University in Tunisia

[72] Interview with Noura Boursali, Tunis, 3 May 2017

to universal values. She explicitly referred to how the Turkey of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk was strictly secular, but Tunisian reform period went in hand with existing sharia codes, nevertheless there are continuities between in the exclusions experienced by women living under Muslim countries. She contends that most feminist movements in the region are faced towards the "West". Therefore, as a tactical strategy, to fight for changes in women's rights regimes, some interviewees argue for taking explicit interest in religious arguments, which sometimes are more appealing to the masses rather than universalist arguments. Similar to Boursali's position, independent feminist Amal Grami explained:

> "For example, the issue on the equal inheritance rights. For me it's important to revisit the position of the *ulema* and *fuqaha'*[73]. We have another work in terms of knowledge, the participation of women in critical way to revisit our classical knowledge of religion, and to analyze the position of patriarchal men, and to understand why they present their interpretation in a certain way. *Femmes democrates* are against using the argument of religion, which is for me is unacceptable. Because you cannot deny the importance of religion in our society. If you try to convince people, you can use religion also. People use religion to convince others, they need to understand what is behind a certain interpretation."

Here anthropologist Amal Grami underlines the importance of being vocal and apt in matters of religious arguments when it comes to women's rights since religion has an undeniable importance in the eyes of the Tunisian society. Seeing religion and local culture as another site of political struggle, Grami argues for becoming familiar with those arguments instead of counterposing only universal arguments for women's rights and gender equality. The idea of reforming religion, uncovering the unequal readings of the sacred texts, and arguing for a local and Islamic form of feminism has been taken up in several Middle Eastern societies, such as in Egypt and in Iran but has been strictly rejected by secular feminists in both Turkey and in Tunisia. A more tolerant approach for religious arguments, despite the risks of populism it entails, is directly in opposition to the universal identity I have explored in the previous section.

In the following quote, Nebahat Akkoc from KAMER in Turkey explores in depth the universal position might be out of touch with the reality for most women locally:

[73] An Islamic jurist

> "We (as in the women's movement) are so uncomfortable with being local, we have to be as much Westerner as possible. There is a problem like this, this is not even debated. Because these women (universalists) are the main carriers of the women's rights agenda in Turkey, women's rights appear as something that is not understandable to the common woman. For example, when you say gender equality, normal woman does not understand this because she does not practice it. Only a woman with a possibility to be equal to a man can understand this concept. Therefore, the status of women's rights come from a Western jargon, 'We want the nights, we own the streets'. Women think that this is how they can teach women's rights to women, but I think they are wrong. Women also produce patriarchy, so in order to explain them women's rights you need to be able to speak to them with their language. We are speaking with a translated jargon, so we cannot communicate with them. So, governments when they are open to it, a super-structural reform can be made but as a mass movement, it fails to convince the society.

Akkoc's position here underlines the duality between the what is understood to be a foreign culture of the "West" vs. the consequences of advocating blindly such universal values for the "common/normal" woman. Her comments did not go deeply into explaining what she understands from the "west" and what a "common" woman is, in fact, the positioning of these dualities such as west and local, common and elite women, seems to reify the conservative critique against the feminist movement and how the women activists within these movements are considered to be elitist and out of touch with reality. However, she makes an important argument towards the end of the quote. She contends that the universalist position might be useful for super-structural reforms, as in reforms in laws and institutional practices, but has little power in creating a transformational effect for the masses.

As an example, to what my commentators mean by the "western" jargon, and how to instead appeal to large masses, a quote from activist Ulfet Tayli from the Purple Roof Association can be illuminating. Referring to the protest of early feminists when they decided to get divorced from their husbands in large numbers to protest the institution of marriage and its links with the oppression of women, she stated:

> "For example, the protest through divorce was radical, but when thinking about its legitimacy, it was not a very legitimate one in the eyes of the society. The Purple Needle protest was on the contrary legitimate. By legitimacy I mean, a type of act that more and more people could identify themselves with but for example divorce was not something that you could propose to all women. You risk widening the distance between you and the society.

> But this risk should be taken. Trying to appeal to all women all the time is not desirable, would be looking at things from a populist perspective. We need to be creative about how to problematize the association between family and women's role in the family".[74]

Again, Tayli makes two important arguments here. She proposes the idea of 'legitimacy' when it comes to the daily actions of the women's activism and that it is an important one to take into consideration. While proposing divorcing their husbands in order to criticize the institution of marriage was not legitimate in the eyes of the society, a campaign on the violence against women was a more appealing one to the large masses. She however cautions us that feminist activists should not worry too much about being legitimate and appealing for everyone in the society as this would be considered a populist approach. She takes a middle position by being aware of the risks taken through creative protests and if activists become too radical in the eyes of the society, there is a risk of losing touch with the rest of the society. But in order to be transformative, protests and practices can and should be creative and perhaps sometimes radical to shake the common perceptions.

Here I want to focus on an alternative position taken by some feminist groups, especially by the new generation of feminist networks in dealing with the tension with the universalist norms and local traditions. Despite the fact that most feminists do adhere to the universal norms on gender equality, the universalist position within the feminist movement is taking on another meaning through local activities and a bottom up approach which aims at providing redistributive justice for women, based on an understanding of what women actually need in their specific contexts understood and defined from their specific political, social and economic positions within the society. Moving away from the debates around culture and symbolic justice through recognition of different identities, political structures and laws and institutions, some organizations have opted to focus on the everyday practices and needs of the women, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Claiming that the universalist debate is not fruitful in the sense that they render organization activities "too formal", and just "on paper", newer organizations and solidarity networks among feminists try to understand needs and *deliver* immediate

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[74] Interview with Ulfet Tayli, Istanbul, 3 April, 2017

results for “common women”. They do this through setting up networks that penetrate the society down to the communal and individual levels and actually by consulting with them what they would like to see change in their communities and in their lives. In addition, they approach local women differently, with little jargon emanating from universal treaties and norms, but by using a more local and common language with which they can reach more women.

As one out of many examples, I have been a part of a women’s network called Purple Solidarity (Mor Dayanisma) in Turkey which has networks around the country since January 2019. Through participant observation methods and actually taking part in their activities, I had the chance to observe what they actually mean by reaching the local masses and how to organize locally from a bottom up approach. Most importantly, they think it is crucially important not to be a “formal NGO” advocating for only changes in laws and institutions, but also being in touch with local women. Trying to reach every neighborhood in Istanbul, they focus most of their activities in low-income neighborhoods where women are less privileged to access the tools to empower themselves. They provide legal support for women who contact them as victims of domestic violence, in addition to conducting leisure events for women in each neighborhood. They build their networks through distributing brochures and making contacts for example at the local bazaars where most of these unprivileged women run their daily errands. They organize their activities explicitly through the feedback they get from the women they make contact. They run consciousness raising sessions through reading and discussing feminist works with local women as well as organizing get togethers in terms of women only parties and celebrations as well as a summer camp to reach women who have no opportunity to take time off due to budgetary concerns. They build their resources from local governments, by being in constant touch with them and demanding that they provide them with free transportation, or locations to conduct their activities. During the 2019 local electoral campaign in Turkey, they have specifically created an agenda for how to improve women’s lives at the local level through demanding an increase in public and free services for women such as free day care centers and shelters and solidarity centers for every neighborhood in Istanbul as well as increasing secure employment for women.

While their activities seem to have no contradiction with the general agenda of the universalist feminist movement, sometimes taking a local position can be in direct opposition of the universalist position. Akkoc from KAMER provided a striking examples during our interview in terms of how these two positions can contradict each other, and how in fact the universalist position which is supposed to empower women can sometimes be disempowering:

> In Antalya, there was a debate on whether to provide a small beach for veiled women. The debate was ignited when the press asked us to comment. I am the daughter of a half Armenian half Alevi family, so comparing to south eastern standards I was raised in quite a modern fashion. But despite this, where I come from, men and women do not swim in the same place. Even I liked this idea a lot. I have a summer house in Antalya, generally in Antalya this is not an issue, but I could understand that this was a pro-woman call, there are some women who are longing for the sea but they cannot swim, so if this would be a space for these women, I would support it. But others saw it as a result of the conservatizing politics of the Ak Party. This in my opinion, is a shallow vision.

She provided other examples in our interview; for example a similar instance was when Siverek municipality in southeastern Turkey decided to establish a women-only park. This action was again interpreted as isolating and confining women in women-only spaces. However, she contended that in Siverek women's public presence was so low that providing a safe space for them would enable these local women to have access to a public space to which before they had no access. She noted that when same policies were applied in the Fatih district of Istanbul, a city in which women's presence is extensive, this could be interpreted as a conservative move by the political party in power. However, conditions in Siverek in Sanliurfa province in a region where Akkoc mostly works were different and a similar policy in this location could infact be empowering for local women. She further asked that what is most important when interpreting policies and their immediate impact is how can we be pro-women, without marginalizing and without losing touch with the rest of the society but always being on the progressive side of politics. In order to do this, she contended that there had to be a position between the universalist and local positions:

> "For this, you need to adopt certain behaviors, local norms. KAMER's most important principle is think globally and work locally. Everyone eats but their food is different and how they set up the table is different. But our ultimate goal is the same, to eat to survive. When you think of this in terms of women's struggle, the best tool we have is the Council of Europe's treaty, it is the ultimate goal of all of us. But my discourse on explaining issues to women is different. Instead of calling child marriages pedophilia, and the religious marriages by imams something else, I use other terms to approach women."

Akkoc contends here women's organizations can serve as an intermediary for delivering the values, norms and discourses germinated at the international level to the local level. Women's movement activists can serve in a sense as 'translators' of the universal discourses to the rest of the society to be inclusive. However, different from the visions of the 1960-70s developmentalist and modernist approaches which had a ahistorical vision of grand and master narratives, meaning basically that they know 'better' than the women they 'help', in order to 'empower them', this vision is nurtured by the historic, local, social, economic, and specific demands which germinate from grassroots and is more valuable specifically because of its plurality, non-hierarchy and therefore equality in including women from different social and political backgrounds.

Linking this debate back to the discussions on citizenship and its content, what ultimately is at stake here is the debate and the tensions between the local and universal positions determine how 'common good' is determined; the new way to practice feminist activism moves more in the direction of localism, in a way of translating the universal values to the specific local claims of redistributive needs.

## *6.3 Conclusion*

This chapter focused on the women's movement in both countries and how they negotiate claims for justice for different groups of women in order to create a pluralistic representation of their communities. Furthermore, I showed in this chapter that claims for justice and common good represent a tension in between claims for a just redistribution of resources and cultural/symbolic recognition of women's rights. Through an analysis of the interview material from both countries, this chapter aimed to show the tensions of how organized women negotiate how they understand socio-economic justice and cultural/symbolic justice for women.

More specifically, I showed how there are currently two main *political identities* within the women's movements in terms of how to approach the needs of women they target. From the interviews conducted, it seemed there are two positions; first one of which is based on a *universal* language of rights while the other position comes from a more *localized* language of needs. The co-existence of both positions reveals a tension in terms of how to approach the question of common good for women. The universal discourse is based on international norms on gender equality and is in direct contrast and

counterposed to the populist discourses adopted by especially conservative politics around what is culturally appropriate and represents itself as a progressive movement which can be ‘ahead’ of what is culturally acceptable.

Yet, the second position proposes a more localized understanding is geared towards what women practically and immediately need in order for a more just redistribution of resources and does not have a clear cut against cultural and traditional ‘reality’ on the ground. The universal position aims to correct inequalities in laws and regulations, struggling to achieve gender equality at a symbolic level based on international treaties such as the CEDAW as well as in civil laws, opposing the discourses on how these treaties and norms can be culturally inappropriate. On the other hand, the new generation of women comprised of proponents of a more localized approach root for providing immediate services for women, an agenda usually developed in a more bottom up and pluralistic approach through sustained contact and interaction with women as well as men in the case of Tunisia, at the local level.

This localized approach chooses to interact with the cultural and religious perceptions of what is acceptable and desired for women, responding to immediate needs for women rather than pursuing a higher normative and hierarchical agenda. Despite the fact that they are also guided by the international norms, they employ the universalist agenda at the local level by translating them across cultures (Ackerly 2001). The movement has therefore is evolving in both countries towards the direction of representing more pluralistically what women need and how they can immediately answer these needs, rather than being stuck at binaries defined in the previous decades. What defines the common good for the new generation of women is underlined by a non-hierarchical approach which tends to include differences in sexual orientation and gender identity as well as seeing it important to have organic links with local women and men alike.

# CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

Citizenship both functions as a regulatory force shaping the everyday lives of citizens, as well as an emancipatory tool in changing these regulatory frames. On the one hand, citizenship is a governance strategy which divides people between groups, into insiders and outsiders, 'us' and 'them', who are entitled and are not entitled to certain rights. This separation creates multiple and hierarchical forms of exclusions and inclusions. For citizenship to function, it needs to create these divisions of 'us' and 'them' because it designates who are entitled to practice given rights. On the other hand, as a site of political struggle, citizenship has provided the grounds for those who are excluded from the existing rights regime to be either recognized as an 'insider' or enlarge a rights regime to include particular rights.

Citizenship regimes are established by the dominant political power, which are the nation-states in the modern world, the function of which is to govern and discipline their subjects. These processes come as "cultural subjectification to power relations that produce consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control and administration" (Foucault 1982). Subjectification is about creating the norms and rules that regulate the daily lives of its subjects and writing down the rules of the game to define who will be subjected to these norms and rules, and what happens when subjects behave in dissidence to them. A citizenship regime therefore installs the mechanisms through which citizens conduct themselves as 'proper' citizens and delineates a group in the society as being entitled to the coded rights and responsibilities.

While at the same time the concept of citizenship regimes institutionalizes the rights of a particular dominant group in a given time, they create their 'others' who are not seen

as complete citizens since they lack one or a multiple of the ascriptive qualities of the dominant group according to which the citizenship regimes are established. The groups that have remained as others, such as ethnic and religious minorities, children, the disabled, the poor and women, are entitled to a lesser citizenship regime than the privileged citizens. The role of the second citizens in maintaining the social order such as reproducers of the nation or cheap labor are recognized through their citizenship status, but their rights have been relatively limited. These limitations have been the motivation for a number of social movements in the 20th century claiming new rights in the name of social justice by demanding change in the scope of what citizenship rights entailed.

On the one hand citizenship regimes create a certain order, an assemblage of rules and norms which governs the behaviors of its citizens, and on the other hand it provides the grounds for recognizing the difference of particular groups to be included in the social order as equal individuals. It enables both the establishment of an ‘order’ as well as the grounds for breaking and remaking of the existing order, to create a new and more just order. The double meaning of citizenship thus creates a paradox for the studies of citizenship. This dissertation saw citizenship as source of empowerment for the excluded others, and less about citizenship as a strategy of governing the conduct of daily practices in a given polity. It focused on the dialogical relationship of creating orders and breaking them in return to establish new orders. In a sense, it situated itself within the studies of ‘citizenship as empowerment’.

As a recent phenomenon, citizenship regimes have a history of empowering people, enabling them to make claim rights for themselves and others in the name of justice. When we think about the political history of the last two centuries, we see an abundance of bottom-up movements that have challenged the conceptualizations of political, civil and social rights, which in contemporary times have been expanded to include a further set of rights such as reproductive, ecological, sexual and cultural rights. Following the independence movements and the grassroots struggles of women and Black peoples for the full extension of citizenship rights, the claim of such rights after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and end of apartheid regime in South Africa in 1990’s showed how the basic political rights discourse that was taken for granted in the ‘West’ was embraced by the newly democratizing societies. Basic civil and political rights, which were taken to be individualistic and legalistic, in the sense that they were void of

power inequalities, were now seen as a “necessary precondition” of full and equal citizenship (Lister, 1997:35). Signaling a convergence between the tensions of universalism and recognition of differences, the demands made during the post-2011 period in the Middle East region can be seen a call for basic civil and political citizenship rights for all groups that make up the society.

### *7.1 Linking women’s movements and citizenship regimes*

The main question of the dissertation was: What is the relationship with between women’s movements and the citizenship regimes in which they are embedded? This question was asked following the increasingly empirical and theoretical interest in the women’s movements around the globe. The role of women in these social movements have been central, not only for political rights but for also social and other new generation of rights.

The main argument of this dissertation has been that women’s movements in Turkey and Tunisia have not only expanded citizenship regimes in terms of rights for women, but also show that citizenship regimes expand through collective action. Seeing citizenship as a dynamic concept, rather than just a signifier of rights and duties of a given collective, it argued that citizenship regimes can be shifted through resistance, dissidence and activism and not only with formal mechanisms of political and social change. In relation to the structures which set up the framework of given citizenship regimes, it focused on the agency of collective actors at different levels of action through changing laws, policies, norms, they have an impact on macro level structures. But more importantly, through interacting with competing tensions at the meso level, and the lived experiences at the micro level, the study of women’s movements show us that citizenship is a multilevel concept.

My study has argued that through building new repertoires of contention, women’s movements have produced new forms of political expression and have challenged the gendered regimes of citizenship in different contexts. Through global strikes, street protests, petitions, occupations, sit-ins, public statements, speech acts, vigils, social media activism, creative artistic expressions in different forms of art have created first a public position to demand our attention to various issues, but also have held various institutions responsible for taking action to correct these injustices.

Analyzing these acts of citizenship systematically and over a period of forty years in two different yet similar locations, it asked the following three questions; What are the acts of citizenship employed by organized women in expanding citizenship regimes? How do social and political structures shape these mobilizations and the practice of full citizenship rights and how do these inform women's agencies in return? And finally, how does the interplay between the agency of women and social and political structures impact the gendered nature of citizenship regimes?

In my chapters 3-6, I took a different aspect of citizenship regimes and have conducted an analysis with the guidance of these three questions. In chapter 3, I took citizenship as rights, and looked at how women's movement collectively enacted certain acts of citizenship which had an impact on how women's citizenship rights have been understood. The chapter reviewed the emergence of the women's movement in both Turkey and Tunisia and traced how these acts have resulted in concrete changes in laws, norms and institutions in both countries. Women's acts have resulted in gender equality policy outcomes, changes in laws were enacted, international norms and links have been established and civil society and public institutions were established at the national, regional and transnational levels.

Also in this chapter, I argued that the gender-equality outcomes were more common during times of intense political competition between Islamist and secular actors. Competition can also be domestic and internationally motivated; two different levels exists at this point, one at the national level where national political scene is not dominated by one group or actor, but open to input and influence from other groups. The role of European Union especially for the context of Turkish citizenship regimes have been a force in implementing gender equality outcomes for Turkey in early 2000s but also in Tunisia, domestic challenges to the one man rule of the dictatorship of RCD as well as the post 2011 period saw important changes in gender equality legislation and institutions. The importance of political competition as a political opportunity structure shows the first interaction between citizenship regimes and women's movements.

Also in chapter 3, I showed how the established citizenship regimes at the foundational regimes have also had a legacy on feminist movements in Turkey and Tunisia. In Turkey, the feminist movement focused on one of the private issues, domestic

violence, and other forms of oppression they have identified as the main results of patriarchy. Contrastingly in Tunisia, the emergent feminist movement adopted a more post-colonial and regional feminism, showing solidarity with women across the Arab region, questioning the role of their own state institutions in perpetuating colonial forms of oppression. This shows the second interaction between the citizenship regimes, women's movements and the political structures; the one between the impact of collective national identity and how women's movements adopt and challenge this identity simultaneously.

In chapter 4, I systematically analyzed acts of citizenships collectively and in relation to the regime type. Seeing citizenship as political participation and a call for equal representation in political agenda making, I showed how women's movements in both countries have employed different groups of acts of citizenship in order to participate in politics. In a four-quadrant typology along two axes; I classified acts in terms of their engagement and detachment from the state, along the second axis of political conflict or cooperation with the state politics. Doing so have helped me to understand how different periods of political regimes in the recent histories of two countries caused the women's movement to navigate between these quadrants in order to participate and conduct an influential feminist political space. I argued that during times of political openings and competition from other actors within the political sphere, the women's movements have leaned into activities of lobbying and advocacy, establishing networks within the policy making circles. However, during one-man rule in both countries, they have opted for street politics and more detached forms of activity from the state, as the regime becomes closed to their demands.

This shows us multiple things. First of all, as also argued in the feminist movements' literature, the women's movements are not cyclical, in fact they are continuous since their emergence since the 1980s. However, their strategies and visibility may depend on the political structures that are available. Despite the fact that these countries have seen periods of authoritarian rule, the feminist movements' employ repertoires of action are flexible; which show us that the practice of citizenship is not limited to democratic rule, but can also happen under authoritarian regimes, through risky territories of a conflictual stance against an oppressive regime.

Chapter 4 shows us a second consequence; that the acts of citizenship are not equal and have different implications at the meso level. While lobbying and advocacy may lead to greater and more concrete gains in terms of changing legal codes and norms, they require a different methodology, capacity and organizational discipline than street politics and networks of different women's groups. It requires continuous presence from the actors and a long-term commitment to movements' goals. As such, they can also be exclusionary towards the new comers, young generation and independent women in the movement. It requires additional networks with the policy makers, knowledge about international and local norm making and capabilities in terms of funds and organizational matters.

Street politics on the other hand makes it possible for marginalized groups to find a space in which they express themselves politically. As such, it also provides the freedom to be most politically critical against state institutions. The typology of acts of citizenship of organized women leads me to stress the importance of the political nature of collective action; as sometimes these activities can be invited and at others they can be invented. It would be wrong to assume right away that all invited spaces are co-opted, however these spaces which are embedded in networks with other institutions can sometimes put off transformatory aspirations as in the case of project-based feminism. However, keeping an engaged but a conflictual position such as lobbying and advocacy can yield in concrete gains for women, with engagement of ally bureaucrats and with bargaining with the state institutions. This shows the political importance of autonomy and keeping a conflictual position against the state institutions which are inherently conservative in these two countries.

However, the nature of this conflictual position and the making of feminist politics is diverse and fluid. While acting in concert during times when political participation channels are open to them, determining what the movement's goals are to be decided by taking into account the different groups from which these interests are represented. As such the following chapter, chapter 5, focused one of the aspects of these differences; the different collective identities within the women's movements and how these are linked to the larger citizenship regimes.

Through a contextual analysis of the Islamist in both countries and Kurdish women's acts in Turkey, the chapter followed how different collective identities emerged within the women's movements, claiming intersectional demands of recognition. I argued that these movements have been critical for the larger citizenship regimes in deconstructing the established hegemonic national identities, defined around certain interpretations of secularity and ethnicity. By claiming demands for the recognition of their difference from the hegemonic constructions of citizenship which erased these differences, they have expanded the depth of citizenship regimes.

Looking at their interaction with the larger political structures, I claimed that these movements have been at times co-opted by the identity politics at play in these countries. The Islamist women have been able to create this particular collective identity as long as they have remained autonomous and conflictual with the larger Islamist movement which sometimes saw their grievances as a potential for voter consolidation. The co-optation of their demands and identities by the larger political structures led to the emergence of a new critical and conflictual identity among the younger conservative generation of women who defined their identity in more post-Islamist terms.

In the case of the Kurdish women's acts of citizenship, I contended that the Turkish regime have sometimes seen them as legitimate players and at other times they saw them as marginal and illegitimate. Their demands have been co-opted by the Turkish regime when the regime was trying to bridge the gap between the Kurdish nationalist movement and the government through dialogue. Once this process proved to be a failure, the acts of the Kurdish women have also become illegitimate by the government, they have been facing police repression ever since.

The analysis of chapter 5 also shows the impact of the political structures on women's collective action and demands for citizenship rights. It points to the fact that once they are linked to larger identity movements, claims of recognition can become co-opted in these larger movements. Staying within the spaces of dissidence and resistance however is the process through which they can impact the depth of citizenship regimes, without being undermined by identity politics.

Chapter 6 focused on a different tension within the women's movements; looking at the content of citizenship regimes which point to the processes of how the common

good is determined by the movements' acts. It showed how there are several separate political identities within the movements for defining the common good; one is based on universal norms and the other focused more on how these universal norms should be interpreted at the local level. This dual position within the movements is being challenged by a third group which rejects this binary, one that is a tension between the cultural and symbolic demands of feminist activism with the demand for redistribution of resources through focusing on what women actually need on the ground. Through their daily practices, the third position defines the common good not through normative claims which are born either through international or local culture, but rather through being in direct touch with the women in their communities; and determining what is good for them through a bottom up approach. In this way, they escape being stuck within the unproductive debates on whether feminism is out of touch with women's local culture or internationally acclaimed norms; they focus on delivering what is good for women, determined through solidarity networks that are built through everyday practices.

Through this analysis, the chapter makes the link between the content of citizenship regimes and women's collective action. The content of citizenship relates to the mixture of rights and duties of citizenship rights as well as the process through which these rights and duties of citizenship are determined. The dilemmas that have been touched upon chapter 6 actually can be seen under the broader view of the lack of social rights and redistribution demands under the neoliberal economy and governance. The intensification of individualism and seeing citizenship as individual rights, rather than looking for the collective good in societies is closely linked to seeing citizenship only through negative liberties; being free from the interference of the state on individual rights. However, through their daily practices, women's movements also remind the state of its duties against its citizens. In interpreting women's needs as part of the women's movements, and in acting for the collective good of women as an oppressed social group, women's collective action expands the content of citizenship to include duties of the state against its citizens, rather than rights of the citizens to be free from the state.

## *7.2 Contributions of the study*

In this section, I would like to summarize what the main findings of this dissertation is to the larger body of knowledge we have on feminist collective action and citizenship. To begin with, my study is an attempt to address an important gap in the literature by

making the link between citizenship not as a concept signifying rights and duties of citizens but also seeing citizenship as a dynamic process in which its extent, depth and content is determined through both political opportunity structures and bottom-up collective action. Literature has contended that women's movements expanded the citizenship rights of women but did not make the connection between how they altered the citizenship regimes at large. Through looking at the spaces of political participation, building of collective identities, and resignification of the common good, the study expanded the link between citizenship as a process of emancipation rather than governance and the women's movements in Turkey and in Tunisia.

In addition, my work is a contribution to critical citizenship studies which sees citizenship as a process through the actions of activist citizens and their links with the state and other institutions of power. Although there are exceptions, this literature has mainly been focusing on the status and claims of citizenship of migrants in European countries. By looking at women's movements, this study has expanded the application of activist citizenship, dissidence and acts of citizenship literature to women citizens and their collective action at the micro and meso levels. These studies also focus generally on individual acts of citizenship of excluded citizens in a polity. Contrarily, through engaging in a systematic analysis of their acts of citizenship, my study has implications in terms of how to see these acts against the broader citizenship regimes.

Classing the acts of citizenship systematically also shows their relation with the political opportunity structures. Taking a four-decade perspective of the evolution of women's movements in two countries, my study makes an explicit link between the political and historical context and how they influence acts of citizenship in their collectivity. This endeavor comes with a second implication, one that is borne specifically from the cases selected in this study. It shows that citizenship is not only a right that is exercised under democratic regimes, but also is possible to enact under authoritarian regimes. The assumption that full and equal citizenship can be only enacted under democratic polities is false, and one that needs to be further scrutinized through looking at activist politics.

Looking acts and the actors who have enacted them also contributes to this literature. It shows that instead of seeing acts random, heroic or unstrategic and the

outcomes of which are unknown, it shows that most of the actors within the women's movement have been individually politicized before they become involved in activist practices. While there may also be acts that are completely spontaneous, most of the acts within feminist politics require a certain process of politicization of the individual against the power hierarchies between genders and the systematic representations of these hierarchies. The fact that the actors have been politicized before does not mean that the acts are being played out of a pre-written script of citizenship, they can still be enacted anew. It is the consequences of these actions and the spaces in which these actions take place that matters for them to be counted as dissident activism. As such, the dissertation underlines the importance of acting in dissent in changing the social contract between the citizen and the state. Acting in dissent does not only capture the formal political institutions which function as an opposition to the established government, but also can be understood by the daily actions of regular citizens, and in fact, excluded citizens in terms of participation in the polity, representation of their particular identities, and rights and duties of whom are determined through hegemonic means.

In addition to the contributions on the critical citizenship literature, my study also has implications for the feminist movement studies as well as broader comparative studies. First of all, despite the fact that Turkish and Tunisian political regimes, political cleavages and citizenship regimes are comparable, this comparison has not been made in the literature except for very few recent cases. Comparing Turkey and Tunisia especially in terms of citizenship regimes show general patterns of which impact women's citizenship rights in the Middle East region. The question of secular and Islamist opposition, the tensions between tradition and modernity and their role in constructing hegemonic collective identities, dirigiste regimes with singular reading of citizenship ideals have implications on how women's roles and rights are shaped within these societies and how their local women's movements respond to these structures. Finding similarities in these structures contributes to our understanding of both the unique and repeated patterns of dynamics which shape women's rights in the Middle East region.

### *7.3 Missing links, avenues for further research and additional questions*

While the comparative study of both movements and citizenship regimes in Turkey and in Tunisia is a contribution to the literature, as far as it goes in comparative studies, middle-range theories lack the sophisticated and detailed research of single-case studies.

While the women's movement itself can be seen as marginal in the two countries, it only looked at the most visible fractions since it has been a comparative and longitudinal study. More attention and focus needed for marginalized groups within the feminist justice movement in the following subject matters.

To begin with, the dissertation does not give enough voice to especially the new emerging post-Islamist identities within the women's movement, and how they relate to the larger citizenship regimes and political context in both countries. This missing link is due to several reasons, first of which is most importantly my lack of ability to find and interview a sufficient sample of Islamist feminist in both Turkey and in Tunisia. The second reason is that majority of this movement is seen co-opted by the larger Islamist movements which render the voices of the minority and autonomous Islamist feminists silent. Another reason which emanated from the limited number of interviews I had was the fact that in Turkey, the removal of the headscarf ban as a regulatory practice has caused the dismantling of the Islamist feminists, who had been rallied around a fixed problem. The removal of one single problem and their lack of raising new agendas for women have put their position even more precarious against the larger Islamist movement.

In addition to the Islamist women, I did not establish enough contact with the Kurdish women from the Kurdish women's movement in Turkey. I had a chance to speak to three Kurdish women. The lack of voice of the Islamist and Kurdish women in this dissertation leads me to recognize that Chapter 5 focuses on the individual acts of citizenship rather than a collective analysis of their individual positionalities. While Chapters 4 and 6 focus on a number of issues along the lines of feminist activism, chapter 5 is mainly reports a few acts from the interviews and secondary sources. As such, it fails to include major discussions on how Islamist women and Kurdish women see how citizenship regimes are gendered in their own terms. These women not only have enacted acts of citizenship demanding the recognition of their particular identities, but have also devised major frameworks to understand the relationship citizens and their rights.

One of these frameworks for understanding gender relations through the vantage point of Islamist women have been through the notions of complementarity (Y. Arat 1998). This has been a framework through which Islamist women have challenged the

secular notions of equality and instead sought to reframe it in terms of male-female complementarity. Another important framework devised by the Kurdish women's movement has been the notion of "jineoloji", a concept which has been built on the principle that without the freedom of women, no society can call itself free. Different women activists from the Kurdish movement are taking part in developing the notion which can be seen as an alternative to how we understand feminism in social sciences (Al-Ali and Tas 2018). The lack of representation by Islamist and Kurdish women in the dissertation shows therefore a lack of inclusion of both concepts, which can be seen as crucial in understanding how these particular women view citizenship in their own terms. As a consequence, this dissertation mainly represents the mainstream women's movements in both countries which are comprised of secular women. The understandings of citizenship of women in both countries are more diverse and richer than this dissertation actually represents.

The second issue with which this dissertation lacks a focus on is the social and economic rights of women. Despite the fact that citizenship regimes concern to a great deal the social and economic rights of women citizens, around various questions of exclusions from labor markets, conservative social policies which focus rather on the family as a social unit rather than women's individuality, questions around ethics of care and women's invisible reproductive work, feminization of poverty and the double impact of neoliberal policies on women, these questions have not come up to a great extent during my field work. Again, despite the fact that a lot of organizations demanded shelters for victims of domestic violence as well as making the theoretical link between domestic violence, women's dependence on their husbands for income, and their exclusion from economic and social rights, it did not come up through an analysis of acts of citizenship.

In fact, during my interviews, I noticed a difference between the Tunisian and Turkish activists in allocating an attention to these issues; Tunisian women seemed to prioritize feminization of poverty more than their Turkish counterparts; possibly due to the acuteness of poverty as a social problem in Tunisia compared to Turkey, and their attention to especially the grievances of the rural women in agriculture. However looking at their acts of citizenship have led me this study to make these claims invisible. Consequently, I can claim that the most visible acts of citizenship by women's movements in both countries have not focused specifically on economic and social rights

of women. The absence of this could be due to several reasons which future research can illuminate. When I confronted one of my interviewees in Turkey has suggested that the problems with women's sole existence and most basic human rights have been so dire that it was never turn for advocating economic rights of women. However, this is problematic given recent developments in Turkey for example. The economic rights of women in Turkey, one of which is the right to alimony after divorce, has been put to question recently by the emerging conservative dynamics against the individual role of women vs. the unity of family. This development definitely necessitates a separate study to understand the link between women's economic and social rights and the larger citizenship regimes.

This dissertation has lacked the focus on the alliances and tensions within the LGBTQ community and the feminist community and how the claims of the queer community and their demands for equal citizenship go with the feminist claims. As Judith Butler contends; "That feminism has always countered violence against women, sexual and nonsexual, ought to serve as a basis for alliance with these other movements, since phobic violence against bodies is part of what joins antihomophobic, antiracist, feminist, trans, and intersex activism." (Butler 2004, 9). Despite the lack of substantive debate between the queer community and the mainstream feminists, recent heated debates which have been conducted in August 2019 between transactivists and radical feminists with trans exclusionary attitudes in Turkey on social media affirms that this subject is becoming relevant in the context of this dissertation. This debate and how it unpacks will be critical in making the exclusionary dynamics within the feminist movement.

Finally, another avenue which this study leads to is other new movements and new forms of citizenship rights which revolve around questions of environmental movement, eco-feminism, just access to the right to the city, migrant communities, peace and ethnic conflict all of which have gendered implications on the rights of the citizens. One of the questions which is crucial in these debates is how the feminist movement positions itself with respect to these new generation of rights-based movements. Does joining these movements empty feminism of its significance and its main objective; or on the contrary having a position alongside with other rights-based movements transform feminist movements in a way to reinforcing its call for justice? This question is relevant not only

at the normative level, but also is crucial for the future of the movement and links between citizenship regimes looking at from a daily practices perspective.

As a final note, despite all of these new ways of being political, and new avenues for political action, we are far from achieving fully engendered citizenship regimes. Two large structural challenges exist which threaten the feminist movement and its gains. Strikingly, one has to do with the exclusion of women's demands and the other has to do with their inclusion. First is the recent surge of conservative and populist politics around the globe. Counter movements in terms of a backlash against feminist and progressive agendas have been on the rise. This development has not only been seen through an exclusionary practice, which has been the case for a long time, but also producing results at the theoretical level; with its own movement dynamics, advocacy and policy impact. Studies which refer to the link between these rising counter movements, especially with prevalence of radicalization of some of the views of the conservative backlash continues to have dire consequences on the movement's gains and relationship with the larger citizenship practices.

The second of these issues has to do with how the recent popularization of feminist views impact the political agency of feminist action. The recent surge in the popularization of feminist movement especially seen in the areas of arts, popular culture and the media can be seen as a positive impact and a broader acceptation of the justice claims voiced by women's movements around the globe. On the other hand though, the popularization of feminism runs the risk of rendering feminism 'apolitical' by taming its demands by its inclusion in the mainstream culture. As this dissertation has claimed all along, feminist politics require to keep its dissident position against all power hierarchies, including the ones that are borne through a popularization and vulgarization of the feminist claims. Keeping a dissident and contentious position will continue to engender citizenship in the struggle to end women's exclusion from citizenship regimes.

# ANNEXES

*List of interviewees and affiliations*

| Name | Affiliation |
|---|---|
| TUNISIA | |
| Monia Ben Jamia | President of ATFD |
| Salwa Grissa | Droit a la difference |
| Halima Jouini | Ligue Tunisienne de Droits de l'Homme |
| Torkia Chebbi | Vice President of Ligues des Electrices Tunisiennes |
| Sana Ghenima | President of Femmes et Leadership |
| Khedija Arfaoui | Academic and independent feminist |
| Souad Triki | Former president of ATFD |
| Communications officer | Aswat Nissa |
| Neila Sellini | Independent feminist |
| Amal Khlif | Chaml |
| Meriam Mechti | Chouf |
| Bochra Bel Hadj Hamida | Independent MP |
| Salma Hajri | Groupe Tawhida |
| Nadia Hakimi | General secretary of ATFD |
| Rouda Rezgui | Ligue Tunisienne pour les droits politiques de la femme |
| Noura Borsali | Lawyer and member of ATFD |
| Jouda Guiga | Independent feminist and judge |
| Hend Bouziri | President of Tounisiet |
| Lobna Bouaouina | Irtikaa |
| Hayet Jazeer | ATFD |
| Aya Chebbi | Independent feminist and activist |
| Lina Ben Mhenni | Independent feminist activist, blogger |
| Feryal Charfeddine | Independent feminist and activist |
| Zeineb Farhad | Actress and independent feminist |

| | |
|---|---|
| Hafida Chekir | ATFD |
| Amira - | Beity |
| Sophie Bessis | Academic and independent feminist |
| | |
| TURKEY | |
| Sule Aytac | Independent feminist |
| Pinar Ilkkaracan | Former president of WWHR – NW |
| Cigdem Aydin | Former president of KADER |
| Handan Koc | Former contributor to Pazartesi magazine |
| Canan Arin | Lawyer and founding member of Purple Roof |
| Sirin Tekeli | Independent feminist and academic |
| Ayse Ayata | Academic and independent feminist |
| Fatma Bostan Unal | Founding member of Capital Women’s Platform |
| Bertil Emrah Oder | Academic |
| Stella Ovadia | Independent feminist |
| Ulfet Tayli | Member of Purple Roof |
| Canan Gullu | President of TKFD |
| Hidayet Tuksal | Founding member of Capital Women’s Platform |
| Ozlem Basdogan | Project manager at Flying Broom |
| Zelal Ayman | Executor of the KIHEP program at WWHR – NW |
| Zozan Ozgokce | Founding member of VAKAD |
| Nebahat Akkoc | Founding member of KAMER |
| Cigdem Kagitcibasi | Former director of KOC-KAM |

## *Interview forms*

| Main objective | Main questions | Sub-themes (reminders) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Activism history<br><br>To retrieve general information about the interviewee<br><br>To retrieve information about the interviewee's activism history<br><br>To understand interviewee's motivations for activism | The main objective of this interview is to talk about the acts of citizenship by women from the women who have been involved in these acts.<br><br>Can you give some personal information about yourself?<br><br>How did you get involved with the women's movement? Do you remember your first act<br><br>Were there any role models who influenced you or any events which encouraged you to take part in these acts?<br><br>Do you have any connection with other political movements in the pas tor the present? | Family history, where they live<br><br>The years active in the women's movement, the roles taken so far within the movement<br><br>Connections with political parties and civil society organizations |
| 2. Perceptions of citizenship<br><br>To understand interviewee's perception of citizenship<br><br>To retrieve information about the interviewees perceptions about the current status of citizenship rights of women in Turkey (Tunisia)<br><br>To determine the interviewees comparative knowledge about the women's rights in the Middle East region | What do you think of when I mention women's citizenship rights? Are they different from women's rights?<br><br>How would you evaluate the status of women's rights in your country? Which periods were important for women's rights gains? Are there important rupture periods?<br><br>What do you think are the factors which cause a change in women's rights?<br><br>When compared to the rest of the Middle East, how do you compare the status of women's rights in your country? Do you have knowledge of the women's | Rights, duties, public and private sphere debates, inclusion<br><br>Historical periods<br><br>Elite decisions, external factors, women's movement, mass society attitudes<br><br>Other majority Muslim countries |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | movements and women's rights in other countries in the region? | |
| 3. Women's access to citizenship rights<br><br>To consult interviewee's experience on women's access to citizenship rights and problems during this access<br><br>To understand the institutions responsible in the access to women's citizenship rights<br><br>To understand the interviewee's perception of women's access to citizenship rights in the region | In your opinion, how well are women aware of their rights?<br><br>What are some of the impediments for accessing rights?<br><br>Who do you think is responsible for correcting these problems?<br><br>What do you think of the access of women citizen's to their rights in your country? | Duties for women, structural difficulties, legal impediments.<br><br>State institutions, society, social institutions, civil society, international organizations |

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Organization and activities<br><br>To retrieve first-hand information about their organization | (Questions if the respondent is a NGO worker)<br><br>Could you provide information about your organization?<br><br>What is the main mission of your organization, how did this mission become about?<br><br>What type of activities do you conduct?<br><br>Can you give procedural information about your organization?<br><br>Which national and international networks are you member of? | The foundation year, the role of the interviewee, the persons who have been most influential<br><br>Main objectives, successful campaigns, slogans<br><br>Lobbying, consciousness raising, protests, marches, charity, projects<br><br>Membership procedures, decision making mechanisms, representative networks<br><br>International organizations, networks and funds |
| 5. The organization's relations with other institutions<br><br>To retrieve information about the organization's relationship with other institutions<br><br>To understand the perception of the interviewee about other associations and institutions | (Questions if the respondent is a NGO worker)<br><br>How would you evaluate the relationship of your organization with the state?<br><br>How about your relations with other political organizations and civil society institutions?<br><br>Can you talk about the relationship of your organization with other women's groups? What do you think about their work?<br><br>What kind of partnerships are you involved with public institutions?<br><br>What about your relations with international institutions? | Independent, common interests, pragmatics, cooperation, conflict<br><br>Socio-economic, political and civil rights |

| 6. Citizenship acts | | |
|---|---|---|
| To consult the interviewee's recollection of the acts | The movement emerging in the 1980's have been involved in some acts. Do you remember these acts? Can you talk about your experience in these protests? | Age, class, occupation, ethnicity, religion |
| To understand the sociological make up of the events and social divisions | Who joined these protests? What kind of social background did they have? | |
| To distinguish the acts from other collective actions | Can you talk about the creativity of these events? What made them creative in your opinion? | The introduction of new concepts, institutional and legal changes |
| To determine the points of rupture with regards to the acts | Do you think that these events have caused changes in the public opinion and institutional changes? | |
| To understand the tensions between the acts of citizenship | What were the demands of these events? What were some norms which emerged through these events? | Equality, justice, emancipation, sisterhood, solidarity |
| | Who and what did the events target? | State, public institutions, judiciary, police, family, mass society |
| 7. The evolution of the women's movement | | |
| Opinions on the factors for evolution of women's rights | What are some factors for the evolution of women's rights in your opinion? | The attitude of the political elite, international pressures, international support, increase in women's perception, the women's movements acts |
| The women's movement history | Which periods have been the most effective in terms of advancing women's rights in your country? What were these advancements about? | |
| The impact of larger political context on the development of women's rights | Which other events caused a change in the public opinion on women's rights? | |
| | What are some strategies and methods which were most efficient in advancing women's rights? | |
| | What was the influence of the political context on these changes? | Nationalism, ethnic and/or religious |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | What do you think has been the influence of the global women's movements in the local movement? | movement, neoliberalism<br><br>Dependence on international organizations, networking, impact of the projects |
| 8. Opinions about the future of the movement and women's rights | How do you see the future of women's rights in your country?<br><br>How do you think the women's movement can be more effective? | |

*Sample Interviews*

Sample 1. Amal Grami, academic, Tunisian

Can you tell me about yourself and your past as an activist?

I teach at the university of Manouba, at the same time I am a woman and human's rights activist. My field of interest is gender studies and Islamic studies. It can be confusing for some people because I come from a humanities background and I do perspective of new methodologies from anthropology of religion, sociology of religion, discourse analysis, I do not do the same work as my colleagues in Zeitouna University, which is the classical way to study religion. At the same time I am doing my best to introduce some new methods such as joining women's studies with religion, art, religion and masculinity studies, so its new research. I am trying to introduce these new topics to the university where I teach.

As an activist, I have a confrontation with Islamists, I have received a lot of death threats, I was harassed on the street because I defended the position of minorities because I am member of many interfaith religious groups, Bahai's, my first thesis was about aposthesy in Islam and I defended the right to change religion. Of course, I was invited many times to appear on tv. Because of my position of homosexuality in Islam…my critical point of view in many topics, there is a perception that I am breaking law and cross cutting boundaries.

Are you a member in any association?

No I work with them, I do trainings, I am working with many women's rights and minority associations, giving lectures, participating in their events, doing reports etc. so but I am not a member. I think its to be important to be independent, in this way you can do your critical thinking, once you are a member, unfortunately it is not acceptable here to take another position.

What are some of the positions that divide women's organizations?

For example defending the equal inheritance rights. For me its important to revisit the position of the ulema and fukaha. We have another work in terms of knowledge, the participation of women in critical way to revisit our classical knowledge of religion, and

to analyze the position of patriarchal men, and to understand why they present their interpretation in a certain way. Femmes democrates, are against using the argument of religion, which is for me is unacceptable. Because you cannot deny the importance of religion in our society. If you try to convince people, you can use religion also. People use religion to convince others, they need to understand what is behind a certain interpretationand I think its time for women to take position and to reduce their ijtihad , they are doing their best to analyze Quran from feminist lenses.

What do you think of the feminist interpretations of Islam?

Based on historical context and new methodology like intersexuality (intersectionality?) you can understand why they defend their position. They defend this idea that women shoudl not have the same part as men bc women were excluded from the economic roles and in society, actually we have statistics that show that the head of the family is the woman because her husband is lazy or unemployed. The context is different, we can convince people by using I focus on this argument, the fact that we don't cut the hand of the theif like in the sharia law, we must use the same interpretation when it comes to women. We touch, its not sacred, the whole package. So what is behind this? it is an idea that we should keep the positive, rights of men untouchable. We can convince people that the mentality should change because we live in another society, people are helping each other, men take on new roles, women also are playing new roles, participatory democratic culture etc. when we defend the principle equality in many areas, you apply it to inheritence too. It doesn't make sense, gender equality or economic equality etc, justice, equal pay in another are we are against in inheritence, it doesn't make sense.

We have different voices in the society claiming equality, there is also men not just women. There is a new dynamic in the Arabic society.

Is this something that women's organizations don't take into account then?

They invite me and Neila Sellini for example to talk about a little bit about this perspective but they didn't really want to use this religious arguments, they maintain their position as secular, laic etc.

So you think this puts them in a distant position?

An unrealistic position. It is a form of radicalism for me. Don't find radicalism in Islamist books but also there is radicalism coming from the secularist parts.

What about political parties, they are also divided, do the secular parties also defend this?

Actually most of them are afraid. They don't want to differ in this issue. Because the context is in certain way, we are under this polarization between these two camps, secularists and Islamists. So, they avoid to maintain their partnership in the government. Ennahda actually is in an alliance with Nidaa, so let's try to work together and avoid topics that divide us. So there is no will to go deeper, for others, because in the constitution we have this clause to defend the sacred, these verses of the Quran are sacred for political parties, and not only for Ennahda, also for some others, In this way, you can say that its an issue between men and women, whatever they belong to, Islamist or secularist. Actually, we discovered that many collegues, family members are against this equal inheritence, it is not an issue of Islamists, its an issue of patriarchal society in the aftermath of the revolution, the rise of patriarchy. We are facing this myth of secularism, we are not a secularist society, more and more traditional and conservative.

What other challenges exist for women in Tunisia?

A lot, in terms of awareness, there is a lack of awareness and illiteracy, it is a big factor. You can't convince women when they are… the number of girls leaving school is increasing. What is the future of this new generation ? The level also of education. Actually we are facing a big problem. Education system is different from 80s. New generation don't have the skill to write in Arabic or French. Doesn't help people to have this awareness maybe the economic crisis also doesn't help women to do they work many associations actually they are facing lack of resources, budget etc. so they cant do their projects.

What is happening in Quranic schools, some families were obliging little girls to cover, they are controlling more and more their daughters and trying to give them a new Islamic socialisation. Even in term of teaching, but they refuse to particpate because they are also this idea secularists, so they dont take your ideas as good ideas. They have this

fear, you control, they accept to learn but they are not convinced about topics, you have this fear of ideas of feminism.

Do you think its a foreign idea for them?

Yes, I am talking about the experience and idea of my collegues too, because we participate in talk shows, they already have this idea that you are not model for them, you are against Islam and their tradition, and we don't have this good environment to be flexible. They are already fixed, they think they are obliged to go to university to get their degree, they didn't chose, to have a course, they don't participate. Their silence does not help the environment to think freely and have a good discussion. They tell me we know who you are when I ask them to discuss.

How did the revolution influence women's movement and rights?

There is different roles in terms of visibility of women. The presence of women in public sphere is important actually, they are participating in demonstration, they are expressing their ideas. I am talking about one category of women, not all. Even when they use arts to express themselves to complain against violence, its a new way to express themselves. It's different from 10 years ago. Ways, strategies, discourse also is different. I am looking to discourse coming from women activists, because they are trying to do Tunisian dialect, no more French. It is very important to bridge the gap.

What are some of the new ideas and changes in discourse?

They are more and more willing to participate in different processes, writing the constitution and the laws, media , the return of terrorism they participate and they express themselves. They are here, and they are voiceless?!

Do they have any allies in the government ?

OF course, for femmes democrates, they have allies with some political parties, they strategise to express their demands.

The relationship with the state is different now. They were invited many times by the president, they expressed their position. It's different.

Was it only the femmes democrates, or others too?

Mostly them, because they have some members in the government so they benefit from this alliances. Maybe they re more powerful, because they have this background and this history, they were pioneers. We understand.

What do you understand from women's rights, women's citizenship rights?

I think we are revisiting the constitution and there is a gap between the const and law. We feel the Moroccon women are passing us, there is a competition, during decades we were the most advanced.

Do you see any political will to pass these laws?

We move from state feminism to another context , we are no more seeing political will to advance womens rights from the state, but women are pushing it themselves, they are defending their vision for the future of the society.

Do you think evolution from on women's rights come from pressure from the below?

Most of the time its the work of the elites, in rural areas there is no demand I believe to change the laws, for example for inheritence, It is not shared by all women. Of course for economic rights, they are asking for them, there is consensus on economic rights, since you are assuming there is an economic crisis, thereis a will to change your everyday life, your daily position. It is different for political rights, its only linked to elites, for social rights of course there is lots of women who share this demand. It depends from which side you are looking from.

There is also a gap between the law and its practice. Violence against women is more and more increasing each day. It's a new phenomena, that is why I am talking about the TUnisian society becoming more and more conservative. You get in your car in the morning, and they intimidate you, each time you are facing violence, verbal or physical. My opinion is formed of trying to change the relationship between men and women, as if some men are taking revenge, because the situation is different today for Islamist men, they can express themselves and say what he thinks about polygamy, two decades ago it was forbidden. Now on the street, in a cafe, not in this area, but in more popular

neighborhoods, you take coffee, the whole space is under the control of men. This is a new phenomenon for us.

In a way the revolution brought more freedoms, but also opened up to extreme ideas, You can't tell people you are different, they have their own ideas, don't expose this idea, this is democracy, and coexistence together, new principles and new behavior, and we are trying to understand what's behind this. When femmes democrates organize some events when they heard I had a conference they came to these extremists, they are not invited but they come and disturb your work. Even though we don't do them, we cannot go to an Islamist event. But we should expect this act of violation of your space.

Maybe for women's activists, women belonging to this association, there is a lack of confidence and strategy… They keep silent, they didn't accept to respond to this violation. For me and Neila Sellini it is different, because we have arguments from religion. They become aware that this woman is untouchable, because she has this expertise. Two weeks ago, I was invited by an association and they came this guy tried to make noise saying you don't really present something new, we know all this, once I started to respond they went silent, you come here to show yourself off, to not let Amal Grami talk, you know this behavior is forbidden in religion, of not respecting others, of women, you don't respect women, it is a form of violence against women. Even my students and collegues, they said this is the first time he didn't do anything, they thought there would be confrontation.

Also for the issue of veiling, its amazing, at the aftermath of the revolution, AFTURD and femmes democrates they were fearful now they accept but there is a crisis of confidence. Each time they freely talk, some group of veiled women are there, maybe they are coming to report, this new environment is a new challenge for them. You cannot close your door, or exclude some woman because they are veiled.

Do you suppose they will come more inclusive?

Actually the problem is they are not doing their best to convince the new generation to be part of this new project of evolution of women's movement in Tunisia. I am thinking about students at the university, they ignore totally ATFD no longer interested in them. I work with my friend, one told me, I don't want to divide on the basis of gender, I want to

be mixed with men for example. For the issue of citizenship for example, look at the culture of citizenship, I am not representing only women, as a citizen is a more important for me. These groups ignore totally women's movement, women's history. They saw some members president of femme democrate they didn't know her, they are not interested, there is a lack of knowledge about this issue. Even before this association, they didn't work with universities, did not organize in universities. They stay at the fixed position, they want to be elitist. Although they receive money from Germany, French, UNDP for their projects in rural areas, but they are convinced to stay as an elitist club. When you distinguish between project and ideas, you are working because you receive money, not because of your conviction, so rural women are only a subject for you. It is manipulation of the certain context to become more visible and powerful but in fact in theories and point of view, and vision, is fixed. They are the same women, they didn't open for new generation. They refuse to accept this view, I am talking freely because I am not freely, I have distance and criticise. It is an issue of domination. You start by criticising men, at the same time you are using the same strategy, you exclude certian women because they don't share certain ideas. For books, for reports etc. they never invite me to participate. Not because they didn't recognize my skills, because I am not sharing the same ideas, so you are excluded. Here I try to advise them for example, since the beginning of the revolution, I try to convince them to write your own history, they didn't accept this idea, they are working new areas, rural areas, bc they are receiving money, but they are of course very satisfied, they enjoy this new environment of liberty. But after 5 years, after the writing of the constitution, when they heard women from Ennahda are producing new narrative about the position of women in Tunisia, they are shocked. Why are they telling Americans they are own story, they were shocked. Why didn't you write your own history? Did you document your activities, take photos etc? You don't have counter narratives, they are everywhere women from Ennahda, because they have money they are well introduced in different spaces, they can talk in English, they are visible, they can say whatever they want. In conferences I was the only Tunisian woman from secularist bloc, and I heard new narratives for complimentarity. They play an important role to convince Gannouchi. Many women defended complimentarity. Who is there to counter their arguments? Noone. So I think that they didn't have a clear vision about the future of women's movement in Tunisia. Maybe they focus more on their benefit and

their position. They are advantages as a group, they share certain history, they want to keep all this heritage for themselves.

I am afraid because once this old generation leaves, who will take this movement? They will say they have youth working for them, but it's not transformation of knowledge. For me, it is a way to change the whole vision in order to open gates for all new generation to participate, to accept differences, different opinions, to be able to practice democratic procedures, strategies, to learn together, in order to change our situation, and not to monopolize as if you are the only group to think about the future of Tunisia, it doesn't work. We moved from situation where men is taking this opportunity to decide on behalf of women, actually there is a group of women now doing the same thing. For me it is not accpetable to talk for all Tunisian women. To present to the West, as if to promote ourselves as the model, no there is another story; we have terrorist women in Tunisia, and we have more and more conservative categories of women asking for polygamy. Different categories and narratives for the future of Tunisia. You dont' have the authority to talk about all Tunisian women. They are one category of women. Women who leave to join ISIS, there is a return of sexual feminin identity.

Do you think I should speak to conservatives?

They are not interesting, they don't talk as individuals, they talk along the lines of the party, so many students came to see me all over the world, they talked to them too and the repeated the same narrative, that they improved human rights etc. you have to be vigilent and check whether they are telling the truth. Are you aware of what you want, your will, your experience, what do you want as a person before being member of the part? That's why you are manipulated by Ennahda, we accept all women. Or same as Nidaa when they chose viled women to speka for themselves, they are chosing bodies of women to send a message the foreign countries, so they are trying to show they are more democratic than the Egyptian Ikhwan.

***Sample 2. Canan Arın. Lawyer. Turkey***

*How did you get involved with the women's movement?*

During 1980s and martial law, it was impossible to gather publicly. Sirin Tekeli was a colleague of my brother at Istanbul University. I grew up under the illusion that Turkish women had equal rights as Turkish men. After our tea parties and awareness raising groups I realized we were never equal, and equality was especially distorted by the MK and TCK.

In TCK woman's adultery and men's adultery was differentially stipulated, which was against the 1961 constitution's article on equality. The grounds for men's and women's adultery were different; it was enough for a woman to be with a man on one occasion. Adultery is grounds for divorce and also a crime by the TCK. But establishing man's adultery was dependent on many other factors; such that he should have to be living or having invited his mistress to live with his wife. 'Business getaways' did not constitute adultery. This article was made subject to a CC case due to the fact that it violated equality clause.

Secondly, rape does not translate to Turkish very well. Rape is equal with violation, you can also violate someone's rights for example. We use assault (irza gecmek) which etymologically shows the mentality behind the penal code; that a woman's body is essentially a commodity. In case of an assault against a woman's body, the code recognized that this was a violation of the family order or public order. A woman's ownership belonged to her family and to her husband after she got married. Therefore if the assault was against a married woman, the punishment would have been more severe. If the woman was single, less sentence was stipulated; and if the woman in question was a sex worker, then serious reductions were stipulated for the punishment. Women's movement had serious influence.

A woman's last name must be changed after she got married, despite the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights and the CC's decisions; the local courts recognize these as individual demands.

There has never been a sincere political will to prevent in Turkey.

All of these point to a denial and violation of women's human rights and the denial of accepting women as individuals and hence normal citizens. This results in women voting for whoever her man tells her to and it becomes impossible to talk about a free will of women under these conditions.

These meetings during 1980s made us realize that women are not equal to men. I have been involved with the movement since then and never quit. I took part in the establishment of Mor Cati women's shelter, later on I was involved in Kader's foundation for women's political participation. In addition I took part in the establishment of the Enforcement center for women's rights at the Istanbul Barr Association, as well as the European Council on Prevention and Expertise on Violence against women. I was a Turkish representative in Beijing +5 by the UN. Since then I was also a lawyer in many cases of violence against women.

*Among your many hats, which one would you prioritize as the most important for Turkish women?*

My role as a defendant for prevention of violence against women. Because you can find the underlying reason for violence in man-woman relationship. Men use violence to enforce their domination and control over women man's body. This violence is the underlying reason for all the things that hold women back in life.

*What was the relationship of the associations you were involved with other actors such as state, political or civil society?*

WM played such a big role in reforming these laws. First of all in 1998 when I was in European Council, an Australian delegate came to me in a meeting in Iceland, explaining to us very proudly that they recently enforced a protection order. We had this enforced before them.

No. 4320 Protection order (or the U.S. version as restraining order, Turkish name of the

law is the ‘protection of family’). The parliamentary debate during the making of this law is very interesting. A male MP claimed that these unruly feminists were trying to destroy the family institution, and things like these should be kept in private, and not made public. Isilay Saygin in a cunning way named the law as ‘the law on protection of the family’, since the family is holy, and women are unimportant.

Also, the WM played a big role on the reform of MK, especially the sections on family law and gender equality within the family. The age of marriage was made equal for men and women, we tried to make it minimum 18, but this was not accepted by the parliament, because women are commodities, they are seen to be gotten rid of as quickly as possible and generate a revenue and so that she doesn’t become sexually aware and make her own choices.

Also, the property regimes which up to that day was based on separation of goods which was based on principle of equality although in practice it worked against women. This was replaced by participation regime in acquired property. It was however applied to marriages after 2002, not those which aggrieved 17 million women. When we went to join the CEDAW committee and give our regular reports we argued that because of these 17 million women who suffered from this change the law should be enforced retrospectively. I was personally lobbying for this change. But even though Turkish delegation accepted to apply it retrospectively, it is the custom of Turks to make promises in international surroundings and never apply them. Many other promises given in those meetings were never actually held. New made laws do not work in retrospect only if the law in question concerns public order. We argued that this concerned the public order but this argument was not accepted.

Second field that WM played a big role in was TCK, we established a group called ‘TCK Women’s group’, to tackle men’s violence against women. We prepared along with lawyers and other members from associations such as Pinar Ilkkaracan from New Ways. Our TCK stipulates the age of consent is 15 and it is impossible to speak about a minors consent in a case where she is under 15. But despite this Mardin Supreme Court as well as 1. Heavy Penal Court recognized consent in the case where 26 grown men raped a 13 year old girl. Therefore it is crucial that laws are reformed because they determine our

room for maneuver.

There is also practice. There is a large gap between laws in place and the practice of laws. To fill this gap, to enforce laws as they are written; on paper article 90 of Turkish Constitution stipulates that international treaties by which Turkey is a signatory country takes precedence over national laws in case of a conflict. Courts rarely take into account international treaties. I will give you another example. I was with Stella in Sweden to visit shelters. Two women there were considered rape because they had objects penetrated in their vaginas. At that time in Turkey, this was not considered rape. Sexual rape was not clearly defined at that time. Later by jurisprudence a definition of sexual rape was accepted by all courts. According to that definition, in order for a woman to be considered as sexually raped, she would have had to be penetrated by a man's penis. If you reduce rape to only male organs, other incidents get left out. Therefore, the new definitions made by us as women during the drafting of the new penal code was extremely important.

(minors issues) Statutory rape and molestation was also defined by us. We wanted to draft the law to exclude consensual relationships of minors with maximum five years of age apart. But because our men of 40 love minors, they filed an action to nullify this law at the CC. CC accepted this law. They argued that it was in our customs that girls could engage in with relationships with much older men.

However, Istanbul Protocol and CEDAW requires all states to rectify all customary laws and regulations which discriminate against women. But this was not applied in this case.

The new regulation commonly known as 4+4+4 opens the way for marrying minor girls. TCK recognizes minors as under 18 and says that anyone under 18 is considered a child. This is contradictory.

There are very interesting cases where women influenced the court. We held a meeting over Skype with many representatives and pressured the court to give the man the sentence he deserves. And it worked, he did not get any reduction on his sentence. Many women's organizations follow such cases to observe and to defend for victims.

Also concerning honor crimes; the old penal code stipulated that murder of close relatives would be punished more harshly than a random murder. But for a long time they did not practice this. If you can influence and change the way judges think, then this gap narrows. New penal code sees murder and honor crimes as separate, the latter being punished more harshly. But we wanted the draft to describe honor crimes as 'namus cinayeti' whereas they were labelled as 'customary murders'. But this change was not necessary, if it had been practiced well in the first place. This gap can be open to abuse.

In addition with the penal code reform, individual sexual freedoms and bodily integrity was recognized.

*It was AKP in power in 2005, how come a conservative government accepted this change?*

At that time, they were trying to sugar-coat and gain support from liberals. There was also the possibility for the EU membership. Yes the WM was very powerful and still is, but on the other hand the possibility of membership gave a reason to sugar coat their reforms. This was not their honest opinion, and they have stated this publicly on many occasions, 'democracy is a tram to arrive at our destination, we can hop on and hop off at any point' they said.

Can we also say that other political parties had any interest in achieving full gender equality?
No, never it was the case that a political party showed the political will to eradicate violence against women. But it was not as bad as the situation we are in today. The PM states women and men are not equals, and family takes priority. They work in this regard as well, they published a 400 page report on this.

The reason that violence against women has increased so much because men realize more and more and fear that they will lose their power. Both on formal and informal grounds they do whatever it takes to keep in power. More and more we are on the way of becoming Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan. Not even Iran or Pakistan. Their aim is to exclude women as much as possible from the public domain. They are even against women's laughters.

Women are not regarded as human beings to an extent that their only purpose is to satisfy men's sexual desires. Or they are seen as child baring machines. They debate whether a woman is a virgin when she climbs over a tank during a social protest. All these statements are a low blow to women's integrity.

*What in your opinion is the role of international support in this context?*

The importance of international context is to help reveal the two-faced perception and attitude of the government. They sign a treaty, such as the Istanbul treaty and they are looking for ways to circumvent or even abolish it. The new law replacing the old protection order is not being applied. The subgovernorate is obliged to supply shelter services and this does not happen. And without a shame they go on claiming that they stand by the treaties they signed. Only when they are very forced they comply. Self defence is not recognized, abused women look for shelters and they cannot find any safe space. This system forces women to become vigilantes and then punishes them when they do.

*Can you talk about the shelters that were opened by local governments?*

Mor Cati first collaborated with a local government office to open a shelter. The mayor thought this was an interesting idea and claimed they did not need any help and could do it themselves. We warned him against it because shelters cannot be established by political power, shelters should not be dependent on political will, and they have to serve continuously no matter who is in power. But the Bakirkoy mayor opened a shelter, and the next election they lost to RP, and the next day it was abolished. Sisli Mayor during Fatma Girikli also tried but she had no idea what she was doing, she was trying to find them husbands, lock them down etc… Women's organization in Ankara collaborated with the local government at some point. Mor Cati with Beyoglu government was a very bad experience, the municipality stopped providing support and it had to close down after a short while. Mor Cati has its own shelter, under a protocole from the municipality.

ŞÖNİM, şiddet önleme izleme merkezi. Kadın sığınakları Kurultayı for more than 10 years was already held by women's movement. KSSGM women's ministry took women

out and replaced it with family. They are using every means possible to prevent women from becoming recognized as full individuals. KSGM officers were attending our meetings in the past. This government first excluded social workers and replaced them with Imam Hatip graduates. This is their intention to save the family. Social workers were very important but now we can't find any at SONIMs. Their location should also be secret but somewhere in the East I cannot remember, it was on the route to the car repair shops, without no elevators and no women worker present, no experts present. Kadin Siginaklari Kurultayi reported all these. I was at that time invited to a meeting in France, which came as a big surprise to me. The government presented SONIM as if they were perfect. I raised my voice against this and I was kicked out of the meeting. I only wanted to stop them from doing government propaganda. This was a recent event only two three years ago.

*Where and how we can see the slow changes in the society?*

We can see it in the media first of all. It used to be terribly sexist but has improved it immensely. Many women were employed in different outlets focusing on various issues concerning women. More men now support feminist cause. They became more humanitarian and stopped believing that they were better than women. But now with the religious education on the rise and the importance of family and not recognizing women as individuals and only creatures which should abide by their husbands, the next decade will see an increase in the patriarchal mindset. What the government aims with these religious education is exactly this. to impse a religious system and growing apart from secular systems is absolutely wrong and detrimental to women.

*What do you think was the most successful strategy women used to make these reforms?*

First of all, street protests are very important. Resisting in cooperation against events is crucial. Whenever the president tries to cover up for a corrupt act, he makes a statement regarding women to divert attention. Because one of the best opposition comes from women and Kurds. So digressing their attention is important. This is my brother Cengiz's observation. We follow very closely in the cases we support.

Opening shelters is the most prime way to support women's human rights. Women's

rights are human rights, before 1993 Vienna Human Rights Convention we were involved with Rutgers University to publish statements. State is responsible for protecting women's bodily integrity and security.

Mor Cati is politically forcing the state to give shelter and protection services through court cases. A long time ago there was a meeting with the government in Ankara, Austrian representatives told us that they got funds from the state to sue the state. You need to support these foundations if the state and its institutions is not doing its job.
Kader has been invaded by second republicans and I quit. Its not following its mandate and is too close to government.

*How does the gap between these associations be closed and cooperation be maintained?*

Kader was supporting the increase of number of women in politics but what's important is not to fight men with their own tools but with feminist tools with a women's perspective. This debate has been ongoing within Kader for so long. Kader has changed its position a little and became interested in violence issues but we are on separate grounds.

*What is your solution to all problems that we mentioned above?*
A secular 12 year mandatory education is crucial. Protecting minors against assault on legal documents is one of my priorities. We have to be very alert because they can cause so much damage overnight with a law proposal. So much is being expected from civil society in Turkey. Ozal depoliticized the youth, we and young generation has to be alert.

### *Coding tree*

Introduction to feminism
Academic interest
Role model
Other NGO activity
Feminist consciousness
Leftist background
Past trauma
NGO
Vision
Mission
Peace
Eradicating violence
Political participation
Organization
Hierarchical vs collective
Volunteerism vs professionalism
Relations with the state
Ministries
Local governments
Relations with political parties
Funding
NGO Activities
Academic
Lobbying/Advocacy
Network
Issue framing
Street activism
Shelter
Awareness raising
Charity
Psychological support
Legal support
Training
Targetting women
Targetting state
Women's movement
LGBTQ
old/new associations
Working in regions
Legal reform
Generational divide
Elitism
Background information
Particular NGO
Feminist movement
Islamic feminism
Feminist consciousness
Autonomy
State cooptation
Exclusion
Competition
Cooperation

Allies

Hierarchy among WROs

Macropolitics

Rural / urban divide

Extremism

Culture/tradition

Islamism

Headscarf issue

Increasing authoritarianism

Increasing conservatism

Political parties

Kurdish issue

Democratization

Civil society

Decentralization

Secularism

Coup attempt 15 July

Identity

Islamist

Kemalist/Secular

Kurdish

Reversibility of rights

Post-2010

Revolution in Tunisia

Local vs. global

Leftists

Instrumentalizing women

Middle Eastern women

International institutions

External support/influence

External pressure

Normative descriptions

Women's rights

Women's citizenship

Ideal feminist description

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