THE POLITICS OF SHELTERING WOMEN:

THE CASE OF SHÇEK

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not always a physical one, was always a reminder of happiness and love, and it helped me extremely throughout the year.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) reported in

2005 that globally women aged between fifteen and forty-four are more likely to be

killed as a result of male violence than through cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, or

wars combined (p. 1). Given its urgency and prevalence, states have been dealing

with the poignant issue of violence against women all over the world. They have

developed policies and built mechanisms. Since the first women's shelter opened up

in 1972 in England, shelters played an important role in the struggle against gender-

based violence. Since the 1990s, the Turkish state has been attempting at an

extensive transformation as well in how gender inequality and violence against

women are approached. During this time, women's rights indisputably moved to a

higher position in the state's agenda and in 1990 the first shelter was launched in

Turkey.

However, as the state began to claim responsibility in transforming policies

and initiating new mechanisms to struggle with violence against women, questions

were inevitably raised about the "essence" of the reforms and the sincerity of "state

feminism"[1] on the basis of implementation. There was a public display of anxiety

and discontent in the country about the state-sponsored social work concerning

women and especially about the condition of the shelters. The Directorate General of

Social Services and Child Protection Institute (SHÇEK), the institution responsible

for shelter provision, was primarily criticized in the media for providing insufficient

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[1] Tekeli (1991) uses this term for the Turkish state policies' transformation in favor of women.

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number of shelters,[2] sometimes in comparison to other countries.[3] Yet, the demand

for more shelters began to be addressed more frequently to local governments instead

of SHÇEK, especially after the recent Municipality Law in 2005 that requires

municipalities populated over 50,000 to provide a shelter.[4]

Nonetheless, SHÇEK still remains to be the main address for criticism by the

women's movement particularly in terms of its quality of shelter work. Even though

the insufficient quantity of shelters appears to be a shared concern for the society that

is reflected in the media, their quality is most often scrutinized and criticized by

women's organizations. SHÇEK has been seriously accused of not satisfying certain

basic "universal standards" that are argued by women's organizations to be

fundamental for every shelter and consensually brought up in the annual Shelters

Assemblies (*Sığınaklar Kurultayı*). For example, the importance of confidentiality

and availability in doing shelter work has been voiced in these meetings which are

claimed to be lacking in SHÇEK's method of sheltering women (Mor Çatı Kadın

Sığınağı Vakfı, 2000; 2003).[5] Simultaneously, there is another strand of a more

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[2] Doğan, Özlem. 2007. Bir sığınmaevi kapısında 2 bin kadın. *Radikal,* 29 January; Örer, Ayça. 2007. 68 Genelev, 32 Randevu Evi Var, Sığınma Evi Sayısı 32. www.bianet.org, 12 June.

[3] Gündüç, Gökçe. 2007. Almanyada 400 İspanyada 293 Sığınma Evi Var. www.bianet.org, 8 August.

[4] İHD: Belediye Çok Sayıda Sığınma Evi Açmalı. 2004. www.bianet.org, 24 November; Büyükşehir Belediyesi Sığınak Kurmuyor, Alışveriş Kuponu Dağıtıyor. 2008. www.bianet.org, 20 February; Yazıcıoğlu, Yıldız. 2008. Bakan'dan belediyelere 'sığınma evi' uyarısı. *Milliyet,* 25 November; UAÖ'den Beşiktaş'taki Adaylara: Sığınma Evi Açın!. 2009. www.bianet.org, 27 March.

[5] It is argued that SHÇEK is not sensitive about the secrecy of the location of the shelters, particularly in less populated cities, which endangers the women staying there. It has been told to me that in two of the Southern cities of Turkey that the shelter has become a place where men go drunk in the middle of the night to have a good time. All the bus drivers know about the location of the shelter and it has almost become a semi-official bus stop. One just has to say s/he going to get off "at the shelter" (Personal communication with the members of the women's organizations in these cities). Morevoer, women's organizations criticize SHÇEK's offices for failing to be available to women after the standard work hours, after 5 PM, or for not "working around" the rules that slow the procedure of accepting women without IDs, health insurance, or illiterate women. They emphasize the "officer mentality" (*memur zihniyeti*) possessing the employees in state institutions and preventing social workers from helping women as fast and as efficiently as they should.

substantial criticism brought by women's organizations about the political attitude of SHÇEK. They find it vital that shelter work is carried out with a feminist approach which can be summerized by having a women's-point-of-view (*kadın bakış açısı*)[6] and it should be in constant coordination with women's organizations.[7] Yet, it is argued that SHÇEK fails on both accounts. So, all in all SHÇEK has been a seriously stigmatized institution in the media about the services it provides for women. Furthermore, women's organizations interpret SHÇEK's incompetence as the extension of a cosmetic, patriarchal, conservative, and pragmatic approach to gender equality that is appropriated by the Turkish state during the policy transformations since 1990s.

On the other hand, despite all the criticisms, an important majority of women's organizations still demand that it should be the state that is in charge of providing women's shelters (Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı, 2000; 2003; Amargi, 2005). Women's organizations stigmatize SHÇEK's shelter services, but they are unable to provide shelters on their own. The few early examples of independent shelters showed that consistency could not be achieved with volunteer work alone due to high demand from women and insufficient resources to satisfy the need.[8] State is always a great source of money and personnel. So, even though women's groups harshly criticize "state feminism" for being superficial, they also occasionally make

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[6] For instance, SHÇEK is criticized for constructing women as victims, weak, and in need of protection and for not seeing the potential in women for self-empowerment or the courage and strength which enabled them to seek help in the first place (Selek, 2007; Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı, 2009; Yalçın, 2009). This approach contradicts the attitude of feminists.

[7] SHÇEK's offices have been under attack for its unwillingness to initiate persistent institutional collaborations with active women's organizations in their city to satisfy women's needs more efficiently. Yet, collaborations exist on the basis of personal communication from case to case formed between "individuals" from women's organizations and SHÇEK.

[8] The examples will be discussed in Chapter III.

strategic use of it when appropriate. Yet, women's organizations insist on being involved in the state-sponsored process of opening up and running shelters, working either as consultants or as social workers inside the shelter. They emphasize the importance of sharing the experience that they have been accumulating for more than two decades and of positing a political attitude that is argued to be essential in sheltering women, i.e. feminist ethics.

Where do the social workers situate in an environment of state policy transformation and the failure of its implementation? And how do they position themselves in the face of this predicament where there is the notorious SHÇEK, on the one hand, and the inadequacy of women's organizations, on the other? How does their work get affected by the transformation taking place at the level of state policy? How do social workers react to the state's and SHÇEK's institutional approach on dealing with violence against women which is argued to be a problematic approach? And thus how does their work affect the state policy in return? This study aims to scrutinize the subjectivities of social workers doing shelter work inside SHÇEK who are stuck in the middle of this tension between SHÇEK and the women's organizations. By enquiring about how social workers relate to the state, the feminists, and especially the women they work with, I question if a space can open up for an institutional transformation. I ask if social workers can be a vehicle for feminist transformation in state mechanisms for women. In other words, can social workers be mediators between the feminists and the state?

The lack of qualitative research about violence against women and the social service provision motivated this study. I was primarily inspired about disclosing the relationship that the social workers form with the women who were subjected to violence inside shelters. The reason for my interest in this aspect of the social service

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provision to women derives from my conviction about the importance of the interaction between the social service provider and the women who seek help for being subjected to male violence. My days observing the counseling sessions in Women's Center (KA-MER) in Diyarbakır in Summer 2005 introduced me to the unique atmosphere of the "counseling room". The dialogue formed between the two women in the room proved its significance, especially when there is a very basic pressing issue on the table about the survival of that woman. The room is very real; it is about life, death, and survival. At first it seems like the room is so real that all the theories die with it, however I came to think that the approach of the social worker who comes into contact with a women who seeks to be sheltered or who is already in a shelter has a crucial impact on the woman's broken psychology, perception about herself, and finding the power in herself to change her life and stop the violence in the long run.

My hypothesis is that there is space for social workers to challenge SHÇEK's and the Turkish state's cosmetic, patriarchal, conservative, and pragmatic approach on violence against women, but it does not lead to a feminist transformation at the institutional level even though it creates significant cracks. Throughout the thesis, the term "feminist" refers to a general attitude against all forms of oppression in the society linked to each other or to the women's groups – institutionalized or not – that share this political attitude. More specifically, it refers to a younger generation of feminists who define themselves as feminists and "challenge and struggle against all the constituents of the patriarchal order: the current education system, family, capitalism, militarism, the army, heterosexism, religion, and their ideological

extensions" (Ayman, 2006, p. 8, translation mine).[9] In the case of dealing with violence against women, i.e. in the confines of this thesis, feminist approach most basically stands for the prioritization of having a *kadın bakış açısı*. *Kadın bakış açısı* entails forming a solidarity relationship among women and a relationship of equals instead of a charity relationship and empowering women who were victimized, weakened, or have lost their self-confidence after having experienced male violence (Arat, 1998; Işık, 2002). The commonly agreed upon and suggested feminist method to achieve this in working with women subjected to violence is that the social worker has to listen to the woman carefully, inform her about the options, understand her needs and limits instead of channeling her towards an option that she is not considering, support the woman to prevent her from feeling alone or embarrassed, and support her in whatever she decides (Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı, 1998; 2009; Akkoç, 2002; Amargi, 2005).

Among the literature of research on women's shelters, studies mostly focus on the impact of professionalization to the quality of shelter provision for women, especially after the states' interference in terms of funding and providing personnel. This transformation is usually explained as being in total contradiction with the premises of the battered women's movement such as having a feminist non-hierarchical organizational structure, independence from the state or other sources of funding, and positing a political stand. Feminist scholars in North America and Western Europe often pointed out the problems of specific shelters and presented their policy suggestions. The common question in their minds was if it is possible for

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[9] "Ataerkil sistemin tüm müştemilatlarına, yani, mevcut eğitim sistemine, aileye, kapitalizme, militarizme, orduya, heteroseksizme, dine ve bunların uzantıları biçiminde hayatımızın her yerini işgal eden ideolojiler [...]"

women's shelters to maintain their feminist edge while at the same time receiving funding from external resources such as the state.

High demand and scarce resources led shelters formerly in the hands of independent feminist organizations to stretch and seek for external collaborations and sources of funding. It has been argued that in time this resulted in substantial changes in how the shelters operate: professionalization, bureaucratization, and depolitization (Schechter, 1990; Dorian, 2001; Gaddis, 2001; McCarry, 2001; Vaughn and Stamp, 2003; Donolly, Cook, and Wilson, 2004; Loseke and Cahill, 2005; VanNatta, 2005). It has been argued that the structural transformation inside the institutions that play important roles in fighting violence against women was both advantageous and disadvantageous. There is a debate among feminists on the role of professionals inside the shelter: while some have worries about the transformations that professionalism brings, others find professionalization necessary to survive in the big competition and want the advantages of professional status – skills, money, and control.

As a part of the emerging professionalism in how shelters are operated, scholars write about an asymmetrical power relationship between the social workers and their "clients" (Vaughn and Stamp, 2003; Loseke and Cahill, 2005). It is argued that the emergence of "experts" on battered women and the increased specialization inevitably constructs a more distant and client-oriented interaction between the residents and the staff or a rescue relationship between the "experts" and their "objects" of expertise (Loseke and Cahill, 2005). Shelters with hierarchical structures directly and/or indirectly contribute to the abusing of women. It has been stated that the efforts to maintain the order and enforcing the rules run the risk of turning shelters into prisons (Gaddis, 2001). On the other hand, Schechter (1990) emphasizes

that professionalization also helps the shelter staff get regular payment and be trained more effectively. With more funding, the shelter can be recognized as a legitimate community institution by the police, judges, etc. as well.

Researches show that the new bureaucratic structure of shelter work created the category of the "appropriate client" for the shelters in order to manage shelters by balancing the demand and the resources (Dorian, 2001; Donolly, Cook, and Wilson, 2004; VanNatta, 2005). Exclusionary mechanisms, discriminating women on the basis of stereotypes, regulate the acceptance of women to the shelters due to scarce resources. Some women are considered "appropriate" and in the boundaries of the category of "normal battered woman" such as the white, heterosexual, middle class women whereas the others are "screened" out in the process (VanNatta, 2005, p. 427). The categories, stereotypes, and hence the decision-making process could also be based on "immediacy". It is argued that they are socially constructed due to "organizational structure, the community in which the shelter operates, competing political ideologies, and the constraints imposed by funding sources" (Donolly, Cook, and Wilson, 2004, p. 716).

Schechter (1990) argues that professionalization had an inevitable effect on the feminist battered women's movement. Feminists were ignored by the funding agencies as "not professional enough" which pushed them to claim expertise and sometimes even to hire professional directors or counseling staff for the shelter, which contradicted and changed the ideal egalitarian relationships between staff and battered women. It is argued that professionalization resulted in a loss of connection to the movement, but feminists always believed in the necessity of a movement in order to end all violence against women. According to them, shelter services should

not be only about "serving" women inside the shelter like a client, but it should seek to change power relations in the society with the support of a political movement.

Feminists had to make concessions during their struggle for resources that often meant sacrificing their political stance (Schechter, 1990; McCarry, 2001; Donolly, Cook, and Wilson, 2004). Early shelters that were more loyal to feminist principles "became less overtly political over the years (avoiding issues such as lesbian battering or cultural differences), at least in part to attract funding from a wider array of sources" (Donolly, Cook, and Wilson, 2004, p. 712). Donolly et al. indicate that in the United States, the terminology changed in time from "shelters for battered women" to "domestic violence services" presenting the problem as a family problem (since it is less politically charged) as opposed to a problem of men battering women. With increased funding flowing to programs for battered women, social service agencies were encouraged to start new programs and shelters as well. In these facilities, violent relationships are acknowledged as problematic, but the approach in counseling is different from and conflicting with feminists' (Schechter, 1990). They put less responsibility to men and explain the issue with women's personality. Social services, funders and community groups approached the issue as "helping the needy" which victimized women and they often explained the problem as a mental health or criminal justice issue on the part of women. Feminists criticize professionals for their approach. Schechter (1990) argues that with professionals "[t]he political analysis disappeared, changed, or was considered beyond the scope of professional concern" (p. 307).

Some studies categorize the different approaches and methodologies in providing shelters for battered women in two groups: social service type and feminist type (Donolly, Cook, and Wilson, 2004; VanNatta, 2005; Plesset, 2006). Plesset

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(2006), in her ethnography, compares two different women's organizations providing shelters in Italy: Family Aid as an example to the social service type and Women United to the feminist model. First, she introduces the Catholic organization Family Aid that offers women trainings about motherhood and family, seeks for a mother-daughter relationship between the shelter worker and the woman which restricts her freedom to make her own choices, and creates a strictly controlled environment with curfews, mandatory permission to get out, locked food and supplies. The second type is the leftist organization Women United that prioritizes female solidarity, empowerment, and the freedom for women to make their own choices. "Women United offered women a feminist ideology that called for the valorization of womanhood and a sense of self as an alternative to the Catholic and societal values that call for the preservation of a family unit and the importance of sacrifice, duty, and forgiveness" (Plesset, 2006, p. 94). So, the shelters that have a social service approach tend to act with the motivation of "keeping the family together" whereas the others have a "politically rooted feminist focus" (VanNatta, 2005, p. 418). Donolly et al.'s study (2004) also points to the conflicts that occurred in the United States between the advocates for battered women and the advocates of family values or therapeutic orientations. The former focused on empowering women and keeping them safe at the cost of the disruption of the family while the latter worked to keep families together through family therapy or couples counseling.

As the discussion above demonstrates, the tension between professionalization and feminist ethics occupies a significant place in the literature about shelter provision, which I believe has relevance to the Turkish context as well. The tension between stigmatized SHÇEK and the insufficiency of women's organizations builds up to a similar debate about the processes of professionalization,

bureaucratization, and depolitization. As a result, "working with or without the state"

becomes the main point of disagreement among different independent women's

groups as well.[10] So, the ongoing debates in the literature definitely shed some light

on the situation in Turkey, but it is also important to see the uniqueness of each

context. For example, independent shelters are not as common in Turkey as they are

in the United States. Here, the state and the local governments have almost fully

taken over the business of shelter provision and women's organizations are slowly

excluded from the shelter work. However, other studies focus on the problem of

professionalization of feminist volunteers that in the end leads to a sacrifice of

feminist ethics. Therefore, the tension in Turkey takes a different form. One

justification for my study derives from this exact point.

In Turkey, researches have been conducted in the areas of women's history,

literature, domestic labor, women in the workplace, the headscarf, women's political

participation, and on the women's movement. Gender-based violence used to be the

subject of a few studies, but in the last decade studies increased exponentially.[11]

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[10] Savran (1998) explains Turkish women's movement in three phases: first, in the first half of 1980s ideological accumulation and fermentation among themselves; second, an intense period of campaigns and activism until the beginning of 1990s; and third, institutionalization and "project feminism" since 1990s. In the third stage, the disagreements started when the state moved to feminists' political agenda. The differentiation is between the "reformer" and the "revolutionary" approach. The first basically approaches the state as an ally (or to act as if it is an ally) and seeks to use every opportunity to manipulate state's power and resources for their own political agenda. Revolutionary approach categorically rejects working with the state and criticizes it for being a hegemonic and patriarchal institution that reproduces gender inequality. Even though working with or without the state is the choice of the feminists, their socio-cultural background plays an important role in this decision. It is not a coincidence that Kurdish women or women from the working class choose to approach the state with caution. Yet, the decision on how to approach the state does not create two groups of enemies among feminists. There are many examples where groups form coalitions to advocate mutual demands and express shared values.

[11] For quantitative nationwide studies see Aile İçi Şiddetin Sebep ve Sonuçları, 1995; Altınay and Arat, 2007; Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması, 2009. For a general discussion of the issue see Arın 1998, Bora and Üstün 2005. For honor killings and suicides see Se'ver and Yurdakul, 2001; Halis, 2001; Faraç, 2002; Kardam 2005; Akkoç, 2006; Sirman, 2006; Parliamentary Commission Report, 2006; Koğacıoğlu, 2004, 2007; Yirmibeşoğlu, 2007. For the women's movement and the struggle against violence see Işık 2002. For sexual violence see Altınay, 2002; Keskin and

Violence against women became the next big intriguing issue that attracts the attention of state institutions, the academia, and the women's movement. For example, eleven years ago, a comprehensive book (Hacımirzaoğlu, 1998) that brought together different researches about women in Turkey was published, but among twenty-six articles there was only *one* article on violence against women. However, at the end of 2008 when Koç University organized a two-day gender studies conference in İstanbul, one whole session was devoted to violence against women. And recently there was a big discussion in the women's organizations' email network group (*kadınkurultayı*) when the upcoming Women's Congress in İzmir (IMWC) did not call for papers under the title of violence against women.

A majority of the studies that focus on violence against women and the struggle with it are rooted in feminist activism (Dayağa Karşı Dayanışma Kampanyası, 1988; KA-MER, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006; Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003, 2009; Amargi, 2005; Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı, 2007). They are published in the form of booklets, brochures, or project reports funded by international organizations and they mostly provide statistics on violence against women, offer policy suggestions, and make political statements. On the other hand, the existing studies consist of either small-scale studies (İlkkaracan, Gülçür and Arın, 1996; Kardam 2005; Yirmibeşoğlu, 2007),[12] or think pieces (Arın 1998; Se'ver and Yurdakul, 2001; Işık 2002; Altınay, 2002; Akkoç, 2006; Sirman, 2006; Koğacıoğlu,

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Yurtsever, 2006. For testimonials of women in shelters see Küçükkurt, 2007; Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı, 2009. For sexual harassment in the workplace see Bakırcı, 2001 and for the university see Erdem, 2005. For a discussion of violence in sex workers' experiences see Yıldırım, 2001; Zengin, 2007. For transgender women's experiences Berghan, 2006; Selek, 2007.

[12] It is possible to talk about only three nationwide quantitative studies: Aile İçi Şiddetin Sebep ve Sonuçları, 1995; Altınay and Arat, 2007; Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması, 2009.

2004, 2007), or women's testimonials (Halis, 2001; Faraç, 2002; Keskin and Yurtsever, 2006; Küçükkurt, 2007). So, only a few researches conducted in the field of violence against women include data collected with qualitative research methods (Bora and Üstün, 2005; Altınay and Arat, 2007; Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması, 2009). The significance of these studies derives from their ability to illuminate upon women's experiences and their perceptions of violence. This aspect of gender-based violence unfortunately remains commonly unexplored in the field.

State-sponsored aid mechanisms in general and social services and women's shelters in particular have always failed to be the subject of inquiry and especially of qualitative research in Turkey. Existing studies did not explore the views, work ethics, and motivations of individuals working for the social services who work with women subjected to violence everyday. There is published material on the feminist method and approach towards how to deal with violence against women, but we do not know much about the social workers' conceptualization of the issue. I believe this gap is worthy of attention, because SHÇEK has the resources, the responsibility, and the authority to generate policies and provide mechanisms concerning gender inequality and violence against women. Thus, SHÇEK and social workers employed in the institution inevitably have a critical influence on women's lives in Turkey. Therefore, I believe this research has significance for its attempt to fill the void in the literature both by providing a *qualitative* look at state-sponsored shelter work and by scrutinizing the subjectivities of the social workers.

Among the studies on SHÇEK (Çengelci, 1998; Göbelez, 2003; Kartal, 2008; Yazıcı, 2008) do not focus on the social work on women in particular, which provides the second important point of justification for this research. Kartal's study

discusses the vaguely defined borders between the state and civil society in the context of SHÇEK. Through the interviews she conducted with the social workers in SHÇEK Society Centers, Kartal (2008) focuses on the views of social workers about bureaucracy and their relationships with the NGOs. She argues that social services in Turkey largely depends on the civil society and on volunteerism. I think her study sheds some light on my study as well in the sense that it explores how the vaguely defined borders creates institutional distrust for social workers. However, even though Kartal asks two lines of questions to the social workers, about the bureaucratic structure in SHÇEK and their NGO collaborations; she does not question their position in-between the two contrast things that they have to work with: the bureaucratic structure and volunteerism. This study intends to elaborate more on this dimension of social work which I label as the "entrapment" of social workers. Yazıcı's study (2008), on the other hand, gives insight about the structure of the state-sponsored social services and the financial, organizational, administrative and conceptual/ideological constraints hampering its performance. She focuses on the Society Centers of SHÇEK as well and interviews the social workers working there. Both studies are highly relevant and useful for my research. However, I think the social workers who work with women subjected to violence and inside the shelter is categorically different from the ones working inside Society Centers. The job of the former by nature involves an emergency social service provision which changes the dynamics of the working condition for social workers. I hope, for this reason, my research is able to fill a hole in the literature.

Having provided a brief review of the literature, I believe this study will contribute to the field of gender and violence studies as well as state and social work studies in Turkey. The thesis is intended to discuss the specifics of doing shelter

work in the confines of the Turkish state in this current conjuncture of transforming

state policies on gender. I believe it contributes to the field since there are no studies

in the context of Turkish Social Services focusing on social workers working in the

field of violence against women and specifically doing shelter work.

Fieldwork and Methodology

This research instrumentalizes "qualitative interviews" (Mason, 1996) as the data

collection method, because I believe my research question is best answered with this

methodology. Qualitative interviews refer to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely

structured forms of interviewing where there is interactional exchange of dialogue,

with a relatively informal conversational style. "For example, the researcher has a

number of topics, themes or issues which they wish to cover, or a set of starting

points for discussion, or specific 'stories' which they wish the interviewee to tell.

The researcher is unlikely to have a complete and sequenced script of questions, and

most qualitative interviews are designed to have a fluid and flexible structure […]"

(Mason, 1996, p. 62). First, I believe that extracting people's experiences,

interpretations, and views with interviews are meaningful to grasp the social reality

better; and secondly, this format is likely to generate a fairer and fuller representation

of the interviewees' views compared to a more structured format like the survey

method. In the case of this study, the interviewing method is important to be able to

scrutinize the subjectivities of social workers, independent of examining SHÇEK as

an institution.

10 interviews were conducted with the "professional staff" (*meslek elemanı*)

in three SHÇEK offices in three different cities. Professional staff, as they referred to

themselves, includes the social workers (university graduates from a social services

program), psychologists, sociologists, etc. However, in this study I choose to use the term "social worker" in place of "professional staff" to encompass all its constituents. Three preliminary interviews were conducted in Spring 2007 and seven interviews in Spring 2009. Among the interviewees, two of them were no longer working for SHÇEK. One had retired and was running her own children's home in İzmir and the other had quit SHÇEK after three years of working as the shelter psychologist. Another two were the heads of their branch in İstanbul while the rest were working as regular social workers. Only one interviewee was a man, but he was the head of a family counseling office. The names of the interviewees have been replaced with the names I chose without changing their spirit in order to protect the social workers' privacy and due to an ethical concern since they agreed to meet me without any official permission from SHÇEK. The interviewees of the study answered mostly open-ended questions about the state, civil society, their working conditions, and the relationship they form with the women who come to SHÇEK for being subjected to male violence. When the interviewee was not willing to elaborate on a point I had to direct the interview and ask follow-up questions.

I should state that the number of interviews conducted for this study seems insufficient to represent the whole group of social workers in SHÇEK who shelter women. However, even though the number is not high, it continues to explore a thorough and detailed analysis of the social workers' position. As Babbie argued (2004), the strength of qualitative research is its high measurement validity whereas reliability would be the strong suit of quantitative research. So, it should be acknowledged that this research does not claim to be representative, but it claims to give an accurate glimpse of a group of social workers' hearts and thoughts and their

subjectivities in SHÇEK and hence explore opportunities for change and generate hypothesis for change or for understanding SHÇEK.

During my research, I used the snowball sampling technique to arrange the interviews, which was not a choice for me due to the unsurprising inhospitality that I encountered. SHÇEK proved to be a closed institution even more than what I had initially expected. Though it is most likely that even if I had the permission, in which case SHÇEK assigns certain social workers for the interviews, I would have to conduct other interviews to reach at a more representative and unbiased data. Nonetheless, the story of getting an official permission for interviews was interesting as well as meaningful in terms of this study. First of all, I had to make more than 10 phone calls to understand what exactly they needed from me so that I could apply for getting permission. Then I wrote a very detailed petition about my research project including the interview questions, theoretical framework, and my hypothesis and I faxed it to the Istanbul main office of SHÇEK. Two weeks later I received a phone call asking me to expand the content of my application. It was only after this that I felt compelled to "find someone" who could accelerate the whole process for me. I asked for help from a friend whose father was an MP. After perhaps six phone calls over a month, to let me know that my application was not complete and that they had to see a more detailed theoretical framework of my research; I was told at the end that the Director of SHÇEK gave her word that I would get the permission as soon as I am able to fulfill their requirements. At that moment, they also requested a research proposal from me in Turkish and that was when I quit trying. During this time, I paid a couple of visits to the main office of SHÇEK to hand in my documents. In one of those visits, the branch head who did not recognize me from our interview two years ago, roasted me for putting "someone" in the middle. She was furious with me for

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implying that things work slowly in state institutions. She repeated that everyone in that office does his/her job perfectly with the speed necessary. Despite her aggressive attitude, I apologized many times to rescue the relationship for the sake of my research. All in all, my adventure of getting permission from SHÇEK did not end well.

Therefore, I had to arrange unofficial meetings with social workers in their offices for the most part. I made phone calls to their offices explaining my research and asking for a meeting. In every case, they did not arrange a specific date or time, but they half-heartedly told me to drop by whenever I wished. As a result, I had to conduct these interviews in the social workers' offices during work hours which meant that we were often interrupted by secretaries, phone calls, private phone calls, lunch time, or people randomly coming in. All these conditions made me feel "unwanted", like a stranger or an intruder in their workspace. I felt compelled do an interview in a journalistic style, get my answers quickly, and leave. Moreover, each time I was feeling that my feminist researcher look was giving me away which caused them to posit a defensive attitude. However, I met a few social workers in more comfortable settings like cafés or in their house. The setting as well as the way of making the first contact to arrange the interview with the social worker had an immense impact on the content of our interviews. For example, I had reached one of the interviewees through a feminist activist friend of mine. This woman welcomed me in her house and it was the most open and relaxed communication. When our date came to an end we had walked by the sea, chatted for seven hours about almost everything from novels to our boyfriends and husbands, and eaten dinner in a restaurant. She also referred me to another friend of hers which was the second and the last example of a fruitful interview.

As researchers working in Turkey, most of us are used to the tradition of state inhospitality towards outsiders and towards the one who asks questions. I believe this refers to a culture of fear and skepticism in state institutions. However, SHÇEK's institutional anxiety derives from a specific incident as well. After the Malatya scandal broke in 2005 and the images of child abuse in SHÇEK's children's homes shot with secret cameras circulated on national television, it definitely had an effect on their attitude towards outsiders. One of the interviewees even mentioned the incident to justify her attitude against my offer to use a tape recorder during our interview.

Sequential Order

The second chapter of this study gives an account of the transformation in state policy concerning gender equality and violence against women, but at the same time argues that this was a cosmetic transformation that continues to carry patriarchal and conservative features and a pragmatic attitude. It provides the recent history of institutionalization in state structures and legal reforms since 1990s and also demonstrates how the issue of violence against women gained public visibility during this period especially with the emergence of honor killings as a new and intimidating phenomenon. By analyzing the parliamentary discussions at the time of important legal reforms, this chapter questions the sincerity of "state feminism" by tracing the patriarchal and conservative traits. So, this chapter demonstrates that there is a dual process where the state went through a significant transformation in how gender inequality is treated, but at the same time fails to implement it to create permanent changes in women's lives.

In the third chapter, after providing a short history of women's shelters in Turkey, I mainly discuss the institutional approach of SHÇEK towards sheltering

women by providing a content analysis. This chapter situates SHÇEK's shelter provision as an extension of the conservatism, patriarchy, and pragmatism of the state's approach towards violence against women. I use the framing of women's shelters as "guesthouses" and what it signifies to be a "guest" of the state as the basic framework guiding my analysis. I use this term as the symbol for SHÇEK's approach to violence against women at the level of discourse. The content analysis derives from the way women's shelters and violence against women are conceptualized on SHÇEK's website, its shelter regulations, and in the declarations of the State Minister of Women and Family Affairs about SHÇEK. I carry on my discussion under three sections: first one argues that violence is treated as *the* exception not the norm so that it depoliticizes and degenders the issue from a family centered approach and by hiding its prevalence; second one shows that state patriarchy and paternalism masks the violence and in particular the "male" aspect of it by forming a hierarchical and fatherly relationship between the state and women that it provides protection for; and the third section dwells on discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, class, or other factors restrict whose eligible to be sheltered. So, this chapter argues that SHÇEK provides a service to shelter women, but its approach to violence against women is an obstacle to creating permanent changes in women's lives and hence it is again a dual process.

The fourth chapter focuses on the subjectivities of social workers doing shelter work in SHÇEK in an attempt to open up a space for their voices to be heard, independent from the overwhelming presence of the state – while at the same time keeping in mind that they cannot be totally outside of the state's and SHÇEK's institutional discourse. This chapter draws solely from the social workers' accounts attained by using the qualitative interview method. It focuses on the subjectivities of

social workers sheltering women and questions the margins of their space of agency inside SHÇEK. It scrutinizes the form of relationship established between the social workers and the women subjected to violence. It discusses the constraints of their approach on the relationship and the reasons behind it. Then, I analyze the feeling of entrapment experienced by social workers and how they cope with this. It is argued that trapped between the state and civil society, social workers come up with new tactics and establish a different subject position for themselves on the margins of *state bureaucracy* and *civic volunteerism*. Demonstrating how social workers deal with the strong feeling of entrapment in SHÇEK, I question if they can cause an institutional transformation. This chapter argues that feminist agenda and vocabulary have diffused to social workers' language, but it is not possible to talk about a widespread diffusion of feminist ethics and methods.

CHAPTER II

TRANSFORMING STATE POLICY ON WOMEN

Since the 1990s, the elimination of gender inequality and violence against women became the "state policy"[13] in Turkey that involved institutionalization in state structures and legal reforms. However, at the same time, the state's implementation of the new policy came under attack from different circles, feminists being one of them, on the basis of being a cosmetic change continuing to feed conservative values and patriarchal codes that reproduce gender-based inequality. As it will be discussed, in the current conjuncture, being sensitive to women's issues and condemning violence against women has begun to be a prerequisite of being the "acceptable citizen"[14] in Turkey. This points to a "paradigm shift" for Turkish society at least in terms of perceptions, because it does not show a valid or permanent presence in the society and especially in women's lives. To the opposite, the state's approach carry traits such as conservatism and patriarchy that continue to imprison women in their disadvantaged positions in society.

In this chapter, I discuss the steps to the process of the elimination of gender inequality and violence against women becoming the state policy in Turkey, but at same time I elaborate on the cosmetic character of this transformation. First, I start by giving a background on the global environment of the human rights regime in order to make sense of the climate change in Turkey. Secondly, I briefly clarify the scope of the problem of violence against women in the country. Then, I provide the

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[13] The elimination of violence against women was officially declared the state policy for the first time in the 2006 July Circular Order.

[14] Here I am following the concept of *makbul vatandaş* used by Füsun Üstel (2005).

recent history of institutionalization in state structures and legal reforms since 1990s and also demonstrate how the issue of violence against women gained public visibility during this period especially with the emergence of honor killings as a new and intimidating phenomenon. Finally, I analyze the parliamentary discussions at the time of important legal reforms to question the sincerity of "state feminism" by tracing the patriarchal and conservative traits. So, I argue that it is a dual process since the recent state transformation in how gender inequality is treated at the same time fails to implement it to create permanent changes in women's lives.

Human Rights as the Standard of Civilization

It is argued that human rights and women's human rights came to be highly valued over the world and its acceptance became the indicator of "civilization" especially since the end of the Cold War (Merry, 2006; Foot, 2000). All the countries tried to present themselves as "human-rights compliant". "It appears that participating in the international human rights regime allows countries to claim civilized status in the present international order, much as ideas of civilization provided the standard for colonized countries during the imperial era" (Merry, p. 79). So, being the standard of civilization, the new human rights regime conceptualizes the failure to comply with it as a "problem of underdevelopment". In the field of gender, it contributes to the "tradition" of conceptualizing women's rights and violence against women as a "problem of underdevelopment".[15] In Turkey, this is visible in the public speeches of the Prime Minister Erdoğan. In 2005, on the International Women's Day he stated that the position of women in a society determines how "modern" and "civilized" the

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[15] Bora (2004) describes a dualism between viewing gender inequality as a matter of "underdevelopment" or, as she prefers it, as a matter of "oppression". She discusses that feminists in Turkey began to see gender inequality as a problem of "oppression" only in the 1990s and only then they were able to distance themselves to the project of enlightenment and modernization.

society is and a year before that he described gender inequality as "primitive". Erdoğan also clearly indicates in the 2006 July Circular Order that the remedy to violence against women is "economic progress and development together with an increase of the level of education and culture" (*ekonomik kalkınma ve gelişme ile birlikte eğitim ve kültür düzeyinin yükselmesi*). So, the framing of "underdevelopment" goes hand-in-hand with certain modernist notions and values: belief in a linear progress in history; education as an important tool; binary oppositions of right-wrong, normal-abnormal, self-other; prioritizing individual autonomy and choice based on free will; efficiency; and specialized professional knowledge. As Merry (2006) argues, "human rights are part of a distinctive modernist vision of the good and just society that emphasizes autonomy, choice, equality, secularism, and protection of the body" that is embedded in the global North (p. 220).

Merry (2006) discusses that translation and appropriation of human rights discourse in the vernacular, which she calls "vernacularization", has its own contradictions. It has been argued that the tension between cultural diversity and the universal principles has always been a part of the human rights practice. On the one hand, it is thought of as parallel to the imperial/colonial processes because of the unequal power of nations in the process of consensus building for human rights (not every nation is able to participate as much). At the same time, it works as an adoption of an inherently Western framework where binary oppositions of the imperialist era still exist between civilized and backward societies, the modern and the traditional, etc. "The practice of human rights is burdened by a colonialist understanding of culture that smuggles nineteenth-century ideas of backwardness and savagery into the process, along with ideas of racial inferiority. Rather than using

these clearly retrograde terms, however, human rights law focuses on culture as the target of critique, often understood as ancient tradition" (Merry, 2006, p. 226). I think a similar negative conceptualization of culture and tradition transfers to the language of the governments in the local as well. As it will be discussed in the next sections, this feature is observable in how honor killings are framed in Turkey.

However, on the other hand, the human rights regime is not exactly coerced on societies. It is rather adopted. Yet, it is not such a simple process where countries decide to adopt a human rights law or sign a convention from the bottom of their hearts. Especially the implementation of such legal frameworks "relies on international social pressure and shame, often mobilized by non-state actors. Recalcitrant states feel pressure because of concerns about belonging to the international community. Compliance with the terms of international community affects foreign aid and investment, tourism, participation in global supporting events, and national reputation including the status of leaders" (Merry, 2006, p. 228). So, the motivations of governments are affected by things such as published lists of violations and country rankings. Exposure and shame can be powerful tools. However, Merry argues that one should not overlook the potential of resistance that the human rights regime brings out and how it is instrumentalized by the NGOs at the local. The human rights framework usually becomes a source of support for local activists' struggle with the state. For example, in Turkey women's efforts to amend the Civil Code were supported by the international context of the time. After the Beijing World Conference on Women, an action plan was prepared by the government to bring the Turkish Civil Code in line with CEDAW recommendations (Arat, 2008).

In fact, women's status as a question of modernity had been on the table ever since the Turkish Republic was founded even before the emergence of the human rights regime. It has been argued by many scholars that improving women's status by promoting women's rights was central to the Kemalist revolution in the earlier years of the Republic and women as the objects of change and an apparatus for revolution were used strategically (Sirman, 1989; Arat, 1997; Kadıoğlu, 1998; Berktay, 1998). It was particularly instrumentalized with the purpose of reaching a certain level of "civilization" (*uygarlık seviyesi*), to eradicate tradition, and in the name of democratic aspirations. However, today in 2009, women's status in society has started to be specifically discussed through a compliance with the human rights framework. Human rights violations seem to be an important indicator of the level of civilization. Prime Minister Erdoğan defines women's rights as a fundamental component of the culture of peace and human rights promoted in "civilized" nations.[16] So, in Turkey since the 1990s the state policy against violence against women is being promoted on the basis of being civilized or under the name of a "desire for modernization" (Sirman, 2008), which is measured in accordance to the human rights framework.

Consequently, one can argue that in the context of the new international human rights regime, a two-tier process exists for Turkey. The unavoidable and enforced diffusion of the human rights paradigm in state policies and mechanisms is an opportunity for transformation towards gender equality. Yet, due to a variety of factors – the analysis of which exceeds the purposes of this thesis, the implementation of state policies have not been prioritized that impedes the promised

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[16] The speech was made in 2006 during the Conference "Medeniyetler İttifakında Kadın".

transformation in society and especially in women's lives. The Turkish state fails to question or challenge the two traits – patriarchy and conservatism – still embedded in its policies and mechanisms, which continue to imprison women in their disadvantaged positions in society. Nonetheless, human rights framework indisputably opens up a space for transformation in society of the mindset, language, and in the practical field although it is a slow one.

Violence Against Women in Turkey: Prevalence, Perceptions, and Public Visibility

In Turkey, the lack of nationwide studies, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, created an obstacle to understanding the scope of the problem at hand which I believe resulted in the delay of emergence of state policies and mechanisms. It is only recently that the state began to initiate and support such studies. I believe it was the result of a variety of factors such as the influence of the international community like the EU, the new frenzy about honor killings and suicides on the media, and the pressures coming from the civil society.

State Minister of Women and Family Affairs declared that 1,806 women were killed in the name of honor and in total 5,375 women were killed between 2001-2006. Governorship of İstanbul Human Rights Desk announced that in İstanbul a woman is killed every ten days in the name of honor. Prime Ministry Family Research Institution designed the first major study with a nationwide survey in 1995, *Causes and Effects of Domestic Violence.* The results indicate that physical violence is an issue in 34% and verbal violence in 53% of the households. In 80% of the cases, subjection to violence is perceived as an irresolvable problem.

The second comprehensive study (Altınay and Arat, 2007) conducted surveys with 1,800 married women in 56 provinces. This study showed that the percentage of

women who have ever experienced violence from their husbands is 35% and half of these women declare that they have not reported such incidents before. Interestingly, the percentage experiencing violence goes up to 63% for women with higher incomes than their husbands. It furthermore invalidates two widely accepted statements about violence against women. First, the findings challenge the belief that domestic violence is much more prevalent in the East of the country compared to other regions. There is no significant statistical difference between the East and the rest of the country in terms of the rates of violence and women's perception. Secondly, it proves that feminists' counter-argument about the justifiability of violence in certain circumstances is not a marginal political demand that does not meet the demands of ordinary women. The finding shows that 90% of the women believe that beating is never acceptable and that the perpetrators of violence should be punished under law. This is a proof showing that feminists' demands are down-to-earth and in compliance with women's wishes. An earlier survey conducted in 1991 in İstanbul by a research group from Boğaziçi University showed that 49% of women believed that there could be cases in which a woman deserved to be beaten by her husband. (Arat, 1998, p. 299). Altınay and Arat argue that the new percentage shows that feminist struggle against domestic violence has been successful in delivering its message and in its internalization by women.

There is a methodological concern about the validity of surveys in quantitative research due to being a more structured format of research (Babbie, 2004). The structured format of the survey questions does not leave any room for articulation. The data reached by the survey method overlooks the possible inclination of participants' to give the "desired" or expected answer which is in fact an important factor affecting the data. Of course, it would be a bold statement to say that the

desired response for the participants of the survey was to stress the unacceptable nature of wife-beating. I will argue how this answer could be "desirable" for women in the following sections by explaining the change of terminology and language in the conceptualization of the issue with new laws and state policies since 1990s. However, it still requires further study to analyze the degree to which women have internalized the feminist framework in Turkey.

The study conducted by the General Directorate on the Status of Women (KSGM) with 12,795 women informants reports that 39% of the women in Turkey have experienced physical violence at least once in their lives (*Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması*, 2009). Almost half of the women had never told anyone about their experiences before the survey. The study also includes a qualitative research consisting of in-depth interviews conducted with women who experienced violence and their relatives and a few focus groups with men. People serving women in the field as lawyers, doctors, public servants, and *imam*s were interviewed as well. The qualitative part of the study analyzes women's perceptions of violence and their struggle against it.

Violence against women, particularly domestic violence and honor killings, gained great public visibility in the last two decades. The feminist campaign against battering (*Dayağa Karşı Kampanya*) in 1987 was the pioneer event that carried the issue of domestic violence to the public attention. It was also special since it was the first legal walk organized after the 1980 military coup in an atmosphere of "political vacuum" in Arat's words. It was initially organized as a response to a judge who decided against a woman's desire to get divorced from her beating husband with the justification of an old saying that compares women to donkeys: "a woman should not be spared the stick on the back or the colt in the belly" (*kadının sırtından sopası,*

karnından sıpası eksik olmaz). The campaign found media coverage and as a result, the book *Shout and Be Heard* (*Bağır Herkes Duysun*) was published bringing together the experiences of violence.

However, the campaign that carried violence against women to the agenda of the citizens of Turkey was the most publicly known "End to Domestic Violence" campaign. The major daily newspaper *Hürriyet* has been carrying out the campaign with the collaboration of the television channel CNN Turk, Foundation of Contemporary Education (*Çağdaş Eğitim Vakfı*), and the Governorship of Istanbul since 2004. Aside from creating public awareness through posters and short films on television, the campaign also had a solid mechanism outcome: an emergency hotline for domestic violence. Arat (2008) highlights the importance of such campaigns since it shows how the issue has become a priority not only for the feminists or the state, but for major media and civil society organizations as well and how these organs can successfully get together against violence towards women.

Violence against women became visible more after honor killings as a "new phenomenon" began to be publicly discussed in the last decade. It also resulted in the acceptance of the significance of women's shelters as an aid mechanism for honor killings. For example, Amnesty International Turkey office started a petition campaign before March 2009 elections for local government ("UAÖ'den Beşiktaş'taki Adaylara: Sığınma Evi Açın!", 2009). The petitions were addressed to the mayor candidates running for the district of Beşiktaş in İstanbul asking about their plans about opening up women's shelters in their municipalities in case they win the elections. In the petitions, they made their case for the urgent need of women's shelters due to the high number of crimes committed for honor.

Furthermore, it is possible to read on the newspapers about murders committed in the name of honor with a variety of justifications such as being on television, going shopping, speaking to strangers, wearing pants to a wedding, rejecting to wear headscarf, getting raped, and cheating on her husband. Usually, newspapers reserve little space for these murders on the "third page" where all the news with a shocking value is gathered such as stories about psychopaths, brutal murders, and bizarre stories. Yet, in some cases women's stories find particularly large media coverage and remain on the agenda for days. Güldünya Tören was one of them. Her name became the icon of honor killings in Turkey. The irony lies in the optimistic meaning of her name: "gül" means rose and smile at the same time whereas "dünya" means world. Güldünya was murdered by her two brothers in 2004. Perhaps her story drew wide attention because she was not killed the first time her brothers shot him, but on their second attempt in a hospital room. All over the world, media works under the assumption that the scandalous character of a murder appeals to the public. Moreover, the fact that the murder took place in Istanbul might be another reason for its large media coverage, because honor killings are commonly linked with customs and values claimed to exist among Kurdish people and in Southeastern cities of Turkey. Some scholars have meticulously argued against the validity of such claims which I will return to in the following sections (Koğacıoğlu, 2004, 2007; Sirman, 2006, 2007). After the murder, Güldünya gave her name to a compilation album published in 2009 for the benefit of the *Hürriyet* newspaper's emergency hotline for domestic violence. The same year, a television series called *Güldünya* was broadcasted until it stopped very recently due to low rating. *Güldünya* was about a young woman running away from her stepbrother's death threat and who starts to stay at a shelter. Most episodes of this show took place inside a women's

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shelter in İstanbul. It was reported in newspapers that the number of women calling the emergency hotline increased after the series.

Şemse Allak was another woman killed by the members of her family in Mardin. She was five months pregnant with her boyfriend when her family attacked them with sticks and stones on the street. The boyfriend died instantly and Şemse lost her baby. She was in the hospital for seven months until she died in May 2003. The news of her death found coverage in the media. Her body was the subject of discussion since according to the laws it was supposed to be handed to her family, who caused her death. Eventually, when Şemse's family did not claim her body, feminist groups buried her to the orphans' cemetery. It was stressed on the news that women joined the funeral prayers in Şemse's funeral that in Turkey is traditionally exercised only by men. I believe her story received attention, because feminists in the region tried to support and protect her during the seven months period before her death. Another reason was because the nature of her death raised issues. Şemse's murder has an equivalent in the Islamic rule: *recm*. A representative of the Republican People's Party (CHP) suggested that this incident should be called a "peasant fight" instead of *recm* ("Şemse Allak olayı recm değil, köy kavgası", 2003). The rejection of the label *recm* for Şemse's murder happened in order to emphasize Turkey as a secular state and ruled by a secular law. One year after her death, the Diyarbakır Municipality on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, announced that a park is named after Şemse Allak. It is now called the Şemse Allak Park of Life.

Step-by-Step: State Efforts for Transformation

As it has been argued before, the struggle against gender inequality and violence against women became a part of the state policy since the 1990s. Reforms were made in fundamental laws such as the Turkish Penal Code and the Civil Code. At the same time, gender moved to a higher position in the government's agenda that can be parliamentary commissions such as the research commission on honor killings. Local governments launched women's centers that offer trainings about parenthood, sexuality, etc. and counseling. Universities established women's centers in many cities in Turkey with the purpose of enriching gender research. Therefore, there seems to be a policy transformation in Turkey with respect to how gender-based inequality and violence are legally treated and how the struggle against them became the state policy. It should also be mentioned that this was only possible with a constant negotiation between the state and the feminists. Since the nationwide campaign against battering (*Dayağa Karşı Kampanya*) in 1987, feminists have been pushing violence against women to the state's political agenda. Simultaneously, the international community functioned as a pressure base that helped accelerate state responses to feminists' demands such as the European Union accession process.

Overall, it may be argued that there is a paradigm shift[17] at the level of state discourse, because in the year that this research is conducted violence against women is widely and publicly disapproved and punished at the presence of the law whereas twenty years ago protesting against domestic violence was considered a marginal act of a "bunch" of feminists. Even though I do not think that feminists' public image has not changed that much from being marginal man-haters, I believe at the level of

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[17] Altınay and Arat (2007) argue that it is a paradigm shift (p. 46).

discourse their demands and methods became more acceptable and integrated to state policies and mechanisms. Educational projects were launched in the hands of the state -usually with funding from international organizations- to work against the perceptions that legitimize or normalize violence inside institutions known for their male-dominated environment and patriarchal nature such as the police, the army, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Selma Acuner (2002) labels this process the official institutionalization of gender equality under the roof of the state. I believe that permanent change or reform in state institutions and laws as well as the ongoing constant effort to deliver a message to the public against gender inequality signify a paradigmatic change.

1990 appears as a significant date in the struggle for gender equality and against violence in Turkey. The year 1990 marks the start for how the state officially took responsibility to formulate different policies and build mechanisms about the issue. Acuner marks the start with Advisory Committee of Policymaking about Women (*Kadına Yönelik Politikalar Danışma Kurulu*) formed under Prime Ministry State Planning Organization (DPT) in 1987 as the first sign of state institutionalization intended for gender equality. In 1990, General Directorate on the Status of Women (KSGM) was founded under the Prime Ministry. Over the years, it became influential in the transformation of the legal framework and had a crucial role in research conducted about women. It has been working as a bridge between the state and the civil society since some well known feminists were employed inside the Directorate and because the bureaucrats expressed their position as "being volunteers inside the state" (Altınay and Arat, 2007, p. 25). However, Acuner argues that at that time both the Committee and KSGM were established out of international pressures and obligations in compliance with the framework of Turkish modernization and the

relations with the West. The head of DPT at the time states in his interview with Acuner that the Committee was initiated as a response to the obligations brought by the UN Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women decisions (Acuner, 2002, p. 127). Yet, she evaluates KSGM differently since its existence was intricately linked with the presence of the women's movement in Turkey.

Another first in 1990 was when SHÇEK began to serve as the institution responsible for establishing women's shelters or, as *they* called it, "guesthouses" (*konukevi*). I prefer to use the term "shelter" in this thesis instead of "guesthouse". This is a political choice. I criticize the connotations of naming this mechanism as guest hosting which I will articulate later in Chapter III more in detail.

Simultaneously, in the legal field Article 159 of the Turkish Civil Code – a repercussion of Article 152 – that obliged women to have their husbands' consent to work outside the home was annulled by the Constitutional Court in 1990. For the new Civil Code of 2001, Article 192, it was proposed that no one should be obliged to have their partners' consent about their choice of employment. However, in the final version of the article, another sentence was added suggesting that partners should prioritize the wellbeing of their marriage in their choices. It brings ambiguity to the implementation of the law that can easily be interpreted to restrict women's freedom. Again in 1990, Article 438 of the Penal Code which provided a reduction of one third of the punishments for rapists if the victim was a sex worker was repealed by the National Assembly. Both changes were made after the campaigning of the women's movement. For the abolishment of Article 159, women signed petitions and appealed to the Constitutional Court.

In 1998, Article 4320 of the Civil Code named Family Protection Law was approved by the parliament. Under this law, any member of the family subject to domestic violence is able to file a court case for a protection order against the perpetrator of the violent act that could be valid for up to six months. It suggests three to six months of imprisonment to the person that goes against the protection order. Article 4320 is interpreted as a reformative law both by feminists and by the government officials who worked for the passing of this law in the parliament at that time. Feminists emphasized the significance of the law because the woman does not have to make the complaint herself; a neighbor or a friend can make a complaint on behalf of her. Moreover, the law is designed in a way that the implementation of the protection order does not require a witness or a medical proof of the violence. Both clauses are evaluated as positive since it is expected to increase the level of reporting and seeking for justice.

Feminist activism before and after 1998 consisted of independent women's organizations such as Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR), Purple Roof Foundation, and Women's Solidarity Foundation that led the movement by agenda setting and campaigning. They held a nationwide petition, press releases, and protest walks every Saturday. In 2005, there was a follow-up campaign called "implement 4320" in order to ensure that Article 4320 was put into practice. A well known feminist activist and now the head of Association for Supporting and Educating Women Representatives (KA-DER) Hülya Gülbahar (2006) explains how absurd it is that they had to campaign for an existing law to be exercised seven years after it passed. In the meanwhile, between 1998 and 2005, women's movement also struggled to generate solutions to this problem of implementation of laws which they believed could be resolved by opening up more women's shelters and centers. The

Shelters Assembly was founded at this period and they met every year. As a result, some changes were made in this law in April 2007. The definition of the batterer expanded to include fathers, brothers, and other family members. However, feminists criticized the law for not being applicable to unmarried women or because shelters are not mentioned as a solution. Yet, there was a court decision made in 2008 using this law to protect a divorced woman that was interpreted by feminists as "exemplary".

One of the most recent and fundamental reforms was the acceptance of the new Turkish Civil Code in 2001, effective as of 2002, in place of the Civil Code of 1926. The 1926 Code which was adapted from the Swiss Civil Code of the time had legislatively reduced women to subordinate positions in the family, with rights and duties defined in respect to the husband. For example, the husband was defined as the head of the household which gave him the privilege of determining the choice of residence and decisions about children. The new Civil Code acquires a new approach where family is defined as based on equal partnership in terms of rights and responsibilities: spouses have equal decision-making powers, equal rights over the family residence, equal rights over property acquired during marriage, equal representative powers, and the custody of the children born outside marriage is given to their mothers instead of going under the definition of "illegitimate children". Women's movement played a major role in the preparation process of the new Civil Code, in the 1990s, as well. WWHR initiated an international letter and fax campaign demanding full equality for women that was joined by hundreds of NGOs from all over the world. A new draft law was prepared in 1998; however because of the national elections in April 1999, a new commission had to be formed to finalize the code and its enactment law. It is often argued by the women's movement that EU

accession process accelerates legal transformations; but it was argued differently for the new Civil Code. EU accession was argued not to be primary driving force, because the draft code was finalized before Turkey became an official candidate in 1999 (Anıl et al, 2005). A significant incident in the process was that 126 women's groups from all around Turkey organized a major campaign again in 2001 to break the resistances of conservatives and nationalists in the parliament who were against certain reforms that the new Civil Code suggested. There were especially harsh debates about the new property regime that claimed equal sharing between spouses.

The new Turkish Penal Code was accepted in 2004 in place of the old 1926 code that was adapted from the Italian Penal Code. The old Penal Code considered woman's body and sexuality as a commodity that belongs to men, family, and society in general and as requiring the control of the state. With this new code, however, women's right to have autonomy over their bodies and sexuality is acknowledged. For example, sexual crimes are no longer classified under the heading of crimes against society, family, public morality or social order. Instead, they are considered as crimes against the integrity of individuals. In terms of language, concepts such as chastity, morality, shame, public customs, and decency with respect to women's sexuality are eliminated. In addition, the new code brings higher sentences to sexual crimes, criminalizes marital rape, brings measures to prevent sentence reductions to the perpetrators of honor killings, eliminates previously existing discrimination against non-virgin and unmarried women, and criminalizes sexual harassment at the workplace. The provision that legitimized rape and abduction where the perpetrator marries the victim is abolished. At the beginning of 2002, women's organizations, women's rights commissions of bar associations and trade unions, and individual women brought their powers together under the

Working Group on the Reform of the Penal Code from a Gender Perspective. They prepared their recommendations and proposed more than 30 new articles. Then it was sent to all members of the parliament, NGOs and media representatives. When their efforts were disregarded by the parliament, the Working Group decided to initiate a massive public campaign in 2003 which in turn resulted in the formation of a national platform consisting of more than 30 NGOs: Turkish Penal Code Women's Platform (*TCK Kadın Platformu*). Many conferences, meetings, press conferences were held at the time. KSGM and women members of the parliament were influential in accelerating this process as well. All the efforts brought success in the transformation of the Penal Code in favor of women, however their implementation remained a huge problem. For example, although the new Code indicated otherwise, in cases where the rapist declared he was going to marry the woman judges sometimes reduced sentences. Some of the major demands posed by feminists to the new Code are the abolishment of Article 225 regulating "indecent conduct" (*hayasızca hareketler*), the usage of tradition (*töre saikiyle*) for defining honor crimes on the basis of its restriction, and the integration of "sexual orientation" as a source of discrimination. Women's organizations demonstrated for a woman who has been sentenced to five-months in prison due to Article 225, because she was reported for her skirt blew in the wind while she was fishing on the Galata bridge ("Balık Tutarken 'Hayasız Giyinme' Cezası", 2008). This article is rejected due to its ambiguity on what is classified as "indecent"; it is open for use to convict women on the basis of how they dress.

Aside from these transformations in fundamental laws, the Turkish constitution made an important change in Article 10 in 2004. Article 10 now holds *the state* responsible for maintaining equality among men and women. In 2005, the

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Municipality Law no. 5393 that defines and regulates the duties and the jurisdiction of municipalities had a new clause under Article 14. Municipalities with a population above 50,000 were held responsible to open up "protection homes" for women and children. Even though the law is not enforced, the number of shelters operated by local governments grew increasingly since then. There are currently 26 municipality shelters in Turkey.

Recently, there were attempts at the implementation of the state's policy transformation. The parliament initiated a research commission on honor killings and violence against women and children in June 2005 called the Parliamentary Commission (*Meclis Komisyonu*). It was organized as a result of the proposals of individual women members of the parliament. On February 2006, the commission presented its final report to the other members of the parliament which consists of findings acquired through studies conducted in different cities that are guided by the suggestions of scholars, NGOs, managers of national television channels, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) representatives who have all adopted an approach against violence. The report focuses on three areas: (1) violence against women, (2) violence against children, and (3) customary and honor killings. It is detected that the prevalent violence is internalized because of the gender roles, that fundamental extensive sociological research has not been conducted yet in this field, that educational materials have not been prepared towards this end, that societal violence and sexual discrimination impede our development, that our families that constitute the nucleus of society and especially women and children are harmed by this, that domestic violence remains as secret, and that individuals perceive it in terms of privacy and hence normalize their experiences. The commission report suggests that in order to increase women's

participation to political life gender quotas could be functionalized, that the article concerning property rights in the new Civil Code should not exclude the marriages before 2002, and that we should work in cooperation with certain institutions in order to eliminate customary and honor killings.

On July 2006, Four months after the Parliamentary Commission presented its final report, a circular order by the Prime Ministry came into effect. The "Circular of Preventive Measures for Violence against Women and Children and Customary and Honor Killings" *(Başbakanlık Genelgesi)* has four main subheadings: violence against children, violence against women, honor killings, and media. It provides a long list of suggestions about preventive and protective measures, institutional services, education, health, and the law on four areas: violence against children, violence against women, honor killings, and media. The content of the Circular is mostly derived from the outcome reports of previous meetings of the Shelters Assembly. For each suggestion, the Circular determines certain responsible institutions such as KSGM, SHÇEK, Directorate of Religious Affairs, local governments, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, etc. In order to put all suggestions into practice, two institutions are assigned to coordinate the activities of other determined institutions: KSGM for violence against women and SHÇEK for violence against children. It is stated that the institutions should prepare a report documenting their activities once in every three months to send to the two coordinating institutions. For example, on September 2006 KSGM organized a meeting with all these institutions where they shared their experiences in this field. It is argued there that for the first time, with this circular order, the struggle to eliminate violence against women became state policy since preventive measures are listed in detail and there are mandatory meetings to put them into practice. However, in order

to fully realize these goals, there are other responsibilities defined by the feminists that the state has to take: reserving the necessary budget, forming a women's support fund, and giving financial support, etc.

As the result of the Circular, certain collaborations were formed with the police, Turkish Armed Forces, and the Directorate on Religious Affairs. KSGM was the institution responsible for preparing the National Action Plan for 2007-2010. Under the coordination of KSGM, State Ministry of Women and Family Affairs and Turkish Armed Forces designed an educational program for soldiers about women's rights and gender equality. Several short films and fliers about domestic violence were prepared by TRT, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation. Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Ministry of Women and Family Affairs launched a project to train forty thousand police officers about violence against women, gender inequality, implementing Family Protection Law, and the ways to communicate with women subjected to violence. In 2006, a video has been prepared for November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to be broadcasted on television where State Minister of Women and Family Affairs, Prime Minister, Director of Religious Affairs talked about how violence against women cannot be tolerated and it is not in compliance with the law and also with Islam. In March 2008 İzzet Er, the vice president of Religious Affairs, explained that they were running two projects with Amnesty International and UNFPA to train their staff ("Kadına şiddete karşı imamlara eğitim", 2008).

Tracing the Conservatism and Patriarchy in State Policies for Women

The two-decade-old transformations in state policy proceeded hand-in-hand with an intact conservative and patriarchal approach, which raised skepticism about the

sincerity of motives. As explained in previous sections, major breakthroughs have been initiated for women in Turkey, however there was a failure in terms of their implementation. The government even accepts that these new reforms did not come to life. Recently, the European Court of Human Rights penalized Turkey in a domestic violence case due to its inability to protect the plaintiff ("Türkiye AİHM'de Aile İçi Şiddetten De Ceza Aldı", 2009). Prime Minister Erdoğan and the State Minister of Women and Family Affairs immediately declared their disappointment towards the decision. The State Minister stated that in every country in the world it requires time to change the minds of people and to internalize the new reforms ("Hükümet AİHM'nin Kararına İtiraza Hazırlanıyor", 2009). However, I argue that there is a significant approach problem on the part of the state that relies on conservative values and patriarchal codes, which hinders a societal transformation in terms of gender equality in Turkey.

Here, I use the term "conservative" to mean the conceptualization of women's issues through the unit of family, using "family" and "woman" interchangeably. Women's liberation is explained to be depending on the integrity of the family and the strength of the nation, both as a sign of them and as the cause: women's liberation strengthens the family and the nation and vice versa. Conservatism, by tying women to the family, keeps them in their present disadvantaged positions. For example, when women are valued only on the basis of their roles in the family, then the family as an entity might become sacred for women. As a result, violence in the family gets more justifiable and less resisted. The family has the potential to be imprisoning for women, a place where women learn to endure their partners' control over their life space, what Lundgren (2009) calls the "process of normalising violence".

In this section, I will try to trace the conservative and patriarchal character of the state policies against gender inequality and violence first by discussing the opposition between tradition and modernity with the specific example of honor killings. Secondly, I take a close look at parliament discussions at the time of some recent major legal reforms such as the Family Protection Law and the Civil Code and at the public statements by Prime Minister Erdoğan. I will argue that the approach of the politicians masks the existence of a structural gender inequality and the patriarchy in the society by "degendering" the issue. In addition, their approach to women's issues inherently involves the idea of strengthening the family, even though the way they frame it changes. I also argue that conservatism does not appear as a new phenomenon, but it has long been inseparable from policies concerning women. SHÇEK also has a distinguishing family-centered approach towards women's issues, which I will discuss further in the following chapter.

I argue that on the contrary to what seculars argue "political conservatism" is not a new phenomenon and has existed long before the AKP government (Acuner, 2004). The Turkish state, since the founding of the Republic, had prioritized woman's role in the family while at the same time it encouraged women to fully participate in the workforce, in the public sphere. Osmanağaoğlu (2009) argues that in 1980s, strategies had been developed around the world to make "home" desirable for women and the recent neoliberal policies made women dependent to their families (husband or father) due to cheap labor. She states that neoliberalism "chains women to the family without locking them in the house" (p. 26). During the process of Turkish modernization, women's engagement outside their homes was expected to be in a masculinized way. They were expected to leave their womanhood at home and were perhaps supported to reserve it all for their families as wives, mothers,

daughters, etc. So, independent of the new AKP rule, family existed as an unquestionable and timeless entity and is still central to the state's policies towards women's rights and violence against women. However, it might be argued that since the 1990s conservative policies affecting women took a different turn by functionalizing the unit of the "modern family" in the process of liberating women.

While discussing violence in general, it is almost impossible to escape the binary opposition between the traditional and the modern. In the Turkish context, discrimination against women is debated through this framework as well. Family is key to this binary opposition – being a traditional age-old structure, gender roles are inevitably contemplated through and for the large part constructed in the family. I discuss that "modern family" is endorsed in the process of developing a state policy against gender-based violence, which is clear in the case of honor killings. The modern family is presented as the sign of the "correct" way of modernization for Turkey, which means adopting the Western modernization while at the same time keeping traditional values like keeping a strong family (Zürcher, 1993). Sirman in her paper titled "The New Face of Honor", presented in a panel in June 2009,[18] draws a three-legged model for how modernization and family are imagined in the context of Turkey. The ideal model that the Turkish state promotes is located in-between the two discredited models: the Western and the Eastern model. In the West, modernization process led to the destruction of family and to a degenerate way of life whereas the East of Turkey failed to complete the modernization process where culture, traditions, and family (*aşiret*) set up their own rules.

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[18] *Şiddetin Normalleştirilme Süreci – İsveç ve Türkiye'deki Bakış Açıları [The Process of Normalising Violence – The Approaches in Sweden and Turkey].* 2009. Istanbul, 6 June.

In the face of the law, different treatments exist to similar acts of violence against women through an "invented" differentiation between "honor" and "*töre*". For example, in the Penal Code, Article 29 is designed to reduce sentences in cases of "unjustifiable provocation" (*haksız tahrik*). It is argued by the feminists that this article paves the way to justifying violence against women in certain "exceptional" cases such as when the woman puts the family honor "at stake". On the contrary, according to Article 82, crimes committed in the name of a specific tradition (*töre*) is treated as a special case that requires *higher* sentences. It also punishes other people who influence the decision of the perpetrator of violence (*azmettirici)*. So, there is a difference in how the same act of violence can move from being acceptable and relatively just to being discredited when it is linked to *töre* that is claimed to be the sign of a "backward" and "primitive" society. Sirman argues that the new Penal Code makes a distinction between crimes committed in the name of "honor" and "töre": the former still continues to reduce sentences to crimes that are committed irrationally under the sudden influence of a passion – i.e. honor – whereas the latter is harshly punished since it is the sign of a well-established culture that acts on rational decisions made by the families (*aşiret)* (Sirman, 2008). Therefore, *töre* needs to be fought institutionally since it is established and organized with its laws, lawmakers, and enforcers. Sirman (2007) also argues that modern reaction towards backwardness and the new conceptualization of *töre* helped push honor-as-a-source-of-violence to the background and even be forgotten.

So what is the basis of such categorization? Crimes committed in the name of *töre* are discussed as resulting from a certain family structure – *aşiret* – and a specific tradition – *töre* – that exists in the Southeast region among Kurdish people. It is otherized and separated from the modern way of life with the claim that it belongs to

backward societies. Instead, the modern nuclear family is presented as the solution. A distinction is made between the nuclear modern *Turkish* family as opposed to the extended "primitive" *Kurdish aşiret* where the former is the ideal model and the latter is the source of all violence and inequalities that should eventually be abolished.

Koğacıoğlu (2004) argues how honor is framed by certain institutions – Turkish state and law, Justice and Development Party (AKP), EU, and international media – as the "tradition effect" that should have been obsolete in modern societies. However, the very existence and power of tradition today is explained as a result of the backwardness of certain groups and their cultures. She explains that the mentioned institutions position themselves as opposed to a notion of *töre* that is timeless and elusive, because *töre* is constructed as the anti- of everything they want for themselves: anti-modern, anti-civilization, anti-human rights, anti-development, etc. Sirman (2007) argues that although struggling against the violence that the traditions bring on women is a just cause, one should be careful about modernity as a source of discrimination.

Looking at the parliament discussions, in January 1998, before the Family Protection Law passed there was a fight in the parliament between Welfare Party (RP) representative and the current State Minister of Women and Family Affairs from Motherland Party (ANAP) Işılay Saygın. Both politicians stressed the importance of family as the most important (sacred even) entity for the wellbeing of society. However, they disagreed on whether this law can or cannot protect the family. Welfare Party argued that extreme measures such as protection orders would destroy family as an entity. The idea there was that domestic violence is a private affair, because the party representatives stated that when law attempts to regulate

family matters the issue gets "out of hand" and irresolvable. It is not hard to see the resemblance to AKP's approach. It was not long ago when AKP resisted to punish one of its members for beating his wife.[19] It was clear that the issue was interpreted as a "family issue" and as something that should not have been told to a third party. On the other hand, the strongest point that AKP and Serenity Party (SP) representatives made during the discussions of the new Civil Code was their discontent about the justification of the new Code on the basis of an idea of modernization that views traditions as primitive and as obstacles to civilization. They argue against the attitude against traditional and religious values.

When Prime Minister Erdoğan talks about the non-existence of institutionalized gender discrimination in Turkey, it functions to mask the structural gender inequality and patriarchy inside state institutions ("Türkiye'de Cinsiyet Ayrımcılığı Yok", 2005). For example, Erdoğan stated in another speech he gave for the International Women's Day in 2004 that "discrimination against women is more dangerous and *primitive* than racism" (emphasis added).[20] Exactly one year after that, he made the same comparison between gender discrimination and racism. Here, what is meant by racism is an abstract and far concept: perhaps an ancient form of discrimination experienced by strangers in another continent long time ago. By comparing gender-based violence to such an understanding of racism, discrimination is reduced to exceptional "brutal" cases. Therefore, it turns a blind eye to the prevalent patriarchy that affects women's lives every day in all kinds of violence. This approach that associates violence against women with primitiveness isolates and

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[19] In 2006, Halil Ürün was convicted for beating his wife and received six months of prison time.

[20] "Açıkça söylüyorum, kadına karşı cinsiyet ayrımcılığı yapmak ırkçılıktan daha ilkel bir durumdur."

excludes "some" cases from others and hence it functions to avoid the questioning of violence present in "sacred" untouchable institutions such as the state, the army, and the modern family.

On the other hand, during the discussions of the Family Protection Law, Welfare Party explained domestic violence with economic problems. By linking violence to the pressure on men due to economic factors, the issue of violence against women is "degendered". Secondly, in the case of how the politician who beat his wife was protected, I believe it was a demonstration of male solidarity between fellow male party members. Thus, as the two examples show, the patriarchal codes in the minds of state legislators mask the patriarchal structure in the society either by degendering the issue or by failing to punish the perpetrators of violence. Welfare Party representatives also declare that they attribute a secondary place to domestic violence as opposed to "more pressing" issues such as terror and poverty. A similar approach to this came from AKP during the discussions for the new Civil Code in 2001. They presented economic and social problems to be the main concern for most citizens when compared to equal rights and freedoms brought by the new Civil Code. A representative from AKP argued the reforms to be on-paper and that it will not affect the lives of the citizens directly, maybe except for a few enthusiastic women's organizations who follow the parliament meetings. So, their thoughts on the new Code were its unrealistic character and disconnectedness from the society's "real" needs.

To sum up, I argued that the recent state policy transformations for gender equality initiated in the context of an established international human rights regime is a breakthrough, however it fails to be implemented to create permanent changes in women's lives and the state continues to carry conservative and patriarchal traits in

its approach. I believe the specific examples from parliament discussions and public speeches demonstrate the contradiction between the initiated reforms and the initiators' approach to the issue of gender equality well. So, in this dilemma, state policy implementers such as social workers working in SHÇEK whose job is to mend the breach between state policy and implementation calls for further analysis.

CHAPTER III

THE INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE OF SHÇEK IN THE CONTEXT OF

SHELTERING WOMEN

Among state responses to violence against women, method of sheltering women to struggle against gender-based violence proved to be successful around the globe and shelters turned out to be an irreplaceable method since 1970s. The European Union advocates that states should have a shelter for every 7,500 women and girls. Also in Turkey, shelter seems to be accepted as one of the most effective mechanisms to deal with violence against women, regardless of the fact that it implies the breaking up of the family. As it will be dealt later in the chapter, the conceptualization of the shelter as a "guesthouse" or "protection home" that dedicates itself to "protecting and strengthening the family" functions to legitimize its presence.

Even though the transformation in state policy regarding violence against women started since 1990s, women's shelters as a model gained legitimacy only in 2000s.[21] The media frenzy with honor killings in the last decade, the pressure by the international community through the reports of the European Union, and pressures coming from civil society had an effect on the realization of shelters as a legitimate method. It triggered a vast search for answers and concrete mechanisms in the state. As explained in the previous chapter, research committees have been established and studies have been conducted to understand the whys and hows.[22] Collaborations among other state institutions were formed to raise public awareness and for

[21] It is striking to notice that between 1990-2003, during the first thirteen years of service, SHÇEK opened up 8 shelters, but it was only in the following five years between 2003-2008 that they opened up 17 new ones.

[22] Some of the major studies were the Parliamentary Research Commission on Honor Killings, 2006; Family Research Institution Studies, 1995; KSGM Research, 2009.

precaution such as between KSGM, Prime Ministry, and Directorate of Religious Affairs. As a result, there was a significant and quick rise in the number of women's shelters run by the state and local governments to aid and protect the "victims" of violence in the short term.

In this chapter, I discuss the institutional approach of SHÇEK towards sheltering women. I use the framing of women's shelters as "guesthouses" and what it signifies to be a "guest" of the state as the basic framework guiding my analysis. I use this term as the symbol for SHÇEK's approach to violence against women at the level of discourse, which I find problematic. I will emphasize three main characteristics: first, violence is treated as *the* exception not the norm so that it depoliticizes and degenders the issue from a family centered approach and by hiding its prevalence; second, state patriarchy and paternalism masks the violence and in particular the "male" aspect of it by forming a hierarchical and fatherly relationship between the state and women that it provides protection for; third, discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, class, or other factors restrict whose eligible to be sheltered. In the end, deriving from these characteristics, I argue that even though SHÇEK provides an important service to shelter women, at the level of discourse it fails to conceptualize women's shelters to be empowering and transforming for all women subjected to violence. Yet, as it will be discussed in the next chapter, the case is slightly different when one investigates the social workers working in the field everyday.

<div align="center">Short History of Women's Shelters in Turkey</div>

SHÇEK's history goes back to 1917 when the Association for Protection of Children (*Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti*) was established in İstanbul. As the name suggests, it was

primarily designed to help and protect children. It was only after 1983, when the state took over the association, that its area of social work expanded to include other disadvantaged groups such as the elderly, disabled, women, separated families, children who work and live on the street. In 1998 the regulation for guesthouses came into effect.

The women's shelters in Turkey have a short history. The first women's shelters opened up in İstanbul in 1990 by Bakırköy and Şişli municipalities. SHÇEK established its first shelter in the same year as well. During the following two years, several other shelters were founded in Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Eskişehir, and İzmir (Arat, 1998, p. 298). The 2008 Annual Report of SHÇEK indicates that there are 26 shelters run by SHÇEK. There are also 42 family counseling centers where social workers counsel women in case of violence among other members of the family, street children, individuals with addiction, etc. According to Nimet Çubukçu, there are now 52 women's shelters in total, as of February 2009 ("Ufuk Uras Mor Çatı'yı Sordu", 2009). In addition, SHÇEK provides service to women through a nationwide hotline for violence (*Alo 183*) and the family counseling offices. *Alo 183* was set up in 2007 to serve women, children, disabled, and families. In the last two years, 40% of the calls were received from women and nearly half of them were for shelter services.[23] As of March 2008, the overall number of women who were sheltered by SHÇEK's shelters was 7,590 and the number of children was 5,586.

The two significant issues constraining SHÇEK's social service provision including shelter work is being "under-funded" and "under-staffed" despite all the workload (Yazıcı, 2008). The 2008 Annual Report indicates that in SHÇEK only two

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[23] http://www.shcek.gov.tr/anasayfa/Diger/Alo183.asp

percent of the budget is spent for the Family Women and Society Services (*Aile Kadın Toplum Hizmetleri*) which consists of women's shelters, society centers, and family counseling centers.[24] Furthermore, out of the 13,727 available positions in SHÇEK only 9,254 of them are filled. On the other hand, the approximate female population in Turkey is 38 million, which means that roughly there is one shelter for 730,000 women. According to the standards that the European Union set,[25] there should be 5,000 shelters in Turkey instead of 52, which is 100 times more than the existing number. The 2008 Annual Report of SHÇEK states that there were 2,042 applications for shelters in 2008, but SHÇEK's shelters can only hold 573 women and children at the same time.

On the other hand, the independent women's shelters have an even shorter history, but a history of shelters in Turkey would be incomplete without women's organizations' adventures since shelters have been on their agenda even before 1990 – since the feminist campaign in 1987 – and also because apart from the shelters they operate they continue to be involved in the shelter work of the state or local governments. Since the first day, feminist street activism and organization building that struggles with violence against women were inseparable from shelter demands. Women's Solidarity Foundation in Ankara, Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation in İstanbul, Mersin Independent Women's Foundation were some of the pioneer organizations that were founded in the 1990s with the primary agenda of either lobbying for shelters or establishing a shelter of their own. These organizations held the torch for setting an agenda for women's shelters in the public through media

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[24] The numbers are provided in Appendix A.

[25] According to the European Union, there should be one shelter for 7,500 women.

as well as by pushing the government. Their demands were summarized in their well-known slogan: "We want shelters as much as we long for the days we no longer need them". Slogans with similar meanings were printed and displayed in most demonstrations about violence against women.[26]

It was 1990 when Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation built the first women's center in Istanbul for empowering and counseling women. Since then, Purple Roof Foundation had proved its presence in the field of violence against women so much that even the national phone line for unknown numbers (*Alo 118*) directs the women who call for shelters to them. However, the first independent shelter was founded by Women's Solidarity Foundation in 1993 with the cooperation of Ankara Altındağ Municipality. Purple Roof Foundation also had two experiences with running shelters both failed to last. First one was between 1995-1998 and the recent one was 2005-2008. In both cases, shelters were the result of their cooperation with local governments. The local governments supplied resources and Purple Roof volunteers worked in the shelter. However, each election brings uncertainty about the future of such shelters. The new elected mayors in municipalities or the appointed governors have the authority to terminate the signed protocols. Yet, it is not all bad news. Very recently, Purple Roof started running a new shelter with Şişli Municipality right after the local government of Beyoğlu district ended their protocol due to lack of resources and signed a new one with SHÇEK in December 2008. Another new shelter was founded for young women in December 2008 with the cooperation of local governments. The director, Uğur İlhan, was also the director of the first shelter in Turkey, Bakırköy shelter.

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[26] A photograph of the sign "For A World Without Shelters" that I took during a demonstration is provided in Appendix B.

Gülbahar in an interview explains how the feminists establishing the Shelters Assembly intentionally chose to use the word "shelter" (*sığınak*) even at a time when it was not in the common agreed vocabulary of feminists either (Demirler and Demirci, 2006). It was a political choice on their part to claim the word "shelter" with all its connotations. First of all, "shelter" is an alternative to the home. Shelter can provide a safe home and be a life changing experience for women. Secondly, it shows that women need shelters because of the real danger in their lives and that it is male violence. Yet, they do not need protection under the wings of the state in state's guesthouses. Instead "shelter" implies that women have the autonomy, free will, and power to choose to get help to help themselves. An outside party does not have to offer it to her. Third, shelter brings women with mutual experiences together, women who have experienced violence because they are women. Institutions should treat these women equally based on mutuality of experience.

Feminists' activism and demands often hold criticism towards SHÇEK's shelter service and their approach to gender-based violence for its pragmatism; however, one can argue that feminist language has diffused in SHÇEK's texts and regulations on guesthouses. Both women's movement in Turkey and the international human rights paradigm that has been circulating through international documents have an effect on this language change. In SHÇEK's website, the text on guesthouses updated in March 2008 stresses the importance of women to be self-sustaining and finding jobs as well as restoring their self-confidence and self-respect.[27] In the text, it is also indicated that SHÇEK abides by universal standards for shelters such as

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[27] http://www.shcek.gov.tr/hizmetler/Kadin_Aile_Toplum/KadinKonukevleri.Mart2008.pdf

employing women personnel in the shelter. However, the 1998 SHÇEK regulation on guesthouses states that "preferably" women personnel work in the shelters. So, it is not a strictly applied rule. As this specific example shows, SHÇEK functions on a pragmatic basis, which means that certain standards can be sacrificed "if necessary".

The pragmatism of SHÇEK is actually a result of the approach that sees women's shelters as an end-in-itself. Çubukçu, in her speeches, only talks about the number of shelters and the funding reserved for this to demonstrate how successful or determined the government is in reaching its goal. Even though it is important that this issue finds media coverage, but it also proves that the primary goal there is to open up shelters not to eliminate violence against women. It is clear in Çubukçu's response to Ufuk Uras' question: "Ending violence against women and achieving gender equality is not the primary goal of SHÇEK" ("Ufuk Uras Mor Çatı'yı Sordu", 2009). According to Mefkure, a Purple Roof volunteer and shelter worker, the two goals on the state agenda for violence is saving "victims" or eliminating potential "risk groups" such as future prostitutes, thieves, and addicts (Şiddetin Normalleştirilme Süreci – İsveç ve Türkiye'deki Bakış Açıları; 2009). Merry (2001) also writes about the centrality of risk management as an integral part of state policies. She introduces a new concept called the "spatial governance" as a new regime of governance that seeks to keep batterers "spatially" away from women subjected to violence. Spatial governance prioritizes managing risk rather than eliminating the criminal act itself. She argues that recent mechanisms to deal with violence against women such as restraining orders and women's shelters are mechanisms for spatial governance. Spatial state mechanisms are basically criticized for providing protection from "a specified offender for a limited period of time" (p. 18) and not making "an effort to reform the batterer" (p. 24).

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Therefore, the quality of the service inside the shelter is not on the state agenda. Feminists argue that women's shelters should not be like prisons or animal shelters. It made it to the news that in some shelters, women were not allowed to get out of the shelter or even in the balcony and the curtains were kept closed like a prison cell (Arpa, 2008). In one case, four women were kicked out of a shelter run by the municipality with the justification that they were undisciplined (Yıldırım, 2008). So, feminists argue that SHÇEK should have an approach that conceptualizes shelters as a means towards the larger goal of the elimination of violence against women and achieving gender equality. In the rest of the chapter, I will elaborate on these criticisms in relation to my analysis of SHÇEK as an institution. For my analysis, I use the two SHÇEK regulations on guesthouses and the texts on their official website. At the same time, I trace the main terminology used by SHÇEK to refer to shelters: the "guesthouse".

<div align="center">Violence as Exception</div>

I argue that SHÇEK does not treat violence as a ubiquitous and structural phenomenon and as caused by the gendered nature of the society. It is often argued by feminist activists that the term "guesthouse" depoliticizes violence against women by trying to avoid politically loaded terms that could refer to gender inequalities, power relations, or patriarchy inherent in our society. The act of violence is perceived as happening in exceptional cases due to the level of education, culture, ethnicity, and class of the people who perpetrate violence as well as who are subjected to it. The prevalence of violence against women and gender inequality existing in every relationship is ignored. As a result, the issue gets depoliticized and degendered. The attempt to depoliticize the issue of violence against women is

actually a very political attitude itself that functions to hide inequalities in the society by treating violence as marginal.

As it has been brought up in different platforms, feminists criticize SHÇEK's service of "guesthouses" for handling the issue of violence against women as a non-political issue and as a matter of family. Violence is perceived as resulting from dysfunctional families. Family is a crucial tool that SHÇEK uses in the process of depolitization of violence against women. The family centered approach of SHÇEK seeks to restore women's roles in the family as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. If it is impossible to recover women's previous relationships, new relationships will be formed. Indeed, this conceptualization of women's shelters by SHÇEK as the tool to protect and strengthen the institution of family functions to give legitimacy to the very existence of the shelters. Yazıcı (2008) and Kartal (2008) also address the conservative character of SHÇEK in the case of Society Centers. They explain how "protecting and strengthening the integrity of the family" became the state social work policy in Turkey with the change in the SHÇEK regulations in 1991. Yazıcı emphasizes that a linkage has been made between the family and the society where the strength of the former affects the strength of the latter. This principle was introduced to SHÇEK regulations in 1997[28] with a decree and was defined as of primary importance whereas the earlier 1983 regulation did not have such an emphasis. Yazıcı interprets this change as a part of the state discourse that began to highlight the principle of protecting the family since the 1990s.

The "guesthouse" was chosen to stress the temporariness of the shelter service not only in terms of the duration of stay, but also in terms of experience. It

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[28] http://www.shcek.gov.tr/Kurumsal_Bilgi/Mevzuat/Kanunlar/2828.asp

delivers a message to the "guests" to go back home to their families – their husbands, fathers, and brothers – as soon as possible or to start new and healthier families. So, the "guesthouse" is just a temporary replacement, which does not offer a life changing or empowering experience for women nor can it challenge women's roles in the family. "Shelter" also implies temporariness, but only in terms of the duration of stay. The regulation on guesthouses and the document on SHÇEK's website also demonstrate this view. For example, one of the participants of the Second Shelters Assembly complained about not being able to question the family as an entity when she has to work together with SHÇEK (2000, p. 241). Another one explained that she knows by personal experience that a social worker asked a woman who called SHÇEK to be sheltered: "Do you want to be a whore?" (2000, p. 238). It results from the assumption that a "whore" is a woman who abandons her family.

Masking "Male" Violence

Gülbahar explains that "shelter" was thought to be degrading to women which constituted the reason for SHÇEK's usage of "guesthouse" and likewise Municipality Law's usage of "protection home". I argue that the reason it was thought to be degrading is the underlying judgment that having experienced violence is degrading for a woman as if it resulted from her weakness. Therefore, by keeping the word shelter, feminists also try to break the equality between violence and degradation. The term "guesthouse" does not have any reference to violence at all as if it does not signify an extraordinary or extreme problem taking place in society. It hides the fact that shelter is a mechanism built because male violence exists and hence implicitly suggests women to hide their experiences. I argue that the reluctance about naming women's experiences as violence alienates women to their own experiences and eventually disempowers women. To deal with violence against

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women, feminists have argued for a method for women to claim their experiences not to reject them and to work on this experience by re-evaluating it with a new perspective – i.e. women's-point-of-view. They believed this method would be empowering for women who were subjected to violence. Following this, the term "shelter" denotes the presence of danger, "something outside" that requires a structure – like a shelter in case of emergency situations such as natural disasters – which definitely does not deny the existence of violence and women's experiences.

"Guesthouse" is a sign of SHÇEK's claims to work toward the end of empowering women in every field of social life by providing *protection* for them. Brown (1995) argues that not only domination and discipline but also *dependence* and *protection* are characteristic effects of state power that one should approach with skepticism. She writes "the heavy price of institutionalized protection is always a measure of dependence and agreement to abide by the protector's rules" (1995, p. 189).[29] This form of relationship between the protected and the protector – which is also evident in the naming "shelter" as well as "guesthouse" – refers to a hierarchical relationship between an all-powerful, omnipotent state and weak women dependent on the state. State-as-father embraces women under its protective wings. It is constructed as a relationship of fatherly affection and love that keeps women dependent on the state. Zelal Yalçın (2009), a member of Purple Roof, criticizes the state and particularly SHÇEK's approach to violence. She problematizes the mentality that perceives women's shelters as the state's "helping hand" where "victims" are being "saved". Yalçın (2009) states, "it is inevitable that the attitude of 'help' and 'rescue' instead of forming a solidarity relationship creates new spaces of

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[29] Brown traces this idea back to Rousseau's concept of "civil slavery" and liberal formulations of "social contract theory" in order to show the resemblance of the debate on power and its subjects.

power" (p. 5).[30] A striking demonstration of this power relationship in the context of SHÇEK is the case where a woman was offered by a male social worker to his house to be "taken care of" (Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı, 2000, p. 238).

On the other hand, when the state refers to a woman who has been subjected to violence as a "guest", then the shelter is a favor or charity offered to women instead of being the duty of the state. Similar to Jakobsen and Pellegrini's argument that "tolerance can never be an effective replacement for the value of freedom" (2003 p. 3); I think that the notion of charity disregards the rights and freedoms of women. I believe the term shelter reserves the woman the "right to be sheltered", with the justification that the violence and trauma she experience is due to a malfunctioning of the society, a failure on the part of the state. However, it is clear that if the state is hosting a guesthouse, it is indifferent to finding a permanent solution to violence against women. A social worker might as well take the woman to his house instead of the guesthouse.

I have argued that SHÇEK hides the violence that women experience, but it also hides the "male" aspect of this violence. Along the same lines, Berns (2001) in her article brings up the issue of "degendering violence". In her study on the discourse of domestic violence in men's magazines between 1970-1999, she comes across a commonly used strategy of reframing the issue of violence against women as "human violence" instead of male violence. She argues that this strategy "undermines the role of gender and power in abusive relationships" (2001, p. 265). Berns argues that the conceptualization of domestic violence as "human violence" works by blaming women as perpetrators of violence as well. Even though, this is

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[30] "Dayanışma ilişkisinden ziyade 'yardım' ve 'kurtarma' mantığı ile yürütülen çalışmaların başka iktidar alanları yaratması kaçınılmaz."

not the case for SHÇEK, masking the gender of the act of violence have a similar outcome. The contradiction lies in the state's two-sided attitude in approaching violence: it claims to develop policies and build mechanisms to resolve the problem of violence against women; but what is it really resolving if it avoids the problem itself? So, SHÇEK appears to be a patriarchal and a paternal institution that re-victimize women in different ways even by using the term "guesthouse" instead of shelter.

<u>Being Eligible to be Sheltered</u>

The regulation on guesthouses specifies *which* women are appropriate to be sheltered and which women are not. Women with addictions or contagious diseases, those involved in illegal prostitution, criminals, who are mentally unhealthy or mentally disabled, underage women, and old women who are unable to take care of themselves are not considered eligible for SHÇEK's shelters. Women with kids over the age of 12 are evaluated by the social worker if they can enter the shelter with their mothers. However, in practice it might work differently. As members of women's organizations often state in Shelter Assemblies and as I understand from my interviews with social workers, it is usually the case that a woman's son who is older than 12 is not accepted. Also, women over the age of 50 are mostly rejected by SHÇEK's shelters, on the basis that they require more attention. On the other hand, there are unwritten rules applied by social workers or their supervisors. For example, the shelter applications of women with records of illegal prostitution are not always evaluated on the same basis with other applications. One of my interviewees working in a SHÇEK family counseling office told me how she had to convince the Mayor to give money for a woman's transfer because she was doing illegal prostitution (*fuhuş*).

Furthermore, SHÇEK requires a group of documents from women who are accepted to the shelter such as her ID card, registration information retrieved from the Civil Registry Office, a doctor's report, a written petition etc. Feminists have argued that these bureaucratic requirements slow down the process which is vital for women in danger to be faster and moreover the women who run away from violence often do not have any documents with them, including their ID cards. Secondly, the circulation of women's documents in SHÇEK is endangering to confidentiality of women's identity. Plus, if a woman is under a threat of violence it would be dangerous for her to collect such documents and reports after she has ran away. The last point of concern is that these requirements result in the "silent" discrimination of women who are already marginalized in the eyes of the state. For example, in the "Seminar for Preventing Domestic Violence against Women and Effective Local Governing" in February 2008, İstanbul Şahmaran Women's Center members stated that they cannot direct women to SHÇEK who were victimized by the process of forced migration due to language restrictions and adaptation problems. Women in rural areas do not acquire an ID card which prevent their applications to SHÇEK shelters. Women who do not speak Turkish and illiterate women encounter similar problems as well.

Therefore, I argue that SHÇEK's treatment of violence against women through its shelters discriminate women. SHÇEK chooses which women can and which women cannot be accepted as the "guests" of the state. Women subjected to male violence are not treated equally on the basis of their shared experiences.

In short, I discussed the discourse of SHÇEK and the power of language in both reflecting and shaping ideology. The choice of using the term "guesthouse" signifies a whole state ideology about how the phenomenon of violence against

women is approached in Turkey, by treating violence as exception, hiding the source of violence as male, and discriminating women. It is not a coincidence that feminism in the post-1980s dealt with language by struggling with the patriarchy in language and trying to find women's own words, write women's (his)tories, creating a women's language in literature.[31]

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[31] For discussions on "women's language" in literature see Irzık and Parla, 2004; For examples of women's novels see Tekin, 2001; Özdamar, 1993; For studies and examples of history writing from women's perspectives see Bingölçe, 2001; Berktay, 2003, Zihnioğlu, 2003; Muhiddin, 2006.

CHAPTER IV

TRAPPED SUBJECTIVITIES:

SOCIAL WORKERS IN-BETWEEN THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

As it has been discussed, SHÇEK's institutional approach to shelter provision is a

reflection of the state's cosmetic transformation in policy since the 1990s that

promises life-changing improvements in women's quality of life but fails to

materialize it. But is it possible to talk about one way of sheltering women in

SHÇEK? Is there no space of agency for social workers? This chapter focuses on the

subjectivities of the social workers sheltering women. I discuss the constraints of

their approach on the relationship they form with women subjected to violence and

the reasons behind it. My question is how and in which ways the shelter provision

might function as a means of power over women subjected to violence and question

if it can be empowering and transforming for women. At the same time, this chapter

calls into question the margins of the social workers' space of agency inside SHÇEK.

I argue that their experiences of entrapment in the institution situate them in a

vaguely defined space in-between the state and civil society, in-between

"bureaucracy" and "volunteerism". I suspect this position helps open up a new space

for transformation in SHÇEK and hence in the state.

Furthermore, this chapter investigates the impact of women's movement on

social workers' approach working in the field with women subjected to violence and

traces the diffusion of feminism inside SHÇEK through social workers. I argue that

feminist agenda and vocabulary have diffused to social workers' language, same way

it was partially diffused in SHÇEK's institutional discourse, and is reflected in social

workers' "volunteerism". However, it is not possible to talk about a widespread

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diffusion of feminist ethics and methods,[32] at least not institutionally: there is

hetereogeneity in social workers' approach depending on their training and the

sustainability of feminist principles through generations cannot be guaranteed.

As Foucault demonstrates, discourse works in mysterious ways. He presents

the notion of "negative power" and "discipline" that are exercised at the micro-level

with individuals' self-control. It is different from the conventional constructions of

power that is exercised from top to down in the form of domination or oppression.

His theory of discourse that brings forth the invisibility (negativity) of power that is

well-diffused and functioning through individuals denies any subject position outside

or prior to discourse or power-knowledge. By itself this is a bleak picture and allows

no space for resistance by stripping individuals of their agency. However, there is a

space for the mobility of subjects. "He speaks not of individual subjects but of social

functions and roles within relationships: parent, child, manager, worker, and so

forth" (Strozier, 2002, p. 66). For Foucault (1980) the "plebs" signifies the resistance

to power: "there is indeed always something in the social body, in classes, groups

and individuals themselves which in some sense *escapes* relations of power […] a

centrifugal movement, an inverse energy" (p. 138, emphasis added).

By subjectivity, I mean this "centrifugal movement" from the inside of a

structure and also, following Sherry B. Ortner's discussion, it means the potential

reflexivity of subjects that allows questioning and criticizing but that cannot be

independent from the cultural and social structure. Ortner (2006) gives a thorough

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[32] What I mean by feminist ethics and methods has been explained in detail, in Chapter I. Also, it should be mentioned that this is not only a criticism valid for social workers. There is also a serious separation among different women's groups who call themselves feminists on the basis of their approach, working principles and methods.

account on different formulations by theorists about the relationship between the structure and the subject. She explains subjectivity as both "the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, and fear that animate acting subjects. But [… also] the cultural and social formations that shape, organize, and provoke those modes of affect, thought, and so on" (Ortner, 2006, p. 107). So, she emphasizes the reciprocality of the structure and the subject impinging on each other. Ortner (2006) presents a culturally constructed "complex subjectivity" by following Geertz "in which a subject partially internalizes and partially reflects upon – and finally […] reacts against – a set of circumstances in which she finds herself" (p. 127) as opposed to the Foucauldian notion of subjects and subject positions constructed as static identities and positions by discourse (p. 114). She emphasizes that she "takes people to be 'conscious' in the sense of being at least partially 'knowing subjects', self aware and reflexive" (p. 126), however she underlines that "this is not to say that actors *can* stand 'outside of culture', for of course they cannot" (p. 127, emphasis added).

Following the debate on discourse and subjectivity, I argue that there is space for social workers to challenge SHÇEK's institutional approach on violence against women, but it does not lead to a structural transformation even though it creates significant cracks. The interviews with social workers were structured along three main axes: social workers' relationship with the state, with civil society and feminists, and with women subjected to violence. The answers to all the directed questions reflected a high heterogeneity. Trapped between SHÇEK's structure and women's organizations' expectations, social workers come up with their own method of struggle against entrapment challenging both the limits of state bureaucracy and civic volunteerism during their time of duty. However, this remains limited with

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individuals' period of duty until they are reassigned to another position, or they give up struggling and resign, or give in to SHÇEK's methods. There is no structure to transfer the experience between generations of social workers and hence it is not possible to talk about an institutional transformation in SHÇEK's policy on how to shelter women.

Solidarity, Charity, or Both?: Working With Women On the Basis of Othering

More than half of the social workers interviewed in this study form a relationship with women subjected to violence in terms of "othering" which I argue prevents a more effective relationship based on "solidarity"[33] which might be formed by acquiring a feminist consciousness. They otherize women and differentiate themselves on the basis of culture, lack of education, economic situation, and psychological issues which results in a "charity" relationship. I claim that othering is a result of the lack of feminist consciousness and is used as a tool by social workers to cope with institutional constraints such as lack of funding, staff, and specialization in one's field as well as it involves the idea of forming a "sense" of solidarity and support with the women. Both motivations of social workers result in the othering of women, but they are expressed with different emotions such as blaming, lack of trust, pitying, desire to educate, to rescue, and to protect. Struggling with institutional constraints, social workers show signs of blaming and distrust towards women coming for shelters. Yet, even though they feel hands-tied, they also empathize with

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[33] Feminists who have been working in the field of violence against women valued commonalities in experience instead of differentiation that results in a solidarity relationship instead of a rescue operation. Işık (2002) explains her feminist method for working with women subjected to violence with the importance of positioning yourself as the subject, an agent, or an active participant of the phenomenon of violence against women not as an observer and that she is in this struggle primarily for herself (p. 42). When she is working with women subjected to violence, every step of the way, she tries to remind herself of her *own* subjection to violence and stop herself from disregarding her own story as trivial. Purple Roof volunteers think that women subjected to violence "hold a mirror" to them and their lives where they mutually have an effect on each other (Ahıska, 2009).

the women and feel solidarity in a deeper layer on the basis of womanhood. They express this through pitying, desire to educate, to rescue, and to protect. The contradiction lies in the fact that these emotions are both the foundations of a charity relationship and a sign of the intentions of solidarity. Nevertheless, I argue that the approach of othering re-victimizes women. The social workers' claimed positions as opposed to women as their parent, doctor, teacher, or savior signify a hierarchical relationship. They define a category of "other" women who unlike them experience violence and who are incapable of stopping or dealing with this experience. This is inevitably an expression of superiority that results in oppressing women once more. I suggest that the feminist method of forming a relationship of equals is more effective for women in the long term.

The blaming of the women coming to shelters is often found in social workers' narratives. The reasons for experiencing violence and not being able to deal with it are explained with reference to psychology, character traits, or culture. Filiz, the psychologist of the family counseling office where Ülkü works, explained:

> For some it's a habit to stay in the guesthouses, instead of building up their own lives they depend on a man or an institution. When the time she can stay here is up, she moves to another city, another women's shelter. When her time is up, she moves on yet to another one. Then you realize she has not developed the ability to handle life. And of course that is a problem. She has to be rehabilitated in that sense, in another words she has to be given responsibilities, however this can not happen in these transitions. It cannot because there is also a personality disorder involved. This issue has to be handled multi-facedly. If an individual won't take responsibility, this is based on childhood. Profound treatment is needed. [34]

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[34] Bazıları için kadın konukevinde kalma alışkanlığı var yani kendi yaşamını kurmak yerine bir kuruma dayalı yani birilerine bağımlı olarak yaşamını sürdürmek: ya bir erkeğe bağlı ya da bir kuruma bağlı olarak yaşamını sürdürmek. İşte burada olmuyor burada kalış süresi bitiyor bir başka şehre gidiyor bir başka şehirde sığınma, kadın sığınma evine gidiyor. Oradaki süresi bitiyor ondan sonra bir başka konuk evi. Bakıyorsunuz ki bu kişide kendi yaşam becerisi gelişmemiş. Ha bu da bir sorun tabi ki yani. Kişinin de o yönde rehabilite edilmesi lazım yani sorumluluklarını vermek

So, she explains that women who apply for SHÇEK's shelters have a dependency

problem, either due to psychological reasons like personality disorder and attitude

problems or cultural reasons like not being able to develop skills required to carry on

independent lives. In this picture, she presents an image of a troubled woman

experiencing violence because she is "that way" due to her own incompetency.

Similar to Filiz's explanation Tülay, the head of the İstanbul branch, states:

> These women, even though they have experienced violence and want
> refuge, they still find salvation in a man. They hope to establish a life
> with a new man after they get out of the shelter, because that's how
> *they* apprehend setting a life [emphasis added].[35]

I think that both descriptions contribute to the process of "gendering the

blame" as Berns (2001) calls it, however the initial attempt to put blame is related to

social workers' feeling of helplessness due to institutional constraints. Since social

workers cannot deal with the scope of women's problems or generate long term

solutions, they remove the "blame" and responsibility off their backs. First, they

ignore violence, as a possible source for women's issues with dependency. Instead,

women's inability to act independent is thought of as a "symptom" of something else

in her life – character, psychology, or culture. Secondly, women are criticized and

blamed for being dependent on institutions, men, etc. which is indeed interpreted as

the reason of their subjection to violence and their inability to handle violence on

their own. So, social workers blame women and hold them responsible for

experiencing the violence in the first place and/or they are blamed for not being able

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gerekiyor, ancak işte yani bu geçişlerde bu çok fazla olmuyor. Gerçekleşemiyor çünkü bir kişilik
bozukluğu da var. Çok yönlü ele alınması gerekiyor. Kişi sorumluluğunu almıyorsa bu temelde
çocukluktan başlayan bir şeydir. Köklü tedavileri gerektirir.

[35] Bu kadınlar her ne kadar şiddete uğrayıp sığınmak isteseler de kurtuluşu yine bir erkekte buluyorlar.
Sığınma evinden çıktıktan sonra yeni bir erkekle hayatlarını kurmak istiyorlar çünkü onların yaşam
kurma tahayyülleri öyle.

to stop it. As a result, the responsibility is taken off from the man who perpetrates violence and it is put on the woman.

On the other hand, distrust appears as a strong emotion expressed by most of the social workers. They often do not trust the stories of the women or they do not trust their judgment about their own situations. For example, Tülay clearly stated "99% of the women who come to SHÇEK lie. Sometimes they say they have been victims of *töre* in order to get attention from media and publicity on television." I believe this is a problematic approach even though women might feel they have to lie to get attention or more importantly to find a place in a shelter, because the shelters have a very limited capacity. On the other hand, social workers act with a sense of justice. From their point-of-view, since they have to "work around" the institutional incapabilities, resources should be managed in the best way possible. In other words, shelter should be the right of the one who needs it the most. According to their sense of justice other women are acting selfish and exploiting the resources of SHÇEK whereas they could be made better use by someone else.

Ülkü, the social worker working at a family counseling office in one of the major cities, explained how she felt that women were exploiting SHÇEK and their services:

> In the media, shelters are presented as if they are hotels. As a place where you can run to whenever you're in trouble, this is positive in the sense that women know there is a center they can consult when they need. On the other hand, for some it's like I cannot stay with my sister, in fact they could stay there and look for a job but there is reasoning that everything is better when you're at SHCEK. Not taking the responsibility of your own life…[36]

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[36] Medyada vesaire sığınma evlerinin sanırım birer otel hizmeti gibi anlatılıyor. Yani her başınız sıkıştığında gidebileceğiniz bir yer tamam bu aslında olumlu da bir şey en azından kadınlar zor durumda kaldıklarında başvurabilecekleri bir merkez olduğunu biliyorlar. Ancak bazıları için de bu

I think the "hotel" analogy is very strong here in explaining Ülkü's view that shelters should be a place to go when you are in "real" trouble and that SHÇEK should be the last resort for helpless women, after they have tried every other option. However, "needs-talk" is always controversial since it is a medium for political claims (Fraser, 1988). While allocating resources, social workers have to make a judgment on whose subjection is worse, which means hierarchizing between different types of violence. This is inevitably a political process, because it cannot be objective or standardized; the severity of a case would be interpreted differently each time by every social worker. Therefore, distrust along with blaming contributes to the othering of women, even though they are used by social workers to justify their decisions in the face of institutional constraints.

Othering carried out by social workers is felt strongly in their desire to educate and rescue women as well, but I suggest that this can be interpreted as a desire to improve women's life standards. I argue that these feelings derive from a feeling of solidarity in general and hence they carry a feminist agenda. Shelters are explained by the social workers as homes to educate women in order to eliminate violence in their lives. The education includes trainings in specific areas such as handcrafts, computer skills, etc. so that they would get economic independence. However, social workers feel that their desires of "rescue" are never fulfilled due to different institutional restrictions. Their expression of these restrictions and hence their sense of entrapment will be elaborated in the next section. Tülay told me that contrary to expectations, social workers cannot be "miracle workers". Similarly,

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böyle bir şey gideyim ablamda kalamıyorum halbuki ablasında kalırken de kendi kişisel sorumlulukları çerçevesinde iş arayabilir bir şeyler yapabilir ama işte SHÇEK'teyken her şey daha iyi olur bir mantık. Yani kendi hayatının sorumluluğunu almayıp...

Ülkü explained that SHÇEK and its shelters alone are insufficient to be the solution to violence against women:

> I suppose everyone expects SHÇEK to take a woman from point zero and raise her to a certain level; however they don't consider her past, education, psychology, her marital status… You cannot give everything to a person in three months, some take in others can't. A woman with a primary school diploma can at least go shopping on her own, but what if she is illiterate… You have to consider the culture that they come from. A woman who has worked in bars for long, she only knows how to host men. When you try to get her a regular job, you get a call saying she does not know how to clean. While she is at the shelter you give responsibility but when things get serious she cannot do it, because she was used to working in a different environment where she only knew how to dress up. It is not possible to inject everything into these women.[37]

Her words make clear the desire yet the impossibility to educate and quickly rescue women from violent relationships with an "injection" like a doctor would save a patient. The social workers express that they want to find a "cure" for women's problems, but unfortunately they are unable to do it.

On the other hand, the desires of social workers are inherently channeled towards the "other" – the illiterate, the poor, and the Kurdish – because violence against women is explained as an issue for the "underdeveloped". For example, Tülay stressed that "women's issues cannot be resolved unless we find a solution to the problem of economy, reproduction, and migration in Turkey". This quote shows how she conceptualizes violence as the problem of the other: the economically

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[37] Sanırım herkesin SHÇEK'ten beklediği sıfır noktasında bir kadını al sen bunu al şeye getir öyle çıkar, ama kimse şunu düşünmüyor yani bu kadının özgeçmişi ne mesleki bilgisi ne psikolojisi ne eğitimi ne çocuk durumu ne eş durumu ne… bu yok. Üç ayda siz bir insana her şeyi veremiyorsunuz, alan var almayan var. İlkokul mezunu bir kadın en azından tek başına çarşıya çıkabilir, ama okuma yazması olmayan... Hele de geldikleri kültüre bakmak lazım. Yani uzun yıllardır barda çalışmış bir kadın, tek bildiği şey konsomatrislik yapmak siz o kadını mesela düzenli bir işe yerleştirmeye çalışıyorsunuz gözlüyorsunuz yerleştirdiğiniz yerlerden telefon geliyor Ülkü hanım temizlik yapmasını bilmiyor. Hani kadın konuk evinde tamam sorumluluk veriyorsunuz iş yaptırıyorsunuz ama iş ciddiyete bindiği zaman yapamıyor çünkü bar kültürü içersinde ne yapmış, giyinmiş gitmiş. Böyle şeyler var yani. Bu kadınlara her şeyi enjekte etmek çok mümkün değil.

disadvantaged groups and the Kurdish people who reproduce frequently and migrate to bigger cities. She distances herself from violence as a phenomenon emerging in other contexts and hence differentiates herself from the women she works with. After all, violence is not *her* problem initially; it is "their" problem experienced more frequently, aggressive, and deadly.

I believe that social workers, by pursuing the hirearchical position of the the educator, protector, or rescuer towards the women they work with cause their re-victimization. Paulo Freire (1970), in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* presents two different models of education: "banking" concept of education and the "problem-posing" education. He argues that the former is an instrument of oppression, because the teacher performs an act of "depositing" on the student. The "bank-clerk educator" does not seek communication or solidarity with the student. With the problem-posing method, on the other hand, Freire suggests a different mode of dialogue where one is simultaneously the teacher *and* the student, which can be an instrument for liberation. I believe that social workers, in support of the dichotomy between the teacher and the student, assume that women's experiences of violence would not reflect on their lives as women or change it fundamentally. However, their presence would be vital for the women who want to be sheltered. Therefore, the impact cannot be the same during the process of sheltering women: social workers can touch women's lives but women cannot touch them in the same way.

To conclude, I argue that the process of othering prevents a solidarity relationship between the social worker and women subjected to violence. Even though othering is a tool used by social workers to work around the institutional constraints of SHÇEK or that it is carried out with "good" intentions and a feminist agenda; it is a tool for oppression as well. Most of the social workers, with different

motivations, seek to differentiate themselves from the "other" instead of exploring

commonalities and shared experiences. They infantilize women who are subjected to

violence by constructing them as lying to enter shelters and undermine their agency

since they are unable to take care of themselves to stay away from violence or to deal

with it in case of violence due to dependency issues, lack of education, and cultural

codes. There is a general ideal on behalf of the social workers to make these women

more educated, more conscious, more capable, competent, self-sustaining, and less

dependant. Paradoxically, these wishes are both the foundation of a solidarity

relationship that involves a feminist agenda, motivation, and vocabulary and of a

charity relationship of the saver-saved, doctor-patient, teacher-student, and parent-

child that lacks feminist ethics and methods.

The "Volunteers" of the State

All the social workers interviewed in this study express a serious entrapment in their

work. This is a multi-sided entrapment due to institutional restrictions of the state,

and the pressures and expectations coming from the society, such as the criticisms of

feminists, and threats from families. In this environment, they come up with new

tactics and establish a different subject position for themselves on the margins of

state bureaucracy and *civic volunteerism*. As a researcher, it was not easy to classify

social workers' position either as bureaucrats or as volunteers. I observed the

emergence of a space transgressing the boundaries of both bureaucracy and

volunteerism. The social workers redefine obligation and volunteerism in their

everyday experience working with women subjected to violence. There is an ongoing

conflict between working with the principle of obligation in bureaucracies as a state

official and working voluntarily without developing any organic ties to the

institution. As has been stated before, "social services was an area in Turkey in

which the state worked as a partner or supporter for the volunteers for a long period"
(Kartal, 2008: 14). For more than 60 years, social services was supported by
volunteers and donations. So SHÇEK, since its establishment, was located on the
ground in-between the state and civil society. I believe this tradition has an effect on
how social workers perceive their work as well.

The common story told by the social workers was a challenging struggle with
entrapment. The state burdens them with excessive office work, question their every
decision, reserves insufficient money and personnel, low wages, lack of
specialization in the field, and that they have to constantly struggle with high rank
officials to help women. They feel hands-tied even though they try their best to do
their job in helping women. Ayşe is a woman who works alone at the family
counseling office of SHÇEK in a small town that recieved city status recently.
Previously, she had worked in a bigger and more populated city. She explains her
experience as follows:

> On the one hand there is bureaucracy, loads of paper work, on the
> other hand people are desparately waiting for answers. You want to
> help them, but there is all this bureaucracy, forms, registrations that
> challenges you. […] I was about to go mad. […] I wanted to quit
> everyday. I wanted to quit because I felt I could not do enough.[38]

Ayşe then quitted her job and moved to her current location where she no longer
drowns herself in work. As shown in the quote, the feeling of helplessness is a very
dominant one. Yet it was not only Ayşe who expressed her desire to quit her job.
Filiz and Ülkü, at the end of our interview, told me that they decide to quit their jobs
every Friday and change their minds back every time. Their biggest distraction was

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[38] Bir yandan korkunç bir bürokrasi evrak yığını, bir yandan korkunç bir gerçekten çözüm bekleyen
insanlar. Yani sen insana değer vermek istiyorsun ama seni zorlayan bürokrasi, yazışma, evrak,
formlar, kayıtlar. […] kafayı yemek üzereydim. […] Her gün işi bırakmak istiyordum. İşi bırakmak
şeyini de yani işe yetişememekten hani.

buying flowers for their dismal offices and taking care of them. It was impossible not

to notice the spark in their eyes when they confessed to me that they actually dream

of becoming a florist one day.

When asked what really keeps them from quitting their jobs, they explained

that even though working at SHÇEK is a psychological strain they "hang in there"

for the sake of seeing the small changes they cause in women's lives. As Filiz put it:

> Sometimes despair, sometimes hope. I mean although it may look
> like we are not accomplishing anything you cannot ignore that we
> have reached some women and helped them improve.[39]

Sevgi, a psychologist who used to work in a SHÇEK shelter for three years had to

quit her job because of the same feeling of entrapment. She explained how she felt

worn-out because she had to struggle with her high rank officials even for very

simple things. She even received threats by women's husbands, but the state could

not make her feel safe. So, in fact they value their jobs and even feel dedication

towards it, but they expect concrete results to continue doing it.

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to read social workers' expression of

entrapment and complaining as sign of weakness. On the contrary, in all of the

interviews, social workers portrayed themselves as active agents and as strong and

struggling individuals. In this section, I will suggest that social workers mainly

follow three paths in dealing with entrapment, both to express it and as a strategy to

escape it. First one is a self-portrayal of heroism through the expression of their

personal involvement in the field of working with women subjected to violence.

Secondly, blaming the state for the policies it develops to deal with violence against

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[39] Bazen umutsuzluk bazen umutlu. Yani öyle baktığımız zaman bazen dediğim gibi hiçbir şey
yapamıyormuşuz gibi görünsek de yine bazı insanlara ulaştığımız ve onları iyi noktalara getirdiğimizi
de göz ardı etmememiz lazım.

women and for the problem of implementation. Finally, social workers deal with their entrapment by responding to feminists' criticisms, either by differentiating themselves or by drawing parallels. Especially the first two paths have a function for social workers to express their feelings of love and devotion towards helping women by contrasting their approach to the pragmatism of the state.

The self-perception of social workers as heroes is revealed through a narrative of personal involvement. They choose to explain their "voluntariness" to demonstrate their entrapment, but I believe it is also a strategy to escape the strong sense of entrapment. I interpret their "voluntary" personal involvement in something they do primarily to make a living as a reflection of civic volunteerism. Personal involvement of social workers takes different shapes. Some of them take the initiative to participate in trainings or to give training, some to accelerate processes in favor of women, some to fight their high rank officials, and some to work outside the office or the determined office hours. However, the agency of social workers is not necessarily a sign of a feminist consciousness although it might be in some cases. In other cases, it results from the satisfaction of doing a "good deed" by helping women.

Ülkü made a beautiful analogy between the two of them in the office and the cartoon hero "he-man".[40] She said, "it is like he-man with so many cases and only two people". When asked about the specifics of their responsibilities in the family counseling office, Filiz and Ülkü showed impatience to describe them in detail. They expressed that they were in fact waiting for me to ask this question since they had so much to tell. Their job description not only includes women's sheltering, but also

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[40] He-Man is a fictional cartoon character known for his incredible strength.

counseling for couples, projects about street children, drug addicts, and many more. They repeatedly expressed how overwhelming it was to deal with all these cases with only two social workers, but most importantly they stressed that they manage to do it somehow. For example, Ülkü explained that they usually had to work extra hours in cases of domestic violence:

> It takes a lot of psychological pressure to work at the SHÇEK, there is no day-night, like when you just got some news or your shift is over, if there is someone at the door you cannot leave. You don't have the luxury to get sick or to say I have had enough for today. […] We go to the police station for them, even at night. For example I have spent a night there, till 4 AM in the morning.[41]

So, Ülkü feels compelled to help the women subjected to violence even though it is outside her job description, because she does not think that it is a choice to decline a woman in an emergent situation.

Social workers also struggle with their superiors to change the circumstances in favor of women who were subjected to violence. For example, Filiz and Ülkü had been pushing for new mechanisms like "intermediary stations" for a temporary stay for women before they are placed in a shelter, but limited resources created an obstacle. They were also two of the four trainers in a big city, of the *Hürriyet* campaign "End to Domestic Violence" in which they held parent educations in schools for violence and anger management. Yet, they received further requests from schools and municipalities even after the trainings ended and they continued to attend those on their own initiative. Ayşe, on the other hand, calls herself an

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[41] Bu böyle, SHÇEK'te çalışmak böyle bir psikolojik baskı, geceniz gündüzünüz yok, hani bir haber çıktığında ya da tam mesainiz bitip gideceğinizi düşünürsünüz ama işte kapıda biri sizi bekliyorsa görüşmek durumundasınız sizin hastalanmak gibi ya da sizin hani ben bugün şu kadar vakayla görüştüm demek gibi bir lüksünüz yok yine sizin benim kapasitem bu kadar daha fazla alamayacağım demek gibi bir lüksünüz yok, aslında böyle bir şey. […] Kadınlarla ilgili karakollara gidiyoruz ve gece, mesela ben bir gecemi orada geçirdim saat dörtlere kadar karkoldaydım.

"education maniac" because she jumps on every opportunity to get all the available trainings for social workers even if it is not about women's issues. She also had stories about how she tried to convince her superiors in certain cases to accept "some" women into SHÇEK's shelters such as Kurdish women or sex workers.

> He was reading the newspaper and mentioned the news about an armed conflict. Are we paying for these, he said. Where is this woman from? I told him I had not asked and yes we are paying for this. I mean we're serving peace. And we have to serve peace.
>
> *But you might be a Kurd as well…*
>
> Yes. He asked me if I was a Kurd. I said no, do I have to be Kurdish to defend their rights? No, he said, you don't but I'm trying to understand why you thought so. I told him the same thing, how are you supposed to choose who to give money? Won't they get service if there was a Kurd in the bloodline? […] Then he told my supervisor that he was just kidding; it was a joke and I did not get it. Do the jokes always find prostitutes, Kurds, Alawites…[42]

Ayşe also explained that she usually took the applications *personally* to the people in charge in order to speed up the paper work processes. In her previous job, she even bought chocolate for the new appointed judge to form a good relationship and a good start.

At the same time, social workers' story of personal involvement accentuate the self-sacrifice on their part that is inevitably presented as a sign of the "natural" love and devotion they feel towards their job, towards helping people. Personal

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[42] O günkü gazeteyi açmış, çatışma haberi mi ne var onu gösteriyor. Bunlara mı para vereceğiz diyor. Nereli bu? Dedim hiç sormadım nereli. Biz bunlara para veriyoruz. Yok dedim biz gene barışa hizmet ediyoruz. Ve hizmet etmek durumundayız barışa.

Hayır yani siz de Kürt olabilirsiniz…

Evet. Sordu bana sen Kürt müsün? Hayır bir Kürt'ü savunmam bir Kürt'ün hakkını savunmam icin Kürt olmam mı gerekiyor? Hayır falan dedi olman gerekmiyor da niye boyle yaptın niye böyle düşündüğünü anlamaya çalışıyorum falan. Ona da ayni seyi söyledim yani insanların neyine göre vericen. Yani Kürtlüğe gore.. peki yani soyunda Kürt taşımışsa hizmet alamayacak mi? […] Müdüre demiş ben şaka yaptım senin uzmanın cok alıngan. Şaka yaptım anlamadı demiş. Şaka yaptım demiş hiç anlamadı falan. Ne kadar şaka bilmiyorum hani. Hep diyorum şakalar şeye mi denk gelir hani fahişelere, Kürtlere, Alevilere mi denk gelir hep şakalar.

involvement and volunteerism are explained by social workers as inherent to the nature of social work, regardless of the field. In other words, it is taken for granted that social work cannot be carried out involuntarily or professionally and that one has to be devoted or at least believe in the cause she is working for. Therefore, the interviewees of this study each deliver the story of their personal interest and sensitivity towards helping women. They claim responsibility for achieving the wellbeing of each woman. Ülkü and Filiz illustrate this point as follows:

> This is a professional point of view, a professional knowledge, but it also has to do a lot with your *personal sensibilities*. You make time to meet women on the weekend. It's about how you see the job […] For instance, you take her into the guesthouse and when she is off to meet her husband the fact that she has make up and new style gives joy. You feel that some things do change, that we have pushed her up to this level. This is important. Or when she starts to go down town alone or to the hospital… The first time, she is escorted by an attendant and the second time she goes alone. For us these are achievements. If we don't see these, we would be drained.[43]

> You have to give your heart and soul to work there. If the employee is not willing she cannot fulfill the service, so volunteering is seen essential to work there. Maybe she has been appointed but has gotten used to the service and keeps it up voluntarily. If she is not willing you see that she cannot keep it up, because to have good relationships she needs to be devoted from the heart. It's about professionalism but also a matter of the heart.[44]

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[43] Bu bir mesleki bakış açısı mesleki bir bilgi ama özelde de kendi kişisel duyarlılıklarınızla çok alakalı bir iş. Yoksa işte gidersiniz hafta sonu zaman ayırıyorsunuz onunla görüşüyorsunuz bununla görüşüyorsunuz bu böyle bir şey biraz bakış açısı. […] Hani mesela kadın kadın konuk evine alıyorsunuz eşiyle görüşmeye geldiğinde makyaj yapmış olması giyimi değiştirmiş olması bile aslında hani böyle bir mutluluk. Şey diyorsunuz hani en azından bir şeyler değişebiliyor onu şuraya taşıyabilmişiz bu çok önemli ya da işte tek başına şehre inmeye başlaması hastaneye gitmesi ilkinde kadın konuk evinde bir görevliyle gidiyor ikincisinde tek başına. Bunlar bizim için bir kazanım. Bunları görmezsek zaten biteriz.

[44] Orada çalışmak gerçekten gönül ister ve ilgi ister. Şu anda gönüllü ve ilgili çalışmıyorsa o hizmete şey yapmaz o nedenle gönüllülük esas alınır orada çalışmak için. Ha belki atanmıştır ama kişi o hizmete daha sonradan alışmıştır ve gönüllü götürür. Atanır ama istemiyorsa bir süre bakılır ki bu gerçekten yürütemiyor çünkü sağlıklı ilişkileri yürütmek için orada biraz gönül vermek gerekiyor. Profesyonelliktir ama biraz gönül işidir de yani.

So, as Filiz summarized it, working at women's shelters requires professionalism but also a voluntary input.

SHÇEK does not offer or require social workers to get on-the-job trainings in their field. On a regular basis, social workers are assigned to a position where they do not have any experience in that particular field and SHÇEK does not offer or force them for training. The assumption about the nature of social work is that "one knows how to work with people". Tülay explained that their university education covers all subjects and fields and that one learns the "notion" of doing social work in general. Thus, the professionalization in a particular field is easily achieved with field experience. Mete, the head of another branch in İstanbul, when asked about how a social worker achieves the right approach in his/her field, also stressed the importance of education and experience. However, he thought specific on-the-job trainings are useless since there is a constant flow of social workers between fields due to "need" because there is only a limited number of personnel working in SHÇEK. Therefore, it is presented as impossible to maintain the sustainability of such trainings. The approach perhaps changes with the rank of the social worker, because the "education maniac" Ayşe on the other hand paints a different picture. She expresses that she does not feel proficient in her field of work:

> We don't have the formation for family counseling. We work by
> chance. We're like pirates.[45]

Ayşe feels the lack of being trained in how to provide psychological counseling to women and hence feels incompetent.

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[45] Aile danışmanlığı formasyonumuz yok ki böyle bir eğitimimiz yok. Hasbelkader çalışıyoruz. Korsan çalışıyoruz yani. Korsanız biz.

So, in order to fill this void and overcome the feeling of incompetence, some of the social workers *choose* to take the initiative to either join Human Rights Education for Women (KİHEP) trainings as in the case of Ülkü and Ayşe or they initiate informal co-operations with women's organizations that work in the field of violence against women like Sevgi formed with KADAV. Since 1998, there has been a formal co-operation between the women's organization WWHR – New Ways and SHÇEK. KİHEP trainings were used in the Society Centers of SHÇEK. The education program consists of two sections: first a two-week trainer training and secondly three or four months the education of women. The participants follow sixteen workshops on different topics varying from legal rights to domestic violence and sexuality. Even though it is not a requirement, social workers who work in family counseling offices and shelters may choose to participate in these educations. As it will be discussed in detail in the next section, Ülkü and Ayşe who had received KİHEP education explained it as contributing to their self-transformation and as a life changing experience. So, social workers *are* able to struggle with this structure that prefers a broad notion of professionalism rather than a specific concentration in a field.

Blaming the state for its policies or the lack-there-of appear as another strategy for social workers to struggle with entrapment as well as a way of expressing it. Since social workers constituted the main target of criticism directed to the state and SHÇEK, the strategy of blaming the state works for them to remove the blame off their own shoulders. They express their annoyance by the fact that their institution and themselves are viewed as the only authority responsible for the incompetence of state mechanisms in dealing with gender-based violence by

women's organizations, media, and academia. Ülkü criticizes how women and

children are incorrectly viewed as under the sole responsibility of SHÇEK:

> It seems as if issues concerning women and children are to be resolved
> solely at SHCEK, however citizens who experience violence first turn
> to the police station. So it's not an option for the police not to employ a
> psychologist or a social services specialist. […] Violence towards
> women is a problem that has to be addressed in diverse areas such as
> economics, welfare, psychiatry, and security. It has been reduced to the
> process of getting in the shelter and labeled as an issue for the social
> services.[46]

In other words, Ülkü believes in the failure of the state but complains that it is

mistaken for a failure on the part of social services. On the other hand, Ayşe stresses

that the state by-nature does not ask for or allow constructive criticism. Indeed, she

does not think that social workers including herself are able to take the initiative to

struggle with the state, because there is no such space.

> The state isn't working towards such a goal. They only ask, how many
> people came in this month, which services did they get, what
> happened, figures, etc. Is it working? What could be done better?
> These questions are never asked. I have never ever came across such a
> thing and the state never asks about these.[47]

As Sevgi also noted, even when she occasionally tried to take the matter into her

hands by going against certain rules to help women, the state not only did not support

but hampered (*köstek olmak*) her efforts.

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[46] Hani böyle çocuk ve kadın SHÇEK'e tapulanmış durumda gözüküyor halbuki şiddet mağduru
vatandaşın ilk gittiği yer polis karakolları emniyet yani sonuçta bir emniyetin psikolog ya da sosyal
hizmet uzmanı istihdam etmemesi diye bir şey söz konusu değil. [...] Hani bunlar olmadan herkes bu
hizmeti SHÇEK'in hizmeti görüyor halbuki kadına yönelik şiddet bir ekonomik boyutu var bunun
ülke için de bir kayıp bir sağlık sorunu psikiyatrik bir sorun bunun emniyet boyutu var neden hep
bunun sosyal hizmet boyutuna ve kadın sığınma evine alınma alınmama sürecine indirgenmiş.

[47] Devlet böyle birşeyin peşinde değil. Devlet şunun peşinde mesela şimdi sorar, bu ay kaç kişi geldi,
ne hizmet aldı, ne yaptın, ne oldu ne bitti, rakam, bunu sorar ama işe yarıyor mu bu iş doğru mu ne
yapılmalı nedir fikirleriniz bunlar sorulan şeyler değil. Hiç hiç karşılaşmadığım birşey ve bunu sormaz
devlet.

Nonetheless, the existence or creation or just the mentioning of a space that allows state criticism makes me believe in the potential arena for struggle and hence I position social workers along the lines of volunteerism. The interviews show that social workers acquired a critical eye towards the state. It should be mentioned though that the ability of state bureaucrats to criticize the state alone does not account for volunteerism since bureaucrats in other state institutions often express a strong sense of resentment and blaming towards the state as well. In this case, however, as the previous discussion shows as well, their criticism is formulated on the basis of their love and devotion to their jobs and their belief in the cause on the contrary to the state's pragmatism in its approach to the issue of violence against women.

On the other hand, while social workers blame the state for its policies they mostly refrain from criticizing SHÇEK or themselves. Most of them do not question their co-workers, themselves, or the institution as a whole. One can even sense their desire to defend it. I interpret this attitude of social workers as being inside the boundaries of state bureaucracy. For example, Ayşe reflected the most critical position towards the state and SHÇEK among the interviewees. Most strikingly she expressed several times that after KİHEP trainings she acquired a new point-of-view (*kadın bakış açısı*) towards the women she works with. She explained that she used to view women as "cases" on her desk like every social worker. However, even Ayşe defended her colleagues when asked about the validity of feminists' criticism about the policy that prefers to return women to their families:

> This mentality does not exist. It is perhaps more valid for other employees at the police station rather then SHÇEK. Because I believe that our point of view is a bit different. We at least say thay violence is wrong, it's bad. It's bad and the women should not have to suffer by it. At least we say this.

Anyone who has had an education or not

Even if they have not had received training, I think all my colleagues would agree on this point. I sincerely don't believe that any of my friends would have the kind of attitude that justifes her getting beaten because she has kids…[48]

The final strategy of social workers to break the entrapment they experience in SHÇEK is by responding to feminists. A main recurring trend in social workers' accounts that requires attention is their desire to answer to feminists. Regardless of the addressed question, they attempt to situate themselves in relation to feminists either by opposing them or by forming alliance. I think this attitude is also related to their presumption about my position as the "feminist researcher". I believe our interviews were inevitably affected by social workers' preconceptions about me as well as my assumptions about them. For example, even though I was careful about revealing my political stance before the interviews, most interviewees recognized me at the first instance in our blind dates and told me that I looked like "just as they imagined". Throughout the interviews, they tried to make their case to defend themselves against feminists' accusations, assuming I would judge them as well. At the same time, I was perhaps sensitive and pushy about their lack of feminist consciousness if that was the case.

For most of the interviewees, ideological differentiation from feminists function as a way of dealing with the pressure coming from feminists' criticisms and

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[48] Böyle bir mantık yok. Böyle bir muhabbet bence daha çok SHÇEK çalışanlarından daha çok diğer amirlerde var, işte karakol çalışanlarında var. Çünkü biz bizim bakış açımızın biraz daha farklı olduğunu düşünüyorum sanıyorum arkadaşlarımın. Çünkü bizde en azından şu denir, hani şiddet yanlış birşeydir, kötü birşeydir. Kötüdür ve kadın bunu çekmek zorunda değil. En azından bu.

Eğitimden geçmiş veya geçmemiş

Geçmemiş hani bütün arkadaşlarımın bunu kabul ettiğini düşünüyorum. Aman dayak yese de nolucak canım çocukları var diye baktığını hiç bir arkadaşımın şey yapmıyorum, inanmıyorum, samimi inanmıyorum.

their non-appreciation. Social workers do not consider feminists as their ally in shelter work and the struggle with violence against women. Instead, they stress their professionalism, humanism, objectivity, and "non-political" stance all of which enabling them to address the needs of *all* citizens equally in contrast to the feminists' approach. These traits are presented as linked to their university education and to being a state bureaucrat in general since the premise about the state and the state bureaucrats is having no ideology or political affiliation, no prejudice or discrimination in their attitude towards all citizens. I interpret the social workers' self-imagination of being simple selfless servants of the public by differentiating themselves from feminists as being inside the boundaries of state bureaucracy.

Social workers' idea of "professionalism" goes hand in hand with a "depolitization claim" whereas feminism – which they seek to differentiate themselves from – represents the extremity of what is political. As it has been discussed before, scholars have argued that professionalism in shelter work have depoliticized the domestic violence movement and the shelter itself where the priority became serving as many "clients" as fast as they can (Schechter, 1990; McCarry, 2001; Donolly, Cook, and Wilson, 2004; VanNatta, 2005) and also by "degendering the problem" by resituating the problem away from a patriarchal framework (Berns, 2001). I argue that the claim to the "apolitical" is in fact political. It is a desire in shelter workers to present state policies as less political, even non-political, and non-ideological; because – speaking for the state – the shelter workers claim to be speaking to the needs of the whole society which would require them to be non-political. The following is Filiz's answer to the question about whether or not she defines herself as a feminist:

I'm not a feminist, even though we're labeled with the feminist movement because we attend to the women but I don't have a marginal stand. During the trainings I make it clear that although we mostly talk about violence against women and try to raise consciousness about it, it's not as common but men are also subjected to it. However they won't speak out. For example, 4320 has been enforced in Ankara for the first time for a man. Essentially this is a humanitarian problem.[49]

So, the social workers' objective, non-political, and authoritative position in understanding and finding solutions to the problems of Turkish society is posited to counteract with what the feminist approach signifies. Tülay also criticized feminist organizations such as Purple Roof for their amateurism, idealism, and extreme demands all of which that are not reflected in the practical realm and are unable to reach the women subjected to violence. She defined feminists and their agenda as extreme (*uç*) in an effort to differentiate the state's, SHÇEK's and her position from that.

The entrapment that the interviewees feel as social workers is explained in contrast to the comfort of doing voluntary work in civil society. Ülkü explains:

It would be great to be civil society. […] Here you don't have the luxury; you have to do it. You have to find a solution despite the impossibilities, the personnel shortage. No one expects the civil society to take care of all the women and the children, but you have to.[50]

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[49] Yani bir feministim falan öyle bir şeyim yok ve her ne kadar böyle kadına sahip çıktığınız için feminist akım falan diyorlar ama yok yani benim öyle uçlarda bir şeyim yok. Ve ben şiddet eğitimini verirken şöyle diyorum, yani tamam biz kadına karşı şiddeti ele alıyoruz ve kadına karşı şiddetle bir farkındalık yaratmaya çalışıyoruz fakat erkeğe de uygulanan bir şiddet de var sadece kadın şiddet görmüyor ki. ama nedir daha fazla kadınlar şiddet görüyor. Erkek dile de getirilmiyor bu toplumda şiddete uğrayan erkekler de var. Mesela 4320 ilk defa Ankara'da bir erkek için uygulandı. [...] Temelde insan yani bu insani bir problem.

[50] Sivil toplum olmak süper bir şey olur. […] Burada senin şeyin lüksün yok, sen yapmak zorundasın. Çözümü, çözümsüzlüklerine rağmen olanaksızlıklarına rağmen şu personel kıtlığına rağmen yapmak durumundasın. Yani kimse hani sivil toplumdan bütün kadınlara sahip çıkmasını beklemiyor bütün çocuklara da sahip çıkmasını beklemiyor, ama sen yapmak zorundasın.

Here, the pressure experienced by Ülkü is clearly demonstrated. Similarly, Tülay

also expresses that in this field of work it is easier to be a volunteer. Referring to the

issue of violence against women, she states "if you are the state, it is not an option.

You *must* deal with this" (emphasis added). In this context of pressure and obligation

Ülkü expresses her resentment against feminists' criticisms:

> SHÇEK could be criticized, but one shouldn't overlook the source of
> the problem. [...] SHÇEK has always been on the agenda of civil
> society whereas policies concerning economy, healthcare, and
> education should have been discussed as well.[51]

Ironically, despite the heavy burden on social workers' shoulders as voiced

by them, most of them are not inclined to form substantive collaborations with

women's organizations to ease the burden. They portray a clear-cut separation of

responsibilities where help provided by the civil society is allowed only in terms of

creating pressure groups through media or offering money like the Rotary Club

helped in the construction of a shelter. As Filiz put it "everone should know where to

stand. Civil society cannot interfere with our internal affairs, but it can present its

thoughts and suggestions".[52] It is clearly stated by Filiz as well as Ülkü and Tülay

that civil society's contribution to sheltering women and dealing with the problem of

violence against women should be limited. In order to justify this view, Tülay argued

that women's organizations such as Purple Roof already deny negotiating with the

state since they view the state as an instrument of force and control and as a threat to

their independence. So, social workers mark women's shelters and dealing with

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[51] SHÇEK de eleştirilsin ama bütüne bakmak sorunun kaynağını gözden kaçırmamak gerekiyor. [...] Yıllarca sivil toplum hani hep gündeminde SHÇEK'i tuttu gündeminde ekonomi politikaları olsaydı sağlık politikaları olsaydı eğitim politikaları olsaydı değişmesi gereken SHÇEK'le birlikte diğer hizmetlerin de aynı ölçüde değişseydi ya da hani bu çok gündemde tutulsaydı.

[52] "Herkes nerede duracağını çok iyi bilmeli. Sivil toplum iç işleyişe karışamaz yani ama nedir görüş ve önerilerini sunar."

violence against women as their own territory. The feminist knowledge and experience in Turkey accumulated since 1980s in this area is not made use of in SHÇEK's shelters. I think that the inconsistency lies in the fact that they express entrapment where at the same time they do not consider any help offered by feminist groups. Ülkü for example argues that first of all women's organizations in their city should go through a training. She criticizes them for not being as active as the ones in İstanbul and Ankara.

Conversely, some of the interviewees stress the resemblance between their work and feminists' work. They draw parallels between the volunteer work of women's organizations and theirs in the sense that they are on the same side, fighting for the same cause – i.e. ending violence against women. Furthermore, in an effort to clear their name in response to feminists' criticisms, they accentuate their own volunteerism and devotion as discussed before. This approach towards feminists was not only presented in the interviews, but it was also voiced in one of the Shelters Assembly meetings by a social worker from SHÇEK:

> Of course we should come and work with you, but you should see how our friends work *devotedly* at the shelters. There were days when they were left broke. Please don't ignore them. Let's not oppose each other when we are working for the same cause (Mor Çatı Kadın Sığınağı Vakfı, 2000, p. 240, emphasis added).[53]

This approach is an expression of social workers' entrapment that they seek to overcome. It entails a request addressed to feminists to be considered as their ally not enemies. Ayşe expresses serious resentment towards feminists who view social workers as the sole representatives of the state policies and approach that they harshly

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[53] Tabi ki bizler size gelip çalışmalarının içine girelim, ama sizler de bizim kadın konukevlerinde bu arkadaşlarımızın nasıl *özveriyle* çalıştığını görün. Parasız kaldıkları günler de oldu. Sizler de lütfen onları göz ardı etmeyin. Lütfen birbirimizi karşı karşıya almayalım. Çünkü amacımız aynı.

criticize. At the same time, she also criticizes her colleagues for positioning

themselves along the "barracks" of the state and taking side against feminists. She

explains in detail the necessity of forming an alliance between social workers and

feminists:

> The Shelters Assembly was wonderful. I was very impressed. But the criticisms towards the state were directed to SHÇEK employees. I also had issues with the state, but feminists criticized SHÇEK employees and SHÇEK employees did a mistake by getting defensive. All of a sudden we found ourselves as the embodiments of the state, but actually we were nothing like that. I was furious with both the feminists and my colleagues. They shouldn't have defended themselves. I could also criticize the state together with feminists, because I really don't see myself on the side of the state. It depends on where you see yourself, how you position yourself… I'm a state employee. I get paid by the state. Yet, I'm not the state. I don't have to share its ideology either. I thought this was an attack to SHÇEK, the state and its policies and actions. Perhaps one needs to materialize, because it's easier to deal with actual people rather than the abstract state. They were wrong to attack us and my colleagues were wrong to act brave, like Don Quixote for no reason […] My friends felt under accusation and it's only normal that they would either defend themselves or attack back. They either insisted that they do their job well or they attacked feminists for just talking and not doing anything in the practical field, just like the feminist image in the media: feminists are the troublemakers and social workers are the actual people who make things happen […] I think we should both criticize the state instead of fighting each other. But what happens is the criticisms don't reach its target and at the same time the state reports to the European Union about the numbers and gets the whole credit.[54]

Thus, Ayşe stresses the importance of forming an alliance between social workers

and feminists to criticize the state towards the end of eliminating violence against

women and the Shelters Assembly proves to be a successful medium for it. She

expresses the inefficiency of the two groups who work in the same field turning

against each other.

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[54] The original quote is shown in Appendix C.

Question of Transformation

Brown (1995) asked more than a decade ago: is the state a "problematic instrument or arena of *feminist* political change" (p. 189) since it is masculinist? Demonstrating how social workers deal with the strong feeling of entrapment in SHÇEK by establishing a subject position for themselves on the margins of state bureaucracy and civic volunteerism, I question the potential of a new space for a "feminist transformation" in their approach to sheltering women. By feminist transformation, I refer to social workers' adoption of feminist agenda and ethics in order to challenge SHÇEK's approach to violence against women that is degendering and depoliticizing the issue, and discriminating and disempowering for women, as it has been discussed in the previous chapter. I believe the adoption of feminist agenda and vocabulary, stress on volunteerism, personal involvement, acquiring a *kadın bakış açısı,* emotions of love and devotion, and state criticism in the accounts of social workers can be interpreted as pointing to such a transformation.

The source of this transformation is the formal and informal engagements between women's organizations and social workers. The most common and extensive engagements as such are the KİHEP trainings and the Shelters Assemblies, both bringing together women from different backgrounds who work in the same field with women subjected to violence. These platforms provide a space for an exchange of ideas and experiences between feminists and social workers. Even though these meetings have caused divisions and conflicts between groups, as Ayşe explained earlier; it is at the same time a means for creating mutual awareness and for forming a network and communication between the actors working in the field of violence against women.

However, I argue that this does not lead to an institutional transformation even though it creates important cracks. I believe a feminist transformation is only possible with an exchange between SHÇEK and women's organizations and social workers have the potential to facilitate this exchange, but formal co-operations between institutions are required for an established, institutional, and persistent relationship. Even though institutional collaborations between SHÇEK and women's organizations exist on paper, in practice all relationships are formed by the individuals themselves. Since relationships are built incidentally with the efforts of social workers, the dialogue between SHÇEK and feminists remain local, limited with certain individuals and hence it does not lead to permanent changes in the structure and approach of SHÇEK as an institution.

First of all, the fact that two social workers defined themselves as feminists was the simplest sign of a crack in SHÇEK's institutional approach to gender-based violence. Among the interviewees, Ülkü and Ayşe were the only ones who identified themselves as feminists. They were also the only social workers who received KİHEP trainings.

> If there are any feminist women in SHÇEK, it's a result of KİHEP. Otherwise state officials do not become socialists or feminists over night. It would be wrong to generalize, but there is more or less a common language for SHÇEK employees, which is not feminist. […] Women used to be cases for me, as a part of my job that I tried to finish early. Now, women have an identity, KİHEP tremendously changed my approach towards this. […] Approaching women as cases includes rescuing, the woman in need comes to me and I help her. I got this perspective from KİHEP and I believe a majority of my friends who received the KİHEP training would notice the same transformation in themselves.[55]

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[55] Yani eğer SHÇEK'te kadın feminist varsa bu KİHEP sayesindedir yani devlet memurları biz durduğumuz yerde böyle aman da ben sosyalist olacağım, feminist olacağım demeyiz yani. Üç aşağı beş yukarı bir dil var, genelleştirmek doğru değil ama hani feminist düşünceyle tanışmaları KİHEP'tir SHÇEK çalışanlarının büyük oranda KİHEP'tir. […] Mesela kadınlar benim için hep dosyaydı daha

Of course I call myself a feminist. You can't do this job without acquiring a women's point-of-view. Otherwise, you would see women as applicants and try to get your interviews done for the day, but it requires something more than that. I don't do my job only at the level of interviews. If necessary you also have to work for these women's rights or to keep this issue on the political agenda outside the realm of SHÇEK. You have to report to the police departments about mistreatment at the stations or prepare reports for the head office about the socio-demographic characteristics of women who apply to our offices. All in all, you do it because you're concerned with the issue.[56]

Sevgi, on the other hand, denied the title of feminism for herself, but her views signaled to a similar crack in SHÇEK's approach. Her discord inside SHÇEK resulted from the good relationships she established with a feminist organization, KADAV. Depending on the case, Sevgi worked together with feminists and psychologists from KADAV for the best interests of the women in the shelter. She also argued for the social workers acquiring *kadın bakış açısı* as a basic requirement for working in the shelter with women who were subjected to violence. Ülkü, Ayşe, and Sevgi stress the importance of forming non-hierarchical relationships with women and being politically engaged with the aim of promoting women's rights whereas for the rest of the interviewees, feminism holds negative implications and signifies a problematic stance or worldview which is inevitably reflected on the relationship they form with women – lacking a *kadın bakış açısı*. So, a gap appears in

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önce. Kadın diye bir şey yoktu yani. Herhangi bir işti, gelir. Hani bir an önce işimi yaparım konuşuruz ederiz. Benim için dosyaydı vakaaydı yani, ama şimdi kadın kadın yani benim için. KİHEP benim o fikrimi cok değiştirdi. […] Bu vaka kurtarmayı içeriyor. Bu vaka bana muhtaç geldi ve ben işte ona yardım ettim. KİHEP'te ben bu bakış açısını kazandım. Hani bir ara arkadaşlarımla bence KİHEP alanların büyük çoğunluğu aynı değişimi yaşamıştır kendi içinde.

[56] Kendime feminist yani tabi ki diyorum. Yani şöyle bir şey bu iş zaten kadın bakış açısına sahip olmadan yapılamaz. Yoksa müracaatçınızı müracaatçı diye görürsünüz görüşmenizi yapar yollarsınız hani böyle çok şey halbuki bu onun dışında bir şey gerektiriyor. Ben burada sadece görüşme boyutunda bu işi yapmıyorum. Dışarıda da bu kadınların haklarının korunması ya da bunun gündeme getirilmesi konusunda politikayı etkilemem gerekiyorsa oturup mesela işte emniyete karakollarınız bunu bunu yapıyor deyip biraz daha dikkatli rapor yazıyorsun genel müdürlüğe bilgi veriyorsun. İki yıldan bu yana bize gelen kadınların sosyo-demografik özelliklerini çıkartan yani sonuçta bu biraz da konuyla ilgili olmanızdan kaynaklı bir şey.

how social workers form relationships with women subjected to violence and how they respond to the issues that come up along the way.

Aside from identifying oneself as a feminist, I believe cracks emerge in SHÇEK's institutional structure in cases where the social worker has the sense of volunteerism intertwined with emotions such as love and devotion, gets personally involved in each women's case, criticizes and challenges her circumstances, and acquires a *kadın bakış açısı*. However, social workers themselves do not interpret their own personal transformations in approaching women and violence as holding hope for the future transformation of the social services scene in Turkey concerning the condition of women. Ayşe demonstrates her despair as follows:

> This point-of-view only allows you to form good relations with the woman; it doesn't save lives. What's important is the service provided; what's institutional is important such as forms, a place to stay, and protection. These are actual instruments that I can offer women in order to solve their problems: if I have the form at hand, if the court issues the protetion order fast, if the police keeps track, if they take full responsibility for enforcing the protection order, if I can offer women a safe alternative, if the shelter can offer a positive living environment such as privacy and suitable conditions for children instead of just gathering everyone under one roof and providing food like a dorm... First you have to really offer a decent service for dialogue to matter. Without that, how you form a relationship with the woman is of temporary importance and it does not have priority for her. Perhaps we're too sensitive, but she has more pressing issues to deal with rather than appreciating the positive attitude of the social worker. She has to figure out where she's going to stay that night, what's going to happen the day after, how her life is going to change, which school the children will go, how she's going to explain to them, will she ever be able to go back, who she can talk to, who she can trust from her past.[57]

Similar to Ayşe, other social workers also express disbelief in the betterment of the conditions of doing social work in Turkey. According to Tülay, one has to be a "miracle worker" to make a change in women's lives. Sevgi had to quit her job when

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[57] The original quote is shown in Appendix D.

she got tired of struggling with her superiors alone. Ülkü and Filiz explained the exhausting and discouraging aspect of being a social worker at SHÇEK.

In short, I argue for institutional collaborations between SHÇEK and women's organizations in the context of sheltering women in order for a permanent and structural transformation to take place at the institutional level. This study attempts to show the possibility of a transformation in how social workers in SHÇEK approach the issue of sheltering women and hence the possibility of a transformation inside SHÇEK. I suggest that feminists should consider this study, because SHÇEK is well and widely organized in Turkey in the realm of violence against women and in providing shelters that one cannot overlook. I think that feminists should prioritize communication and sharing every experience in the field instead of establishing an aggressive and antagonistic relationship with social workers. The current situation shows that some social workers are going through a feminist transformation due to personal relationships formed between them and the feminists. The dialogue between the social workers and the feminists makes a remarkable difference in social workers' approach to the issue of violence against women and the nature of their relationship with the women they work with, as in the case of Ayşe, Sevgi, and Ülkü. KİHEP trainings have the potential to play a crucial role in creating this difference or in other words this break with SHÇEK's approach and position.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As it has been explained earlier, SHÇEK is interpreted as a notorious institution,

judged by the media for its inability to propose solutions for the problem of violence

against women as well as other problems of the society and criticized by women's

organizations for its lack of feminist approach and principles in working with women

subjected to violence. Yet, SHÇEK is the main institution responsible for shelter

provision and it has the resources and the organization for this. Therefore, women's

organizations, since they mostly lack the means to establish shelters themselves, have

to depend largely on SHÇEK although they harshly criticize the state's approach to

women, which presents itself as a dilemma.

The second dilemma is about the implementation of state policies. In the

current atmosphere in Turkey, the elimination of gender inequality and violence

against women has become the "state policy" as a result of a process consisting of

series of legal reforms and institutionalization attempts in state structures since the

1990s. Women's shelters, being one of the most effective aid mechanisms for

violence, were an inseparable part of this process from the beginning. However, the

implementation of policies were not prioritized equally which appeared as an

obstacle in the way of achieving a societal transformation promised by the new

reforms. I argued in the thesis that the state's approach to policies concerning women

was cosmetic and carried conservative and patriarchal traits that I traced through the

parliament discussions at the time of important legal reforms or the government

statements. Parallel to this, I discussed that the politics of sheltering women in

SHÇEK at the level of discourse reflects the state's approach that depoliticizes and

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degenders the problem of violence against women by hiding its prevalence and its male aspect. I showed that the framing of shelters as "guesthouses" is an indicator of this.

In the face of both of these predicaments, this study aimed to scrutinize the subjectivities of social workers doing shelter work inside SHÇEK. It showed that social workers, trapped in the middle of this tension between SHÇEK and the women's organizations, have the potential to take on an important role as negotiators between two camps. At the same time, as state policy implementers, they have the power to mend the breach between policy and implementation and hence build bridges between the law and life, between the state and women. By enquiring through in-depth qualitative interviews about how social workers relate to the state, the feminists, and especially the women they work with, I questioned if a space can open up for an institutional transformation in SHÇEK. I asked if social workers could be a vehicle for feminist transformation in state mechanisms for women, i.e. if they could be mediators or build bridges between the state, the feminists, and women?

My research suggests that the social workers who shelter women experience a severe multi-sided entrapment in their jobs due to institutional restrictions and societal pressures and expectations, but they are still dedicated to helping women. I argued that they, by redefining obligation and volunteerism to cope with entrapment in their everyday experience working with women subjected to violence, challenge both the limits of state bureaucracy and civic volunteerism and open up a space transgressing their boundaries. They also exceed the boundaries of their job description when they identify with women and feel a sense of solidarity towards them with an adoption of a feminist agenda and vocabulary, but at the same time

they maintain certain patriarchal and conservative values in line with SHÇEK's institutional approach. Due to social workers' agency in the institution, it is not possible to talk about a holistic policy of sheltering women in SHÇEK. So in this study, through the layered and complex subjectivities that I encountered, I called into question the limits of social workers' potential to affect the institutional approach towards shelter provision by acting as a medium for the diffusion of feminism in state mechanisms for women. The data collected by interviews showed that there is a space for transformation that the social workers are able to make use of. Yet, they are unable to generate institutional transformations with their limited resources in their entrapped positions. Their subjectivities may set off significant cracks in SHÇEK's institutional discourse.

On the other hand, another important area for research would be the shelters run by local governments.[58] As it has been stated earlier, local governments have an exponentially growing number of shelters in Turkey when compared to SHÇEK, especially after the recent Municipality Law when local governments in populated districts were advised to open up shelters. I believe, with this new law, local governments started to make use of shelter provision as an instrument to collect votes. Furthermore, the social workers interviewed in this study had speculated on the staff's lack of training about social service provision in municipalities. Therefore, I predict that the election anxieties together with the lack of professionalization of the staff would have unique consequences on the politics of sheltering women in municipalities. To exemplify, it was on the news very recently that Antalya Municipality called the homes of women who left the shelter to inquire about their

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[58] Berna Ekal, for her dissertation thesis, is currently conducting an ethnographic research on shelters established by local governments in Turkey [personal conversation].

satisfaction about the service ("Mor Sopa" Hizmeti, 2009). This approach resembles the corporate attitude interested in "customer satisfaction" at the cost of sacrificing women's confidentiality. So, I believe a comparative study on the staff working in SHÇEK and in local governments would be fruitful. Of course, further studies should widen the scope of my study by adding an ethnography of the SHÇEK shelters. This topic cannot be covered fully without the stories of the women who stay in shelters. Moreover, as it was mentioned before, there is an urgent need to multiply the qualitative researches on gender-based violence in order to better grasp and attempt to generate policies to struggle with it.

To conclude, I should state that the meaning of this study is derived from the special position of social workers. I believe social workers carry the potential to be the "buffer zone" between the state, feminists, and women. They may be highly influential in establishing a culture that prioritizes women's liberation and empowerment as well as in the implementation of state policies to make a change in women's lives. They are convenient vehicles for the diffusion of feminist ethics and politics into state institutions. Women's organizations should look at SHÇEK and the social workers beyond the common stigmatization and search for opportunities of collaboration. One cannot overlook the fact that SHÇEK is a well established and widely organized institution in Turkey in the realm of violence against women and in providing shelters. Plus, the current situation shows that some social workers are going through a feminist transformation due to personal relationships formed between them and the feminists and it makes a remarkable difference in their approach to the issue of violence against women and the nature of their relationship with the women they work with. Such exchanges prove to have a crucial role in making a difference or in other words a break with SHÇEK's and hence the state's

problematic approach and position towards the struggle against gender-based

violence. However, these need to be formal, established, and institutional exchanges

in order to result in a permanent transformation that would reflect on life in Turkey.
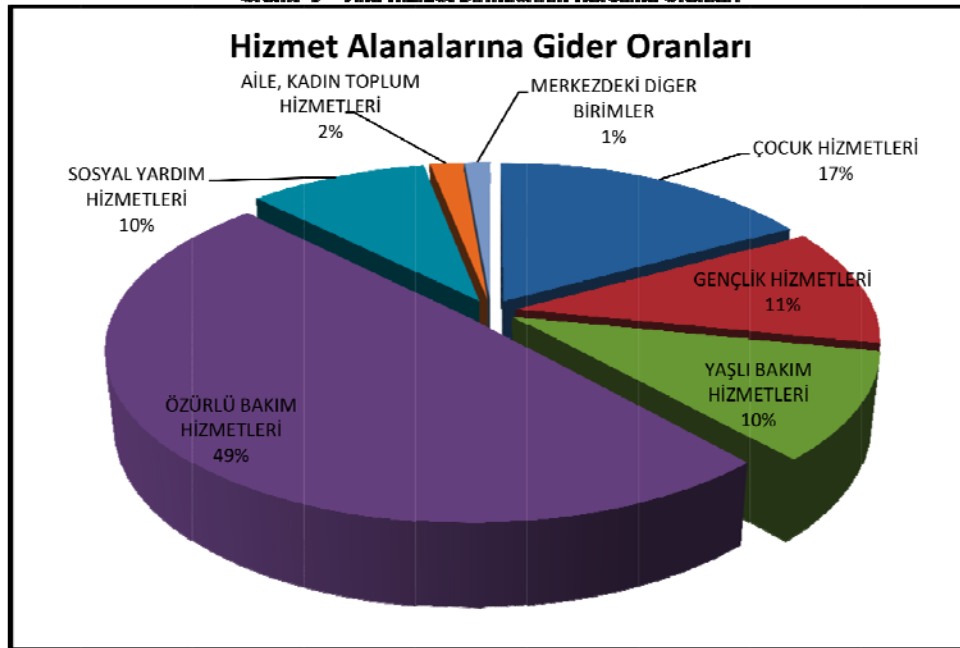
APPENDICES

Table 1
2008 SHÇEK's Annual Expenses

Tablo -10- 2008 Mali Yılı Kurumsal Kod Bazında Ödenek ve Harcama Tutarları

KURUMSAL KOD	BİRİMLER	Kurum Başlangıç Ödeneği	YIL SONU HARCAMA
07.93.00.04	DESTEK HİZMETLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	4.587.500,00 TL	4.248.262,76 TL
07.93.00.05	İNSAN KAYNAKLARI BAŞKANLIĞI	1.342.000,00 TL	1.252.310,26 TL
07.93.00.06	SOSYAL HİZMETLER EĞİTİM MERKEZİ BAŞKANLIĞI	732.000,00 TL	671.724,10 TL
07.93.00.11	YAPI İŞLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	2.296.000,00 TL	1.844.129,72 TL
07.93.00.20	TEFTİŞ KURULU BAŞKANLIĞI	3.069.500,00 TL	2.878.075,13 TL
07.93.00.23	STRATEJİ GELİŞTİRME DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	2.005.000,00 TL	1.794.732,97 TL
07.93.00.24	HUKUK MÜŞAVİRLİĞİ	553.500,00 TL	563.993,80 TL
07.93.00.30	ÇOCUK HİZMETLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	171.154.500,00 TL	181.913.961,24 TL
07.93.00.31	YAŞLI BAKIM HİZMETLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	95.974.000,00 TL	109.509.021,40 TL
07.93.00.32	ÖZÜRLÜ BAKIM HİZMETLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	334.710.500,00 TL	528.855.512,91 TL
07.93.00.33	SOSYAL YARDIM HİZMETLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	93.595.500,00 TL	100.952.171,77 TL
07.93.00.34	GENÇLİK HİZMETLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	124.271.500,00 TL	120.775.425,29 TL
07.93.00.35	AİLE KADIN VE TOPLUM HİZMETLERİ DAİRESİ BAŞKANLIĞI	17.334.000,00 TL	18.647.366,87 TL

Graph 1
The Percentages of SHÇEK's Expenses

Grafik -9 – Ana Hizmet Birimlerinin Harcama Oranları

Hizmet Alanalarına Gider Oranları

AİLE, KADIN TOPLUM HİZMETLERİ 2%
MERKEZDEKİ DİGER BİRİMLER 1%
ÇOCUK HİZMETLERİ 17%
SOSYAL YARDIM HİZMETLERİ 10%
GENÇLİK HİZMETLERİ 11%
YAŞLI BAKIM HİZMETLERİ 10%
ÖZÜRLÜ BAKIM HİZMETLERİ 49%

Source: SHÇEK 2008 Yılı Faaliyet Raporu retrieved from
http://www.shcek.gov.tr/Yayinlar/FaaliyetRaporlari/2008.FAALIYET.RAPORU.pdf

APPENDIX B

"FOR A WORLD WITHOUT SHELTERS"

EXCERPT FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH AYŞE

Çok güzeldi yani kurultay çok etkilendim ben ondan. Bir de devlet memuruyu m ya hani, orada devlete bir eleştiri geldi, ama SHÇEK çalışanlarına yöneltildi. Ben anlamadim orada onu sey diyorum. Benim de devletle sorunum var yani bağımsız feministler, daha dogrusu örgütlü feministler SHÇEK çalışanlarına yöneltti o eleştiriyi. SHÇEK çalışanları da hata yapip o elestiriyi uzerlerine aldilar. Yani devletin vucut bulmus halleri olduk orda. Aslinda hic de oyle degildik. Ben onlara da kizdim, kendi arkadaslarima da kizdim. Hani niye siz o elestiriyi uzerinize aliyosunuz ki? Ben de onlarla birlikte elestirebilirdim yani. Hakkaten kendimi devlet tarafinda gormuyorum hani. Kendimi nerde gordugumle ilgili. Nerde konumlandırdığım… Ben devletin calisaniyim, maaşımı devletten aliyorum. Ben devlet degilim. Onun zihniyetini tasimak zorunda hiç değilim. Ama işte ben oyle değerlendirdim olayları SHÇEK'e cok büyük bir yüklenme oldu aslinda devlete, devletin politikalarına, uygulamalarına. Ama insan somutlaştırmak istiyor heralde. Hani devletle uğraşmaktansa hani vücut bulmuş kişilerle uğraşmak daha kolay. Işte onlar oyle bir hata yaptı bizimkiler de o eleştirilere göğüs gerdiler, gereksiz don kişotluk yaptılar. […] Arkadaşlarım daha cok kendilerini suçlanmış hissettiler. Suçlanan savunmaya gecer. Kendini suçlanmış hisseden savunur. Ya savunur ya karsi saldiriya geçer. Onlar da öyle yaptılar. Ya savundular, biz iyi yapıyoruz ya da karşı saldırıya geçtiler, "onlar da sadece konuşuyor hiçbir iş yapmıyor" mantığı vardı. Sadece car car bar bar konusuyorlar. Iste medyada falan feminist kadinlar nasil algılanıyor. Işte sorun çıkartan arıza, vıdı vıdı ediyorlar. Ama iş var mı iş yapmıyorlar. Işi yapan biziz gibi. […] Evet o eleştiriyi ben de devlete getirmeliyim onlar da devlete getirmeli. Ama noluyor birbirimize getirip birbirimizi yiyoruz yani. Asıl muhattabına gitmiyor. Mektuplar dağılmıyor muhattabin haberi yok. Onlar orda otursun kendini yesin. O kendini Avrupa Birligi'ne rapor veriyor filan. Şu kadar aile danisma merkezim var diyor falan filan. Devlet kendini cok guzel anlatiyor. Sen aşağıda istediğin kadar uğraş. Biz halbuki birbirimizle uğraşıyoruz yani, asıl uğraşmamız gereken kişiyle uğraşmıyoruz da.

EXCERPT FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH AYŞE

Bu bakış açısı sadece karşındaki insanla daha iyi samimi bir ilişki kurmanı sağlayabilir yoksa bu çok hayat kurtaran aman da çok önemli birşey değil işe yaramıyor çünkü önemli olan derneğin sunduğu hizmettir, kurumsallaşmış şeyler önemlidir. Form gibi, kurum gibi kalacak yer gibi, işte koruma gibi… Benim bir kadına gerçek anlamda ihtiyaçlarını sorunlarını çözmesine yardımcı olabilecek araçlar bunlardır. Benim elimde form olursa, mahkemenin koruma emri çok hızlı çıkarsa, polis bunu gerçekten takip ederse, etmesi gerektiği halde hani özellike bir memura uyarı söylemesi olmadan gerekmeden bütün bir iş olarak yaparsa, koruma emrini kendine bir görev vasfederse, ben ona bir alternatif olarak ona gerçekten şiddetten uzak bir yaşam sunacak bir yerim olursa, sığınakta insanın olumlu uygun bir yaşam sunuyorsa, özel bir oda, çocukları ekonomize edebiliyorsa, böyle ne biliyim herkesi koğuş gibi bir sürü problemi sıkıntısı olan insanı birbirini hadi bakalım giyinin yiyin burda kafada bir çatı akşam da yemek var demek dert değil yani. Gerçekten insanoğluna yaraşır birşey sunabiliyorsa ondan sonradır hani muhabbet çok işe yarar hani onla kurduğun ilişkide tavrın önemlidir. Tek başına insani bir tavırla ilişki kurmak o anlık birşey. O da onu çok ilgilendirmiyor aslında biz belki çok hassasız çünkü onun o an öncelikli sorunu o değil. Aman da o memur bana nasıl yaklaştı, ah bu memur da insaniymiş hoşmuş, bu çok önemli değil o an onun için temel problemleri var, bu akşam nerede kalacak, yarın ne yapacak, bunlar bile daha basit. Alıştığı bütün hayatı bırakmış, çocuklar hangi okula gidicek bunu onlara nasıl açıklayıcam geri dönebilecek miyim, tanıdığım sevdiğim herkes geride kime anlatıyım, kime güvenebilirim o bunlarla uğraşıyor.

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