

Received / Makale Geliş Tarihi 02.12.2023  
Published / Yayınlanma Tarihi 29.02.2024  
Volume / Issue (Cilt/Sayı)-ss/pp 11(104), 310-320

Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi  
10.5281/zenodo.10731974

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Setenay Nil Doğan

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9212-6687>

Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, İstanbul / TURKEY

ROR Id: <https://ror.org/0547yzj13>

## Kadın Gazetesi (1947-1979): Continuities and Changes in the Kemalist Women's Discourses on Nation and Women<sup>1</sup>

### Kadın Gazetesi (1947-1979): Kemalist Kadınların Millet ve Kadınlar üzerine Söylemlerinde Süreklilikler ve Değişimler

#### ABSTRACT

This paper will study *Kadın Gazetesi* (1947-1979), one of the woman magazines published for the longest time in Turkey. Among the woman magazines in Turkey most of which are fashion and family magazines, *Kadın Gazetesi* has a peculiar place in terms of the centrality of politics on its agenda, its consistent perception of women as political beings and its persistent commitment to the 'woman problem.'

This study will focus on the magazine to explore the Kemalist women's discourses on nation and women, whether these discourses changed; whether these Kemalist women lost their enthusiasm toward the nationalist project. The magazine, published by the Kemalist women, was characterized by a strong cooperation with the regime, a firm commitment to the Kemalist ideals of modernization and nationalism; and an instrumental understanding of women's rights. To that extent, despite its peculiarity among the woman magazines, the Kemalist women in the magazine borrowed and sometimes mimicked the voice of the 'malestream' politicians, especially in the early decades of the magazine. Furthermore, the daughters of the Republic most often had the privilege to talk in the name of a homogenous category of 'woman' while they also constructed some 'others' most of whom were women.

**Keywords:** Women, Nation, Kemalism, Woman magazines, Turkey, Kadın Gazetesi.

#### ÖZET

Bu makale Türkiye'de en uzun süre yayınlanan kadın dergilerinden birini, *Kadın Gazetesi*'ni (1947-1979) çalışacaktır. İçeriğinde politikaya merkezi bir rol vermesi, istikrarlı bir şekilde kadınları siyasi varlıklar olarak algılaması ve 'kadın sorununa' olan ısrarlı bağlılığı nedeniyle *Kadın Gazetesi*'nin Türkiye'de moda ve aile dergilerinin çok baskın olduğu kadın dergileri içinde ayrı bir yeri vardır.

Bu çalışma, Kemalist kadınların ulus ve kadınlar üzerine söylemlerini, bu söylemlerin zaman içindeki dönüşümlerini ve milliyetçi projeye olan inançlarını kaybedip kaybetmediklerini inceleyecektir. Kemalist kadınlar tarafından yayınlanan *Kadın Gazetesi* rejimle güçlü bir işbirliği, Kemalizmin modernleşme ve milliyetçilik prensiplerine katksız bir bağlılık ve kadın sorununa araçsal bir şekilde yaklaşım gösteren bir dergidir. Bu ölçüde, Türkiye'de yayınlanan kadın dergileri içindeki özel yerine rağmen, *Kadın Gazetesi*'nde, özellikle ilk yıllarda, Kemalist kadınlar 'erkek-akım' bir sesi ödünç almış ve taklit etmişlerdir. Ayrıca dergideki Kemalist kadınlar bir yandan çoğunluğu kadınlardan oluşan bir "ötekiler" grubu inşa ederken bir yandan da homojen bir kadın kategorisi adına konuşma imtiyazına sahip olmuşlardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadınlar, Miller, Kemalizm, Kadın dergileri, Türkiye, Kadın Gazetesi.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Magazines are critical tools for the social scientists to explore the hegemonic discourses, power relations, the cultural constructions and the multiple ways agents resist them. Similarly, women's magazines have a polysemic content that "ranges from being very traditionally 'feminine' to being unspoken, emancipated and even feminist" (Hermes, 1995, p. 9). Woman magazines provide valuable hints about the parameters of the gender regime and its interactions with the political projects such as nation, nation-state, citizenship etc. and their very perception by the actors. Also, woman magazines shed light on 'herstory'. While woman magazines, in general, provide social scientists with noteworthy insights about the dynamics of the gender regime, magazines published by women may act as a gate to women's perceptions and narratives by giving

<sup>1</sup> This article is extracted from my master thesis entitled "The other(s) in the discourse of Kemalist women: Sublime womanhood creates the sublime nation", supervised by Dilek Cindoğlu at Bilkent University Institute of Social Sciences in 2002.

the social scientist the opportunity to listen to women's voice(s). These voices may give us hints to reflect on how women have constructed their identities, how they resisted and strategized in their negotiations or 'bargains' with the 'man's world', and how they have represented and perceived the 'other', the less desirable women and men.

This paper will study *Kadın Gazetesi* (1947-1979), a magazine that was published for a surprisingly long time given the short publication time of the woman magazines in Turkey. A magazine of the 'daughters of the Republic', 'women of Enlightenment' as they call themselves in the magazine will be analyzed to explore the Kemalist women's discourses on women and nation, whether these discourses changed; whether these Kemalist women lost their enthusiasm for the nationalist project which they embraced in the early years of the magazine.

The discourses of Kemalist women are significant in many respects. First, Kemalist women were intertwined with the Kemalist Republican regime. These women's lives, successes and life stories were presented by the regime as a main component of the new regime, and in a similar vein, these women closely associated themselves with the regime. Therefore, a focus on the daughters provides valuable insights about the Republican Fathers and their grand projects of modernization, nation-building, and civilization making. Second, these Kemalist women have been a major actor of the 'woman problem' in Turkey since they have become a symbol of the new regime and its revolutionary character until the 1960s, the target of the feminist critiques in the 1980s, and a group that was positioned in the 1990s *vis-à-vis* Islamist women and political parties of political Islam to protect the regime from these threats. Hence, any discussion of the 'woman question' in Turkey in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the grand political projects of nationalism would be missing without reference the daughters of the Republic.

With such a motivation, this study will discuss woman magazines in Turkey that will be followed by a profile of *Kadın Gazetesi* (1947-1979), and then focus on the Kemalist women's discourses on nation and women and the transformation of these discourses over the years.

## 2. WOMAN MAGAZINES IN TURKEY

Earliest magazines published for women appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with other magazines with general content in the Ottoman Empire. As *Takvim-i Vekayi*, the first newspaper was published in 1831, *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (1869), 'elevation of women' (Törenek, 1998, p. 26) was the first woman magazine that was openly addressed to women to be followed by other magazines such as *Vakit Yahut Mürebbe-i Muhadderat* and *Ayine* in 1875. Toska underlines that a critical examination of these earliest woman magazines and the domination of articles on education and child-rearing in those magazines display that the ultimate aim of these magazines was not communicating with women as individuals, women *per se*, but rather the mothers of the children whose education was considered urgent and necessary: these magazines were motivated by the belief that the backwardness and the problems of the empire could only be overcome by well-educated people, and hence, well-educated mothers (1994, p. 122-123). Such an instrumentalist discourse that defined women as the mothers and the creators of the future generations became a common characteristic of the woman magazines published in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and the Republican era until the feminist movement of the 1980s.

While woman magazines increased in number in the *Tanzimat* period between 1876 and 1908, like all other media, the emergence of a segment of elite women educated in the newly-established modern schools of this era led to the publication of 'woman pages' in newspapers, and even woman magazines and newspapers with female authors (Tekeli, 1983, p. 1191). Advantaged by the recent changes of modernization and Westernization in the Ottoman social life, these elite women gained a voice in these magazines to write about the problems they survived as the 'Ottoman woman' and searched for possible solutions. Hence, woman magazines and woman associations in this period formed the first sparkles of Ottoman woman movement. *Aile* (1880), *Hanımlar* (1882), *Şükufezar* (1887), *Mürüvvet* (1887), *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (1896), *Kadınlar Dünyası* (1913), *Kadınlık Hayatı* (1913), *Hanımlar Alemi* (1914), *Bilgi Yurdu Işığı* (1917), *Türk Kadını* (1918), *İnci* (1919), *Diyane* (1920) and *Süs* (1923) were among the woman magazines published in the last decades of the Empire (Çakır, 1983, 750). Toska states that these magazines dealt with not only traditional feminine topics such as education of children, family and cooking but also texts on photography, illustrations, theatre, art, literature in addition to sociological and philosophical texts (1994, p. 199).

While these magazines in the last decades of the empire had an agenda on women's rights and defined their problems with reference to a gender perspective, studies underline that with the new nation-state the emphasis on gender in the woman magazines was weakened, as a result of both some positive responses by the regime to women's demands and a new society ideal (Demirdirek, 1998, p. 79) that was imagined to be surpassing gender, class and ethnic divisions. Durakbaşı (1998, p. 37) notes a large gap between Ottoman women's movement's discourse on women's rights and Ottoman women rebelling against men through their own magazines; and the early Republican discourse on women's rights that were given from above, under male patronage and women now being designated, commissioned or invited to act in accordance with the framework provided by the Founding Fathers.

An examination of Davaz-Mardin's bibliography, a study on the woman magazines and newspapers since 1928 allows us to explore some common characters of women magazines in Turkey throughout decades. Out of the twelve woman magazines published between 1930 and 1940, four of them called themselves handiwork magazines, three defined themselves as 'family magazine' and three as fashion magazines while two magazines with an intellectual and political agenda, *Cumhuriyet Kadını* (1934) and *Okul Kızı* (1937) were short-lived publications (Davaz-Mardin, 1998). Hence, the 1930s was a period of regression for the woman magazines, and they abandoned the pre-Republican rights discourse and moved towards traditionally feminine topics such as family, fashion and handiwork. This turn was in line with the facts that the new regime considered any women's rights movement 'unnecessary' as the women's rights were claimed to be granted to women from above and the interwar period was characterized by the rise and consolidation of fascist and authoritarian regimes and ideologies, and hence, the rise of the traditional images and roles of women in many European and non-European countries. Gürboğa who studied the visual depiction of women in the popular periodicals published between 1920 and 1940 argues that the visual depiction of the 1930s was notably characterized with an expression of masculine fears about active female sexuality and its destructive powers over the moral integrity of the society and a more frequent identification of women with the female role patterns of private realm through certain women images of the modern housewife and mother (Gürboğa, 1996, p. 16). Although Gürboğa's study is focused on general magazines, the same trends are valid for woman magazines most of which were owned and published by men. In the 1930s, the magazines reminded women of their traditional 'womanly' duties as mothers, wives and young girls and as the Kemalist regime consolidated itself after 1930, the images of women were consolidated towards more feminine, domestic and traditional images.

In the 1940s, the trend towards fashion, handiwork and family in woman magazines continued despite the persistence of discourse on the 'new Turkish woman'. Seventeen woman magazines were published; twelve of these magazines defined themselves as handiwork, fashion and family magazines while two magazines were published by girls' schools (Davaz-Mardin, 1998). The remaining two magazines were *Asrın Kadını* (1944) which announced its interest in "woman, her intellectual life, business life and home life", and *Salon* (1947), a literary magazine (Davaz-Mardin, 1998, p. 55-67). The seventeenth magazine is *Kadın Gazetesi* (1947) a political magazine published for thirty years in 1125 issues.

After 1950, the politics of the multiparty era and the Democrats depended more on liberal and peripheral tendencies and that contributed to a liberalization of civil society dynamics in Turkey, and hence, the rise of a politicization of journalism (Gevgilili, 1983, p. 221). However, woman magazines did not survive such a political revival and the increasing popularization of the American type of magazines led to a further weakening of women's voices which had already been weakened (İlyasoğlu and İnel, 1984, p. 176) which led to an increase in photographs and articles on traditional feminine topics such as fashion, beauty, child-rearing, marriage, and cooking in woman magazines. Among the twenty two woman magazines published between 1950 and 1960, fifteen of them defined themselves as family, beauty and fashion magazines as two of the remaining ones were photo-story and another two were occupational magazines (Davaz-Mardin, 1998). In the 1950s, three magazines were able to differentiate themselves from the increasing hegemony of fashion and family magazines. *Demokrat Kadın* was published by the women's branch of the Democrat Party while *Gazete Magazin* (1956) defined its contents as literature, theatre, cinema and sexual life (Davaz-Mardin, 1998, 111-119). Another woman magazine, at odds with the trends in the woman magazines, was *Kadın Sesi* (1957) that defined itself as a weekly opinion paper, and its owner was a woman and it was published for nineteen years with more than thousand issues.

Sixteen woman magazines were published in the period between 1960 and 1970: three of them were family, fashion and/or handiwork magazines, three defined themselves as photo-story and two as encyclopedias for women. In the 1970s, Davaz-Mardin informs us that twenty two magazines were published (1998, p. 13). The most noteworthy among these magazines are *Milli Gazete Kadın* (1974), the

appendix of *Milli Gazete* which was published for woman and also considered to be the first Islamist woman magazine; and *Kadınların<sup>2</sup> Sesi* (Voice of Women, 1975), the first woman magazine with a leftist agenda using the slogan, “for equality, social progress and peace” (Davaz-Mardin, 1998, p. 189). In this period, while a pluralism of political currents shaped the political spectrum, a pluralism of political woman magazines was witnessed. After these early instances, leftist and Islamist woman magazines display a constant presence among the woman magazines in Turkey. Gül and Gül, in their examination of Islamist publications, states that Islamist magazines that peaked in the late 1980s and early 1990s have placed women at the center of their arguments as a symbol of their oppositions to Kemalist reforms and the Muslim woman with the headscarf as a symbol of Islamic revivalism in Turkey (2000, p. 1).

The period after the *coup d'état* of 1980 brought more pluralism to the political woman magazines as the domination of fashion and family-related topics continued in the woman magazines. First, several feminist magazines appeared as a result of the independent feminist movement of the 1980s and had their peak in the early 1990s. Second, a new type of woman magazines with political content, Kurdish woman magazines appeared in the 1990s.

### 3. KADIN GAZETESİ (1947-1979)

*Kadın Gazetesi*, ‘Woman’s Paper’ is a magazine that had 1125 issues for thirty three years. The magazine has a noteworthy status among the woman magazines in Turkey as it is the second woman magazine that was published for the longest time, the first one being Turkish Nurses Magazine (Davaz-Mardin, 1998, p.16) and also, one of the first woman magazines that was owned and edited by a woman (Davaz-Mardin, 1998, p. 19). Furthermore, it was a political woman magazine, a rarity in the world of woman magazines in Turkey.

Six women, İffet Halim Oruz, Emel Gürler, Münevver Ayaşlı, Füzuran Eksat, Nimet Selen and F. Elbi were the founders of the magazine. However, the authors frequently changed over the years except the owner and editor, İffet Halim Oruz. In my interview with him in 2002, İsmet Oruz, İffet Halim Oruz’s son informed me that the circulation of *Kadın Gazetesi* was close to 10,000 and it was restricted to the social networks of the editor and the authors (Oruz, interview, April 20, 2002). İsmet Oruz, with a little bit of reproach, told that that her mother, İffet Halim Oruz personally financed the magazine until she could not afford these expenses (Oruz, interview, April 20, 2002). As İffet Halim Oruz’s public persona and the magazine went hand in hand, the article will now have a brief look at the life story of the editor.

#### 3.1. The Editor and the Owner of *Kadın Gazetesi*: İffet Halim Oruz (1904-1993)

İffet Halim Oruz was called the author, the journalist and “the society woman, the breakthrough woman, ideal woman” (Tuncer, 1951) in an article in the magazine. Daughter of a father who worked in the economy department in the Ottoman Empire and who had been a supporter of Committee of Union and Progress and a mother whose activism in Association of Müdafai Hukuk-i Nisvan impressed her, she graduated from the Faculty of Economics at Istanbul University as one of the first graduates and started her career in journalism in 1927 in a local newspaper. After 1930, she started writing articles that defended the Kemalist revolution of women’s rights in *Ulus (Hakimiyeti Milliye)*, the main newspaper that supported the RPP, Mustafa Kemal’s party. Apart from journalism and a career in economics, she was the author of collections of poems *Füsun* (1928), *Tul Daireleri* (1931), *Kışın Bahar* (1965); a collection of speeches *Arkadaşlar* (1936); books such as *Yeni Türkiye’de Kadın* (1933), *Burla* (1933), *Türkiye’de Fiat Murakebesi* (1944) and *Atatürk Döneminde Türkiye’de Kadın Devrimi* (1986).

Her son and the articles in the magazine stated that she worked for the establishment of a branch of the Turkish Women’s Federation in Eastern Anatolia and then became the general secretary of the organization in Istanbul. She also participated in the meetings about woman rights before 1933 and she was one of the women who, in the 1930s, visited the villages in Anatolia to educate women of rural areas with the directives of Atatürk. In the multiple pieces of her biography that I have been able to collect, the phrase, “the directives of Atatürk” is emphasized more than once and the narrative on “the directives of Atatürk” plays a significant role, highlighting being ‘invited’ to the cause by the great leader, rather than following her personal desires and projects. These narratives on the ‘directives’ of the great leader aimed to provide legitimacy to her political actions. While she also worked in People’s Houses and women’s branch of the

<sup>2</sup> With the first leftist woman paper we see a pluralization of the word “women” which had been solely used as singular until the 1970s. Till the 1970s the only political group of women were Kemalist women and their parameters were defined by Kemalism and nationalism. The pluralization of the word ‘women’ signals the discovery of multiple womanhoods with different voices and experiences.

RPP, she worked in the establishment of some civil society organizations that aimed at the development of the social conditions of the women, the elderly and the children.

Though she had some activities in RPP and she had a sympathy towards the Democrat Party, in these parties, she did not become one of the woman candidates for the national elections. Disillusioned by the network party politics, she became a candidate in the national elections of 1965 in the Republican Peasants Nation Party, a small conservative party that won 14% of the votes in the national elections in 1962 (Poulton, 1997, p. 139). Alparslan Türkeş became the new leader and transformed the small conservative party into a hierarchically organized party with a militant ultra-nationalist programme and formed the basic pillars of the party's new ideology (Zürcher, 2010, p. 256) with a strong emphasis on extreme nationalism and anti-communism (Zürcher, 2010, p. 257).<sup>3</sup> The party placed Oruz in the fourth row in Ankara in 1962 and she could not win. Then, she became a candidate of the same party for the senate elections in 1966 and she was not elected. In the national elections of 1969, she became the first candidate of the Nationalist Action Party, renamed after the Republican Peasants Nation Party, in İzmir and she failed. Despite these failures, her interest in nationalist parties persisted.

### 3.2. The Aim and the Content

On March 1, 1947, *Kadın Gazetesi*, in its first issue, defined itself as a social and political woman's paper published weekly, and explained its aims to "embrace any agenda about woman and all movements of science, art and idea" that are considered to be "useful to the country and the family, and which will contribute to the development of our womanhood" ("Çıkış Amacımız," 1947, March 1). Before the statement of the aims, the magazine in a hurry emphasized the lack of necessity to talk about equality between men and women since the Republican Revolution had already provided Turkish women with a comfortable status among the women of the progressive world ("Çıkış Amacımız," 1947, March 1) and women quickly supported this policy. Hence, the magazine's first issue excluded gender equality from its agenda as it was presented as a problem that had already been solved by the Kemalist reforms. These problems related to gender were defined as the problems of the past. Such a perspective was in line with the Kemalist perception of women's rights which argued that women's movements were now redundant because women "were granted" their political and social rights from above, by the Kemalist regime (Zihnioglu, 1999). The first issue of *Kadın Gazetesi* declared that the magazine would also deal with social, economic, cultural and literary issues in addition to child care and health, elegant and cheap dressing, tasteful home decoration, healthy and cheap nutrition, flowers, animals, sports etc.

In the following issues, *Kadın Gazetesi* stepped back from the usual Kemalist argument about the unnecessary of demanding women's rights due to the success of Kemalist policies and declared that the magazine had three intertwined causes: the political cause was transforming the formal equality provided by the women's rights into substantive equality as the other cause was economic and it aimed to evaluate the compatibility of the working of woman with the national needs, whether or not her work would be harmful for the family, whether or not her work would lead her to ignore her children. The third type of causes was called social and it is stated to include a reevaluation of women in the cities as they departed from the family woman which Islamic teachings envisaged, whether or not she got the most excellent and most original qualities as she has attained the outlook and traditions of the Western woman ("Davalarımız," 1947, March 22).

In 1949, the magazine started publishing some of its pages in English to communicate with women of other countries and parallel to the pro-American tendencies in Turkey in the 1950s, women writing in *Kadın Gazetesi* attempted to communicate with American women.

Starting from 1953 till 1956, the magazine announced that it became the broadcasting medium of the Turkish Women Federation<sup>4</sup> which was reopened and declared that a woman organization was needed "not to go back in time and do suffragism" but "to be missionaries to elevate our woman and the backward Middle Eastern woman (Kadınlar Birliği, 1947, April 5)."

Though *Kadın Gazetesi* included articles and news about art, fashion, cooking, sports, education of children, novels and poems, until the mid 1960s, political topics such as the policies that concerned

<sup>3</sup> In 1969, the party was renamed and became the Nationalist Action Party. While NAP played a significant role in the political polarization between extreme right-wing and left-wing groups in the 1970s, it moved towards the center in the 1980s (Özbudun, 2000, p. 98).

<sup>4</sup> We learn from *Kadın Gazetesi* that the new Women Federation aimed, first, to protect the rights that the Turkish revolution had granted women; second, secure the cultural development of Turkish women; third, help women to understand and accept the notions of right, duty and responsibility in the political realm of democracy and fourth, prevent the moral evils in women ("Türk Kadın Birliği'nin Amacı Nedir?", 1952, June 23). For the story of the first federation and the ban on its activities in the early Republican era, see Zihnioglu (1999) and Sirman (1989).

women, representation of women in the National Assembly, the status of women in the political parties, women's social and economic conditions in other countries etc. were dominant (Yaraman, 2001). At the end of the 1970s, when it became financially harder to publish the magazine, the staff tried to make the magazine more popular through some coupons, the introduction of a new subscription system etc. As a result of these difficulties, in 1978, Aslan Babal, a young businessman who started writing in the magazine in the early 1970s became the new editor and owner of the magazine. In 1979, the publication of the magazine stopped.

#### 4. KEMALIST WOMEN ON WOMEN AND NATION

The Kemalist women writing in *Kadın Gazetesi* mainly prioritized the nation and the Kemalist Revolution. These ideological priorities formed and legitimized the backbone of their perspectives on women issues. Hence, women's rights they defended were overwhelmed by the duties and responsibilities that each Turkish woman owed to the Republic. Even the use of those rights was perceived to be one of the many duties of Turkish women towards the nation and the Republican Fathers.

The Kemalist regime, in the early republican era, signaled the modern and the revolutionary character of the new state through images of women that were central to the regime's iconography (Kandiyoti, 1997, p. 125) and enabled women to join the public sphere with new roles. However, women's emancipation from traditional and religious roles was acceptable to the extent that they fulfilled public roles and acquired public visibility for the 'national cause' which in turn implied modesty of women, rather than individualism (Göle, 1998, p. 60). *Kadın Gazetesi* inherited the same characteristics from the Kemalist regime: 'Woman problem' was portrayed as a legitimate concern for the Kemalist women in the magazine mostly because it was central to the nationalist program and the ideal nation that the Kemalist Revolution envisaged. Hence, nationalism and modernization, not feminism and individualism, became the two frameworks through which Kemalist women could defend woman rights and talk about women's politics in the magazine. On the contrary, they deliberately and carefully avoided any sign of feminism and individualism. Even the tiniest details of women's lives were perceived to be national matters of utmost importance, closely related to the well-being of the nation, national aims, interests, and prevention of national threats. Motherhood and children, the outfit of women, adornment, morality and make-up were all portrayed as significant national matters that required policy making and surveillance. Kemalist women in *Kadın Gazetesi* acted as volunteers for that surveillance and suggestions for policy making.

Nationalism in particular, and ethnic and national processes, in general, designate multiple roles for women as Yuval-Davis and Anthias lists the five major ways in which women tend to participate in these male projects of nationalism: first, as biological reproducers of members of collectivities; second, as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups; third, participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; fourth, as signifiers of ethnic/national differences; and finally, as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles (2000, p. 1480-81). The discourse of Kemalist women in *Kadın Gazetesi* included instances of all of these types of participation of women in nationalist projects.

In an agenda dominantly shaped by nationalism and Kemalism, women's rights were instrumentalized and perceived as the extension of the well-being of the nation, nation-state, rather than individual rights and liberties. Such an instrumentalization of women's rights that we see in the discourse of the Kemalist women of *Kadın Gazetesi* was a late reflection of an alliance between nationalism and feminism in the Middle East in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as Kandiyoti explains that instrumentality forming the backbone of the 'malestream' modern interest in the 'woman question' as a concern with women that parallels the search for a new family which would form the basic unit of a 'healthier' and more viable nation (1991, p. 9-10).

Inside that instrumentalist discourse of women's rights and emancipation lay the automatic association of women with motherhood. As mothers or future mothers, women were perceived to be the mechanisms to shape the next generations, and therefore, creators of the new Turkey. Any other task that led women to neglect the role of motherhood was perceived as illegitimate. Mothers would serve and protect the nation, the Kemalist Revolution and a modern, Westernized, civilized Turkey. Using the motto that sublime womanhood creates the sublime nation ("yüksek kadınlık yüksek millet yaratır") under their main title until the mid 1950s, they believed in women's crucial and undeniable roles in providing the conditions for the political, economic and social development of the nation. The motto about sublime womanhood resembles the quotation from Tevfik Fikret, a famous Turkish poet, that was quoted also by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

when a young female teacher asked him about the characteristics of the ideal Turkish woman: “Naturally declines the mankind if the woman is destitute” (Arat, 1998, p.1).

These Kemalist women in *Kadın Gazetesi* were part of the new elite, a new segment of urban professionals that was created by the new regime and characterized by a new Republican ethics and a *noblesse oblige* attitude (Zürcher, 2010, p. 182). The authors of *Kadın Gazetesi* were proudly part of that segment and the other women were the antithesis of that segment as far as they were concerned. Kemalist women were a group of professional women who was backed by the state and the Founding Fathers of the Republic perceived themselves to be the representatives of Turkish ‘woman’, used in the singular form without any reference to a plurality that originated from regional or other differences (Arat, 1997, p. 100).

Though Kemalist women in *Kadın Gazetesi* imagined a homogenous ‘ideal’ Turkish woman and always talked in the name of that ideal, they were quite creative in categorizing women. Their very sources of legitimacy which were nationalism and Kemalism led these Kemalist women to talk about the “woman problem” but also distance themselves from women, in plural, and the plurality and heterogeneity of their problems, histories, experiences and stories. To the extent that they identified themselves with the ‘malestream’ politicians and their projects, they addressed and sometimes mimicked that male voice. Through a very close identification with the ‘malestream’ politicians and their nationalist projects, they were able to locate themselves in the center as the teacher, savior, reformer etc. and the undesirable and defective ‘others’ in the margins. Hence, although their main themes dealt with women, their main alliance was not with women, the sisters but with ‘malestream’ politicians. Furthermore, making themselves the ‘norm’, they constructed some ‘others’, other women that symbolized all the calamities they were fighting as a nation: backwardness, bigotry, the Orient, ignorance, immorality, and in the coming years, leftism and political Islam. These other women were called the “disgraces of the republic”, “the sediments of the past,” and shameful scenes and dark seals that would permeate the national existence (Oruz, 1954, 31 October).

These categories of ‘other’ women were constructed as a result of their perceived deficiency in the priorities of Kemalist women which were nationalism, Kemalism and modernization: Some women were bad mothers who would harm the next generations that would form the nation; some leftist women would divide the nation; some other women were dangerous for the social institution of family which was the smallest unit of the nation; some were harmful for the national economy, discipline and morality; some were damaging the modern image of the nation by improper and premodern appearance and outfits. The great projects of the regime, namely, nationalism, Kemalism and modernization, were the axis around which Kemalist women writing in *Kadın Gazetesi* had recognized, defined, represented and categorized ‘other’ women. Despite their declarations to be the voice of women in Turkey, their voices overlapped with the voices of the ‘malestream’ ideologies of nationalism and Kemalism. As the women of enlightenment, they had the duty of detecting these harmful and defective ‘others’, “the disgraces of the republic” to educate, guide, enlighten and save them so that these other women would be the dutiful, virtuous, national, and competent mothers and raise the nation to the desired levels of contemporary civilizations.<sup>5</sup>

Hence, rather than a sisterhood among different groups of women in society, a gratitude, devotion and commitment to the Republican fathers and ideology shaped the discourse of Kemalist women in *Kadın Gazetesi*. Their main solidarity was towards the ‘malestream’ politicians and their political projects, rather than women from different classes, regions, ethnicities etc. Furthermore, the multiple inferior others that were abundantly constructed in the discourse of *Kadın Gazetesi* acted as a clause of what can be called a Republican bargain between the Kemalist women and the Republican fathers: to be exempt from the limitations of the ‘malestream’ politicians, Kemalist women writing in *Kadın Gazetesi* constantly had to prove their commitment and loyalty to the nation and Kemalist ideology, act as the obedient supporters of ‘malestream’ politics and prioritize alliances with the ‘malestream’ projects over any possibility of sisterhood and women’s solidarity. Hence, the dutiful daughters constantly collaborated with the state, ‘malestream’ political actors and carefully avoided any form of sisterhood solidarity. Tekeli elaborates on the concept of patriarchal bargains as strategies of women within a set of concrete constraints and highlights that “different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct "rules of the game" and hence, require “different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression” (Tekeli, 1988, s. 274). Distancing themselves from those other women and avoiding any feminist movement and solidarity might have acted as the condition of a Republican bargain that would optimize the life options of Kemalist women writing in *Kadın Gazetesi*.

<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed analysis of these “others” constructed by the Kemalist women in the magazine, see Doğan (2002).

During the multiparty period in which political participation of women did not increase since the harsh competition of electoral politics allowed little space for the passive and symbolic role that women had acquired in the single party period, *Kadın Gazetesi* had always been insistent on constructing women as political beings. Given the narrow scope of woman magazines in Turkey which were dominantly oriented towards traditionally feminine topics, their dedication to the significance of woman question and centrality of politics in addition to the international coverage made *Kadın Gazetesi* unique. Yet, their understanding of women's politics was strictly limited to the public realm. Throughout the years they avoided the term feminism and tried to defend women's rights with reference to national interests, Kemalism and modernization. Hence, though the magazine survived the 1960s and the 1970s, "personal is political" principle of the second wave feminism did not find a place in the discourse of the magazine. Some of the so-called private problems of women such as rape, harassment, purity and virginity that contribute to the "second-sex" status of women, as Beauvoir uses the term, had never been on their agenda as some of them such as domestic violence were not perceived as political issues that required a critique of the state, the 'malestream' politicians and their projects.

#### 4.1. Changes in Discourse

Starting their political journeys as supporters of RPP, *Kadın Gazetesi* and İffet Halim became sympathizers of DP in the 1950s and then supported a more extreme form of Turkish nationalism and employed a leitmotiv of anti-communism in the 1960s. With the *coup d'état* of 1960, the magazine embraced militarism and declared its open support for the military intervention which was defined as "a national breakthrough" in which the steel hand of the army saved democracy from the interest-based mentality. "Turkish woman" was following her heroic army (Oruz, 1960, May 28) and the magazine was inviting women to the patriotic duty of transferring "the moral presence of a golden age" to their families (Oruz, 1960, July 9). After the military ultimatum in 1971, Kemalist women in *Kadın Gazetesi* once again praised the military, "the alert protector of the country" for raising its steel hand and saying that it was enough (Oruz, 1971, May).

Throughout the thirty years that the magazine was published, the discourse of women in *Kadın Gazetesi* was characterized by a full commitment to Kemalist reforms and principles, and a belief in the political realm and 'malestream' political actors to solve the 'woman question'. However, this absolute belief seemed to be weakening after decades of their first publication. In the 1970s, the self-confident discourse of the early years was replaced by self-critique, harsh criticism of the contemporary politicians and a loss of belief in the 'womanhood cause' [*kadınlık davamız*] as they call it.

– Self-critique. In 1969, the magazine admitted that closure of the Turkish Women's Federation had not been helpful to the struggle of women's rights and blamed themselves, the Kemalists for this policy (Oruz, 1969, November). For decades, the women in the magazine always defended the Kemalists' decision to close the Federation on the grounds that the Kemalist revolution had solved the problem of women's rights and therefore solved the 'woman problem' and hence, there was no need for a women's federation. They underlined their confidence in Kemalism to solve the problem in the near future, at worst.

In the years to come, self-critique became more explicit in the magazine. After acting as the supporters of the projects of 'malestream' politics such as Kemalism, nationalism and militarism for years, in 1979, a piece in *Kadın Gazetesi* criticized women for being the leg and the arm, rather than the body: "Rather than complaining that we had eighteen woman representatives in the assembly in Atatürk's era and eight under Ecevit's rule, if we had just thought about working as the BODY rather than being the leg and the arm..." (Atabek, 1979, March). Especially the competitive and populist nature of electoral politics in the multiparty era disappointed Kemalist women and made them question their efficacy in terms of creating a boost for women's participation in politics.

– Harsh criticism. In the 1970s, women writing in *Kadın Gazetesi* openly criticized politicians and political parties for the social, economic and political conditions of women and their underrepresentation in politics, and for the misapplication of the Kemalist ideals about women. For instance, the magazine harshly criticized politicians for Civil Code for the first time: "Would we expect this from the reformist gentlemen, professors and politicians following the tracks of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk? They may launch into tirades saying that "revolutions are done, they have reached the base" as they wish; this claim melts like ice *vis-à-vis* the reality. The truth is that today woman is not still within the reach of the Declaration of Human Rights, our constitution and views of Atatürk on woman rights" (Ünen, 1972, August).

These criticisms signal that their close alliance with the regime vanished after decades. In the 1970s, they could easily criticize politicians who were not the Founding Fathers of the Republic and to that extent they

could now harshly criticize the Civil Code, one of the future targets of the feminist movement in the 1980s. To the extent that their embeddedness in the regime decreased, the potential for sisterhood increased.

– Loss of absolute belief in the continuous struggle for the cause. Although the magazine and its authors always declared their commitment to the Kemalist project on women, their belief in the success of the project of creating the “sublime nation” through “sublime womanhood” seems to be replaced by a covert exhaustion at the end of the 1970s. Standing in front of the statue of Halide Edip, one of the leading figures of the women’s movement, İffet Halim Oruz narrates her ideas about giving up the cause: “In front of me stands Halide Edip... Her face underneath her dirty eyeglasses seems pale, and there is thrash all around her. ...I want to clean the thrash. ...But the hairy and bearded hippies are there, maybe they will not let me. Her voice is in my ears “İffet Halim, I am old, from now on you will manage the cause”. I have respected her words for years. ...Can it be given up under these circumstances?” (Oruz, 1979, October)

Hence, a disillusionment and disappointment with the struggle for women’s rights emerged in the 1970s in *Kadın Gazetesi*. The reference to the hippies in the quotation insinuates a disillusionment with the youth as a result of the rise of leftist ideologies among young women in universities since Kemalist women of the magazine had always assumed that educated and enlightened women would be grateful to Kemalism for the educational opportunities it provided and hence, automatically committed to Kemalism. Instead, over the years they reproached young people, in general and young women, in particular, for their lack of interest in Kemalism. This period also witnessed the emergence of a different voice that was more rebellious and that was now able to use the “I” language in the magazine. The more they got distanced from and alienated by the populist governments, the more they found themselves as imperfect individuals with suspicions, regrets, confessions and mistakes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

*Kadın Gazetesi*, from 1947 to 1979, reflects the political events of the time and perceptions of a particular segment of the women’s movement in Turkey. It is a rich resource for better understanding the Kemalist women in Turkey, and their discourses that have been widely criticized by the feminist and Islamist women groups since the 1980s. To the extent that magazine gives insightful hints about the Kemalist construction of ‘ideal’ woman; it also portrays a wide range of the ‘other’ women who became other as a result of their incompatibility with the Kemalist projects of civilization, modernity and nation building.

Among the woman magazines in Turkey that were largely dominated by fashion and family magazines, *Kadın Gazetesi* had a peculiar place in terms of the centrality of politics on its agenda, its consistent perception of women as political beings and its persistent commitment to the ‘woman problem.’ Yet, it was their close alliance with the state ideology that enabled and facilitated such a commitment to politics. For decades, the magazine and its authors had been discursively embedded in the ‘malestream’ projects of nationalism, Kemalism and militarism. Hence, their perceptions of women politics had the same limitations with the projects that they supported. Though many great societal projects such as Kemalism, traditionalism, political Islam, socialism etc. had very different visions, aims and historical origins since the 19<sup>th</sup> century; as Kadioğlu (1998, p. 99-100) states, all of them had two common traits as far as women were concerned; first, women were always considered to be the visible symbols of these projects; and second, these projects generally located women in the family and as mothers, rather than individuals. *Kadın Gazetesi* was burdened with the same limitations of these projects.

With a strong cooperation with the regime, a firm commitment to the Kemalist ideals of modernization and nationalism; and an instrumental understanding of woman issue, these Kemalist women borrowed and sometimes mimicked the voice of the Republican Fathers, and this voice had no conflict with the ‘malestream’ politics and politicians. After decades, in the 1970s, they lost that authoritarian and self-confident voice and questioned their choices, expressed some forms of disillusionment and disappointment, and criticized the male-stream politicians. That late alienation from the realm of the ‘malestream’ politics came with a decreasing emphasis on ‘other women’ that the Kemalist women in the magazine abundantly and creatively constructed in the early years. Over the years, these multiple ‘others’, ‘other’ women were criticized, condemned and regarded as inferior in their discourse. The construction of these ‘others’ in the discourse of the Kemalist women of *Kadın Gazetesi* acted as a clause of an invisible republican bargain between Kemalist women and the Kemalist regime. They were able to talk about women, politics and women’s rights to the extent that they did not form or claim any sisterhood bond and solidarity with women from the different segments of society: They could enlighten, educate, emancipate, judge and try to “save” these ‘other women’ but they were not supposed to form sisterhood bonds and solidarity with them as equals. The bargain was dependent on the ‘malestream’ politicians’ desire “to divide and rule” the

different segments of women in society. Müftüler-Bac claims that “paradoxically, the presence of an emancipated small group of women does more harm to women in Turkey” since it creates the illusion that Turkish women are not subject to oppression as in other Islamic countries (Müftüler-Bac, 1999, p. 303). Maybe not only their existence but also the bargains through which Kemalist women were able to exist in the political realm of the Republic were enigmatic.

## REFERENCES

- Arat, Y. (1997). The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey. In Sibel Bozdoğan & Reşat Kasaba (Eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (pp. 95-112). University of Washington Press.
- Arat, Z. (1998). Introduction: Politics of Representation and Identity. In Zehra Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Women* (pp. 1-34). St.Martin’s Press.
- Atabek, F. (1979, March). Dilden gelen elden gelse. *Kadın Gazetesi*, 1120, 1.
- Çakır, S. (1983). Türkiye’de Feminizm Dünü ve Bugünü. In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Vol.13) (pp. 750-756). İletişim Yayınları.
- Çıkış amacımız. (1947, March 1). *Kadın Gazetesi*, 1, 1.
- Davalarımız. (1947, March 22). *Kadın Gazetesi*, 4, 1.
- Davaz-Mardin, A. (1998). *Kadın süreli yayınları, Hanımlar Aleminden Roza’ya bibliografya 1928-1996: (Dergiler, gazeteler, bültenler)*. Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi ve Bilgi Merkezi Vakfı ve Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı.
- Demirdirek, A. (1998). In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women’s Movement. In Zehra Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Women* (pp. 65-81). St. Martin’s Press.
- Doğan, S. N. (2002). *The other(s) in the discourse of Kemalist women: Sublime womanhood creates the sublime nation* [Unpublished master thesis]. Bilkent University.
- Durakbaşa, A. (1998). Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey. In Zehra Arat (Ed.), *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Women* (pp. 139-155). St. Martin’s Press.
- Gevgilili, A. (1983). Türkiye Basını. In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 1) (pp. 202-228). İletişim Yayınları.
- Göle, N. (1998). Islamism, feminism and post-modernism: Women’s movements in Islamic countries. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 19, 53-70.
- Gül, S. S. & Gül, H. (2000). *The question of women in Islamic revivalism in Turkey: A review of the Islamic press*. *Current Sociology*, 48(2), 1-26.
- Gürboğa, N. (1996). *Images of women: Visual depiction of women by the popular periodicals of Early Republican Turkey 1920-1940*. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Boğaziçi University.
- Hermes, J. (1995). *Reading women magazines*. Polity Press.
- İlyasoğlu, A. & İnel, D. (1984). Kadın Dergilerinin Evrimi. In *Türkiye’de Dergiler ve Ansiklopediler, 1849-1984* (pp. 163-184). Gelişim Yayınları.
- Kadioğlu, A. (1998). Cinselliğin İnkârı: Büyük Toplumsal Projelerin Nesnesi Olarak Türk Kadınları. In Ayşe Bertay-Mirzaoğlu (Ed.), *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler* (pp. 89-100). Tarih Vakfı Yayınları.
- Kadınlar Birliği. (1947, April 5). *Kadın Gazetesi*, 6, 1.
- Kandiyoti, D. (1991). End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey. In Deniz Kandiyoti (Ed.), *Women, Islam and the State* (pp. 22-48). Macmillan Press.
- Kandiyoti, D. (1997). Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity. In Sibel Bozdoğan & Reşat Kasaba (Eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (pp. 113-132). University of Washington Press.
- Müftüler-Bac, M. (1999). Turkish women’s predicament. *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 22(3), 303-315.
- Oruz, İ. H. (1954, October 31). Cumhuriyet kadını. *Kadın Gazetesi*, 385, 2

- Oruz, İ. H. (1960, July 9). Kadınlara düşen görev. *Kadın Gazetesi*, 2.
- Oruz, İ. H. (1969, November). Bir açık muhasebe. *Kadın Gazetesi*, 1010, 3.
- Oruz, İ. H. (1971, May). Annelerin dileği. *Kadın Gazetesi*, 1028, 4.
- Oruz, İ. H. (1978, October). Halide Edip Adivar anıtı karşısında. *Kadın Gazetesi*, 1116.
- Oruz, İ. H. (1986). *Atatürk döneminde Türkiye’de kadın devrimi*.
- Oruz, İ. (2002, April 20). Interview. İstanbul.
- Özbudun, E. (2000). *Contemporary Turkish politics: Challenges to democratic consolidation*. Lynne Rienner.
- Poulton, H. (1997). *Top hat, gray wolf and crescent*. New York University Press.
- Sirman, N. (1989). Feminism in Turkey: A short history. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 3(1), 1-34.
- Tekeli, Ş. (1983). “Kadın.” In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Vol.5) (pp. 1190-1204). İletişim Yayınları.
- Tekeli, Ş. (1988). *Kadınlar için: Yazılar 1977-1987*. Alan Yayıncılık.
- Toska, Z. (1994). Haremden kadın partisine giden yolda kadın dergileri gündemleri ve öncü kadınlar. *Deftir*, 21, 117-142.
- Törenek, M. (1998). Kadın dergiciliği ve Mehmet Rauf. *Toplumsal Tarih*, 51(9), 26-29.
- Türk Kadın Birliği’nin amacı nedir? (1952, June 23). *Kadın Gazetesi*, 4
- Tuncer, F. R. (1951, November 19). Türk kadın şairlerimizden: İffet Halim Oruz. *Kadın Gazetesi*, 7.
- Ünen, N. (1972, August). Revizyon böyle mi olur? *Kadın Gazetesi*, 1043, 22-23.
- Yaraman, A. (2001). Durgunluk döneminde cüretkâr talepler: Kadın Gazetesi. *Toplumsal Tarih*, Mart, 36-41.
- Yuval-Davis, N. & Anthias, F. (2000). Woman-Nation-State. In John Hutchinson & Anthony Smith (Eds.), *Nationalism* (Vol.4) (pp. 1475-1488). Routledge.
- Zihnioglu, Y. (1999). Bir Osmanlı Türk kadın hakları savunucusu: Nezihe Muhiddin. *Tarih ve Toplum*, 183, 132-139.
- Zürcher, E. (2010). *Turkey: A modern history*. I.B.Tauris.