Turkey's Modern Paradoxes
Identity Politics, Women's Agency, and Universal Rights

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The Turkish Republic, established in 1923, has experienced in the course of its history increased political pluralism, resulting in a diversification of images available for women, expanding space for autonomous individual initiative and for feminist organizational development. Parallel to this, divisions in formal politics along secularist, Islamist, and ethnic national-ist lines have encapsulated a women's agenda within their domain, thus potentially undermining the capacity for an autonomous feminist agenda. However, the growing aspirations in the country for individual rights and liberties, increased engagement of women's organizations with universal rights regimes, and the national consensus over European Union (EU) membership offer new opportunities for reinterpreting the parameters of national unity. Such reinterpretation may serve to transcend the domestic rivalries that arise in the alternative masculine political discourses. Para-doxically, women's status, which is at the center of current controversies, is perhaps the main point at which the "patriarchal knot" and thus the ensu-ing political tensions may be unraveled.

In this chapter, I address this paradox by looking at the competing forces of identity politics, gender mobilizations, and transnational politi-cal development. I suggest that the case of Turkey is particularly impor-tant because it incorporates Islamic and secular, modern and traditional, and democratic but authoritarian tendencies that shape the status of women around the world. Furthermore, it illustrates how women's agency can transcend domestic rivalries as a result of increased engagement in universal rights regimes.

Global Trends in Identity Politics

The trends observed in Turkey in identity politics and the representation of women in the public sphere correspond to global shifts in values towards the recognition of sociocultural pluralism. Since the early 1970s it has become evident that a diversified and plural competition for power gradually replaced the ideologically polarized world order between the East and the West that marked much of the twentieth century. This trend became particularly pronounced with the breakup of the Soviet bloc, which brought to the fore micronational and ethnic interests in redrawing of boundaries and conflict among groups within and between countries. Consequently, identity politics became central to the competition over power at national as well as international levels.

These developments revealed the fact that the modernization project, which most assumed would establish new contractual relationships free from the binding ties of the past, the family, tribe, or religion (Migdal 1997: 254), could not be realized. Instead, modernization became globalized, carrying the contradictions of national capitalisms to a transnational level.[1] While this resulted in deterritorialization of national borders for the flow of capital, new borders and new marginalities emerged for labor. The new tension between labor and capital has invigorated particularistic modes of identity and solidarity. The relations between the state, the community, and the individual are reconstituted around the communal group rather than the state as the focal point of loyalty, the provider of welfare, and the administrator of justice. While cultural fragmentation increasingly reinforces loyalties below and beyond the level of the national state, at the same time supranational institutions and transnational networks evoke other loyalties as they emerge as agents of change in the transformation from the national to the global market and link the local with the global.[2] Within this context, as the loyalty of individuals shifts to centers of power below and above the national state, the monopoly of the state over the representation of its citizens begins to erode, creating alternative norms and, at times, parallel normative systems that traditionally did not exist.

While transnational movements of the past two decades, such as environmentalism and feminism, offer the possibility for a global identity, the opportunity for inclusive membership in the transnational community for the masses of the world is jeopardized by several factors: (1) growing economic inequalities across the globe between nations, classes, ethnic groups, women, and men; (2) creation of new social marginalities and divisions among the working classes of the world, who are separated from one another in terms of language, culture, and religion; and (3) reconstitution of antagonisms tied to historical struggles in the form of a global conflict across imagined civilizations. Hence, globalization has proved to encompass equally strong tendencies toward standardization as well as fragmentation—and toward universalism as well as particularism—in restructuring the economic and political order.

Implications for Gender Equality

These trends have implications and give rise to tendencies that are contradictory for the identity formation of women and men. On the one hand, diversification implies greater options and autonomous space for women, and the weakened role of the state in determining identity allows for the expression of alternative lifestyles. On the other hand, politicization along ethnic/religious specificities poses a threat as women's public representation may be monopolized by traditional centers of power that claim legitimacy on the grounds of culture, ethnicity, and religion, thus overriding individual rights. Such spheres of power, whether in the North or in the South, are almost invariably biased against women. Women's identity carries the symbols of collective identity, such that the assertion of group boundaries necessarily suppresses women's individuality. Especially after September 11, the assertions of cultural particularism have deepened global antagonisms, "legitimizing" the power of conservative or even reactionary political actors, whether within or outside of the state apparatus. The global gender equality agenda and the capacity for women's collective action are adversely affected as a result (Ertürk 2004a).[3]

Paradoxically, parallel to these trends, there has also been a convergence over the value of universal human rights. This has been particularly marked in the area of the advancement of women. The UN-sponsored conferences of the 1990s—in particular, Vienna 1993, Cairo 1994, Beijing 1995, and Copenhagen 1980—placed gender equality and women's human rights on the public agenda across the globe. Moreover, emerging transnational feminist networks have been instrumental in simultaneously localizing global gender politics and globalizing local struggles. This creates a new *universalism* from below.

Conflicting demands emanating from group interests and interests of women as individuals continue to compete in the formation of women's

identity. This issue has been central to debates on women's human rights. While some theorists have pointed to the incompatibility between women's rights and cultural diversity (Okin 1999), others have argued for the possibility of reconciliation (Kymlicka 1999). Still others, employing a dialectical approach, look at the contradictions that arise within the intersectionality of culture, material conditions, and relations of power that often underlie cultural justifications for women's subordination. As an advocate of the third approach, I aim to identify the sites where the struggle for change can be possible. From this perspective, women's liberation is better understood as a political problem than a cultural one (Ertürk 1991a, 2004a; Tripp 2002).

The critical question, then, is this: Given the global trend toward fragmentation along cultural lines, can universal human rights regimes help transcend paradoxical identity formations that subordinate women to a patriarchal gender order of competing masculinities operating locally, nationally, and internationally? Tripp (2002), in her study on Uganda, argues that universal norms reflect problems and solutions ingrained in the commonality of humanity. This conviction provides the underpinning for the global gender equality agenda, calling for human rights of women, equality between women and men, and commitment to change among women, linking them across discourses, cultural groups, classes, and nationalities. In what is to follow, this chapter provides an analysis of these trends in the case of Turkey, further exploring how local and global linkages are established in women's quest for transformative change.

Women's Identity Formation in Turkey

In analyzing women's identity formations in Turkey, my primary focus is on the politics of public representation of women within diverse discourses, resulting in the diversification of "legitimate" images available to them as the society moves from modernization to globalization. I argue that competing masculinities have dominated the political competition over identity politics in Turkey, representing alternative patriarchal conceptions of women's place in society, whether the ideological frame of reference is based on secular, nationalist, Islamist, or other principles.

While I identify similarities in the gender contract inherent in these alternative discourses, I also argue that the diversification of political discourse is accompanied by new contradictions that produce neutral zones—that is, ones undefined by the dominant competing paradigms— and rupture the traditional patriarchal order, resulting in greater space for women's autonomous movement. However, this is not an unproblematic process. Women's public representation is a convenient site where contending political groups negotiate their terms for an alternative societal project vis-à-vis one another. Today, while middle-class, educated women of all orientations enjoy more autonomous space, the secularist/Islamist polarization in formal politics sustains the contours of patriarchal dominance.

To establish the basis of these contradictory political forces shaping Turkish gender identities, I start with a discussion of the continuities and discontinuities in the transition from the Ottoman multinational Islamic world empire to the secular national state of the Turkish Republic. My attempt is neither to critique the Turkish modernization project nor to analyze the various forms of resistance and opposition to this project. Rather, at the risk of being categorical, I try to capture the specific discourse(s) defining women in successive time periods where men's competition over political power has been the defining characteristic.

My argument is that the political contest has been over the definition of the "modern" space. Therefore, in essence, all competing gender discourses are a by-product of the modernization project. Each political discourse, while reconfiguring and expanding modern space to include new symbols of representation, at the same time has generated its peripheral space of marginalities and excluded certain social groups. However, the latent consequence of this competition has been the broadening of space for autonomous individual action beyond what is intended by the various political discourses. The feminist movement and the liberalization of the economy in the 1980s have been both a consequence of and an instrument in the creation of an autonomous individual with a quest for an identity beyond what is prescribed by the competing discourses.

The impact of the global political processes on these developments cannot be overlooked. Most recently, Turkey's accession bid to the EU has complemented and reinforced the opening of new venues for individual liberties, particularly for women. Diverse women's groups, despite their mutual suspicion and seemingly irreconcilable differences, are joining to use both the regional mechanisms of the EU and the global ones of the UN in pushing their agenda forward.

Continuities and Discontinuities in State Formation

Turkey is located at the crossroads of two continents and many civilizations. It emerged as a modern secular national state by radically breaking from the multination Islamic Ottoman Empire and adopting a Western model of development. Ironically, a war for independence fought against Western powers after World War I made it possible for Turkey to diverge from its historical heritage and converge with the West. This process of transition carried with it elements of continuity and discontinuity, unity and diversity, tradition and modernity, which today still form the basis of political competition and identity politics.[4]

The elements of continuity from the Ottoman to the Republican era are ingrained in what has been referred to as "corporate identity" (Lewis 1961), which incorporated both religion and political power within state authority and historically facilitated the sustenance of a centralized political order. Keyder argues that "the historical genesis of the state tradition in Turkey determined the choices made by modernizers in their attempt to delimit the scope of modernity, thus undermining their avowed goal of Westernization" (1997: 39). Within this context, the collectivist community rather than the individual constituted the building block of society, thus suppressing any tendency toward heterogeneity in public discourse. This political culture, sustained through religion, state tradition, and economic order, is rooted in public consciousness, social convention, and the individual identities of men and women alike (Ertürk 1991a). These constitute the dimensions of continuity in the Turkish Republic, which assumed a centralized, authoritarian, statist character at its inception.

The process of modernization had already started in the late eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire. The *Tanzimat* (reorganization) reforms mark the beginnings of a shift from a theocratic sultanate toward a modern state. However, modernization became more far-reaching with the creation of the republic. The new national state entailed a restructuring of the relationship between state, community, and individual, by subordinating religion to state authority and adopting legal and institutional measures that would transform the individual into a citizen, loyal and responsible to the state rather than to the communal groups. At this juncture, the modernization project of the republic diverged from its past Ottoman counterpart, and a paradoxical tension between the state and civil society had emerged. Yavuz (2000) argues that, while Islam was used in the process of nation-building to unify diverse ethnolinguistic groups,

at the same time, it was excluded from the representation of identity under a state-monitored public sphere. A major dilemma is created as an absolutist state is built on the corporate character of the populace rather than on individual citizens, an essential element for nation-building.

"The Woman Question"

The "woman question" formed one of the major sites where this transformation was both initiated and challenged. Analysts of women's emancipation in Turkey generally agree that the "woman question" as a political agenda dates back to the Ottoman modernization (*Tanzimat*), starting in 1839 (Kandiyoti 1991a). The modernizing elites perceived women's advancement to be part and parcel of Turkey's overall modernization. The founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, emphasized that the road to progress must include both sexes working together. In this regard, he took an uncompromising stand on the place accorded to women in official and popular conceptions of Islam. Thus, equality between women and men was given constitutional and statutory recognition. A number of reforms were undertaken, most significantly, the abolition of the caliphate and passage of the Unification of Education Law in 1924; the adoption of the Swiss-inspired Civil Code in 1926; and the extension of the right of women to vote and be elected in local elections in 1930 and in national elections in 1934.

Integrative Institutions

Lacking a significant bourgeois class around which to develop integrative market institutions, the modernizers relied basically on three institutions in their effort to create national integration: secular education, the nuclear family, and the military.[5] Education would transform subjects into citizens; the nuclear family would liberate the individual from traditional extended kinship ties; and the military, with its well-organized infrastructure, would disseminate and guard the goals and principles of the Republic throughout the country.

Secular Education

Education is often attributed a transformative capacity. According to Caldwell, "Schools destroy the corporate identity of the family, especially for those members previously most submissive and most wholly contained by the family: children and women" (quoted in Moghadam 1993: 125). Education was perceived to be the cornerstone of the republican reforms, through which modernization and the creation of a citizenry were to be achieved.[6] The Unification of Education Law of 1924, based on the principle of equal opportunity and free education for all, made the five-year primary school education free and compulsory for both sexes. Starting in 1924 with primary schools, coeducation was introduced to higher levels of education. In the process, although new schools for girls were opened, girls' education lagged behind. Despite the considerable progress achieved to date in universal compulsory education, which was increased to eight years in 1997, regional and gender inequalities in literacy, access to schooling, enrollment rates, and educational attainment continue to characterize the educational system (Abadan-Unat 1991; Ertürk and Dayıoğlu 2004).

Thus, the role of education in nation-building was constrained by gender inequality and unequal access to schooling. Due to the former, many girls and women were excluded from the process of becoming citizens in their own right. However, it was through the principle of education for all that the cadres of an urban middle-class society were formed and the participation of many women in public life as professionals was possible.

The Nuclear Family

Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), the theoretician of Turkish nationalism, urged the proliferation of the nuclear monogamous family. This, he believed, represented the original Turkish family prior to Islam and is the means for women to reclaim their value and reestablish a balance of power (Fleming 1998: 137). The Civil Code, adopted in 1926, aimed at creating modern nuclear households and thus represents a paradoxical encroachment of modern state authority on communal and traditional forms of patriarchal power. The law outlawed polygamy and gave women equal rights to inheritance, divorce, and child custody, but the patriarchal nature of the family was preserved as households were deemed male-headed and defined patrilocally.

As Moghadam argues, "The relationship between the family and the state illustrates the fine line between the public and private spheres" (1993: 103). Modernized patriarchy represented state feminism in the private sphere (Tekeli 1986). Within the reconfiguration of paternity, masculinity was reconstructed in line with the new contours of citizenship. "The modern father had a special link to his daughters, who were valued, educated, and nurtured—men gave social birth to the new woman of the republic.... Atatürk's choice of daughters as his adopted children[,] in a society where male child preference was the uncontested norm, was also heavy with symbolic significance" (Kandiyoti 1997: 123).

The nuclear family, where modern fathers were to raise modern daughters, could not be universally realized, especially because of the resistance of traditional power blocs that reproduced themselves by exercising control over women through increased sex segregation, veiling, and paternal cousin marriages. A degree of autonomy for the traditional elites was tolerated by the state, especially with regard to the private sphere. In fact, the degree to which the Civil Code could influence the areas of social practice outside direct state control is an indicator of the balance of power between the state and local communities. In this regard, the modern republican institutions remained remote for some segments of the population. Moreover, the inability of the system to provide people access to formal means of social security and sources of livelihood left the masses with little or no alternative to kinship and traditional networks for their survival.[7]

The Military

Among the three institutions, the military was by far the primary modernizing agent, since its hierarchical, authoritarian, and highly developed organizational structure allowed it to penetrate the periphery. Universal conscription for men allowed the military, although in an authoritarian manner, to connect directly with every household. Through military service, men became acquainted with the state apparatus and their citizenship responsibilities. Until the early 1980s, when alternative practices were introduced, military service was regarded as a rite of passage into "real" manhood, after which, it was said, a boy became eligible for marriage. The military, with its universal conscription and role as the guardian of the Republic, revealed itself as the face of the "father state" across the country, generating both loyalty and dissent from the people. Ironically, it can be argued that the authoritarian "father" built a sense of

"egalitarianism" or guardianship into the social consciousness, particularly of men.[8]

Given that the military was the primary vehicle through which citizenship expanded to the periphery, women, particularly in rural areas, remained marginal citizens, at best experiencing state membership indirectly via men.[9] Therefore, the female consciousness with regard to the military is considerably different and less problematic. Whereas women of the secularist urban classes may share men's positive inclination to the military as the safeguard of the modern secular system, women of the periphery are likely to be distant, even hostile, toward the military.

In short, all three modernizing institutions shared a gender bias as the modern secular reforms of the state were mediated mainly through men. Women's realities and engagement with modernity were established differently and depended on their patriarchal setting. This bifurcation put women at the center of competition over identity politics, since women's autonomous engagement in the modernization project could not be assumed to the same degree.

Competing Paradigms in Women's Identity Politics

State hegemony over identity politics continued until the 1960s. After this point, uneven development, exodus from rural to urban areas, and emergent urban marginalities carrying the seeds of opposition rapidly unfolded into an irreversible pluralism. Despite three military interventions (1960, 1971, and 1980) to protect the integrity of the regime, public opposition to the very foundation of the system heightened significantly by the 1980s. This posed a challenge to Turkey's identity politics, constructed on the basis of secular and unitarian principles excluding religious and ethnic distinctions. While the "woman question" was central to the national identity, women's role was defined in terms of their service to the state-building process rather than recognizing their autonomous personhood. Women's identity thus remained a site for political competition throughout recent history.

I distinguish four distinct periods embodying new and competing paradigms for public representation of women: (1) the 1920s to 1960s—hegemony of the nationalist/modernist paradigm; (2) the 1960s and 1970s—the emergence of a leftist or socialist paradigm; (3) 1980s to mid-1990s—diversification of discourses along religious and ethnic lines, on the one side, and the feminist movement, on the other; this was also a period of economic liberalism that favored market-oriented individual liberties; (4) mid-1995 to the present—engagement of the competing actors, including women, in universal human rights regimes and transnational networks.

The Nationalist/Modernist Paradigm

Although this period contains contradictory elements in terms of political discourse—mainly resistance movements with ethnic and religious underpinnings,[10] and the transition to a multiparty system in 1946—no significant shifts in the modernist paradigm can be said to exist from the point of view of the politics of women's status and identity.

The image of women as the markers of the modern nation was defined with reference to an idealized, original culture of the Turks before they accepted Islam. As Durakbaşa (1998) observed, "Gender equality was presented as part of national identity; in fact the equality of the sexes in the original nomadic culture of the Turks was the basic theme in the first generation of Kemalist women" (141). Afet Inan, a historian and Atatürk's adopted daughter, argues that Turkish women lost status with the transition to Islam in her book *Emancipation of Turkish Women*. Reference to the ancient Turkish values legitimized not only the active role envisaged for women by the state in national development but also a break with Islamic law and practice. The modernizing elites also relied on the legitimization won by victory in the war for national independence.

The new modern Turkish women were perceived as an integral part of the public landscape. As educated professionals they would assume their citizenship duties in serving the state, while within the context of the nuclear family as homemakers they would sustain sexual modesty and their reproductive responsibilities. These contradictory expectations set the standards by which women's self-worth and value in society were to be measured. The challenge for the newly created urban elite women was to distinguish themselves both from the traditional backward Turkish women through their professionalism and from Western women through their assumed sexual modesty. Indeed, "The traditional values of virginity before marriage, fidelity of the wife, and a particular public comportment and dress—was carried over with an even heavier emotional load to the new generations of Kemalist women and became the basic theme of the 'new morality' for the Kemalist elite" (Durakbaşa 1998: 148). Conse-

quently, under the emerging new masculinity, the modern father—with the backing of the modern state—could give his daughter the right to participate in public life confident in her self-monitored sexual purity and moral conduct—a duty first-generation Republican women unquestionably assumed. *Erkek gibi kadın* (manlike woman) came to denote the virtue and enlightenment with which women paid back the privilege bestowed upon them. Thus, the integration of women into the public domain was accomplished without endangering the crucial aspects of patriarchal gender relations.[11]

Many success stories of women in the professions, in politics, and even in international beauty pageants mark the early decades of the Republic. These achievements testified that the "women question" in Turkey was resolved, leaving only the task of spreading modernization across the country to the masses, eliminating the rural/urban and traditional/modern differences (Ertürk 1991b). Kandiyoti notes, "The discourse on tradition and modernity acquired a new dimension, and the civilizing gaze turned inward. 'Tradition' was no longer used to designate Ottoman mores versus the West, but those of the urban elite versus villagers and tribesmen" (1991b: 312).

Expansion of modernity to the periphery, however, was constrained by the uneven penetration of capital to the periphery. By the 1950s the market integration of the agricultural sector had accelerated, thus uprooting labor from land. Rural to urban and international labor migration offered new opportunities for rural people, but the generation of urban jobs lagged behind the increasing number of people migrating to the cities, which resulted in the creation of urban ghettos. Here the seeds of opposition were sown, but for much of this period the authoritarian civil and military bureaucracy maintained a monopoly over political power.

The Marxist/Socialist Paradigm

The emergence of the Marxist/socialist paradigm corresponds to a period that started and ended with military interventions (1960 and 1980, respectively), with another in between (1971). This is an era in which "the state's ability to maintain a monolithic ideology and monopoly over political mobilization was seriously shaken and eclipsed by the emergence of new and ideologically distinct opposition groups" (Z. Arat 1998: 17). The Marxist/socialist paradigm, in its varying forms, expressed the mounting discontent experienced by these groups. As a result, during the 1960s and

1970s, the focus of political discourse shifted from building national institutions onto critiquing economic inequalities and redistributive processes. The Turkish left represented an alternative norm of masculinity vis-à-vis the modernizing elites. Similar to the nationalist paradigm, its intellectual frame of reference emanated from the Western tradition, albeit an alternative one. The ideology of third worldism, class cleavages, and student activism also provided a powerful international frame of reference to the aspirations promoted by the leftist groups. However, the main impetus was the 1961 constitution, which was quite progressive in terms of individual rights, welfare, and social obligations of the state. Vibrant debates around the socioeconomic structure of the country culminated in a rich literature. Political mobilization around economic and social justice also attracted much enthusiasm, particularly from the marginalized new urban dwellers and university students. The ethnic and religious cleavages, increasingly more conspicuous, were articulated in the rhetoric of both the left and the right.[12]

Within the left paradigm, women's emancipation was perceived as a dimension of the struggle against backwardness and feudal formations. Female university students were extensively mobilized and recruited into left organizations and were encouraged by male "comrades" to take part in revolutionary activism, which took violent forms in the 1970s. However, like the modern/nationalist women, the revolutionary women also had to submit to a new form of patriarchal domination. In her analysis of the gender politics of the Turkish left, Fatmagül Berktay (1991) argues that, since left ideologues perceived women as potentially corruptible by bourgeois values, they claimed jurisdiction over women's dress and behavior. A desexualized image of women was constructed by the left, symbolized through reference to female comrades as *bacı*, a provincial term that means "sister." The reliance on the "folksy" term was not only a way to link the left to the masses, but also a means of guarding against women's potential for dissent while countering the popular perceptions that communists are sexually promiscuous.

During this period women's issues were also ignored, and the leftist women functioned under the strict scrutiny of their male counterparts. However, these women lacked the support the nationalist women had been provided by the modern father and the modern state. The opposition against the establishment, which the women shared with their male counterparts within the left movement, distanced and placed them at odds with the institutions of the state, particularly the three integrative institu-

tions. Yet participation in the left movement exposed these women to a new political reality involving conflict, opposition, and activism, clearly distinguishing them from the compliantly modern bourgeois women. Thus, despite the disillusionments and the cost of social upheaval, experience, and the contradictions of the left, political discourse in Turkey laid the ground for individual and feminist consciousness and women's issues to emerge in their own right under feminist leadership.

The 1980s: Fragmentation and Diversification of Identities

The decade of the 1980s is perhaps best described by Tekeli (1991: 7) as one in which a "civil society" was emerging out of divergent groups of conflicting interests all of which nonetheless formed a common bloc in demanding democratic guarantees from the state. This awakening from below occurred at a time when the heavy hand of the military was trying to systematically depoliticize the country. After the third military intervention in 1980, which had disproportionately suppressed political ideas and activism on the left, among labor unions and universities, a cautious but resolute defiance epitomized the mood. There was discontent with the repressive and antidemocratic nature of the 1982 constitution and the other measures imposed by the military.

In 1983, Turkey returned to civilian rule. Although the transition to "democracy" was carefully orchestrated by the military, the party of their choice lost the elections. Instead, Turgut Özal led the newly established Motherland Party (ANAP) to power. ANAP and its charismatic but controversial leader took office with an ambitious privatization and liberalization program, in line with what is often referred to as Reaganism and Thatcherism. The Özal period represents contradictory but striking elements, demystifying taboos but perhaps also leaving a vacuum in public and private life. Combining religious and conservative values with liberal and unconventional modes of behavior in his personal and political life, Özal injected a feeling, however false, of freedom in the people. A new entrepreneurial culture emerged; business administration, marketing, and economics became popular fields of study among university students. Özal's policies aimed not only to transform the urban middle-class way of life and support big business in the metropolises but also to strengthen the religiously oriented provincial small capital holders. He wanted to "revive the market by bringing Muslim capitalists, businessmen and small traders

to compete with secular bourgeoisie, with their more enduring ties with Western-centered capitalism" (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 224).

By encouraging individual and entrepreneurial initiatives and launching deregulation programs, Özal's policies in many ways significantly eroded "statism" and unleashed competition within capital itself. Furthermore, unlike in the previous years, ANAP policy offered a degree of individualization of public space, allowing for divergent demands to be voiced.[13] According to Zehra Arat, the restrictions imposed by the military "allowed the previously circumvented issues and subsumed groups to find an opportunity to surface and organize around new causes or old ones rephrased in different political language" (2003: 10). The ANAP economic programs within a matter of four years proved to be unsustainable, and on the political front, ANAP fell short of fulfilling the expectations it gave rise to with regard to democratization. However, Özal's politics ruptured the secular and unitarian principles of the Republic, fostering not only economic competition but also public articulation of religious and ethnic aspirations.

Three main groups particularly stand out with their alternative claims for political space in the 1980s: Islamists, Kurdish nationalists, and feminists. The first two, while projecting alternative images for women, also significantly contested the secular and unitarian foundation of the Republic. Islamist political groups symbolize the claims for justice that they believed were compromised by secularism, and the Kurdish nationalists' clamored for recognition of an ethnic identity that they believed was repressed by the unitarian structure of the state. Both discourses represent alternative masculine ideologies competing for power and directly challenging the existing state formation. Though defined differently in each movement, women are similarly mobilized within the ranks of both to serve the wider cause. This creates two new dichotomies in women's public representation: Islamist versus secular and Kurdish versus Turkish women. The boundary of women's identity is still carefully guarded by masculine norms in both Islamist and the Kurdish discourses, as was the case with the modernist and socialist discourses.

The illegal Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) monopolized Kurdish nationalist aspirations,[14] and its encounter with the state mainly took the form of armed conflict from 1984 to 1999. Increasingly militarized, women took part in several suicide missions staged by the PKK in the 1990s. Although lack of reliable information on the internal dynamics of

the PKK makes it hard to assess the full extent of women's involvement in its ranks, we know that Kurdish women in general had to deal with violence both from the rebels and from the state security forces. This situation politicized and moved them in the late 1990s to join political parties and to establish women's rights organizations throughout southeastern Turkey.

The Islamist groups used more diversified entry points into the public discourse.[15] According to Yavuz, the Islamic movement is a source of power for marginalized segments of the society that includes distinct identities framed in terms of the Islamic vernacular (2000: 28). Analysts differentiate the characteristics of Islamist discourses that became dominant in the 1980s from earlier right-wing movements (Gülalp 1997; Ilyasoğlu 1998). The growth of an Islamic bourgeoisie in the previous period not only constituted an alternative to the secular Western-oriented big business but also provided Islamist political parties with a material base (Z. Arat 2003: 14). Thereby, religion was brought from the margins to the mainstream and into modern terrain, challenging the modernist discourse on its own ground. This also had the effect of transforming Islamic discourse through altered lifestyles of the new social strata.

"The new veiling of Islamist women in Turkey is a part, and an essential part, of this new Islamism; it is the main instrument of identity politics" (Ilyasoğlu 1998: 243). As a matter of fact, it is argued that women's status, symbolized by the Islamic dress code—mainly the head scarf referred to as the *türban*—is the main marker of the Islamist movement. Without it, there would be little to distinguish it from other contestations for power (Toprak 1994). This issue also brought Islamist politics into a head-on collision with the secular establishment, since the *türban* is banned in public institutions.[16] In this regard, Islamist women, like the revolutionary women of the 1970s, differed from the secular modern women in terms of their antagonism toward the integrative institutions of the Republic. Yet they differed from the revolutionary women, insofar as being part of an opposition that was heavily entrenched within communal and family values, which made their struggle in the public realm harmonious with their private life. Their primary goal was to access mainstream institutions, from which they were excluded by their veiling.

Since the 1980s, the *türban* has come to symbolize contradictory claims in the public sphere. Although the meanings attached to it have at times shifted, *türban*, by and large, symbolizes cultural authenticity and defiance of the Republican modernization project for the Islamists and a funda-mentalist reaction *(irtica)* to Republican principles for the secularists. Irrespective of the intentions of the Islamist women themselves, their bodies became the site where the Islamist versus secularist struggle manifested itself. Interestingly, neither discourse rejects modesty as an esteemed goal for women: secularists call for an "internalized veiling" of women's sexuality, whereas Islamists demand external veiling.

Feminism, as the third major discourse influencing women's identities from the 1980s onward, differs from the Kurdish and Islamist discourses in a number of ways. First, feminism seeks to define women's identities from within women's own experiences rather than identify a role for women within a wider political agenda. Unlike the other discourses that created dichotomies of women's images, feminists have argued that all women are oppressed by the patriarchal system and that it is continually reproduced in traditional as well as modern institutions. Though the movement was theoretically open to all women who considered themselves disadvantaged, in practice it remained restricted to a small group of educated middle-class women mainly in Istanbul and Ankara.

Second, although feminism offers a deep critique of the patriarchal gender order, it initially appeared less than challenging for the system. As a matter of fact, the movement was perceived by many observers as being promoted by the establishment to distract attention from "more fundamental issues" in the society (Tekeli 1991: 13). According to Kardam, "Women's groups themselves did not challenge the state authority, and, in fact preferred to have minimal interaction with the state. During this period, Turkish women began to explore the meaning of feminisms, as they had been discussed in the West since the 1960s" (forthcoming: 14). Disillusioned by their involvement in the left movement in the 1970s, they were eager to distance themselves from formal politics, confining their activities initially to consciousness-raising meetings and moving only slowly toward open public gatherings (Y. Arat 1994; Sirman 1989; Tekeli 1995). Also during this period, Western feminist classics were translated into Turkish, and women began to engage with international events more systematically. The UN Conference on Women in Nairobi (1985), unlike the Mexico City (1975) and Copenhagen (1980) conferences, was attended by women of diverse backgrounds. Their experience helped to link local issues with the global agenda, as reflected in the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women that were adopted to review and appraise the implementation of goals set by the conference.[17]

The lack of threat of the feminist movement did not last long. Feminism's transformative potential was revealed as the movement matured and the international momentum for gender equality began to have its impact. In 1987, the feminist platform organized the first street demonstration under military rule in protest of domestic violence, a strategically chosen theme. Fighting violence against women was moving to the top of the international gender agenda, as was manifest in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),[18] which the UN General Assembly adopted in 1979. Turkey, as a result of commitments made in Nairobi, ratified the convention in 1985 with reservations on a number of its articles. Although the "no violence" demonstration was regarded with some cynicism, it opened the private sphere of life to public debate and helped legitimize the feminist movement in the eyes of many.

Perhaps more significant was the public uproar of women's groups in 1989, in connection with a rape case taken up by the Supreme Court, that challenged Article 438 of the Criminal Code, which granted the rapist of a prostitute a reduced sentence. The court ruled that the article was not in violation of the equality clause of the constitution, since it aimed to protect "respectable women." The mounting public reaction resulted in the abolishment of the article in the National Assembly. Women's groups have since become more diversified but acted in unison in demanding state accountability for equality between women and men, particularly after the Beijing conference (Kardam and Ertürk 1999).

Islamist women's activism became conspicuous toward the end of the 1980s through mass demonstrations against the *türban* ban at universities, developing an alternative women's movement in the following years. Although Islamist women defined their identity within a religious context, they began to make nontraditional demands. According to Ilyasoğlu, "Their public stance constitutes a subjective rupture from the roles defined within the boundaries of traditionalism, and Islamist women situate themselves within the modern condition" (1998: 245). Hence, Islamist women's identity is constructed not only in opposition to modern secular women, but also in opposition to traditional women. Aktaş (1988), an Islamist woman writer, distinguishes between enlightened and traditional Muslim women, where the latter, she argues, lack an Islamic view of themselves and of the world.

During this period, the encounter between Islamist and secularist, Kemalist and feminist women alike, entailed much mutual suspicion and led to countermobilizations. Islamist women challenged the secularist women for being elitist and antidemocratic, and the secularists—particularly the more mainstream Kemalist women—organized to counter the rising religious activism (Y. Arat 1994: 246). Despite this obvious mistrust and reactive orientation, the Turkish experience differed from that of other Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Algeria, and Iran, where the encounter among different groups has been more conflict ridden. Ye_im Arat argues that in Turkey the competition between Islam and secular ideology had long been won by the latter in the public realm.[19] Although the feminists disagreed with Islamist women and maintained that their position could not be considered feminism, some feminists acknowledged and respected the struggle of their Islamist sisters (1997: 107). However, for the majority of secular women as well as the society at large, Islamist women in the 1980s stood in stark contrast to the image of modern educated women in the Turkish society (Acar 1991: 60). Hence, the politicization of the *türban*, as discussed earlier, has served to keep women divided, a situation that continues to be a source of tension and an obstacle in forging a common women's agenda today.

In conclusion, greater integration into global markets, erosion of modernist/nationalist state ideology, and an increase of pluralism in identity politics (and the emergence of the individual as an autonomous economic and political actor) have characterized a new phase in Turkey's development since the 1980s.[20] Political pluralism offered women alternatives within conflicting discourses and at the same time allowed public space for autonomous initiatives to take hold.

As the new decade unfolded, the activism and fervor of the women's movement gave way to what many have called "project feminism" (Bora and Günal 2002), as women started organizing around specific issues and raising funds for their projects. Islamist women began to gain more visibility within the Islamist discourse with their distinctly female but religiously flavored orientation. At the turn of 1990s, the Kurdish women were yet to be heard.

As was already evident by the mid-1990s, institutionalization has gained further momentum in the new millennium. The most significant developments of the early 1990s were twofold: the establishment of the national machinery for women and women's centers and academic programs within universities, and recognition of the potential of women's issues in politics by political parties. This was reflected in the 1991 general elections when women's issues became visible in the campaigns and pro-

grams of major political parties. However, "contrary to the rhetoric of the political parties, women candidates were shunned in the electoral race" (Y. Arat 1994: 247).

Although women's low level of representation is a common feature of all political parties in Turkey,[21] it has become particularly contentious within the religiously oriented parties, which relied heavily on women in soliciting support, without allowing space for their equal participation. This was often justified by the *türban* ban. It is commonly acknowledged that women voters were the force behind the victory of the Welfare Party (WP) in 1994 local elections. However, in the 1999 elections the Virtue Party, which succeeded the WP after its closure, brought into parliament only three women. One of them, a *türban*-clad, U.S.-educated young professional, aroused much public controversy (Saktanber 2002: 77–79). She was prevented from taking her oath as a parliamentarian clad with her *türban* and subsequently stripped of her Turkish citizenship when it was discovered that she concealed her U.S. citizenship when registering as a candidate to stand election. Islamist women were angry both with their party and with the secularist women, as the latter condoned the discriminatory treatment of the first veiled woman to be elected into the parliament.

Toward a Consolidation of Diversities: 1995 and Beyond

As the momentum of the Beijing conference snowballed worldwide, the women's movement in Turkey was stimulated as well, benefiting from the increased availability of resources due to Beijing.[22] This particularly took the form of NGOization and was spurred by the steady buildup of governmental and nongovernmental institutional mechanisms since the turn of the decade. The national machinery for women (Directorate General of Women's Status and Problems), established in 1990 to coordinate public and civil activities for the advancement of women to fulfill Turkey's international obligations, played an important role in consolidating the emerging capacity in the country toward putting gender on the domestic political and public agenda. The directorate also led Turkey's active engagement with international gender equality regimes. Arguably, this was a significant enough turning point to delineate the period after the mid-1990s as a distinct phase in the identity politics and women's agency in Turkey.

The national machinery was first established as a unit within the Ministry of Labor and later restructured under the office of the prime minister

(Acuner 2002; Kardam forthcoming). Until 2004 the directorate functioned without any legal base and as a result suffered from poor financing and understaffing. Its weak structure, however, contributed to the growth and strengthening of the academic and activist capacity on gender issues in the country, since the bureaucracy had to rely on the voluntary contributions of expertise that existed outside itself. This collaboration between the state and civil society served several ends, for both the state apparatus and civil society.[23] It gave women's groups an institutional framework within which to penetrate and influence the state apparatus; to become familiar with the international gender agenda and women's rights instruments and mechanisms; to give inputs into Turkey's official reports prepared in accordance with international and regional mandates, including the European Commission mechanisms and intergovernmental bodies of the UN; and to provide a diverse set of women's groups a common platform for dialogue. Perhaps most important, it also gave women the ownership of the state's agenda on women's issues. For the state apparatus, it provided expertise and human resources in meeting its mandate and enabled the directorate to engender its political agenda and activities in relative independence from bureaucratic priorities.

The NGOization and the "project feminism" that emerged earlier in the decade dominated the agenda of women's groups after the Beijing conference.[24] While this has been criticized for fragmenting the feminist movement and thus being an obstacle in its development, it has also enabled the women's agenda to "trickle down" to the grass roots, bringing feminists into close encounter with "other" women (Bora and Günal 2002). In southeastern Turkey, as the impact of the armed conflict eased, Kurdish women came forth as autonomous agents, beginning to engage in the mainstream society through legitimate institutions and processes. In 1999, a women's center (KAMER) was established in Diyarbakır to address women's daily problems. Other such organizations followed throughout the region. In an article that chronicles the inception of KAMER, Akkoç wrote, "At every phase of our lives we implemented the decisions taken by others. Although we strove more than men, unless we behaved like them, we could not participate in decision-making processes" (2002: 206). Thus, the Kurdish women, in a struggle that had a dual character, targeted both the dominant Turkish society as members of an excluded ethnic entity and their indigenous patriarchal order as oppressed women. Precariously situated, they found themselves at odds with Turkish women's groups, as well as with their own ethnic community.

Association with the directorate not only provided a shared space for different women's groups but also paved the way for channeling feminist energies into the formation of pressure groups that sought to influence legislative change. Landmark legal reforms in this regard include the adoption in 1998 of the law on domestic violence; the removal in 1999 of the reservations placed on CEDAW; the entering into force of the new Civil Code in 2002 and the ratification of the CEDAW Optional Protocol; and the Criminal Code reform scheduled for adoption in October 2004.

The recent changes in both the Civil Code and the Criminal Code reflect significant shifts in the understanding of gender relations, modifying traditional patriarchy and bringing domestic law in line with CEDAW principles. The former establishes the principle of equality between spouses by replacing the concept of the male head of the conjugal union with equal partnership in decision-making authority and representational powers in the management of the household. The most significant amendment under the new Civil Code is the legal property regime, which stipulates that all property acquired during marriage shall be shared equally in the case of divorce, thereby recognizing the unpaid contributions of women to household sustenance. The criminal law reform is replacing the community with the individual as its focal point. In this regard, the definition of the word "women" on the basis of chastity has been abandoned in the draft law. Similarly, sexual crimes are now recognized as crimes against women's bodily integrity rather than against public morality as previously was the case.

It would, no doubt, be wrong to attribute these recent achievements in Turkey to the efforts of women alone. However, this is not the point here. Rather, the issue is that engagement in lobbying and advocacy, using universal norms and Turkey's international commitments as negotiating tools for leverage, has increased the opportunity for dialogue among women of different orientations. This is not to argue that women's groups have a common stand on all issues; rather, it is the process of dialogue around common problems negotiated within a common human rights framework that creates the possibility of transcending the diverse identities imposed within formal politics. Recently, the strong reactions provoked by so-called honor crimes have allowed women's groups and organizations to act together on a common platform against such acts. Honor crimes, in particular, and violence against women, in general, are the primary issues that unite women. In March 2004, women's organizations sent a joint complaint to the special procedures mechanism of the Human Rights Commission charging that the state failed to provide protection to a woman killed by her brothers, while in hiding.

These types of activities around common issues and seeking solutions on the basis of a common framework broaden the women's agenda and cut across divergent and irreconcilable differences among women. Turkey's EU candidacy serves as a catalyst in supporting this process, both in terms of the democratization measures undertaken by the government and in creating a momentum for greater rights and liberties. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), elected to power with a majority in 2002, has incorporated EU membership and universal human rights norms in its government program as priority goals despite its Islamist orientation. It thereby engaged itself in a political agenda that was traditionally associated with the secularist political discourse. However, due to skepticism regarding AKP's intentions, particularly with regard to secularism, the Islamist/secularist tension continues to define formal politics. Interestingly, however, with an Islamist government in office, the tension is now brought into the state apparatus itself. Ironically, while the *türban* is excluded from state protocol, the wife of the country's prime minister is clad in one. Consequently, Islamist women, at least those in the mainstream, find themselves a part of the establishment—although in a rather awkward fashion. This situation brings to light the patriarchal contradictions in their lives, thus bringing them closer to their secularist sisters in their stance vis-à-vis patriarchy.

There are also contradictions associated with market mechanisms that offer risks as well as opportunities for rupturing traditional patriarchal structures and for diversifying women's identities. Liberalization of Turkey's economy gained momentum in the 1980s and has accelerated over the last two decades. Women's bodies have become commodities in advertisements and television programs, thus demystifying the emphasis on modesty over women's sexuality. Ironically, this is happening at a time when one of the major political battles is still about the *türban*. In the meantime, market commoditization has also reconstructed the *türban* itself as a fashion object. Interestingly, the market is providing a context shared by Islamists and secularists alike (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 222). Consumerism has further diluted the ideological premises that demarcated the boundaries of alternative female identities. Within the context of Turkey's integration into the global market, female modesty and arrogance, con-

cealing and revealing of the female body, are in evidence simultaneously. The cosmetic and fashion industry is booming to cater to the modern bourgeois women, whether *türban*-clad or not.

Conclusion

I have argued here that the political contest over women's identity politics in Turkey has revolved around the definition of the "modern" space. Consequently, each competing political discourse resulted in reconfiguring and expanding modern space to include new symbols of representation, while at the same time generating its peripheral space for marginal and excluded women's groups. This competition, which reflects the diversification of the society in terms of sociopolitical cleavages, not only created alternative patriarchal images of women but also broadened the space for autonomous individual action beyond what was proscribed by the respective political discourses. The feminist movement and the liberalization of the economy in the 1980s have been both a consequence of and an instrument in the creation of an autonomous individual in the quest for expanded rights. In the process, women increasingly engaged with the human rights regimes in articulating their demands. This has naturally served as the node where all roads crossed, thus increasing the possibility that diverse women's groups engaged each other.

Increased interaction around common problems among women from different orientations—Islamist, nationalist, secularist, and so forth—has eroded the dichotomized boundaries that fragment women, while also disclosing the patriarchal nature of all existing societal discourses discussed in this chapter. Of course, the hard reality of economic disparities (locally and globally), pressures emanating from radical religious and nationalist movements (inside and outside Turkey), uncertainties with regard to Turkey's place in global political order, and the persistence of the polarized public discourse among competing masculinities continue to pose obstacles for sustaining a women's common agenda. Against these odds, women need to expand their networks domestically and internationally, enhance their skills in using international instruments to hold governments accountable, and develop strategies to resist identity politics that project women's images, making them a bone of contention and a form of ideological expression. The current political environment in Turkey, with a commitment to EU membership and universal human

rights norms, offers an opportunity for women's human rights advocates to strategize for an inclusive understanding of rights, transcending their particularistic concerns as imposed by the identity politics of competing masculinities.

Returning to the question posed at the outset: Can universal human rights regimes be instrumental in transcending paradoxical identity formation? I argue that universal human rights regimes certainly provide a normative framework within which diversities can coexist and be reconciled. These regimes represent the highest level of international consensus, reflecting commitments governments have made in response to the demands filtering up from the local to the global and emanating from the intergovernmental forums. Translating these norms back into the local context to expand the rights of excluded social groups requires, first and foremost, due diligence on the part of the state and civil engagement on the part of the public, to hold the state accountable for compliance. As argued throughout this chapter, women stand at a strategic location in this regard. However, the global conjuncture cannot be overlooked. The effectiveness of these regimes and the sustenance of the gains achieved so far in the implementation of human rights and gender equality standards are dependent on the future direction of the world political and economic order. At the moment, there is a strong tendency at the global level toward a deviation from the rule of law toward the rule of power, while at the same time there has been a fortification of the relations between capital and labor in favor of the former. If this indeed is a predicament in the emerging new world order, then one can only expect that the existing economic disparities and cultural divisions will further deepen, thus intensifying conflicts at the local, national, and global levels. This will endanger the realization of the global agenda for gender equality worldwide. It would then be probable that the "clash of civilizations" will be a self-fulfilling prophecy!

NOTES

1. Both concepts—modernization and globalization—are associated with the rise of modern capitalism. This point in human history involves the institutionalization of patriarchal class relations beyond the boundaries of the local and the traditional, creating uniform patterns and linking localities into a hierarchical "world system." As opposed to the overall standardizing tendencies of modernization (which aimed at creating national markets), globalization (the creation of a

global market) inherently contains the contradictory forces of both uniformity and diversity.

2. This is not to imply that the state is disappearing but that its role and sphere of sovereignty are changing. By adopting deregulation and privatization policies and measures, the state facilitates globalization.

3. Tripp (2002: 416) argues that cultural rationales are used to protect the status quo when it comes to women's rights. Ironically, this rationale cuts across cultures and religions. Such was the case during Beijing+5, when conservatives from diverse cultural backgrounds formed an alliance against the Beijing agenda (Ilkkaracan 2002: 753), declaring that the Beijing Platform for Action is a dangerous document.

4. For alternative interpretations of Turkey's modernization process, see Lewis (1961) and Bozdoğan and Kasaba (1997), among others.

5. After the war of independence (1919–1922), most non-Muslims, mainly merchants and industrialists, either left or were expelled, leaving the new republic in need of creating its bourgeoisie (Keyder 1997).

6. Moghadam (1993: 120) has argued that education for women in the "patriarchal belt" has had a revolutionary impact and demonstrated this with the experience of countries in the Middle East.

7. Patriarchal structures, while constraining the penetration of state authority, in some regards may relieve the state of the responsibility to provide welfare to its citizens.

8. This is a relatively unexplored aspect of the role of the military in Turkish modernization, which is important in understanding its current involvement in governance and the tolerance with which this has been accepted by diverse social segments, particularly by the secular nationalist elite.

9. It has been argued elsewhere that rural women of eastern Anatolia, the majority of whom did not speak Turkish at the time, have perhaps been the most marginalized by the republican reforms. Their participation in the institutions of the modern national state was literally mediated through men, whose own access—given the ethnic and tribal character of the region—was dependent on their place within the local power structure (Ertürk 1991b).

10. For a discussion of the challenges encountered by the Republic, see Keyder (1987).

11. Women's autonomous initiatives were discouraged. For example, the creation of a Republican Women's Party was prevented, and the Turkish Women's Federation was closed (Y. Arat 1997; Tekeli 1991). It was argued that feminist activism is not necessary, since women's rights are already granted.

12. The left/right fragmentation characterized political parties as well as other civil society organizations. In this regard, Sunni Islamist and ultranationalist groups represented right-wing politics as opposed to the left-wing political orientation of the Alevi Muslims and Kurdish groups.

13. Durakbaşa (1998: 150) argues that, although unintentionally, Kemalist socialization cultivated in women the first seeds of individuation, since women were confronted with the task of reconciling between modernity and tradition.

14. Although ethnic Kurds always participated actively in the political system and rose to high positions as ministers or even prime ministers, their representation in their own right continues to be a fragile issue. The first Kurdish political party was established in 1990 and represented in the parliament until banned in 1993. The succeeding parties could not make the threshold in the subsequent elections.

15. Although the Islamist groups have also been perceived as a threat to the system, their engagement with the state and its agents has varied. It is often claimed that it was the military itself that supported militant Islamist groups as a counterforce both to the leftists and later to the PKK (Z. Arat 2003: 11).

16. The first *türban* incident took place in 1968 when a female student in the Department of Theology at Ankara University was expelled because she wore a head scarf. In the 1980s, the issue gained greater attention. In 1982, the newly created Higher Education Council banned the head scarf in institutions of higher education. This provoked protests from Islamist female students and their supporters. The issue has occupied the agenda of the parliament and the judicial system and more recently has been taken to the European Human Rights Court, which in July 2004 ruled against the complainant. With the coming to power of the religiously based Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, the head scarf has become a crisis in state protocol, since the wives of most AKP ministers and parliamentarians wear *türban*.

17. In the absence of a national machinery to disseminate the outcomes of the Nairobi conference, its impact was limited to the writings of journalists and academicians.

18. In 1992 the CEDAW committee adopted General Recommendation 19 defining violence as a discrimination against women and placed responsibility on the states to eliminate it. However, the most significant breakthrough with regard to violence against women came as a result of the persistent efforts of the women's movement, at the International Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993. The same year, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted as the formal normative framework on violence against women. The following year the post of a rapporteur on violence against women, its causes, and consequences was created with the mandate to document and monitor violence against women worldwide.

19. Given the ongoing friction over secularism at the level of the state—the office of the president representing secularism versus the current government representing Islamism—the tension no doubt is one that requires a cautious assessment of Arat's assertion.

20. Women's relatively low level of labor force participation constrains their autonomy.

21. A right-wing party (True Path) elected a woman as its chair in 1993; she later became Turkey's first woman prime minister. Today women's representation in the parliament is at a low of 4 percent.

22. In 1996, with UNDP funding, I organized rural women's workshops in two localities. The objective of the workshops was to provide a platform for rural women, the most invisible segment of the society, to voice their problems.

23. The directorate initiated a participatory approach to the preparation of inputs to national reports. The most significant of these was the preparatory workshop for the Turkish National Report in 1994 for the Beijing conference, bringing together seventy women from different backgrounds. As such, the report reflected views of women "themselves" rather than that of a government institution. Similarly, Turkey's second and third combined periodic CEDAW reports (1997), as well as the third and fourth combined periodic CEDAW reports (2005), were prepared in a collaborative manner. Official delegations of Turkey to the various international meetings were also composed of participants from academia and the NGO community.

24. For instance, of the 339 women's organizations listed in the *2004 Women's Organizations Guide in Turkey*, 196 were established in 1995 and after, which amounts to 58 percent of the organizations listed in the guide. Of the remaining, 92 (27 percent) were created between 1980 and 1995; 25 (7 percent) between 1960 and 1980; and 18 (5 percent) prior to 1960. No date was specified for 8 of the organizations. Forty-two percent of the NGOs are located in the three main urban centers: Istanbul (21 percent), Izmir (11 percent), and Ankara (10 percent).

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