Master of International Studies 2016-2017- Leiden University

Master Thesis

Magali de Biolley-s1923137

Supervisor: Dr. N. Rodriguez

2nd Reader: Dr. S. Regilme

7 July 2017

Building bridges across dissimilarities: Women's activism in Turkey at the heart of the global/local paradox of human rights.

Word count: 16049

---

[1] Fortune.com. (2017). Erdogan's Victory in Turkey's Referendum Could Be a Loss for Women. [online] Available at: http://fortune.com/2017/04/18/turkey-referendum-2017-erdogan-women/ [Accessed 7 Jul. 2017].

List of Acronyms

AKP	*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – Justice and Development Party
AKKD	The Women's Association against Discrimination
ANAP	*Anavatan Partisi-* The Motherland Party
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
DEP	*Demokrasi Partisi* – Democracy Party
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
HEP	*Halkın Emek Partisi* - People's Labor Party
Ka-Der	The Association for Support and Training of Woman Candidates
FP	*Fazilet Partisi* – Welfare party
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
RP	*Refah Partisi* – Virtue Party
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The debate surrounding the headscarf ban in Turkey has been omnipresent since Mustafa Kemal Ataturk came to power in 1923. After 624 years under Ottoman rule, the Turkish people were offered a new secular Republican nation-State. Ataturk presented his six principles- republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, statism and reformism, altogether constituting Kemalism- as the much-needed vehicle for the modernization of society (Karabelias,2009). These ideologies initiated the ongoing search for identity in which Turkey finds itself today- between global aspirations and the local realities. For women, the reformist principle was translated into a ban of the headscarf in public spaces. This ban was seen as an attack on Islamist women's freedom and access to public spaces such as universities and political organs, and recently some women's movements in the 1980s and 1990s turned their activism toward ending the headscarf ban. However women did not always agree on the terms of this lack of visibility. For example, both feminist groups working in the public sphere and Islamic women's groups acting within religious political parties are against the ban, as it prevents women from being represented in politics and limits right as woman (Cubukçu,2009). However, discourse shows that on the one hand, Islamic women do not support the ban because the veil is a fundamental aspect of their religion. On the other hand, feminist movements support lifting the ban so long as the old rule, where women live as men's property, is not reinstated. (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 2012). These women fight the same battle but do not have the same rationale. Their campaign to end the headscarf ban stands between a global understanding of human rights - including women's rights - and a local social reality concerning the needs of religious women. The research question for this dissertation is twofold: *What is the tension between the local and the global in gender issues in Turkey? What role did women play in activism for human rights in the 1980s and the 1990s?*

This tension between the global and the local is a theoretical framework that some scholars adopted in order to evaluate the universal applicability of the international human rights regime.(Cmiel,2004). The "global" refers to the identification of an evolving interconnected network of state and non-state actors, where norms and values are shared and applied globally in order to create solidarity.(Buzan,2004). These shared norms enable the possibility for universally applicable human rights to become institutionalized, understood as "treatments to which all individuals are entitled by virtue of being human" (Schmitz and Sikkink 2012: 682). Whereas, the 'local' is understood "as a sited experience of community and contention about rights, values, and obligations" (Stern and Straus 2012:12). This understanding of "local" and

5

the "global" account for the role of activism, which is understood as the active work undertook by grassroots movements, civil societies, and NGOs in order to change the norms that pertain to a society. My hypothesis for this thesis is that women are enclosed in different spaces of activism, i.e. the public sphere and the political sphere, and this separation prevents them from uniting under then common banner of 'woman'. Modern society is polarized between the global and the local aspirations, and so every human rights situation will evolve around this opposition. The challenge in this paper will be to evaluate this dichotomy with the help of an historical critical account of women's activism and how the tension between the two relates to the status of women in the public and the political sphere. This research is valuable because, International observers often comment that women's rights within Turkey are progressing and evolving.[2] However, research in this thesis will demonstrate that local realities do not always confirm this assumption and that responsibilities are shared between different actors in Turkey (Kadioglu,1996:178).

Methodology

This paper will employ the works of Cmiel in his seminal text *Recent History of Human Rights,* as a starting point. The author demonstrates how to historicize human rights in terms of discourses and activism, hence their nuances in political language, as a means of overcoming the typical difficulty of explaining the complexity of human rights history (Cmiel,2004:120). To do so, he delimitates three waves of historiography, respectively the 40s, the 70s and the 80s-90s and identifies their different motivations. The cultural setting which will be discussed herein is the multi-party democratic state in Turkey. The time frame that is used will be the period extending between the beginning of the 1980s and 2001, the year of the rise of the Justice and Development (AKP) religious ruling party.

The methodology of this dissertation draws on qualitative methods of content analysis. The research of this study will compare the political campaign of two organizations, Ka-der and the Ladies' Commission of the *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party) -RP and the *Fazilet Partisi* (Virtue Party)-FP, religious-Islamic parties, as a case study, with the first organization operating in the public sphere and the other inside the political structure of the government. The first group was a women's organization created in 1997 for the improvement of women's political representation through awareness and education in Turkey. This paper will examine

---

[2] "According to the Gender Empowerment Index—a composite index measuring gender inequality based on three dimensions of empowerment — Turkey ranks 63rd of 70 countries (UNDP 2001)".(Arat,1989;205).

their missions and values, as well as their activity concerning engendering gender equality, participatory development, and Good governance (Openaid.se,2015). The second group, the Ladies' Commission of the RP and the FP religious parties, aimed its activities at "energizing women's role in the Islamic parties, (Sahin,2011;160) . This paper will evaluate the party's official program from 1983 to 2001 which focus on women's objectives in entering the Commission.

Academic literature will be used to set the theoretical limits of this case study and the extent of human rights perspectives. The empirical evidence, i.e. descriptions of the programs and the participation figures, will be used to construct the hypothesis (above). Primary sources used include the programs and the numbers of both women's movements. For example, Ka-Der's reports since 1997 translated by international human rights website such as Openaid.se or Keig.org give valuable information concerning their goals and figures of women's representation in political parties and in the parliament along the years. These primary sources are vital in understanding the motivations and the rationales behind the activism. The secondary sources will be used to analyze the relationship between both programs and the role of this relationship in building women's identity in the Turkish society.

Challenges and intended contribution to the literature

This thesis seeks to contribute to the academic literature on human rights in two areas. Firstly, by accounting for the historical development of women's activism in Turkey in the 80s and the 90s, which has led to the creation of polarized women's movements acting in different spheres. And secondly, by studying their respective goals and motivations. This analysis will demonstrate that opposition to women's activism does not only lie within different spheres but between them, which can be problematic for building cohesion and creating change. In the opinion of this author, this is this last element, hence the lack of cooperative work between the decisional political sphere and the 'right-claiming' public sphere, that has led to the construction of a contradictory status for woman in Turkey. Media often attributes human rights repression to the leader of the ruling party. However, this paper will argue that other constitutive elements, specifically the tension between Turkey's local realities and the global identity, are responsible for a limited women's freedom.

The analysis of the two women's movements programs proved to be the most challenging aspect of this thesis. Indeed, when writing this paper, my research was limited by the fact that I do not speak and read Turkish. In addition, both of these programs were written within the limits placed on freedom of speech in Turkey. As a result, they may not reflect perfectly the how the women felt in the society. Thus even though women's organizations shares a purpose, their differing ideology perpetuated the divide between them by ensuring they could not conduct activities in the same manner.

The reason why I chose to write this thesis is because I have myself lived and felt this difficulty for women to find a place in the Turkish society. I have lived in Istanbul for 6 months last year and it was enough to see numerous women's protests in the streets. I always wondered what they were fighting for and for whom. I have also always wondered how come I had such difficulties living through the men's look. This country is full of identities and is more than welcoming. However this last argument was contradictory to the way men and sometimes even women see other women. And it was hard, even for 6 months.

Structure

This thesis is separated in four different chapters. The two first chapters explore the more theoretical and informative aspects of human rights activism in the literature and in practice during the 1980s and the 1990s in Turkey. The research will start with an overview of the literature on human rights in a local versus global setting and the evolution of human rights activism internationally and in Turkey. The second chapter lays out an account of the specific activism of these two groups in the 1980s and the 1990s in Turkey. It will examine the evolution of women's activism and the impact this had on the representation of women in politics. This chapter is present in order to explain clearly the motivations behind women's activism in the 80s and how they changed in the 90s.

The following third and fourth chapters recall the demonstration and the critical analysis of the empirical information and the figures provided by the two women's organizations programs. Through a content analysis of these two important women's activist groups, it will be possible to show that the existing contradictions between the public sphere and private sphere were affected by the role of, both the patriarchal system and the international community human rights regime impositions, and how these different influences led the women to fight on complete different fronts. First, the reason why I chose to analyze

Ka-Der's content is because it is the only and largest organization that concentrates on the issue of political participation of women and their role in decision-making processes in Turkey. The study of the Ladies' Commission is motivated by the fact that today, the AKP ruling religious party, heir of religious RP and later FP, has the highest rate of women's participation and a new and most effective women's group, the Women Auxiliaries.(Ka-Der,2013)[3]. On one hand, the Women Auxiliaries are important factions within the AKP (Ayata and al.,2008;373) suggesting that improvement stems from the work conducted by the women's group during the activism years (80s and 90s). On the other hand, if the Women's auxiliaries disagree with the quota regulation proposed by the EU to improve their quantitative representation, their previous responsibilities have been effectively internalized in the party's ideology.

---

[3] In February 2003, the Women's auxiliaries of the AKP ruling party with Abdullah Gül at its head became the successor of the Ladies' Commission of the RP and FP religious parties.(Ayata and al.,2008;370). In 2013, AKP counted 46 woman deputies out of 246 AKP deputies and 550 deputies for all the political parties.(Ka-Der,2013).

Chapter 1: Literature review

The heart of the human rights Paradox

What is the paradox?

The human rights area has been studied by scholars from schools as diverse as the Marxists, neo-Marxists, Liberals and constructivist traditions. However, this field also leans toward the study by other less official theoretical framework. One of them is a study of the applicability of human rights through its paradoxical situation (Cmie,2004). The paradox they refer to is the one of a human rights regime that is globally written and imagined by the international community, but locally applied by the government and respected by the population. The best example of this human rights paradox is explained by Bahçecik. He claims that human rights have been imagined at the global level to protect civil societies from State's repression (Bahçecik,2015;1225). However, locally, human rights needs state actions to be promoted, protected and reproduced (Bahçecik,2015;1225). This interplay can explain to what extend human rights are applicable.

Since the end of the War of Independence in 1920 when ended the rule of the Ottoman Empire and gave birth to Kemal Ataturk' new secular Republic in 1923, the country has tried to become more Western while also preserving its traditional and patriarchal values. Concretely, politically, as Bozdağlıoğlu argues Turkey is first "a Muslim population representing at the same time a unique version of a secular state approximating a Western-style democracy" (Bozdağlıoğlu ,2003:57). All aspects of the Turkish society, including human rights and women's rights, are trapped in this dual aspiration. Women in Turkey reflect this duality. They are assigned to two roles: the one of the traditional mother and the one of the modern worker. There is no middle-ground for them, hence no possibility to build a common identity as 'woman' (Kadioglu,1996). This dissertation uses this last theoretical framework, that Cmiel calls a "sensibility in the historical writing of human rights" that "sees human rights politics as paradoxical" (Cmiel,2004;132) to demonstrate how this paradox impacts women's status in Turkey. Indeed, as Kadioglu states, "the women's world is like a microcosm of this paradox ingrained within the Turkish psyche. Since the early days of westernization at the beginning of the 19th century, women have been burdened with the task of being tight-rope walkers between tradition and modernity"(Kadioglu,1996:178).

This paper will employ constructivist analysis as a theoretical tool. Constructivism is ideal as the Turkish case could not be analysed only from a liberal or a Marxist strict point of view. Indeed, though constructivism is not classified as a human rights theory as such but "it offers a way of thinking about the relationship between norms and interests" that other theories do not (Dunne and al., in Goodhart,2016;64). Its emphasis of the social construction of norms giving birth to new interests reflects Turkey's ongoing search for identity. This dissertation will study the process of social construction considered through the practical case of women's activism in Turkey. In addition, to fill the gaps concerning how these women's rights movements relate to the global theory of human rights framework of a the local versus global paradox will be employed.

Positive complexity of the paradox

However, this paradox that is to be found in the case of human rights, Turkey, and women, does not put the two dimensions, i.e. the local and the global, in opposition. The world is not or global or local. Indeed, "it is not becoming a world society with a single system and culture. Nor are world politics simply converging around a single coherent set of ideas around how to structure the state" (Lechner and Boli 2004, Kupchan 2012, in Stern and al. 2012:4). In that sense, it is important to understand that, as Marylin Young argues, "paradox is not contradiction. Rather, paradox calls for the persistent negotiation between claim and practice" (Young 2000 in Cmiel 2004:132). This theory of the constitutive aspect of the paradox of human rights is at the core of this thesis. Additional authors (Wasserstrom, Darnton, Young, Sikkink, Hunt, Caney, Cmiel 2004:126) place themselves in the same theoretical wave, acknowledging the fact that those human rights ideas are not simply local or global but "complex and often internally contradictory" (Wasserstrom,2000:20). The paradox does not call for a destruction of either the global or the local, but a critical understanding of the use of one or the conciliation of both. It allows scholars to imagine human rights as being realized by humans "only in particular places with particular instruments and with particular protections" (Stern and Straus,2012:3) by at the same acknowledging the fact that human rights are protected globally.

Margaret Flynch, in Stern and Straus' book (2012), accounts for the positive complexity of the paradox explained above. She wrote that the Burundian army chose not to use the human rights discourse to end the 1992 Burundian War. On the one hand, she explains that the generals thought it was more effective to work on people's fear for self-preservation.

(Flynch,2012 in Stern and Straus,2012). On the other hand, she finishes her chapter by arguing that even if the solution had to be found locally, "the local actors upheld global human rights norms unintentionally" (Flynch 2012 in Stern and Straus 2012:99). She demonstrated that local efforts and not global norms caused the violence to end in 1992. Nevertheless, Flynch contends that global norms were enacted vicariously, as globalization enabled the public to become more aware of violations of human rights in the world, putting pressure of governments to affirm their commitment to these norms in order to maintain legitimacy (Flynch 2012 in Stern and Straus 2012:99. For Flynch, the actions of local politicians is more relevant for establishing theoretical approaches to calming violence, as it is these individuals who "seek the most effective, rather than the most normatively palatable, ways to do so" (Flynch 2012: 99). The case of Burundi helps to channel the discourse concerning the dual nature of human rights presented in Cmiel (2004) by demonstrating how human rights norms can develop on a local, rather than a global level.

The global side of the paradox

How were human rights globally imagined?

The recognition of the individual in international politics and law brought the human rights regime on the global negotiation table in the 20th century and made the individual universal. Schmitz and Sikking write that "the human rights discourse is universal in character and includes claims of equality and non-discrimination" (Schmitz and Sikkink,2012 in Carlsnaes,2012;182). This idea of being entitled to certain rights by virtue of being human is reminiscent of Rawl's conception of justice. In his writings, he argues that the ideal method to ensure the creation of a fair society is by placing the individuals behind a "veil of ignorance" where they would be unaware of their future position in the society they are creating. In this "original position", they would be encouraged to design a society where all people would be equal (Rawls,1971). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights ratified in 1948 by 48 member States can be understood as this tool used to place the persons in the original position. Later, the ICCPR, Convention adopted in 1966 by the General Assembly, defined the legally binding civil and political rights of the member States. It gave even more power to the aforementioned declaration. They are the representation of the global application of human rights.

Hoover explains and later opposes the fact that, under the UDHR today, the individual dignity is understood as inherent to the particular logic of the humanity of the moral claim,

"claims that are formally universal in reference and global in scope"(Hoover 2013;218). Hence the humanity became the identity (Hoover 2013). Indeed, in a globalized world where each individual is considered as deserving equal treatments when facing an existential threat to his/her life or simply his/her decent way of living, ideas take over interests and the natural rights of 'the human' becomes a universal morality translated into Human Rights. In addition to the impact of the UDHR on States and the importance of activism, Zizek and Barros argue that the Human Rights regime is used as a way to limit excessive power and to legitimize the State (Zizek 2011,Barros 2001). With the introduction of the universalization of the individual rights (UDHR) and the globalized world order, it is only if the government decides to accept, respect and institutionalize human rights inside their regime, and this limit their own power, that the State can be seen as legitimate actor in the eyes of the international community (Donnelly 1989, Forsythe 1993).

The global history of human rights cannot be separated from the activism that took place inside the countries. In order to account for link between the local and the global, the concerned actors who create the possible link are the activists. Sikkink argues that the human rights regime follows a logic of diffusion of the universal morality and these ideas of rights and wrongs "desire to convert others to those ideas" on the basis of the claim that the global can limit the excessive use of local power (Sikkink,1998). The diffusion is undertaken by what Nadelmann calls 'transnational moral entrepreneurs' (Nadelmann,1990 in Sikkink,1998;518). They are the new activists. They are mainly constituted of civil societies and NGOs that are meant to make human rights advocacy relevant (Cizre,2001). If the diffusion happens correctly, the State becomes a member of the "club of liberal States" (Sikkink,1998:520) that agreed on human rights principles. It generates a certain model of international politics (Sikkink,1998).

Cmiel's waves of human rights bibliography

Kenneth Cmiel accounts for this activism evolution and explains that the presence of these entrepreneurs' changes according to discourse concerning the international community and its changing social realities (Cmiel 2004). His historical analysis of "the shift from political language to the history of activism"(Cmiel,2004;126) will be the base of the analysis in this paper. He analyzes how certain elements such as activism are influenced by the bibliographic evolution of human rights separated in three waves: the 40s, the 70s and the 90s. Women's political rights of representation in Turkey can be understood as starting in the 1930s, but the

visibility of their claims in the public sphere and the political structure of the country are best demonstrated in the activists' efforts of the 1980s and 1990s.

Cmiel starts with the idea that before the 1940s and the redaction of the UDHR in 1949, the term 'human rights' was not used, and that "there were no non-governmental organizations with global reach to defend its principles" (Cmiel 2004:117). States were sovereign and could still do what they wanted inside their borders. In the closing years of the colonial era, emphasis was put on national minorities' right to self-determination (Cmiel 2004). Those responsible for establishing and propagating norms during this period were typically found in the upper echelons of Western countries' political elite, with other entrepreneurial efforts coming from incipient international institutions. "This activism was also designed to build international law, and the United Nations was at the heart of it" (Cmiel 2004: 129). A primary motivation for establishing international human rights norms was the recent memory of World War II, in order to prevent human rights atrocities such as the 1940-45 Jewish genocide from occurring again by enshrining human rights in international law (Cmiel 2004). However, individuals exogenous to Western political systems were not a predominate feature in this process. In Turkey, political mobilization was predicated on social, rather than human rights, such as women's right to suffrage/electoral rights, which were obtained in 1930 and 1934 (Arat 2011). Their claims were what the government could give them in terms of 'voting' rights thinking that this was enough to acquire all the other freedoms.

The second period in the bibliography regarding human rights is the 1970s. During these years, "there was an explosion of interest in human rights" conducted mainly by NGOs such as *Amnesty International* and *Human Rights Watch* (Cmiel 2004: 130). For 10 years, the entrepreneurs of norms were to be found, this time, outside the international institutions. The involvement of the two Cold War superpowers in proxy wars across the globe undermined the image of these states as paragons of human rights, diminishing popular trust in their moral authority (Cmiel 2004). Globalization both propagated and was a proponent of enhanced telecommunications technologies, allowing people to become aware of what was happening around the globe. For example, in the context of the Cold War, the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was heavily condemned by international NGOs such as Amnesty International, but not by the international community because it was seen as a threat more to the United-States than to human rights (Amnesty International 2013). Civil societies were shocked by the

atrocities conducted not only by Afghan forces, but Soviet and American forces as well, as Horia Mosadiq[4] explains in her interview (Mosadiq 2013).

Finally, the third wave established norms to be aligned a construction of renewed interests. This wave of activism started in the 1980s and continued until the beginning of the 2000s. The end of the Cold War brought human rights back onto the agenda of international institutions, expanding the scope of the notion to include "health rights, women's rights, economic justice and indigenous people's rights" (Cmiel 2004: 130). Norm entrepreneurs, in these years, could be found both in society and in international structures. In addition, more and more civil societies were forming outside the spheres of western influence (Cmiel 2004). Viewed from within the framework of Constructivism, this shows that norms evolve according to the way people interact with what occurs in their local political environments, such as involvement in international institutions, NGOs or wars. An example of this third wave is the global movements for women's rights around the world explained below.

From these historical accounts, it is possible to analyze how this particular activism, - contextualized from within the framework of increasing globalization - mirrors the difficulty the Turkish Republic faced when attempting to employ human rights norms as a government tool, reflecting the dichotomy between global and local identities. *Is women's activism in Turkey using more global or local rationale? Is it using both? How does this affect women's place in the Turkish society over the past the two decades? And finally, how does this reflect the place of Turkey's human rights in general?*

Women's rights in the world

In this section, the history of activism in the 1980s and 1990s for women's political rights in the world and in Turkey will be established. Enhanced communication and greater transparency meant that the global community was more open to consider women's problem and members of civil society became more aware of their entitlement to fundamental human rights. This third wave of human rights historiography is reflected in feminists' fight around the world. Claire Snyder theorizes it in terms of the evolution of women's mobilization (Snyder 2008). In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly. This treaty "defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to

---

[4] Horia Mosadiq was a young girl during the 1979 invasion. She is today working for Amnesty International.

end such discrimination" (UN Women 2000). This historical agreement was an important tool that laid the foundations for future activism in the area of women's rights. Feminists in the 80s worked from the previous waves of women's activism' difficulties to recognize that women have different identities and not only the women: it could also be black women, Asian women…In that sense, Claire Snyder claims that the difference with the other periods is to be found in the tactical approach used to settle issues (Snyder 2008). The feminist movement of this third wave kept the idea of 'the private is political' conoting that violation of human rights in the private can be denounced publically (Gündüz,2005;121). In terms of the multiplicity of identities, the technique was to frame feminism as "multi-perspectival and intersectional (…) as well as an inclusive and non-judgmental approach of the other" (Snyder 2008: 175). This aspect of global feminism reflects the multiplicity of women's movements in Turkey but also the difficulty in finding unity when confronted with the oppressive power of a patriarchal state.

This type of feminist activism saw the moving of authority regarding women's rights into women's hands. It was feminism with women and not without women as it was during the second wave (Snyder 2008). This conception of human rights is typically coming from the international community understanding of the application of global human rights. Natural rights "emphasize the importance of the 'individual' perfect freedom". (Straw 2013: 39). This suggests that Human rights are exercised individually. (Straw 2013: 4). The problem with that conception is that the individual can never exercise his right alone because rights are inherently relational, which is reflected in the works of Monique Deveaux and Richard Hiskes, who conceptualize international human rights as relational rights rather than individual (Deveaux 2000 in Eckert 2002 and Hiskes in Steve and Stern,2012). For example, feminists believe that women should be represented in politics because they offer a unique perspective, unique in a sense that they represent a worldview men are incapable of having (Tremblay and Pelletier 2000: 381). In order to establish a model of women's position in the structure of patriarchal society, building their argument on what men do not have and what they do have, reflecting this relational conception of human rights. Based on this argument, it is important that women are able to negotiate their rights with their male counterparts, as their rights are exercised in relation to men. In the sense feminists that are part of this third wave, reacted to the past by insisting on the importance of having women talk to other women only. This technique denies the relational conception of human rights. In the case of Turkey, this characteristic is very present in the activities of both the Ka-der and the Ladies' Commission

(Ayata et al. 2008: 377). It suggests that women also have their part of responsibility in the lack of improvement of their status. In order to account for this aspect, it is relevant to theorize the local side of the paradox.

The local side of the paradox

Why would a local study of human rights be useful?

Cmiel (2004) asserts that historians in the 20th century favored cultural relativism to universalism, and therefore emphasized their studies on the particularism of cultures as a way to explain the need for locally-rooted human rights. Two reasons are attributed to this argument. First, Cmiel (2004) argues that because the creation of human rights was tainted by the end of imperialism and simple-minded rationalism, the study of the local was easier at that time. Second, Hoover (2013) explains that because the UDHR was drafted solely by western powers, it was not well received and interpreted by scholars hailing from ex-colonized, westernized societies before the end of the Cold War. The fact that human rights have such a strong universal claim is a good start in terms of, what Straw (2013) calls, "the role of consciousness" (68). Being conscious of others is a quality that is "produced by submission to a moral code or moral law" (Straw, 2013:68), however, this does not mean that all the answers to human rights violations will be found in the universal morality of human rights. In order to understand how the above-mentioned paradox works for women in Turkey, there is a need to go back to the local conception and development of their activism.

Sikkink is one such scholar who views human rights politics as paradoxical. (Sikkink,1998 in Cmiel 2004: 132). She uses Constructivism in order to analyze her cases, arguing that the emergence of human rights reshaped the idea of the national interests so that ideas do not always take over the interests (Sikkink 1998). The local and its actors pave the way to an acceptance or a denial of the universal morality that human rights impose. She poses her argument on the fact that national norms are projected at the international level (Sikkink 1998: 519). This argument is extended by Forsythe's theory of legitimization. Even if he claims that the human rights regime is a strong source of international legitimization for the States and their leaders, he adds that "States have multiple sources of legitimacy" (Forsythe 1993 in Sikkink,1998;520). For States, the global and the local serve as sources of legitimacy.

Feminist movements in Turkey

Giving rights to women and increasing their freedom in certain fields is, in Forsythe's words, another source of international legitimization used by the Turkish government (Forsythe,1993). Even if women were always well-perceived in Turkish society, their local activism helped to change their status and improved their political rights of representation to a certain extent. Indeed, increasing political representation does not mean that these women are taking decisions independently (Pitkin 1967). To understand Forsythe's claim, it is important to detail the development of feminism at the local level and link it to the population's perception of feminism at the global level. In terms of theory, Cengiz et al. (2010) exposes a theoretical constitution of women's movements and activism in Turkey. Supported by McAdams's concept of cultural opportunities, Cengiz et al.(2010) question the assumption that 'new social movements' were formed in the 1980s, following a change in social values in Turkey following the 1980 military coup d'état. They use the relationship between changes in political opportunities hence, in our case, the aftermath of the coup, and the new interests that were formed in this new space (Cengiz 2010: 22). The political opportunities were clearly there since a vacuum was left by the regime that only focused on the threatening groups, i.e. from the extreme left and from religious fundamentalists. In addition, subjective shifts where to be found in the change in women's roles. This room for new struggle gave women incentive to claim their rights.

Feminism and women's activism in Turkey already existed before the global community institutionalized their treaties. Indeed, CEDAW and the ICCPR mentioned above came after national electoral rights were given to women in 1930 and 1934 (Arat 2011). Local activism during the 1920s pushed for this change but did not continue to fight for other rights. Indeed, women believed that having electoral rights were enough and would have the spillover effect of improving their status in other areas of their life (Onbasi and al. 2008). As a result, the real activism started in the 1980s and continued in the 1990s. In the 80s, women's activism worked on consciousness understood as awareness and establishing platforms for discourse via the discrete gathering of women. During the 1990s, institutionalization was the word of order. On the one hand, the evolution seen during these two periods' rests on the local development of women's movements and their efforts to root their fight in accordance with local realities. (Snyder 2004; Onbasi and al.2008). On the other hand, the global had an important impact on the place of the human rights regime in the country and on the evolution

of the movements. The 1980s and globalization "gave rise to a political climate that allowed the search for a more historically rooted Turkish identity". (Kadiogly 1996: 190). Because these two decades are at the center of this thesis, a deeper analysis of it is to be found in the next chapter.

The understanding of the global in Turkey

As said above, the global impact is to be accounted for, especially in the case of Turkey, a country that is a "bridge between two different socio-cultural and political life norms territories". (Degirmenci 2013: 2). In his text on the power effects of human rights reforms in Turkey, Bahçecik (2015) writes that "it is often thought that the adherence to human rights and principles requires a political consensus" (1230) advocating instead for a non-political process for promoting human rights. According to Bahçecik, the perception of the global in Turkey is supposed to be internalized by citizens, and that involving local politicians creates obstacles for human rights norms to be established quickly and efficiently.

In Turkey, human rights are recognized by the population. But recognition doesn't mean acceptance. For example, in the early 1980s, some women saw feminist movements' work as a waste of time (Arat 2011). It is understood as part of the process of globalization, which in Friedman's words (Friedman 2005, in Stern and al, 2012), flattens the differences. Kadioglu (1996) claims that "globalization paradoxically led to the emergence of local identities" (190). The global is accepted but is often seen in contradiction to the local in the case of Turkey. The global dimension and the international human rights regime is then a way to legitimize already existing structures and rationale in the country, as legitimization was needed in order to be part of the 'club of liberal States' and the globalized world (Sikkink,1998;519). Cengiz (2010) asserts that people in Turkey do not see human rights as a new identity, but rather a strategy of survival (Cengiz 2010). This position is not only seen in the place given to women by the patriarchal regime but also by women themselves in the society. This is instrumental in answering the research question by using a concrete human rights situation. Should women adopt their traditional or modern role in order to find their place in society? The global compels regimes to adopt women's rights but in some cases, society itself maybe unprepared to internalize it into everyday life. But this paradox is not contradiction and is to be used as a starting point for the analysis of human rights through the case-study of women's political right in Turkey.

Why is women's representation important to report on the situation of human rights?

Women's representation in the political structure is understood in this paper as the best example to situate human rights in Turkey and demonstrate this interconnection between the local and the global. Indeed, as said earlier, women are a fitting example for their paradoxical position in society. This can then contribute to previous authors' 'critical understanding' argument of the local and the global. Political representation is the highest level of visibility in a State. Assessing this visible area is the easiest way for the international community to evaluate women's right to political representation in a country. In addition, this visibility is the objective which women's movements in the political structure and the public sphere have worked for. Pitkin's theory or representation is explanatory of this aspect. She says that representation is needed to show different interests. However, she adds that the actions of elected officials "must involve discretion and judgment; he must be the one who acts". (Pitkin,1967 in Degirmenci,2013;3). The content of these rights have to be studied, as well as the way interests are represented and dispatched in society.

Political parties in Turkey

The element that groups the democratic, authoritarian and representation indicators are political parties. In order to account for representation, it is important to explain briefly how institutionalized the political parties are and how they work. As Arat asserts, political parties are crucial in a democratic society (Arat 2017). The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey emphasizes the crucial role of political parties in Article 68 of the Chapter of the Law of the Political Parties: "Political parties are indispensable elements of democratic political life"(Law of political parties). They are the reflection of democracy and of the societies' interests. However, the negative sides of political parties have to be taken into account when analyzing their democratic roles. First, opposition parties do not offer valid alternatives as they constantly work in opposition to the ruling party, making this opposition their only program. Second, as Degirmenci asserts, candidates are not well-known and people tend to vote for the party leader and not the party's ideas (Degirmenci,2013;6), hence not for the party program or for a party where more women are present. And finally, they are highly institutionalized groups' which creates a risk of a strong patriarchal and hierarchical politics, leaving women marginalized. The system almost forces women to vote for the ruling party, as this party at least typically is the most transparent in its policies. Nonetheless, they are crucial actors in the process of integrating women into the political structure of the country even if

they "do not necessarily constitute one of the primary targets of feminism (Ayata and al.,2008;365). In addition, political engagement is a the best way to voice women's claims (Sahin,2008;202).

The constructivist approach to human rights

There are two reasons why Constructivism underpins the theoretical framework of this thesis. First, contrarily to its counterparts, it accounts for social transformation and interaction, that is, as mentioned above, a prerequisite for the analysis of the interaction of the global and the local (Carlsnaes et al. 2016: 139). And second, social construction is important in the case of Turkey as the construction of its identity is central to its politics and, more importantly, is constantly being negotiated between the Western materialism and the Eastern spirituality. (Kadioglu,1996). When realists see human rights 'just as words' floating in an anarchic world of sovereign States and lacking coercive institutions, constructivists claim that there is no "necessary tension between the interests of sovereign states and the moral principles associated with the promotion and protection of human rights". (Dunne and Hanson 2016: 64). When liberals see the human rights regime as a tool to promote democracy and as a global appeal of the regime on each individual, constructivists account for the fact that this regime has an impact on the state identities in plural and not in singular. (Dunne and Hanson 2016: 64). Constructivists allow ideas and norms creating human rights to be shared and influenced by multi-level social constructions. "Constructivism is a social theory about the role of knowledge and knowledgeable agents in the constitution of social reality" (Adler 2012: 129). By accounting for these knowledgeable agents, they also account for an analysis of human rights practiced in relation with someone else and not individually.

Constructivists of this new wave of study see the domestic level as a place where "national preferences are born and international practices are produced" (Adler 2012: 129). Adler argues that the different sources of "state preferences" are connected to the agents and their structures (Adler 2012: 129). Finally, these negotiated norms and ideas born from the changing interests of the social sphere "have constitutive effects on the identity formation of actors" and do not simply act as an additive to the interests indicator. (Schimtz and Sikkink 2012: 690). These theories will permit the Turkish case to be analyzed through the lenses of social interactions. By a change in interests, it is possible to understand if identity is being officially manufactured or actually inherent to the public sphere social interactions. (Kadioglu 1996).

Chapter 2: Feminist movements after the 1980 military coup

The aftermath of the 1980 coup

On September 12th, 1980, violent erupted in Turkey as a bloody coup d'état was underway: "clashes between left- and right-wing groups led to (…) hundreds of thousands of people arrested in following years, dozens executed" (Aljazeera.com 2016). This violent event brought despair to the country but also opportunities. Despite the fact that civil societies and trade unions were deeply affected by the coup, its impact on women's activism was actually positive. After leftist and oppositional groups were forbidden and banned from the political sphere in 1980, the 'new movements' advocating for women's rights emerged (Cengiz et al. 2010). But for what reason did this restrictive political climate in fact did not feel threatened by actions led by women? The answer is two-fold: First, from 1981 to 1983, activists only gathered and discussed in small numbers and in private houses (Arat 2011). In 1984, the Women's circles were created under the ambiguous title of 'associations', undertaking "a wide variety of activities ranging from supporting women's labor, providing consulting services to women's legal problems" (Cengiz et al. 2010: 24). Secondly, argues Arat (2011), because "the State still did not take the women seriously. "The state bureaucrats were typically not interested in getting engaged in a dialogue with women's organizations" (196). As a result, women did not ask for more political rights in the first years following the coup but instead concentrated on awareness. Onbasi et al. (2008) describes these first years as a "period of political vacuum and transition that provided women with the opportunity to re-organize, not within the pre-established frames of 'grand social projects', but in alternative modes" (330).

1980s consciousness rising

According to Cubukçu et al. (2004), the female activists of the 1980s "fought against the patriarchal gender roles and relations so that the rights granted by the law could be put into practice in social, cultural, political and economic domains" (56). Globally, this decade took place in Cmiel's third wave of human rights bibliography. Nationally, it was born as a reaction to the violence of the 1980 coup. These first movements were a rebellion against State (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 56). As mentioned in the literature review, and in the words of constructivists, the changing interests of social spheres have an impact on identity. The interests of women in the public sphere, in the years of rising awareness, shifted from an

internalized patriarchal system based on a sufficiently perceived political participation grounded on the fact that they have electoral rights, to a complete opposition to the patriarchal system led by feminist groups who "instigated Turkey towards solution" (Cubukcu et al.,2004:56). The "equality of rights" was not enough, and the hard division between private and public that "left women alone in the private domain" had to end (Cubucku and al. 2004: 73).

Why consciousness?

Tomen suggests that, when demonstrating the state of the public sphere in Turkey, "citizens are not fully aware of their rights as citizens and there is a wide apathy among people towards civil society and organization". (Tomen 2015: 473). For this reason, consciousness is an important phase that led to the visibility of new political interests. From 1923 to the end of the 70s, rights granted by Turkish law diminished the politicization of women in the public sphere (Arat 2011). In the case of Turkey, in 1924 the first 'Women's Union' was created, a self-proclaimed apolitical organization. (Arat 2011: 188). Following the lobbying of this group, municipal and electoral votes were granted to women respectively in 1930 and in 1934, followed by an opening for women to run in parliamentary elections (Arat 2011:190). The legislation of such electoral rights led to a period of stagnation between 1940-1960 as the effect of the law depoliticized women in the public sphere, period that that might have hurt women's rights and activism "by giving the impression that they are not needed" (Arat 2011: 204). As a result, only apolitical organizations were created, constituted of educated upper-class women (Arat 2011: 192), locking women's associations and individual women in both their modernizing and traditionalizing role (Onbasi 2008: 339). Therefore, working on reinvigorating awareness of their cause was the only way to re-politicize women.

This is where the 1980s are important in understanding the impact of consciousness on the local development of women's political rights. Human rights or women's rights in our case are not about simple implementation but the understanding of its norms by the public. In the 80s, "79 percent (of the woman electorate) did not want their daughters to be politically active" (Arat 2011: 204). To limit this perception, awareness had to grow in order to institutionalize rights effectively at the level of a regime that is conscious of the stereotyped place they were giving to women. The movement organized campaigns and actions to raise awareness of the fight against domestic violence, abortion, honor killings, women's ability to participate in politics, etc… (Cubucuk et al. 2004: 64). In this process, "women's usage of

public spaces increased" (Cubukcu et al. 2004: 66). Different types of protests happened in the streets of the biggest cities. In addition, the 'private is political' already observed in the second wave, continued to be used. Their sufferings were visible. In terms of political representation, this awareness had limited results, limits which were attributed to the patriarchal regime in which this movement was evolving. In 1987, the percentage of female deputies in parliament dropped to 1.8% from 3.0% in 1983 (Sahin 2011;294). Even though feminist movements became popular in the public sphere and reached the private spaces of women, it would still be time before this would be reflected in parliament (Degirmenci 2013:3).

What was the impact of the global?

As said in the literature review, the impact of 'the global' on Turkey was a legitimizing force for political activism. In the case of the women's movement, international regulation helped to avoid more violations of rights based on a legitimate global claim. In the words of Cubukçu et al. (2004), it was an important "deterrent force of regulations to prevent discrimination they faced in every area" (62). The 1985 ratification of CEDAW, helped to spread awareness of women's movements and legitimated their occupation of public spaces, using the Convention to foster their demands alongside other women in the public and political sphere. As a result, "women became a potent social pressure group on political power by way of such collective actions" (Cubukcu et al. 2004: 61). Consequently, CEDAW then helped ruling political powers to cooperate with women's movements worldwide (Onbasi 2008: 331). In March 1986, the initiation of a petition to press for the implementation of CEDAW was the first important and successful act that took a global turn (Arat 2011). Moreover, in 1987, the AKKD, The Women's Association against Discrimination, worked only at CEDAW's implementation in order to fight for the end of discrimination against women in the public and private spheres (Cubukçu et al. 2004).

These two events are important to understand the local anchoring of the women's movements in Turkey and their use of 'the global'. These events were instrumental in providing women with a platform from which they could negotiate their place on the agenda with the State, "referencing universal texts" (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 62). In other words, they used the same language that the government had been using to legitimize itself since 1923. However the prevention of violations instituted by CEDAW would not have taken place without the awareness campaigns conducted from 1980. Women were acting outside and in

opposition to what they saw as a patriarchal State government. In Turkey, the 1980s can be characterized by its responsive and angry public sphere. This type of feminism uses global values such as equality, freedom and women's rights to advance their claims. The awareness campaigns that women's movements undertook are said to have not only affected women but the whole society" (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 64).

1990s institutionalization

Cengiz "points out that the 1990s were the years when the feminist activism of the 1980s turned into institution building attempts" (Cengiz,2010:25). This new trend is placed, globally, in the context of expanding human rights activism and a "renewed interest in international law", as mentioned in the previous chapter. In Turkey, it is placed in the context of the acceptation by the Turkish government that "certain abuses were part of a systemic policy" and not only attributed to the deviant behavior of individual politicians (Casier 2009: 6). This new position was enhanced by Turkey's official request of candidacy for the European Economic Community (EEC). The protection of human right was integrated into the state administration (Casier 2009). Consequently, human rights discourse started to become employed more and more by State leaders. Moreover, women understood that it would be more effective to stop working in opposition to the central government and work towards bilateral solutions instead. This second decade of activism invigorated a still active public sphere, nonetheless willing to work outside but jointly with the government in order to get what they wanted. The causes of this need for institutionalization are two-fold: firstly, there was a need for "sustaining independent women's organizations" that struggle would dignify the years of struggle undertaken by female activists (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 71); secondly, "the movement was motivated by the feminist accumulation of consciousness" (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 75) which was reflected in increased publications of women's magazines, state institutions and daily discourses (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 76).

Women's activism in the public sphere

Women in the public sphere developed domestically along local realties using the global as a rationale. In terms of the women's movement in the public sphere, the amendment of several articles of the Civil code is a demonstration of this institutionalization, amongst

many other crucial areas of improvements.[5] The change of the civil code is more relevant in terms of the political representation of women because its amendments recognized the civil equality between men and women that this Code was entitled to grant. Amongst the 1,030 additions (Gündüz 2005) that were made to the code, the one that is extremely relevant to the status of women in politics was Article 159. It was "binding women's employment to the permission of the husband" (Cubukçu and al.,2004;81). Thanks to the pressure exercised by women's NGOs, this Article was officially abolished in 1992. As a result, women could be politically active for example, if they wanted to, without having to obey their husband's demands to stay at home. In terms of the paradox they find themselves in, this allowed women not to be assigned only the role of mother but also that of a career-driven individual. Furthermore, taking up only one of these roles became socially acceptable. This way out of the paradox took place thanks to multiple campaigns and organizations' communication such as the *media-fax campaign*, the creation of the Women's Research Center (1993), statements, communiqués, visits to the Parliament Speaker's Office, etc… (Cubukçu and al.,2004;81). The new Civil code, finally enacted in 2002, "is the most important gain of the women's movements in Turkey" (Arat 2011;191).

In order to reach the central government, women's groups used human rights discourses to "resonate the values of the secular state". (Tomen 2015: 473). It was not important to believe or not in the Western values adopted by the secular State. However using this language allowed activists to have a legitimate claim in front of the political elite Tomen,2015). It is, nonetheless, not deniable, that women's movements in Turkey generally agreed with international regulations concerning women. Indeed, CEDAW had a great impact on the enactment of the law because its language could be used (Cubukçu and al.,2004;82). However, they know that they have their own locally rooted claims, before demanding the international ones. When they finally managed to communicate with the ruling elite, actual legal changes could take place.

Where were women in the local political structure?

In terms of the political sphere' work, the major change that happened in the 90s was the role of women in political parties, the result of women's activism and the amendments

---

[5] Domestic violence against Women, The Law on protection of the Family, The development of women's Studies in Universities, the Turkish Penal Code Draft Law, Labor and Job Security, Constitutional Change (Cubucku and al.2004;78).

made to the Civil code. Now that they could work freely in politics and use their family name instead of their husband's, they had greater visibility (Arat 2011). In terms of political representation figures, "the highest representation of women was recorded between 1996-1997 with 10%" (Ka-Der 2013). Moreover, almost all political parties' programs addressed the 'women's question' (Arat 2017: 249). From 1992 the HEP and later DEP Kurdish parties "developed concrete policies regarding women rights and gender equality" (Sahin 2011: 124). Since 1994, the Kemalist CHP party has started to "address range of women's issues by employing the language of rights" by lobbying for social equality between men and women. Finally, the Islamist Refah and later Fazilet Party, were less confident in mentioning women in their party.

Nonetheless, women's activism increased female representation by creating "party organizations, called the Ladies' Commission" (Sahin 2011: 160). More or less all the parties agreed challenging and effacing traditional and stereotypical conceptions of women as "mothers and homemakers" typical of the 1980s (Arat 2017: 245). The problem with this statement is that most of them were actually used as way to show that they were modern parties further. As Arat (2017) asserts, "political parties have been arguably the most institutionalized political entities, after the military and courts" (242). As a consequence, women working in political parties were not freed from any ideology and were reminded everyday that they were stuck in the mother/modern women paradox by the prevailing patriarchal system of politics. For example, in the 1990s the CHP lobbied "for putting women's legal right in practice but also to stress women's role within the family" and it is still the case today (Sahin,2011;206). In addition, Sahin (2011) says that women were used as vote gatherers more than they were perceived as genuine political actors in the decision making procedures.

What was the impact of the global?

As said above, the global directly impacted women's movement in the public sphere but also indirectly women's groups in the political parties. Lack of political consideration for women is illustrated by Turkey's latency in adopting international tools, such as the ICCPR. While CEDAW had been ratified 15 years earlier, the ICCPR was only ratified in 2000 because of the pressure from the EU (Cizre 2001). This latency is uncharacteristic of Turkey, given that it was one of the first in the world to grant electoral rights to women (in 1935), which seemed to indicate progressive values and an anticipation of incipient women's

movements. However, the ICCPR - responsible for ensuring that the political rights of men and women became legally binding - was not welcomed in Turkey's political environment, demonstrating how women's identities were still being manufactured by a patriarchal regime. This reflects Cmiel's (2004) contention regarding the crucial separation between civil and political rights. According to Cmiel, this distinction is crucial to understand why women were not being granted real political rights, asserting that "the link between the civil and the political is relatively new" and "their distinction bears real consequence" in the 19th century (122). For women in Turkey, the fact that the political international framework was adopted so late shows that the government could play on the distinction of the two terms, i.e. improve the women's civil rights as mentioned above, but not especially their political rights.

In conclusion to this chapter, it is important to keep in mind that these two decades of activism made space for two types of women's movements. The first is the one that emerged in the public sphere in the 80s and was subsequently institutionalized in the 90s, independently from the political sphere and that often references its fight to the international human rights regime. The second movement of women was composed of those who had been attributed rights within the political sphere in the early 90s and who worked on the rationale of the party they were part of. This second group only applied the international regime when the political parties used it. "Human rights discourse produced in the 80s and institutionalized in the 90s did not change women's problems but the way it was perceived by the State, as part of the human rights discourse". (Tomen, 2015:470). Then *how exactly has the consciousness and later institutionalization years impacted the relationship between women's groups within the political and public sphere?*

Chapter 3: Women's movements inside and outside the State apparatus in a globalized world

This third chapter recalls the conclusion that was made in chapter 2 concerning the two different groups that were constituted in the fight for women's rights in Turkey: the women's organizations formed in the public sphere and the women's group present within the central government political parties. Onbasi et al. (2008) accounts for this different space of institutionalization, claiming that "the debate is mainly about choosing between dispensing with the existing political structures (case of Ladies' Commission with RP and FP) - the state, existing political parties, and other CSOs- and, alternatively, participating in these structures to transform the established system from within (case of Ka-Der)" (334).

Ka-Der women's association

What is the local development of the organization?

Ka-Der was established in 1997 by a group of women who specialized in "political and social sciences, law journalism and public relations" (Cubukcu et al. 2004: 100). It was "established to encourage, train, and support women in seeking public office and acquire equal representation of women"(Arat 2011: 199). Their work is mainly based on figures of the participation rate of women in politics. They began their fight by claiming that women were not present enough in decision making posts (Arat 2011). The organization was created at the end of the 90s, when, domestically, the use of human rights discourses was already a well-established governmental tool. In addition, the central government and political parties were more interested in women's issue, instigating what Arat (2011) terms the "national women's machinery" (202). In the public arena, 211 associations for women were registered in 1994 in Turkey (Keskin,1997). The plurality of issues they were addressing formed a strong network for women's independent activism, improving the democratic representation of women in Turkey. For Ka-Der, "*democracy without women in not democracy*[6]" (Ka-Der 2016). As mentioned by Pitkin in chapter 1, having women present in the political structure is important to depict women's interests that may otherwise be neglected or overlooked by a predominantly male cabinet. However they also have to be represented in decision making bodies (Ka-der 2016).

---

[6] Emphasis added

What is the Organization's Program?

Amongst the many aims set by the organization, the first one sets out the tone of the fight:

"*To raise awareness on equality between women and men to counter male domination in social and political life[7]*".(Ka-der 2016).

From the beginning, the organization saw this new awareness as a way to make women from all segments of society understand that they are politicized and that they have international political rights. Moreover, they had to show that political representation is a right that is available to all women in society (Ka-der 2016). Their education-centered movement started with the use of the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women to which Turkey participated, as a pressure document on the Turkish government (Cubukçu and al.,2004;101). Many other actions have been done by the group since its establishment, such as "The Women using Computers" program, which aims to empower women by offering them training in the domain of information technology (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 103).

A secondary objective to the education of women is to establish collaboration with other political groups:

"*To strengthen cooperation and collaboration among women in political parties, to have them and the women's movement act in cooperation on issues concerning women, to carry lobbying, advocacy, campaigning[8]*". (Ka-der 2016).

For Ka-der, it was and still is important for working women from across a broad spectrum of political parties and organizations to establish a network and work together to achieve their common interests. This type of activism coupled with the very pluralistic network of women's organizations incentivizes organization such as KA-DER to work on a model of "issue-based collective action" (Onbasi et al. 2008: 340). When working on a specific aspect of political participation - such as education through literature - the organization can collaborate with other women's organizations, such as the *Women's library and information center Foundation* that concentrates on the improvement of women's status in the archives (Cubucku et al. 2004: 104). When studying the role of these organizations in maintaining women in the paradox, these two characteristics are critical. Indeed, the fact that Ka-der pushes for the

---

[7] Emphasis added

[8] Emphasis added

cooperation between women and not between men and women, undermines their actual capacity to enter negotiations with men. As a result, only issue-based negotiations can take place because a general improvement of women's status would require the presence of men.

This "women-to-women" relation is related in the first chapter. The fact that they only negotiate with women implies that there is no fight in relation with men, which limits women's ability to change men's perception of the opposed gender. This fact is translated into two aspects of Ka-der's organization. First, the membership criteria bar entry to men, which is not the case of every woman's organization in the public sphere. This shows that Ka-Der did not see women's issues in terms of men. Second, the fact that they are playing between the feminist and issue-based basis for action is "an important indicator of ideological cleavages" in the political arena but also the public sphere (Onbasi et al. 2008: 339). These two features of the organization that find their roots in the local composition of the two spheres of influence only improve the status of women between women and gives the impression that their fight is unified because all women are represented. However, considering that in 2004, after 7 years of constant activism from Ka-der, only 4.4% of women were elected in the Grand National Assembly, (2% more than in 1995), it can be seen that inequality is still endemic to Turkish politics, and that awareness via the networking of women's organizations is crucial to achieving better equality in the future.

What is the role of the global?

Internationally, Ka-der was established well after the ratification of CEDAW, but before the ratification of the ICCPR (Cubukçu and al.,2004). Nonetheless, the impact of international human rights conferences that were organized in order to serve an effective implementation of CEDAW was a crucial step for the organization. Concerns of the Beijing Report were integrated into Turkey's National Action Plan published in 1997, which highlighted 8 concerns, amongst which one was 'women in power and decision making'. (Arat 2011: 209). The illiteracy problem and education gaps were rampant, as well as the inequalities between different social classes (Arat 2011). These internationally recognized issues and the fact that Turkey advocated for a strong international involvement, forced the Turkish government in the middle of its human rights foreign policy, to seriously consider implementing social reform to address these issues. Ka-der pushed for the introduction of a *National Plan* that would fight this lack of education in women's circles (Arat 2011). In 1995, the Turkish delegation in Beijing already assured their commitment to women's education:

"*Since one of the targets of this conference is the empowerment of women, we believe that only through a better education these goals may be achieved[9]*" (Turkish Delegation 1995).

The international regime gave the Turkish delegation in Beijing a legitimate starting basis. "By creating educational opportunities for women," (Cubukçu and al. 2004: 102), these delegates widened their repertory of actions and initiatives aiming at attaining both the upper-classes and the women on the grassroots level.

During the period of activism that followed the implementation of the *National Plan*, "Ka-der specifically emphasized that they perceive themselves as part and parcel of the women's movement in Turkey and the world (…) by collaborating with other women's organizations working on local, national and international bases". (Cubukçu et al. 2004: 103). Even if, as mentioned above, their will to start this organization was deeply rooted in the local, seeing the inequalities that were still present in society despite UNHR and CEDAW, the international regime helped these organizations to work from a legitimate basis. Ka-der's full commitment to international feminist values is not completely verified because of their swing movements between issue-based and unified feminist stances. Nevertheless, the organization's norms mirror international ones. This link to the global should be taken into consideration when analyzing most women's organizations like Ka-der in the public sphere. However, the long history of women's activism in the country forces scholars to read Ka-der content of the fight as locally-constructed by different power relations taking place between the political and public spheres. As a member of Ka-der said, "You cannot import women's perspective… a feminist platform can only originate from a factual basis" (Onbasi,2008;339). When this aspect is accepted, then the international regime is understood as tool to continue their fight through the years.

What are power relations and where does authority lie?

First, as mentioned before, the way the government institutionalized women's movements, gave place to a divided society where human rights organizations were placed outside the state. They were seen in opposition to the government and a threat to Turkey's national security (Casier 2009: 7). Ka-Der considers itself as an 'above-party' association (Arat 2011) working with, but outside the State apparatus. Hence every woman could become a member, even female politicians, if they accepted to work in this public sphere outside the

---

[9] Emphasis added

authority of the State. As a result, the authority lies in the hands of all women inside and outside the political structure that are willing to fight for the Ka-der's cause made visible by its leaders.

Because Ka-Der works outside the State apparatus, power relations exist between the women's movements in the public sphere and the ones within the political sphere, again pitting women against women. Once again, the paradox in which women worked forced them to exercise their power with other women and not with men, preventing the creation of a unified front. A concrete aspect of these power relations is the relation between the movements from the public sphere and the Directorate General on the Status of Women established in 1990. This was created as part of the above mentioned 'national women's machinery' instigated by the government. It was "affiliated of the Prime Minister's Office, with the stated aim of achieving gender equality in all ranks of life" (Onbasi et al. 2008: 330). Women's organizations tried to influence the Directorate, which at that time was the competent organ in terms of women's rights (Onbasi and al. 2008). Their link to the political structure was only via the Directorate, which was only composed of women. Men managed to cast women somewhere in the government, far from decision-making roles. In addition, the Directorate answered issues according to the Prime Minister's party ideology, which was at odds with the feminist rhetoric used by Ka-Der in its campaigning. This reality led to moments of opposition between the Directorate recalling the patriarchal system and women's movements in the public sphere appealing to global values (Cubukçu et al. 2004). However, with the pressure of Ka-der and other movements, civil societies in Turkey managed to "serve as a bridge in transmitting the demands of the movements to official bodies" (Cubukçu and al. 2004;85). Power relations were not always easy, but sometimes pressure works.

Women within the Islamist Refah and Fazilet political parties

This second type of women's activism is the one of the group of women that found a place in the political structure of the State, mainly invited to participate in the politics of the country in the 1990s. The following paragraphs analyze the local and global development of the Islamist political parties of the 1980s and 1990s, i.e. the *Refah Partisi* 1987-1999 (RP) and its successor, the *Fazilet Partisi* 1999-2001 (FP).

How did they develop locally?

Formation and Party programs

The RP was established in 1983. It was created in an era of political development and the end of military rule in the post-coup period. The centrist Motherland ANAP party with Turgut Ozal at its head was ruling the country from 1983. Domestically, it has entered the country during the multi-party period. (Yesilada 2006 in Rubin and al. 2006;63). The success of the RP and its leader, Erbakan, was not visible until new elections took place in 1991. In terms of women and the party's program, the party program "had no reference to women, nor was gender listed in its listing of categories against which discrimination is unacceptable" (Arat,2017;244). In order to study the extent to which women's rights had penetrated into political discourse at this time, Arat (2017) performs a content analysis of the political programs of 12 political parties pertaining to a wide array of political ideologies between 1980 and 2000. The study found that references to 'women's freedom, women's rights and equal pay for equal work' in conservative, nationalist, social-democrat, socialist and pro-kurdish parties, but not in predominantly religious political parties before 2001 (Arat 2017). It seems that after 20 years of RP and FP rule, little progress has been made in including women's rights in political discourse. "The RP 1986 program pointed out the importance of family and motherhood, but did not mention any women's issues" (Sahin 2008: 159). The successor party, the FP, was established in 1999, following the closure of Erbakan's RP on January 16th, 1998. The FP "similarly adhered to traditional ideas about the role of women in society, and it also failed to list gender discrimination as an unacceptable discrimination category" (Sahin 2008: 160).

Despite the lack of references to women's rights in the party program, Recep Erdogan, head of the RP's Istanbul Branch "established the first women's party organization, called the Ladies' Commission in 1989" (Sahin 2011: 160). This organization enhanced women's political participation, attracting many women to vote for the RP and the FP (Sahin 2011). The Ladies' Commission made numerous visits to small groups, houses, families, attended conferences, etc…(Sahin 2011). "It is stated that women made up 52 percent of the total number of RP members in 1995" (Kristianasen, 1997 in Sahin 2011;163). "No other party in Turkey has ever achieved similar numbers of female members or such a mobilization of women" (Sahin 2011: 163) thanks to their multiple visits. A "contagion effect" (Sahin 2008: 170) took place within the political sphere as "these numbers encouraged other right-wing

political parties to promote women's mobilization and participation to compete in the later election campaigns" (Sahin 2011: 170). However, their active participation in decision-making procedures did not happen, mainly due to endemic inequality and a lack of contact with men (Ka-Der 2016). In addition, as seen from the outside, it was argued that women in the Islamic parties were passive and had integrated the party's "gender-biased ideology" indicating that they were only used as vote-gatherers (Sahin 2011: 169). By "'women-to-women' speeches, members of women branches attracted inactive female votes to have male candidates be elected" (Arat 1989: 241). This argument is important because it widened the scope of the women's movement in the public sphere as they internalized their party ideology and refrained from feminism (Onbasi et al. 2008: 339). By doing so, they vicariously channeled the ideology of the prevailing patriarchy.

What is the impact of the global?

Similar to the activity of Ka-der, the 1995 UN World Conference in Beijing had an impact on gender equality. The same can be said for 1986 CEDAW. However, none of these organizations managed to make women's political participation obligatory. The fact that Turkey did not sign the ICCPR is one of the causes of this lack of representation, outlined in Cmiel's argument concerning the separation between civil and political rights.

When it comes to women's representation in the political parties, the impact of the global is to be evaluated at the level of the structure of the political parties, but not directly regarding women's representation. These changes are accounted for by the pressure imposed by the EU more than the one coming from the international human rights regime. The strategy was established with the National Action Plan of 1995, which was consequently implemented by the EU. The plan "includes gender equality issues in all activities, and one of the objectives to which priority is given in the European Union action programs is an equitable distribution of women and men in the decision-making processes". (Kadic 2014: 15). For example, gender quotas in politics were included as one of the criteria set by the EU, however, neither the RP nor the FP adopted this new rule. Hence, it can be argued that the impact of the global on women's participation in the political parties is almost inexistent, as it is only proposed by the international institutions but not always applied. The development of women's rights in the parties remained, once again, within the boundaries of the parties, because of the apolitical way men promoted them. The international impact on the development of women's rights is superficial and strategic, in the sense of Putman's theory of

a two-level game (Putman 1988). Indeed, at the end of the 1990s, when the RP was replaced the FP, the party adopted a softer and less religious stance to be accepted in the domestic political elite that gave allegiance to the norms of the international world. With this technique, they could attract the attention of female voters and at the same time enter the 'club of liberal states'. (Sikkink 1998: 520). In addition, seeing the non-changing program of both the RP and FP, we understand that authority does not find its place in the global arena. It this case, it helps the political parties to continue to impose their role to women by making them and the international community think that women's participation in the political party's work is enough, even if they are not in the decision-making organs. As of today, the AKP has still not adopted the quota system either (Ayata and al.,2008).

What are the power relations and where does the authority lie?

In opposition to the Ka-der, the Ladies' Commission and any other women's groups in the political parties are pro-establishment. "These groups chose to dispense with the existing political structures" (Onbasi et al. 2008: 334) and instead work from within the political structure. Women employed and sometimes elected in political parties were satisfied with their status, i.e. being recognized and represented. However, men's real interests to work with women are not being accounted for. Indeed, men see women as "a contribution to the Islamic revivalism" (Sahin 2011: 161). It means that for a predominantly male-dominated political party, hiring women was a way to respect the important place given to women in Turkish society, satisfy international criteria and above all, gather votes from Muslim and non-Muslim women that were touched by the fact that their interests were taken into account. This other side of the coin shows that the authority lay in the hands of the male leaders of the political party. Indeed, in the RP and later FP rules "the Ladies' Commission was under the direct control of the central party organs". (Sahin 2011: 161). Women were appointed by men and their activities were directed and controlled by the party leaders. In addition, despite the fact that the number of women delegates went from 3 under the RP to 52 under the FP out of 1,200, they were not granted decision-making powers and were confined in their role in the Commission. (Sahin 2011: 164). "This structure reproduced patriarchal constraints within the party" (Sahin 2011: 161). It allowed women to follow their goal as well as men to fulfill theirs. The risk is that this perception will become accepted by women in the society and within the political structures (Arat 1989). Indeed, as Degirmenci (2013) asserts, "one shall not be able to ask without questioning if "the outside works" are too important to leave under

women leadership or women are simply not willing to get involved with those areas" (8). If women are not often appointed for decision-making positions, it is also because they think they are not fitting the role. This is the real risk because their fight ends in the limits of the patriarchal regime that they have accepted.

Power relations find their place in the fight between the different political parties present in the government and their need to gather as much voters as possible. This need comes from the fact that Turkey has a democratic system of governance, therefore without votes they cannot be elected as the ruling party. But above all, this occurs because of the strict Laws of Political Parties of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. Yesilada (2006) asserts that "The RP and FP, like all other political parties, were set up in accordance with the Political Parties Law" (in Rubin and al. 2006;70). One element of this law pushes parties to constantly place themselves in competition. Indeed, Article 68 imposes a minimum threshold of 10%[10] in order to from a party, which is very high. (Law of The Political Parties 1983). It is the perfect excuse to gather even more votes from the female electorate and try to steal the votes to other parties by making it seem as if their prerogative is to improve women's rights. It is important to note that nowhere in the Law of Political Parties are requirements that directly concern women in particular. Women might think that by being in the political parties they participate in the political power relations, however, the trend for their votes to be instrumentalized by men as demonstrated above shows us that this is not the case because the patriarchal values stay intact.

---

[10] 10% of primary votes of the whole Turkish population. Turkey imposes the highest threshold upon the parties. For example, in Belgium, it is 5%.

Chapter 4: Outsider and Feminist? Or Insider and Non-Feminist?

As stated in the introduction, most of the problems that are stated in terms of women's movements in Turkey come from the competition that exists both between women's movements and the NGOs in the public sphere and between the different women's political groups within the political parties. (Casier 2010). However, the issue concerning the opposition that exists between the public and private sphere is understudied as they do not work in the same space and because the work of women's activists in the public sphere is often considered as useless as they are anti-establishment. This last chapter analyzes this opposition as underlying the impossibility of forming a unified front, feminist or not, lobbying for women's freedom, and an increase in female representation in general. With first the analysis of women's movements motivations in general in the 80s and the 90s and then the particular analysis of Ka-der and the RP/FP religious political parties, it is possible to explain how the programs, the different spaces and the global impacts influence the difficulty for women to find their place in society. The lack of efforts coming from both fronts leads to a differentiated understanding of women's status in Turkey, putting them neither in the traditional nor in the modern box. Because both sides of the paradox are over-emphasized in each type of activism, a 'juste milieu' is not currently a viable future prospect for women in Turkish society. This last chapter answers the research questions and places human rights in Turkey in this heart of the paradox. The previous content analysis allows this last part to study how the local and the global form contradictions within the women's movements in Turkey.

The 'heart of the paradox's' oppositions

Different spaces of action

As stated in the previous chapter, Ka-Der and the Ladies' Commission adopted a different space of action. Ka-der's outsider position has two consequences. First the organization grew in a risky and discomforting area as "a group that is willing to negotiate with the state (hence not just working with it but ready to make concessions) is not civil society" (Tomen 2015: 476). It does not help Ka-Der's members to root their legitimacy in national apparatus. Second, and most importantly, women's perception of the movements fighting for them is as polarized as society itself. Indeed, "25% of women questioned in 1983 found these movements not to be useful" (Keskin 1997:3). This point is crucial because without women's support, NGOs cannot work as they wish to. With regards to the Ladies'

Commission, the 'insider' position of this organization carries with it one important consequence: by working in close affiliation with the prevailing patriarchal system, this organization risk internalizing patriarchal ideology via a trickle-down paradigm of ideological influence from the elite to its supporters. The women in the Commission agreed with the regime and limited their work to the limits of the Ladies' Commission capacities (Sahin 2011;90).

These polarized positions take root in the classical debate between feminist and non-feminist women's movements. Childs and Krooks make the distinction between the two ideologies: "feminist definitions focused on role change for women, often through increases in autonomy and scope for personal choice; meanwhile non-feminist definitions focused on women's traditional roles in family and society" (Childs and Krooks 2006 in Degirmenci 2013;2). The Commission considered itself as non-feminist group when Ka-der worked as a feminist organization. (Ka-Der 2016, Sahin 2011). This feminist idea comes from 'global' values. For this reason, most of the women from within political parties see the Commission as using its imperial past to 'colonize' (i.e. infiltrate) local women's movements (Onbasi et al. 2008). Onbasi (2008) contends that women see the Commission as the "cultural pollution of Western feminism (…) or a group that is deemed to contradict the value attributed to motherhood and family" (338). This very different vision of the women's issue led to oppositions between different spheres, which are consequently are and transferred to society. The following statement gives a concrete example: Serpil Yildiz, female AKP depute, "stated that she is not a feminist, but she has connections with women's organizations and NGOs that she greatly appreciates". (Ayata et al. 2008;376). She is willing to work jointly with the public sphere does without advocating for women's rights in a unified feminist manner. The link that is found between both spaces, theoretically, is the fact that they have "responsibilities but no authority" (Ayata et al. 2007: 376). This last statement explains why women's representation in decision-making organs in the parliament is not evolving. Without authority, that is men's hands, or at least negotiation with the authority, women's status will always be the one of a traditional and at the same time a modern woman. These feminists and non-feminists stances are to be found in their respective programs.

Are the programs in contradiction?

Both the Ladies' Commission and Ka-der's programs strive for increased women's political representation via improved education. This idea of educating women as a way to

make them more active comes from the 1980s activism (Cubukçu 2004: 36). Indeed, small women's movements wanted to make other women conscious of their rights and make them understand that passively accepting them because they are written in the Constitution is not enough. The Ladies' Commission implemented door-to-door campaigning in order to educate women in the private (Sahin 2013). This technique of increasing political awareness via education used by the party and exercised by women is the same as the one that Ka-Der used both in its early years and still uses today. However, it is important to keep in mind that education was not used to teach them politics (which is done in higher-education institutions) but to tell them how to use their rights. Hence, both types of activism used the same technique. Indeed, women in political parties saw inclusion in a political movement as an opportunity to -be able to go out, -be visible, and -serve God" (Sahin 2011: 161) when Ka-der activists and members worked for "different experience and capabilities of women to be reflected in social and political issues". (Ka-der 2016). In both spheres they seek for recognition and visibility in society, the most effective platform for which in society is via political mobilization. Ka-der says that the country will only become democratic if women are represented and placed in decision making spaces. (Ka-Der 2016). Women of the Ladies' Commission agreed with this vision as well as the method and took advantage of the Islamist Party's concrete actions of inclusion of women (Arat 2017).

However, similarities in the ideologies of Ka-der and the Ladies' Commission were not enough to build a common feminist front and improve woman's place in Turkish society. The difference between these groups is the space of resistance and the rationale they use in order to claim their interests and justify their fight. For Ka-der, this activism happens in the whole country and in connection with the global women's movements, while for the Ladies' Commission, activism "stayed within the boundaries of the political party" (Sahin, 2011: 167). This difference explains everything in terms of support and identity. In terms of rationale, the first group used the local struggle and global feminist norms to conduct their fight, while the other used the powerful place given to the political parties and their political ideology in order to improve the status of women in Turkey. Indeed, in order to serve God, women's activists in the RP and FP strive for a common pious Muslim identity and a religious ideology and not a feminist view instigated by the international regime (Sahin 2011). The two groups only share their spaces when they can agree on one issue, such as the headscarf ban, but not when there is a need for a change in men's perception of women. In that sense, they are using the Directorate in order to communicate, wherein men are not present.

Why do they not negotiate with men?

On the one hand, women's movements such as Ka-der do not negotiate with men because they rightly see them as insiders of the patriarchal system. They see the latter as the only cause of the lack of female representation, and women's rights in general. "Feminists in general emphasized that it is not the political indifference of women that leads to their underrepresentation, but the male domination in politics is the basic obstacles". (Ayata et al. 2007: 375). Indeed, even if some leaders or political parties tried to improve women's status such as Recep Erdogan in 1989, their efforts did not change women's situation in the country in general because their motivations are more political than purely guided by good will. On the other hand, women's groups such as the Ladies' Commission do not see the patriarchal values as a problem and hence work for women's rights based on the motive that they fight for the improvement of human rights in general. The relational way of applying rights as suggested in chapter 1 advocated that women's rights cannot be exercised without men. However, women of the Ladies' Commission do not see the point in applying this relation as they do not think that gender and politics are linked (Ayata and al. 2008). When the "Ladies' Commission" was created, its name was criticized by women's movements outside the political sphere because the term 'ladies' referred to a traditional female role in families (Sahin 2011). However, members of the Commission did not see it as a problem, agreeing with the party leader's perception of the name: ladies reflected the high-esteem given to women "as the party's desire to use more polite terms in addressing women" (Sahin 2011: 160). This male domination that is felt in the public sphere is not translated in the women's group of the political parties. Hence, in terms of spaces, the Ladies' Commission does not try to change the patriarchal system and Ka-der cannot change it as it works outside of it.

The relational view of human rights is not used because none of the women's groups chose to settle their problems in relation with men, for a variety of reasons. However women's rights have to evolve compared to men's rights. The problem is that a woman alone is not allowed to talk in "I" when demanding rights (Ayata et al. 2008). Hence, a relation between an 'I' of a man and an 'I' of woman is non-existent in Turkey: the only thing that exists is the "we" of the women's movement. In a general manner, interviewed women from the AKP said that "women compete with other women, instead of working together harmoniously" (Ayata et al. 2008: 377). By dividing society, the patriarchal regime has

managed to separate women's movements by giving importance to some of them and silence the rest in society.

In this sense, Tomen has a very exact argument concerning the polarization in Turkey. He writes that "the problem in divided societies (such as Turkey) is that 'one identity can only be validated, or worst, constituted by suppression of another. Focusing on the specific needs of groups (…) can be a way to resolve conflict rather than fighting over general uncompromising values". (Tomen 2015: 466). Women's rights improved in the Constitution and their presence in political parties has increased over the past few years. However, giving more legitimacy and voice to women's groups in the political parties cannot go along the improvement of women in the public sphere, and vice-versa. Women in political parties enter the vertical political authority of the State and "pave the way to the evolution of strong states" preventing the horizontal development of pluralism (Kadioglu 1996: 189). The division within Turkish society, underpinned by the political structure and the ruling party in place, doesn't help women to choose for a common feminist claim supported by international human rights values. Instead, they both see their improvements as being possibly taking place if the other group's abilities are reduced. This is the zero-sum conception of social reality. For example, Ka-Der criticizes the Ladies' Commission and the Directorate when women in the political parties are mostly satisfied with it.

This last chapter shows that women's political rights of representation in the 90s and 80s are to be understood as shared between the dimension attributed to the political sphere and the one mirrored by the public sphere. We can say that women have a strong program, and a similar one, but they do not work on the same ideological justification and in the same space of resistance. This element of truth gives us the position of human rights in the country. By asking different questions that are born of the fact that the global and the local are in constant interaction, we understand that if they can't find a common women's status it is because the systems, both international and domestic, do not allow them to do so. *What would be the solution of this division problem? How could political parties represent better the interests of the civil society? What kind of rationale should women movements in the public sphere adopt in order to improve the relation with women's group in the political parties?*

Conclusion

In this dissertation the following research question was tackled: w*hat is the tension between the local and the global dimensions in gender issues in Turkey?* By situating this tension neither on the local nor the global side, this thesis demonstrated that the difficulty to apply human rights effectively and honestly in Turkey is partially due to the fact that activism is as divided as the Turkish society, making it difficult to voice women's freedom as a human right. Therefore, these difficulties are not only attributed to the patriarchal role of the regime and its leaders , but also to the fact that women are not willing to work jointly and use the same rationale. Even if they cooperated on issues such as violence against women and many others, this is not enough to change society's perception of how human rights have to be applied. The second part of the question, i.e. *what role did women play in activism for human rights in the 1980s and the 1990s?* is suggested by Cmiel in his paper (2004). Indeed, he wonders if activism really had an impact on human rights and in particular on women's political rights in Turkey (Cmiel,2004). In other words, has the opposition of the two women's movements worsened the situation or helped women to find a place in society. Ayat (2007) says that despite their disagreements, women's activism in both spheres had as "common denominator the problem of integrating women into politics and increasing female representation" (383). In fact, both groups, Ka-der and the Ladies' Commission, reached their goals which were to "politicize the private" and make women's interests visible in politics. It is vital to understand that the international human regimes had an impact on both the civil society and the state (Casier,2009:15).

The essential point is to realize that "the changes have not been linear nor unanimous" (Arat,2017;250). In order to understand why women's status has only slightly improved in practice, it is crucial to see that there is a persistent negotiation between the global claim and the local practices (Young 2000 in Cmiel 2004), leading to a paradoxical situation. Answering Cmiel's question, women's activism did have an impact on the evolution of women's rights in Turkey. It was and still is very useful because it is the only pressure that is exercised on the central government, which is trying to play along the global rules while keeping their traditional understandings. In addition, significant efforts have been made in terms of human rights and women's rights. However, a unified activism representing the plurality of the Turkish society's interests would be the most effective way to increase that pressure coming from activist groups. Women have to understand that men are neither their boss nor their

enemy but that they are part of their battle. Improvement of women's freedom coming from a unified understanding of what a woman is, i.e. a human being, will force men to see the opposite gender as a human being equally placed but with differing needs. In addition, political parties should have stronger political programs that propose instead of criticize, in order to reflect the multiplicity of interests. When this is accomplished, seeing minorities or black people, Kurdish, gays, LGTBs, journalists, etc with the same point of view is possible. *Rights may exist, but where and between whom? What is the activist past of the movement and how are the movement's actors situated in the Turkish society and in the world? If the current Turkish President goes too far in his authoritarian drive, would it create another political opportunity for women to change their rationale?*

Appendix

1) Historical frame of women's political rights evolution in Turkey (1923 to 2003).

*All these dates and information have been taken from Arat's book on *Human rights in Turkey* (2011), specifically from chapter 4 on Women's rights, pp185-213.

1920s-1940s	First Period (Arat,2011;188).
1923	Ataturk declared the Turkish Secular Republic
1924	Creation of the first Women's Union
1925	Two women were nominated for the 1925 elections but they could not run for office
3 May 1930	Women were allowed to vote on municipal (Arat,2011;189)
5 December 1931	Electoral rights were granted to women and Articles 5-11-16-23-58 of the Constitution were amended (Arat,2011;190)
1934	Women could run for parliamentary elections
1935	4.6% (18) of the entire parliamentary body were elected women for the Grand National Assembly
1940s-1960s	Period of stagnation(Arat,2011;191).
1940	One-party rule
1940-1950	Many philanthropic women's associations were created (Arat,2011;192)
1946	Multi-party system emerged
1960s-1970s	The restless years (Arat,2011;192)
1965	Foundation of the Turkish Association of Progressive Women- realization of social and political rights (dissolved in 1970 due to decline in membership) (Arat,2011;193).
1975	Establishment of the Association of Progressive Women amongst other left-wing associations engaging in more activism (banned in 1979) (Arat,2011;193)
1979	CEDAW was adopted by the UN GA
1980s-1990s	The activism years(Arat,2011;195).
1976-1986	UN Decade for Women (Arat,2011;196)
1981 to 1983	Women started gathering in houses in order to discuss. Small consciousness raising groups by feminists were created (Arat,2011;197).
1984	Creation of the "Women's Circle". It was formed as a company rather than an association. (Cengiz and al., 2011;24).
1985	Turkey ratified CEDAW. It was ratified with the reservations placed on Article 15 and Article 16 (removed in 1999) (Arat,2011)
March 1986	Initiation of a petition drive to press for the implementation of the CEDAW (Arat,2011; 199)
May 1987	3000 women protested in Istanbul. It was the first protest allowed nationally (for domestic

	violence) (Arat,2011; 199).
8 March 1988	World Women's day
1989	Establishment of the Ladies' Commission
1990s	Awareness gave place to institutionalization
October 1990s	Beginning of the "national women's machinery". The Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women, was established.
November 1990	The provision of the Civil Code, **Article 159**, was annulled. (Arat,2011; 200)
1990s	Many lobbying efforts led to the amendment of the penal and civil code
1993-1996	First female prime minister in Turkey, Tansu Ciller (part of the DYP) was elected (Arat,2011; 199)
1994	Institutionalization of the AKP's Women auxiliaries
1995	Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women
1995	Only 2.4% (13) women were elected for the Grand National Assembly out of 550 members.
1997	KA-DER was established (Cubukçu and al. 2004).
1998	27.9% of women are participating in labor in general
1998	The Grand National Assembly formed a special parliamentary investigative commission for gender discrimination (Arat,2011; 203).
1999	Turkey's candidacy into the EU is approved
2000	Optional Protocol was ratified (ICCPR) (Cizre,2001;71).
2001	Adoption of the new Turkish Civil Code on 22 November 2001
November 2002	Amendment of the Civil code which assured women's rights and equality between women and men in marriage
2002	4.4% of women were elected to the Grand National Assembly
2002	AKP came to power

*The yellow colored texts represent the different periods

*The blue colored texts are showing political representation figures

* The red colored texts represent the international changes

Bibliography

Primary sources:

Chapter four, part two of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey: Chapter on the Law and Duties of Political Parties: http://www.hri.org/docs/turkey/part_ii_4.html.

Ka-Der., Bianet - Bagimsiz Iletisim Agi. (2013). *KA.DER Releases Woman Representation Report*. [online] Available at: http://bianet.org/english/women/144963-ka-der-releases-woman-representation-report [Accessed 3 Jul. 2017].

Ka-Der. (2016). *Association for support of women candidates/Ka.Der*. [online] Keig.org. Available at: http://www.keig.org/?p=131&lang=en [Accessed 3 Jul. 2017].

Openaid.se (2015). Support to women's political participation Turkey - Ka.Der 2013-2015. [online] Openaid.se. Available at: https://openaid.se/activity/SE-0-SE-6-5502009301-TUR-15170/ [Accessed 4 Jul. 2017].

Turkish Statement at the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women: Turkish Delegation (1995). [online] Un.org. Available at: http://www.un.org/esa/gopher-data/conf/fwcw/conf/gov/950905113000.txt [Accessed 6 Jul. 2017].

Secondary sources:

Aljazeera.com. (2016). *Timeline: A history of Turkish coups*. [online] Available at: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/04/20124472814687973.html [Accessed 3 Jul. 2017].

Amnesty.org.uk. (2013). Women in Afghanistan: the back story. [online] Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/womens-rights-afghanistan-history [Accessed 4 Jul. 2017].

Anderson, C., Regan, P. and Ostergard, R. (2002). Political Repression and Public Perceptions of Human Rights. *Political Research Quarterly*, 55(2), pp.439-456.

Arat, Z. (2011). *Human Rights in Turkey*. University of Pennsylvania Press, pp.1-376.

Arat, Z. (2017). Political Parties and Women's Rights in Turkey. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44(2), pp.240-254.

Arat, Y. (1989). *The Patriarchal Paradox: Women politicians in Turkey*. New Jersey, London, Ontario: Associated Press Inc.

Ayata, A. and Tütüncü, F. (2008). Party Politics of the AKP (2002–2007) and the Predicaments of Women at the Intersection of the Westernist, Islamist and Feminist Discourses in Turkey1. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 35(3), pp.363-384.

Bahçecik, Ş. (2015). The power effects of human rights reforms in Turkey: enhanced surveillance and depoliticisation. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(6), pp.1222-1236.

Bozdağlıoğlu, Yücel. *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*. New York: Routledge Member of the Taylor and Francis Group, 2003, p57.

Buzan, B. 2004. *From International to World Society? English School Theory and Social Structure of Globalisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Find this resource

Carlsnaes, W., Risse,T., Simmons. B-A., (2012). *Handbook of international relations*. Los Angeles [u.a.]: Sage.

Casier, M. (2017). *Contesting the 'Truth' of Turkey's Human Rights Situation: State-Association Interactions in and outside the Southeast*. [online] Ejts.revues.org. Available at: https://ejts.revues.org/4190 [Accessed 3 Jul. 2017].

Cengiz, F. and Ozcurumez, S. (2011). On resilience and response beyond value change: Transformation of women's movement in post-1980 Turkey. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 34(1), pp.20-30.

Childs, S., & Krook, M. L. (2006). The Substantive Representation of Women:Rethinking the 'Critical Mass' Debate. PSA

Cizre, U. (2001). The truth and fiction about (Turkey's) human rights politics. *Human Rights Review*, 3(1), pp.55-77.

Cmiel, K. (2004). The Recent History of Human Rights. *The American Historical Review*, 109(1), pp.117-135.

Cubukçu, S., Berktay, F., Kerestecioğlu, İ., Terzi, Ö. and Forsman, Z. (2004). The Positionof Women in Turkey and in the European Union: Achievements, Problems,Prospects. *Ka-Der Press*, pp.1-89.

Cubukçu, S. (2009). The headscarf issue in feminist discourse in Turkey. *The international studies Association,* New-York,pp104-117.

Degirmenci, N. (2013). The female politicians and the the political parties: A case Study of HIgh Profile Female Politicians in Turkiye.

Derry-Malone, J. (2017). *Are Human Rights Universal?*. [online] E-International Relations. Available at: http://www.e-ir.info/2012/10/04/are-human-rights-universal/ [Accessed 3 Jul. 2017].

Donnelly,Jack. (1997). *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Eckert, A. (2002). The global and the local: reconciling universal human rights and cultural diversity. *Human rights & Human welfare*, pp.1-7.

Esen, B. and Gumuscu, S. (2016). Rising competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. Third World Quarterly, 37(9), pp.1581-1606.

Forsythe, D. (1993). Human rights and peace. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press,pp1-206.

Goodhart, M. (2016). *Human rights: politics and practice*. 3rd ed. Paperback, pp.1-512.

Gündüz, Z. (2004). The women's movement in Turkey:From Tanzimat towards European Union Membership. *Perceptions*, pp.115-134.

Hoover, J. (2013). Rereading the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Plurality and Contestation, Not Consensus. *Journal of Human Rights*, 12(2), pp.217-241.

Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, Lynn Hunt, and Marilyn Young, eds., (2000). Human Rights and Revolutions (Lanham, Md).

Kadioğlu, A. (1994). Women's subordination in Turkey : Is islam really the villain. *The Middle-East Journal*, 48(4), pp.645-660.

Kadioğlu, A. (1996). The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of official identity. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32(2), pp.177-193.

Karabelias, G. (2009). The Military Institution, Atatürk's Principles, and Turkey's Sisyphean Quest for Democracy. Middle Eastern Studies, 45(1), pp.57-69.

Keskin, K. (1997). Political Participation Patterns of Turkish Women. *Middle East Review of International Affairs 1*, available at http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1997/issue4/jvol1no4in.html [accessed 6 July 2017].

Kirdiş, E. (2015). The Role of Foreign Policy in Constructing the Party Identity of the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP). *Turkish Studies*, 16(2), pp.178-194.

Kristianasen, W. (July, 1997). New faces of Islam, Le Monde diplomatique. Retrieved from http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/51/296.html

Mosadiq, M. (2013). Afghanistan: 1978 - 2010, a brief history. [online] audioBoom. Available at: https://audioboom.com/posts/1590570-afghanistan-1978-2010-a-brief-history [Accessed 4 Jul. 2017].

Nadelmann, Ethan. (1990). "Global Prohibition Regimes: The evolution of Norms in International Society." *International Organization* 44(4):479-526.

Onbaşi, F and Coşar, S. (2008). Women's Movement in Turkey at a Crossroads: From Women's Rights Advocacy to Feminism. *South European Society and Politics*, 13(3), pp 325-344.

Putnam, R. (1988). Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games. International Organization, 42(03), pp 1-427.

Rawls, J. (1971). A theory of Justice. Harvard University Press, pp.1-607.

Rubin, B. and Heper, M. (2006). Political parties in Turkey. London: Frank Cass.pp1-160.

Sahin,Z. (2011). The Political Representation of Kurdish, Kemalist, and Conservative Muslim Women in Turkey (1990-2010). Proquest LLC, pp.1-299.

Sikkink, K. (1998). Transnational Politics, International Relations Theory, and Human Rights. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 31(3), pp.516-523.

Snyder, R. (2008). What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 34(1), pp.175-196.

Stern, S. and Straus, S. (2012). *The human rights paradox*. Series Editors, pp.1-274.

Straw, D. (2013). *Human rights violation in Turkey*. Palgrave McMillan, pp.1-188.

Tomen, B. (2015). The Paradox of Rights-Claiming: The Case of Mazlumder in Turkey. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 17(4), pp.465-483.

Tremblay, M. and Pelletier, R. (2000). More Feminists or More Women?. International Political Science Review, 21(4), pp.381-405.

UN Women (2000). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. [online] Un.org. Available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/ [Accessed 4 Jul. 2017].