

Islamist Civil Society Associations: The Case of the Rainbow Istanbul Women's
Platform

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Kenan ayır

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ABSTRACT

Islamist Civil Society Associations: The Case of the Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform

Kenan ayır

This thesis analyzes the self-definition of Turkish Islamist women who are organized around the Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform which consists of more than forty Islamist women's civil associations. The thesis is based on a survey of the members, interviews, participant observation in panels of the Platform, the pamphlets of the Platform and media material. It asserts that the Islamist women of the nineties differ from the critical actors of the eighties with their discourse focused on self-definition in relation to their public and private roles, professional rights and on participation. The contemporary Islamist women express their demands to take place in the public sphere on an equal basis with other social actors. However they are not for a total equality which according to them results in a denial of the 'feminine nature' of women. Instead, they stress difference of women as mothers and propose to rearrange working hours and spaces for women. Similarly the private sphere must be reorganized to make women more active in their homeplaces. In the last analysis they feel the tension in combining their public and private roles or their professional aspirations and motherhood roles.

KISA ÖZET

İslamcı Sivil Toplum Örgütleri: Gökkuşuğu İstanbul Kadın Platformu Örneği

Kenan Çayır

Bu tezde kırktan fazla İslamcı sivil kadın örgütünü temsil eden Gökkuşuğu İstanbul Kadın Platformu çerçevesinde İslamcı kadınların doksanlı yıllardaki söylemi analiz edilmektedir. Veri toplama aşamasında üyelerin profiline anlaşılmaması için bir anket uygulanmış, üyelerle mülakatlar yapılmış, Platform'un düzenlediği panellerde gözlemler yapılmış, Platformun hazırladığı kitapçıklardan ve medyadaki haberlerden yararlanılmıştır. Tezde doksanlı yılların İslamcı kadınlarının özel ve kamusal alandaki rolleri çerçevesinde kendi kimliklerini tanımlama ve katılım talepleri üzerine yoğunlaşan söylemleriyle seksenli yılların politik İslamcı aktörlerinden farklılaştığı ileri sürülmektedir. Günümüz İslamcı kadınları diğer aktörlerle eşit düzlemde kamusal alanda yer almak istemektedirler. Bununla beraber kadının 'kadınsı tabiatının' reddi anlamına geldiğini iddia ettikleri cinsler arası tam eşitlikten yana da değildirler. Kadının anne olarak farklılığını vurgulamakta, ve bu farklılığıyla kamusal alanda bulunabilmesi için kamusal alanın ve çalışma saatlerinin yeniden düzenlenmesini önermektedirler. Aynı şekilde kadını daha aktif hale getirmek için ev içi alanın da düzenlenmesi gerekmektedir. Kamusal ve özel alandaki rollerine kaynaştırmaya çalışan kadınlar bunun gerilimini yaşamaktadırlar.

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INTRODUCTION

The veiled Islamist women appeared on the public agenda in the 1980's in Turkey as the actors demanding to study at the universities with an accompanying political/ideological discourse. In the nineties with their newly acquired professional occupations (as doctors, lawyers etc.) they express their desire to take their place in social life. They organize themselves around new associations, enterprising groups and platforms to promote their goals. Associated with these developments, the critical discourse of the previous decade has been replaced by a reflexive one concentrating on the issues of self-definition and the role of women in the Islamist movement and in public and private spheres of life.

In this research, I will elaborate on the formation and nature of the Islamist women's identity and on the self-definitions of the women Islamists relating their public and private roles on the basis of the Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform which consists of more than forty Islamist women's associations, enterprising groups and foundations. I will try to account for its forms of organizations and scenarios of conflict with other actors, the state and civil society. Specifically I will search for the answers to the questions of 'What sort of language, public and private, do Islamist women propose to speak? What public and private identities do they embrace as alternatives to the previous social definitions of women? What do they propose to redescribe the daily practices? How do they reconstruct their identity, social experience and reality itself? And How do they 'get in on the action'??'

So far Islamist movements have been treated by many social scientists as a political strategy oriented towards the state, in order to transform it in to a political device implementing Islamic law. This type of an approach considered Islamist (and also other social) movements as a result of an economic and political disorder. It points out that rapid urbanization, economic crisis and political instability in Muslim countries provided the stage for the emergence of contemporary Islamist movements.

For these social scientists the position of women is “ secondary or at best instrumental in relation to strategies of Islamists to seize political power.” (Göle; forthcoming). Hence they treat the question of women in Göle’s terms “ as epiphenomenon of Islamism or at best as an annex issue of human rights.”

This situation is also valid for the Turkish context that in almost all of the narratives -journalistic, academic etc.- Islamist women are presented as passive and submissive agents in the Islamist movements(Saktanber 1994;103).In many texts Muslim women are often pitied as the victims of the male-dominated Islamic religion. The ultimate symbol of their oppression and their acceptance of inferiority is the veil.

However the new veiling is almost totally different from traditional veiling, *basörtüsü*, which symbolizes an image of women as uneducated, passive and domesticated. Whereas the new veiling or *türban* refers to the young, urban and educated Islamist girls. While the former is pre-modern rather than being anti-modern,

the latter represents active and visible agents in a movement that formulates an alternative model to that of western modernity.

The new veiling is also the instrument with which Islam came on the public agenda in Turkey in the eighties. In these years the demand of the Islamist girls to attend at the universities challenged two conflicting processes. On the one hand it was a divergence from traditional Islamic precepts that defined women in domestic space. On the other hand it was a challenge to the secular and homogeneous public sphere created by the Republican modernists.

Since the eighties there has been a hot debate on the role and position of women among Turkish Islamists and secularists. It is obvious that contemporary discourse on women has its roots in earlier discourses about modernism during the foundation of the Republic. The Republican elite sought to modernize the country through Westernization. In this process the emancipation of women has been conceived as an integral part of the modernization. According to the Republican elite the modern world was a 'sexually integrated' world and if Turkey was to reach the level of civilization, she was to abandon denying one part of the society. Along with these precepts, the Kemalist elite introduced a series of reforms destroying links back to the old traditional Ottoman society. These reforms were an attempt to modernize and secularize the life world around a homogeneous public sphere. This public sphere was conditioned by the visibility of modern women profiles whom were presented as unveiled, educated and professionalized, and throughout the Republican history this image of modern women has been promoted in many instances.

So after seventy years of secularism, the appearance of the Islamist girls at the university campuses created a social tension between secularist and Islamist social actors and generated hot debates on the concepts of Islamism, secularism, democracy and modernism.

The voices and conduct of the women Islamists in the eighties were subsumed in radical ideological discourse which dominated the Islamist movements in Turkey. Their identities were shaped within the framework of this radical discourse in reaction to the 'other' or within the ascendancy of the male Islamist actors. However despite their rhetoric of domesticity and conservatism, Islamist movements provided women with a vehicle to become visible in the public sphere and build social networks outside the home (Arat 1990;21). In fact, by receiving a secular education and as a result acquiring a professional occupation and by being activists in the Islamist movements they skillfully used the channels or opportunity space opened up both by Kemalism and Islamism (Göle 1992;137-40). Therefore becoming visible in the modern contexts, independent of the actors' intents, has brought about the transformation of Islamic traditional prohibitions on women and of gender relations in the public and private sphere.

In the nineties the political discourse of the eighties is replaced by a self-reflexive one. The Islamist women have begun to express their aspirations to take their place in the public sphere. In this decade the complaints of the eighties that 'I could not study at university with my Islamic outlook' turned into demands that 'I want to work as a lawyer'. In other words the actors are preoccupied with their professional rights more than political rights. Paralleling with that the tactics of the last decade has

changed from sit-ins and demonstrations to meeting, organizing and participating panels and conferences in order to affect (thus reflect) societal norms. Islamist women in the present decade is mobilized by professional social movement organizations (women's associations, enterprising groups, platforms etc.) which carefully calculate and steer collective action to gain media coverage and public sympathy for movement goals. The women Islamists with this new mobilization, are preoccupied with their self-definition to sustain a coherent belief and action system in a modern urban context.

Not all women of course mobilize themselves. The new actors of Islamism are those who have experienced a high level of 'cognitive mobilization'.¹ They are educated, skilled and urban based. Therefore classical narrations of passive Muslim women do not account for their activities. Their activities contain both a demand and a challenge. They struggle not only for equal rights but also for the right to be different. They stress the feminine nature and motherhood role of women but also seek for an equal opportunity. In other words their movement combines equality of opportunity and recognition of the biocultural specificity of women. The importance of their movement lies in the fact that although the conflict was provoked by a particular condition (Islamist girls demands to receive education), it simultaneously brings to the fore the problems that concern the entire system's logic and dilemmas. Women Islamists from their specific condition address the whole society. Being a Muslim woman in present Turkish society has ceased to be solely related to faith or to headscarves and has increasingly began to be defined in cultural terms. Women are

¹ I am borrowing the term 'cognitive mobilization' from Inglehardt (1990). It refers to a process of acquiring a high level of education, political information and political interest.

Islamists not only because they cover their heads, but involve a life style, daily practices and social experiences. They exemplify other ways of doing things. Their movement carries an excluded and marginalized group to the polity with an accompanying process of identity construction.

In the present research I will elaborate on this process of self-definition with the questions I mentioned above. I approach my research questions with Göle's perspective that to explain Islamist movements as a result of an economic and political disorder shadows the importance of social relations-between Islamists and other actors- and cultural processes-or the process of meaning construction- that actually underlie the contemporary Islamism (Göle forthcoming). Therefore I posit that women's activities in structuring an Islamist woman's identity requires us to rethink our understanding of woman agency, rather than trying to fit their actions within the constraining categories of traditional/modern, victim/actor or passive/powerful.

I argue that the Islamist women's movement display strong parallelisms with new contemporary movements such as environmental, nuclear, ethnic and second wave feminist movements. Contrasting with the qualities of the old social movements which engaged in a confrontation with the state in order to realize their 'great ideals', the new movements form themselves in to social networks where through negotiations among various groups a collective identity is structured (Melucci 1994;117). As these new social movements represent the return of the repressed-nature, ethnicity, woman-, the Islamist women's movement symbolizes the coming of an excluded category. Therefore

the similarities and contrasts with the western (especially feminist) movements can provide us some clues for the understanding of the contemporary Islamist women's movement. My first chapter will discuss the nature and formation of these contemporary western movements.

In the second chapter I will focus on the trajectory of Turkish modernity which actually is the historical and cultural basis of the women's issue. Touraine sees the cultural field, the historicity of a society, as the main stake in the conflicts of the movements, and since any identity construction is not outside the boundary of the cultural context, Turkish modernization history will help us to elucidate the contemporary discourses on women. Then I will look at the role and position of women in the Islamist discourse in general, and in the Turkish context in particular. Lastly in the third chapter I will present my findings.

My findings is based on a survey that I conducted to gather some basic information about the platform members (Questionnaire, appendix 1). I collected the news and writings about the Platform in the press. Moreover I collected the documents and the pamphlets of the Platform. I participated the panels organized by the Project Production Center, one of the members of the Platform. Lastly I interviewed the (former) vice-President of the Platform, three lawyer members of the Women Lawyers Enterprising Group (Kadin Hukukcular Girisim Grubu), the vice-President of the Support to Working Women Group (Calisan Kadina Destek Grubu) and the President of the Women Health Personnel Solidarity Group (Hanim Saglikcilar Dayanisma Gurubu).

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The Collective Behavior Theories

In the analysis of social movements classical sociology has spoken on the two extreme poles. Collective action has either been treated as an effect of structural crisis or as an expression of shared beliefs. While the first one disregarded the dimension of conflict within collective behavior and reduced it to marginality, the second could not explain the passage from a given social condition to collective action. (Melucci, 1985; 790-1). The classical collective behavior theory like any other subfield of sociology assumes a general image of society which is highly affected by the modernization theory. In this model individual action was conceived both naturalistic and as an historical creation of modernity. Authentic social action necessarily meant a facing away from all types of traditional action. Agency and social action was embedded in the historical process in which man freed himself from the constraints of traditional bonds (religion, kinship etc.). Based on this 'revolutionary idiom of action', the classical collective behavior theory explained any action outside the boundaries of this process by a phenomenon external to the modern actor. (Somers and Gibson, 1994; 49-50).

Among the prominent names of the collective behavior theorists Smelser treats collective behavior as irrational and exceptional which emerged as a response to

structural changes brought about by the process of modernization (1962). This sort of analysis has some implications. First it treats social movements as marginal and the poor, uprooted people as the social basis of them. Secondly, it takes social movements as a transitory phenomenon which will weaken when the process of modernization provide benefits of progress to all. (Offe, 1985;839-40). Hence classical sociology of social movements asserts that the real dynamic of change lies not in society but in history. Depicting a society progressing according to the predetermined rules of history, therefore assuming some developmentalist (historisist) premises, it postulates stages for social movements or other forms of collective action (Tilly 1985;737) and characterizes social movements merely as epiphenomena of ongoing structural changes. In other words social movements in this paradigm 'appear like a fever' in times of economic and social crisis or a breakdown.(Sztompka 1994;296). What is presumed in this type of an explanation is that it is the historical necessity not social movements that cause social change.

This classical tradition was challenged by the emergence, in the US and Europe in the sixties and seventies,, of large scale movements such as the peace movement, green movement, anti-nuclear movement, women's movement, lesbian and gay movement etc. These movements emerged in societies characterized by pluralism, democracy and a strong civil society. Therefore these movements are not simple reactions to a breakdown and the actors of them do not conform to the image of reactionary, anomic deviants of the classical paradigm. They have certain goals and rational strategies. Their struggle focused on areas of cultural reproduction and on issues like quality of life, individual self realization and participation rather than material reproduction or distribution. They are not channeled through parties but

professional social movement organizations which “carefully calculated and steered collective action to gain media coverage and public sympathy for movement goals”(Cohen and Arato 1992;505). With the emergence of these contemporary movements sociologists began to tackle questions such as “why people still act in tradition ? Why many social movements do not try to overthrow the state? Why are people willing to pursue goals which brings no material gain?”(Somers and Gibson 1994;50).

To make sense of these developments new theories of action emerged. These were mainly the resource mobilization paradigm in the US and the new social movement paradigm in Europe. While the first one stressed the political aspect, the second focused on the cultural aspect of the conflict that are generated by contemporary movements. Before elaborating the basic premises of these paradigms, we will look at the characteristics, contexts, issues and actors of contemporary movements to clarify the concept of new social movements.

New social movements

The movements dominating the early phases of modernity were focused on economic interests and organized in a centralized manner to control and attain political power with members generally composed of single social classes. the worker's movement is one of the best examples of this type of movement, since it was almost under the tutelage of a political party or of political action, being associated with the idea of revolution. Workers within that movement were not subjects but ‘agents’ in the implementation of an historical necessity.(Touraine 1992;142-3).

These type of movements are called 'old social movements' meaning that they belonged to the old type of (industrial) society.

As with the old ones the new social movements are not independent of the context or of society within which they emerge. Social theorists define this context differently from each other by focusing on different aspect of social mechanism.

Touraine grounds new social movements in his famous paradigm of post industrial society. Post industrial society is a new type of society with its new loci of power and new forms of domination. For Touraine contemporary social action is new because it involves struggle around the field opened up by post industrial society. This field which is contested by new social movements is no longer state, but civil society. Social movements according to Touraine involve confrontations between social actors over the structure of civil society (1985;670). The existence of new social movements reveals the transformation of the relationship between social movements and political action (1992;142-3). Therefore contemporary movements are new since they dissociate themselves from the idea of controlling state-power and are no longer subordinate to political action.

Offe tells another story for the emergence of contemporary movements. He asserts that new social movements arose in the West along with the challenges to the model of the welfare state. The social, political and economic order in the early fifties was structured around the model of the liberal welfare state which remained unchallenged by any significant political force. The central values in this model were growth, prosperity and distribution. The underlying assumption of the welfare state is

that “privatistic and consumption centered patterns of life would absorb the energies of most people and that participation in and over public policies would be of no more than marginal significance in the lives of most citizens”(1985;823). In this context highly institutionalized interest organizations and political parties were the dominant collective actors. They emphasized the values of private life, instrumental rationality and an order which devalued participation. The key task of public policy was security which as a result brought about a social control to prevent all sorts of ‘deviant’ behavior that might affect polity and social order.(1985;821-4). But the demands voiced by new social movements deviate from the welfare state pattern of institutionalized conflict over distribution. They place emphasis on the non-economic quality of life rather than stressing economic growth. Inglehart theorizes this shift in value priorities as the emergence of post materialist values which underlie the basis of new social movements (1990). The rise of the women’s movement for example is not due to the fact that women are more exploited today than they were a few decades ago, but that women in contemporary society place greater emphasis on identity and self-fulfillment. Hence the question posed by new social movements is not one of compensations that the welfare state can provide. Rather the question is “how to defend or reinstate endangered life styles, or how to put reformed life styles into practice. In short the new conflicts are not sparked by the problem of distribution, but concern the grammar of life” (Habermas 1981;33)

The new social movements are different from utopian and neoromantic movements of the past such as the worker’s movements, in terms of their goals. While utopian and neoromantic movements sought the de-differentiation of the social, political and economic sphere into a premodern utopian community, the new social

movements defend structural differentiation of modern society and seek to expand a space for non strategic action. Cohen explains this phenomenon with the term 'self limiting radicalism'. She uses this term as a "self understanding that abandons revolutionary dreams in favour of the idea of structural reform, along with a defense of civil society that does not seek to abolish the autonomous functioning of political and economic systems" (1985;664). The new social movements have a self limiting character in a way that they accept the existence of the democratic state and the market economy. Actors limit themselves to the defense and extension of spaces for their way of lives, hence abandon neo-romantic myths. Actors limit themselves vis-a-vis one another as well. Without rejecting the existence of one another, they struggle in the name of autonomy, difference and identity within the boundaries of the democratic state.

The new social movements also differ from the old ones in terms of their social base, actors. Melucci depicts the actors of old type of social movements as tragic characters that "they act in a historical scene as heroes or villains depending on the point of view, but always oriented towards great ideals or a dramatic destiny" (1985;809). Whereas the actors of contemporary movements seem more interested in themselves rather than the outer world. While old social movements had an economically determined class base, the new social movements draw from a different social class base. It is asserted that old movements mobilized entrepreneurs, workers and the professional middle class, whereas the new movements find support in the new middle class (younger generation and groups with a high level of education). This new middle class is a modern, class aware group whose goals are more general than the traditional classes.(Offe,1985).

Despite this common strategy in explaining the social base of contemporary movements with a new middle class, there is another line of argument that asserts that the social base of these movements cannot be understood in class terms. According to this position, since contemporary movements are not economically determined, economic reading of their social bases should be left off. Social movements are defined by the dynamics of race, gender, ethnicity and so on. all of these conceptions transcend the term class in shaping collective action. It is pointed out that the group identities defining collective action have shifted from class to status, race, gender and nationality. Dalton, Kuechler and Burklin characterize this phenomenon “as a shift from group based politics rooted in instrumental interest to value based politics rooted in ideological support for collective action” (1990.cited by Buechler 1995;453).

The contemporary movements also differ from the old movements in terms of their organizational structure. With respect to the centralized organizations (with their big leaders) of the old movements, the organization of new social movements is provisional and reversible. Participation in the organization is seen as a commitment rather than a duty and decisions are taken through negotiations. In other words collective action is the result of a contractual and reflective process(Melucci 1994;124).

The emergence of the contemporary movements in the sixties and seventies with such qualities mentioned above challenged the classical collective behavior paradigm. What has been obvious about the contemporary movements is that they existed in democratic and civil societies; they were not responses to economic crisis or

breakdown; their actors did not conform to the image of anomic, underprivileged and irrational deviants. On the contrary they involved concrete goals and rational interests and strategies. These realities led to the emergence of two competing paradigms in the study of social movements. These are the resource mobilization paradigm and the new social movements paradigm which have been influential in the United States and Europe respectively.

The Resource Mobilization Paradigm

Although both paradigms stress different aspects of the contemporary movements they share certain premises that distinguish them from the old paradigm. Before analyzing the basic assumptions of the Resource Mobilization paradigm let us look at the common points of both paradigms that will enable us to clarify their position vis-a-vis the old approaches.

First of all, both paradigms treat conflictual collective action as normal and the modern pluralist societies as the context of them. Both argue that participants are usually rational and well-integrated members of organizations and argue that social movements involve contestations between organized groups with voluntary and autonomous organizations and with sophisticated forms of communications (Cohen 1985;673).

Based upon these basic presumptions the Resource Mobilization paradigm analyzes contemporary movements exclusively on the political level. Contemporary

conflicts are explained as the expression of excluded social groups to join a system of benefits and rules (Tilly 1978) or as demands for the different distribution of resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 1981). Although it is not an homogeneous paradigm, the theoreticians basically argue that collective action involves the rational pursuit of interests by individuals with a strategic- instrumental logic. Success of a movement depends on its ability in getting recognition as a political actor or increasing its material benefits.

For Tilly collective action is the expression of common interests of a fully formed group-a social class, ethnic group, union, party and so on. In his view a social movement “consists in a series of demands or challenges to power holders in the name of a social category that lacks an established political position”(1985;736). So he places contemporary conflict on an exclusively political level and accounts for the emergence of social movements with a political process in which excluded, marginalized groups try to get access to the established polity.

The context of mobilization of excluded groups is provided by the process of modernization. Hence the idea that large scale structural change affects collective action is retained by Tilly although he criticizes the breakdown model of the classical paradigm. He asserts that economic transformation, urbanization, state making process and hence a new loci of power and the new structures of everyday life led to the emergence of a new action repertoire and of new associational forms. These involved the replacement of the food riots, tax rebellions etc. that belonged to the ‘eighteenth century action repertoire’ by the demonstrations and strikes typical of the ‘nineteenth century action repertoire’; and the replacement of communal solidarities

by voluntary associations. Tilly characterizes the nineteenth century action as offensive and proactive and the former one as defensive and reactive. This meant that while in the former action a group reacted to the claims of another group over a resource currently under its control and hence displaced a defensive mobilization in the face of an outside threat, in the latter, groups asserted claims to power, privileges and resources that had not existed before. What is obvious in the new action is that it attempts to gain control over power and resources rather than merely resisting. This positioning as a result leads to the formation of special-purpose organizations in place of communal groups(Cohen and Arato 1992;499-501). So Tilly defines social movements as interactions between dominant powers and people who make visible demands for change in the distribution of power and resources.

Tilly's strategic conception of social movements is criticized by different theorists in a way that it results in the reduction of society to power relations, detached from any reference to a social system. Therefore that type of treatment of contemporary movements misses both cultural orientations and structural dimensions of conflict(Touraine 1981;56, Cohen and Arato 1992;512). Actually what is challenged by the new social movements is not only injustice distribution of power but socially shared meanings or the ways of defining reality as well(Diani 1992;10). It is argued that Tilly's position that places contemporary collective action on an exclusively political level does not give the answers to the questions of "do contemporary movements reveal systemic conflicts that are unrelated to those of industrial capitalism?" (Melucci 1994;116) and to "what if a social movement does not target the inclusion in to the polity?" (Cohen and Arato 1992;504). In other

words, Tilly's approach excludes the possibility of analyzing the identity dimension of the new social movements.

Moreover, it is pointed out that focusing on strategies to attain political representation and benefits makes it difficult to differentiate between social movements and interest groups. Social movements have an offensive side not only in the sense of struggles for inclusion in the polity but also in the sense of their efforts to influence political actors to make policy and initiate reforms appropriate to new collective identities. (Cohen and Arato 1992;505)

The resource mobilization paradigm by limiting itself to the strategic uses of power and influence focuses on the political dimension of contemporary conflict. Although this is an important face of the new social movements, that type of an analysis does not explain collective actors' concerns on identity, autonomy, discourses and social norms. The other part of the story can be completed with an identity oriented paradigm.

The new social movements paradigm

The new social movements theorists, contrasting with the political conflict model that reduces collective behavior to instrumental ideals and political level, focus on other logics of action based in culture as the root of much collective action and to other sources of identity such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity as the markers of collective identity (Buechler 1995;442). Instead of merely treating contemporary movements as sociopolitical that targets change in politics as Tilly does, they also do

stress the sociocultural aspect of new social movements in a way that they address social life and struggle in the cultural sphere to change values, norms, identity structures and life patterns.

One of the most prominent advocates of the NSM paradigm is Alain Touraine whose sociology ceases to treat social action as a response to a situation but asserts that the situation is the changing result of relations between actors. Society for Touraine is not a given but constantly produced and reproduced phenomena. In his words "it is a play not of situations but of social action and social relations" (1981;1). This play is written and written again by social conflicts. Touraine considers social life as organized around a central social conflict. For him social conflict is not anomalous for society, as considered in breakdown theories, but is a mean through which "the major orientations of a culture are transformed into social, political and economic organization" (1992;127). In other words it is the social conflicts through which a society produces itself.

Based on this general image of society, Touraine asserts that the sociology of social movements cannot be separated from a representation of society as a system of social forces competing for control of a cultural field. He sees the cultural field and patterns as the main stake in the most important conflicts and gives a basic role to the notion of social movements as an agent of conflict for the social control of the main cultural patterns(1985;785). He defines social movements as socially conflictual but also culturally oriented forms of behavior. The action of social movements is not fundamentally oriented towards state and cannot be identified with political action for the control of power but it is an action directed towards a social adversary. The

absence of an adversary reduces a social movement to a modernizing or an anti-modernist current. The conflict of a social movement with its adversary according to Touraine should not be specific but be a social problem concerning the whole of society. This brings Touraine's key argument into the scene that social movements transcend the political level and function at the level of historicity i.e. the capacity of a society to produce itself. Therefore contemporary actions are the collective action of actors for the social control of historicity or "control of the great cultural orientations by which a society's environmental relationships are normatively organized" (1981;26).

Touraine grounds the new social movements in his model of our contemporary societal type, namely post industrial society. For him contemporary movements are new because they involve struggles around the field opened up by post industrial society. This contested field is neither state nor market but civil society where the separation between private and public is fading away. The breakdown of the walls between private and public life leads to the emergence of new types of conflicts based on life styles and identities. Therefore Touraine argues that the new social movements expand civil society by bringing about social practices which were formerly shielded from public scrutiny by a tradition of a well defined private sphere.

Alberto Melucci concurs with Touraine that the post modern world brings a new loci of power, new forms of social control and new conflicts that are interwoven with everyday life to which new social movements respond. However he stresses more the symbolic character of the contemporary movements. Compared to the qualities of the old movements which engaged in a confrontation with the state in

order to realize their great ideals, the new social movements form themselves into social networks where through negotiations among various groups, a collective identity is structured. A movement network for Melucci is a field in which identity is recomposed and unified. With its networks a movement “ provides individuals and groups a relatively stable point of reference from which to rebuild identities split among the various memberships, roles and time scales of social experience” (1994;117).

For Melucci the deepest and hidden message of the new social movements is their questions oriented toward rationalizing apparatuses: Who decides on codes? who establishes rules of normality? What is the space for normality? How can one be recognized not for being included but for being accepted as different? (1985;810). With these questions the contemporary movements challenge the symbolic ground on which society stands. He points out that since power in information societies is exercised through the control of codes, the new conflicts revolve around these symbolic codes. Hence antagonism of the new movements lies in their ability “to give a different name to space and time by developing new languages that change or replace the words used by the social order to organize our daily experience” (1994;123). Actually their very existence is already a challenge to the system. In other words the movements, by their practices question the established norms and exemplify other ways of ‘doing things’.

A major debate among theorists is whether these contemporary movements are totally enclosed into the cultural field or engage in issues relating to the whole system; or in short are they defensive or offensive in character? Do they orient

themselves to instrumental or expressive ideals? Are they particularistic or do they engage in issues relating to the entire system.? This debate teaches us much about the crucial facets of the new social movements.

Melucci states that although the contemporary movements are not mainly oriented to the political sphere, they produce some effects on political institutions, for instance, by introducing new elites to the institutions who can renew culture and organization. They also confront political systems with their public mobilizations. Even the lack of mobilization, argues Melucci, points out realities in terms of system-actor relations. Lack of mobilization in a country makes clear the authoritarian nature of that country. In such societies social movements push rationalizing apparatuses to produce justifications, to reveal their logic and reasons. In short they make power visible, and Melucci states that in systems where power is anonymous and incorporated in formal procedures, to make it visible is a fundamental change(1985;810-14)

For Melucci orientations of the contemporary action are both general and specific in character. The conflict is encouraged by certain particular conditions, but it simultaneously brings in to the fore the problems that concern the system's overall logic and dilemmas. Although the actor is always a specific entity, it addresses a social field and raises issues that are related to the entire system. For Melucci this is obvious in the case of the women's movement. Their struggle for equal rights on the one hand, and for the right to be 'different' challenge the dominant logic of the system and make the movement to address women and society as a whole(Melucci 1994;119).

Habermas on the other hand treats these new social movements as particularistic and defensive in character except for the feminist movement. He ascribes two interrelated roles to the contemporary movements. First they carry elements for the formation of identity and the second they voice democratic projects that would initiate processes by which the public sphere might be revived and discourses institutionalized (Cohen and Arato 1992;527). In other words they have the potential to create new rational identities and a revived democratic culture. With such potentials however contemporary movements are resistance movements against tendencies to colonize the lifeworld. They do not seek to conquer new territories. But among them argues Habermas the feminist movement with its struggle for political inclusion and equal rights, and for the realization of a life style that claims the elimination of male prejudices is offensive in character (1981;34-5). In other words the feminist movement has a dual logic: a defensive, particularistic side focusing on identity and an offensive, universalist side carrying emancipatory claims.

Compared with the resource mobilization theorists who stress the instrumental/strategic logic and offensive character of the new movements, almost all of the new social movement theorists focus on identity construction of these movements in civil society. This leads the latter to orient themselves to the cultural sphere and omit the political implications of the contemporary movements. Although they also spoke about the offensive character of the new movements, the term offensive is used differently by new social movements theorists. Unlike Tilly, for instance, offensive action is not an action oriented for inclusion in the polity and power but to the struggle to extend existing public space and to democratize political

institutions at the expense of state control. Cohen and Arato criticizing the fact that two competing paradigms leave us with an unsatisfactory choice between instrumental and expressive or political and cultural aspects of the new movements try to develop an approach that combines the both. They argue that movements operate on both sides of the system lifeworld divide or in other words they are both offensive and defensive. They accept that the crucial role of the new movements is the establishment of identity. This is their defensive character. The creation of identity involves a struggle over the power to create democratic spaces within both civil and political society. This brings their offensive aspect that they target political and economic society. They develop organizations that can exert pressure for inclusion within these domains and extract benefits from them. Hence they conclude that strategic\ instrumental modes of collective action are indispensable for such projects(1992;530-2). They discuss this dual logic of the contemporary action with the example of the feminist movement which we will discuss in the last section.

What these debates reveal in the analysis of contemporary action is that the new conflicts and movements differ from the 'old politics', which centered around economic and political problems, and engage in problems of individual self realization, equality, difference, participation, quality of life and creation of identity. This is a 'new politics', a politics of identity involving social contestation of norms and creation of new meanings.

The Identity Politics as an expression of new social movements or vice versa

As it is mentioned so far the major concern of the new social movements revolves around the creation of identity. Based on the empirical fact that various social movements like the women's movement and gay and lesbian movements in contemporary times seek the affirmation of excluded identities 'as publicly good and politically salient', social theory has come to see the idea that identity itself may be as important focus of political struggle (Calhoun 1994;4). What was obvious is that these pursuits of identity politics have shaped and been shaped by an array of new social movements. These developments led to the emergence of new theories of identity politics, with which the explanation of action has shifted from interests to identities and from universalistic social agent to particularistic social agent.

Calhoun criticizes the argument that identity politics is a new phenomenon. He reminds us of the two hundred year history of the women's movement and asks if the European nationalisms of the nineteenth century are not instances of identity politics(1994;23). But , although it is not a deniable fact that identity politics have been part of modern times and social life for many years, what characterizes new identity politics-or movements - is their stress on difference and otherness. In modern times the driving force of social movements has been the principle of equality-equality between nations, ethnicities, the sexes etc.(Göle 1992;70). In today's societies actors of course want to take their place in the scene, but with their

authenticities not with the model that is presented to them. This involves the issues of self-recognition and recognition by others.

This process of the formation of self is characterized by Giddens as 'life politics' which is concerned with human self actualization both on the level of individual and collectivity. Life politics for Giddens emerges in a context where emancipatory politics is cast. He defines emancipatory politics 'as a generic outlook concerned above all with liberating individuals and groups from constraints which adversely affect their life chances' (1991;210-11). Emancipatory politics aims to eliminate the illegitimate domination of some individuals by others. 'It is essentially a politics of others'. Agencies of emancipation diversify from class to subordinate groups, nation or ethnicity. This politics revolves around the divisions between these agencies and ruling groups, rich nations or ethnicity. But in all cases it aims to eliminate the relative differences between them since the principle of equality is the main motive of this politics.

Whereas life politics, although to some extent it of course presumes emancipatory claims, does not primarily concern the condition which liberates, but is an answer in Giddens' terms to the question of "how should we live in a post traditional order?". While emancipatory politics is a politics of others, 'life politics is a politics of choice'.(ibid;214). It is a politics of self actualization with a reflexivity linking self to the system. With this reflexivity self creates its identity since "as lived, identity is always a project, though various external ascriptions or recognitions may be fixed" (Calhoun ibid;27). This project involves not only ideologies or tackling certain issues but also actors' bodily appearance and style of dress all of which are associated

with social identity. Bodily appearance became particularly important with the advent of modern society, since in premodern societies it was relatively fixed in terms of traditional criteria. Dress is also more than a means of bodily protection; it is “a means of symbolic display, a way of giving external form to the narratives of self identity” (Giddens *ibid*,62). So modern actor’s bodily appearance, its dress and even posture designate its own unique social identity.

It can be said that the search for identity is a modern issue, and what is obvious is that the development of the modern notion of identity has given rise to a politics of difference. Besides its universalistic claims, (stress on equality) this politics suggests that everyone should be recognized for his or her unique identity. But recognition here, argues Taylor, means something else: with the politics of equality, “what is established is meant to be universally the same, an identical basket of rights and immunities; with the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognize is the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else” (1995,38).

This politics of identity, with its claim of authenticity but at the same time with a demand for inclusion on an equal basis with other actors is an apparent characteristic of most of the new social movements, especially of second wave of feminism.

Feminism as an example of a new social movement

Feminist movement, with its characteristics until the seventies and with its new outlook after that time provides a good example for the points we have discussed so far.

Almost all of the theorists who wrote on the nature of contemporary action recognize the new dimension of the feminist movement, that is its focus on the issues of identity and autonomy which distinguishes it from the early phases of the movement. In the early years of the women's movement emancipatory interests were in the ascendancy. It aimed to free women from traditional constraints and allow them to participate on an equal level with men in areas of social activity formerly dominated by males(Giddens 1991;228). This strand of the women's movement functioned more like an interest group by focusing on economic and political inclusion and endeavored to affect the legal and political system to be able to attain equal rights with men(Cohen and Arato 1992;551-2). The aim of the women activists in this first wave of feminism was to enter into the public arena that was defined by male standards, and their claim was that women too can take male characteristics appropriate to that sphere. In this way, for a complete social and economic equality they devalued the private sphere and the motherhood role of women. Hence the precondition of equality supplied the 'inner metamorphosis' of women (Elshtain 1981;309). This was actually a self denial of female identity since the position of males is celebrated.

But the women's movement in the seventies began to tackle issues such as abortion, contraception and violence against women. This characterized the

emergence of new, namely second wave of feminism which focused on creating autonomous spaces and identities within both the private and public sphere. Beyond the demand for equality, the young generation of women claimed the right of difference and 'otherness'.

Women for decades endeavored to liberate themselves from home or domesticity. But in the outer world the only identity available for them were those offered by male stereotypes. Based on this fact the new generation of women argued that socially constructed gender identities were male biased and worked against women's autonomy and self determination. The coming on the scene of the abortion issue provided them a context in which they demanded control of their own bodies. With the motto 'personal is political' they challenged the traditional boundaries of the public and private sphere and demanded recognition for 'the oppressed side' of their identity. This demand meant more than a desire for equal rights. It "symbolized a demand for autonomy regarding the self formative process, for self determination and for bodily integrity, in short for the right for women to decide for themselves who they want to be, including whether and when they choose to become mothers" (Cohen and Arato *ibid*;554-55). So the demand that came up with the abortion issue transcends the conventional politics of the women's movement for inclusion in the polity on the basis of equality and involve challenges to traditional gender identities and processes of identity construction or in Habermasian terms it means 'the toppling of concrete life styles determined by male monopolies' (1981 ;34-5).

The focus on identity does not mean that the contemporary women actors are totally enclosed in the 'existential sphere', besides this dimension they also target

the state and the economy for inclusion on equal terms. However what differentiates them from earlier actors is that they do not attempt to take their place in the world of work and politics within the given sexist models, but their inclusion involves a challenge to established standards of the system: “ Once the typical worker is no longer construed as the male breadwinner, the structure of labour time, the length of the working day, the nature of benefits and the worth of jobs must be suitably revised. And once the responsible citizen is no longer construed as the male soldier, the inclusion of women in politics and state spheres must entail significant changes in these domains as well’(Cohen and Arato *ibid*;549-50).

The reforms that are generated by the inclusion of women both on an institutional and social level bring to the fore an important dimension of the feminist movement that the women from their particular position raise issues that are related to the whole system. In other words they address society as a whole since “ granting recognition to women entails accepting a different outlook on reality, existence in a different body and a specific way of relating to others and to the world” (Melucci 1994;119). Hence the women’s movement challenges explicitly the traditional understanding of women and to social contexts that produce inequalities and exclusion. Consequently the second wave of feminism, with its appeal to identity and recognition among other movements displaces a great potential to bring about significant changes in both cultural and political markets.

Islamism between 'new' and 'old politics'

Göle conceptualizes Islamist movements in a way that it displays certain similarities with contemporary western social movements such as feminist, civil rights, environmental and ethnic movements. As the contemporary social movements display the force of the repressed (gender, nature and ethnicity), the Islamist movements promote the coming back of the Muslim actors to the historical scene with their own ethics and esthetics (forthcoming). In other words Islamic movements seek the affirmation of an excluded category as 'publicly good and politically salient'. On the other hand she mentions about the Islamist movements' tendency to morally control the public sphere through the control on women's modesty by veiling and the limitation of the public encounter between the sexes.

Then the question to relate our data to the theoretical accounts is that is Islamism and Islamist women's visibility in the Turkish context still an 'old politics' centering around economic and political problems or 'new politics' engaging in problems of self-realization, equality and participation? Can the existence of the women Islamists in the public sphere be treated as a response to economic crisis or social breakdown or do they address to social sphere to change values, norms, identity structures and life patterns? Do Islamist women promote the totalitarian tendency of Islamism or do they expand civil society as Touraine says by bringing about social practices which were formerly shielded from public scrutiny? Similarities and contrast with especially western feminist movement and identity politics can provide us some clues to understand such questions. But first let us look at the historical context form where these questions arise.

CHAPTER II

WOMEN IN THE TURKISH CONTEXT AND THE ISLAMIST
MOVEMENTS*Turkish modernization and women issue*

The position of women has always been a political and social issue in Turkey. This is due to the fact that women's rights and women's emancipation were integral parts of Turkey's modernization plan. Women occupied a central position in Turkish history both as agents and objects of the project of modernization in the 1920's. The defenders of modernization from the reformists of the early nineteenth century to the Kemalists of the Republican period believed that backwardness and problems of the Ottoman society were due to its exclusion of women from social life and claimed that the only way to attain Western civilization was through the liberalization of women (Göle 1992). In other words the liberalization of women was seen by the modernist elites as the prerequisite of being civilized.

According to the reformist elite the modern world was a 'sexually integrated' (in contrast to the sexually separated) world. Therefore women agencies who were excluded from public life so far, were to be integrated in to new Nation. According to Ziya Gökalp, the ideologue of Turkish nationalism, education and employment of

women was a central element of Turkish nationalism and civilization². For Atatürk also the failures in the past were a result of the subordination of women. In a speech in March 1923 he said: "Our enemies are claiming that Turkey cannot be considered as a civilized nation because this country consists of two separate parts: men and women. Can we close our eyes to one portion of a group, while advancing the other, and still bring progress to the whole group? The road of progress must be trodden by both sexes together, marching arm in arm." (Karal 1956;54).

Therefore for the Kemalist elite national progress and relatedly modernization were inextricably bound up with equality and the emancipation of women³. The term 'emancipation' of woman in a Muslim context meant freeing of women from all her traditional and religious (Islamic) bonds which were the 'barriers' keeping woman out of sight and thus had to be broken down.

In a larger perspective the Republican elite believed that social backwardness was a result of the social relations and system structured by the Islamic religion (Mardin 1991;72). Hence the Turkish mode of modernization was put in such a way to create a society which with its social, political and cultural environment was to

² In one of his poems Gökalp writes:
 Women are also human beings, and as human beings
 they are equally entitled to the basic rights of human beings
 education and enlightenment
 So long as she does not work, she will remain unenlightened,
 Which means the country will suffer
 If she does not rise, the country will decline.
 No progress is complete without her contribution.
 See Dogramaci 1984; 127.

³ Moghadam calls the Kemalist revolution as 'women's emancipation model of revolution' in order to differentiate it from Algerian (1962) and Iranian (1979) revolutions where cultural identity, modesty and veiling were encouraged for women. She calls these latter cases as 'women in -the -family model of revolution'. See Moghadam, 1993;71-72.

differentiate itself from the old community. This old community was based on hierarchic relations not only among different ethnic groups but also among the sexes. It was a 'sexually separated' society. Women were defined in the private sphere and their public visibilities were strictly controlled by state decrees as well as a communitarian morality. They were the *mahrem* which means secret, confidential and invisible. Symbolically the term '*mahrem*' reveals the position of women since the mahrem was women. *Harem* was a place where the women lived. The division of *mahrem* and *namahrem* shaped traditional Ottoman society from its architecture to its basic daily relations. Houses were designed according to separate men's and women's spaces, women were separated by a curtain in ships and trams and places of amusements were assigned to women on separate days.

Obviously this old society with its traditional / religious bases did not overlap with the conception of modern society that the modernist elites aimed to create. Upon this fact, the Republican elite introduced new reforms prohibiting traditional dresses, music, calendar, Arabic scripts and religious sects, in Göle's terms in the name of a "new modern way of life" based upon using Latin scripts, wearing European hats, using the Western calendar and listening to Western music. With the settlement of the principle of secularism religious institutions were brought under state control⁴. Moreover in 1926 with the introduction of the Turkish civil code polygamy was banned and women were granted equal rights with men in matters of divorce and

⁴ In the Turkish context the process of secularism follows a different pattern from the Western case although it is inspired by the French 'laicite'. While in the French case secularism meant the gradual separation of state affairs from religion, in the Turkish case it connotes to the control of the institutional religion by the state in order to discipline the religious idiom and education according to the modernist and rationalist ideal. The two cases only concur in providing the dereligiosity of the public sphere (Göle forthcoming).

child custody. These reforms were obviously an expression of the intention to destroy the links back to the Ottoman society.

Along with these reforms the public sphere was reconstructed around universal egalitarian principles which for the Kemalist elite underlay the modern civilized way of life. In this process women played a central role both as agents and objects. At this point it is interesting to note that the trajectories of the emergence of the public sphere are asymmetrical in the Western and Turkish context. In Western Europe the public sphere emerges as a liberal bourgeoisie sphere by excluding women, whereas in Turkish case, the public sphere was created by the visibilities of “modern women actors” defined tightly by the secular elite. In Göle’s terms “in a Muslim context, the existence of a public sphere would be endorsed by women’s visibility and social mixing of men and women. It is the construction of women as public citizens and women’s rights (even more cherished than the construction of citizenship and civil rights) which make up the backbone of Turkish modernism.” (Göle forthcoming).

Women within the modernization process were carried into the public sphere by different occasions. Education was unified to make way for compulsory co-education for boys and girls; civil rights for women such as electoral eligibility and voting were established; Western types balls were organized where men and women danced; women were encouraged to go to restaurants and other urban spaces⁵; and different

⁵ Atatürk’s attitudes in certain situations exemplify this type of encouragement. One day the first female student of the Faculty of Law Süreyya Agaoglu and her girlfriend went for lunch to a famous restaurant in Ankara. When her father heard this news she was forbidden to go again. Atatürk one day took Süreyya to that restaurant and in front of it he shouted in a way that everybody could hear them ‘Süreyya let’s have lunch today at my house, you come here tomorrow’. The day after Süreyya and of course many women who heard that sentence appeared in front of the restaurant. *Süreyya Agaoglu. Bir Ömür Böyle Geçti* cited by Zeynep Avcı *Kadının Güncedinden Sayfalar* Afa, 1994 p 23.

contests were organized making the woman's body, voice etc.⁶ visible in the public sphere.

The entry of women into the education system and social and public life challenged the traditional order of things and hence underlay a certain break from the old traditional / religious community.

However this participation did not lead to an autonomous women's identity in the young Republic. Rather, the women who took place in the modernization / nationalization process were defined as 'mission women'. The official discourse after the reforms was that the problem of the status of women had been solved and thus Turkish women should consider themselves 'lucky' since they had been granted certain rights before their European counterparts. It seems that this discourse was internalized by many women who benefited from the opportunities introduced by the new Republic (Ilkcaracan 1996;14-5)

An event symbolizing the fusion of women within the Republican collectivist identity is the self-cancellation of the Turkish Women's Association in 1935 after acquiring the right for electoral eligibility. The General Secretariat of the Association argues that the *raison d'être* of the association disappeared and adds "Halkevleri were being established. From then on men and women would collaborate on social and cultural matters and follow their Ata's path"(Oguz 1986;33).

⁶ The semi-official daily Cumhuriyet organized a series of women's contests (beauty, eye and voice contests) in 1931. In January 1931 the other daily Vakit announced for another contest 'whose legs are the most beautiful'. Women were called to send a photograph of their legs for a contest. At the end of the contest the woman chosen first by the readers was disqualified when it was realized that her measurements did not fit the European standards (those determined by leg contests organized in Europe) and a new winner was announced having European measurements.

As a result of the internalization of this official discourse Kemalist women and women's associations turned to 'helping' women living in villages, instead of questioning the role that the Republic had determined for them (Ilkkaracan ibid;15). The Kemalist woman was not for herself but for her nation. In Kandiyoti's terms she was a self-sacrificing "comrade woman" who participated in the struggles of her male peers. She served in the making of the Republican collectivist identity more than in her own interests. Hence the emancipation of women during the process of the Kemalist modernization was not an effort specifically directed towards a radical reassessment of sexual roles. Rather " it was a politically expedient means of inducing cultural transformation to the extent that women play an important role within the family in transmitting the dominant cultural values to younger generations." (Toprak; 1986;55). The fact that the most prestigious occupation at that period was being a teacher reflects the civilizing mission of the Kemalist women.

It should be noted that it was not only women whose identities were fused but all of the social groups and actors. This is due to the fact that within the modernization / nationalization process the Kemalist elite pushed a universalistic (egalitarian and hence homogeneous) conception of the public sphere in the sense that people were allowed to enter public life within the boundary of the defined modern / secular identity, leaving behind their particularistic, religious and ethnic affiliations.

Populism, one of the six founding principles of the new Republic, was the underlying term by which all the differences in the new society were subsumed. During the liberation movement the term was used to motivate people for a popular

sovereignty and after the declaration of the independence as a sociological basis of the new nation state. The new nation state according to Atatürk was a society united in terms of religion and culture, having a common fate and interest since it did not possess various social classes pursuing different interests (Arar 1963;35). This discourse of homogeneity is also salient within the publications of the People's Party, governing the country from 1923 to 1950. It was declared several times that “ the Turkish Nation is the most classless society in the world... We are a nation without classes, without differences(Arar ibid;31).

Kemalist modernization therefore was a ‘difference blind’ project. It established the definition of women and other social actors congruent with the true identity of the collectivity. According to Republican notions maleness and femaleness were not issues with which the new Nation had to deal. They were private issues. So Kemalist elites defined a public and private sphere now shielded not by religion but by a collectivist national identity.

The Republican elite who had witnessed the unsuccessful attempts of the Ottoman Empire to be able to accommodate differences, put great emphasis on homogenizing and then monitoring the public sphere. This notion led to “Turkifying” each citizen on a political level and equating them from dress to the alphabet, from using the calendar to measures, in short from the way of life to the way of thinking.

The attempts to tightly monitor the public sphere summarize the short history of the Turkish society between 1950-80. Thirty years of pluralistic society, after the single party period from 1923-46, were interrupted by three military coups in 1960,

1971 and 1980 when different groups were politicized and threatened the homogeneity of the public sphere. In other words military interventions can be read as attempts by the founders of the Republic(an identity) to cleanse the public sphere

Throughout the sixties and seventies leftist and rightist movements dominated the Turkish political agenda. Then in the eighties the tension arose between secularist and Islamist discourses. In this period there appeared no autonomous women's movement. Women were visible in the public sphere as part of collectivities. They were the actors of either Kemalism, Marxism or Islam (Sirman 1989;89). Hence in such an atmosphere women's issues were subsumed to political (collectivist) ideologies.

The post-1983 period however, with its liberal politics and discourse, witnessed the challenging of the homogeneous public sphere of the Republican project with the coming of the "different" identities such as Islamists, alavis, kurds, homosexuals and non-statist women⁷.

In this context the claims of Islamist female students to attend at universities in their Islamic outfit constituted the most salient threat to the homogeneity of the public sphere and the process of seventy years of secularism and the axis of social tension was transformed from left-right to Islamist-secularist since the existence of Muslim

⁷ After 1980 the first movement challenging official collectivist positioning was the women's movement. At this period a group of women began to criticize the official Kemalist position on the new Turkish women by arguing that it restricted women to the framework of secularism and to the transformations of the Islamic way of life. Sirin Tekeli as an example evaluates the Kemalists' framing of the women as an instrumentalization by the Republican ideology, since it manipulated women actors as 'protectors' of secularism and the new Republic (1990).

girls is perceived by secular elites in Göle's terms as an invasion of "their" public sphere.

Women in Islam: Contemporary responses to role and status of women

One of the most striking features of the Islamist movement throughout the Muslim world is their preoccupation with the 'women question'. Although concern with women's proper place in society has been a feature of Islamic thought since the early decades of this century, Islamist movements in recent years have been addressing with more frequency and urgency the question of 'how a woman in contemporary society must conduct herself and what is expected of her?' (Taraki 1995;643).

Contemporary Islamist movements, although they cannot be considered monolithic since they vary in different contexts, concur in constructing their arguments on the practices of the 'asri saadet' period (the age of the Prophet Muhammed and the four khalifs). Based on this lived 'golden age' they have an radical anti-modernist stance. Contemporary Islamist discourse on the role and status of women in Islam is shaped in response to the 'modern egalitarianism' of Western modernity. Specifically on the women question the Islamists' perspective is reactionary to 'equity feminism' which proposes a total equality and hence according to Islamists brings inevitably the hostility and antagonism as a necessary co-condition among sexes. In the theoretical framework of this type of feminism men and women

are locked in adversarial positions and are matched against each other in a 'perennial gender struggle' (Abedin 1996;75).

Moreover, it is asserted that the 'empowerment' of women in the feminist discourse is generally seen at the cost of men's territoriality. Inch by inch women should regain the territory they lost to men or they never had access to in the past. So in this discourse according to Abedin, increase in the value of one sex is in proportion to the decrease in the value of the other. Women's rights therefore do not increase vertically upward, but on the contrary their struggle is assumed to be oriented towards a horizontal redistribution. They are to expand horizontally encroaching up on the as yet alien territory occupied by men, so far inaccessible to women. Lamyā' Al Faruqi calls this type of feminism as a "new brand of male chauvinism" since it respects such roles of providing financial support, of success in career, and of decision making which have been traditionally fulfilled by the male members of society and devalues those of domestic matters. Thus feminism according to Faruqi denies the differentiation of male and female roles and demands a move towards a "unisexual society" in which "a single set of sex roles and concerns are given preference and esteem by both sexes, and are pursued by all members of the society regardless of sex and age differentials." (1983;134). Therefore gender issues in the feminist discourse according to the Islamists are expected to be resolved on a battlefield, yielding winners and losers. The term 'empowerment' and 'equality' of women becomes relevant in such a context.

Islam on the other hand according to Abedin approaches this issue by replacing the element of 'power' in social relations with an element of 'responsibility'. In the

Islamist discourse gender relations are based on the principle of mutual responsibilities. Men and women are defined with their distinct functions in a way that generate a harmony and interdependence not a conflict (*ibid* ;93). In other words men and women in radical Islamist stance are put in a complementary position that is the backbone of a 'healthy' (Islamic) society.

At this point it should be noted that Islamists' framing of the women issue is not outside the boundaries of their vision of the 'Islamic society'. More than any other religion, Islam presents itself as a way of life and a social system not just a set of beliefs and rituals. Thus directly or indirectly , Islamic principles influence all aspects of social life as well as spiritual life and personal conduct among its followers. Therefore Islamist movements' concern on women's dress and conduct as a cornerstone of its social agenda expresses what this proposed society fears and needs: the fear of a disorder or *fitne* and hence the need for order. The source of *fitne* is women actors and this problem arises when they do not respect the boundaries of their identity determined by their biologic and physiologic nature.

Islamists' claims suppose that there should be a wholeness to their objectives which should not be dimmed by a partial vision. It is asserted that 'full equality' between men and women will be reached only when the issue is handled as one of humanity. That men and women are equal in their humanity is recognized by Islam which places on them equal obligations and equal rewards in matters of faith. They will be judged equally and by the same standards on the day of judgment.(Hatemi 1988, Dilipak 1995). Therefore according to the Islamist writers there was no inequality among the sexes in Islam.

However according to the Islamist discourse the fact that men and women are different in their biological make up, serving different biological functions is beyond dispute. They are constructed to serve different functions, most decidedly in the area of procreation and by extension in related areas of family life, involving the care and nurturing of their offspring. (Abedin *ibid*; 90-93). Thus after acknowledging the very central role of women in the domestic sphere, the Islamist discourse places the economic responsibility of supporting the family on the male members.

Islamist writers handle the women issue on the basis of 'fairness' and 'justice', *hak* and *adalet*. *Hak* refers to a right or to a convenience. In legal terms or in terms of basic human rights men and women are equal. " But in social life having a *hak* needs a certain service and anthropologic convenience" (Güler 1991;311). Since women's nature is different it is an injustice to demand a complete equality at certain spheres. The prominent Islamist thinker Mawdudi also settles male-female relations on the principle of justice. He argues that women's nature is not suitable to take an active role in social life and asks " if it is justice to load women with civil and cultural burdens besides her natural responsibilities that men cannot share" (Hyman 1985;24). Therefore although both sexes are equal in terms of humanity, they make a division of labor to attain the great ideals of humanity. In this division because of the differences of nature, males in some matters are "primus inter pares" (first among equals) (Hatemi *ibid*;32). But it is pointed out that this privilege of men is in matters of "duties" and hence is a "burden" on men. So Islamist intellectuals argue that insisting that there are no differences between men and women and extending this argument to include their social roles and obligations is to commit a logical fallacy.

Therefore the Islamist writers reply to modern egalitarianism on the basis of “social functions” produced by natural-physiological differences (Berkta1996;159). In other words woman is defined with an essentialist nature, hence with a ‘discriminatory’ treatment by which structures her identity is structured in private and public life.

The discriminatory treatment of women in Islam according to the Islamists does not mean that they are subordinated to men. Rather this is a ‘positive discrimination’ that benefits women (Abedin ibid;92). This line of argument paves the way to the other component of the Islamist discourse that elevates the position and role of women on the basis of ‘real’ Islam. It is pointed out that in terms of their social functions, the function of the women was superior to that of the men. Man who is obliged to provide all means of sustenance to the family is not made a master by so doing; rather he is to complement the woman who is performing the real work of maintaining the family. This, on the other hand does not mean that a woman’s function is restricted to the rearing of children or looking after the home, their role encompasses all social life within and outside the home. A woman can do anything she likes, including earning money. The money she earns belongs to the woman alone. Her husband or family have no right to it. She can run her financial matters. She has a right not to take the name of her husband. So a woman in Islam has her own individuality within the family (Jamal Al-lail 1996;105-107).

What is obvious about the Islamist perspective on women is that it is a defensive and apologetic discourse. It settles gender relations and the role of women

in contemporary society on the basis of the conception of a 'pure' Islamist model. It handles the women issue as well as others within the context of a romanticized past, rather than problematizing the current conflicts. This is actually what political Islam is.

Islamism and women in Turkey in the 80's and 90's

Islam came on to the public agenda at the beginning of the eighties in Turkey with the demands of Islamist girls to attend at universities in their Islamic outfit. This demand challenged two conflicting processes. On the one hand it challenged the modernization trajectory of Turkey. In this trajectory the emancipation of women, which actually meant the de-Islamization of women regarding their Islamist clothing and position, was one of the important underlying basis of modernization/westernization, and for the Kemalist elite modern secular educational institutions with their 'sterile' contexts were the basic means to attain western civilization. On the other hand, the demand to study at secular institutions was a great challenge to the traditional interpretations of Islam. While traditional Islam propagated the differentiation of the sexes and seclusion of women from the public sphere, this demand would politicize and transport women Islamists in to the public sphere.

According to Fatma Barbarosoglu, an Islamist woman writer-sociologist, Muslims who until the eighties had not sent their girls to modern secular education institutions changed their attitudes and preferred "to be inside by being herself". However what is obvious is that the girls demanding to get education at universities are not anymore 'themselves', or traditional Muslim females, but are actors

politicized in and by the Islamist movement. Their appearance within the 'fortresses of modernization' was conceived as a threat to the homogeneity of the secular public sphere and at some universities they were not allowed to study. As a result sporadic and unorganized demands to enter freely into universities soon turned into organized sit-ins and demonstrations.

The Islamist movement that empowered women⁸ in the eighties had an ideological / radical stance. Islamist actors in this decade have had discussions to clarify certain Islamic terms such as *dar-al-Islam* (Islamic state), *mustekbir* (oppressor) and *mustaz'af* (oppressed). which all had 'vertical' hence political implications. Islamist discourse was reactionary, anti-modernist and voicing a pure societal model for the future. Within this discourse the identities of the Islamist actors, including women, was defined with respect to 'external enemies' and situated in this pure model. The women's issue gained currency among Islamist intellectuals in such a context.

In this decade there has emerged many books on the position of women in Islam generally with an apologetic discourse against the egalitarianism of western modernity. Islamist writers have pointed out that there was no inequality among the sexes in Islam. However as a result of the biological and physiological difference, men should attend to the public sphere and women should take care of children as mothers of the family. In this model women are more advantageous since they have a right not to work outside to make money (Hatemi ibid, Dilipak ibid).

⁸ Göle points out that Islamist movements create counter elite to that of secularist elite. She mentions three groups of Islamists: engineers, intellectuals and women. See (1996) and for a discussion of the making of these counter elites see (1997).

What is interesting is that in the eighties almost all of the actors writing and speaking on the women's issue in the public sphere were male Islamists. Islamist women although they claimed that they were different from traditional women, seemed to play their assumed roles in the private sphere or at most with women's monthly and small gatherings within their own 'female contexts'. They are yet *mücahides* or "foot soldiers" of the political Islam (Talhami 1996;103). Since in a radical / political discourse actors are reactionary more than being self reflexive and focus on the future more than the present, differences were not problematized within the Islamist movement in the eighties. The women Islamists in this decade are no longer within the four walls of domestic space, but are still shielded by a 'political metanarrative' that oppresses the problems. But political Islam which had "postponed all problems to times of post revolution" (Göle 1992;159) could not hinder the emergence of tensions among Islamist actors with their extension to public spaces.

The first voices criticizing the male Islamists' views on women began to be heard in daily Zaman in 1987. A group of Islamist women, later known as 'Islamist feminists' in public, wrote a series of articles arguing that the source of motherhood and housewife roles attributed to women by males were not Islamic but traditional. According to them these traditional roles were obstacles for women to take part in the public sphere. An Islamist woman writer, Yildiz Kavuncu has written that: " Why do Muslim men fear women who know and learn? Because it is easy to have power over women who are solely busy with their husbands and are isolated from the outer world. As long as women are able to receive education and are able to realize themselves,

and view their environment with a critical eye, they make men fear. Actually, the type of woman who is pleased with everything, namely the 'sleeping beauty' type is quite attractive." (Zaman, 29-9-1987, cited by Göle 1992;124). These women asserted that they had a right not to do housework, not to cook, even not to suckle their kids if they wanted to be in 'real' Islam. Islam according to these women did not consist of any prohibitions limiting women to work outside and thus, Muslim men should tolerate women on this matter. They were criticized by Islamist male writers severely and the discussion lasted a few weeks

During the end of the eighties Islamist women began to voice that they were different from 'ordinary' women and they no longer wanted to stay at home. They acquired professional jobs and "wanted to appear in the light of the day" (Göle 1989). They however have not yet certain means and spaces to realize their newly forming identities. In this period the stories written by Islamist women tell about the problems of university graduates but not working women⁹. Women Islamists felt they were being squeezed between their education and real life. A woman university graduate self reflexively depicts such a situation as follows: "if I had said I was a university graduate and I had five kids, they would ask which of them I was proud of. If I had said directly that I was a housewife, I would have the feeling that I was nothing else during the times I did not do the housework. If I had added I am a teacher, I would think with regret what is the use of saying this, since I could not answer the questions of where my students and school is. I usually say that I am at home and I have children. However the answer is always hard for me." (Nuray Yildiz. A portrait of a university graduate housewife, *Izlenim*, September 1996, p.30-31).

⁹ See for example Aktas1991,1995 .Toros 1990.

In those years women Islamists were in trouble since they could not create a new life style. When they worked or demanded to take place in public space they converged to feminist discourse; when they stayed at home they approached to 'ordinary' women (Barbarosoglu 1996;23).

In the nineties the apologetic discourse of the previous decade is replaced by a more self reflexive one. Women Islamists reconstruct their identity by arguing that they have to reconcile with their children and homes. The former president of the Refah Party Istanbul women's commission Sibel Eraslan says that: " We said 'we will not stay at home we want to work'. We said ' we are not born to look after children'. We still insist on saying these things. We said 'we are different from that image of woman staying at home'. After being involved in active politics, I have been at home for one and a half year. Still I am not used to it. Recently my child drew a picture which was painful to see. He drew a house in which there is a woman whose arms are open in a way that 'hug' the whole house. I asked my son ' whom this woman? He said my grandmother. There is another woman outside the house, near a car. That woman is me. The car had five-six tires. When I asked why? he told me 'so that you can come and go faster'. I am not inside the house even in my children's pictures. I have an argument as to women and the house. Muslim *mücahide* women are in fact very modern women. We were outsiders. Children could not see their mothers. When that *mücahide* returns home, she will have a big crisis. I had that crisis. We have to make peace with our home and children. We have to accept that breast-feeding a child is a beautiful thing." (Interview with Sibel Eraslan, Zaman, 14 September 1996)

In the 1990s Islam is still on the public agenda but with different debates of the compatibility of Islam and democracy, multiculturalism and even of the type of Islamist entertainment and Islamist holiday. Many women Islamist already perform their professional jobs in the public sphere.¹⁰ The success of the Refah Party in municipal and governmental elections, and in addition newly formed Islamist institutions like Islamist radios, TVs, newspapers, hospitals and commercial companies have opened a channel for women Islamists to take their place in the public sphere. Today Islamist women work in municipal institutions, make programs on TV and radio and even participate in the RP government's official trips abroad as businesswomen. They organize and participate in panels where no sex differentiation exist and where they speak with males to males. Hence, contrary to Kemalist perceptions, women Islamists by skillfully using the opportunity space opened up by Kemalism have overcome Islamic prohibitions on women and have transformed gender relations in the public and private sphere (Göle 1992;137-8).

In the 1990s Islamist actors want to take their place in the public sphere with their 'authentic', hence different identities. In that sense, Islamist movements display certain parallelisms with other contemporary western social movements as feminist, nuclear, environmental and ethnic movements that criticize the enlightenment modernity and the universalistic claims of western civilization by standing for the 'particularities' and differences. In other words, as the new social movements symbolize the return of the repressed (gender, nature, ethnicity etc.), the Islamist movements lead the coming of

¹⁰ The increasing number of kindergartens opened up by Islamist entrepreneurs in the last years should be an indicator of this phenomena.

the Muslim actors to the historical scene with their own Islamized life styles. However what differentiates the Islamist movement from other contemporary movements is its utopian desire to Islamize all spheres of life (Göle 1997;57-8). Whether the Islamist movement will abandon its revolutionary dreams and will have a 'self limiting character' or not is still an open ended question in the context of Turkey.

However according to Göle newly formed Islamist elites, engineers, intellectuals and women may countervail the totalitarian tendency of the Islamist movement. She posits that although they propose an alternative model to that of the secular life style, they are products of secular education and modern urban life. Hence they attain the same 'cultural capital' as the secular elites, share the same contexts in university campuses, in panels, in parliament. So as an unintended consequence of this process they embody the conflictual tension between their professional individual and religious collectivist identities. In Göle's terms " engineers embody the conflictual tension between rationality and faith; intellectuals reflect that between critical thinking and Islamic morality; and veiled women express the tension between communitarian morality and individualism. To the extent that rationality, individualism and critical thinking emerge as autonomous value-references for the Islamist elite formed through the modern system of education, the process of secularization can be said to be ongoing" (Göle 1997;58). Therefore the new Islamist elite with their new value spheres, in addition to the religious one furnishes them as new agents of change in Islamism. In other words Islamism is challenged by its own elite.

In the nineties Islam is no longer a marginal ideology . The emergence of new Islamist agents/ elite represents the shift of Islam from the periphery to the center of

the system. Islamists with their radios, TVs, hotels, hospitals and other modern institutions struggle to realize an alternative life style. In this process they organize around different civil associations. Among them the business association MUSIAD, a syndicate HAK-IS, and as a culture oriented platform Gönüllü Kultur Tesekkulleri Birliği can be mentioned. Moreover, in the 1990's the Islamist girls are not anymore students but university graduates ,most of them acquired modern professional jobs. The slogan of 'I can not practice my belief' turned in to demand of 'I want to practice my job with my scarf'. The discourse of 'representation' of the 80's was replaced by the discourse of 'participation'. This led to the formation of the new platforms as a new voice of the Islamist woman. The Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform which we will focus on this study is the first and the model of them.

CHAPTER III

ON THE RAINBOW ISTANBUL WOMEN'S PLATFORM

The Organization of the Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform

The Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform (RIWP) is the first platform of the Turkish Islamist women. It was founded in 1994 and provided a model for the other (women Islamists') platforms, namely, Ankara Capital, Bursa, Kayseri, Konya, Antalya and Diyarbakir Women's Platforms. RIWP for the moment represents 41 different groups ,specifically 9 women's foundations, 10 associations and 22 enterprising groups. So far it has participated in 4 national and 4 international women's conferences. It has especially became public in Turkey with its activities at the fourth UN World conferences on woman in Beijing¹¹.

The notion of the platform is a new phenomenon among Islamist groups since it accommodates differences. "Coming together was always on the agenda of the Islamist woman , but so far it was thought to be under one association" says the former vice president of the Platform. The meaning of the rainbow is illustrated in this way: "A rainbow represents unity with each color carrying its own identity. There is strength in unity. Variety and diversity are not obstacles to unity, but prejudice and intolerance are."

¹¹ For the list of the Platform members and conferences the Platform participated see appendix 2.

The RIWP is different from earlier organizations in terms of its organizational structure since it represents different women's associations as a supreme council by allowing them to continue their own existence. In this sense it is a heterogeneous organization. It consists of some conservative groups like Ottoman Knowledge and Wisdom Foundation, and some more radical groups like Mazlum-Der¹². The heterogeneous structure is also valid for the enterprising groups of the Platform. That actually differentiates them from the organizations of the eighties which generally consisted of women of the same religious sects or tendencies. The President of the Women Lawyer's Enterprising Group says that "our group consists of women lawyers having different religious and political tendencies. In our meetings we do not talk about politics or religious sects. We function just as a typical occupational organization." Therefore it can be said that the enterprising groups bring Islamist women together around a common issue.

In its letter of invitation it is announced that the Platform is founded to respond to events relating to woman and the family. When explaining the legal framework of the Platform, it is pointed out that for the application of the 'National Program' signed between the UN and the Turkish Republic, the Center of Woman's Status and Problems decided to promote the organization of local platforms which would mediate between civil associations and the government.

¹² Mazlum-der is an Islamist association that aids Muslims (especially Kurdish origins) who are in need of economic or political (lawyer etc.) help

Among the objectives of the Platform is to stress the motherhood role of woman; to increase social participation of women; to research for the problems of rural and urban women and to produce solutions for them; and to elevate the position of women from being objects to 'subjects' (*kadinin itildigi nesne durumundan özne durumuna yükselmesini saglamak*). To carry out these objectives the Platform come together every month with two members from each association. Each association has one vote and the decisions are being taken by two thirds of the votes. One member association which functions as a coordinating center is chosen as the general secretariat of the Platform.

When we look at the profiles of the Platform members (to do this I made a survey of 22 members) we see that two thirds of the members are university graduates and have professional occupations such as doctors, lawyers, chemists, theologians and journalists. Except for two lawyers they all practice their jobs. In this sense they have their economic autonomy. Almost half of them are between 25-30 years. Similarly half of them were born in Istanbul. Those who were born outside Istanbul have lived in this city for 30-40 years. Almost all of them live in the wealthy districts of Istanbul. Therefore it is difficult to call them newcomers.

Although they all vote for the Refah Party, they complain that they are known in the public as the women's commission of the RP. "There might be the members of the RP among our members, but as a Platform we do not have any relation" says the vice-President of the Platform.

While only six of the members have never been abroad, the others have been to Saudi Arabia (probably for pilgrimage) and other Eastern but mostly to Western countries. While half of them speak one European language, only two speak Arabic and another two are bilingual (Arabic-English).

Therefore the members of the Platform are actors who cannot easily be counted as marginal. Rather they are those with a relatively high level of education, political information and political interest, in short with a relatively high level of 'cognitive mobilization'. They seem to be rational actors who carefully calculate and steer collective action to attain legality in the construction of a new Islamist women's identity. They are the members of a new middle class. In this sense they emerge as the basis of a new social movement displaying similarities with other contemporary western social movements like environmental, ethnic and feminist movements. This point will be elaborated soon. I suffice now by arguing that the emergence of new Islamist women actors cannot be understood by conventional approaches to social movements which treats collective action as a reaction to a structural and economic crisis. This point can be illustrated more by looking at their discourse.

The new discourse on identity

The women Islamists of the nineties are different from the women actors of the eighties in terms of their discourse. Within the dominant political discourse of Islamism during the eighties, the Islamist women seemed to concentrate their critiques on Kemalism, capitalism and modernism rather than the role of women in Islam. In the politicized context of the eighties women Islamists became visible in the public sphere as an extension of the activities of male actors. They were instrumental in demonstrations and listeners in panels and conferences organized by men.

But in the nineties the foundation of various Islamist women's platforms symbolizes women's intent to have a voice of their own. Now new women actors participate in national and international conferences. They organize panels where the agenda revolves around the concept of women's identity.¹³ Instead of the 'future-oriented' spectacles of political Islam of the eighties, they problematize the present relations. They express that women's status should be elevated from being objects to subjects. A Platform pamphlet writes that "the past is a vast terrain filled both with all that is fascinating and beautiful, and with error too. It is out of the question to repeat this history by returning to ancestral homes and to live there once again. Nonetheless,

¹³ PUMER, Project Production Center, one of the enterprising group of the Rainbow Platform organized a series of panels in 1996-97 every month focusing on the issues relating to women's identity. Moreover in the International Women's Summit which was held on 16-17 November 1996 in Istanbul under the sponsorship of the Municipality of Kagithane some of the titles discussed were women and the problems of women, identity and images of women, women and politics and modernity, public life and women. In addition it is meaningful that the name of the most popular women's monthly nowadays is Women's Identity. The group publishing it is also one of the enterprising groups of the Rainbow Platform.

those principles that are not limited by time of place continue to cast their rays upon us. Muslim women now wish to intervene in time and events flowing away before them, which they are currently watching in a state of helplessness, as they try to become the subject and not the object of life while improving both their material and spiritual strength so as to be able to attain their goals.” Although it is declared that the past is not repeatable, the Islamist women still legalize their asserted public and private roles by referencing to the times of the Prophet and four Caliphs. Therefore it can be argued that the women Islamists are in between two conflicting ideal. They may promote the totalitarian face of Islamism as ‘actors of history’, or they may approach to feminists by emerging ‘subjects as women’ and leading to a more individualistic understanding of Islam.

However it is seems that the assertions of the new women Islamists are not as criticized as the group called ‘Islamist feminists’ in the media in 1987. At that time few Islamist women wrote articles tolerating feminism and criticizing male actors in the daily newspaper Zaman. They were strictly criticized by Islamist intellectuals and other circles because of their egalitarian discourse. Today’s more tolerant attitude is due to the fact that the new Islamist women’s discourse does not deny women’s feminine nature, and most importantly their motherhood roles, instead they structure their identity around their femininity. In this sense it can be said that their discourse with its concentration of difference, otherness and womanhood seem to overlap with the hierarchical societal model of Islam.

However it should be noted that the women's movement does not only define women's identity with its feminine (and Islamic) nature but also calls for an equality of opportunity in the public sphere. In other words, the women Islamists struggle for both recognition of their particular identity and for equal rights. Hence they combine the demands of both equality and authenticity. They ground their demands with universalistic claims that they are not different from any other group for political participation. They often refer to UN reports and the declarations of universal human rights. Actually this is the reason for their participation in international conferences to be able to affect the global agenda. A woman Islamist argues that "the global conferences have played a considerable role in instituting an agenda and granting it legality and international approval in relation to redefining gender identities and roles, and bringing new definitions to sexual rights and relations between the genders (i.e. men and women)."

The women Islamists combine their particularistic and universalistic claims in a way that everyone has a right to define its authenticity. It should be noted that authenticity is not something given, but something to be created by the reflexive activities of the individual actor (Giddens 1991;52). It is created dialogically in relation to actor's ideology and also to 'other'. Confronting the other or a civil adversary is put by Touraine as a precondition for a movement to be social. According to him the absence of an adversary reduces the struggle to a modernizing or an anti-modernist current (1981;85).

'the Other': Feminists or Islamist men

In the case of the Islamist women's movement the place of the 'other' seem to be filled by the Kemalist and feminist women who according to them "deny the feminine traits and thus the nature of woman". Feminism according to the Islamist women is destined to create a society without men. The conflict of the two groups became visible in the fifth Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 and during the preparatory meetings for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlement in 1996 (Habitat II). In Beijing Nazife Sisman who participated in the Conference in the name of the Platform says that we almost had no dialogue with the official delegate and adds that "they were looking at us with eyes asking why we were there. They were humiliating us... in all instances they cooperated with western countries' delegations in a way to define gender as a social construction." (Yeni Safak, September 21, 1995). The conflict of the two groups became obvious during the preparatory meetings for Habitat II where various women's groups came together to write a national action plan. Ayse Böhürler, one of the members of the Platform, commented on these meetings in a conference that "although we collaborated on certain matters such as violence against women, it became obvious that we could not arrive at a consensus with the feminists especially on the concept of gender, family and the role of mother."

It seems that the women Islamists are more cautious in putting the male Islamists in place of the 'other'. However in the discourse of the new women Islamists

some voices began to be heard complaining about the male Islamist actors' attitudes toward 'publicized' Muslim women. A woman speaker who has completed her doctorate in theology depicted her situation in men's eyes in the International Women's Summit that "the Islamist men treat Muslim women who follow an academic career in such a way that we are not happy at home and we do this to satisfy ourselves. They want us to be just a listener." And she added that "Muslim women working in Islamist institutions are all low paid. They pay for cost of their headscarves. I do not find it just."

The Islamist women in the pages of the monthly Women's Identity openly criticize the position of traditional Muslim men whom according to them define women only within the domestic sphere. In this way they also criticize the attitude of the Refah Party by the words that "the Refah Party makes use of us before the elections but during the elections they do not nominate any women." The Islamist women express their demands to rethink over the male-female relations within the family. In one of the panels of the Platform entitled 'the changing meaning of marriage and love throughout history' the woman director opened the panel with the words that "so far we have discussed the role of women with reference to the concept of family. By focusing on this concept we have omitted the discussion of male-female relations and soon have come to the child." And lastly, while criticizing the women's shelters opened up by feminists they propose that "why are we leaving home. If it is needed, men must do that."

All of these critics denote an emerging conflictuality between male and female Islamists. And it can be argued that the contemporary women Islamists no longer just “speak for”, but “speak to” the Muslim male actors (Kural 1997;9). Therefore they display a potential to transform the position of the Islamist male actors within the movement itself.

Based up on these empirical facts it can be said that the women Islamists of the 90's are different from the ones of the 80's. Militant women actors of the 80's political Islam were either rejecting other social actors or trying to box them within 'prescribed' boundaries. They were modernizing agents since they defined themselves with the political stakes of the conflict. Whereas the members of the new women's movement act dialogically in relation to 'other', feminists and traditional Muslim men. In Tourainien sense it can be argued that they discovered the 'other' and they established horizontal relations. This is an important step for Touraine in emerging as a subject (1995). In this context in a Platform brochure it is announced that 'women besides questions like who am I ?, should ask themselves who am I with ? What should I be ? What can I do ?' (in Turkish: *bir birey olarak kadının, kendisine 'kimim?', 'neyim?', 'nasılım?' sorularının yanısıra 'kiminleyim?', 'ne olmalıyım?', 'ne yapabilirim?' sorularını da sorması...*). These questions allude to the women Islamists as new subjects. These new subjects reconstruct their identity with reference to feminists and Islamist men. Consequently, with its demands to attain full recognition of their identity and its criticism of the Islamist men, the Islamist women's movement carries a potential to transform both the homogeneous public space and the position of the Islamist male actors.

A redefinition of the traditional private roles and spaces

Calhoun notes that any pursuit labeled by 'identity politics' is collective as well as individual and public as well as private since the construction of an identity turns on the interrelated problems of self-recognition and recognition by others (1994;20-29). Therefore the movement of the contemporary Turkish women Islamists, if it is a movement seeking legitimacy and recognition, should involve a recontextualization of their public and private roles. In this section I will focus on the conceptualization of the private sphere by the new women Islamists.

The contemporary women Islamists put a great emphasis on the motherhood role of women. The stress on motherhood constitutes the backbone of their discourse. Almost in all brochures of the Platform it is announced that 'a healthy society can only be created around the concept of 'happy mother'. In this way the Islamist women organize motherhood seminars to equip woman with religious and social sciences. They call their motherhood 'educative motherhood', *egitimci annelik*. So the motherhood stressed by the Islamist women is no longer a traditional one but a 'scientific one'. With this new motherhood identity the Islamist women differentiates themselves from their traditional mothers.

As with the motherhood role of women, the status of housewives should also be re-determined according to the Platform members. F. Barbarosoglu, in a pamphlet

prepared by the Project Production Center, points out that the life experienced by housewives has been devalued as electrical home appliances have entered their lives. These appliances according to her have obscured the status of housewives since "although the devices at home must be programmed by someone for them to function, those outside the home underestimate the importance of the existence of this programmer". Thus the position of the housewives are treated as consumers rather than being producers. The days of social gatherings between housewives perform no greater function than simply the common destruction of time. This is due to that the housewives lack of motivation that would enable them to make their time more fruitful. Barbarosoglu notes that "the latest researches indicate that mothers who are able to engage in meaningful self expression rear children in a better manner." Actually "in the traditional life of the Turks, women led lives where they were engaged in some occupation. Within the context of Turkish society, it is a new concept for women not to work by being engaged in manufacturing some things, but instead to be busy with a 9-6 working life. In this respect, when the homes are converted into workshops of trade and art, it will not only rid housewives of their being questioned 'what have you done today?', but also will permit them to utilize that period of time they usually spend from the time they leave their homes till they get work instead in the arrangement of their household affairs... For the work to be made enjoyable in the medium of the house, housewives must be provided with facilities to work together. In this respect, the arrangements of the basement floors and attics as workshops may allow them to construct places to work together." And she adds that with the realization of the ability to perform such office jobs as typesetting, correction, accounting. housewives can work without leaving their homes. These views constitute the basis of several projects presently being developed

by the Support for Working Women Enterprising Group. The vice-president of the group states that they are in contact with a local municipality to make it supply a place as a workshop and thus to bring the project to life.

Therefore the contemporary Islamist women try to recontextualize the domestic space where women can perform their motherhood and household affairs and still be productive. For this, they propose the re-arrangements of working hours and places. As a result, especially by carrying modern occupations as office jobs to the domestic space, they combine their traditional roles and the activities of a modern economy in the context of the home.

The roles of women as mothers and housewives are crucial for the Islamist women since "the mother creates future generations and the housewife organizes the family, thus daily life." Family is another important concept for the Platform to struggle for. According to the Islamist women the denial of the differences between the two sexes leads to the increase in homosexuality and thus the collapse of the family. They state that they are against the rise of single parent families which according to them is constituted of 'deviant' sexes. In both the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference and the 1996 Istanbul Habitat II Summit the Platform rejected the position that 'various families exist'. According to the Islamist women the family which consists of man and woman with their biological identities is the basis of a healthy society. Therefore in the definition of the family the contemporary women

Islamists defend a conservative position and place woman within the family with her biological (essentialist) nature.

At this point it should be noted that the Islamist women who by their very existence questions the rules of normality and stands for the differences in Turkish context, with their conservative position in the definition of the type of family and gender create new rules of normality and standardization. They in a way stand for their own differences while in certain cases denying the others.

Visibility in the public sphere

With the stress of the Islamist women on their domestic roles, it should not be assumed that Platform defines women only with reference to family and thus within the private sphere. The existence of the Platform itself is a reflection of the demands of the Islamist women in the public sphere or at least leads to such a result. Besides that Platform members like the Support to Working Women Group, Women Lawyers' Enterprising Group and Chemists' Group are representing the entrance of the Islamist women into the public sphere. Within the brochures of Platform it is announced that "Platform is struggling to make woman happy at home and at work with their Islamist identities." In order to attain these ends the Islamist women organize and participate in panels where their 'secret' bodies become visible.

Participating in conferences instead of just criticizing and reacting against them differentiates the Platform from earlier Islamist organizations. However these conferences are not places where only women come. Islamist women attend at the same place with men, discuss with them, even give lectures to them. This as a result alludes to the breaking down of an important taboo of traditional Islam. With their new positioning the Islamist women challenge the border between men and women or *mahrem* and *namahrem*.

The women Islamists discourse for the visibility in the public sphere is radical in the sense that they legalize their arguments by reference to the practices of the early days of Islam. They often speak about the Quranic verses and Islamic practices at that time of the four Caliphs that legalized and exemplified women's existence in the public sphere. It was the false tradition that kept women in the domestic sphere. A woman lawyer argues that "In the early days we see Islamist women sometime warning a Caliph for any fault and sometimes, in the case of Aisha, correcting some wrong statements and interpretations of the companions of the Prophet." Prophet Muhammad had taken '*biat*' (allegiance) from women which according to her meant women's direct participation in political life. During the preliminary activities of the Islamist civil associations for the Habitat Summit in 1996 in a panel entitled 'The Identity of the Muslim Woman in a Changing Turkey' a women speaker commented on the status of women in Islam as such:

"Despite the fact that all the Quranic verses and the practices of the early days of Islam which legalize and even necessitates the participation of women in

social life, the disappearance of women except in cases of compulsion in Islamic history shortly after the Khulafa-e-Rashideen, has prevented the participation of women in social life. The woman was given the right of existence only as a wife and a mother, and as such, her potential could not be developed in other fields. This understanding led to keeping the women under guardianship... It also obstructed the growth of women as a free individual... This hard-line approach towards the domain of male and female led to undue emphasis on and exaggeration of the male and female sexuality.”

It seems that their Islamist identities and the veil are seen by the Islamist women not as a reason to be kept inside (in private sphere), but as a mode of appearing outside. Relatedly they reject that they are a source of *fitne* (social disorder). One of the Islamist women writers, Cihan Aktas, says that keeping women within the four walls is not a solution to the problem of *fitne* in a world of a technological communication (1991;254). Moreover she argues that not only women but men can also be a source of *fitne*. Therefore the new women actors challenge the meaning of one of the most important Islamic concepts which provided a theoretical tool throughout the Islamic history to associate women with the domestic sphere.

The women Islamists claim that in Islam woman has the right to work outside. The President of the Women Lawyer's Enterprising Group says that “if a woman does not want to work, she should not be obliged. But if she wants to work, without forgetting her family responsibilities, she should not be hindered.” However they do

not claim total occupational equality. The vice-President of the Support to Working Women Enterprising Group states that “ we orient young friends to certain jobs as doctors, teachers and nurses because we believe that women are in difficulty in performing some jobs requiring physical power. For instance to be a civil engineer is almost impossible for a woman. I am an architect but outside work at the time of construction is full of problems for me.” Thus by emphasizing their ‘deficiency’ in certain occupational areas, the women Islamists combine their demands to attend in the public sphere with their essentialist arguments.

However against the obstacles they face in performing their jobs because of their headscarves, they argue that they are not different from the other women. A woman lawyer says that “ we have the same intellectual capacity as the others. We can do all of the things they do. But they do not allow us to attend in the courts.” Thus the Islamist women express their demand for a full equality in terms of professional rights. Meanwhile the women Islamists seem to have found the mechanism to overcome problems in their entrance in the public sphere. The woman architect has a male partner who does outside work while she attends to the office. The President of the Women Lawyer’s Group has an uncovered woman partner who goes to court while she engages in internal matters.

The women Islamists also legalize the acquirement of modern professional jobs with an argument that in certain contexts women need women’s services. They argue that Muslim women in certain cases cannot go to male doctors. So we need women

doctors. This argument extends to the cases of teachers and lawyers. Therefore by receiving an education women not only become better informed mothers but also provide teaching, medical and juristic services for other women. Thus the problem of male-female interaction can be avoided. Hence Islamist discourse on gender and public roles, if we use Moghadam's words, " combines traditional and conservative ideas about women's place and an acceptance of the need of a modern economy." (1993;148).

For women Islamists in the eighties education and occupation were structured within a radical Islamist discourse in a way that they were just means for attaining great Islamic ideals. But in the nineties the Islamist women's occupations and visibility in the public sphere serve as a means within the process of the creation of a new Islamic identity. Women Islamists' professional occupations open up new avenues in the search for an alternative life style. However they feel the tension in combining their private (especially motherhood) and public roles, although they prefer to acquire jobs that do not require full time attendance. In order to overcome this problem the Support to Working Women Enterprising Group works on a project that will mobilize the educated but non-working women or university students to take care of the children of the working women living nearby. With this project, "we aim to provide the warmth of a home" says the vice president of the group. But it seems that this tension will constitute an important part of the new Islamist women's identity as the tension in combining the arguments of both difference and equality.

The Islamist women's movement : homogeneity or plurality

The salient feature of new social movements that differentiates them from the old ones is that they operate on the basis of otherness and difference while the latter stands for a complete equality. In other words, whereas the old social movements involved actors who structured their identities within the given dominant models, the actors of the contemporary movements like ethnic, lesbian, gay, environmentalist and post-feminist movements are those who struggle not only for equal rights but also for the right to be different. These abstract propositions make sense in the case of old and new or first and second wave feminism.

While the first wave feminists devalue the private sphere and the motherhood role of women and call for the complete economic and social equality on the basis that women too can take male characteristics appropriate to the world of work and politics; second wave feminists criticize their position in a way that the precondition for that type of an equality is the 'inner metamorphosis' of women. According to new feminists the call for complete equality is actually self-denial of the female identity since in that approach the position of males is celebrated (Elshtain 1981,309). So they problematize the universalistic claims and instead introduce their repressed and devalued features-their feminine traits and motherhood roles- into the system.

The movement of the new women Islamists displays strong similarities with the second wave feminists in a way that it invokes a category, Muslim woman, which was excluded by the homogeneous public space of the modern Republic. The exclusion and reentrance of Muslim women is illustrated in a pamphlet of the Platform as such : “after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Muslim women in Turkey kept themselves on the periphery since they were told that they had no place in modern life. When they rarely entered public places they were confronted with the possibility of legal proceedings. They kept themselves out of sight because they were told that everything which symbolized their identity was in conflict with social progress. They kept themselves out of sight too, because they did not have the strength to overcome the narrowness of a recently completed revolution. As they began to develop some trust in the democratic system, they reentered the mainstream of life.” It is obvious that the Islamist women appear in the public sphere in the nineties as doctors, lawyers and journalists. This visibility symbolizes the return of a repressed category (veiled Islamist women) and thus challenges the homogeneity of the Kemalist public sphere.

The new women Islamists also show parallelism with post-feminists in terms of their discourse. The discourse of the Islamist women in the eighties was radical and reactionary to their traditional roles. It was argued that the women in Islam had a right not to do housework, even not to suckle their children. Whereas the new Islamists in the nineties seem to reappropriate their traditional roles by stressing the role of women as mothers and wives.

The new women Islamists actually seem to be aware of these parallelisms. "As the subject has gradually evolved simply into one of women's rights, in place of quarrelsome feminism which was the first to surface, we are now beginning to find in the post-modern feminist movement signs of conciliation and compromise" writes Cihan Aktas in a Platform pamphlet delivered during the Habitat Summit II in 1996. She severely criticizes the form of feminism which argues that the difference between men and women is only relative and has arisen through cultural mutation and that there will in the near future remain no significant difference between the two sexes. Therefore according to Aktas the motto of this form of feminism is "one is the other." Against this motto there are some other women who say "one is by no means the other." They argue that men and women are different not only on the basis of reproduction but also in many social and physical aspects. Therefore the problems of women can be solved by stressing the importance of the protection of women's values.

The defense of the biological and physiological nature of woman by women Islamists does not refer to a simple return to uncontested categories of the biological determinism. Rather their argument claims value for a category that has been repressed and devalued in dominant discourse and thus invokes it in an essentialist way. They exacerbate their Islamic (and also woman's) identity and struggle to carry the components of that identity into the polity. Hence in Göle's terms "the Islamic way of dressing, Islamic way of living, Islamic faith, all signs considered as sources of 'backwardness', 'uncivilized ways', as 'dark side of modernity', as 'forces of

obscurantism' thus signs taken to be responsible for Muslim oppression and exclusion, are all reappropriated and accentuated by these Islamist actors." (forthcoming)

With the transportation of their different outlook in to modern contexts the new women Islamists have been confronted by the secular elite who have treated their existence as a threat to their life styles. So although the conflict has been encouraged by particular conditions and specific actors, it has simultaneously involved problems concerning the system's overall logic and dilemmas. Hence with the advent of new Islamic actors the concepts of democracy, secularism, Islamism, human rights, public space and so on have been brought into public light.

The paradox of the women Islamists (actually Islamism itself) is that they address the whole of society in the name of a particular category or group. On the one hand the Islamist women's message is antagonistic in a sense that they challenge the standardization of experience and homogenization of society. Thus they may expand the civil society and promote the plurality. But on the other hand it should be noted that this particular category differs from other contemporary categories like environmentalists and some ethnicities, since it potentially/ideologically bears totalitarian tendencies. Islamism which the new women actors are part of is an ideology that may serve to cleanse the public sphere in the name of a 'divine good'. The Islamist women's discourse is actually homogenizing especially in their conservative positioning in the definitions of certain concepts like type of family and gender. However if they try to establish forms of communication that allows differences, the very existence of the Islamist women actors can be seen as a mean

that helps to democratize the political system and to renew political and cultural markets in Turkey.

CONCLUSION

Differently from the Islamist women of the eighties who oriented themselves to the political sphere and stressed on their political rights, the contemporary women Islamists appear in the Turkish context as professionals and intellectuals focusing on their professional rights. Contrary to the conceptions which depict the Islamist women as passive and submissive beings, they emerge as rational actors, being organized around civil associations and platforms, willing to redefine their private and public roles both within the Islamic movement and modern Turkish society.

The Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform is the first of these platforms through which actors problematize their identities, social norms and life styles. It seems to be oriented towards the civil societal more than the political sphere. It is a civil association differentiating itself from the Islamist Refah Party, although the contemporary women Islamists benefit from the space opened up by the rise of this party in municipal and governmental level. However it should be noted that although

the women Islamists are not mainly oriented to the political sphere, they aim to produce some effects on political institutions. As in the case of the members of the Women Lawyer's Group who negotiate certain codes with politicians, they want to influence political actors to make policy appropriate to their collective identity. This is the offensive side of the Platform which functions in this case more as an interest group. But more important side of the Platform is its function in the process of self-definitions of women which involves issues of public and private roles.

They challenge both the traditional Islamic identification of woman as 'locked into the private sphere' and modern (feminist) identification as 'disenchanted/liberated from all traditional, communal and familial ties'. They are not for a total equality among the sexes. They stress on the feminine traits, especially the motherhood role of women. But they do this by redefining this role as 'educative motherhood', one which is furnished by religious and social sciences. Thus they differentiate themselves from their 'traditional' mothers. They develop projects to reorganize the domestic space in order to make housewives more active by demonstrating their abilities in their homeplaces.

Besides their stress on private roles, the contemporary Islamist women voice demands transcending the boundaries of the domestic roles. They state that they have a right to take their place in the public sphere. They struggle for political inclusion on the basis of equality with other actors. They organize and participate in panels, and they perform their modern professional jobs in certain contexts where both sexes

meet. In other words they are not afraid of the 'non-Islamic'. Their existence in such places leads to the breakdown of the first taboo of Islamic social organization based on the segregation of sexes. Hence their participation into public life as professionals and intellectuals starts an unfolding process which transforms the traditional understanding of Islam. Such a challenge also alludes to the questioning of the position of the Islamist male actors, and thus leads to the emergence of new conflicts between male and women actors within the Islamist movement.

As result of their stress on the concept of family, the contemporary women Islamists feel the tension to reconcile their professions with their family life. To overcome this problem they develop projects for the children of working women or propose to redetermine working hours for women. Although they orient themselves towards professions which do not require full time work, they still seem to encounter this difficulty in combining their private and public roles. They seem to be squeezed between their Islamic ideals and professional/individualistic aspirations.

The Islamist women's participation into public life also challenges the Kemalist homogenous public sphere which during the foundation of the Republic was constituted around the principle of excluding all (especially Islamic) signs of the past. Hence the existence of the Islamist women, especially in modern urban contexts represents the coming of an excluded category. In this sense the Islamist women's movement displays strong parallelisms with new contemporary movements such as environmental, ethnic and feminist movements. As these movements, the movement

of the Turkish Islamist women debate the codes, the rules of spaces and normality in question. In other words it challenges the symbolic ground on which society is grounded. With their different outlook the Islamist women question established norms and by their very existence, they exemplify other ways of 'doing things'. In this sense the Islamist women's movement challenges the definition of secularism which for many decades has served as a means to define the public sphere in Turkey.

The Islamist women are willing to take their place in the public sphere with their 'authentic' identities. They at the same time claim the right to be different and seek for an equal opportunity. Their movement carries an excluded group to the polity with an accompanying process of identity construction. However since it is still part of a general Islamic identity which bears its totalitarian tendencies, the Islamist women's identity is met with great caution by some other social actors. Actually whether the Islamist women will serve as means for cleansing the public space by the Islamic movements or by acquiring a self limiting nature they will enlarge the civil democratic space in Turkey are still open ended questions in the Turkish context.

APPENDIX I

Mesleğiniz :

Mesleğinizi aktif olarak yapıyor musunuz ? Evet Hayır

Doğduğunuz yer ve yıl :

İstanbul dışında daha evvel yaşadığınız yerler :

Kaç senedir İstanbul'da yaşıyorsunuz? :

İstanbul'da oturduğunuz semt :

Varsa daha evvel oturduğunuz semtler :

Eğitiminiz : Lise : Şehir :

Üniversite :

Y.Lisan - Doktora :

Bildiğiniz yabancı diller :

Yurt dışına çıktınız mı? Evet Hayır

Çıktıysanız hangi ülkelerde bulundunuz? :

Medeni durumunuz Evli Bekar Boşanmış

Eşinizin mesleği :

Eşiniz aktif biçimde siyasetle uğraşır mı? Evet Hayır

Eşinizin tercih ettiği siyasi parti :

Sizin tercih ettiğiniz siyasi parti :

Parti tercihinizde aşağıdakilerden hangisi etkili olmuştur? Önem sırasına göre numaralandırınız.

Anne - Baba

Eşim

Çocuklarım

Parti programı

Kitle iletişim araçları

Sosyal çevrem

Parti lideri

Din bilgilerini nasıl edindiniz ?

Aileden :

Kur'an kursundan :

Lise - Üniversiteden :

Kendi çabalarımla :

Çocuğunuz var mı? Evet Hayır

Kız : Okuduğu Okul :

Erkek : Okuduğu Okul :

Varsa kardeşleriniz Kız : Eğitimleri :

Erkek : Eğitimleri :

Geliriniz :

10 - 20 milyon 20 - 30 milyon 30 - 40 milyon 40 - 50 milyon

50 milyon üzeri

APPENDIX II

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS cont.

Association Sub-Organizations

- ❖ MAZLUM - DER / Women's Commission
- ❖ ANATOLIA INTELLECTUAL HEARTH
Women's Commission

Initiative Groups

- ❖ RADIO, TV GROUP
- ❖ FAMILY UNITY GROUP
- ❖ HAZAR GROUP
- ❖ LAWYER'S GROUP
- ❖ NIL GROUP
- ❖ PROJECT PRODUCTION GROUP
- ❖ MY HOME WOMEN'S CLUB
- ❖ KARTAL ANATOLIA III. MOTHER'S UNION
- ❖ FEZA CULTURE GROUP
- ❖ BASIC EDUCATION GROUP
- ❖ AUTUMN GROUP
- ❖ OUR FAMILY GROUP
- ❖ OUR LINE GROUP
- ❖ WOMEN'S IDENTITY GROUP
- ❖ EDUCATOR'S GROUP
- ❖ EDUCATION SUPPORT GROUP
- ❖ 5T GROUP
- ❖ SUPPORT TO WORKING WOMEN GROUP
- ❖ POPPIES CLUB



THE SECRETARY ORGANIZATION
OF THE PLATFORM IS THE
WOMEN'S SCIENTIFIC AND
CULTURAL SOCIETY.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- ❖ 1993 Congress and Exhibition for Women NGO's in Turkey / ANKARA
- ❖ 1993 Identity of Women in Turkey / ANKARA
- ❖ 1994 International Year of Family, NGO Forum / MALTA
- ❖ 1994 International Year of Family / MONTREAL
- ❖ On the way to Beijing Congress for the Cooperation of Eurasian Women / ANKARA
- ❖ 1995 NGO Forum on Women / BEIJING
- ❖ 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women / BEIJING

ADMINISTRATION OF THE RAINBOW ISTANBUL WOMEN'S PLATFORM

- ❖ Members participate in the administration of the platform with two representatives and the Platform Assembly is the highest competent body of the platform.
- ❖ The representatives of the organizations must be chosen by the organization itself and the platform must be notified in writing.
- ❖ Every organization has the right of one single vote at the assembly.
- ❖ Membership and withdrawal from membership is possible at any stage by the notification of the platform secretary in writing.
- ❖ The platform is a non-profit and non-political voluntary organization.

RAINBOW

ISTANBUL WOMEN'S PLATFORM

*Come, let's meet,
Let's make life easy,
Let's love and be loved,
This world is only passing.*

Yunus Emre - Sufi Master

Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform has been founded by voluntary women's organizations, foundations, associations, commissions and groups from various fields in Istanbul.



HASEKI KADIN SOK. NO:1
AKSARAY ISTANBUL / TURKEY

TEL: (90) (212) 588 45 96

FAX: (90) (212) 586 31 37

A group of women carrying the spirit of *Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi* and the words of *Yunus Emre* in their hearts founded the **Rainbow Istanbul Women's Platform**, which acts as a network of women's organizations sharing common goals and interests.

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To coordinate unity among women organizations which are serving in different fields.
- ❖ To provide a common working ground for achieving goals that cannot be met by single organizations.
- ❖ To provide a link with national and international organizations.
- ❖ To pursue events related to women and the family and to respond accordingly.
- ❖ To take an active part in the decisions made in Turkey or abroad affecting the status of women and the family.
- ❖ To monitor the media and respond to related issues.
- ❖ To establish audio/visual and printed material archives.
- ❖ To inform the general public about the aims and activities of the platform through media.
- ❖ To encourage research on relevant topics.

A RAINBOW represents UNITY with each colour carrying its own identity. There is strength in UNITY. Variety and diversity are not obstacles to UNITY, but prejudice and intolerance are...



ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Holding regular meetings, defining common goals.
- ❖ Encouraging women's occupational groups such as physicians, lawyers, educators, artists, etc..
- ❖ Holding regular cultural and social events to raise funds for the platform.
- ❖ Getting in touch with various women's organizations in Anatolia and specifying common goals.
- ❖ Participating in the meetings of the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women in Ankara and establishing a network of information.
- ❖ Participating in national and international conferences on women and the family.
- ❖ Setting up audio/visual and printed material archives.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Women's Foundations

- ❖ WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND CULTURE FOUNDATION
- ❖ COMPASSION FOUNDATION

Foundation Sub-Organizations

- ❖ HISTORICAL ISLAM RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Women's Commission
- ❖ ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION FOUNDATION
Women's Commission
- ❖ MANTLE OF THE PROPHET FOUNDATION
Women's Commission
- ❖ UNITY FOUNDATION / Women's Commission
- ❖ LIFE, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOUNDATION
Women's Commission
- ❖ SOLIDARITY FOUNDATION / Women's Commission
- ❖ RESEARCH AND CULTURE FOUNDATION
Women's Commission
- ❖ OTTOMAN KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM FOUNDATION
Family Commission
- ❖ ELIF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOUNDATION
Women's Commission
- ❖ TURKISH LITERATURE FOUNDATION
Women's Commission
- ❖ YENI ASYA EDUCATION AND CULTURE FOUNDATION
Women's Commission

Women's Associations

- ❖ WOMEN'S SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL SOCIETY
- ❖ FRIENDSHIP WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
- ❖ HALE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
- ❖ ÇAĞRI WOMEN'S SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL SOCIETY
- ❖ KADIKÖY HILAL ATMINAIE ASSOCIATION
- ❖ NEEDY MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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