Women and Civil Society in Turkey
Women's Movements in a Muslim Society

ÖMER ÇABA
WOMEN AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN TURKEY
To my mom
Women and Civil Society in Turkey
Women’s Movements in a Muslim Society

ÖMER ÇHAHA
Yildiz Technical University, Turkey
## Contents

*List of Tables*  
vi

*Preface*  
ix

*Introduction*  
xi

1 Civil Society in Modern Political Thought and Feminist Reaction  
1

2 Women and Civil Society in Turkish Politics: From Past to Present  
27

3 The Feminist Movement in Turkey During the 1980s  
63

4 The Feminist Movement from Streets to Institutions  
93

5 The Islamic Women’s Movement  
121

6 The Kurdish Women’s Movement  
151

7 Concluding Remarks: Women’s Movements and Feminine Civil Society in Turkey  
179

*Bibliography*  
189

*Index*  
215
This page has been left blank intentionally
## List of Tables

2.1 Female representation rate in the Turkish Parliament 55  
2.2 Female representation rate in local administrations 56
This page has been left blank intentionally
Preface

There is a Stella Mars postcard saying “Redefine feminism so it includes you.” Whether feminism today needs a redefinition or not is an ongoing debatable issue among feminists. This study brings the problem under discussion by drawing attention to the existence of different women’s movements in Turkey. Starting in the early years of the 1980s, we began to hear the voice of diverse women’s groups with common as well as different discourses. At least three women’s movements are worth mentioning in this respect. In the 1980s, the feminist movement, for the first time following a long break after 1935, occupied the streets and brought attention to the discourses related to the control of women of their own bodies. The Islamic women’s movement that accompanied feminism concentrated on the struggle to articulate in public life with their headscarves. After the mid-1990s, we started to hear the voice of Kurdish women’s groups drawing attention to the intersection of a double identity, namely of gender and ethnicity. We can say that the demands of each movement can be considered feminist if we leave aside the essentialist understanding of woman as developed by the feminist movements within a modernist paradigm.

This study contains the 30 years’ history of diverse women’s movements that occupied the agenda of Turkish society between 1980 and the early 2010s. I can happily say that I have examined almost all magazines published in Turkey by feminist, Islamic and Kurdish women’s groups during this time: in this respect, more than 50 different magazines. In order to understand the reactions to feminists coming from different social groups, like Kemalists, diverse leftist groups or Islamic groups, I have analyzed other publications on women’s issues as well. In addition to the analysis of publications of diverse women’s movements, I have also interviewed some of the leaders of these movements. It is a great pleasure for me to present this book as the outcome of a long, hard and labor-intensive study covering more than 30 years.

I have given speeches, lectures, and conferences in Turkey, as well as in various other countries, on topics such as the issue of womanhood in Turkey, the women’s movement and civil society, and Islam and women, and so on. The question I have most frequently been asked in most of these speeches is, “As a man, why do you deal with such an issue?” My response to this question has mostly been as follows: “We are living in a society where women are being oppressed and subordinated in various ways. Women are not oppressed by men because of patriarchal culture only, but also by political authority in the name of such projects as westernization and modernization. I have developed a passion for this issue as required by my sense of justice.”
A number of books in Turkish and various articles in Turkish and English are the reflection of my sense of justice that I owe to women as a man in a Muslim society. This is perhaps an attempt to pay a debt of conscience to my own sisters, with whom I was born into the same family but from whom I became separated by a world of difference; to my childhood girlfriend, from whom I am currently very different in many aspects due to schooling processes, although we grew up on the same street and played the same games; and to numerous oppressed women I have witnessed throughout my life, spanning over 40 years. This interest is a kind of pay-off for the advantage of being a man in the type of society and culture I was born into. Beyond my personal life story, I believe that the issue of woman should be of interest to both academician and writer due to its crucial significance for the social life of the human community.

When I was a university student, I wrote an article entitled “It is Difficult to be a Woman.” I attempted in that article to demonstrate how women are used as instruments in the power struggle, especially in the hands of the political powers. Some friends of mine teased me by saying, “As a man, how can you know about the difficulty of being a woman?” Indeed, they were largely right. It is a reality that the women’s movement or movements have produced two main concepts: “women’s politics” and the “women’s perspective.” The former one is of a character that might attract support from men, although it is a gender-based struggle. However, the latter one is a matter of experience. Perspective is something that can only be acquired through experience. For this reason, I am aware of the unavoidable fact that I have left many defects behind me stemming from a lack of experience on this issue. In this respect, I think it is inevitable for me, as a man, to inadequately analyze and understand, or even to misunderstand, those women who experience problems and carry out the activities of the women’s movement and their organizations and publications. Thus, I hope all women and all actors that I have analyzed here will understand and tolerate me.

Surely, in every work, there are individuals and institutions that need to be appreciated and thanked. First of all, I thank my lovely wife, Havva, for her invaluable support of all my work; my son, Melih Erdem, and daughter, Merve Şebnem. I am sure that when Merve grows up, she will be proud of her father for doing this work in times I stole from her. I would like to express my special gratitude to the Women’s Library in Istanbul for their archival support. I can honestly say, as a researcher working on this issue, that one of the most valuable accomplishments of the women’s movement in Turkey is the Women’s Library, which developed as an outcome of this movement. I thank every single individual who initiated and supported this institution. I would like to send my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the women I interviewed from different women’s groups. There are countless friends and colleagues who deserve thanks for improving my knowledge and perspective by discussing women’s issues with me. Since I am afraid of forgetting someone, I will not list any names here, but I express my feelings of thanks, appreciation, and gratitude to all who supported and contributed to this study in numerous ways.
Introduction

Starting from 1980 onwards, we have begun to hear women’s voices in Turkey. The discourses that women’s groups have been putting into words and the politics that they have been practicing have echoed broadly in the mass media, on television, in the cinema, in art, and in universities. The feminist discourses that, at the beginning, had earned a reputation among highly educated women living in metropolitan cities gradually succeeded in becoming an important issue for the different social groups and the ordinary people living in the various regions of Turkey. Basically, feminist women’s groups intended to undermine the traditional norms and thoughts that people had in their mental matrices on the concepts of man and woman, and they managed to make significant changes in the ways many people had hitherto been thinking. Activities like the efforts by women in supporting their “sisters,” the methods of increasing the dignity of women, and the alternative ways of raising the political consciousness of women have emerged and developed as a reflection of feminist politics. The discourses and understanding that had initially been expressed by feminist groups gradually exceeded them and gained the attention of non-feminists regarding the issue of womanhood.

The mobility of women highlighted by feminist, Islamic or Kurdish women’s groups in Turkey after 1980 was not the first example of the woman’s side in Turkish history. The material and cultural atmosphere brought about by the modernization policies pursued by the Ottoman Empire from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards dragged Ottoman women into the very heart of public life. Benefiting from the space of opportunity created by modernization policies, Ottoman women not only found places for themselves in the public sphere, but they also succeeded in introducing the subject of woman into the literature of almost all the intellectuals of the post-Tanzimat era. By taking advantage of the free environment that the Second Constitutional Era had provided after 1908, women organized themselves under different associations and developed an alternative discourse opposed to the political power. Women’s groups of the time developed a feminist movement which I call “indigenous feminism” that concentrated on local women’s problems. Focusing on this struggle, in particular, in order to receive the highest amount of support and attention, they even attempted to found the first political party of the Republican era, called the Women’s People Party, in 1923. However, the official politics of the first years of the Republic, which were oriented to impose the ideals of the ruling authority on everyone and to ensure the absolute superiority of the state over society, put an end to the women’s movements, like all other social movements. Thus, feminist women, from 1935 onwards, went underground and witnessed a silence that lasted at least until 1980.
During the first decades of the Republican regime, which was established in 1923, women were basically given two rights: legal equality through the adoption of a new civil code imported from Switzerland and the franchising right. But these rights were used by the ruling elite in a way that caused women to be indebted to the political regime regardless of their historical necessities or the role of women in their acquisition process. Turkish women have been indebted to the political regime by official propaganda which directed women to pay their debt through serving the regime. Furthermore, subconscious memories of the women’s movement of the late period of the Ottoman Empire were erased from the collective memories of women by the political power of the time. The political authority almost totally masked this movement by developing an understanding of indebtedness of women to the regime as if there had never been such a movement in Ottoman history, that women had never fought for their rights and the Republican regime had begun to favor women from the top down. According to this official understanding, the woman who had served man in harems and family during the dark ages of the Ottoman period, upon the founding of the Republic, became a part of the public sphere, enjoyed her individuality as a citizen, became an object of history and was emancipated. In other words, the Republican regime created the woman who had previously not been present in history. This has been propagated by the state elite under the title “state feminism.” But, it is a matter of fact that the unrestricted domination of the state over society brought an end to the women’s movement in Turkey.

The women’s movement that had disappeared in the first years of the Republic started to come to the surface once again after 1980. The feminist movement, as the first women’s movement of the 1980s, remobilized women on the basis of a social movement and as an element of civil society. It placed women at the forefront in demonstrations, motivated them to shout/chant slogans particular to women, made them publish books, journals and newspapers on women’s problems, and urged them to found several organizations. The Islamic women’s groups that went to the streets in the mid-1980s with the demand of getting a place in public life and the generation of Kurdish women’s movements all enriched the front of civil society started by feminists in the public domain. With women’s demonstrations, seen for the first time in the history of the Republic, the voices of women en masse echoed throughout the streets of Turkey. Diverse women’s movements have been struggling since then, demanding rights for women from their own perspective and trying to resolve their problems. In other words, through developing a separate identity, they have tried to enable women to exist by standing on their own feet and claiming their rights independently of the political regime.

When the women’s movement is analyzed in the context of civil society and democracy, we witness a similar situation in both the Turkish context and Western societies. The women’s movement transforms the understanding of both civil society and democracy in a radical manner. Women in the feminist movement in the West have drawn attention, after the 1960s, to political texts, discussed in detail the very notions of political literature like citizenship, equality, freedom, justice, the public sphere, the private sphere, and democracy, and tried to bring
new meanings to them. They reinterpreted the norms which exclude, in their conceptual framework, women from the public sphere, and they headed towards defining the woman as an element of civil society in the public domain. In addition to this, feminism, as a social movement, through constituting a social formation against the state and its political culture, tried to disseminate woman-oriented values, thoughts, behaviors, and institutions in Turkish society.

Feminists, at the same time, by setting aside the classical separation in modern political thinking between the public and private spheres, tried to integrate women into public life. The feminist slogan, “the personal is political,” is aimed at ending all institutions, understandings, norms, and values which separate the private from the public sphere. Women’s groups, through this slogan, formulate a public sphere that is open to diversity. In the modern political thought started by Machiavelli and continuing with Hegel, the public sphere is constructed in a strictly separated manner from the private sphere. In this tradition, the public has a projection of generalization which ignores individuals’ particular and natural affiliations and the differences among them. This general conceptualization of the public sphere has been largely eroded by the values and institutions that feminists have been trying to introduce into public life. While feminists have created a new opening in the Enlightenment scholars’ understanding of the public sphere, they have also attempted to convert the private sphere into the public domain. Thus, by the efforts of feminists, the formation of a plural and inclusive public sphere has become possible.

Besides this, feminists have been struggling to open a different space in the public sphere through the notion of “particular rights.” They draw attention to the point that the same norms in the public sphere cannot be applied to different groups, for they cannot ensure equality, and, thus, justice. The feminist movement emphasizes the importance of making regulations in favor of groups that are at a disadvantage due to their gender, race, culture, age, disability, and so on when designating rights in a democratic system. Because of this, some feminists argue that women should have some extra rights due to several situations peculiar to them, such as their conditions in the workplace, pregnancy, maternity, and their unpaid labor in the household. In other words, they demand positive discrimination for women. Their demand for positive discrimination has brought about the conception of a type of justice which takes into consideration other disadvantaged groups as well.

It could be stated that feminists have opened a new chapter in the classical understanding of civil society through their insistence on a politics of diversity and autonomy in the public sphere. In modern political thought, as mentioned above, it is assumed that civil society develops in the public sphere. In other words, the domestic sphere that has constituted women’s domain throughout history is kept outside of civil society. In this literature, the public sphere, being the realm of men, precedes, encompasses, crumples, and thus establishes superiority over the private sphere. All culturally prestigious activities like economic structures, social transformations, scientific inventions, and historical progress take place in the
public sphere. According to this understanding, women have had no role or place in such activities. Feminists, however, by focusing on the new definition of the public sphere and rendering the woman a player in this area are attempting to place the woman at the very center of social and political life. In other words, they transform woman from being an invisible actor of history into a historical as well as a political subject.

Similar to their counterparts in the West, women’s movements in Turkey also seem to corrode the homogeneous public sphere, which has an understanding of a paternal state. Indeed, the norms of the political culture in this tradition stem from a central approach that prioritizes the state over society. In the process of changing from the Ottoman period to the Republic, the state increasingly encompassed society and came to hold it in the palm of its hand. Ottoman society, which was like a colorful map decorated with ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, was reshaped in the Republican period into a homogeneous and collective mass. Therefore, it has become impossible for social groups to fully flourish in public life for a long time. Yet, this tradition entered into a process of transformation after 1980 and the voice of emerging social movements started to be heard again. Various social groups started to attempt to narrow down the scope of the state’s economic, social, political, and even cultural hegemony in favor of a civil society. In this context, it is possible to argue that different faces of civil society, such as those of religious groups, ethnic movements, women’s movements, human rights activists, and environmentalists, have been serving the same purpose. Activities of these groups in the public sphere have contributed to the development of a “heterogeneous” public sphere, on the one hand, and restricted the domination of the state over civil society, on the other.

It could be stated that because of their unique discourses, originality, and institutions, women’s movements have been afforded a special position among the diverse faces of civil society that emerged in Turkey after 1980. Building on this claim, this book will analyze the discourses that women’s movements have developed and discuss the importance of these discourses in the formation of civil society. This study will dwell basically on five main subjects. It will firstly discuss the issue of womanhood in civil society debates within the literature on modern political thought and the theoretical dimension of feminism as a “civil” movement that renders the above-mentioned debates almost invalid today. Secondly, it will attempt to reflect on the social status of women in Ottoman-Turkish society, beginning with the Ottoman period and continuing well up into the 1980s. It will seek answers, in this respect, to questions like the social status of women in Ottoman-Turkish society, their role in the modernization processes, and their position as an element of civil society against political authority during the late Ottoman and early Republican periods. Thirdly, we will come to the post-1980 period to examine the development of the feminist movement and its role and contribution to the formation of civil society in Turkey. Fourthly, we are going to examine the Islamic women’s movement, which flourished after the 1980s and gradually began to progress on the same path with feminism. Special attention
will be paid to “Islamic feminism” that developed within the Islamic women’s movement. Finally, the Kurdish women’s movement, which developed along the lines of Turkish feminism, in the beginning, but later dissociated from it, will be analyzed in a detailed manner. It is noteworthy to remark that both Islamic and Kurdish women’s movements constitute typical examples of the “third-wave” women’s movement which emerged within the feminist tradition.

I have attempted to analyze the feminist women’s movement from the early 1980s, when it originated, until today. This movement first became visible in the magazine Somut, published in the early 1980s, and began to make its voice heard on the streets in the mid-1980s. It was observed within a few years that different groups originated from this movement, and they championed different feminist approaches around different magazines. In this respect, a discourse analysis that is important for the analysis of feminism in Turkey will be carried out based on writings found in a number of magazines published during these times. It will be seen in the following pages that each magazine represents a different feminist approach from the 1980s. It can be said that the feminist movement was developed on the basis of diverse magazines, on the one hand, and in the streets through a number of protesting activities, on the other, throughout the 1980s.

However, it changed its course in the mid-1990s towards institutionalization and produced permanent and significant organizations. In addition, this feminism has gradually begun to occupy a larger space in the agendas of numerous women’s groups at the local level. As an outcome of all of this, it has been observed that numerous publications have emerged by various women’s groups throughout the 1990s and 2000s. I tried to analyze most of these publications in this study in order to understand the local- and group-based dynamics of the feminist movement in the post-1990 period. It is worth noting that Pazartesi (Monday) and Amargi (the name of a Goddess in East) have been the longest-lasting ones among those publications published at a national level. In addition to almost all feminist publications in the post-1990 period, the prominent institutions initiated by the feminist movement have been strictly analyzed in this study.

Besides the feminist movement, a fundamental challenge to the homogenous understanding of the public sphere has come from Islamic women’s groups. It is possible to trace the roots of the Islamic women’s movement back to the 1950s. The headscarf, which was first seen as an issue on the pages of newspapers and magazines in the 1960s, later constituted the driving force, and even the raison d’être, of this movement. I will attempt to provide a detailed picture of how Islamic women have turned into political actors in the public sphere around the headscarf struggle. An important number of Islamic women, fighting for the right to get into the public sphere with their dress, have undergone a radical transformation in their traditional housewife roles and have also attempted to develop a feminist discourse. The discourses developed by the Islamic women’s movement have been analyzed on the level of their publications. A dozen publications have been systematically analyzed in this respect.
As described above, another women’s movement that developed within the corridors of the feminist movement in Turkey is the Kurdish women’s movement. Given the claim that women are being oppressed for other reasons besides gender, this movement stresses a dual identity of ethnic women. This movement, too, has made its voice heard through various institutions and publications from the mid-1990s onwards. Magazines published by Kurdish women have drawn attention to their double identity. Kurdish women have laid the institutional foundations of a movement through various organizations, alongside such publications.

As a concluding remark, in this book, women’s movements in Turkey are considered within the context of civil society. This study attempts to underline how women’s movements have contributed to the emergence of a plural public sphere in Turkey. As indicated above, the political authority during the Republican period had tried to extend its area of domination through women, bringing them under the service of the regime. While doing this, it formulated women as gender-free actors, in other words, as man-like citizens who were expected to devote themselves to the collective targets projected by the ruling elite. This study, however, indicates that women’s movements have left aside this image of women and have motivated women to struggle for their particular interests. Women’s movements, composed of various women’s groups, have managed to open a considerable area for the development of what I call a “feminine civil society” in Turkey. The following chapters will portray how such a civil society has become possible through the publications, actions, discourses, and institutions of diverse women’s movements.
Chapter 1
Civil Society in Modern Political Thought and Feminist Reaction

The separation of civil society from the state was an intellectual effort of the political philosophers writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Until the end of the eighteenth century European political thinkers used the term “civil society” to describe a type of political institution which placed its members under the influence of its laws and thereby ensured a peaceful order and good government. This term formed a part of an old European tradition. This tradition can be traced from modern natural law to the classical political philosophy, above all, to Aristotle, for whom civil society (koinonia politike) refers to the polis, which contains and dominates all elements of society. In this old European tradition, civil society and the state were interchangeable terms. To be a member of a civil society was to be a citizen, a member of the state and thus obliged to act in accordance with its laws and regulations (Keane 1988: 36). But, the term civil society gained a new meaning in the hands of the political philosophers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This chapter looks at how civil society was formulated by the philosophers of the time and how a place was assigned to women in it. It also analyzes the feminist reaction to the meaning of civil society as the domain of men and the attempt by feminists to develop a new definition of civil society which includes women as well.

Women and Civil Society in Social Contract Theories

Civil society was identified by social contract theorists in the sense of “public sphere,” which works on the basis of rules different from private domestic life. They divided the whole of social life into civil society and domestic private life. The family or domestic life for Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau was based on natural ties of sentiment and blood line while the public life was governed by universal, impersonal, and the conventional criteria of achievements, rights, equality, and property (Pateman 1988). The most striking assumption about Hobbes’ theory is that the growth of individualism requires a centralized authority, one in which individuals must sacrifice their sovereignty when entering society in order to enjoy the benefits of peace and security. However, for Locke, who saw individualism as grounded in labor, sovereignty resided in the individual and his property from which even the government derived its authority. Rousseau urged a further different hypothesis: once individuals
accept an agreement they lose their individuality and should be obliged to obey the rules of the common will. As Genovese (1991: 176–7) aptly remarks they all together assumed that the individual was male and thereby they then discussed the relationship of the female to that male.

Thomas Hobbes’ theory is generally based on the necessity of the organization of a society and the establishment of the commonwealth so that peace and civilization can be attained. In the state of nature there is a war among individuals who seek self-preservation and attainment. Naturally, man exists in this state of war and has passion and reason. It is man’s passions which bring about the state of war. But at the same time fear of death, the desire of commodious living and the hope of obtaining a life by industry are reasonable things which incline man to seek peace (Hobbes 1968: 189–90). Man seeks self-preservation and security, but he is unable to attain this goal in the natural condition of war. The laws of nature are unable to achieve the desired end by themselves alone unless there is a coercive power capable of enforcing their observance by sanctions (Ibid.). This means that a plurality of individuals should confer all their power and strength upon one man or upon one assembly of man that may reduce all their wills into one will. The transition of rights takes place in Hobbes as follows (Ibid.: 227):

... by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, I authorize and give up my Right of Governing myselfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of man, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorize all his Actions in like manner. This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH. This is the Generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently), of that Mortal God, to which we owe under the Immortal God, our peace and defense.

The theory of the covenant of man enables Hobbes to make the transition from the condition of atomic individualism to organized society. Self-interest, according to him, lies at the basis of organized society, in which the self-destructive attempts are checked by the fear of the sovereign’s power. Civil society, as stated by Hobbes, allows individuals to seek self-preservation on the principles of their particular interests. This essential unit is, on the contrary, the state or the public domain that unite the fighting individuals. If men are naturally egoistic and always remain so then the only factor that can hold them together effectively is a centralized power vested in the sovereign.

Now, the question arises as to how women’s roles are formulated by Hobbes in civil society. Hobbes began from the premise that there is no natural dominance of men over women. In the state of nature, female individuals are as free and equal as male individuals. But their position changes in marriage, whereby life and family are then artificial political institutions rather than natural forms. The roles given to the members of the family are gained in civil society. For Hobbes (1841: 109), “a father with his sons and servants, grown into a civil person by virtue of his
paternal jurisdiction is called a family.” Hobbes’ families are ruled by men, not as fathers but as political masters: masters of families rule not by their paternal and procreative capacity, but by virtue of contract. Men as masters enter into the original contract that constitutes civil society. Women, now in subjection, no longer have the necessary standing to take part in creating a new civil society. Thus, for Hobbes, conjugal rights are not natural; rather they are created through the original contract and so are politically right. Hobbes (Ibid.: 67) states that in civil society the husband has dominion “because for the most part the commonwealths have been created by the fathers not by the mothers of the families.”

Matrimonial law takes a patriarchal form because men have made the original contract. Through the civil institution of marriage, men can lawfully obtain the familiar “helpmate” and gain the sexual and domestic services of a wife, whose permanent servitude is now guaranteed by the law and political authority. Shortly, in Hobbes’ political theory all individuals including women have self-protection rights in the state of nature. But in civil society women as wives who have given up their right in favor of the “protection” of their husbands are now protected by the sword of the Leviathan (Pateman 1991). Civil society thus comes into being as a contractual agreement among men on behalf of the representation of men and the subjection of women.

John Locke extended this definition of civil society. He, accordingly, began with the state of the nature and resulted with a society established by the consent among free individuals. In his view all men are equal in the state of nature and remain so until they become members of a political society. Unlike Hobbes, he argues that the state of nature is the state of liberty and it has a natural law to govern it (1988: 270–1). Natural law obliges everyone to be equal and independent in a way that no one harms another in his life, liberty or possessions. To him, God put men under strong obligations of necessity, convenience, and inclination to force him into society. For Locke, in the state of nature all men enjoy equal rights and are morally bound to respect the rights of others. It is in men’s interest, therefore, to form an organized society for the more effectual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates he calls property. Civil society thus comes to be closely identical to political society:

Wherever any number of Men are so united into one Society, as to quit everyone his Executive Power of the law of Nature and to resign it to the public, there and there only is a political, or Civil society (Ibid.: 350–1) [A civil society comes into being] … wherever any number of Men, in the state of Nature, enter into Society to make one People, one Body Politic, under one Supreme Government, or else when anyone joins himself to incorporates with any Government already made. (Ibid.: 89)

Man being free, equal, and independent by nature cannot be subjected to the political power of another without his own consent. Even though civil society grows out of the family and tribe, it is a fact that the rational foundation of civil
society and government is consent. Civil society and government are created on the basis of two covenants. By the first contract a man becomes a member of a definite civil or political society and obliges himself to accept the decisions of the majority. However, by the second contract the majority of the members of the newly formed society agree to form a government (Coplestone 1964: 145). Unlike Hobbes, Locke considers individuals and groups as those whose moral convictions give them a strong feeling of autonomy and independence from the official system. They preserve their own values and interests even in civil society.

Locke analyzed the relationship of man and woman, in civil society, on the basis of conjugal and political relationships. Both were grounded in consent and existed for the preservation of property. Yet conjugal society was not a political society because it conferred no power over life and death of its members. Men and women, in the state of nature, were free to determine the terms of the conjugal contract. But, in civil society, these terms could be limited or created by the customs or laws of the country (Butler 1991: 86). He analyzed several non-political relationships including those of master-servant, master-slave, parent-child, and husband-wife. Each of these forms of association is distinguished from the political relationship of ruler-subject (Ibid.: 84). Thus, the conjugal society is a natural unit which is based on a voluntary contract between man and woman. Although the conjugal relationship began for the sake of procreation, it continued for the sake of property:

[Men’s power] leaves the wife in the full and the free possessions of what by Contract is her Peculiar Right and gives the Husband no more power over her Life, than she has over his. The power of the Husband being so far from that of an absolute monarch that the wife has, in many cases, a Liberty to separate from him; where natural Right or their Contract allows it, whether that Contract be made by themselves in the state of Nature or by the Customs or Laws of the Country they live in; and the Children upon such Separation fall to the Father or Mother’s lot, as such contract does determine. (Jones 1989: 14–5)

Locke distinguished also between the property rights of husband and those of wife. All property in conjugal society was not automatically under the husband’s control. Because of certain inconveniences, men quit the state of nature to form civil society through an act of consent. Locke’s insistence on the relationship between men and women was based on the premise that in the state of nature man dominated woman since he was naturally the more able and was stronger. However, in civil society, man dominated woman on the basis of the consent of the two to preserve women’s rights. Thus, Locke, like Hobbes, stated that civil society is an agreement among free men who, at the same time, represent women whose roles are as the homemaker in civil society.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in relation to the condition of women, developed the same definition of civil society as Hobbes and Locke. He also began with the natural state of man. Natural man, for Rousseau, was somehow a tabula rasa awareness
of nothing, not a culture gainer and therefore in peace with his environment. Since natural man thinks that coming together with others enables them to overcome natural disasters and to have a more fruitful life, they come together to form society. But, once society comes into being we see a conflict, a war, and a struggle among them (Rousseau 1950: 236). Therefore, they need a government in order to protect their property on the principle of peace and security. Social contract thus leads man to transform his particular will into the common will. He is now a member of a new society of equals in which he has gained a new form of equality on a higher level than the one he enjoyed in the state of nature (Zeitlin 1968: 33).

Rousseau insisted that the inequality of power and wealth transformed the expression of drive for self-preservation into rational egoism. Since all develop different concerns, different interests are necessarily in constant opposition. Therefore there is no room, in Rousseau’s theory, for particularistic and individualistic thought (Lange 1991: 105). For Rousseau the Supreme Being, which is denounced as the “General Will,” is the essential unit and woman could be saved under such a General Will.

The Supreme Being wanted to honor the human species in everything. While giving man inclinations without limit, He gives him at the same time the law which regulates them, in order that he may be free and in command of himself. While abandoning man to immoderate passions, He joins reason to these passions in order to govern them. While abandoning women to unlimited desires, He joins modesty to these desires in order to constrain them (Bloom 1979: 359).

The timidity and the weakness of woman, according to Rousseau, inspired her to be pleasing to a man. Acting to please man is a quality of woman directly derivable from her nature. Within civil society man is stronger and dependent on woman only through desire. However woman depends on man through need in addition to desire. The habit of living together paves the way for man’s conjugal and paternal love. Within the family, as the little society, woman becomes more sedentary and grows accustomed to being housewife while man becomes a political actor (Rousseau 1964: 117).

“Natural” man and “natural” woman imply quite different things for Rousseau. Natural man, for him, is a man in the original state of nature; one of total independence of his fellows, devoid of selfishness, and equal to everyone else. Natural woman, however, is defined according to her role in the golden age of the patriarchal family: dependent, subordinated, and naturally imbued with those qualities of shame and modesty which served to make her sexually appealing to her husband (Thiele 1987: 37).

The virtues of women in civil society are characterized as closer to “nature” than men. Man can be transformed and denatured in a political society. However, women constitute a link between the supreme artifice of political society and nature (Lange 1991: 101). If women attempt to act, in political society, according to their particular interest they will be oppressed by men. In civil society, “particular interest” of women is disastrous, for Rousseau. He proposed for women a sphere of their true competence, namely childcare, household tasks, and recreation for
men. In a good society women should devote themselves to the development of a patriot nation for the interest of all materialized in the state. The love of the self should be transformed to the love of the nation, in other words, of the common will of men. In short, Rousseau formulates a family in which women are dependent upon men in a way that they are devoid of any particular interest and rational egoism (Ibid.: 107).

As a concluding remark, for social contract philosophers civil society seems to be identical with the public life of the state, which comes into existence on the basis of agreement among individuals who are assumed to be men. The chief principle of civil society functions under the rule of male individuals. Women, treated as being close to nature, are represented in civil society through their husbands who are their political masters. It would not be wrong to say that women, in such a definition of civil society, are hidden or are considered to be absent in social or political life.

**Women in the Separation of Civil Society from the State**

The distinction between the state and civil society was systematically made by Hegel in his *Philosophy of Right* published in 1821. Civil society (bürgerliche Gesellschaft), in Hegel’s philosophy, represents a “stage” in the dialectical development of historical spirit (Zeitgeist) from the family to the state. While social life typical of civil society is different from the ethical world of the family and different from the public life of the state, it forms a necessary element within the totality of a rationally structured political community (Pelczynski 1984a: 1). For Hegel, civil society is conceived as a historically produced sphere of ethical life positioned between the simple world of the household and the universal state. It includes a mosaic of private individuals, classes, groups, the market economy, social classes, corporations, and institutions whose transactions are regulated by civil law (Keane 1988: 50; Pelczynski 1984b: 263).

In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel subdivides the sphere of ethical life into family, civil society, and the state. They are “moments” of the ethical order and are the ethical powers which regulate the life of the individual. Ethical duties in the family are determined according to one’s place in the family, which ultimately depends on the natural factors of sex and birth. Love, altruism, and concern for the whole are the dominant features of ethical dispositions in the family. However, in civil society this type of “natural” ethical unity disintegrates. Men are primarily concerned with the satisfaction of their private, individual needs by working, producing, and exchanging the product of their labor in the market. This develops a new ethics. Men behave, in civil society, selfishly and instrumentally towards each other. The only thing they care about is increasing their self-interest (Knox 1967: 148).

It is the self-interest of man which results in conflict within civil society that necessitates the state. For Hegel the state is the concrete human embodiment
of the ethical idea of mind (Geist) developing from a stage of immediate, undifferentiated unity (the family) through to that of explicit difference and particularity (civil society). As remarked by Keane (1988: 55), “the universal state conceived by Hegel must be regarded as a secular deity whose claims upon its male citizens and female and other subjects are always for their benefit and ultimately unquestionable and irresistible.” Hegel conceives the state as a new stage in history which synthesizes the conflicting elements of civil society into a higher ethical entity. Hegel’s political philosophy developed the concept of the public realm of the state as expressing impartiality and universality. For Hegel, as a member of civil society, the individual pursues private ends for himself and his family. Conceived as a member of the state, on the other hand, the person is not a locus of particular desire, but the bearer of universally articulated rights and responsibilities. The point of view of the state and law transcends all particular interests to express the national and universal spirit of humanity (Young 1987: 65).

It is this particular desire in which Hegel, like social contract philosophers, puts woman at its center. Hegel’s analysis of woman is restricted with the particular world, while he puts only male citizens at the center of universal spirit of humanity or state. Women are conceived in Hegel’s political philosophy as the guardians of the private realm of need, desire, and affectivity. As remarked by Benhabib (1991: 134), women are viewed as representing the principles of particularity, naturalness, and substantiality, while men stand for universality, freedom, and subjectivity. Hegel formulates the European nuclear family with its family relations and its particular division of labor between the sexes as being rational and normatively right. It is a family type in which the woman is confined to the private sphere and the man to the public. He invokes the superiority of man to woman in the following way (Knox 1967: 114):

... one sex is mind in its self-diremption into explicit self-subsistence and the knowledge and volition of free universality, i.e. the self-consciousness of conceptual thought and the volition of the objective final end. The other sex is mind maintaining itself in unity as knowledge and volition in the form of a concrete individuality and feeling. In relation to externality, the former is powerful and active, the latter is passive and subjective. It follows that none has his actual substantive life in the state, in learning, and so forth, as well as in labor and struggle with the external world and with himself so that it is only out of his redemption that he fights his way to self-subsistence unity with himself. In the family he has a tranquil intuition of this unity, and there he lives a subjective ethical life on the plane of feeling. Woman, on the other hand, has her substantive destiny in the family, and to be imbued with family piety is her ethical frame of mind.

To Hegel men’s lives are concerned with the state, science, and work in the external world. Man, as remarked by Ravven (1988: 149), “possesses, as a citizen, the self-conscious power of universality, he thereby acquires the right
of desire and, at the same time, preserves his freedom in regard to it.” Women’s lives, by contrast, are in the family and in the unity of the private sphere. They are incapable of the spiritual struggle which characterizes the lives of men. Since women cannot overcome unity and emerge from the life of the family, they are excluded from history-constituting activities. Their activities in the private sphere such as reproduction, the rearing of children, and the satisfaction of the emotional and the sexual needs of men place them outside the world of work in the public sphere (Ibid.: 132).

Another philosopher who separated civil society from the state was Karl Marx, for whom civil society was just the reverse of what Hegel conceived. Marx rejected the view that the state was an all-inclusive political community with a distinct ethical character and denied its primacy in social and historical life. He reversed the Hegelian relation of the two and made civil society the ground of political life and the source of political change (Pelczynski 1984a: 2). For Marx, the economy as a context of man’s primary interaction with nature is a paradigm of all social life and human activity. Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, and so on are all just particular modes of production and fall under its general laws (Ibid.: 203). For Marx, civil society “comprises the entire material interaction among individuals at a particular evolutionary stage of the productive forces” (Keane 1988: 63–4).

The state, on the other hand, in Marx’s thought, is taken as an institution of the dominant class, instead of being the expression of a universal and national need. It is both the repetition and reinforcement of particularistic interests. Unlike Hegel, he views the state not as the transcendence of civil society but merely as its reflection: as civil society is, so is the state. The state incorporates civil society not in order to transform it into something else, but to keep it as it is. Civil society, which is historically determined, does not disappear into the state but reappears in the state in all its concrete manifestations (Bobbio 1988: 75). For Marx, civil society embraced “the whole commercial and industrial life of a given stage and, hence, transcends the state and the nation ...” (quoted in Ibid.: 82). Marx strongly insisted that legal relationships, as well as the forms of the state, have their roots in the material conditions of life. Therefore, to him, “…the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy” (Pelczynski 1984b: 263). Civil society in this sense seems to be a negative area leading to the domination of the capital class over the labor class.

One should bear in mind that the arguments about civil society among Marxists in the last few decades borrows their crucial elements from Gramsci’s writings on civil society. Gramsci’s theory introduces a profound innovation to the whole Marxist tradition. Civil society in Gramsci does not belong to the structural sphere, but to the super-structural sphere (Bobbio 1988: 82). He means, briefly, civil society being the cultural pillar of hegemony which a social group exercises over the whole of society as the ethical content of the state (Ibid.: 83–4). Gramsci takes both civil society and the state as two major super-structural levels of “hegemony.” His argument continues in the following (1971: 12):
What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural “levels”: the one that can be called “civil society,” that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called “private,” and that of “political society,” or the “state.” These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of the “hegemony” which the dominant group exercises throughout society, and on the other hand, to that of “direct domination” or command exercised through the state and “juridical” government. (Gramsci 1971: 12)

Gramsci gives great importance to intellectuals in the realm of hegemony. Within the realm of super-structure the intellectuals perform organizational and connective functions within both the area of civil society or hegemony and the area of political society or the state. Intellectuals refer to a social stratum which exercises an organizational function in the wide sense whether in the field of production, in that of culture, or in that of political administration. The intellectuals have roles not only in culture and economy, but in all levels of civil society and political arena of the state (Sassoon 1987: 135). Consequently, one can see obviously that Gramsci attributes not a negative meaning to civil society as it was under the hands of Hegel and Marx, but rather uses it in a positive way in transforming capitalist hegemony.

The place both Marx and Gramsci give to women in civil society is, indeed, not different to what Hegel stated in his political philosophy. It should be remembered that the class division, for Marx, arose over the struggle for appropriation of the surplus of food and objects. It is obvious that the definition of class in this way eliminates from consideration conflicts over other socially necessary activities such as childbearing and child-rearing. The activity of “reproduction” thus becomes a non-historical aspect of human existence or a by-product of change in the economy (Nicholson 1987: 24–5). It would not be misleading to claim that Marxist theory, similar to Hegelian philosophy, denies that women can create history.

As a concluding remark, one can clearly see that there is no real substantial difference between the social contract philosophers and the philosophers who separated civil society from the state, in respect to the place they give to women in civil society. As aptly argued by Pateman and Shanley (1991b: 3), the tradition of Western political thought rests on a conception of the “political” that is constructed through the exclusion of women and all that is represented by femininity and women’s bodies. Manhood and politics go hand in hand in this political thinking. Everything that stands in contrast to political life and virtues has represented women and the roles fulfilled by their capacities. Debates on civil society in Western political thought from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries always assumed the exclusion of women from civil society and their confinement to the privacy of the household (Teresa and Pateman 1978).
Civil Society as a Milieu of Alternatives

In the civil society formulated by the political philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx, it seems clear that women have stood outside the boundaries not only of the political community, but also of civil society itself. Since the very concept of civil society, for almost all of them, refers to an association whose members are bound together by common laws, women in this sense were not properly citizens. In the eyes of the laws laid down by their understanding, women, in fact, do not appear independently; rather they are dependent upon men to represent them, to administer their property, and to make decisions for their children (Vogel 1988: 138–9). However, in modern society there is an institutional interdependence and a public/private mix rather than a public/private split. Moving from the experience of the Scandinavian countries, Hernes (1988: 203) brilliantly observes that the state, the market, the public sphere of opinion, and the family are interrelated institutional settings. While until the 1960s women had been mainly confined to the family, nowadays they move increasingly among all four settings. Women’s evolving profiles of citizenship reflect the institutional interface between state and family, their employment in public sector, and their political mobilization.

Markus (1987: 105–9) goes further, in respect to the relationship between women and civil society, to claim that the elevation of economic activity into the public sphere and its transformation into an arena of socially recognized success means the separation of household and family from being a private sphere which is assigned naturally to women as the only proper location of their activities. She goes on to urge that the distribution of social status and the recognition of success are restricted to the arena of socially organized work. Therefore, she takes the programs or attempts for social change promoting the liberation and social recognition of diverse human potentialities and ways of life as “the potential civil society.” Modern women’s attempts to gain success in public life place them at the center of the potential civil society.

Through this study the term civil society can be understood as the existence of social groups with the potentialities economically, ideologically, and organizationally to produce alternative structures, meanings, definitions, values, programs, and so forth to state authority. Social groups as such will reconstitute, change, and even restrict, if necessary, the direction of the authoritative institutions. There are mainly three ultimate goals that social groups, at least in the modern world, particularly feminist groups, attempt to reach: equality, diversity, and autonomy. These concepts are taken, in this study, as the principles of civil society and each of these principles results in different implications.

First, consider the “equality principle” among the citizens, regardless of class, race, religion, ethnicity, and similar social categories. The equality principle is inevitably based on the law. It regards all individuals equal in being a member of the political society. Equality in this sense does not mean to “have equal” results, rather it means to create the equal chance of opportunity for citizens in every
aspect of social life. The claim on equality has an explicit implication: it results with the emergence of a “homogenous” civil society. A homogeneous civil society unites society through the claims to make different groups equal by erosion or by assimilation of the less privileged groups into the norms and the values of the privileged groups. Therefore, the egalitarian feminist groups’ insistence on the equality principle brings women, in the last analysis, to be integrated with a cultural atmosphere being set up by the norms of men.

Second, the most important principle of civil society, in respect to a study on feminist groups, is the “diversity principle.” This principle brings under discussion how best to make the law recognize and appoint the diversity of the different categories and assign duties and rights under that principle. In particular, the demand made by some radical, postmodern, and French feminists to develop a different language and discourse with more relevant meaning to and advantages for women has initiated a new phase amongst feminist groups. A set of particular rights and duties has come under discussion. The implication of this principle for us is that it leads to the emergence of a heterogeneous civil society, which better serves, in the last analysis, the democratization of society. An assertion based on the diversity principle also results in a plurality of legal rights.

Finally, think about the “autonomy principle” of civil society. The autonomy of social elements paves an open way for the emergence of different groups on different issues and holds to create alternative discourses and values in the public sphere. The critiques highlighted by Marxist feminists and socialist feminists, on the one hand, and the total demands of radical feminists, on the other, are essentially important to create such alternative discourses. The implication of the autonomy principle has resulted in an autonomous civil society. As Held brilliantly emphasized, this arises out of two interdependent processes: the expansion of social autonomy and the restructuring and democratization of the state institutions (1984: 236). State and civil society in that sense must become the condition for each other’s democratization. The state institutions must be viewed as necessary devices for enacting legislation promulgating new policies, setting down conflicts between particular interests, and preventing civil society from falling victim to a new form of tyranny. Civil society, on the other hand, must be perceived as a social body regulating the disorder of the state, checking their functionality, directing their policies on behalf of their particular interests, and preventing any authoritative decisions.

In conclusion, civil society, in modern society, must be understood in a way that it includes those individuals and groups whose moral convictions gives them a strong feeling of autonomy, independence, and difference from the official system. The common features of civil society understood as such brings forth discourses, structures, meanings, values, and norms by the members of different social groups. This allows civil society to include diverse groups regardless of the volume of their members, the extent of their demands for change, and the character of their activity. Feminism, indeed, is one of the most outstanding examples of these groups. Therefore, feminism will be analyzed within the framework of the
vantage point of these principles of civil society, both in the following part and in the remaining chapters, concentrating mainly on the case of diverse women’s movements developed in Turkey.

**Feminism and the Advent of a “Feminine” Civil Society**

Feminism can be defined as a political movement directed at changing existing power relations between men and women. These power relationships structure all areas of life: the family, education, and welfare; the worlds of work and politics; and culture and history. Feminism seems to be a politics whose basic goal is to remove the discrimination and degradation of women and to break down male dominance in society. In a very general sense, feminism can be divided into two major branches: “the women’s rights” movement and “the women’s liberation” movement (Tong 1997). The women’s right movement works predominantly for political reform by means of traditional pressure group tactics. An aim is to be acknowledged and to be respected by the political establishment. It embraces primacy of a companionate, non-hierarchical, male-female couple as the basic unit of society. This kind of feminism has long historical roots tracing back to the suffrage movement of the nineteenth century and the successful campaigns for women’s access to education, to qualified work, and to legal majority.

However, the aim of the new-wave feminism which has emerged since the 1960s is completely different. These feminisms, known as the “women’s liberation movement” includes radical, left-wing and postmodern feminists who reject the idea of equality with men: instead they advocate the emancipation of women from the aggression of a patriarchal society. The new-wave feminism celebrates the quest for women’s independence in all aspects of life and rejects traditional roles of women. The main activities of the women’s liberation movement consist of consciousness-raising activities, creation of a counter-culture and feminist literature (feminist theater, music bands, women’s festivals, and so on), and the formation of alternative institutions (crisis centers, women’s centers, self-help clinics, women’s shelters, and so on). All these aspects of feminist groups are analyzed in the following chapters with a vantage point of their contribution to the development of a feminine civil society.

As Mitchell (1987: 31) argues, feminism arose in England in the seventeenth century as a series of demands by women who saw themselves as a sociological group that was completely excluded from the principles of new society. The seventeenth-century feminists were mainly middle-class women who wanted to take part in a changed society which came about with the end of feudalism and the beginning of capitalism. As the new bourgeois argued for freedom and equality, these women wondered why they were being left out (Ibid.: 31). As is well-known during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in particular after the French Revolution, a new understanding of man, civil society, political society, and so forth were institutionalized. In political theories women were appropriated
as being identical with the private household. However, the household was no longer an appropriate place for them since industrialization, particularly in Britain, brought a substantial change in the role they traditionally had. With industrialization, the forces of industrial capitalism began to draw labor out of the private home and into the public workplace. This process of industrialization indicated its first impact on married bourgeois women. These women were the first to find themselves at home with little productive or income-generating work (Ibid.: 35–40). Therefore, many of these women attempted to gain a proper place within the new public sphere and its workplace.

The first feminist demand was to achieve the right to vote. Therefore, the first wave of feminism is best known for the suffrage campaign. The basic aim of the women’s suffrage movement was to gain admission to citizenship and, through this, admission to the public sphere (Holton 1988). But the following generations of women added a new impetus to this movement through a more severe struggle to improve women’s position in a male-dominated society. The women’s movement as a collective unity to better women’s position and challenge male dominance in society started in the USA in the 1840s, in England in the 1850s, in France and Germany in the 1860s, and in the Scandinavian countries in the 1870s (Dahlerup 1986: 2–3).

The most striking shift in feminist politics was observed in the 1960s. This period marks the beginning of the second wave in feminism. Since then, the new feminist movement has grown rapidly in terms of the volume of its members, the range of goals, and, most strikingly, in the number of organizations. Indeed, the present-day feminist movement consists of thousands of interrelated but essentially independent groups. The issue of abortion on demand was at the center of political protests and campaigns by the feminist groups of the 1970s, and the issue of gender analysis was at stake in feminist theoretical studies. Abortion on demand became a symbol of women’s fight against the patriarchal society and its institutions. Moreover, it was, for women, the means by which the right of decision and control over their own bodies could be gained legally. Another important issue at the center of feminist groups of the time was the analysis of the gender issue. Simone de Beauvoir’s assertion on gender gained motivation from feminist activists and academicians in this respect. She asserted that “one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one” (de Beauvoir 1973: 301). Feminist theory took gender relations as its central issue in analyzing how gender relations are constituted and experienced and how we think about them. To adopt “gender” as an analytical category means to focus on the social and cultural construction of sexual difference in humans. It means that every culture, society, and historical epoch constitutes and interprets sexual difference in a certain way (Flax 1987: 622–3). It is assumed, by gender analysis, that men and women are behaviorally and psychologically different and therefore these are the causes for the differences that can be found in their growing process (Kessler and McKenna 1985: 99).

As remarked by Benhabib (1989: 366), feminists “have gone further and identified the ‘gender subtext’, in visions of the political subject, in the definition
of the political realm and in the logic of terms like ‘participation’, ‘autonomy’, ‘consent’ and ‘rights’.” Feminists, in the last decades, have shifted their attention from social analysis to discourse analysis, from power itself to the politics of its representation. In short, one of the most important results of second-wave feminism is its success in changing many of women’s and men’s ways of thinking about women. Indeed, through the focus on consciousness-raising, on experience in different ways of living, on non-oppressive relations between men and women at home and in society, and on creating a counter-culture and alternative institutions, feminists have attempted to develop new ways of engaging politics.

Now, the question concerning this book is about what place feminism constitutes, as a social movement, in relations between the state and civil society. It would not be wrong to claim that social movements, feminism in our analysis, raise important questions about the distribution and legitimacy of macro-power relations. Moreover, it challenges the deep-rooted codes of social interactions within civil society and puts new forms in their place. The main task of a social movement is to raise collective activity in order to promote social change thus representing a protest against the established power structure and against the dominant norms and values. As Wilkinson (1971: 27) brilliantly emphasizes, “a social movement’s commitment to change and raison d’être of its organization are founded upon the conscious volition, normative commitment to the movement’s aims or beliefs, and active participation on the part of the followers or members.” In the collective action of women, in the last decades, the issues of “gender,” “rights,” “inequality,” “exclusion,” and “liberation” constitute a large part of the mobilization process. What women, along with other collective actors, have achieved is, above all, to practice alternative definitions to the existing institutions. In other words, they have created meanings and definitions of identity which contrast with the increasing determination of individual and collective life formulated by the aforementioned masters of modern political thought (Melucci 1988: 247).

It can be said that feminism, as a social movement, contributes to the development and the consolidation of civil society at least upon three interrelated grounds. First, it highlights such issues as abortion, bringing it from the back streets out into the open and proffers it for public discussion. Second, it redefines the deep-rooted codes of social institutions, as in the case of gender analysis, and replaces them with new meanings. Its largest impact, in that sense, is seen on the grass-roots structures or in the socio-cultural fields. Finally, feminism as a social movement puts pressure on the political parties and the governments to develop policies on behalf of women. In the following chapters I will indicate those feminist groups in Turkey who have succeeded in all of these, sometimes through street activities and campaigns and sometimes through institutional activities. For now I will focus on three political discourses developed by feminist groups, which serve to develop a civil society different to the one underlined by the masters of modern political thought.
Feminist Politics of Equality

Feminist politics of equality is defended by the egalitarian feminists who attempt to develop a democratic theory based on civil equality that undermines the differences between the sexes so that full citizenship for women can be secured. They aim to achieve full equality of opportunity in all spheres of life without radically transforming the present social and political system. The realization of its aim means the transformation of the sexual division of labor and norms of femininity and masculinity (Weedon 1987: 4).

Egalitarian feminism received its classic formulation in liberal feminist Mary Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792). Egalitarian feminists’ main emphasis, still shared by contemporary liberal feminists, is that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that prevents women’s entrance into the public sphere. Since society has the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectual and less capable physically than men, it excludes women from academia, the forum, and the market-place. As a result of this policy of exclusion the true potential of many women goes unfulfilled. If women and men are given the same educational opportunities and given equal civil rights, they will overcome their subordination (Tong 1997: 17–8).

Mary Wollstonecraft rejected the Enlightenment’s understanding of human nature. In other words, she insisted that women share the same nature with men, as having the same reason. The distinction between the sexes is entirely social, not natural. Therefore, all human activities should be governed by the principles of reason which are the same in all. Women can be dutiful or rational only when they are treated with the same dignity and allowed to share the same privileges as men (Gates 1991: 117–21). She claimed that the perfection of our nature and capability of happiness must be estimated by the degree of reason, virtue, and knowledge. From the exercise of knowledge the sexes should be equally undeniable (Wollstonecraft 1975: 19). Moreover, she insisted on freedom for women and claimed that when you make women free, “they will quickly become wise and virtuous as men become more so” (Ibid.: 175). In short, she denied the ideas developed by Rousseau and Hegel that women were, by nature, more pleasure-seeking and pleasure-giving than men. She wanted women to be treated as autonomous decision-makers like men. An equal education and equal opportunity for entrance into citizenship will allow a woman to assume responsibility for her own development and growth and will give her chance to share the same virtues as a man.

John S. Mill (1999), accordingly, in The Subjection of Women, insisted that women should have equal educational and economic opportunities as well as the same civil rights with men. It is his liberal idea that the ordinary way is to maximize aggregate utility (happiness or pleasure) and to permit individuals to pursue whatever they desire. The only way for women to maximize their pleasure is to have the same rights as men in civil society. But he argues that sexual division of labor within the family is made by consent and he defends this as the most suitable division of labor between the two. When a woman marries it might be
understood that she, like a man, chooses a profession, she makes a choice of the management of the household. Mill believed that even given the same education, economic opportunities, and civil liberties as men, women will still choose marriage and motherhood over other competing occupations. In short, although he regards women as having the same natural endowments as men, he accepts that the most suitable occupation for women is to follow their natural duties as homemakers and mothers.

The contemporary liberal feminists have gone further in their say on equality. One of the prominent figures of the twentieth century liberal feminists is Betty Friedan who insists in her book, *The Feminist Mystique* (1992), that a woman can find satisfaction exclusively in the traditional role of wife and mother which has left the modern woman feeling empty and miserable. Therefore, even if, she proposes, contemporary liberated women want to stay at home with their husbands and children, they should not be allowed to do so. Otherwise not only they will lose their productive capacity, but they will also lead their children, in particular their sons, to grow up being passive and immature. But in her later book, *The Second Stage* (1998), she changed her view radically. In that book she argues that women should have the right to be either in the market or to choose motherhood. She attempts to create a liberal condition which makes it possible for women to be able to work in equal conditions as men and choose, if they so desire, to have children.

Contemporary liberal feminists have maintained their position at the center of the same issue formulated by Friedan’s first book. Their common argument is that the most important goal of women is gender equality. They aim to free women from oppressive gender roles which prevent women from taking a place in academia, in the forum, and in the market place. Contemporary liberal feminists argue that patriarchal society thinks that women are ideally suited only for certain occupations such as teaching, nurturing, caring, and cleaning and are largely incapable of other tasks such as ruling, preaching, and investing. Egalitarian feminist Zillah R. Eisenstein (1984: 207) fights to guarantee equal sexual relations between men and women. This, for her, does not mean that men and women are pressured to be the same sexually. Rather it means they are politically the same by guaranteeing that sexual difference has nothing to do with how much sexual freedom, economic independence, radical equality, and intellectual opportunity one has. Sexual egalitarianism, for Eisenstein, can be achieved only under the condition that sexual difference is no longer the basis of women’s secondary political status.

In short, egalitarian feminists drive toward liberty, equality, and fairness to women. The implication of equality for them will morally transform not only those who have been deprived of their rights, but also those who have held rights on the basis of might (Vogel 1986: 33). Feminist writer Catherine A. Mackinnon emphasizes the result if there could be sexual equality for women in the following terms (1989: 215):

> If the sexes were equal, women would not be sexually subjected. Sexual force would be exceptional, consent to sex could be commonly real and sexually
violated women would be believed. If the sexes were equal, women would not be economically subjected, their desperation and marginality cultivated, their enforced dependency exploited sexually and economically. Women would have speech, privacy, authority, respect, and more resources than they have now.

It would not be wrong to claim that the root meaning of equality formulated here is negative egalitarianism, an abolitionist politics in its origins. Its aim is to eliminate both differences between categories and to restrict the authoritative oppression (Walzer 1983: 142). It holds as the basic principle that the rules and the policies of the state and rules of private institutions ought to be blind to race, gender, and other group differences. The public realm of the state and law should express its rules in general terms that are abstract from the particularities of individual and group needs and situations and should recognize all persons equally and treat all citizens in the same way. Equality, as such, obviously, is blind to group differences and blind to differences of race, gender, age, or disability. Moreover, women who formulate equality in this way are serving the politics of privileging the male standards. Thus we can say that equality embraces the principle of sameness with men due to the fact that the present norms of the patriarchal state or the principles of patriarchal culture are institutionalized on the terrain of male-centered values. Such an understanding of equality, in the last analysis, integrates women with the world of men.

Feminist Politics of Difference

In feminist thought a shift has developed from the politics of “equality” to the politics of “difference” which, in the last analysis, leads to the idea of heterogeneity. Many feminists in the last decades have begun to defend social diversity and group specificity against the politics of assimilation which is idealized by egalitarian feminists. They have questioned whether justice always means that law and policy should enforce equal treatment for all groups. Feminist groups as such formulate the concept of a differentiated citizenship as the best way to realize the inclusion and participation of everyone in full citizenship.

It has become increasingly clear, among feminists, that it is not possible simply to include women in patriarchal discourses laid down particularly by the masters of the theory of civil society that excluded women from political and social life. For the advocate of the politics of difference among feminists, patriarchal discourses are incapable of being broadened or extended to include women without radical upheavals and change. There is no space, to them, within these discourses to accommodate women’s inclusion and equal participation. Therefore, the political, ontological, and epistemological commitments underlying patriarchal discourses should be re-evaluated from the feminist perspective. It was argued by Elizabeth Gross (1987b) that the a priori assumptions of sameness or interchangeability, sexual neutrality or indifference, the complete neglect of women’s specificities
and differences could not be accommodated in traditional theoretical terms. Gross maintained that the whole social, political, scientific, and metaphysical underpinning of patriarchal theoretical systems needed to be shaken up.

Feminists who proclaim difference raise a strong critique to the universal aspect of modern law and modern political thought. Ursula Vogel (1986: 135–6), for instance, urges that if we believe that women have interests and needs significantly different from those of men and if these constitute not disabilities but sources of identity and strength, then the construction of a uniform genderless agent and the central premise of modern legal thinking must become significantly problematic. Another feminist writer, Beverly Thiele (1987: 35–9) goes further to argue that the concept of citizenship in modern political thought gives everyone the same status in public life. However, to her, the values and norms of citizenship as such are structured in the concern of “malestream” conception. She maintains that women are hidden in malestream conceptions through mechanisms such as decontextualism, which implies the distance of females from their actual being; universalism, which rejects the particularity of sexes; naturalism, which is based on men’s nature; dualism, which takes the dualities as its essence; and appropriation, by which each sex is appropriated to certain roles framed through malestream values (Ibid.: 35–9). Masculine experiences, which are the mainstream of the modern state and its public realm, are labeled by feminists as militarist norms of honor, competition, and bargaining among independent agents. Thus, it is claimed by some feminists that modern man, by extolling the virtue of universal public realm, fails to recognize the sexual difference, another instance showing that they could not entirely understand the morality that women represent (Young 1987: 120).

Feminist theorist Iris M. Young (Ibid.: 135–6) argues that there are group-based differences between men and women, whites and blacks, able-bodied and disabled people, therefore any equal treatment puts these groups in a disadvantageous position. The generalized equal treatment usually disadvantages these groups in their opportunity to develop their particular capacities. Where there are group differences in capacities, socialization, values, and cognitive and cultural styles, only attending to such differences can enable the inclusion and participation of all groups in political and economic institutions. Therefore, instead of rights and rules in universal terms, some groups deserve to have special rights (Ibid.). For instance, the issue of special rights for pregnancy and maternity leave and the right to special treatment for nurturing mothers is highly fashionable among this group of feminists.

In respect to the issue of differences, there are mainly two approaches among feminists. In the first, it is considered that the differences to men lead to the inferiority of women and thus keeps them relatively powerless, meaning inequality and oppression for women. Therefore, some feminist authors insist that the argument surrounding differences should be left in feminist literature. A prominent feminist of that viewpoint, Shulamit Firestone (1970: 12), draws attention to the chief difference between men and women being pregnancy or a woman’s childbearing ability. She holds that women will never be entirely equal
to men until they are able to get rid of that chief difference. Likewise, Zillah R. Eisenstein (1984: 207) claims that the issue of sexual difference has been used to reject woman’s notion of freedom and equality. Man and woman are sexually different from each other, but, she claims, they are not as different as men claim they are. She maintains in her book, *Feminism and Sexual Equality*, that woman’s potentiality of childbearing constitutes the basis of the institution of motherhood, of woman’s economic dependence on man, of her secondary wage-earner status, of the system of heterosexual controls, and of restrictive notions of sexuality. Difference, as such, she asserts, constitutes the basis of a secondary position for women in every respect and therefore should immediately be left aside by women.

However, increasing numbers of feminist women are emphasizing the differentiation of women to men as the privileges of women and thus, they argue, their differences strengthen the status of women. There has been a tremendous growth of interest in developing a separate “women’s culture” among feminists in the course of the last few decades. For these feminists, the creation of artistic, literal, philosophical, and spiritual forms of self-consciousness created by women would lead to the sense of things being different, not positioning women as men’s equivalents but placing women differently to men in a plurality of meaning (Gallop and Burke 1985: 107). A prominent supporter of that view, Joan W. Scott (1990: 142) puts it very clearly: “feminists cannot give up ‘difference’; it has been our most creative analytic tool.” Another feminist author, Caroline Ramazanoğlu (1989: 186), insists that if they reject the positive aspects of womanhood then women’s liberation has much to lose. Women, she maintains, should have special claims on nurturing, co-operation, caring, creativity, and closeness to nature. Still another advocate of that view tried to show that women have been thought of as nurturing, affiliative, and co-operative, the results of which endow them with more truly human qualities than men (Eisenstein 1985: 18). Adrienne Rich (1986) took a further look at the positive side of motherhood. Arguing against Firestone, she proclaims that a feminist revolution would not liberate women from motherhood: on the contrary, it would liberate women into a truly nurturing motherhood. Briefly, Rich saw female physiology as based on motherhood as a source of strength.

Psychoanalytic feminist Carol Gilligan (1985: 276) pays attention to the knowledge and behavior that are constructed differently in men and women. Time, space, self, and other such concepts all arise out of the active interchange between the individual and the physical and social world in which she or he lives. Moving from this Kantian assertion, she develops an idea that women develop a living experience and thus a morality different to men (Ibid.: 276). The separation and autonomy in men’s lives often leads them to focus the discussion of morality around issues of justice, fairness, rules, and rights; whereas family lives lead women to focus on people’s wants, needs, interests, and applications (Ibid.: 3–23). The male reasoning is taken, by the advocate of that view, as instrumental, however women’s knowledge is taken as intuitive, emotional, engaged, and caring, and they claim that only these features of women can save humanity from the dangers of unconstrained masculinism. In short, for feminists who think in this way, much of
Women and Civil Society in Turkey

Women’s history has been concerned with private matters: the bearing and raising of children, the cooking of food, the carrying of water, the tilling of the soil, and so on. This leads one to conclude that women should, in a democratic society, gain not just rights on the principles of neutral and universal citizenship, but rather on the principle of women’s deep experience (Rowbotham 1986: 20).

Feminists have opened up a new epoch in arguments on difference by articulating postmodern concepts to the feminist thought. As is well known, postmodernism embraces a skepticism regarding general and universal claims of any sort (Di Stefano 1990: 74). Postmodernist feminists, similarly, have begun to suspect that all transcendental claims of Enlightenment reflect and reify the experience of a few persons, mostly white Western males in the name of universality. Therefore, they have tried to formulate the notions such as self, knowledge, and truth differently to those that were created by Enlightenment philosophers (Flax 1987: 625–6). They have criticized modern moral and political theories, exposing the contingent, the partial, and the historically situated character of what has passed in the mainstream for necessary, universal and historical truth. They have called into question the dominant philosophical project of seeking objectivity which transcends any situation or perspective (Fraser and Nicholson 1990: 26). Postmodern feminists developed the recognition that to live in a Western culture is to always find oneself located within the confines of domination and subordination. Domination and subordination are structured through a hierarchical duality of social construction, one of these polarities of duality being domination. The duality of male/female is a discursive formation which develops with women’s subordination (Borde 1990: 149). Therefore, postmodern feminists are seeking how it could be possible to create a different discourse or culture based on particular experiences of women and therefore one which does not bring about their subordination.

In respect to the development of an alternative discourse and culture, the feminist movement which developed in France, known as French feminism, has a special role in feminist movement. French feminism has been highlighted mainly through the studies of Julia Kristeva (1980, 1987), Luce Irigaray (1980, 1991), and Hélène Cixous (1980a, 1980b) which promise a great revolt against the institutions of patriarchy reconstructed in their language. They bring together the Freudian psychoanalytic theory and the Lacanian social production of subjectivity with a post-structural analysis of sexual or discursive production.

The term “difference” in the work of French feminists has a revolutionary meaning. It believes that the goal of a feminist enterprise is not to achieve socioeconomic equality with men, but to disrupt and subvert Western patriarchal language and thought. French feminists have made us read language as a dense web of metaphors, displacements, and silence, as the embodiment of difference and the source of meaning, as well as the source of women’s subordination (Rosenberg 1989: 101). French feminists argue that women’s oppression does not merely exist in the concrete organization of economic, political, or social structures. It is embedded, however, in the very foundation of Logos, in the linguistic and logical process through which meaning itself is produced. What we perceive as the real,
they maintain, is a manifestation of the symbolic order as has been constituted by men. Thus only by exposing this phallocentrism and by deconstructing it can we transform the real and thus subvert the subordination of women in any fundamental way (Stanton 1985: 73).

French feminists draw attention to the problems involved in women’s struggles for equality with men. They both assert that there is an irreducible difference between the masculine and the feminine and that equality can only be postulated by the reduction of one, subordinating one to the other. Therefore, they strongly emphasize a politics of difference which involves recognition of the differences between men and women (Gross 1987a: 140). For French feminists the act of speaking and of writing as a female represents a fundamental revolt in the traditional systems of not only its material, economic, social, and political manifestations, but the generative system which determines the production of meaning (Stanton 1985: 78). This is why they have equated recognition of the specificity of the female unconscious with free access to a specific discourse in the feminine mode and have defined this as the central focus of their struggle (Marks and De Courtivron 1988; Moi 1987; Duchey 1987).

Now, it is the central concern of this book to analyze what implications are observed in those arguments pertaining to the principles of civil society by reviewing the arguments on the politics of difference. It would not be misleading to say that discussing difference seems to place feminists in a pendulum, swinging between the “same as” and “different from.” The politics of “same as” brings those who seek equality along the same line as men. However, the politics of “different from” differentiates women from men and creates an area of heterogeneity and plurality enhanced by women’s experiences and values. It proposes a kind of “separation” which implies that it separates women from men and from institutions, roles, and activities which are male-defined and male-dominated and exclusively operating for male privilege. This attempt brings one to observe a kind of plurality in the public life. Seen as such, we can claim that feminists, by appealing to the notion of multiplicity, are creating an increasingly different voice and identity in civil society, which at the same time creates a challenge to the dominant unitarian power. In other words, it serves to break down the “homogeneity” of any society. Moreover, feminists, by embracing the concept of difference, serve to create a need for justice which is sensitive to variations of gender, race, class, and other sociological categories. Such a justice, clearly, will foster a conception by the public which excludes no person, no aspect of a person’s life, and no topic of discussion, and which encourages esthetic as well as discursive expression.

It would not be wrong to claim that different social groups have different needs, cultures, histories, experiences, and perception of social relations, all of which influence their interpretation of meaning and the consequences of policy proposals as well as the forum of their political reasoning. The participation of citizens in the political system over the principles of their particular interests develops a plural ground in a political system which might be considered as a functional contribution to the development of civil society. We can say that this is,
perhaps, one of the most important feminist contributions to the development of a feminine civil society.

Feminist Politics of Autonomy in the Public Life

The distinction between public and private life has attracted strong attacks by many feminists in the last decades. They have tried to indicate that the distinction traditionally made between public and private spheres brings nothing more than the oppression of women in the household. The household as the chief sphere of private life is accepted by some feminists as the extension of the political sphere of public life. What we traditionally know about the public and private is their having different modes of functioning and their being governed by different rules. The private sphere is known as the world of subjection, inequality, natural emotions, love, and partiality; whereas, the public sphere is known as the world of universalism, independence, equity, reason, rationality, and impartiality (Kymlicka 2002; Hall 1984).

However, feminists object to this distinction and argue that the concept of privacy has created a place of battery, marital rape, and women’s exploited domestic labor. Catherine A. MacKinnon (1989: 193–4), criticizing this distinction, argues that when women are segregated in private they are isolated from each other and from public resources. Therefore, she claims that the distinction between the public and the private, embraced particularly in liberal thought, is an ideological division that mystifies unity among women and assures women’s subjection within it. Carol Pateman (1987: 107), a passionate advocate of this view, raises strong criticisms of Western political philosophers who formulated civil society on the basis of the public domain belonging to male individuals. She argues that philosophers like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau conceptualized civil society in abstraction from ascriptive domestic life, and, therefore, women are forgotten in their discussions. The separation between public and private is represented as the division within the worlds of men and women. The separation in Western political thought is expressed as civil society and state, but domestic life has tended to fall outside both state and civil society.

Radical feminists raise an argument about the roots behind the division between the public and the private realm. Many radical feminists argue that it is the patriarchal system that creates such a distinction in order to oppress women. They claim that the natural order attributed to women is nothing more than a patriarchal trap giving men and women different personhoods, characteristics, and attitudes. Kate Millett (1970: 43–5) is one of the prominent radical feminists who think that the roots of women’s oppression are hidden in patriarchy’s sex/gender system. She argues that sex is political because the male-female relationship is the paradigm for all power relationships. Patriarchal ideology ensures that men control the public and private worlds and allows them the dominant or masculine roles and women the subordinate and feminine ones. It produces that ideology
through academia, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women’s subordination to men. Another feminist author, Michelle Z. Rosaldo (1974), claims that common to all known societies there is a type of separation between a domestic sphere and a public sphere. The former is associated with women, and the latter with men. Therefore, women’s power is always viewed as illegitimate, disruptive, and without authority. Pointing to the same problem, Mary O’Brien (1989: 78) attempts to indicate that patriarchy in all parts of the world has divided up men’s work and women’s work along evaluative lines with work performed in separate places. Men, she maintains, make history in public, while women are the handmaidens of nature in private; men achieve and women serve; and women’s work takes place under the supervision of men. To her, the private is not truly private; however, it is ideologically institutionalized and has a set of myths, ideologies, and practices to prepare a culture which is called patriarchy. The private, in this sense, is the locus of power for every man and the locus of patriarchy is a crude form of biological determinism (Ibid.).

Radical feminists criticize the division between the public and the private with the slogan “the personal is political.” “The personal is political” came from those radical feminists of the 1960s and 1970s who argued that since the family was at the root of women’s oppression, it must be abolished (Okin 1989: 125). Indeed, the “personal is political” has become much more than a slogan for recent feminists. As remarked by MacKinnon (1982), the person is epistemologically political, which means that philosophy, poetry, language, science, and all scholarly inquiries are political. “The personal is political” challenges the separation of public and private spheres as well as their identification with men and women. It implies an emancipationist demand for articulation of women into the public sphere. Since feminists think that the private sphere is a common ground for women’s inequality, they do not keep it out of state intervention for the safety of individual liberty, rather they politicize it. As MacKinnon (1989: 192) aptly states, the politicization of the private is doing nothing more than producing a public not isolated from difference, but consisting of the ingredients of diverse modes of living. The family, as the center of private life, is regulated politically by the state through legislation concerning marriage, sexuality, and so forth (Genovese 1991: 67). Therefore, feminists argue that traditional gender division of patriarchal society should be broken down.

In order to take a full part in the public life women should escape from the roles assigned to them as child-bearer and child-rearer. An advocate of that view, Ann Oakley (1974: 187) argues that motherhood is a myth produced within the patriarchal discourses to institutionalize the oppression of women. Girls, she claims, are not naturally positioned to be mothers; rather they are socially and culturally conditioned to be mothers. Shulamith Firestone (1970: 1), emphasizing the same issue, strongly argues that women’s liberation requires a biological revolution by which women seize control of reproduction in order to overcome the sexual class system. She claims that when there is no distinction between the productive and reproductive roles for men and women it will be possible to
overcome all of the relationships, structures, and ideas that have always divided
the human community: oppressing/oppressed, exploiting/exploited, master/slave,
and so on. She proposes a new technique of reproduction like the test-tube baby
which is only under the control of women.

Another way that radical feminists propose for women to take a place in public
life is political lesbianism. For these radicals it is lesbian sexuality that serves as a
paradigm for women to depart from men. Lesbianism for radical feminists is not a
personal choice; rather it is the symbol of patriarchal rejection. They argue that sex
is not a private matter, but it is a political matter of oppression, domination, and
power. Therefore, lesbianism, for them, is the only way for women to challenge
the ideological, political, and economic bases of male supremacy. Radical feminist
Marilyn French (1996) develops the image of community which has androgynous
values. She argues that men traditionally have the ideology of “power-over”; however, women have the concept of “pleasure with.” The “pleasure with” is the
most human way of living and this is only possible in an androgynous culture. In
short, for radical feminists, the only way in which women can get their autonomy
from men in public life and recover their true and natural femininity is to separate
from men and the patriarchal structure of society.

Another project to break the wall between domestic life and public sphere
and thus to articulate women in public life has been produced by Marxist and
socialist feminists. Beginning with Friedrich Engels (1972), Marxist feminists
have claimed that women’s oppression originated with the introduction of private
property. Private ownership of the means of production by relatively few persons,
originally all male, created a closed system whose contemporary manifestations
are imperialism and capitalism. Based on that state of affairs they claim that
capitalism itself is the cause of women’s oppression. In order for women to be
liberated, the capitalist system must be replaced by a socialist system in which
no one would be economically dependent on anyone else. Contemporary Marxist
feminist Margaret Benston (1969: 21) draws attention to the economic situations
of men and women in industrialized capitalist society. She claims that women are
primarily producers of single-values in those activities associated with the home
and the family; however, men are the producers of essential products associated
with the factory and the public. Therefore, she claims that unless a woman is freed
from her heavy domestic duties, including childcare, her entrance into public work
will not liberate her. Not only is an equal entrance to public work necessary for
women, but also the socialization of domestic labor. As long as work in the home
remains a matter of private production and is the responsibility of women, they
will never achieve their liberation (Ibid.: 21).

Socialist feminists attempt to link the radical feminists’ concept of “patriarchy”
with Marxist feminists’ concept of “production” by paying attention to the material
base of patriarchy which brings men’s control over women’s labor. That control
maintains, for socialist feminists, through excluding women from access to economically necessary productive resources and by restricting women’s sexuality
(Hartmann 1981: 18–9). Juliet Mitchell’s Woman’s Estate (1971) is one of the
prominent studies in the socialist feminist framework. She argues that women’s condition is over-determined by the structures of production, reproduction, sexuality, and the socialization of children. Women’s status and functions in all of these structures must change if she is to achieve full liberation in public life. It would not be wrong to say that both Marxist and socialist feminists, like their radical counterparts, see the liberation of women through the abolition of the private sphere and women’s full articulation in public life.

As a concluding remark we can argue that the feminist demand of articulation of women in public life over the basis of woman’s identity and values leads to the development of a plural and heterogeneous public domain. Such a public sphere rejects the idea of a unified public realm which is based on a single truth and a common interest. A plural public sphere considers diversity positively and acknowledges diverse entities in public life as functional elements of civil society. We could say that at least three interrelated implications are seen in a plural public sphere: first, it contributes to the self-organization of group members who are aware of their identity, collective interests, and group consciousness. Second, it protects the individuals or groups by appealing to their norms against the oppression of authority. Finally, it develops a veto power regarding specific policies which threaten the group interest about special issues. It would not be wrong to argue that the feminists’ demand to develop a plural public sphere which is open and sensitive to diverse identities, cultures, experiences, and demands subverts the universal public project of modern political thought which excludes particularity, desire, feeling, and those aspects of life associated with women and their bodies.

It is clearly seen that feminist politics of equality, difference, and autonomy are interrelated and complete with each other. It is on the basis of equality that a location can be opened for the diverse elements in civil society. No segment of diverse categories can find a chance to maintain its existence within civil society unless the principle of equality is institutionalized legally, politically, and economically. We could say that feminists contribute to the development of a feminine civil society firstly by their claim on equality, secondly their commitment to difference, and finally concerning their idealization of autonomy in public life. Equality opens the way for the penetration of women into public life, the difference functions to institutionalize the existence of diverse groups in the public realm, and the autonomy plays the role of staying against the dominant power on behalf of the members of the subordinated groups: women in our analysis. In modern society we clearly see that women, as a social group with particular values, norms, interests, and political discourses, have changed the meaning of civil society formulated by modern political philosophers from Hobbes to Hegel and Marx on the basis of masculinity.
This page has been left blank intentionally
References


Ak-Der, n.d.. Bülten: Beyaz Yörûk. İstanbul: Ak-Der.


Arat, Y. 1999. Political Islam in Turkey and Women’s Organizations. İstanbul: TESEV.


Arat, Y. 1999. Political Islam in Turkey and Women’s Organizations. İstanbul: TESEV.


Akşam, R., Bozan, D. and Talu, B. 2004. İslam Hatip Liseleri: Efsaneler ve Gerçekler. İstanbul: TESEV.


Göktebel, B. 2012. The intimate politics of secularism and the headscarf: The mall, the neighborhood, and the public square in İstanbul. Gender, Place and Culture, 19 (1), 120.


Güler, N. 1998b. İslam, feminism and post-modernism: Women's movements in Islamic countries. New Perspectives on Turkey, (Fall), 53-60.


Rowbotham, S. 1986. What do women want: Woman-centered values and the world as it is. Dalhousie Review (20), 49-69.


Safa, P. 1959. Türk inkilabına Bakış. İstanbul: İnkilap Kitapevi.


Tekeli, İ. 1985b. Türkiye'de feminist ideolojinin anlamlı ve stütürerine Yapılı Toplumsal Araştırmalar Dergisi, (9), 6091.
TESEV . 2006. Zorunlu Gelen ve Yüzelemek: Türkiye'de Yerinden Edilme Sonrası Vatandaşının Hâlesi. İstanbul: TESEV.
Topaloğlu, B. 2001. İslâmî Kadın İstanbul: Raşet.
Toros, E. 2007. Understanding the role of civil society as an agent for democratic consolidation: The Turkish case. Turkish Studies, 8 (3), 39591.
Tuksel, H.1990b. Şam ve feminizm. Interview by Ruhen akı Direniş ve saat: İkiden Arasında İslâmîcadın İstanbul: Metis.


