WHEN DO MOVEMENTS AGAINST FEMICIDE SUCCEED?

THE CASES OF MEXICO AND TURKEY

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Rana Elif Aydın, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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ABSTRACT

When Do Movements Against Femicide Succeed?

The Cases of Mexico and Turkey

Femicide refers to the killing of women because of their gender and is the deadliest form of violence against women. Data shows that it exists in every country around the world. While some of these countries may be deadlier for women than others, few stand out for their strong mobilization against the issue. In this thesis, I try to pinpoint when movements against femicide succeed by using the feminist and the subsequent antifemicide movements in Mexico and Turkey as my cases. Previous research shows that social movements have a higher chance of success in times and spaces where political opportunity structures exist. This thesis aims to clarify whether political opportunities have been conducive to the success of antifemicide movements. To test that hypothesis, I first trace the emergence of antifemicide movements in both cases through qualitative methods. While outlining these movements, I point out when these movements have achieved success based on the theory of political opportunities. Then, through a wide historic lens, I define what success means for a movement and the circumstances of the turning points that allow the movement the gain traction or achieve success. As a result, I find that antifemicide movements are compatible with the political opportunity paradigm, but only when an expanded definition of political opportunities is used. With that definition in place, I argue that political opportunities that present in various forms are conducive to the success of movements against femicide.

ÖZET

Kadın Cinayeti Hareketleri Ne Zaman Başarılı Olur?

Meksika ve Türkiye Vakaları

Kadın cinayeti, kadınların cinsiyeti nedeniyle öldürülmesidir ve kadına karşı şiddetin en ölümcül biçimidir. Veriler, kadın cinayetinin dünyadaki her ülkede mevcut olduğunu göstermekte. Bu ülkelerden bazıları, diğerlerine göre kadınlar için daha ölümcül yerler olsa da çok daha azı bu konu etrafında güçlü bir mobilizasyona ev sahipliği yapmakta. Bu tezde, Meksika ve Türkiye vakalarını inceleyerek kadın cinayeti hareketlerinin ne zaman başarılı olduğunu belirlemeye çalışıyorum. Geçmişte yapılan araştırmalar, toplumsal hareketlerin siyasi fırsat yapılarının olduğu konumlarda ve zamanlarda başarıya ulaşma ihtimalinin daha yüksek olduğunu gösteriyor. Bu tezin amacı da siyasi fırsatların kadın cinayeti hareketlerinin başarısında etkili olup olmadığını netleştirmektir. Bu hipotezi değerlendirmek adına ilk olarak nitel yöntemler aracılığıyla her iki vakada da kadın cinayeti hareketlerinin çıkış noktalarını belirliyorum. Bu hareketlerin hatlarını çizerken siyasi fırsat kuramından yola çıkarak ne zaman başarıya ulaştıklarını, ardından geniş kapsamlı tarihsel bir bakış açısıyla bir hareketin başarılarını ve bu hareketi güçlendiren veya başarıya ulaştıran dönüm noktalarının şartlarını tanımlıyorum. Sonuç olarak kadın cinayeti hareketlerinin siyasi fırsat paradigmasıyla uyumlu olduğunu, ancak bunun yalnızca siyasi fırsatların genişletilmiş tanımı baz alındığında mümkün olduğunu iddia ediyorum. Bu tanım belirlenip kabul edildiğinde ise farklı şekillerde ortaya çıkan siyasi fırsatların kadın cinayeti hareketlerinin başarısına etkili olduğunu savunuyorum.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, two countries have stood out for their strong grassroots mobilization around the issue of femicides: Mexico and Turkey. These countries, placed on opposite sides of the world, are different along numerous political, economic, and societal axes. However, both have seen the rise of powerful grassroots movements mobilizing with similar strategies, even though the structures of these movements differ from one another. Furthermore, these two countries have been successful in increasing the participation of women in the public/political sphere to make their demands heard, as well as leading to the creation of legislative change on violence against women and femicides.

A striking similarity between Mexico and Turkey is that femicide has not only gathered immense media attention but also become the focus of grassroots social movements and local advocacy networks. In Turkey, *Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu* (We Will Stop Femicides Platform, KCDP) was founded in 2010 after the highly publicized murder of Münevver Karabulut in 2009 (Kav, 2020). KCDP has been actively organizing protests, attending court cases of femicides, advocating for the full implementation of existing laws to protect women, and monitoring femicide data ever since (Kav, 2020). In Mexico, the antifemicide movement is more fragmented, with organizations such as *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa*, *Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas*, *Observatorio Ciudadano Nacional del Feminicidio*, *Madres Buscadoras de Mexico*, as well as individual activists such Maria Salguero and Frida Guerrera who are mapping and tracking femicides across the nation. I have called the antifemicide movement in Mexico fragmented. However, this of course does not mean that KCDP is the only organization in Turkey

with a focus on femicides. For example, Zeren Göktan has created “Anıtsayaç”, a digital monument that counts femicides in Turkey through KCDP reports, as well through scanning news articles (Kav, 2020, p. 73). Other feminist groups, organizations, collectives, and platforms routinely address and protest the issue of femicides as well. Moreover, the movement extends beyond the scope of feminist organizations, as other organizations and institutions such as city councils and platforms, trade associations, and women’s branches of political parties come together under the roof of organizations such as *Eşitlik için Kadın Platformu* (Platform for Equality for Women), a platform that is concerned with issues such as femicides, violence against women, the sexual abuse of children, and the Istanbul Convention.

The antifemicide grassroots movements in both countries not only routinely protest femicides when they happen, but they also help the women’s families, attend court cases of femicides, advocate for new laws to address the issue and also for the full and correct implementation of existing laws to protect women, and monitor femicide statistics. They share knowledge and experience with one another, utilize their networks to the fullest extent and form transnational connections. As mentioned in an above paragraph, their strategies are quite similar, even if their structures may differ.

Yet, the existence and endurance of these large-scale social movements against femicide show that their impact on eradicating femicide has been limited in both cases. However, with all its limitations, these movements have been a strong factor behind legal change around the issue. The limitations persist when it comes to the implementation of said laws, as in Mexico and Turkey, laws to protect women exist on a global, regional, and domestic level, however, these are not implemented

correctly and fully. Compared to Mexico's extensive legislation on the issue, Turkey lags behind. For example, Mexico provides official data on femicides, whereas no such data can be obtained in Turkey. One crucial demand of the antifemicide movement in Turkey has been for the government to monitor and track data on femicides, and to share it with the public (Kav, 2020, p. 42). Another divergent example is Mexico's exemplary penal code, which recognizes femicide as a distinct crime.

However, there are also similarities in terms of the legislation, especially concerning international and regional agreements. Both countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which forms the basis for the protection of women's rights on a global level, and also, later on, addressed the issue of violence against women through during the Nairobi Conference in 1985 (Zwingel, 2016, p. 41). Regional conventions on the topic of eradicating violence against women include the Convention of Belém do Pará, which Mexico adopted in 1994, and the Istanbul Convention, to which Turkey was the first signatory in 2011. The implementation of both these regional conventions was a force that catalyzed a more committed debate on the subject (Luján Pinelo, 2015). Domestically, Mexico adopted the General Law of Access for Women to a Life Free of Violence in 2007, and Turkey passed Law No. 6284 to Protect the Family and Prevent Violence against Women in 2012. Yet, these conventions and laws in both Mexico and Turkey have not translated into action on eradicating violence against women or femicides. Furthermore, women's advocacy groups in both countries have mobilized to demand the correct implementation of said laws.

Despite these similar outcomes, the underlying conditions in Mexico and Turkey are different in important ways. Currently, no reliable global statistics that are based on a common definition of femicide are kept (Walklate et al., 2020). However, both official and non-official data show that violence against women is more pervasive in Mexico. In 2015, the number of female homicides per capita (a measure that is not synonymous with femicide but is likely correlated with femicides per capita) was seven times higher in Mexico than in Turkey (Taştan & Küçüker-Yıldız, 2018). The nature of violence against women is also different in these two contexts. For example, some scholars try to pin the reasons for femicides on a range of factors: In Mexico, femicides have a disproportionate impact on certain societal groups—the crime is connected to issues of race and drug violence (Brysk, 2018; Wright, 2011). By contrast, femicides in Turkey tend to be diffused across all layers of society, although some studies do indicate that violence against women in Turkey is linked to low socioeconomic status (Başar & Demirci, 2018).

Because the underlying grievances in Mexico and Turkey are different in their severity and nature, it might be expected that the grassroots movements in these countries would use different rhetoric and strategies or have distinct levels of success. Not only is the number for femicides per capita different, but these two countries have different political conditions, in which the levels of pluralism and overall levels of democracies are different (Freedom House, 2022). In a less pluralistic context such as Turkey, scholars might expect that social movements would be less able to succeed or would need to use different tactics (McAdam, 1982). Of course, there are also noteworthy similarities: For instance, the State of Civil Society Index of CIVICUS shows that Mexico and Turkey have similar levels of civic space (CIVICUS, 2020).

If Mexico and Turkey do not present similar conditions in which social mobilization around the issue of femicides has emerged, then how are these movements' strategies similar, and how do they diverge from one another? How is the success of a social movement measured? To answer these questions, I first describe what defines a femicide and an antifemicide movement, then provide a literature review on social movements theories which I use throughout this thesis to explain the movements around femicides. After my literature review, I provide a novel framework to measure the success of antifemicide movements. Then, I outline the methodology employed to analyze the cases of Mexico and Turkey. The following chapters present insight into the emergence and structure of women's rights movements in Mexico and Turkey, as well as its relation to the antifemicide movements. Finally, I provide a comparison of Mexico and Turkey to explain the emergence, organization, and differing levels of the success of antifemicide movements.

1.1 Definition of femicide

Femicide is the "killing of women only because they are women," a term that Diana E. H. Russell coined in 1976 and quickly gained traction in both women's social movements and academic circles (Radford & Russell, 1992). Distinguishing femicide as a concept that sets it apart from "murdered women" or "female homicides" and is crucial step, as naming this phenomenon is a way to provide a framework to understand what sets it apart from other forms of homicide. Conceptualizing femicides allows us to interpret this form of violence against women in relation to the gendered power relations of a patriarchal society (Radford & Russell, 1992, p. 7).

Femicide is the final and most violent form within all other types of violence against women and sexual violence and should be located in a continuum of all forms of violence against women. (Radford & Russell, 1992, p. 15). Globally, intimate partners commit femicide the most at 35% (World Health Organization, 2012, pp. 1-2). However, intimate partners are not the only ones committing femicide. Relatives, acquaintances, colleagues, or unknown men as well as "criminals" linked to violent lifestyles may also be the perpetrators (Lagarde, 2008, p. 216). The wide array of potential perpetrators, environments (such as wanting to leave or rejecting the perpetrator), and behavioral patterns of this crime show that femicide is an issue that affects society as a whole. A criminal perspective that evaluates femicides as stand-alone occurrences or outbursts of random, untraceable violence is a severely lacking approach to explaining femicides, whereas feminist theory provides a useful theoretical perspective as it situates femicides within the sociostructural oppression of women (Radford & Russell, 1992, p. 264; Taylor & Jasinski, 2011, p. 354).

Radford and Russell also argue that giving a name to killing of women because of their gender is the precedent that creates a movement against it (1992, xiv). This seems to be true, as femicide has become a subject of public attention, a political issue, and a legal category in some countries only recently, especially during the twenty-first century although violence against women has existed throughout human history. Women have mobilized on both an international and domestic level on the issue and femicides have become the main topic in many women's rights movements across the world, have been defined in the legislation and penal codes of various countries (especially in Latin America, with 18 countries in 2018 who had specific legislation on femicides) and many international organizations (United

Nations, World Health Organization, European Union to name a few) have started getting involved in addressing, monitoring, and offering solutions. Following Wright's lead, I use the term "antifemicide" to describe the movement that rallies around the issue of femicides (2007, p. 402). The reason behind this is to indicate a special form of grassroots mobilization that emerged around the issue of femicides to differentiate it from the general feminist or a women's rights movements that have also been voicing protests to end violence against women. This of course does not mean that antifemicide movements are not feminist or are not concerned with women's rights. On the contrary, the culmination of women's rights movements up until the emergence of antifemicide movements all over the world has been instrumental to the emergence, structures, strategies, knowledge, and methods of this specific movement. Antifemicide movements are feminist in their nature, even if they may not self-identify as such, which tends to be the case where maternal activism, leftist women's activism in Mexico and Turkey, and the Islamic women's rights movement in Turkey. However, the simple fact that they aim to dismantle the power structures that bar women from the right to life and the right to a life free of violence is a feminist objective. The first step to ensuring gender equality starts with women not being killed on the basis of their gender. While primarily concerned with violence against women and femicides, antifemicide movements are intersectional and routinely address other feminist issues such as the right and access to abortion, economic inequality, labor rights, and racial injustice.

1.2 Literature review and theoretical framework

Social movements have long been a form of engaging in collective action to voice grievances, concerns, and demands (Snow, 2004). The expansive academic literature

on social movements offers several explanations for why they emerge and when they succeed. In my research, I plan to investigate whether the following theories, specifically if political opportunity theory (Eisinger, 1973; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; McAdam et al., 1996; Tarrow, 2011) can explain the similarity of varying degrees of success of the antifemicide movements in Mexico and Turkey.

One "classical" approach, often described as "strain and breakdown theories," was the starting point for scholars to distinguish between all forms of collective action and social movements (Buechler, 2004). This paradigm viewed grievances, social strain, and irrationality as the basis of collective behavior, of which social movements were one manifestation, along with riots and mobs (Buechler, 2004). However, other scholars argued that attributing these movements to grievances is a simplistic explanation. Grievances may explain why movements emerge, they do not explain how they emerge or why some grievances lead to movements, but others do not (McAdam, 1982; Meyer, 2004; Tilly, 2004). Isolated incidents are not sustainable social movements, because the participants of these incidents do not have the power to sustain challenging the status quo (Tarrow, 1994, p. 11). In time, social movement theory has moved in the direction of justifying collective action not based on grievances, but rather on the mobilizing structures behind it (Oberschall, 1973).

This branch, often termed "resource mobilization theory," argues that grievances have always existed, that social movements require coordination and strategic planning, and that mobilizing resources cannot be simply done on a whim (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; Jenkins, 1983). Resource mobilization theory places the emphasis on the importance of resources, such as organizations (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), and subsequently, the power of elites in mobilizing. The idea of grievances treats protests as acts of irrationality that come from social disorder,

whereas the resource approach emphasizes good organization and extensive networks.

A third approach, the "political opportunity" model, argues that these theories may explain how social movements emerge and how they are shaped to some extent, not the success and the overall process of the movements (McAdam, 1982). To explain the process, political opportunity structures emerge in the literature. Under the political opportunity paradigm, the behavior of individuals in collective action is not only based on the resources they have access to, but also on the openings, weak spots, barriers, and the resources of the political system itself (Eisinger, 1973, p. 12). McAdam also critiques the previous models of mobilization and amends how these mobilizations are shaped by his own political process theory (PPT) (McAdam, 1982; McAdam et al., 1996). The political opportunity theory explains the development and emergence of social movements through the increase and decrease in political opportunities (McAdam et al., 1996, p. 24). Political opportunities in social mobilization research refers to how the success or failure of social movements is affected primarily by political opportunities, which can present itself in opportunities such as expanding democracy and democratic transitions, divisions within elite political groups or alliances formed with elite allies, and the state capacity for repression (Tarrow, 1989).

Although the idea that protests and political institutions are linked is not new, political opportunity theory offers explanations when applied in a systemic way to understand the relationship between collective action and formal politics (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004, p. 1458). This theory treats social movements as a form of politics, expanding the political domain beyond formal, institutional politics. McAdam argues that the emergence of a structural opportunity was the basis for a social movement's

success; that is, an “openness” in politics allows the social movement to mobilize, whether it be in the form of increased pluralism, a decline in repression or higher levels of political empowerment (McAdam, 1982). Political openings due to these factors signal a possibility of challenging institutionalized politics (McAdam et al., 1996; Tarrow, 1994).

The idea of political opportunities does not go without criticism. One critique of the PPT paradigm, which will be relevant to my research, especially in the case of Turkey, is that it assumes that a political opportunity is a prerequisite for social mobilization, which leads to constantly seeking out political opportunity behind any and all social movements (Koopmans, 1999). Negative changes in the political sphere may also lead to the development of mobilization, even if the actors within the movement know they do not have much of a chance of affecting policy (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004, p. 1462). Another criticism of the political opportunity theory emerges through the role of long-lasting emotions in social movements, which explains how movements emerge and are formed under the influence not only what we perceive as the “rational”, structure and framing-based approaches to social movements, but also by feelings (Jasper, 2011, p. 287). By bringing emotions back into play for social movements, Goodwin and Jasper argue that it is important differentiate emotions and other factors, and provide a critique for the political opportunity paradigm, deeming it “conceptually muddled”, as there is no clear definition of what is structural and what presents an opportunity in the political sphere, at least one that has been agreed upon by scholars (2004, p. 4).

Moreover, Meyer and Minkoff argue that the conditions that provide opportunities for social movements may be the same, and thus tracing the causal effect of social movements in policy change may become muddled—policy change

may be attributed to something else entirely, such as a general desire of a state to be integrated into the liberal international world order, or in contrast, be attributed to the success of social movements when the change actually stems from another factor (2004, p. 1462). Political opportunities should also not be evaluated only through the interaction between protestors and the state, as the international context can also provide opportunities that help shape domestic institutions and alignments (McAdam et al, 1996, p. 34).

Furthermore, Goodwin and Jasper (1999) argue that the PPT paradigm is conceptually muddled because of disagreement on what is structural and what is not. They argue that defenders of the PPT paradigm have stretched the concept of political opportunities by lumping in new factors with structural variables, thus creating a model that explains everything (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999).

How valuable is a concept that can be applied in every case, if it offers no distinction at all? Key factors such as strategy and agency (the active choices and efforts of movement actors and their opponents), cultural factors (the moral aspect), cognitive understanding and emotions (which predate the movement but are also shaped by it) are thrown in together with the structural side or conceptualized as "framing" (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999, p. 29). Goodwin and Jasper's criticism brings emotions, grievance, and the role of resources back into the spotlight (1999). However, as Goodwin and Jasper also argue that scholars of social movements should do away with grand theories that aim to explain every form of social movement, Meyer and Minkoff argue that not all concepts in political opportunity theory have to be muddled—it is possible to use this framework once a distinction has been made between structural changes in opportunities and the signals of the

political system, as well as distinguishing issue-specific and general political opportunities (2004, p. 1464).

Scholars have also brought back the importance of social, psychological, and cultural theories of social construction, which were previously discarded by resource mobilization theorists to do away with the idea of collective behavior (Buechler, 2004; Oliver et al., 2003). Social movements are now organized around four main concepts: framing, identity, culture, and emotions (Oliver et al., 2003, p. 227). In conclusion, they suggest a more integrated theory of social movement that combines structural and socio-psychological approaches (Oliver et al., 2003, p. 236).

In my research, I utilize the political opportunity theory to explain the emergence and development of the antifemicide social movements in Mexico and Turkey by considering the factors such as international norms and pressures and democratization. Since the political opportunity paradigm has its shortcomings and I aim to avoid adding to the "muddled conceptuality" of the paradigm, I also look at civic participation, the networks between and within the feminist and antifemicide movements, and the alliances they form with other political actors. My framework for evaluating the success of anitfemicide movements is based on the three remedies McAdam offers for the future of social movement research within the political opportunity approach. These remedies are as follows: 1) Protest cycles and order of emergence, 2) the international context of political opportunities, and 3) political opportunities as both a dependent and independent variable (McAdam et al, 1996).

By protest cycle, McAdam refers to the temporal order within a given social movement. The use of "cycle" may lead to confusion here, implying an ebb and flow of movements, moments and periods in time where it is present and when it also

retreats from the spotlight. However, what McAdam is referring to is the cycle of protest, which Tarrow defines as an expansion of social movement action across various scales, such as incorporating different groups and actors within society (1989, pp. 14–15). Thus, the protest cycles should not be confused with protest waves. In my framework, I use it to explain broad social movements such as the women's rights movement, for example, which constitute the "initiator" movement. These movements help set the dynamics for the emergence of all "spin-off" movements, such as the antifemicide movement within the scope of this thesis. Although it differs in form from the popular feminist movements of both countries, the antifemicide movement is a continuation of it. McAdam argues that when it comes to the emergence of these "spin-off" movements, it is crucial to not overemphasize the role of political opportunities (1996, p. 31-32). With this in mind, I first outline the "initiator" feminist movements in Mexico and Turkey to explain the emergence of the antifemicide movement.

For the international context of political opportunities, McAdam emphasizes that previous research on political opportunities has been too narrow in scope as they have conceived the concept of political opportunities in terms of domestic politics and affairs (1996, p. 34). Here, the shortcomings of the political opportunity approach are apparent. The conceptual definition of what constitutes a political opportunity is stretched thin once again, incorporating international norms and pressures. While I understand this to be case, it is still crucial to look at how international factors have influenced the feminist and antifemicide movements in the cases of Mexico and Turkey. So, to amend this gap, I trace how states have responded to international norms and agreements on a domestic level, as well as how

the feminist movement, then the subsequent antifemicide movement has utilized international pressure on women's rights violations to their advantage.

Last but not least, McAdam raises the issue of differentiating whether political opportunities are dependent or independent variables. Opportunities may lead the way for political progress on behalf of social movements, but movements themselves can also be the factor behind expanding political opportunities (1996, p. 35). I examine this aspect in the case of both Mexico and Turkey, where the simpler, traditional definitions of political opportunities is more useful in explaining Mexico's antifemicide movement, in which the openness of the political sphere and formal institutions accompanied by the onset of democratization, whereas the antifemicide movement in Turkey represents a clearer case in which it has reshaped and pressured the increasingly authoritarian regime to respond to its demands as well as creating a higher level of social awareness, thus more opportunities to eradicate femicides through social change.

By basing my framework on previous literature, I have come up with a framework to answer the core question behind this thesis: How and when are antifemicide movements successful? The short answer to that question would be eradicating femicides completely. It would mean that no women or LGBTQI+ people are killed on the basis of their gender. No country in the world has achieved this, just like no country has achieved gender equality according to the United Nations, and no country will be able to achieve gender equality by 2030 based on current growth rates.

The longer answer for defining success can be divided into three stages, which may not exactly be linear, depending on factors such as international norms leading policy change before social change takes place and the issue is recognized:

Recognition, policy and implementation. The first step is the recognition of the problem. This lies in understanding, accepting and defining the killing of women as a gendered and political problem, both on a social level and by the state.

Distinguishing femicide as a concept that sets it apart from "murdered women" or "female homicides" is a crucial step, as naming this phenomenon is a way to provide a framework to understand what sets it apart from other forms of homicide and is also the first link to see it as a political phenomenon. First, femicides are a product of a patriarchal society where men have the power to kill women, and second, they are not punished for it. Femicides are overlooked, written off as normal homicides, disappearances, suicides even; they are not defined in the laws of countries as a specific type of crime (a gendered type of crime), and even when they are, the states do not maintain any form accountability, the police does not investigate femicides properly nor classify them as such when there are specific laws in place for femicides in Penal Codes, as the case is in Mexico, and judicial organizations are severely lacking when it comes to implementing laws. When movements garner the power to create social change within society and create awareness on the issue, thus leading the state to respond to demands from below, the first stage of success is achieved.

Recognizing femicides for what it is, leads us to the second step, policy. This stage includes legislation, institutions and all other forms of policies dealing directly with the issue of femicides. Policies and legal change happen as a result of a broad movement that has created immense social change and awareness on the issue. And finally, of course, the crucial step is implementation. Throughout my research, I have seen that even when legislation is bulletproof, as is the case in Mexico, unless there is political will to combat femicides, the numbers will not decrease—on the contrary,

impunity works in a top-down approach. When states do not handle the matter femicides for what it is, the most violent form of violence against women and a product of patriarchy and gender inequality, perpetrators know they will not be punished, and the number of crimes increase.

Thus, I use a framework based on recognition, policy, and implementation and examine the successes of the antifemicide movements in Mexico and Turkey by also looking at political opportunities, as well as three additional concepts: protest cycles, international norms, and the social change and power garnered by the movement which itself can create opportunities for the movement to achieve success.

1.3 Methodology

This comparative study aims to assess the strategies and success of "spin-off" antifemicide movements and groups working on preventing violence against women through advocacy, activism, and norm creation in the contexts of Mexico and Turkey. My aim is to convey a detailed explanation and description of the current situation in Mexico and Turkey regarding the positions of the movements against femicide and how political opportunities shape their strategies and objectives. To explain my case selection based on Della Porta's description of qualitative research on social movements, my case selection is not randomized to provide a representative sample of the universe, but instead, I have opted for theoretical relevance (2014, p. 6). I have chosen Mexico and Turkey to examine their similarities and differences, especially for the similar outcome they both present regarding social movements around the issues of femicides. In fact, I selected my cases when I asked the following questions: Where in the world is there a country like Turkey where women's rights movements need to focus so much on femicides?

How do these movements emerge and how do they achieve "success"? How do we define success when femicides have not been eradicated?

Instead of conducting a single-country case study on Turkey, I propose a comparative approach because these studies are highly effective in explaining the causal relations between a dependent variable (high level of recognition of femicides as an issue within society, consequent laws and policies, and action taken by the state in this case) and independent variables (femicides per capita, political pluralism, economic empowerment of women, patriarchal culture, etc.). A study comparing multiple cases allows for replication in more than one text, thus describing the phenomenon in a more comprehensive way (Johnson et al, 2016, p. 199). Using a comparative approach that deals with two cases may cause a loss of information that would be gathered through an extensive case study. However, single-country case studies cannot easily assess causal claims about why social movements emerge and gain broader traction, especially in the context of women's rights. Moreover, a comparative approach with an aim to provide an in-depth look into two cases allows for measuring variables in the context of each case, which in turn leads to a "higher level of conceptual and measurement validity" when compared to a large sample of cases (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 13).

Using Mill's method of agreement, I chose Mexico and Turkey as my case studies because they both exhibit similar outcomes (the dependent variable) despite their many differences. Mexico and Turkey both show immense similarities when it comes to the success of antifemicide movements: the issue is recognized, certain policies and laws exist, but the implementation is lacking. The root of the problem, all forms violence against women, exist in all countries around the world, women are killed every day in various places, and no country, no matter how developed it is, has

yet achieved gender equality (SDG Gender Index, 2022, p. 5). However, violence against women and femicides are one of the major topics that occupy the agenda of the movements in Mexico and Turkey and major mobilization has developed around this issue. However, the conditions that may give rise to and lead to the success of social movements, such as grievances and political opportunities, are different in the two cases. An alternative research methodology would have been to apply the method of difference by examining two remarkably similar countries that have different outcomes in terms of social mobilization around the issue of femicide. However, Turkey differs in many political, economic, and societal respects from both its neighbors and other countries globally, and it is thus more feasible to identify a quite different (rather than a similar) case.

Even though I have chosen Mexico and Turkey as my case studies, this does not mean that there are no other countries with a high level of antifemicide social movements. Argentina is one example. The *Ni Una Menos* (Not One Less) movement in Argentina began with a march in June 2015 with over 200,000 people congregating in front of the Palace of the Argentine National Congress (Terzian, 2017, p. 4). Although the protests may have been sparked by the femicide of the pregnant 14-year-old Chiara Paez, who was murdered by her boyfriend, this event was a tipping point for women as the femicides in Argentina had been increasing at an alarming rate.

According to *La Casa del Encuentro*, an NGO in Argentina that has been counting femicides since 2008, femicides have increased by 44% in 12 years (La Casa del Encuentro, n.d.). The *Ni Una Menos* movement has been successful in many different ways—the movement has spread not only across the region in Latin American countries, but it has also been a factor in advancing a feminist agenda

across the world, which is crucial for the strength of various feminist movements as this creates opportunities for feminist movements at a national level to transcend beyond borders, learn from one another, and increase the visibility of their demands and agendas (Souza & Selis, 2022, p. 9). I had mentioned that antifemicide movements learn from one another in the introduction to my thesis—*Ni Una Menos*, for example, is a phrase coined by Susana Chávez, a human rights activist and poet who fought to eradicate femicides and to bring justice to women in Ciudad Juarez, where she was also murdered in 2011.

My reasoning behind comparing Turkey to Mexico is because the antifemicide movement in Mexico leads all the way back to 1993 after the events of Ciudad Juarez. The activism around femicides in Mexico has led the way for many women in their struggle against femicides across the world, such as in the case of Argentina, and the context in which the antifemicide movement emerged in Mexico allows me to trace the progress. Almost three decades have passed since the beginning of the antifemicide movement in Mexico, which offers more insight into assessing the strategies and success of local, grassroots antifemicide movements.

While the antifemicide movement in Mexico is older, more than a decade has passed since the highly publicized murder of Münevver Karabulut in 2009 in Turkey, after which Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu (We Will Stop Femicides Platform, KCDP) was founded in 2010 with the aim to stop femicides (Kav, 2020, p. 78). The movement against violence against women and femicides in Turkey also goes back and can be situated as a core issue within the broad feminist movement, but the emergence of a concentrated antifemicide movement is relatively new. Thus, I will evaluate the critical turning points within Mexico and Turkey by examining these cases over a period of around three decades. The method of comparative

historical analysis plays a crucial role here, as it places an emphasis on causal links and relationships, how processes change over time, as well as the use of systematic and contextualized comparison (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 10). Skocpol and Somers (1980) offer three distinct types of methods in comparative history research: macro-causal analysis, parallel demonstration of theory and contrast of contexts (p. 175). Parallel demonstrations seek broad coverage, and the focus of the comparison is on showcasing a similarity between cases, in the light of a theory that is established prior to case examination (Skocpol & Somers, 1980, p. 177).

Contrast of contexts, on the other hand, examines the cases in length, and questions and themes emerge throughout the process of comparison (Skocpol & Somers, 1980, p. 177). Unlike parallel demonstrations, contrasting contexts uncovers clear differences between cases by asking the same question to different cases, in order to produce case-specific answers instead of applying generalizations to cases (Skocpol & Somers, 1980, p. 180). Finally, macro-causal analysis is the comparative historical research application of Mill's Method of Agreement and Method of Difference (Skocpol & Somers, 1980, p. 183).

Referring back to my case selection method, I aim to combine a method that contrasts two contexts and employ macro-causal analysis in my research to determine how cases differ and what they have in common to understand the structures behind the success of grassroots mobilizations around violence against women, and more specifically femicides, and how that success can be defined and measured.

It is important to note that the social movements I intend to study are shaped by grassroots organizations rallying around the issue of femicides. These grassroots

groups utilize protests, traditional forms of media as well as social media to make their demands heard. For that reason, I propose an analysis based on the discourse of both grassroots organizations, as well as state actors. In line with the descriptions of methods I have outlined in the above paragraphs, utilizing discourse analysis allows for understanding social movements both fully and in context (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 203).

Throughout my research, I examine the data and information published and disseminated by local advocacy networks, as well as the discourses employed by both the proponents of the movements and the authorities. Thus, the links between discourse, its context, and insight into processes can be traced (Lindekilde, 2014).

For this, I investigate how women's rights movements have shifted their focus to violence against women and femicides, starting from the mid-1990s. As grievances around the issue reached a tipping point, governments started keeping statistics on femicides and publishing data (although lacking) and started addressing the issue through policymaking. One advantage of looking at this issue over time is that there has been a significant change in key factors, such as expanding and contracting political opportunities. Thus, I will be able to assess whether changing political conditions have affected the success or strategies of these social movements.

One advantage of looking at femicides and the movements around them is that it is much less likely to be underreported, unlike sexual assault even though official or semi-official femicide data is contested in both countries, due to the fact that most femicides are not even investigated as femicides. Thus, another objective of this study would be to understand if there is a link between the degree of

democracy and a lack of action on behalf of states with respect to the similarly high levels of protests and social movements in both Mexico and Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

THE CASE OF MEXICO

2.1 1980s: Emergence of the feminist movement

Up until the 1980s, the women's rights landscape that emerged in Mexico reflected the disconnect between an autonomous women's rights movement and leftist party affiliations (Aguilar Sanchez, 2020, p. 15; Franceschet & Macdonald, 2004, p. 15; Lamas, 1994, p. 146; Serret, 2000, p. 47). The feminist movement of the 1970s had emerged as part of the Mexican left, with university-educated and middle-class women forming non-Indigenous but rural and popular solidarity groups (Hernandez Castillo, 2010, p. 318). Patriarchy became an important concept for women seeking to understand social inequalities and was intricately linked with the desire to transform all social institutions. Thus, the emergence of these women's movements can be traced back to the transformative action of Marxism (Sangari, 2015, p. 348).

Some of the leftist women's groups founded at the time are *Mujeres en Acción Solidaria* (Women in Solidarity Action) in 1971, *Movimiento de Liberación de la Mujer* (Women's Liberation Movement) in 1972 and *Movimiento Nacional de Mujeres* (National Women's Movement) in 1974 (Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 113; Serret, 2000, p. 46; Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 1). Although these groups may be considered the beginnings of contemporary feminist movements in Mexico, they were made up of a small group of women coming together to discuss the issues women faced but were not equipped to apply a feminist discourse to the challenges faced by women of all backgrounds (Serret, 2000, p. 46). These small groups of women addressed issues such as sexuality, sexual division of labor, and especially abortion and motherhood (Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 113).

As an emerging ideology in Mexico, the lack of autonomy of the feminist movement from leftist, socialist, and Marxist ideologies should be noted (Bartra, 1999, p. 217). It is no wonder that these women did not have much room to mobilize, as the context of PRI's authoritarian regime at the time provided no political opportunities for participation. However, even though the nascent feminist movement may have been made up of a small group with limited political opportunities and reach, it was important in forging a new political culture and feminist mobilization in Mexico (Lamas, 1994, p. 143; Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 113).

The feminist movement in Mexico began to move away from the political left by the second half of the 1970s as they were frustrated with their lack of progress within leftist groups and started forming groups with a distinctly feminist perspective (Jaquette, 1994, p. 120). The first *Encuentro* for feminist women across Latin America was held in 1981 with an aim for women across to region to share their experiences, negotiate politics, produce a feminist identity, and develop agendas for action (Alvarez et al., 2003, p. 541; Jaquette, 1994, p. 120).

Within this limited political arena, the first international conference on the status of women was held at a World Conference in Mexico City in 1975 for International Women's Year. The World Conference, at the time, was highly criticized by Mexican leftist and feminist women regarding how the government utilized the Conference as an opportunity to boast about its progressiveness without including women in the discussion, and the Conference's agenda of cultural imperialism (Olcott, 2017, p. 223; Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 114; Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 2). However, it also showed both that women had made their

voices heard to some extent and also signaled more political opportunities for advancing women's rights (Bartra, 1999, p. 214; Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 2). Regarding the political openings of the World Conference, the Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace as a part of it indicates a turning point where the state of Mexico recognizes women's rights to be a central issue. The dispute around the Conference also pointed toward the issue of autonomy through the struggle of feminist activists who protested the top-down feminism of the United Nations, and how the discussion of autonomy would be pertinent to shaping the movement in the upcoming years.

The second half of the 1970s in Mexico saw an advancement in women's mobilization and highlighted the two emergent forms of feminism. Franceschet and Macdonald define these two forms as "autonomy" versus "double militancy", where double militancy signifies provides opportunities during democratic transitions for participation in women's movements while also strategizing a "way in" to the formal political arena, not only as women politicians but also in terms of policies concerning women's rights and health, both of which were excluded during the hegemonic PRI rule in Mexico (2004, p. 6). The double militancy strategy was employed by *políticas* or *militantes*, feminists from leftist traditions, and would later on be a point of contentious debate between autonomous feminists and *políticas* in Latin American feminism, as autonomous feminist groups argued that *políticas* were not concerned enough with feminist ideology, and the *políticas* deemed feminists were partaking bourgeois politics (Alvarez et al., 2002, p. 543). Both groups of feminist women at the time have utilized political opportunities, especially through attempts to increase the number participating in formal politics, within both Mexico and Latin America to further women's rights.

The double-militancy of the feminist movement was imminent to the electoral reforms brought on by PRI's López Portillo (1976-1982), which legalized the formation of political parties (García Díez, 2001, p. 20). These reforms, along with strengthening and legitimizing the rule of PRI, also created a political opening for the opposition and the feminist movement (Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 116; Stevenson, 2004, p. 167). The issue of abortion and motherhood became a central point in feminist demands and was one of the first feminist demands to make its way into the formal political arena through the Voluntary Motherhood Bill put forward by the *Partido Comunista* (Communist Party, PC), which had been possible as PC had only gained access to the parliament through electoral reforms (Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 116). The Bill did not pass, as PC had only taken up this issue to utilize the demands of women and to leverage into power, and women's participation in formal politics was lacking (Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 116; Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 4).

This trend continued into the 1980s when the main conservative opposition party PAN (*Partido Nacional*) started restructuring itself around issues that PRI lacked–such as creating a separate category of "promotion" for women's rights and founded the *Oficina para la Promocion Politica de la Mujer* (the Office for the Political Promotion of Women) in 1989 (Kapur, 1998, p. 369). The effects were two-fold: Electoral reforms and a stronger opposition against the incumbent party caused both PRI and the opposition parties to rally around women's rights to further their legitimacy, which started providing political opportunities for women. Although the first attempts may have been hijacked by other aims of political parties (Stevenson, 2004, p. 170) and seem to have fallen short, the women's rights movement began to

permeate the political arena through parties of various political alignments with the expansion of competitive party politics.

Characterized by the expansion of women's rights into the public and political sphere, the 1970s marked a point at which women started making their voices heard (Serret, 2000, p. 48). Mexico signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1980 and ratified it in 1981, a major international agreement that forms the basis for the protection of women's rights on a global level. The apparent commitment to international norms regarding human rights, and especially women's rights at the time, is interesting as the ruling party at the time, PRI is considered a "hegemonic" authoritarian regime, a single-party regime under which opposition parties were allowed (Geddes, 1999, p. 135).

As noted in the previous paragraph, why do authoritarian regimes or conservative parties become concerned with women's rights? There are three crucial factors in play here: The rising women's movement in Mexico and Latin America, the global norm diffusion around human rights, and an attempt at legitimation which led PRI to rely on cooptation and consent more in the face of challenges as the ruling party's power is contested through the 1980s as the economy worsened. To begin with, per the constructivist view in the field of international relations, states wish to become integrated into the international arena, thus showing an openness to adopting international norms of human rights on a domestic level (Zwingel, 2012, p. 117). However, this does not mean that a desire to be integrated into the international arena is the only factor behind the adoption of global norms. For norms to take hold in the domestic sphere, the path to change can only be achieved through local and

contextual activism on a domestic level (Zwingel, 2012, p. 126). This leads us to our most crucial component, the emerging women's rights movement in Mexico. Scholars also argue that even authoritarian regimes show commitment to international norms to signal their commitment to their integration into the global sphere at large, as well as because they believe the commitment will only be on paper and will not create a mechanism that holds them accountable to the commitments they have signed off on (Alvarez, 1990; Weldon & Htun, 2013, p. 242, Zwingel, 2012, p. 117).

Moreover, authoritarian regimes can incorporate women's rights into their agenda to consolidate their power (Donno & Kreft, 2018; Lorch & Bunk, 2016; Tripp, 2013, p. 9). While PRI tried to derive legitimacy through an appearance of being a modernizing party, it is not only authoritarian parties that make use of women's rights to consolidate their power, as opposition parties can include women's rights in their agenda with no particular feminist commitment to the issues on hand as a way of contesting authoritarian powers. This is evident in PC's Bill for legalizing abortion in 1979, and also for PAN's promotion of women's rights. As a result, the combination of these factors has been conducive to creating more political openings for the women's rights movement in Mexico.

The 1980s in Mexico marks the continuation of an autonomous form of feminism that breaks away from the revolutionary left (Alvarez et al., 2002, p. 542; Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 115). Various women's rights groups proliferated in this decade, and a feminist approach became significant in dealing with the issues of various social groups (Bartra, 1999, p. 218). The debt crisis of the 1970s, followed by the oil crisis of the early 1980s, increasing foreign debt, and the devastating

earthquake of 1985 were some of the crises at the time that led to the impoverishment and poverty for many Mexicans, of which women were significantly affected. Mexico was going through two simultaneous processes, in which PRI's power began to decline, while poverty levels increased. The economic downturn at the time led to many women joining the workforce to ensure the survival of themselves and their families (Chant, 1994, p. 208). Although the political opportunities at the time may have seemed limited due to the ongoing crises, it is important to note that crises can also be a factor that destabilize regimes and lead to openings. The economic destabilization at the time led to direct action from below in the form of organization of grassroots movements to take more hold, which women of various backgrounds joined and sustained (Stephen, 1997, p. 124).

By the 1980s, following the weakening of the hegemonic one-party regime of PRI, political openings for women began to emerge (Kapur, 1998, p. 363). While some of the professional women's groups with a strictly feminist ideology were continuing their work in conferences and as human rights defenders, another form of activism began to take root: Poor, working-class women started participating in urban grassroots mobilization with demands for better living conditions and the women's movements broadened at the time through the participation of working-class, indigenous women focusing on various issues such as poverty, repression and abuse, providing a stark contrast to the issues and methods of the educated, middle-class feminists of the 1970s, both autonomous and *políticas* (Alvarez et al., 2002, p. 544). Women were not only coming together to struggle against poverty but also were distinctly aware of their position as women within their families and their domestic roles (Stephen, 1992, p. 82). The gender component of poverty was highly relevant at the time to women's mobilization. The structural political opportunities to

mobilize may have been low at the time, however, poor, indigenous women from various neighborhoods came together in 1981 to form the Women's Regional Council of the National Council of the Urban Popular Movement (CONAMUP) in Mexico City, a long-lived grassroots organization that formulated different methods of direct action to not only combat economic poverty but also violence against women in its later years (Stephen, 1992). While groups such as CONAMUP may have emerged out of other popular broad movements and may not have acted with a strictly feminist ideology, their participation and collective action have created further space for women to mobilize (Serret, 2000, p. 49; Stephen, 1992, p. 90; Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 119). Moreover, women groups within popular movements piqued the attention of traditional feminists of Mexico, women from various backgrounds made contact with one another through local and regional conferences, as well as the protests held on International Women's Day on 8 March, Mother's Day on May 10, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November (Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 5). Greater recognition of gender-based issues such as women's participation in the workforce, how women were affected by poverty, and women's health issues led to the expansion of the feminist agenda through the interactions of the two groups (Serret, 2000, p. 49).

2.2 Institutionalization of the women's rights movement: Two emerging logics

Compared to the women's groups of the 1970s, in which feminism emerged through an intellectual path, a new form of women's rights emerged in the 1980s, this time from the issues faced by women in contexts of poverty and the rise of neoliberal policies (Jaquette, 1994, p. 120). As feminist activists directed their attention and attempted to bring a feminist perspective to grassroots mobilizations of women, these

women from popular movements started joining the feminist movement (Alvarez et al., 2002, p. 545; Serret, 2000, p. 49). Here, autonomous feminists and *políticas* consolidate their differences, and instead utilize a united approach in engaging with leftist groups, political parties, and state institutions, united under a feminist stance (Alvarez et al., 2002, p. 543). Instead, new tensions emerged in its place between the now united professional feminists (made up of autonomous and leftist feminists of the 1970s) and women from popular grassroots movements.

Professional feminists were discontent with new groups of "uneducated" women repeating the same discussions they considered to be settled, and also with the fact that the whole feminist effort had turned into efforts to "educate" (Alvarez et al., 2002, p. 545). The debates over how far mainstream, popular feminism extended would provide another turn in which the women's rights movement struggled among itself to become unified (Alvarez et al., 2002, pp. 545–546; Franceschet & Macdonald, 2004, p. 5; Hernandez Castillo, 2010, p. 319; Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 119). The struggle between professional feminists and women in popular grassroots movements provides critical insight into the emergence of the antifemicide movement originating around the northern border of Mexico in the early 1990s, as the grassroots mobilization with popular support from which the antifemicide movement emerged versus professional forms of feminism repeats the patterns in feminist history of Mexico.

Although engaged in critical debates and broadening the feminist mobilization in the nation through popular, leftist, professional forms of feminism, the women's rights movement at the time lagged behind in advances made in the political arena, such as lack of new policies around women's rights issues, which

Zapata Galindo attributes to the struggles between popular, grassroots groups and professional feminists, as well as a lack of gender-based democratic perspectives of the women's movement at the time (2007, p. 5)

This period provided political opportunities in a certain way, but in others, political opportunities were dwindling, especially with the highly contested general elections of 1988, in which Carlos Salinas de Gortari of PRI gained 51% of the vote and was accused of usurping power through electoral fraud (Edmonds-Poli & Shirk, 2008, p. 105). PRI's stronghold on the nation had been decreasing up until that point with the economic and natural crises of the period, and the left *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD) emerged as an opposition party in 1989, signaling more political opportunities for actors in Mexico (Stevenson, 2004, p. 167). Within the closed but slowly opening political arena, the feminist movement had to reconstruct itself and move past the fragmentation that had emerged within (Lamas, 2011, p. 21). The feminist movement had needed to reformulate itself after previous attempts to enter the political arena through the parliament in the 1970s and during the mostly closed political arena of the 1980s caused by a culmination of the economic crises that led to the adoption of global neoliberal policies and rising poverty, an earthquake that affected Mexico City, and the following contested elections.

2.3 1990s: Contestation between professional and grassroots activism

A reformulation of the mainstream women's rights movement in Mexico meant that it needed to assess its "losses" within the electoral and civic arenas. This assessment resulted in a redirection of their energy and efforts toward forming alliances in an attempt to change the political system from the below through civil society groups

and NGOs (Franceschet & Macdonald, 2004, p. 17; Stevenson, 2004, p. 167; Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 6). The trend continued into the 1990s and formed what Alvarez et al. would coin the "policy-advocacy logic", which became the substantially more influential form of feminist mobilization both on a local level in Mexico and the rest of the region (2002, p. 548).

The policy-advocacy logic in Mexico was marked by two characteristics: on one hand, it had aims to engage with domestic actors such as political parties, the government, and the state. On the other hand, it was highly influenced by international norms around women's rights, particularly United Nations Conferences held at the time (Alvarez et al., 2000, p. 548). The policy-advocacy logic aimed to move away from less structured forms of protest and claim their space and exert political influence over policies around women's rights through newly emerging parties in Mexican politics (Lamas, 2011, p. 13; Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 9) by utilizing the power of international norms on women's and human rights. In an attempt to institutionalize gender issues outlined by the Beijing Conference in 1995, the governmental *Programa Nacional de la Mujer* (The National Program of Women, PRONAM) was founded with the efforts of feminist NGOs in 1996 (Serret, 2000, p. 50; Rodríguez, 1998, p. 130). PRONAM, at the time, would go on to form the basis of *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres*, INMUJERES), the governmental agency for women which was founded by the Vicente Fox administration in 2001 and remains the ministry of women in Mexico today.

The founding of PRONAM is significant in two senses: 1) professional feminists of NGOs had begun interacting with the state, and forming formal institutions, and 2) the political parties and the state at the time showed an opening

for advancing and institutionalizing women's rights. Thus, the presence of women in political parties and the networks built between them and the women's organizations should be noted. Many feminists employed previous knowledge they had in methods of double militancy, partaking in NGOs as they provided a "nomadic" style of politics, as women had not yet gained full access to the arena of formal party politics (Stevenson, 2004). At the same time, women were slowly permeating formal positions of power to advocate policies concerning women in parties of all political spectrums, including PRI. The first head of PRONAM at its founding was Dulce María Sauri Riancho, a life-long PRI politician who had been regularly active in advocating for women's issues and rights (Rodríguez, 1998, p. 130). Both feminist NGOs and female politicians worked together on bringing about the first governmental institution for women. In short, the policy-advocacy logic and the power-from-below methods of professional feminists had worked in certain ways and had fully taken advantage of the gradually broadening political arena brought on by further democratization.

Institutionalization of policies aimed at improving the lives of women provides critical insight into how feminists had been engaging successfully with the state. However, in the background, the contention within professional, feminist NGO organizations and grassroots mobilization continued to brew. Another form of women's rights activism became prominent at the time, contesting the unequal resource allocation received by professional feminists from both international and domestic actors, and the ensuing hierarchical structure they implemented (Alvarez et al., 2000, p. 549). The unequal resource allocation or "funding" received by feminist NGOs inherently meant that the less structured, less powerful grassroots groups would be pushed to the periphery. While professional feminist organizations would

go on to form their own hierarchies and rigid structures to engage with other professional organizations to receive and allocate resources, they also had to reach a consensus, a certain middle ground to be able to engage with state actors (Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 13). This created a rift between the more "radical" demands of women engaging in popular, grassroots mobilizations. The new forms of formal structures they built also meant that professional feminist NGOs moved away from the power-from-the-bottom methods employed by what Alvarez et al. define as the "identity-solidarity logic" (2000, p. 549).

The identity-solidarity logic co-existed and cooperated with the policy-advocacy logic, but the policy-advocacy logic became the more salient strand of the women's rights movement in Mexico. Some scholars argue that the rift between the policy-advocacy logic and the identity-solidarity logic is irreconcilable (Zapata Galindo, 2007, p. 15). Lamas, on the other hand, contests the whole notion of the identity-solidarity logic by deeming it as "victimization", meaning that the whole approach is one where the "victims" argue that they understand the issues of women because they live in its discrimination, and cannot move beyond that perspective to translate into action and policy (2011, p. 26). Although the feminist movement in Mexico may have been divided along various axes during its acceleration in Mexico, Icken Safa puts it best: women's social movements are not defined by the successes of certain sectors within, it is a process of political organization that may experience some setbacks from the fractions in itself, but it is enduring (1990, p. 366).

Basing off on that, I argue that the identity-solidarity logic that is based on popular social movements and concerned with "practical issues" (such as femicide) is not in contest with the mainstream, more powerful form of institutionalized

advocacy. Its emergence and growth may be based on contestation, however, the form of grassroots activism that coexists with professional feminism makes use of the latter's connections to the transnational arena, its political influence, and its networks. Emergent grassroots movements focusing on one singular issue at a glance not only learn from the previous experiences of the women's rights movement but also form connections with it and use political opportunities to advance their cause. In turn, through their learning, they also start applying a feminist perspective to other issues and can turn their advocacy efforts to other causes (Wright, 2007, p. 402), such as *Red Mesa de Mujeres Juárez* in Ciudad Juárez who started out as an antifemicide organization which is now also concerned with issues such as health, education, community development, and labor rights. Moreover, other organizations focusing on other issues, such as human rights and journalist networks have joined the antifemicide mobilization. The knowledge antifemicide organizations have gained, and the networks they have built explain how the antifemicide movement that emerged in Ciudad Juárez quickly turned first into a national issue, then transcended borders and made the problem of femicides visible on an international level. Professional feminists may not have been the first ones on the ground, protesting femicides and asking for justice, but the opportunities created by the institutionalization of feminist and women's rights policies have been critical to advancing the antifemicide movement.

2.4 The antifemicide movement in Mexico

The bodies of Angélica Luna Villalobos and Alma Chavira Farel were found in January 1993 in northern, border city of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. They were 16 and 13 years old, both underage, and had been murdered and their bodies left

abandoned. The murders of the two girls were not isolated events. The numbers grew exponentially throughout the years. Between 1993 and 2005, around 470 women and girls had been murdered in Ciudad Juárez (Washington Valdez, 2006). Femicides were not only an issue that plagued Ciudad Juárez, but the whole country. The government of Mexico has started publishing official data on femicides starting from 2015. In a 2022 report, official data on femicides published by the *Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública* (Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System, SESNSP) of the Mexican government reports 415 femicides in 2015, 607 in 2016, 742 in 2017, 896 in 2018, 947 in 2019, 949 in 2020, and 969 in 2021 (Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, 2022). The official data based on the definition of femicide shows a 133% increase (See Figure 1) in recorded femicides between 2015 and 2021.

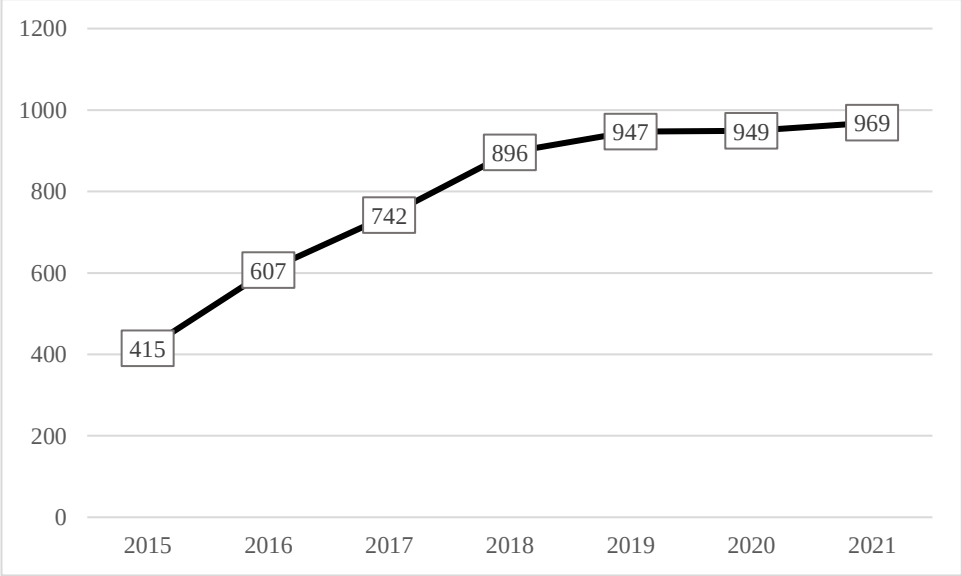

Figure 1. Number of femicides per year

Source: [SESNP, 2022]

The official definition of femicide is particularly important here for two reasons: First, for the government to be able to respond to the issue in any form, it needs to have the data on the phenomenon on hand. No government or any other entity is capable of combatting an issue such as femicides without full and correct data, or without understanding the full scope of the problem. Secondly, it is a distinct legal category in Mexico, as defined in Article 325 of the Federal Penal Code. This distinction emerged with The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence, which went into force in 2007, which is evidence of movement success as it was created after a decade of mobilization around the issue of femicides. It is the most comprehensive national law to date and distinguishes femicide as a distinct category of crime and as outlines how other forms of violence against women that take in place of the institutions of family, labor, education, and community culminate in its most violent form as femicides and prescribes special punitive laws for cases of femicides (Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia, 2007). As femicides are a form of violence against women that emerges out of specific conditions, it becomes important to distinguish them from the number of female deaths with the presumption of homicide. It is a special case of violence that requires specific measures to ensure all forms of violence that may lead to femicides are eradicated, as stipulated in The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence. Moreover, it is defined as a distinct crime with a punishment of 40 to 60 years of imprisonment for the perpetrator, and 3 to 8 years of imprisonment for any public servant who maliciously or negligently delays or hinders the procurement or administration of justice (Código Penal Federal, 1931, p. 99). Thus, cases of femicides first need to be recorded as femicides–not as disappearances, suspicious

deaths, suicides, or other forms of homicide/murder–for the judicial system to be able to penalize perpetrators and any other parties accordingly.

However, impunity is one of the greatest issues surrounding femicides in Mexico today. The joint report on female homicides by *Secretaría de Gobernación* (The Ministry of Interior, SEGOB), INMUJERES, and UN Women presents the national rate of female deaths with the presumption of homicides in Mexico between 1985 and 2016 (SEGOB, 2017, p. 18). I have included the numbers starting from 1990 until 2016 to showcase the scope of the issue, as femicides became a significant grievance that led to the mobilization of the antifemicide around 1993 in Ciudad Juárez:

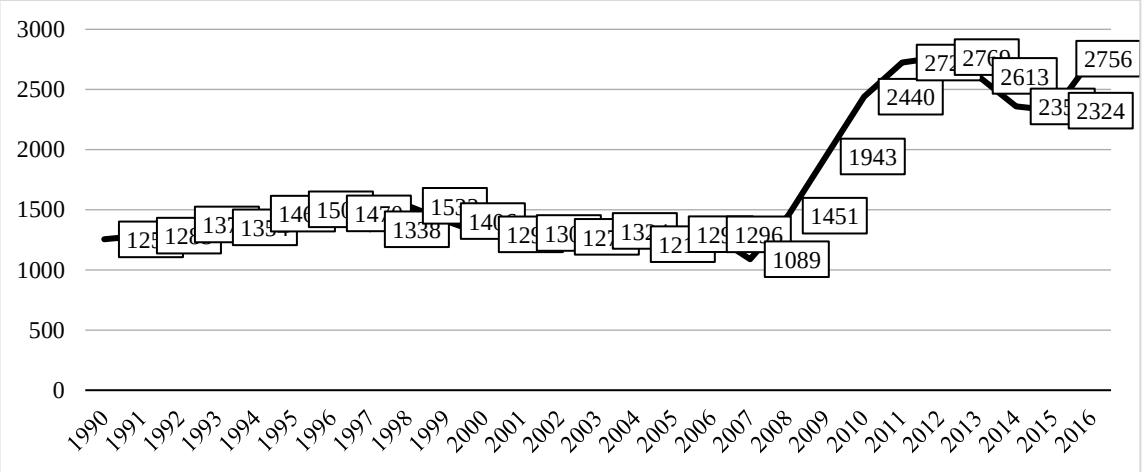

Figure 2. National rate of female deaths with presumption of homicide in Mexico
Source: [SEGOB, 2017]

The years included in the SEGOB report overlap only between 2015 and 2016 with the data from the SESNP report, but even with data on just two years, the discrepancy is striking in Table 1:

Table 1. Comparison of Female Homicides and Official Number of Femicides in 2015 and 2016

Year	Female Homicides	Femicides
2015	2324	415
2016	2756	607

Source: [SEGOB, 2017; SESNP, 2022]

The unaccounted number of murdered women is 1909 in 2015, and 2149 in 2016. It is possible that not all murdered women can be classified as femicides–some female homicides may not have a gendered component. At this point, data from activists working on femicides provides more insight. Maria Salguero is an activist who is mapping the femicide cases in Mexico by herself through media reports and submissions (Los feminicidios en México, n.d.). She has only started publishing data since the beginning of 2016, and the discrepancy between female homicides, official femicides, and reported femicides is as below:

Table 2. Comparison of Female Homicides, Official Numbers of Femicides, and the Activist Reports

Female Homicides	Femicides	Activist Reports of Femicides
2756	607	2038

Source: [SEGOB, 2017; SESNP, 2022; Salguero n.d.]

Out of all female homicides that took place in 2016, only 22% were investigated and found to be femicides. The numbers are even direr when we take Salguero's reports into account: At least 73% of all female homicides correspond to femicides,

however, out of the total numbers reported to be femicides, only 29.8% were recorded as femicides by the state.

Salguero has reported 9997 femicides between 2016 and 2020 alone (Los feminicidios en México, n.d.). The government of Mexico, on the other hand, has reported 4281 femicides in the same period (SESNP 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). It comes as no wonder when translating the term to Spanish in the 1990s, Lagarde added one more factor that makes a *feminicidio:* impunity (2008, p. 217). A government that cannot count and adequately categorize femicides, as well as punish the perpetrators and offer remedies to the problem in the first place reflects its inaction and complicity on the matter. The impunity and blatant disregard surrounding the issue of femicides, along with the sheer number of grievances catalyzed one of the most impactful social mobilizations against femicides not only in Mexico, and but also in the rest of the world on an international level (Wright, 2007, p. 401).

To explain the background of the femicides in Ciudad Juárez, many scholars and journalists have offered their insight on the area and the phenomenon through "logical" explanations. Some of these theories include serial killers on the loose and drug cartels sending messages to one another through the mutilated bodies of women (Rodriguez, 2007). Ciudad Juárez is located on the border of El Paso, Texas, and is known for the drug trafficking that occurs and cartels that function across the border. Its face has been transformed by the advance of the NAFTA agreement in 1994, which set up *maquilas* or *maquiladoras*, tax-free factories to process raw materials and export goods to the United States. The *maquiladoras* attracted labor from all parts of Mexico, including Indigenous and poor women, as well providing

employment opportunities to the women of Ciudad Juárez who previously were only involved in "feminine" sectors such as domestic work (Wright, 2007, p 408). The effects of poverty brought on by neoliberal policies and the marginalization of poor women regarding femicides have been widely studied, along with the *machismo* culture that is prevalent across Latin America–the patriarchal culture had not yet caught up with women participating in the "masculine" spheres of the workforce (Olivera, 2006, p. 109). Thus, the femicides in Ciudad Juárez must be analyzed through the most critical components: it is mostly young, poor, and Indigenous women who are being killed, and requires a gendered perspective to approach the problem (Lagarde, 2010, p. xv; Monárrez Fragoso, 2009; Olivera, 2006, p. 107; Washington Valdez, 2006; Wright, 2011).

The number of murdered women kept growing throughout the years in Ciudad Juárez. The initial protests that took place after the growing numbers of murdered, discarded, and disappeared women of Ciudad Juárez were in many different forms. Led by women, these protests included direct action, rallies, press conferences, marches, and public displays in the form of vigils (Orozco Mendoza, 2017, p. 352). The protests were quiet at the beginning, with women erecting magenta crosses, with the names of women who had disappeared or had been murdered nailed to the crosses on notes (Brice, 2020). Between 1995 and 2005, the women of Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City led the protests, which took place almost daily, for the women and girls that were being kidnapped and murdered (Wright, 2007, pp. 401-402). These women were at first made up of the mothers, teachers, and relatives of the murdered women, then activists, journalists, and human rights defenders took to the streets to protest the lack of action on behalf of the state and demanded that justice be brought to the cases of murders. Jasper and Goodwin's

contribution to social movement research by bringing the role of emotions into play is significant here—long-lasting emotions born out of moral shock can have an enduring effect on emerging rhetoric of social action (Jasper, 2011, p. 298).

Until 2001, both the federal and local authorities of Chihuahua did not intervene to address the femicide crisis, the local authorities brushing it off as "common murders", and the federal authorities throwing the ball back to the local authorities' court by stating that these issues fell under the jurisdiction of Chihuahua (Aikin Araluce, 2012, p. 28). Given the inefficiency of the authorities and the impunity surrounding femicides, a local protest network began to emerge. These networks, then the organizations they formed, would create links between the mothers and families of the murdered women, human rights activists and reach beyond the borders of not only Chihuahua, but also Mexico and put the femicides taking place all over the nation under international spotlight.

The antifemicide movement in Mexico was thus born out of "maternal activism". Mothers, teachers, and relatives of the murdered women and girls have always been at the forefront of leading the antifemicide movement in Mexico. Carreon and Moghadam frame maternal activism in two forms: maternalism-from-above and maternalism-from-below (2015, p. 19). Here, the concept of maternalism-from-below is highly relevant. This category defines a type of activism within the maternal frame, led by non-state actors such as grassroots groups with less or no formal political power that may aim to increase and expand women's rights in certain contexts, though not necessarily.

Some of the most prominent organizations that were founded at the time in Ciudad Juárez in response to the femicides, then subsequently gained worldwide

attention include *Casa Amiga Centro de Crisis* (House of Friends Crisis Center), *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* (May Our Daughters Return Home), *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas* (Justice for Our Daughters) and *Red Mesa de Mujeres de Juárez* (Juarez Women's Network). Esther Chávez Cano founded *Casa Amiga* in 1999 as the first feminist crisis center for women in Ciudad Juárez (Swanger, 2007, p. 109). It focuses on providing all forms of help to rape victims, and families of femicide victims, as well as other activities such as consciousness-raising groups and feminist workshops (Swanger, 2007, p. 116; Wright, 2001, p. 552). Esther Chávez Cano was one of the first people who voiced her protest around the issue of femicides in Ciudad Juárez, stating that around 40 women and girls had already been murdered and also founded *La Coordinadora de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales en Pro de la Mujer*, which consisted of eight local organizations which focused on issues such as community health, education, economic development, and preventing violence at the beginning, then grew to fourteen by 1999 (Wright, 2007, p. 409).

Norma Andrade and Marisela Ortiz founded *Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa* later on in 2001, after the femicide of Andrade's daughter and Ortiz's student Lilia Alejandra in the same year. *Nuestra Hijas* has been crucial in providing help to families whose daughters have disappeared, demanding legal and social justice, promoting the modification, elaboration, and revision of articles of the law concerning femicides, and demanding that the national and international community oblige the local, state and federal authorities of Mexico to allocate the necessary people and material resources to find a solution to this problem (*Nuestra Hijas*, n.d.).

Justicia para Nuestras Hijas is another organization founded by the families of victims of femicide. It was established in 2002 in Chihuahua and concentrates on

the same issues and efforts as *Nuestra Hijas* (Justicia para Nuestras Hijas, 2003, p. 1). *Red Mesa de Mujeres de Juarez* was founded in 2001, by activist Imelda Marrufo Nava, after three underage girls' bodies were found in a cotton field (Mesa de Mujeres, n.d). *Red Mesa de Mujeres* is one of the crucial organizations behind the social mobilization that brought the Cotton Field Case into the international spotlight and led to a defining moment and turning point for the antifemicide movement in Mexico. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) provided the first verdict that held the state of Mexico accountable and guilty for the disappearance of the three girls, as well as the growing numbers of murdered women due to the culture of impunity in Ciudad Juárez, and for its lack of action on investigating, prosecuting and preventing these events (Caso González y otras vs. México, 2009). These organizations are not the only local, grassroots groups working on the issue of femicides, as there are many other such small groups in other states and cities of Mexico.

The formation of these organizations may differ–some of them have been founded by activists, others by the families and close friends of the murdered women to seek justice, presenting feminist, maternal activism from below that has been highly influential in making laws on femicide and violence against women, through protests, forming networks with elite allies as well as interacting with other political actors and mobilizing the mainstream feminist movement, along with the rest of the nation. Right after the femicides in Ciudad Juárez and the following protests, Mexico signed the Inter-American Convention of Belém do Pará in 1995 and ratified it three years later in 1998 (Organization of American States, n.d, p. 1). Belém do Pará is the first inter-regional agreement in Latin America that establishes women's right to a life free of violence and is the basis on which many laws and policies on the

prevention, eradication, and punishment of violence against women were adopted in the states party to it, including Mexico (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994). The protests of antifemicide groups as well as networks they formed have been the leading factor behind the subsequent adoption of laws and policies on the issue of femicides.

It is the culmination of various national and regional feminist groups' efforts across Latin America that came together through various methods, such as *Encuentros*, established a common agenda, and formed networks out of the movement. The power of these networks becomes apparent when their ideas and participation in public debates and on various platforms become the force that pushes for legislation and the enforcement of existing international norms. Along with the advance of international agreements and the feminist agenda, the various antifemicide groups in Ciudad Juárez only had issued more than 24 reports and a total of 200 recommendations addressed to the government concerning the murders that took place between 1997 and 2007 (Aikin Araluce, 2012, p. 28).

Although women had been protesting femicides since the early 1990s in Ciudad Juárez, organizations started emerging only around the early 2000s. The reasons for this can be attributed to a need for a period of acquiring knowledge, forming connections, and creating agendas. Once the antifemicide had achieved that, the conditions for the institutionalization of the protests and the movement had also become conducive. The end of the 1990s, as well as the beginning of the early 2000s, had deepened the trend of democratization in Mexico, and PRI’s 71 years in power would come to an end with the general elections held in 2000, in which conservative, center-right PAN’s Vicente Fox would be elected to office (Edmonds-Poli & Shirk,

2008, pp. 108-112). Despite his conservative party, Fox was elected based on his campaigns which addressed a myriad of social issues, and promised to implement political reforms, anti-corruption measures, and Indigenous rights, thus signaling increased political opportunities and presence for all sectors of the public, as well as new possibilities for the organization of the feminist movements (Ortiz-Ortega & Barquet, 2010, p. 129).

Based on his discourse on democratic principles and human rights, Vicente Fox founded the *Coordinación para la Alianza Ciudadana* (Coordination for the Citizen Alliance), which aimed to establish a bridge of direct relationship between the Presidency and civil society (Gallardo-Gómez, 2001, p. 1). Through the *Alianza Ciudadana*, Vicente Fox met with newly emergent antifemicide NGOs, such as *Justicia para Nuestras Hijas* in 2003, for example (Justicia para Nuestras Hijas, 2003, p. 3). Again, during the first year Fox was elected to office, *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres* (The National Institute of Women, INMUJERES) was established in 2001 with a mission to coordinate compliance with the national policy for equality and to eradicate violence against women (Ley del Instituto Nacional de Las Mujeres, 2001).

The political opportunities were favorable for the antifemicide movement to organize as formal NGOs, and to interact with one another, as well as other political actors, official institutions, and international organizations. The first stages of the antifemicide movement had emerged at the local level but had also managed to capture the attention of national allies. However, during this period, the movement would be challenged by the regional corporate powers and political leaders: They tried to undermine the issue by blaming the patriarchal family–women had not been

acting properly, had not been good, obedient daughters and wives, and went out to work like men (Wright, 2007, p. 417). The elite powers in the region did their best to minimize the problem, and to make it seem like it was the victim's fault. However, the transnationalization of the defense network of the antifemicide movement and the political pressure they sustained to elicit a response from the government advanced the movement, and the second period of legislative and political action began for the movement (Aikin Araluce, 2012, p. 45).

During the second period, however, with increased political opportunities on a national level with the presidency of Vicente Fox, as well as having made the issue of femicide visible on an international level, the movement would shift its focus to consolidating itself through establishing NGOs, institutions, and the further transnationalization of the network (Aikin Araluce, 2012, pp. 36-40). The politically conducive environment allowed the antifemicide movement to pursue its common objectives: compliance of the Mexican state with international legislation on violence against women, such as Belém do Pará, as well as for the state to fight impunity. To the advantage of the antifemicide movement, the previous global and mainstream Mexican feminist movements, as well as the state's desire to be integrated into the liberal international arena had brought in critical international agreements such as CEDAW and Belém do Pará. Through these agreements, the antifemicide movement had the chance and legal avenues to hold the state responsible, as was the case for *Campo Algodonero*. The movement's pressure under favorable conditions had an effect on both local and federal Mexican authorities, leading to changes in federal and local penal codes, for example, and other considerable institutional and legislative measures, as well as discursive change around confronting the issue of

femicides. This is evidence that the movement has been conducive to the recognition, policy, and action framework of success of eradicating femicides.

The first interaction of the antifemicide movement with official agencies was solidified when Marcela Lagarde led to the creation of *Comisión Especial para Conocer y Dar Seguimiento a las Investigaciones Relacionadas con los Feminicidios* (A Special Commission to Make Known and Monitor Feminicides in Mexico and Efforts to Secure Justice in Such Cases) in 2004, which drafted three bills to codify feminicidio as a distinct crime in the national Penal Code and also to create the *Ley General De Acceso De Las Mujeres A Una Vida Libre De Violencia* (The General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence), which came into effect in 2007 (García-Del Moral, 2020, p. 15). During the same period under President Vicente Fox, the *Comisión Nacional para Prevenir y Erradicar la Violencia Contra las Mujeres* (The National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women, CONAVIM) was founded in 2004 with the specific goal to combat violence against women and femicides in which took place in Ciudad Juárez, and CONAVIM's role was later on expanded to the national level in 2009 and moved under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación, 2009).

The Special Commission was founded after Lagarde was elected to the Chamber of Deputies as a part of the social democratic party of Revolutionary Democratic Party (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD), which signaled political progress to address the issues regarding femicides in the whole country (Lagarde, 2010). The importance of the networks mothers, families, and local activists built with mainstream feminists, as well as politicians is apparent. Lagarde was the academic feminist who introduced the term *feminicidio* to Spanish and was a

part of the educated feminist strand in Mexico. This alliance between mainstream feminism and the grassroots mobilization in Ciudad Juarez, along with the political opportunities brought on by the Vicente Fox administration which lasted until 2006, led the state of Mexico to assume responsibility for the problem and to recognize that a large part of it lies in the impunity and inefficiency of a justice system that must be reformed, at least on a legislative level.

The trend of creating legislation on femicides would continue into the early 2010s, when Mexico's the Supreme Court of Justice established two important regulatory frameworks specific to the judiciary: *Pacto para Introducir la Perspectiva de Género en los Órganos de Impartición de Justicia en México* (The Pact to Introduce the Gender Perspective in the Judicial Bodies of Mexico), which came into effect in 2011 and *Protocolo para Juzgar con Perspectiva de Género* (The Protocol for Judicial Decision-Making with a Gender Perspective), which first came into effect in 2013, and was subsequently revised in 2020 to broaden its scope (OECD, 2019, p. 139). The Pact was created based on CEDAW and the aim of it is to create an obligation for institutions of justice in Mexico to guarantee the full and non-discriminatory exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms by considering the principle of equality and a gender perspective (OECD, 2019, p. 139). The Protocol, on the other hand, is also based on fulfilling the requirements of CEDAW and Belem Do Pará, and further establishes the basis on how to incorporate a gender perspective in the judiciary under the principles of equality, universality, interdependence, indivisibility, and progressiveness. The purpose of the Protocol is to address the problems detected and the reparation measures ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, IDH) in the case of *Campo Algodonero* (Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, 2013). It is a turning

point for the judiciary regarding cases of violence against women and femicides, as it is a verdict that holds the Mexican state accountable for the lack of preventative measures in protecting the victims and also all other crimes of gender, as well as lack of due diligence in investigating these crimes despite being aware of the patterns of gender-related violence.

The current laws in place in Mexico play an important role in showing how international agreements can be turned into domestic laws that ensure and protect gender equality and aim to eradicate violence against women, once they have domestic social mobilization around the issues concerning these laws, even if states themselves were not fully committed to these norms and had other goals such as signaling their integration to the global arena. However, laws themselves have provided to be inadequate in eradicating violence against women and femicides as one crucial component of *feminicidios* has persisted throughout the years: impunity. The legislation in Mexico on femicides, violence against women, and gender equality is bulletproof on paper. It is important to note that the number of female deaths with the presumption of homicide decreased steadily from 1998 to 2007 (see Chart 2). During these years, the antifemicide movement mobilized and harnessed enough power to create legislative change when new political opportunities emerged under the consolidation of democracy. Although legislative change and institutional reforms continued into the 2010s, homicide of women started rising again by 2008 and has reached unprecedented numbers today. Even by just looking at the official data, the action taken by authorities on femicides is meager–SESNP has only started publishing nationwide data on femicides beginning in 2015. After two decades of antifemicide mobilization, countless laws, and policies, the lack of statistical data on the issue shows a severely inadequate response on behalf of the state. Between 1998

and 2007, the number of murdered women decreased by 29%. If the decrease in the number of murdered women had remained consistent throughout the years, the figures in 2016 should have been 645. If the same rate had been achieved, it should have been 315. Instead, the government recorded 2756 female homicides, SESNP reported 607 femicides, and Maria Salguero reported 2038 femicides in 2016 (see Table 2). The only logical conclusion on the confounding data is impunity, the lack of action on behalf of local and national authorities on femicides, for which corruption and the lingering effects of the drug war are the main reasons. On a localized level, femicides are not recorded or investigated as such in many instances– they are recorded as murders, suicides, and disappearances. According to OCNF's report, many cases of murdered women are still pending, and the local authorities who were found to be responsible for various irregularities remain unpunished even though it is stipulated by the Penal Code (CDD & CMDPDH, 2012). On a national level, the incapability of the growing antifemicide movement to stop increasing femicides can be attributed to changes in political opportunities. The antifemicide movement had not diminished at all–on the contrary, *Observatorio Ciudadano Nacional de Feminicidio* (The National Citizen Observatory of Femicides, OCNF) was founded in 2007, bringing together more than 40 organizations (Aikin Araluce, 2012, p. 50).

However, the political climate had changed. Contesting the PRD candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the conservative Felipe Calderón from PAN was elected to office with a margin of 0.5% of the votes in the highly controversial general elections in 2006, replacing Vicente Fox (Edmonds-Poli & Shirk, 2008, p. 115). Right after his election, Calderón mobilized the military with a war on cartels and drugs, and around 70,000 people died around under his six-year term (Rosen &

Zepeda Martínez, 2015, p. 1). The violence brought on by the war on drugs generated a series of political changes that had repercussions, especially for women, as the high level of militarization enhanced the reproduction of violence against women and increased the impunity that accompanied the cases (OCNF, 2008, p. 22). The femicide agenda slowly faded away as issues such as electoral fraud or the fight against organized crime took the center stage (Aikin Araluce, 2012, p. 50). The political opportunities that would allow the antifemicide movement to yield actual results on the ground had diminished as policies and agendas changed with the government, as institutional capacity decreased following the concerted efforts of the Mexican state on the drug war and the structural problems such as the *machismo* culture and dysfunction of the justice system (impunity) accompanying femicides remained.

The political arena has changed vastly since the beginning of the women's rights movement in Mexico. Beginning in a period under the single-party rule of PRI, the political arena has become more open at times, beginning from the 1980s with local and federal shifts to democratization, and provided a critical turn in 2000 when PRI's Francisco Labadista lost to the conservative PAN's Vicente Fox in the General Elections, marking the beginning of Mexico's democratization. Women's rights movements have the chance to contest and change the discrimination they face as equal citizens through the opportunities created by democratic transitions (Franceschet & Macdonald, 2004, p. 5). The case of Mexico proves this to be correct, especially in terms of defining and conceptualizing femicides, creating legislation to eradicate violence against women in all forms, and achieving gender equality.

The turning point for Mexico in adopting more laws comes at a time when grievances around femicides are high, but also when political opportunities present an opportunity to achieve legal and political rights. Starting in the 1990s following the political opportunities brought on by the third wave of democratization, the feminist and antifemicide movement in Mexico has achieved the recognition and classification of different crimes for gender issues such as violence against women, harassment, rape, and femicide. The murders of women that took place in Ciudad Juárez in 1993, a border city with the United States in the state of Chihuahua, were so severe in numbers and the lack of police and state action to investigate the murders thoroughly, that protests were inevitable. Mexico has shown a high level of commitment to eradicating femicides and violence against women by signing international and regional agreements, creating national laws, and amending penal codes, and even being held accountable by IDH to create adequate measures to prevent femicides. However, the reason for the commitment to eradicating violence against women in all its forms is the social mobilization of women utilizing and rallying behind both international and region-specific norms, as well as a demand from the ground up for justice. Structural change to eradicate femicides can only be achieved once there is a strong movement, international support, and political opportunities. The advancement of women's rights on a political and legislative level has persevered through the single-party regime of PRI, then later on with the right-wing, conservative party PAN which came into power with the elections in 2000 and the transition to democracy was set into motion, and later on until today. The antifemicide movement has also transcended borders and garnered support on an international level. The missing piece of the puzzle is political opportunities, which

have dwindled over the last two decades, leading to Mexico being one of the deadliest places for women today.

CHAPTER 3

THE CASE OF TURKEY

Bora classifies the broad feminist movement in Turkey in three distinct periods: the era of action, radicalism, and consciousness-raising in the 1980s, then a period of fragmentation within the movement that led to institutionalization, proliferation, and acceptance in the 1990s, and the project-based feminism of the 2000s (2011, p. 78). She also argues that although a classification of this type may explain the general trends of the movement, it also makes it more difficult to unravel the dynamics within the movement, as the feminisms in Turkey constantly diverged within itself throughout its life cycle (Bora, 2011, p. 78).

To further Bora's argument on the divergence of feminisms, I examine a divergent form of feminism that has emerged alongside "project feminism" of the 2000s in the past decade in Turkey: the antifemicide movement.

In this chapter, I first broadly explain the progression of the feminist movement in Turkey, starting from the 1970s until today. Then, I examine their divergences and transformation into new forms of feminism. While looking into these concepts to assess patterns, I also examine the feminist movement's advances in relation to political opportunities and evaluate if political opportunities were conducive to the emergence and progression of the movement. Basing my arguments on the previous patterns of political opportunities, grievances, and resources from which the modern-day feminist movement of Turkey was born, I then explain the emergence and proliferation of the antifemicide movement based on these factors.

3.1 1970s: Roots of the feminist movement

The women's rights movement did not begin in the 1980s in Turkey is not a new, modern concept–in fact, it dates all the way back to the Ottoman Era, to the end of the 19th century (Tekeli, 2017, p. 338). However, the popular, autonomous movement can be traced to post-coup Turkey in the 1980s. the women's rights movement as well as women partaking in other social movements in Turkey (Tekeli, 2017).

With that in mind, the women's movement we know today dates back to the 1980s, with its formation beginning in the 1970s through the formation of the *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği* (Progressive Women's Organization, İKD). The women in İKD were educated and were from a middle-class background. Even though they had gender equality on the agenda, İKD was primarily concerned with class-based issues (Tekeli, 2017, p. 269). It was part of a political arena that was concerned with "common interests" belonging to the public sphere, such as class. İKD is not considered a constituent of the popular feminist movement in Turkey by feminist scholars today (Berktay, 2020, p. 279; Tekeli, 2010, p. 194). However, other scholars point out that the popular feminist movement of the 1980s is a result of the struggle women led against the patriarchal structures of the leftist groups and organizations they were initially a part of and broke away from (Aytaç, 2005; Timisi & Gevrek, 2021, p. 13).

İKD may not have exactly been feminist in its structure, but the organization of women at that point time indicates that women were starting to come together as a collective under the roof of other ideologies, such as one based on a class struggle, and learning how to organize. Recently, more studies have been done on the women's rights subjectivities of leftist organizations and movements, and Akal

argues that women in İKD, “one of the strongest women’s organizations in Turkey”, are wrongfully accused of using women to further other agendas and explains further that İKD is the basis of the legacy of the women’s movement in Turkey (2011, pp. 17-18). Many women who were a part of leftist groups, learned and organized under such groups, would go on to form their own groups and organize again, this time under the roof of feminism.

Although popular feminism today may exclude the leftist organizations they participated in from the beginning of the feminist movement, it is significant to point out where these women came from for three reasons. First, the fact that these women were educated, middle-class women who followed the developments in Western thought quite closely (Bora, 2011, p. 21). This becomes relevant later on in explaining the contestations between feminist groups.

Concepts of inclusiveness and broader reach of feminist movements and goals became a turning point in which other women’s groups such as Kurdish women and Islamist women contested the popular forms of feminism (Bora, 2011, pp. 25-30). I argue that this also applies to the emergence of the antifemicide movement, as its foundations were laid by women with leftist party affiliations in the 2010s. This brings us to our second point, which is the formation of the anti-femicide movement in Turkey. I pinpoint the emergence of an antifemicide movement with the formation of KCDP in 2010. Although violence against women has been one of the core issues of the women’s movements in Turkey since the 1980s, we can only speak of an antifemicide movement with KCDP, as its main goal and objective is to eradicate femicides and was born out of the grievances brought on by a rising number of murdered women.

KCDP was founded by leftist women, women who were members of the *Emekçi Hareket Partisi* (Laborist Movement Party, EHP). Replicating the patterns of the 1970s of women's organizations that broke away from leftist parties and formed the popular feminist movement in Turkey, KCDP has emerged with the purpose and goal of ending femicides. It is one of the most important feminist organizations today focusing on the issue of femicides and follows a different trajectory from the emergence of popular feminism in the 1980s. The popular feminism of the 1980s broke away completely from its leftist affiliations to form an independent type of organizing, whereas KCDP still maintains its ties to the party, but also has turned into broad and truly inclusive social mobilization, with members from all levels of society–not just leftists–coming together to stop femicides. The concept of leftist women's organizations has become relevant again in today's women's movements in Turkey and has been successful in mobilizing the public around the issues of femicides along with a myriad of other issues faced by women.

This goes to show that the initial attempts of women to organize within leftist parties should not be dismissed from the feminist movement so quickly. Last but not least, even if they may not have been fully formed feminists at the time, including the leftist women of the 1970s and İKD in the formation of a feminist movement is important because it shows women were organizing, learning from, and interacting with other political actors, fine-tuning their methods for becoming political actors themselves. This is not to say men instructed these women, on the very contrary, it was women who participated politically and made the effort to learn and forge their own methods of engaging in the political arena.

Considering the above points, this time period in which women actively worked and engaged in politics to gain "skills" should not be discarded as not being a

part of the feminist movement, as this time period and the knowledge accumulated by women during it is crucial for the formation of the modern, popular feminist movement of Turkey we know today. In any case, the final nail in the coffin of leftist parties and politics came on September 12, 1980, with the military coup. The political opportunities for any contesting voices were completely closed, leading to an abrupt cessation of all political activity in civil spaces. Leftist women's mobilization may have continued to persevere under different conditions, but the lack of any political opportunities for such political activity, along with women's disillusionment with the patriarchal structures of leftist parties and organizations were incremental in shaping the autonomous feminist movement that emerged right after the military coup of 1980.

The following development of the feminist movement in Turkey presents a unique case. The popular women's movement emerged in Turkey at a time in which no other groups, organizations or movements could mobilize for any cause, due to the crackdown of the military regime in place.

The actual breaking point for women to move away from leftist politics may have been brought on by an unexpected opportunity created by the coup. If women could not organize under the roof of socialism, they would have to find other ways. However, this was not the only reason. Maybe it was not even the most important reason, as women had already become disillusioned with the patriarchal, male structures of leftist parties and organizations.

Initially, socialist groups in Turkey were quick to harshly proclaim that feminism was a bourgeois ideology, which over time thawed into an attitude that made them say, "Why not? Feminists should join us too; socialism has room for all of us" (Bora, 2011, p. 59). Even the more "accepting" face of socialist groups

presented an acceptance on their own terms. The disillusionment was only fueled by the fact that differences were considered personal, discarded, and overlooked in an ideology that favored organizing as one for revolutionary action. The shift from the Leftist women of the late 1970s to an autonomous, popular feminist movement lies in the shift of women's focus to these personal differences (Timisi & Gevrek, 2021, p. 14). "The personal is political" slogan became the core component of the emerging feminist movement, which directed its attention to the personal issues and differences between women and men (Tekeli, 2010, p. 194).

3.2 1980s: Emergence of the feminist movement

The 1980s was a decade of trial in which women started forming their own political language and exploring their common issues (Bora, 2011, p. 22). Formerly leftist, educated women started forming groups among themselves to discuss feminism, which was a period of reckoning with Marxism (Tekeli, 2017, p. 72).

They formed the first groups to raise consciousness among themselves and met in each other's homes in large cities such as Ankara and Istanbul in 1981, and as homes became insufficient for providing enough space for women who wanted to participate in these meetings, they started meeting in public places by 1985 to discuss issues such as the patriarchal structure of the Civil Code (Timisi & Gevrek, 2021, pp. 16-20).

The limited political arena of post-coup Turkey did not offer many opportunities at first and forced women to gather in their homes at first, which themselves were political spaces, as they claimed. Under the shadow of the coup, women were partaking in a "secret preparation" (Tekeli, 2017, p. 270). However, as the years passed, women forged their own path and took their discussions and

debates to the public sphere by the mid-1980s. In fact, 8 March was first celebrated by women in 1985 among themselves (Timisi & Gevrek, 2021, p. 20). The first consciousness-raising groups were highly unique at the time, as they formed the basis of the feminist movement that pioneered the democratic opposition after the coup (Tekeli, 2020, p. 31; Tekeli, 2017, p. 277).

One of the main achievements of the feminist movement at the time was the campaign to implement CEDAW, which Turkey had already ratified in 1985. As previously discussed in the chapter for Mexico, states which have no concern regarding women's rights can sign and ratify international human rights treatments concerning the status of women because of international norms, and a desire to become integrated with the rest of the world.

However, again as noted in the chapter for Mexico, the implementation of these norms can only be achieved through local and contextual activism on a domestic level (Zwingel, 2012, p. 126). As Tekeli puts it, the responsibility fell on women to be equal and free; to bring CEDAW to life through collecting data, making demands, and influencing political actors through legitimate and democratic means (2017, p. 224). This is exactly what happened in Turkey, and the first campaign of the feminist movement was launched to implement CEDAW. Also known as the "Women's Petition", this campaign was the first mass action taken after the coup and the petition was placed before the parliament on 8 March 1987, with around 6000 signatures (Tekeli, 2017, p. 275).

The petition was one of the first attempts of the women's rights movements to seek legitimacy. Yelsalı Parmaksız argues that the adoption of the United Nations' international norms by the Turkish state was a strategic move on behalf of the state to create a contesting power against the rising women's mobilization (2017, p. 181).

This argument aligns with other research on international norm adoption to consolidate power (Donno & Kreft, 2018; Lorch & Bunk, 2016; Tripp, 2013, p. 9). As noted in the previous chapter on Mexico, states that have no or little apparent reason to commit to international norms on women's rights can do so for several reasons: to become integrated into the global sphere, to consolidate their power, and to contest civil opposition in the case for Turkey.

Following the successful campaign and petition for the implementation of CEDAW, women were the first ones to take to the streets in post-coup Turkey to protest violence again women in May 1987. Women took to the streets in both Ankara and Istanbul and around 3000 people marched only in Istanbul (Tekeli, 2017, p. 276). Violence again women became one of the most critical issues feminists would deal with in the coming years, and these protests demonstrated how the women's movement paved the way for creating political spaces. Moreover, they had transformed politics and made the private political by bringing domestic violence into the political arena (Bora, 2011, p. 153).

One other instance in which the early feminist movement brought a "private" issue to the public and political sphere was the campaign against rape. Article 438 of the Turkish Penal Code, which had been in place since 1928, stipulated a reduction of the sentence given to a rapist by one-third if the victim was a sex worker (İlkkaracan & Erçevik Amado, 2008, p. 2). The possible reduction in the sentences for a mass rape of a sex worker in Antalya was rejected by one judge, who made an appeal to the Constitutional Court on the basis that the article was against the principle of equality stipulated by the Constitution, to which the Constitutional Court rejected, stating that "the rape of a sex worker and a chaste woman are not the same" (Bianet, 2003).

This rejection spurred a massive outrage and the following campaign, which then turned into protests in various locations in Istanbul. As a result of the campaign and mass protests, which went on for almost a year, the article was repealed from the Penal Code by the DYP-SHP coalition government in November 1990.

Women would then focus on another critical issue for the emerging movement: organization. To fill the gap in organizing, women in Ankara would form *Perşembe Grubu* (The Thursday Group), encompassing not only women who identified as feminists, but homemakers with lower levels of education (Timisi & Gevrek, 2021, p. 26), and women in Istanbul would go on to found the *Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Derneği* (Association of Women Against Discrimination), which emerged from the committee that prepared the campaign for the petition for CEDAW (Tekeli, 2017, p. 275). Along with these major organizations at the time, women came together under other smaller organizations, associations, and various groups (Tekeli, 2017, p. 276). All of the groups and associations that emerged at the time signaled that women had found ways to form pluralistic and solidarity-based organizations.

Although the political arena may have offered limited opportunities, Tekeli argues that the three mainstream political alignments of the 1980s, made up of nationalist and conservative *Anavatan Partisi* (Motherland Party, ANAP), social democrat *Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti* (Social Democratic Populist Party, SHP) and fundamentalist Islamists, all responded to the demands of the feminist movement in some form: The Turkish Women Empowerment and Promotion Foundation of Semra Özal, the first lady of the ANAP leader Turgut Özal, adjusted the course of foundation to "protect" Turkish women from advances of feminism through absorbing some of its demands and merging them to become in line with a

Kemalist/nationalist ideology; SHP included a section on women's rights in their congress, which was inspired the Women's Petition in 1986 and suggested establishing a ministry for women; and the young women in radical religious groups turned their efforts to "reform" Islam with certain elements they acquired from the feminist movement regarding their rights (2017, pp. 279-280).

Similarly, the neoliberal, conservative, and anti-feminist Özal government founded the *Kadın Sorunları ve Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü* (The Directorate on the Status and Issues of Women, KSSGM) in 1990, as the need arose for an institution that would coordinate and execute women's rights issues on a national level under the frameworks of CEDAW and the World Conference on Women in 1985 in Nairobi (Yelsalı Parmaksız, 2017, p. 203). Although political opportunities may have been limited on a domestic and civic level, first through the shockwaves that cut through the political arena, then the rise of neoliberalism brought on by ANAP's policies, both the domestic feminist movement and international norms and agreements elicited a response from the Turkish government and led to the adoption of women's rights policies. However, the feminist movement still had a long way to go until it could engage with other political actors on a formal level, which would lead to the institutionalization of the movement as a way of building legitimacy.

The dye was cast to form more concrete methods to legitimize the movement, as the need arose to engage with other political actors. However, a clash of ideas and fragmentations within this new identity-building era in feminism would soon emerge. The first contestation between the feminists of Turkey came in 1989, with the *1. Kadın Kurultayı* (The First Women's Congress) and *1. Feminist Haftasonu* (The First Feminist Weekend), where the differences in the ideology of leftist women who did not identify as feminists and the women from the popular feminist movement

clashed on matters of ideology and identity (Bora & Günal, 2021, p. 8; Bora, 2011, p. 22; Timisi & Gevrek, 2021, pp. 27-31). The popular feminist movement argued in favor of a united front in spite of different identities, and ideological and class-based differences. However, the 1990s would mark the beginning of a period where the united face of the popular feminist movement would become only one of the emergent forms of women's rights movements (Bora, 2011, p. 23).

3.3 1990s: Institutionalization of the feminist movement

The years that followed the era of building a feminist movement in the 1980s led to both fragmentations and institutionalization of the movement. Feminist women had learned how to form groups, come together, protest, campaign, and form collective subjectivities (Timisi & Gevrek, 2021, p. 38). However, the fragmentations within the movement showed a great need for institutionalization to project women's demands on a legitimate basis. Moreover, the political arena of Turkey in the 1980s had not been yet conducive enough to the advances of the feminist movement, and this had to change. As international organizations and the state started allocating more resources and effort to the mobilization of women's rights and violence against women, the feminist movement's task of changing their strategies was facilitated, and the movement started conducting research, undertaking projects, founding NGOs, and cooperating with the state they had protested against in the 1980s with the help of resources secured from international organizations and the state (Altınay & Arat, 2008, p. 21).

The feminist movement branched out on various issues, such as violence against women, creating feminist spaces, and women's participation in formal politics. One strong branch of the institutionalizing feminist movement of the 1990s

rallied around the issue of violence against women (Altınay & Arat, 2008; Işık, 2021). The campaigns against domestic violence in the 1980s culminated in identifying two core components that would build the institutions and NGOs working against violence against women. First, this branch progressed free of ideologies and other political movements. Second, it created NGOs to build shelters for women who had been subjected to violence, as well as other efforts for in policymaking to prevent violence. This way, consistent efforts would be concentrated around the issue and reach both the public and political spheres (Işık, 2021, p. 47).

The first organization to combat violence against women by providing shelter was *Mor Çatı* (Purple Roof). *Mor Çatı* challenged the conservative and traditional discourse of the state regarding women while being intent on maintaining its feminist ideology when it came to providing accommodation to women who had been subject to violence (Arat, 1998, p. 120). Through *Mor Çatı,* the movement also gained great traction in engaging with municipalities and the state on creating shelters for women who had been subject to violence (Arat, 1998, p. 121; Tekeli, 2017, p. 339).

The 1990s then saw a rise of women's "lobby groups", platforms that were made up of various civil society actors, such as bar and professional associations (Tekeli, 2017, p. 368). These lobby groups were a crucial factor in changing laws and creating policies around women's rights. The institutionalization of the feminist movement along with more power in mobilizing other civil society actors brought on a great advancement for women's rights: Law No. 4320 on the Protection of the Family was a great breakthrough when it entered into force in 1998. The law presented the first legal text that accepted violence against women as a critical issue to be addressed following the persistent struggle led by women from various parts of Turkey, regulated the actions to be taken to protect women in cases of violence, and

emphasized the state's obligation and role in preventing violence. The law went into force, and following suit, reforms were made to modernize the Civil Code in 2001, and the Penal Code to fortify it on issues concerning violence against women in 2004 (Tekeli, 2017, p. 368).

It is also important to note that these changes took place in the Turkish parliament when the majority of the deputies were from moderate right, nationalist, and Islamist parties (Tekeli, 2017, p. 398). It could be expected that the structure of the parliament would not be conducive to advancing women's rights, as the majority group did take a dislike to a feminist ideology.

However, a small number of select women were not only ones who adopted a feminist ideology. Feminism had made leaps in reaching various parts of society and changing public opinion. During this period that brought an unprecedented change in legislation around women's rights, strong public support had been garnered, but another important change was also taking place that would change Turkey's political and democratic landscape in the early 2000s: The European Council officially accepted Turkey as a candidate country to access the European Union at the Helsinki summit in December 1999 (Öniş, 2003, p. 9).

The topic of accession to the European Union had gripped Turkish politics by the second half of the 1990s. Among actor-based approaches, democratization in response to internationalization and regional powers in Turkey has been studied widely and puts forward the argument that the pre-accession period in Turkey brought in sweeping reforms (Müftüler Baç, 2005; Yılmaz, 1997, p. 1). The women's rights movement had adopted strategies to engage with the state, such as founding NGOs, lobby groups, and platforms working on policy change, and the reforms generated through the aims of accession to the European Union had created political

opportunities, allowing the demands of the feminist movement to be turned into legislative and policy change (Aldıkaçtı Marshall, 2013, p. 1).

Another change that the feminist movement underwent during the 1990s was the emergence and separation of new groups within feminism. The ideological diversity of the movement was bound to increase with rising participation. Alongside "radical" feminists who had formed the core component of the autonomous feminist movement in Turkey, groups such as Kemalist, Islamist, and Kurdish women started joining the movement. These groups with ideologies that would clash greatly on certain subjects did not threaten each other and managed to form connections with one another while maintaining their identities and working together on various women's rights issues, such as the headscarf ban, and the protests of the Saturday Mothers (Arat, 1997, p. 107; Tekeli, 2017, p. 395). It is only natural that diverse groups emerged as the movement broadened and reached to encompass various identities and ideologies, thus we cannot speak of a coherent feminist movement that acted as one united front; fragmentations and disagreements were inevitable. The important outcome, on the other hand, is the dialogue and cooperation between various fragmentations, and how they pushed for rights, reached the public, and led to legislative change in certain areas by utilizing present political opportunities.

3.4 2000s: The disillusionment with "project" feminism

Turkey would enter a new era in politics when the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) was elected and came into power in 2002. A party with an Islamist background, AKP presented itself as a right-wing, conservative, and democratic image that had intentions of furthering democratization and promoting liberal values in line with those of the European Union when it first

came into power. However, the main strand of feminism in Turkey has always had conflicts with the AKP government ever since its rise to power (Tekeli, 2017, p. 165). AKP had made it clear early on that it favored a discourse of women's rights within the unit of a family, an extension of the "family-based" discourse employed by ANAP in the 1980s, but this time with an Islamist twist, instead of secular, Kemalist values.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had voiced intent to repeal abortion laws and proposed a reform of the Penal Code regarding bringing back an article on adultery, making an "other-ing" statement distinguishing between feminists and "acceptable" women, and that "Anatolian women voiced such a desire for this change" (Tekeli, 2017, p. 400). Both of these issues involved the rights gained by the feminist movement in previous years and decades, and after a lengthy campaign, a new Penal Code went into effect in 2004, thanks to the efforts of the feminist movement (Tekeli, 2017, p. 401). The AKP government had made it clear early on that feminists were *persona non grata* and that it would continue to enact non-feminist policies concerning women's rights with an approach that would centralize the family and "acceptable" women as defined by cultural and Islamic values.

The AKP government also presented a continuation of fostering the neoliberal policies that had been enacted starting in the 1980s which left policymaking on social issues to NGOs. Through this opening and the possibilities it presented, the feminist movement of the 2000s turned into a full-fledged "project" feminism, a topic that would be highly debated among feminists of the era and continues to be so today. "Project" feminism is a strand that is based on creating projects that target the development and empowerment of women and girls with the aid and funding of international organizations such as various agencies of the United

Nations (UNDP, UNIFEM, UNHCR, UNICEF, etc.), the World Bank, various organs of the European Union and the Council of Europe (Kümbetoğlu, 2021, p. 125). This strand that originally emerged as a method of aiding the development and mainstreaming of gender issues, then later on as a way of policymaking, has been criticized even by the feminists undertaking such projects to have turned "methods" into "goals" and feminism into a form of social services (Bora, 2011, p. 83). While outlining the drawbacks of the discussion of policy-making and projects, Bora further argues that these debates themselves are futile and that it creates a false sense of "being political" just by criticizing the funding projects receive, and proposes that projects have made it possible to take real action such as interacting with women of all walks of life and founding centers in various places, tangible actions that have the power to transform (2011, p. 84-85). On the other hand, most of the criticism came from the socialist strand of feminism, which had slowly been reconstructing itself in recent years in search of positioning itself against both global and domestic capitalism (Özuğurlu, 2012, pp. 133-134).

This newly emerging strand took great issue with the funding provided by international organizations, and how it led to the loss of autonomy, depoliticization, and reproduction of existing inequalities with the hierarchical structure that is necessary to undertake such projects (Hacıvelioğlu, 2009, pp. 16-17). On the topic of violence against women, almost all women's organizations agreed with Bora's criticism on feminism turning into social services and that "project" feminism should not turn into something that assumed the obligations of the state–which is to protect all of its citizens (Altınay & Arat, 2008, pp. 35-36).

As the most violent and deadly form of violence against women, femicides take place when the issue is silenced, disregarded, and authorities in charge of

preventing and eradicating these crimes do not take action. (Lagarde y de los Rios, 2008, p. 216). Weldon & Htun (2013) delineate three linkages to how states are responsible for violence against women: policies, implementation, and action (2013, p. 231). Moreover, the states are responsible for the actions of private citizens (Bunch, 1990, p. 488). On the other hand, the "private" discrimination, abuse, and violence women face very much affect their ability to participate in the "public" sphere as full citizens with human rights and access to democracy (Bunch, 1995, p. 14). Thus, states have a responsibility to intervene against violations of women's rights, which includes the highly visible issue of violence against women and femicides. Therefore, "project" feminism becomes both unsustainable and politically problematic when it turns into a handy tool for the state to place the burden of fulfilling the obligations of the state (protecting women) through women's solidarity, devotion to the cause, and their limited means (Altınay & Arat, 2008, p. 36).

A shift in focusing efforts to bring back the state to undertake its responsibility to protect women against all forms of violence was necessary, and the feminist movement would once again diverge within itself. Criticized for having lost its action, new actors within the feminist movement would soon emerge by the end of the 2010s as grievances around violence against women and femicides reached a tipping point, especially within the political arena in which the increasing authoritarianism of the AKP government was accompanied by a severely patriarchal discourse.

3.5 The antifemicide movement in Turkey

The news of 17-year-old Münevver Karabulut's violent murder in 2009, then the subsequent events that unfolded sent shockwaves through Turkey. The framing of

the media of the event was highly sensationalized, the murderer Cem Garipoğlu, a man she had been in a relationship with hid for more than 6 months, and although he retracted his statement later on stating that his words had been misconstrued, the Chief of Police in Istanbul said that "the family should have kept an eye on their daughter" (Kav, 2020, p. 77).

The We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP) was founded at the end of 2009, after Münevver Karabulut's murder in the same year. KCDP's founding members, along with Münevver's family, wanted to seek justice not just for Münevver's case, but for all the femicides taking place in Turkey (Yaşasın Kadınlar, 2022). The Platform's aims were to make visible and eradicate femicides in Turkey and after its founding, it became involved in monitoring and attending femicide cases in courts of law. To be able to become a party in cases taken to court, the Platform had to be a legal entity, thus KCDP was legally established as an organization (Yaşasın Kadınlar, 2022).

This is the first example that highlights how KCDP has emerged out of the broad feminist movement and its achievements in Turkey. Even though I argue that the antifemicide movement in Turkey gained traction with the founding of KCDP, organizations such as *Mor Çatı*, *Amargi, Kadının İnsan Hakları Derneği* (Women's Human Rights Association), *Kadın Adayları Destekleme Derneği* (Association for Supporting of Women Candidates) and *Filmmor* had previously requested to become parties to such cases, and had repeatedly been rejected until the court accepted their request in 2008 for the case of Sevim Zarif (Eyüboğlu, 2009, pp. 10-11). The precedent set by the efforts of the feminist movement led to one of the crucial methods that KCDP would later utilize to engage with the justice system on femicide cases. Previous experiences of the feminist movement aid the emergence of

grassroots movements and organizations, as these movements are in a constant state of producing knowledge and learning from one another. I had noted that the feminist movement needed revitalization when it came to the issue of femicides and violence against women to move away from the dominant strand of "project" feminism. Kav (2020) describes this shift as follows:

> The present women's movement had previously waged an important struggle on the subject of "honor killings" and although it had achieved gains, it could not keep it on the agenda . . . While there was a great need for feminist struggle and women's organizations at a time when femicides were increasing rapidly, women's organizations on the contrary were placid and largely disconnected from each other. (p. 79)

A new voice in the feminist movement came in the form of leftist feminists–KCDP was founded and led by women who were members of EHP, a Marxist-Leninist party founded in 2004. Despite the fact that it was built upon the achievements of the autonomous and independent feminist movement, KCDP differs from other women's organizations because of its leftist party affiliations. KCDP is not a feminist organization in the form that became common and widely accepted after the 1980s (Yıldız, 2021, p. 253). Once thought to be a relic of a bygone era in the 1970s, leftist women had made a return to feminism, and had rallied around the issues of femicides. What sets apart KCDP from leftist, party-affiliated women in the 1970s?

To begin with, KCDP is an independent organization that aims to eradicate femicides. It presents a new form of collective subjectivity within the feminist movement today (Altuntaş, 2019). Its members include the founding leftist women, women and LGBTQI+ people who do not particularly identify with any particular ideology or party, women who have been subjected to violence, and the families of murdered women. It organizes in all cities of Turkey as *Kadın Meclisleri* (Women's Councils). Along with *Kadın Meclisleri*, KCDP collects data in all cities in Turkey

through local and national media reports. The coalition of networks within KCDP across Turkey indicates the broad reach and plurality of the organization.

One aspect of the collective subjectivity formed within KCDP includes the family members of the murdered women, thus also showing a form of maternal activism that comes naturally around the issue of femicides, as is the case in Mexico. Maternal activism is an important strategy for both movements in Mexico and Turkey. In Mexico, it serves as a strategy to deal with the patriarchal culture and authorities who routinely employ discourses that blame the victim for having ventured into the public "male territory", asking questions such as "Why were they outside at that hour?" or "What were they doing in that part of the town?" The maternal activism of the groups in Mexico presented the victims of violence as "daughters," utilizing the very same discourse of the conservative authorities that blamed women as a counteract (Wright, 2007, p. 411). KCDP employs similar methods to address a remarkably similar discourse of the patriarchal, Islamist, and conservative Turkish authorities and media. An instance of the conservative, Islamist discourse employed by AKP regime includes when Erdoğan made statements on the nature of women and men, and stated the following:

> Femicides are happening, right? We truly need to think about this. A believer, I am not talking about perverts. I am talking about a person who really understands the value of it. Could they murder a woman, could they do something like this? Is that possible? They cannot. . . Why? Because I am speaking as a Muslim, our religion is Islam. We are the followers of a religion of peace. As the followers of this, you could never torture women as such. You cannot be violent toward women. In fact, what is the verdict for children? You will not [complain], it is your mother. That is how sensitive our values are. (BBC, 2014)

Erdoğan's framing of femicides employs a maternal-sanctity discourse based on conservative Islamist values. As a strategy of circumventing the same discourse on a political level, KCDP reaches out to the families of the murdered women based on

news reports in the media and acts in solidarity with them, and the communication it establishes with the families also pursues a goal of greater mobilization around the issue (Yıldız, 2021, p. 272).

My own experience within KCDP has shown me that the aims of KCDP include establishing connections with the families to re-frame femicides to place the blame not on the victim and her family because their daughter had not been "honorable" or had not acted in acceptable way by venturing outside of the conservative Islamic rhetoric and role placed on women by the government to the perpetrator, then the authorities for not providing protection. By successfully incorporating and emphasizing the participation of the families of the murdered women in the movement, KCDP has managed to first frame the issue of femicides as political–not as honor killings or private issues that only concern the family of the victim. The struggle of the feminist movement to become involved in cases of "honor killings" converges with the families and politicizes them, and this is the success of KCDP in its framing strategy. In other words, for the families who framed their daughters' murders because they had been "dishonorable"–for asking for a divorce, being in a relationship outside of marriage–there are now highly conservative, uneducated, poor families that say, "No one has the right to kill my daughter, not for any reason" (Yıldız, 2021, p. 252).

It also does not help that the government is constantly creating an environment in which impunity spreads like wildfire–a discourse that excludes women that stray from a certain role when talking about femicides leads to state officials not doing their job to provide protection to women (Karakaş, 2021), the perpetrators being routinely given a reduction in sentences due to clauses in the Turkish Penal Code that offers it in cases of "good behavior" or "regret" (Çabuk,

2021), and perpetrators of femicides to stating that it was “good that Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention” (Gazete Duvar, 2021) as they know that the Istanbul Convention was a critical framework that not only holds the state and the judiciary accountable for all forms of violence against women, but also signals a general shift of a lack of concern for femicides in the public opinion.

The broad mobilization of the antifemicide movement in Turkey is unprecedented and have led to great advances regarding women’s rights and femicides, such as creating great awareness around the issue, mobilizing other groups and movements as well as the feminist movement, and playing a crucial role in the adoption of the Istanbul Convention and Law No. 6284, along with the rest of the feminist movement. Both Islamist and Kurdish women routinely join the ranks of the feminist mobilization to call for equal rights, to stop violence against women, and many other issues such as child marriage, abortions, education, and women’s participation in the labor force (Arat, 2019, p. 260). The nature of KCDP is also unique, and the main reason behind the success of a leftist organization with party affiliations on mobilizing masses against femicides is the fact that it was built on the experiences of the feminist movement. Unlike leftist organizations and parties in Turkey, the women's movement has been building up experience ever since the 1980s for successfully producing concrete and oppositional policies that address current problems of women (Yıldız, 2021, p. 259). The success of the mainstream feminist movement in creating structural and legislative change has in turn affected the methods employed by left parties and organizations.

Meanwhile, since the emergence of KCDP, Turkey’s democracy has consistently been eroding under AKP’s regime (EIU, 2021; Freedom House, 2022; Boese et al. 2022). This brings us to our most crucial question: When approaching

the question from a perspective of political opportunities, how does a broad mobilization around the issue of femicides emerge under the perpetually diminishing political opportunities and eroding democracy in Turkey? To begin with, it is evident that although the movement is greatly influential, patriarchal authoritarianism has slowed down the progressive women's rights movement in Turkey (Sabeti & Moheimany, 2022). One example of this is Turkey's decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention in 2021. Women are not gaining traction in terms of legislative change or eradicating or decreasing the numbers of femicides as there are no political opportunities for the movement. However, the movement itself is still highly influential in terms of garnering not only public support but also can elicit a response from the government, however weak it may be.

I argue that instead of political opportunities for the antifemicide and the broader feminist movement, Turkey has political gaps–the government has no policy or data on femicides or violence against women, thus the feminist movement has the opportunity to proliferate and mobilize the nation on the issue by being the only source of data on the scope and nature of the issue, as well as the only source that offers remedies for it. KCDP offers legal help and other forms of support to women who have been subjected to violence and to the families of murdered women. Through these avenues, activism becomes a substitute for the state as they undertake a responsibility that falls within the scope of the state, which creates space for the antifemicide movement within the sphere of civil society (Altuntaş, 2019, p. 52). As the antifemicide movement and KCDP are the only actors working on this issue, we are drawn back to Altınay and Arat's observation on the unsustainability of the government placing the burden of its obligations on feminists–it is not sustainable

(2008, p. 36). Without a government response, strong movements with international support may make no progress at all.

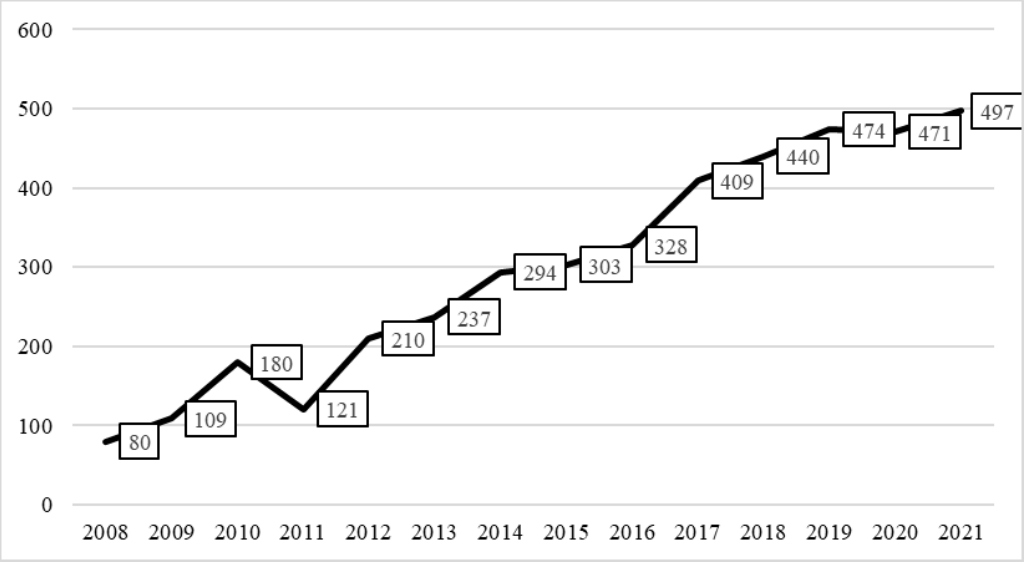

Figure 3. Femicides per year in Turkey

Source: [KCDP, 2022]

The Convention outlines four pillars that hold the state accountable for violence against women: the state is responsible for the prevention, protection, prosecution, and coordinated policies (Council of Europe, 2011). Turkey signed the Convention in 2011 without reservations and it went into force in 2014. Law No. 6282, on the other hand, outlines the domestic application mechanisms to implement the framework provided by the Istanbul Convention (Law No. 6284, 2012, p. 1). This is significant as it is the part of the second stage, policy, of eradicating femicides.

Both the Convention and Law No. 6284 may be attributed to the AKP government; however, both were a result of the enduring political and legal struggle of the women's movement in Turkey. With the support of an international actor such as the Council of Europe, enough pressure was generated on the government for

these international and domestic legislations. A legislative change in the right direction around the issue of violence against women signaled that the government would be assuming responsibility, even if the Convention went into force in 2014. This was highly effective, and 2011 was the only year in which femicides declined in numbers. The government had shown that it had stepped up to fulfill its obligations for protecting its citizens and implemented policies to take steps in eradicating violence against women.

When states show direct support for women's rights through procedures, implementation, and execution, this sends a message to individuals that make up society that a violation of those rights is unacceptable, and even punishable by law, which can be an effective factor behind social and structural change (Weldon & Htun, 2013, p. 234). However, after it went into effect in 2014, despite the struggle of the feminist movements for its full and correct implementation, but the state never assumed its obligations. The reasons behind the struggle for the implementation of the Convention were to be able to create social change that would be provided through legislation. However, the Convention and Law No. 6284 were never correctly implemented for this change to take place.

The pattern that emerges here is similar to Mexico: legislative change can be achieved when the state cooperates with the demands of the movement, and enough pressure from the international arena is garnered. Legislative change happens, but without a real commitment to the issue at hand, a wide social change that would eradicate violence against women and femicides never takes place. The data from KCDP on femicide figures clearly illustrate this point, as the number of femicides has steadily increased throughout the years.

Since its founding, KCDP has demanded that the state publish data on femicides. To date, Turkey has not published data on femicides through any official channels. One of the most important sources of information on femicides is the answers given to the parliamentary questions. Some information can be garnered through the answers of the Minister of Justice Sadullah Ergin in 2009, but his answers include female homicides. Fatma Şahin, the Minister of Family and Social Policies in 2013 has also provided the numbers on women who died as a result of domestic violence as an answer to a parliamentary question. The other avenue for information on femicides is press releases of various ministers. The Minister of Family and Social Policies Derya Yanık shared the data of the Ministry of Interior in 2022. While Ergin's answer provides the number of women whose cause of death was recorded as homicide, Şahin's answer indicates the number of women who lost their lives as a result of domestic violence. Yanık's figures are based on the data provided by the Ministry of Interior, and how the Ministry defines femicides is unclear.

Table 3. Comparison of Femicides, Female Homicides, and Female Victims of Domestic Violence

Year	KCDP	Ministry of Justice	Ministry of Family and Social Policies	Ministry of Interior
2003		83		
2004		164		
2005		317		
2006		663		
2007		1011		
2008	80	806		
2009	109	953	171	
2010	180		177	
2011	121		163	
2012	210		155	
2013	237			
2014	294			
2015	303			
2016	328			301
2017	409			353
2018	440			279
2019	474			336
2020	471			268
2021	497			307

Source: [KCDP, 2022; Milliyet, 2009; Habertürk, 2003; Evrensel, 2022]

Table 3 shows that data is sporadic and the distinction between femicides, female homicides, and women who died as a result of domestic violence only are muddled up until 2016. However, the fact that the Ministry of Interior started sharing data on femicides retroactively around 2020, however unclear its definition may be, is a sign that the demands of KCDP have been heard. KCDP has consistently been sharing data on femicide throughout the years, and the government has also started sharing its data to counteract it. It is an attempt to counteract, because in 2020, The Minister of Family, Labor, and Social Services Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk had made a statement that was aimed to undermine the data of KCDP: “When we analyze the data of

NGOs, they reflect suicides and suspicious deaths as femicide" (Birgün, 2020). KCDP released a written statement on its website in response:

> The Minister's statement is as if we are the ministry responsible for women, not herself. We would like to remind Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk that she is the Minister. The Minister, who says that the facts are distorted, should employ all mechanisms, and explain to us how many women were killed, why, how and by whom. Let society see it with all its transparency. We expect the Ministry to do its job. (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu, 2020)

Thus, for the antifemicide movement in Turkey, even data on femicides shows that political opportunities can be the independent variable–the movement itself has created an opportunity through engaging with the state and eliciting a response, even if no legislative change has taken place to create an official avenue through which data is clearly presented. The implications of this are two-fold: Under authoritarian, patriarchal regimes, not all achievements of the movement, such as forcing the government officials to make statements regarding violence against women and femicides, thus bringing the issue into the spotlight, can turn into legislative change. However, as the movement advances to fill in political gaps, authoritarian governments can try to counteract it as a strong, broad-based movement threatens the authoritarian regime and attempts to fill the power vacuum. The "power" here stems from the social change created by the movement, as awareness around violence against women has grown significantly since the founding of KCDP and especially during the last decade during which KCDP has broadened its reach. This and measures are taken to patriarchal discourse of the AKP government became even more consolidated.

However, social movements can only garner so much progress when domestic politics offer no political opportunities in the conventional sense, even when they have international support. Moreover, along with the acceleration of authoritarianism, the AKP regime has signaled a departure from any ideals of being

integrated into the Western sphere of international politics and has amplified a narrative based on tradition, culture, and nationalism, which in turn has had implications for gender policies (Doğangün, 2019, p. 2). Within this context, the links between the feminist movements, the state, and the international actors are severed–as the state consolidates its power and refuses to "answer to anyone," the political opportunities for movements also diminish.

Another instance that exemplifies the limited advances a movement can gain under such circumstances concerns the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in 2021. Turkey withdrew from the Convention on March 20, with Presidential Decree No. 31429 published in the Official Gazette at night.

At this point, it is important to note the difference between post-2016 AKP regime and the previous right-wing parties in power. The case of Turkey shows that almost all of the successes, meaning legislative change here, of the feminist movement had been achieved with right-wing parties in power. Although right-wing parties were in power, the feminist movement, combined with public opinion and international norms and values, as well as Turkey's desire to be incorporated into the global arena had paved the way for campaigns for women's rights to be successful. In fact, the earlier AKP regime had also presented a conducive environment for advancing women's rights, as is the case with the Istanbul Convention, which Feride Acar worked on and was signed under the supervision of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Arat defines this in the clearest way, calling this process a regime change (2021, p. 25). This regime change took place by transforming Turkey from a weak democracy to an authoritarian regime, a transition in which AKP had come into power in a constitutionally secular state while promising to strengthen the secular democratic regime under which gender rights were instrumentalized by governing

elites and were used to form a conservative, Islamist gender framework in an authoritarian political regime (Arat, 2021, p. 25). The AKP regime that signed the Convention and the one that withdrew from it present the democratic backsliding that Turkey is going through to the fullest extent.

Withdrawing from the Convention had been on the agenda since 2020, but the decision that confirmed it sparked immense outrage among the feminist movement, the antifemicide movement, the opposition parties, as well as the public (Deustche Welle, 2021). Women all over Turkey took to the streets to protest the decision. Women and LGBTQI+ groups who took to the streets to defend the Convention were subjected to heavy police violence, and dozens of people who participated in the protests were detained. Women's organizations, bar associations and opposition parties filed a lawsuit at the Council of State for the annulment of the decision. KCDP has been involved from the very beginning of the decision to withdraw, going all the way back to the time rumors around it had started circulating. With the decisions, KCDP and other organizations, collectives, and platforms came together to protest and demand that the decision be annulled. *Eşitlik için Kadın Platformu* (Platform for Equality for Women, EŞİK), a recent platform that brings together around 400 organizations, which include women's organizations, city councils and platforms, trade and bar associations, women's branches of political parties, and individuals has turned its attention to the Istanbul Convention (EŞİK, personal communication, April 1, 2022). KCDP is also a member of EŞİK and has been actively involved in its systematic approach to bringing back the Convention. The case of the decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention was recently held at the Council of State. Hundreds of lawyers and women from feminist organizations, as well as KCDP, joined the hearing. As a result of the outstanding

struggle women and LGBTQI+ people led, the prosecutor of the Council of State announced that they had found the decision to withdraw from the Convention with a Presidential Decree went against the Constitution and presented their opinion for a stay of execution. Although we do not yet know if the government will comply, the opinion of the Council of State is momentous. It is a clear representation of the generative power the feminist movements hold through collective action and the broad-based network they form and how mobilization is possible and partial change be achieved in the absence of opportunities.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis first outlines the emergence and success of the feminist movements in the recognition of women's rights, the following legislations, then the subsequent antifemicide movements in Mexico and Turkey by utilizing the political opportunity theory. Thus, this analysis offers a framework to explain the differences of secondary movements from their predecessors, as well as their strengths. The emergence of the antifemicide movements in both Mexico and Turkey can be traced back to McAdam's theory of protest cycles (1996, p. 31-32). Before there was an antifemicide movement, there was the autonomous feminist movement.

The feminist movement in both countries follow a similar path: They both emerged out of women who had been part of leftist organizations, then went on to form an autonomous movement with the advance of global human rights norms that both states upheld. In both cases, after a period of learning and garnering enough resources, the movements assumed more institutionalized forms that in turn would give them the power to interact with other political actors. Again, the hierarchies of doing politics at a formal level slowed down the "activity" of the movements.

The popular, autonomous feminist movements in both cases were the initiator of the antifemicide movement and had emerged under various conditions of political opportunity: In Mexico, with the slow trend towards democratization, supported by international norms and transnational networks, and in Turkey, in a completely closed off political arena after the military coup in 1980. However, domestic political opportunities emerged throughout the years with the advance of international

opportunities. As a result, the movement has broadened its scope vastly and is one of the strongest opposing voices under the authoritarian regime in Turkey.

As new grievances emerged, the popular forms of feminism in both countries had been slow to respond. Thus, new actors took to the stage—mothers, activists, leftist women, and many more—to address the issue of femicides. Although women are killed every day in all countries across the world, the sheer magnitude of the grievance in both countries, along with the knowledge the newly emergent activists had acquired from the previous feminist movements led to the development of the antifemicide movement. The consolidation of the antifemicide movement came through political opportunities provided at times, as well as the social change it has created in public opinion and the antifemicide movements have gained great traction not only in their countries, but also on a transnational and international level.

Moreover, as McAdam had suggested, the international context has also provided political opportunities (1996, p. 34). The international context has been crucial to the advancement of both the popular form of the feminist movement and the antifemicide movement. The second wave of feminism brought on a global norm change regarding human rights and consequentially, women's rights. The institutions, agreements, and mechanisms regarding the matter formed on an international level have been conducive to the creation of political opportunities on a domestic level. Moreover, the networks local activists built with international actors through NGOs have been crucial to the progress of the movements and have created political opportunities as well.

Last but not least, McAdam had pointed out how political opportunities could also be a dependent variable (1996, p. 35). Mexico and Turkey differ slightly on this

aspect, as Mexico's antifemicide movement has advanced through the more traditional political opportunities provided within the domestic and international arenas. The antifemicide movement in Turkey, on the other hand, seems to solidify McAdam's suspicions: movements themselves can forge and carve out their own opportunities under closed political contexts, and against anti-feminist reactions of the government, given that they have a great amount of knowledge and collective action behind them.

The differences between Mexico and Turkey are also apparent. Mexico has numerous antifemicide organizations (with the sole purpose of eradicating femicides), whereas the only organization with the sole aim of eradicating femicides in Turkey is KCDP. The movement in Mexico achieved policy change during the first years of Mexico's democratization, however, the movement in Turkey made progress on legislative success as it garnered further capacity through social change after its emergence, under diminishing political opportunities.

The varying levels of success are apparent: In Mexico, femicide is defined legally, is included in the Penal Code, and the state publishes statistics. In Turkey, the state shares data irregularly and through press releases of ministers, and there is no clear legal definition of femicide. However, both countries present a high level of activism and has seen social change and growing awareness in public opinion. When it comes to policy, the laws in Mexico are plenty regarding gender equality and femicides. Compared to Mexico, Turkey has less legislation on gender equality, femicides, and violence against women in place. Moreover, existing laws and right have been eroded under an increasingly authoritarian and anti-feminist regime. Implementation, on the other hand, is lacking in both states, but due to a slight difference in reasons. The Mexican state, constantly undermined by cartels, drug

wars, and corruption presents a high level of impunity, issues with classification, correct implementations of laws by the judiciary, and effective investigation. The high level of impunity in Turkey, on the hand, is due to lack policy and of implementation of existing brought on by the erosion of democracy and rights, which is supplemented by a discourse of Islamic values versus feminist women's rights, lack of recognition and thus, categorization and judicial response.

Currently, the antifemicide movements in Mexico and Turkey are at the forefront of the feminist movements and are some of the strongest contenders for the government. The reasons for these can be traced to their organization methods, the decades of experience they utilize, and their extensive ability to form alliances with all kinds of political actors. Although femicides are a long way from being eradicated in both countries, it is only these movements that can help remedy the issue.

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