

**GENDER AND CITIZENSHIP: AN ENLIGHTENING LINKAGE TOWARDS
EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN**

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ABSTRACT

Due to the ambivalent nature of modernity, citizenship has been historically used as a force for inclusion and exclusion. Societal transformations brought about the necessity to reformulate the concept of citizenship into a gendered political conception by which one can evaluate hegemonic relations of different nature. The contested nature of citizenship also provided an avenue for women's political participation through different means in different societies. This article aims at outlining the major theoretical perspectives on re-gendering citizenship, which brings us to more practical concerns about the political sphere: Gender mainstreaming is presented as one of the key issues on political freedom for women, which is the second theme emphasized in the article.

Key Words: Citizenship, Gender mainstreaming, Political participation.

**TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET VE YURTTAŞLIK: KADINLARIN ÖZGÜRLEŞMESİNDE
AYDINLATICI BİR BAĞLANTI**

ÖZET

Modernliğin kendi içinde çelişkili doğasından dolayı, yurttaşlık tarihsel olarak kapsayıcı ve dışlayıcı bir kategori olarak kullanılmıştır. Sosyal dönüşümler yurttaşlık kavramını daha çok toplumsal cinsiyet ile bağlantılı politik bir kavram şeklinde yeniden formüle etme gereğini ortaya çıkarmıştır; söz konusu kavram sayesinde farklı türlerde hegemonik ilişkiler değerlendirilebilir. Yurttaşlığın savaşımsal doğası farklı toplumlarda farklı araçlar dolayısıyla kadınların politik katılımı için de bir mecra yaratmıştır. Bu makale toplumsal cinsiyet kavramını yeniden vurgulayacak şekilde konuyla ilgili temel kuramsal yaklaşımları ele almayı hedeflemektedir; böylelikle kamusal alan ile ilgili daha pratik meselelere değinilebilecektir: Makalenin ikinci ana teması olarak da toplumsal cinsiyet kaynaştırması (gender mainstreaming) kadınların politik özgürleşmesi için anahtar sorunsallardan biri olarak sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yurttaşlık, Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, Politik katılım.

Introduction

Ulrich Beck notes that those spheres such as private life, science, everyday life, which have been excluded in the classical model of industrial capitalism, are now at the target of political debates in the era of reflexive modernity. The extension what is considered as political is ambiguous and depends on political decisions in terms of shaping policies and transforming possibilities of action (Beck 1999). In other words, Beck emphasizes the invention of politics as a panacea for de-politicizing of everyday life as well as the way in which political decisions determine policy making practices the very same process. This picture reflects upon a very complex terrain whereby the linkage between social life and the concepts/theories on social life has a complex relationship.

The way in which the concept of gender has been used and utilized in various different fields responds to a necessity of filling the gap required by the politicization of spheres such as everyday life, private life, the world of emotions, identities, and other practices neglected by institutional power circles. The rise of studies in gender practices overlapped with revealing the significance of such spheres which have been defined via apolitical terms, that worked as a political act in itself. In this context, the concept of gender is useful in terms of revealing the relationship between different hegemonic practices due to the significance of its position it occupies and it has been related to other political concepts such as nation, nation-state, masculinity, and citizenship which are all conceptions of historical nature. Thus, one can argue that such an intricate relationship requires a thorough understanding about the concept of gender as well as other concepts which have not been historically related to the concept of gender. The pace and the quality of social transformations required an analysis of different aspects of societal configurations. Thus, the marriage of these concepts led to the emergence of a vast literature which has been relying on the question marks formulated through philosophical as well as practical concerns. This article aims at presenting the major arguments related to a gendered social science with a focus on a political concepts such as citizenship. Second, I will evaluate practical implications of using various different gendered concepts in social science with an emphasis on gender mainstreaming.

Why Gender?

Gender refers to the socio-cultural meanings given to masculinity and femininity and to the complex and varying relations between the two¹. Gender relations are rooted in perceptions of difference and structured inequality and over the long periods of time they

have led to women being disadvantaged and disempowered. It has become clear that the particular forms of disadvantage that women face cannot be examined without taking account of the complexity of gender relations. Using the term “gender” also makes it possible to take a broader view of differences and identities and to ask “not only the woman question”. Accordingly, there has been a move across a range of disciplines from women’s studies to “gender studies”. The concern about “gender talk” climaxed with the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 held in Beijing, China, with the theme “Equality, Development and Peace”. Feminist scholarship integrated the concept of gender as an analytical category.

The concept of gender typifies not women or men per se, but the ideological and material relation between them, which historically has been an unequal relationship. It connotes a kind of “socially constructed inequality between women and men”. It also relates to the political, economic and cultural contexts of relations between men and women, where the latter are most often subordinated to the former. The phrases such as “gendering the nation-state” or “gendered public sphere” depict a web of practices whereby hegemonic relationships exist between man and women. In addition, the usage of “gender” is functional to refer to a dynamic social network by which differences exist and need to be explained.

By the mid-1980’s, the shift to “gender studies” brought about the need to explicate different meanings of gender. As Nicholson reminded us within feminist research gender is used in two contradictory ways: One the one hand, it is used to depict that which is socially constructed, in contrast to “sex” which is assumed to be biologically given. On the other hand, gender refers to “any social construction having to do with the male/female distinction, including those constructions that separate “female” bodies from “male” bodies (Nicholson 1994). According to this definition, sex is subsumable under gender and not separate from it since our constructions of the body are themselves subject to social interpretation and redefinition. Gender has therefore been transformed into an increasingly inclusive category denoting an expression of difference within a field of power relations. Lorber defines gender as an all pervasive social institution that establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family and politics, and is also entity in and on itself (Lorber 1994). Therefore, such an inclusive category leads to employing different methodological devices in an interdisciplinary approach. The literature on gender research has

been widened to the extent that a gendered social scientific thinking shaped works in different fields such as literary theory, political economy, policy analysis, cultural studies, and others. In addition, there seems to have been a wide variety of studies which elaborated different levels of analysis ranging from macro units (e.g. the nation state) to micro levels (e.g. social psychological categories such as gendered self, etc.). The concept of gender operated as a glue linking different levels of analysis which were not brought together in such a fashion.

The feminist scholarship illuminated the ways in which citizenship, in both its civic republican and liberal clothes, developed as a quintessentially male practice and ideal. The gendered construction of citizenship was no aberration but was constitutive of the very idea of the citizen. Underpinning this gendered template was the public-private dichotomy, together with the male-female qualities associated with it. On the ‘public side’ the disembodied citizen *qua* man was elevated because he was thought to display the necessary qualities of impartiality, rationality, independence and political agency. This public sphere of citizenship was supported by the ‘private’ sphere, to which embodied women were relegated and from whence they were deemed incapable of developing the ‘male’ qualities of citizenship (Pateman, 1989; Lister, 1997; Prokhovnik, 1998).

If gender is defined as an inclusive category which helps us to understand complex hegemonic relationships in society, one of the most important concepts defining the relationship between the state and the individual is “citizenship”. Fundamentally, three distinct components of citizenship principle have been identified in the literature of citizenship: citizenship as a political principle, citizenship as a juridical status of legal personhood, and a form of membership (Barbalet, 1988). Given the historical and social transformations in polity and society relations, these components can and do come into conflict, and that every historical synthesis entails a set of political choices and tradeoffs that tend to be forgotten once a conception becomes hegemonic. There seems to have been three major approaches in the literature of citizenship: republican, liberal and communitarian, each of which emphasizes different dimensions of the problem of citizenship: civic virtue; individual identity and communalist identity². In addition, each perspective assembles and disassembles different components and characteristics of citizenship.

However, such a grandiose project is nothing but an easy job to accomplish. Legal personhood can be disassociated from citizenship status and each level can be given new set

of meanings. Yet, none of these attempts would resolve the problem about demands made by citizens in terms of expanding their rights formulated by Marshall (1965) extensively. The key point here is that claims for expanding rights and new forms of protections for rights emerge first from “civil” rather than political actors, which requires a multidisciplinary understanding on the phenomenon. The feminist research aimed at assembling gender sensitive concepts in such a way that problems of what is defined as the private sphere could be located into the political one.

Feminist political scientists have criticised the androcentric bias in the paradigms and concepts underlying the discipline, Marshall’s concept of citizenship being an example of this (Pateman 1986, 1988). They underlined that women were in many cases excluded from the citizenship rights attributed to men, involving that the concept of citizenship and the rights attached to it were not universalistic but exclusively male (the right to possess property, the right to an unemployment allowance, the right to vote, to cite but a few). Feminists also emphasised that women not only obtained citizenship rights late than men but also in a different order, starting with social rights, to which civil and finally political rights were added (Bock and James 1992). Even more important was the fact that Marshall’s concept of citizenship heavily relied on welfare state assumptions, with wage work as the basis for many rights, which de facto excluded women (Vogel 1991).

Within the tradition of civic republicanism, the very meaning of civicness has been challenged by a gendered analysis that locates the practice of citizenship in women’s experiences and political modes of action (Jones, 1990, and Phillips, 1995). Within the tradition of social citizenship, the gendering of social rights, has meant confronting the rigid distinctions between public and private domains that circumscribed social citizenship theorizing. Feminists have also extended the framing of social rights to include family and domestic rights and responsibilities, which address exclusion as a result of economic dependency in the family and posit a recasting of unpaid care work as work, which should be included into the calculus of social benefits. Expanding rights and re-defining duties of women as political members were at the core of various theoretical approaches on gender and citizenship.

Citizenship is a concept that is very much at the centre of policy debates within and across national borders, either explicitly or implicitly. This is particularly true in the European

context in which welfare states have redefined notions of citizenship in an era of restructuring and retrenchment. Pivotal here have been both the shifting relationship between the rights and obligations of citizenship and questions of membership of national communities in an era of economic globalization, migration and increasingly multi-ethnic populations. These developments are reflected in a parallel outpouring of academic works, debating and contesting established notions of citizenship (Hobson and Lister 2001).

The feminist preoccupation with citizenship in part reflects a wider desire to re-claim concepts which have been ignored in the interest of men. Given citizenship's status as a "contested concept" it is hardly surprising that the issue of how to re-gender it is not straightforward. As is emphasized below, the debates focused on the nature of citizenship as well as re-gendering citizenship. While the republican tradition approached the duties of citizen, the liberal tradition emphasized the status of citizenship. Until recently, it is a rights discourse which has been more dominant. Women have struggled to achieve equal rights with men in the civil, political and social spheres as crucial to their achievement of full citizenship. Although some contemporary feminists reject a legal rights discourse as individualistic and male inspired, many others acknowledge "the dual nature of law – as an agent of emancipation as well as oppression" (Vogel 1988). The phrase, "re-gendering citizenship", denotes embracing both rights and political participation and analyzing the relationship between two (Sarvasy and Siim, 1994). The different approaches to the re-gendering of citizenship can be summed up under three headings of gender neutrality, gender differentiation and gender pluralism. The first works with a model of women as equal with men, the second with a model of women as different from men; the third model both women and men are members of multiple groups and/or holders of multiple identities (Lister 1997).

The concepts of narrativity, relationality and contextuality help us relating the gender identity to citizenship, because, the way in which citizenship is constructed via rights and responsibilities in different societies, the way in which people with different political cultural characteristics help people to internalize values related to different roles, they are all significant features of a concept of citizenship which should not be isolated from issues on gender problems. Yuval-Davis (1997) argues, a comparative study of citizenship should consider the issue of women's citizenship not only by contrast to that of men, but also in relation to women's affiliation to dominant or subordinate groups, their ethnicity, origin and urban or rural residence. It should also take into consideration global and transnational

positionings of these citizenships. In order to be able to analyse adequately people's citizenship, especially in this era of ethnicization on the one hand and globalization on the other hand, and with the rapid pace at which relationships between states and their civil societies are changing, citizenship should best be analysed as a multi-tiered construct which applies, at the same time to people's membership in sub-, cross- and supra-national collectivities as well as in states. She also adds that one needs to go beyond formulating a gender-blind, Westocentric and a hegemonic theorization of citizenship; instead feminist research should be focusing in particular on the questions of membership in 'the community', group rights and social difference and the ways binaries of public/private and active/passive have been constructed to differentiate between different kinds of citizenships. In other words, overlapping concepts – political, economic and cultural - which categorized citizenship necessitate positioning gender in a complex web of societal relationships in a changing world.

The feminist approaches to citizenship thus have different vocabularies of gender and citizenship, competing visions of the good citizen and ways to include women in citizenship. Although there are differences between the methods of re-gendering and rethinking citizenship, the major conceptions are equality and difference, work and care; and participation and power (Siim, 2000). In other words, the complex relationship between different political terrains and issues intersects with the issue of gender which clarifies the hegemonic relationships between different actors in society. The concept of citizenship, one of the most important status of individuals as members of the nation-states, is possible through political participation. When we consider the social and economic challenges to citizenship (e.g. consumer vs. citizen) one can observe the significance of the possibility of what is political. Thus, the concept of “gender mainstreaming” as a core idea of such a political sphere provides a bridge between theoretical conceptions described above and the practical concerns of political participation.

Re-Gendering Citizenship and Political Participation: Pictures from the Turkish Society

To a certain extent, the womens' issues and womens' perspective have been transmitted into politics in many countries. These venues of politics allowed women to openly spell out their “privatized” problems and offered new voice making practices for women. This process has been limited, to such an extent that not all women from different segments of the society can transmit their demands and raised questions for public discussion. Due to the web of political and social remnants of the past shaping the notion and the policies of citizenship,

in Turkish politics, taking part in the public sphere and relating to all the interests of women, to a great extent, could not be realized as important political goals by the major actors affecting the political scenery.

New studies which accept women as subjects can offer in depth thinking about the roles of women and the level of participation. They can also transcend problematics which are accepted as significant by the traditional political approaches. As is noted above, the problems scripted as non-political have become political and became part of the political sphere on which not only women but men also reasoned and discussed in different publics.

Thus, the problem of women as citizens is part of the new approaches which attempt to formulate new ways of thinking about the position of women as subjects. Citizenship, as a status as well as an identity, is a concept which allows us to investigate inclusive and exclusive practices regarding the roles of women in public sphere. Exclusive practices have been affective in the sense that they value a limited conception of citizenship; whereas inclusive practices allow a comprehensive web of roles and practices for women, accepting them as subjects. The tension between the two can be exemplified by various different parameters: the level of participation by all means, the level of free market to allow women to be employed, the degree of legal procedures and regulations in opening up new rights for women, the possibility of civil organizations in affecting political institutions and the quality of political communication between the two, the impact of the international organizations (e.g. the E.U., the UN) on major actors shaping the political sphere. The legal and the social universes complement one another: The legal procedures and rules cannot be divorced from the social reality, that is, culture, values, and norms accepted widely in a society (Erol-Işık, 2004).

The ‘woman question’ emerged as a hotly contested ideological terrain where women were used to symbolize the progressive aspirations of some segments of the society. In Turkey, the shift from a multi-ethnic empire to an Anatolia-based nation state involved a progressive distancing between cultural nationalism and Islam and culminated in Kemalist republicanism. Atatürk not only dismantled the central institutions of Ottoman Islam by abolishing the caliphate and secularizing every sphere of life, but took measures to heighten Turkey’s “Turkish” national consciousness at the expense of a wider Islamic identification: the compulsory romanization of the alphabet, new dress code and an elaborate rereading of

Turkish history stressing its pre-Islamic heritage where the elements of the cultural mobilization in the service of the new state. The secularization of the family code and the enfranchisement of women were thus part of a broader struggle to liquidate the theocratic institutions of the Ottoman state and create a new legitimizing state ideology (Kandiyoti, 1991). The republican reforms in Turkish society did 'ascribe' the status of citizenship to women in the early years, yet women, at some point in history, demanded to 'achieve' gaining rights.

Borrowing from the Swiss legal system, in 1926 Civic Law was accepted. The acceptance of the code was recognized as a way of re-establishing the Turkish family as well as an outcome of winning gaining rights for Turkish women. In 1930, the legal system was reformed so as to give women political rights in the sense of becoming candidates in local elections. In 1935, there were 18 female members of the parliament, which meant 4.5 % of the total members.

There have been a strong link between the state and the patriarchal system, legitimizing institutions such as the law, the family, the education, the media, all of which could serve drawing certain boundaries for women and their rights. As Sirman points out vividly, while in the West the state defines women / mothers as citizens and protects them against the ups and downs of the market as well as their husbands and other secondary persons, in Turkey the process of protecting women's rights has been revealing various problems (Sirman, 1996) perpetuated by political decisions. There have been different voices demanding a renewal in the existing legal system at different times. In order to reform the civic law which indicated flaws in defining the role of women, a new legal law (*Medeni Kanun*) has been prepared and was legislated on 22nd of November, 2001. It is possible to shortly add that the new law, although it offers regulations which could not have been thought about years ago, seems to be based on certain presumptions about the nature of women's participation to the public sphere. The Civic Law legislated some important reforms in recognizing women's rights in terms of personhood: For example, adultery of women did not constitute a type of crime; women were given the right to use their maiden names in addition to their husbands' surnames, the age of marriage, seventeen, was made equal for both men and women; it brought about important changes regarding the 'regime of property' among married couples. Additionally, the law implied an ambiguous definition of morality.

When it comes to analyzing gender equality in political decision processes, the picture seems to have been indicating flaws: Rated as the 101st among 174 countries in a list considering the rate of women representation in parliaments, Turkey with the rate of 4.2 % remains below the average of European, American, Pacific, African countries.

World Order Women (%) Order No	Country	Election Date	Rate	of
1	Sweden	09.1998	42.7	
2	Denmark	03.1998	37.4	
3	Finland	03.1999	36.5	
4	Norway	09.1997	36.4	
5	Holland	05.1998	36.0	
9	S.Africa	06.1999	29.8	
10	N.Zeland	11.1999	29.2	
11	Venezuela	02.2000	28.6	
14	Austria	03.2000	28.5	
16	Argentina	10.1999	26.5	
17	Turkmenistan	12.1999	26.0	
21	Switzerland	10.1999	23.0	
24	China	1997-8	21.8	
28	Canada	06.1997	19.9	
32	England	05.1997	18.4	
52	Israel	05.1999	12.5	
60	Italy	04.1996	11.1	
61	France	05.1997	10.9	
71	Bangladesh	06.1996	9.1	
72	India	09.1999	9.0	
82	Iraq	03.2000	7.6	
96	Japan	10.1996	5.0	
101	Turkey	04.1999	4.2	
110	Lebanon	08.1996	2.3	

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union database: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>, 15.04.2000, "Women in National Parliaments."

The low level of participation in decision making processes is also reflected in other sectors.

On 22 July 2007, Turkey held its general elections. This election, being very critical for various reasons, was also very important for women's political representation. KA-DER (The Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates) has run a wide public campaign, supported by more than hundred other NGOs, to raise awareness on this issue and to create pressure over the party leaders to put more women in their electorate lists. The quota demands of the women's movement have not been taken seriously by the past governments

and many people still think that quota practices lead unqualified people to unfairly be privileged and thus that it is not only unjust but will also pull the standards down. In fact, most Turkish politicians, including the Prime Minister think the same way. However, quotas for women are actually tools to put an end to the exclusion of women from decision-making by helping them overcome the obstacles that prevent them from entering politics in the same way as their male colleagues. Moreover, in Turkey and in the world in general, more women joining politics has real effects on policymaking that cannot wait.

The result of the elections, although drastically successful (thanks to the efforts of KA-DER and women's organizations) at first glance, is indeed still a miserable result: 50 women parliamentarians among 550; 9,1 percent. The candidate nomination process was truly a disaster for women candidates. Even the parties which have gender quota enforcements in their statutes, did not exercise these quotas during the nomination process. In Turkey, the leading government party, Justice and Development Party (AKP), has no quota at all in its statute, and openly states that they have no intention to enforce the quota with legislation. The main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP) has a 25 percent quota for all city, district councils, as well as the highest Party Council, but no quota for electoral lists nor the Party board. Some relatively small political parties have voluntary party quotas for women. Small, left wing parties such as the Social Democratic People's Party (SHP), has a 33 percent quota for all party organs and electoral lists; The Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP), has a 50 percent quota for all party organs and electoral lists and the pro-Kurdish left wing party, the Democratic Turkey Party (DTP), has a 50 percent quota in its statute and following the European Greens they have elected two chairpersons (a woman and a man). The center right, Motherland Party (ANAP) has a gender quota of 33 percent and True Path Party (DYP) 10 percent, which are not reflected in their electoral lists in actuality.

Turkey, recognizing women's right to vote and be elected as early as 1934, was ahead of a number of European countries. In 1935, there were 18 women MPs in the Turkish Parliament and the percentage was 4.5. With the transition to multiparty democracy, the "symbolic function" of women ended, and the percentage of women in the Turkish Parliament decreased to 0.62 percent in the 1950 elections. Between 1950 and 1977, the most "brilliant" result for women was 1.7 percent women in the National Assembly in 1977. The percentage rose to two percent between the years 1983-1995, and doubled after KA-DER (The

Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates) was established, in the 1999 and 2002 elections.

With the new election results, the percentage of women in Turkish Parliament increased to 9,1 from 4.36. Once (72 years ago) ranking within the top five in the world with 4.5 percent women MPs, Turkey today rose to 127th from 167th among 189 countries, and still ranking last among the European countries. The number of women in local governments is an even more miserable picture. The percentage of women mayors is not even one percent, and in local municipal councils it is a little bit over one percent. According to the report prepared by a group of researchers (Tan, Ecevit & Üşür, 2001) who presented the findings to the TUSIAD (Turkish Businessmen Association), the causes of women's lacking power in political process can be evaluated on the basis of the following factors:

- ❖ The family, that is thought as the 'living field of women' is considered to be outside politics. The area of responsibility for women has always been framed within family life in Turkey. The family is being considered as 'private' and placed outside the 'common' life of society. Furthermore, it is a common belief that the participation of women in social life will be destructive to the functions of the family.
- ❖ Dominant social activity pattern for women is to participate 'voluntary social work' associations which do not focus on the issue of women's empowerment, that makes them unable to change their invisibility in political decision making processes.
- ❖ The 'male dominated model' in political decision making processes has a discriminating effect.
- ❖ The political parties do not consider equality of women and men as an issue of democracy.
- ❖ 'Women's Branches' of the political parties have limited legal rights hindering the participation of women in the political decision making process.
- ❖ Providing equality for women and men still does not exist as criteria for the success of political leaders.
- ❖ Women working for the civil and political organizations are still incapable of networking for better cooperation towards reaching to a common agenda.

Up until the 1980's, the motto "women select, men are being elected" was prominent in popular culture. After the 1980's, signaling major currents of change for the Turkish

society, the women's movement made an impact on the ways in which different sides of womanhood should be discussed, and the image of "good mothers who sacrifice" was debated by the mass media. Differentiation among women's expectations, the election of the first woman Prime Minister (T. Ciller), the changing patterns in organizing women's branches active in political parties all made a positive impact on the position of women in politics (Ayata, 1998). Some women started not to express their political preferences to their husbands; common problems (e.g. abortion, violence, the Civic Law, etc) were being discussed openly, the level of political knowledge among women started to increase, and the impact of globalization introduced a new national and international web of organizations to women. These developments could not be ignored in the sense that they have been making an impact on the women – politics linkage to ease the difficulties in defining the role and the position of women.

The nature of citizenship as a legal status and a social tie reveals that it is a notion by which one can understand the scope of rights in a gendered terrain of politics. Women, right from the birth of the Republic, have been given rights to participate and raise their voices in the public sphere. The legal universe itself has been evolving rapidly such that the renewal of the Civic Law has been opening up new opportunities for women to defend their rights and gain consciousness regarding their responsibilities. For various reasons, the political culture has had experienced difficult times in terms of realizing the goals formulated at the beginning of the Republic. In today's Turkish society women are seen as the main actors of democratization and laicism; as is emphasized above, the way they transmit the 'personal' problems to the public sphere through ngo's and other organizations offers new opportunity spaces for reforming citizenship rights.

Political, legal and social universes effecting women also draw boundaries for the scope and the nature of citizenship rights. The social implications of the legal reforms seem to be relevant for understanding the notion of citizenship, because, although women have been given equal rights with men, the socio-cultural texture of the society still renders these rights irrelevant in some segments of the society. As is emphasized above, the latest reforms in the Civic Law do bring about significant changes for the lifeworld of women; yet the practical considerations do not allow women to feel at ease with the legal universe. The level of participation among women is low, which is itself related to the weakening party politics. The civil organizations should accompany the party politics in the sense that they have the

potential to formulate new missions and instruments for women, which have been de-emphasized by political parties.

Gender Mainstreaming

It should be noted that Turkish legislation and legal institutions have focused on “recognizing” rather than “promoting” women’s human rights. In many parts of the country, there have been wide discrepancies between women’s equality with men in terms of legal procedures and in everyday life. There is a clear need to put in place a “comprehensive”, “systematic” and “sustainable gender policy that emphasizes the implementation of existing legislation as well as its improvement (Acar, 2007). Factors such as low persistent regional disparities in sociocultural and economic conditions, strong patriarchal structures, a political cultural world that does not open up a gendered space for women’s rights all necessitate implementing policies based on *gender mainstreaming* rather than participation factor per se. In other words, despite improvements in gender equality legislation, an emphasis on campaigns heard in the public opinion, the terrain of politics is still threatened by the economic and socio-cultural factors which serve as a barrier for a gendered space for women’s rights.

The structural and functional constraints faced by women are shaped by social and political relations in society. The common pattern of women’s political exclusion stem from (a) social and political discourses (b) political structures and institutions (c) the socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women’s individual and collective agency (Bari, 2005).

Over the course of the last decade, two gender equality strategies have gained prominence internationally as a means for promoting women’s political representation. Gender quotas focus on women’s descriptive representation, establishing goals for the selection and election of female candidates to political office. Gender mainstreaming, in contrast, addresses women’s substantive representation, arguing that policy-makers should consider the gendered implications of all public policies in order to assess their differential impact on women and men. Although introduced initially within the framework of the United Nations and the European Union, it has now been transformed into official policy in more than one hundred countries. In actuality, quotas promote women to the ranks of policy-makers, but do not compel them to consider gender when proposing public policy, while

mainstreaming requires that policy-makers take gendered effects into account when drafting legislation, but does not call for these policy-makers to be women (Krook and Squires, 2006).

Gender mainstreaming emerged in the early 1990s as a new method of policy-making that was distinct from earlier approaches in that it did not seek to add women into existing policies or to identify certain policy areas of specific concern to women. Rather, it aimed to recognize all issues as ones that potentially had different effects on women and men, including those matters that had not traditionally been viewed through a gendered lens. Mainstreaming was first established as a global strategy in the Platform for Action ratified by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, but was subsequently endorsed by a wide range of global governance institutions, such as the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the World Bank (Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002). Despite differences in policy range, as well as in the range of participants in policy debates, however, all forms of mainstreaming treat women as the objects – rather than the subjects – of public policy, even as they work with a concept of gender rather than sex in order to displace the dominant hold of masculine norm in policy-making. Although individual policy-makers understand and apply mainstreaming in a variety of different ways (Booth and Bennett 2002), all versions of mainstreaming undermine the need for more women in politics, as policy-makers – whether or not they are women or men – are expected to consider the gendered implications of all public policies. Indeed, the focus on ‘gender,’ rather than ‘women,’ acknowledges the relevance of men’s lives to gender equality policies, thus empowering male bureaucrats and legislators in mainstreaming debates. In the process, mainstreaming elevates experts and bureaucrats as the central political actors, who may be put in charge of mainstreaming public policy with or without any specific background in gender issues. The most common strategy involves simply retraining the actors who are already part of the policy-making process, rather than incorporating new actors – specifically women inside the political parties – who were previously the main source of information on ways to combat gender inequalities.

One of the most important aspects of gender mainstreaming is organizing national women’s machinery (NWM). National machineries have been established, restructured, streamlined and upgraded in an effort to promote gender equality. The concept of national machinery includes many different bureaucratic units, ranging from ministries to desks, departments or directorates. Some may be located within the Presidents or Prime Ministers

office; others may be a portfolio within a state ministry or local administration; yet others may be ministries in their own right. The mandates, responsibilities and resources of these machineries vary as well. There are some characteristics that national machineries seem to share. These are: (1) they are all bureaucratic bodies whose mandate includes, in one form or another, changing institutions towards greater gender equality; and (2) they are usually relatively weak compared with other state institutions in terms of resources and political clout. Mainstreaming gender is a cognitive, organizational and a political process which requires shifts in organizational cultures and ways of thinking, as well as in the goals, structures and resource allocations of governments. It is more useful to think of mainstreaming a gender perspective as the process of assessing the implications for women and men in any planned action including legislation, policies and programmes in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making sure that women and men benefit equally in all political, economic and societal spheres and that inequality is not perpetuated, but reduced. At the heart of the mandate of NWMs lies the promotion of gender accountability. Gender accountability is defined as responsiveness to the structure of relationships between women and men and the interests of the former at two different levels: the political and organizational. The end goal of the mainstreaming process described above is to achieve accountability for gender policy. In Turkey, there is a lack of communication between different womens groups: they compete for the same pool of funds rather than collaborating (Kardam and Acuner, 2007).

Conclusion

The ambivalent nature of modernity has been revealing various different nation-building processes which are gendered in the sense that they give way to certain practices whereby men and women were allocated different economic and social resources in different contexts. In this process, of course, political means have played very important roles in the sense that they either facilitated new roles for women to participate into what is being called “public sphere” or they created and re-created new obstacles for women, all of which served the interests of political power.

The concept of citizenship have become a keyword through which women’s problems and issues can be recognized socially, culturally and politically: domestic violence, family policies, gender inequality, and political participation. Re-gendering citizenship is possible via legislative as well as societal precautions based on transforming culturally constructed categories on gender. Challenges which have been precluding implementing gender sensitive

policies are based on different historical and sociological characteristics of each society; nevertheless, the age of globalization has brought about the way in which knowledge and ideologies intersect in a reflexive way. Apart from national positionings of women, there is a growing global awareness of the seriousness of the gender sensitive issues which also made an impact on gendering citizenship in Turkey. We need to see detailed analyses on the indicators of male bias in de-politicizing issues related to maternalistic culture as well as domestic issues; of the linkage between political cultural characteristics of the Turkish society and larger ideological attitudes towards women which at the end empower men in some certain publics; which are all related to the issues on gender and citizenship covered above. Issues which are significant about gendering citizenship at the macro level have a great impact on issues exemplified at the meso and micro levels. In this context, more multidisciplinary practices of social scientific research should be reconsidered: The relationship between civic education and gendering citizenship is one of the most important themes, due to the tensions experienced by different categories of women.

In sum, political terrain which has been traditionally coded as a masculine field usually does not open up new possibilities and opportunities for women in many societies. To overcome this problem, one needs to redefine the place and the function of the gendering citizenship as well as gender mainstreaming processes which aim at improving specific regulations and politics gender sensitive. Rights and responsibilities which are at the core of the identity of citizenship are not ambiguous concepts; rather their meaning constructs the way in which we look at power struggles in our everyday lives. After all, overwhelming weight of the consumer culture on depoliticizing individuals and new forms of hegemonic relations not only disempower us but also they de-sensitize us in terms of making the idea of “life is a struggle” irrelevant which is much more harmful than anything else...

END NOTES

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¹ For a full debate about the problem, see Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon (2002)

² Beiner discusses these traditions extensively (Beiner, 1995).

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