

I.B. TAURIS

Activism and Women's NGOs in Turkey

CIVIL SOCIETY,
FEMINISM AND POLITICS

ASUMAN ÖZGÜR KEYSAN

Activism and Women's NGOs in Turkey

Activism and Women's NGOs in Turkey

Civil Society, Feminism and Politics

Asuman Özgür Keysan

I.B. TAURIS

LONDON • NEW YORK • OXFORD • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

I.B. TAURIS
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA

BLOOMSBURY, I.B. TAURIS and the Diana logo are trademarks
of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain 2019

Copyright © Asuman Özgür Keysan 2019

Asuman Özgür Keysan has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents
Act, 1988, to be identified as the Author of this work.

Cover design: Adriana Brioso
Cover image: Rally for International Women's Day on March 8, 2018 in Istanbul,
Turkey. (© Chris McGrath/Getty Images)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced
or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical,
including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval
system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc does not have any control over, or responsibility for, any
third-party websites referred to or in this book. All internet addresses given in this
book were correct at the time of going to press. The author and publisher regret any
inconvenience caused if addresses have changed or sites have ceased to exist, but can
accept no responsibility for any such changes.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 9-781-7883-1013-0
eISBN: 9-781-7867-2631-5
ePDF: 9-781-7867-3637-6

Series: Library of Modern Turkey

Typeset by Newgen KnowledgeWorks Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, India

To find out more about our authors and books visit www.bloomsbury.com
and sign up for our newsletters.

Contents

List of Tables	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
1 Civil society and women's NGOs: Feminist reactions	1
2 Civil society and NGOs: Theories, applications and feminist critique	31
3 The sociopolitical context in Turkey: Official dominant civil society discourses	65
4 Mapping civil society as a voluntaristic, autonomous and mediatory agent	101
5 Reconstructing the site of civil society: Alternative voices	117
6 Encounter with official civil society discourses: Reflection, negotiation, critique or resistance?	139
7 Women's voices in civil society: Transformatory potential?	161
Appendix: Profile of interviewees	169
Notes	173
Bibliography	185
Index	213

Tables

1.1 List of women's organizations in the sample	17
1.2 Age range and number of participants	26
3.1 Typology of official dominant civil society discourses in Turkey	66
5.1 Discourses of women's organizations	134

Acknowledgements

This book is based on research conducted for my PhD, awarded by the University of Strathclyde in 2015. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr Catherine Eschle for her invaluable guidance throughout all stages of my research. Without her guidance, ongoing support, criticism and encouragement this book would not have been possible. I am also indebted to Prof. Laura Cram, Dr Wolfgang Rudig and Dr Mark Shephard who sacrificed their valuable time for my research and gave me stimulating advice. I would like to include a special note of thanks to Prof. Nadjé Al-Ali and Dr Sebastian Dellepiane Avellaneda for their valuable comments on my research.

This research was made possible by a Scottish Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme (SORSAS). I am grateful to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for the scholarship which enabled me to undertake this research at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the women I interviewed in Turkey and thank them for trusting me, showing willingness to share their experiences with me and making my fieldwork enjoyable. Without them, this book would not have been possible.

I would like to thank the editorial team of I.B. Tauris Publishers, especially Sophie Rudland for all of her assistance and confidence in my work. Also, the feedback from anonymous reviewers from I.B. Tauris Publishers was invaluable.

My friends, Dr Emel Uzun, Dr Feyza Bhatti, Dr Rosalind Greig, Dr Kirsty Henderson, Dr Kirtsy Alexander and Dr Andrew Judge, who accompanied me during my research, deserve all my love for their support. Their feedback on my work and their friendship were invaluable. A special word of gratitude is due to Dr Gökten Doğangün, Dr Zelal Özdemir, Dr Burcu Şentürk, Dr Özge Özkoç and my colleagues from the Office of Sponsored Projects at Middle East Technical University, who supported me in this process of book-writing.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my partner, Ozan Keysan, for his encouragement, love and belief in my success. I would also like to express my gratitude to my parents for their endless love and support.

Abbreviations

AGD	Anatolian Youth Association
AKP	Justice and Development Party
AKDER	Women's Rights Organization against Discrimination
AMARGİ	AMARGİ Association
ANAP	Motherland Party
AP	Justice Party
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
BKP	Capital City Women's Platform Association
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CSO	Civil society organization
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CHP	Republican People's Party
ÇKD	Republican Women's Association
DEHAP	Democratic People's Party
DEP	Democracy Party
DİKASUM	Diyarbakır Research and Implementation Center for Women's Affairs
DİSK	The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey
DP	Democrat Party
DÖKH	Democratic Free Women's Movement
DMO	Democratic mass organization
DTP	Democratic Society Party
DYP	True Path Party
EU	European Union
FCDA	Feminist critical discourse analysis
FP	Virtue Party
HADEP	People's Democracy Party
HEP	People's Labour Party

KADEM	The Women and Democracy Association
KA-DER	Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates
KAMER	Women's Centre
KCK	Kurdish Communities Union
KESK	Confederation of Public Workers' Union
Mazlumder	Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed
MEDA	Mediterranean Economic Development Area
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
MGK	National Security Council
MHP	National Movement Party
MNP	National Order Party
NGO	Nongovernmental organizations
Özgür-Der	The Association for Free Thought and Educational Rights
PDA	Poststructuralist discourse analysis
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
RP	Welfare Party
SELİS	SELİS Women's Association
SFK	Socialist Feminist Collective
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TEMA	The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion
TESK	Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen
TİSK	Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
TOBB	The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
TSK	Turkish Armed Forces
TÜKD	Turkish Association of University Women
TÜRK-İŞ	Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions
TKB	Turkish Women's Union
UN	United Nations
US	Flying Broom
VAKAD	Van Women's Association
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

Civil society and women's NGOs: Feminist reactions

This book critically examines the debate on the relationship between civil society and feminism and aims to identify to what extent and in what ways voices of women activists contribute to the meaning(s) of civil society and/or produce alternative understandings to the dominant neoliberal and gendered view of civil society. In order to throw light on this debate, this book particularly focuses on the empirical case of ten women's organizations in Turkey and discusses how women activists from these groups approach the concept and practices of civil society and whether and how they produce alternative ways of thinking to this dominant view.

This book is a response to two current political struggles over the theory and practice of civil society. The first has to do with the contemporary dominance of a neoliberal version and its contestation. Civil society has long been an ambiguous and contested term, as is evident in the existence of diverse traditions in the civil society literature – such as liberal, Marxist, Gramscian and Habermasian. However, since the global revival of the concept in the 1980s, the meaning of the concept has become more fixed. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, civil society was perceived by both scholars and policymakers as a way of overcoming a range of problems associated with authoritarianism and the crisis of the welfare state. Policymakers, scholars and NGO activists alike have interpreted the revival of civil society as 'a return to associational life, enabling engagement with the state and fostering solidarity in the public sphere' (Chandhoke, 2005), thereby facilitating the cultivation of 'trust, choice and virtues of democracy' (Young, 2000: 155). In this context, international institutions such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB) have employed the notion of civil society as a policy tool

for promoting democracy and development, including in the Middle East. The dominant approach of international organizations rests on a Western, liberal dichotomy between state and civil society, in which civil society is identified with associational life and control over the state. In this sense, civil society is construed as crucial to the functioning of liberal democracy and democratic governance an empowering force against the authoritarian state. However, civil society is also associated by international organizations with neoliberal policies intended to shrink the developmental and welfare state, bringing with it an emphasis on the delegation of key responsibilities to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including women's NGOs, in the areas of poverty, education, health and the like, a fact that has garnered significant critique.¹

The second political struggle over civil society hinges on the gendered character of the theory and practice of civil society. Feminist thinkers and commentators locate the gendered bias of the term, particularly the liberal/neoliberal versions of civil society, in the reification of a public/private divide.² Put simply, liberals waver between two views of the public/private divide; in one view, civil society is squarely envisioned as part of a public, masculine sphere distinct from a private, feminine sphere, and in the other, it is private yet still distinguished from domestic life (Okin, 1998: 117; Squires, 2003: 132). In both views, civil society is associated with masculine traits and roles. Not only does this reveal the gendering of civil society as a concept, but it also calls attention to the historical exclusion of women from civil society and political life based on the desire to confine them to a private world. By exposing the reification of the liberal public/private dichotomy, feminist theorists highlight the interaction between civil society and both public and private spheres, and bring the family, considered as a part of the private or domestic sphere, back into political consideration (Benhabib and Cornell, 1987: 7).

The dominant neoliberal and gendered version of civil society is contested across different historical and institutional contexts in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Latin America, Southern Africa, South East Asia and the Middle East, including in Turkey. Particularly in the Middle East, where we observe many studies that criticize neoliberal civil society, there are scholars who seek to rethink civil society in the region by looking at women's position and activism. Such scholars indicate the gendered dimensions of civil society and the state, and the increasing significance of gender politics in challenging

the state in the region.³ To be sure, a number of studies have explored the history, trajectories and contemporary contexts of the women's movement, women's activism around state ideology and policies, NGOization, and the gendered dimensions of funding processes in the Middle East, including Turkey.⁴ Particularly in Turkey, feminist scholars and activists have examined the understandings of women's groups and civil society organizations (CSOs) of the effects of the EU accession process on civil society organizations, especially women's organizations. They have critically researched the impacts of the EU and other international funding on the Turkish women's/feminist movements and women's organizations.⁵ However, there is a limited research on NGO activists' articulation of civil society in the Middle East, which includes work by Abdelrahman (2004) and Pratt (2005) on the engagement of NGO activists with civil society and power in Egypt, and Kuzmanovic (2012)'s study on activists in Turkey. There has been even less attention given to women activists' articulations of civil society, with the exceptions of Doyle (2017a, 2017b), Çaha (2013) and Leyla Kuzu (2010).

This book builds upon and seeks to contribute to these critical interrogations of civil society in Turkey but takes as its starting point the question of how NGOs in general, and women's NGOs in particular, can contribute to the field of meaning around civil society, as this has not been widely discussed in the literature. As such, this book focuses on voices of women activists from ten different women's NGOs and their contributions to civil society in Turkey. Particularly, it seeks to identify how and in what ways voices of women activists in Turkey contribute to the meaning of civil society and/or produce alternative understandings to the dominant view of civil society, which is gendered and neoliberal in character. Foregrounding women's voices and their experiences helps not only to engender the concept and practices of civil society but also to document the transformative potential of civil society activism for women.

Why Turkey?

The Turkish context offers a unique window of opportunity for analysing women's voices in the promotion and institutionalization of civil society.

Although Turkey cannot be regarded independently from the global revival of civil society, and particularly not from efforts to promote and institutionalize it across the Middle East, there are three reasons why the Turkish case is distinctive.

First, the Turkish modernization process has fuelled tensions between secularism and Islam that affect both civil society and women's organizing in distinctive ways. Turkey is unique among the other Middle Eastern countries with regards to its modernization process, led by the Kemalist elites who promoted secularism and Westernization. 'Turkey is often singled out as the only Muslim majority country with a secular Constitution and a Civil Code (adopted in 1926) that breaks with the *shar'ia*' (Kandiyoti, 2011b). The aspiration to be modern through Westernization and Europeanization dates back to the Tanzimat reforms of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, which intensified with the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Republican Kemalist elites sought to disengage with the Ottoman past, which they associated with Islamic traditions, through the top-down imposition of a secular state and secularist political culture, backed by military force (Arat, 2009; Göle, 1997; Tank, 2005: 6; Toprak, 2005). Their effort was only partially successful and a dichotomy emerged between the secular modernity of elites and urban centres, and Islamist values in rural areas and among the poor. Westernization by state-imposed reforms has predominantly been perceived as a reason for the subjugation of civil society by the Kemalist secular state in Turkey (Toprak, 1996). Tensions remain today as Islamic forces seek entry into civil society and Kemalists resist that move (Doyle, 2017a, 2017b, Ketola, 2011; Seçkinelgin, 2004; Şimşek, 2004).

The dichotomy between Western and Islamist values and the Turkish Republic's modernizing project have had crucial implications for women's organizing in Turkey (Kardam, 2005: 3). To begin with, Kemalism instrumentalized the women's movement. The struggle for women's rights in Turkey began in the Tanzimat period of the Ottoman modernization, and after the 1908 revolution 'women emerged as activists, forming their own associations and expanding the volume of their publications' (Kandiyoti, 1991: 43). However, in the early years of the Turkish Republic, as Al-Ali emphasizes (2003: 217), the women's movement in Turkey was induced by 'developmental and modernist aims' in contrast to colonized countries such as

Egypt, Algeria and Palestine; it was supported as pulling away from the Islamist roots of the Ottoman Empire and bolstering the secular ideology⁶ that could justify 'the new state' (Arat, 1994: 71; see also Kardam, 2005: 39–40).⁷ Since the 1980s the women's movement has been characterized by diversification, with the rise of feminist and Kurdish oppositional voices to Kemalism, as well as a conflict between Islamic organizing and Kemalism. In Kandiyoti's words (2011b), 'A new generation of post-1980s feminists were no longer content to be the grateful daughters of the republic.' Such women questioned 'the modernist gender discourse promoted by secular state elites', reconsidering women's position within society and challenging the public/private divide (Kardam, 2005: 43, 45).⁸ But new divisions within the women's movement also emerged at this time (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 42; Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 325; Landig, 2011), most obviously around sexuality (sexual orientation and gender identity), the headscarf issue, the Kurdish issue and class. Kurdish and Islamist women criticized Kemalists for 'being ethno-centric and exclusionary of other identities' (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 47). In such ways, then, the dynamics of modernization and the tensions between secularism and Islam have played out in unique ways in Turkey and within its women's movement. What is more, it has been often framed that 'such divisions over different ideologies may prevent women's NGOs/NGOs from coordinating their efforts and may limit the effect of civil society in policy formulation' (Landig, 2011: 208), although issue-based coalitions and alliances have been formed to promote women's legal rights.

The second reason for focusing on Turkey is that, in contrast to other Middle Eastern countries, the development of civil society there was led by the EU – in ways that have had profound implications for women's organizing although this has been changing drastically in recent times. While other international institutions have had a role in the country, particularly as donors,⁹ it is the candidacy of Turkey to the EU that has been fundamental to the way civil society has developed. EU influence has been widely debated among scholars and commentators, as has the extent to which this Muslim-dominated country could embrace concepts of civil society and democracy that originated in the West (Kubicek, 2005: 362). Nonetheless, Turkey has participated in Community Programmes for some time, having been granted candidate country status at the Helsinki Summit (1999). Since then, considerable political attention has

been given to the reforms necessary to meet the political dimensions of the Copenhagen Criteria, which 'serve as a basis for the further democratization of the state-society relations' (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003: 224). 'The EU has explicitly directed its attention towards Turkish civil society as a partner/local agent with regard to bringing about social and political change and buttressing the development of a democratic policy' (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 14). More concretely, there has been since 2006 a programme of EU support allocated for the furtherance of the EU-Civil Society Dialogue in Turkey, with the specific aim of encouraging civil society engagement in the proposed accession of Turkey to EU membership. Thus Turkey has undergone an EU-led civil society development process.

The EU strongly encourages the participation of the women's movement in this process, as it makes clear in the Communication (EC, 2005: 9) that 'through close links between women's rights and equal opportunities organisations in the EU and in Turkey, the civil society dialogue will contribute to the objectives of strengthening the position and participation of women in all aspects of Turkish society'. Since 2006, EU funding has been offered to women's organizations in Turkey, which has consequently contributed to a shift in the focus of most of these organizations to projects enhancing 'civil society'. Certainly, 'gender equality, women's empowerment, gender mainstreaming and women's human rights' (Kardam, 2005: 1; see Landig, 2011) have become part of the agenda of civil society organizing, and women's organizations have become central to development programmes, taking on the provision of 'services to increase women's literacy, medical information as part of public health and population control programmes, development of women's skills and talents in order to increase their participation in the labour force, and shelters and legal consultancy to battered women' (Diner and Toktaş, 2010: 52). Such projects can be interpreted as part of the democratization process in Turkey (Gazioğlu, 2010) or criticized as precipitating the NGOization of the women's movement (Bora and Günal, 2002: 8-9; Hacivelioglu, 2009: 16-17) or it has been argued that although EU funding motivates and inspires women's NGOs, there is a lack of evaluation, monitoring and sustainability of projects (Landig, 2011: 211). Whichever interpretation is adopted, it is clear that EU-funded civil society programmes are a powerful force in reshaping women's organizing in Turkey. In parallel, women's organizations have contributed to key domestic legislative

reforms, which are aimed at ensuring Turkey fulfils the requirements of the EU accession process.¹⁰

The third reason to focus on women's organizing in Turkey has to do with the fact that the country has recently become a laboratory for a unique government-led and conservative vision of civil society, with fraught implications for women. The victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the last four general elections (2002, 2007, 2011 and 2016), through an increase in votes, has enabled the party to set the agenda for Turkish politics during the 2000s and beyond. The rise of the AKP during this period invigorated the debate of secularism versus Islam because of its conflictual relationship with the Kemalist state and military elites. Nonetheless, it did to some extent succeed in inserting conservative and neoliberal values into civil society. The AKP supported the diversification of CSOs, a civil rather than military approach, a democratic opening for the Kurdish issue and EU-initiated reforms such as revisions of the Penal Code, Civil Code, Press Law and Anti-Terror Law. As an example, the laws regarding associations and foundations implemented in 2004 and 2008 under the AKP regime 'made it easier to establish organisations and harder for the state to monitor organisational activities' though 'there are still a number of legislative concerns in relation to securing full freedom of associations' (Kuzmanovic, 2012: 10). What is more, the first AKP government was in support of holding negotiations with civil society organizations, particularly women's CSOs¹¹ (Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 326) and its gender-sensitive policies included penal reform, 'the amendment to the Law on Municipalities (2005), which obliges municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to open women's shelters, and the formation of the Parliamentary Commission for the Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men (2009)' (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011: 562), along with the 'nullification of the statement "man is the family chief" from its civic code' (Yılmaz, 2015: 157).

However, EU influence and, correspondingly, the AKP's commitment to democracy in Turkey began to lessen with the AKP's third term in office particularly beginning in 2011. Since then, the authoritarianism of the AKP has increased,¹² sparking protests from the women's movement in Turkey. Pursuing authoritarian gender policies, the AKP government has launched an ideological battle to control the female body and sexuality, promulgating several controversial laws and decrees.¹³ Simultaneously, since the 2007

elections, the AKP government has negotiated more selectively with women's organizations (Coşar and Onbaşı, 2008: 326). In such ways, the AKP's support of civil society, and particularly of the role of women's organizations within it, has been limited and ideological; it has instrumentalized CSOs to legitimize its policies and 'acted selectively, excluding class-based and gender-based organisations deemed radical and/or marginal' (Coşar and Yücesan-Özdemir, 2012: 298). AKP has 'given five prominent Islamic charities the status of "public benefit organisations" which is very difficult to get and AKP's close relationship with a large body of charitable foundations (*Vakıflar*), which enables these organizations to claim tax exemption benefits on donations given to them' (Ketola, 2011: 7). The AKP government's 'active role in shaping the direction of civil society fuels discordant relations among NGOs' (Ketola, 2011: 7). Women activists are aware that the AKP government tries to find favour with some pro-government women's organizations – which have grown in number and influence during this period – by, for instance, inviting them to policy-making meetings, while marginalizing other groups, especially those with more radical views towards the body and sexuality. More concretely, as Doyle (2017a: 11) highlights, most of the women's organizations in her study articulate that AKP policies cause 'marginalization of voices that do not ascribe to the AKP's conservative ideology' and "state friendly" Islamic women's organisations were helping to fashion a more conservative society'. These women also indicated that 'the government's attempt to co-opt civil society by creating new women's organisations' and the 'objective of these organisations was to exclude and marginalize existing organisations that challenge the AKP' (12). Even though organized women have been 'questioning and challenging the prevalent gender relations in Turkish society and politics and pushing the Turkish government to make more gender-friendly policies' (Aksoy, 2015: 151–2), many women's organizations, apart from some of the Islamist organizations, are nowadays in the situation of hindering 'regressive change' instead of promoting 'progressive change' for women's rights in Turkey (Doyle, 2017b: 251).

While apparently embracing some of the core assumptions of the Western liberal understanding of civil society in AKP's first and partially second term in office, it leans increasingly towards supporting Islamist/conservative and/or pro-government organizations and muting the dissident and critical ones.

Particularly in the post-2011 period, the Gezi Park Protests which took place in 2013 due to the rising authoritarianism of Prime Minister Erdoğan (Bilgiç and Kafkaslı 2013: 8), the contestations afterwards with the Gülen Movement¹⁴ (with which the AKP were previously in collaboration) and the trials of four AKP MPs for corruption have resulted in deepening tensions around AKP authoritarianism. What is more, the military coup attempt of 15 July 2016 has had drastic outcomes for the civil society in Turkey. Not only were the CSOs in line with the Gülen Movement closed but also the dissident voices were muted. This shows how the civil society terrain in Turkey is contested and continues to evolve, meriting close and continued research.

Defining terms: Civil Society in relation to democracy, democratization and development

Civil society is a term that has always juxtaposed to the notions of 'democracy', 'democratization' and 'development'. It is significant to elaborate on these often taken-for-granted terms in relation to civil society as they would take varying meanings. It is necessary to problematize these terms rather than use them in an uncritical way, since the main focus of this book is to identify to what extent and in what ways voices of women activists contribute to the meaning(s) of civil society through analysing whether there is any alternative vision of civil society to liberal civil society with its ideal and developmentalist approach to international organizations, states and NGOs, and how this is constructed.

Civil society is a historically variable and politically contested concept. While its neoliberal formulation may be dominant today, as disseminated through international organizations, this should not be treated as fixing the meaning of civil society once and for all, particularly in light of the many critical voices raised against the neoliberal view. In this book, the term civil society is approached as a discursive construction with the varying meanings it takes over time and space; that is, civil society is given meaning through discourses in historical and sociopolitical contexts. This book examines women activists' various articulations of civil society in terms of 'historical, social, political and cultural factors that shape the language [they] use' (Treleaven, 2004: 159). In this regard, it adopts a feminist perspective, one which is critical

of the sidelining of women's voices on the problems of civil society in Turkey and which seeks to ensure that the full diversity of women's voices is given a platform.

Democracy is a broad and contested term that has been employed closely with the concept of civil society. The concept of democracy has been used as a key term in non-Western contexts, very often particularly after the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s. What especially the international organizations, multilateral banks and donors look for in non-Western contexts is liberal democracy through democratization policies although there are various approaches to democracy.¹⁵ For these actors, 'three core components of democracy building are support for free and fair elections, state institutions and civil society' and 'channeling technical and financial support to CSOs is therefore integrally linked to these broader aims of democratization' (Ketola, 2013: 17). Herein, NGOs are seen as 'functionaries of democracy, increasing citizen participation in activities that hold the state to account' (Ketola, 2009: 2). However, what is problematic here is that they 'see their aims to constitute a neutral, value free approach, forming a template ready for use in any context' (2). The suggested democratization policies should not be taken as a top-down recipe for achieving and maintaining democracy in those geographies as if there is only one ideal way of practicing it in every context. Feminist scholars also pay attention to the point that democratization should consider the nature and ways of doing politics in the non-Western contexts by taking into account 'socially diverse sections of the population including, but not limited to, women' (Pankhurst and Pearce, 1996: 2). At this point, this book cannot consider the concepts of democracy and democratization as unproblematic terms; thus, approach these terms with caution.

The civil society concept also links with the developmentalist approach of international organizations, states and NGOs. Civil society is regarded as significant for development processes in the Global South. Various actors, that is, multilateral banks, international development agencies, governments and some international NGOs perceive poverty and inequality as a global economic problem which can be fixed by a policy agenda set through a partnership of civil society, state and the market (Howell and Pearce, 2001: 17). This approach is criticized by Howell and Pearce as 'socially responsible capitalism', aiming

to eliminate the risks that an individual market approach can create against social cohesion (17).

International donors start out with two implicit assumptions: namely, that 'democracy contributes positively toward development and that civil society is an important democratic check on the state' (Howell and Pearce, 2001: 40). The result is a system of financial assistance delivered through short-term projects to NGOs for development. In this approach, civil society is merely viewed as a 'negative liberty and protection against the state's encroachments' (40). As an alternative perspective to the developmentalist approach, grass-root movements and 'change-oriented NGOs' note 'the embedded power relationships and inequalities that make development an conflictual rather than consensual process' (17). Within the critical group, there is a strong transnational feminist movement, especially from the feminists of the Global South, against the developmentalist approach, who catch our attention to the lack of a gender perspective and so the necessity of the analysis of gendered implications of development processes (Rai, 2012). In other words, feminist views have been effective in challenging mainstream development theory and practices and they have made development actors pay attention to gender issues while formulating policies, even though they have 'been partial and uneven' (Craig, 2007: 121–2).

Third World scholars 'generally agreed on the need to focus on the poor, especially poor women; on the importance of global economic inequalities; and on the need to ground solutions to women's problems in the realities and experiences of women in the South' (Connely et al., 2000). In order to respond to this demand, new organizations were established for activism and research in the South, namely, the Association of African Women for Research and Development, the Gender and Development Unit of the Asian and Pacific Development Center and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), which played a key role in these debates (Connely et al., 2000). Transnational arena has also been a great place of opportunity for these organizations and feminist activists, especially the United Nations World Conferences have made a great contribution to feminists in terms of expanding their area of activities in cooperation with other feminists around the world as well as getting aware of the importance of 'transnational resources and networks for feminism' (Ferree and Tripp, 2006: ix). In sum, particularly

with the establishment of new NGOs, platforms and transnational networks, feminists get an opportunity to voice their concerns and to critique the developmentalist approach of civil society and NGOs.

Researching women in civil society: Methodology, method and sampling

Feminist critical discourse analytical approach and its application

In order to analyse the civil society discourses of women activists from various groups in Turkey and to uncover their gendered dimensions, this book adopts a methodological framework drawn from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), informed by Fairclough (1992, 1995) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), and developed in its feminist form by Lazar (2005, 2007). CDA is generally about exploring links between language and social practices and 'the role of discourse in social and cultural critique' (Wood and Kroger, 2000: 205).

The key focus of CDA is to show the relationship between language and power. Power is a key concept in CDA for analysing how and why the dominant discourse is reproduced and/or resisted. It often sees texts as 'sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance' as well as challenging and subverting power (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 10; see also Fairclough, 2003). Although in CDA power is understood as structural and hierarchical, chiming with Marxist views, some CDA approaches, such as Fairclough's (1992; 2001: 233), argue that Foucault's post-structuralist approach to discourse is another useful theoretical reference point. There are, therefore, overlaps between CDA and post-structuralist discourse analysis. In the Foucauldian view, power is conceived as 'a force which creates subjects and agents – that is, as a productive force – rather than as a property possessed by individuals, which they exert over others' (Jorgensen and Philips, 2002: 63). In Foucault's words, 'power needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression' (Foucault, 1984: 61). This approach to power claims that it is dangerous to see power as essentially unidirectional since, among other things, it can mean