



editörden

"Toplumsal Cinsiyet Çalışmaları-II" Özel Sayısı

Women: As Seen from the "Gendered" World

The gratitude I feel towards the 'AP' team, the University of Giresun and the ENS Lyon is not simply a formality. The edition owes a great deal to a great many since this special issue contributes to the field of study that connects "gender studies" with "women studies".

How might "gender studies" be of use with "women studies"? And how might it relate to - or possible even fruitfully reframe- the ongoing problematics and current theoretical issues of "women studies"? In this guest-edited volume of *Alternative Politics*; contributors use, critique, critically extend and develop "women studies" by using the concept of "gender".

From a feminist perspective, "gender" refers to "a complex system of personal and social relations of domination and power through which women and men are socially created and maintained and through which they gain access to power and material resources or are allocated status within society" (IFAD, 2000, p. 4). Gender relations embed a fundamental social inequality between men and women across the world (Acker 1992). As Connell (1987) argues, "there is an ordering of versions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' at the level of the whole society... [which is] centered on a single structural fact, the global dominance of men over women" (183). Patriarchy, she further explains, is legitimated by "the configuration of gender practice[s]" which sustains it in society (1995: 77).

The idea of this issue is to bring "gender" as a key concept which creates a space where scholars can meet and discuss the contradictions, tensions but also possibilities for situating their own going work on the field of "gender, women's and feminist" studies. This requires an understanding of the social, which is conceived with reference to gender.

Taking into account the concept of "gender", Laura NAVARRO GARCIA's analysis (82-94.) of Islamic Feminisms departs from interpretations of hegemonic cultures as the root cause of women's problems. Through an elective affinity of the social and the gender, she questions the ethnocentric and classist visions of the dominant hegemonic Western feminism. More than depictions of Muslim women

as powerless victims of social oppression; NAVARRO explains that as historical subjects, Muslim women have the power of action to establish strategies of resistance and to fight for changing the situation of inequality in which they live. It is necessary, thus, to seek feminist meeting positions for understanding and integrating all differences historically discarded by a supposedly "universal" Western hegemonic feminism.

As Blanka KNOTKOVA-CAPKOVA (**61-81**) points out, Post-communist countries do not unambiguously belong to a properly Western hegemonic feminism as well. Yet, their experiences have still to be appropriately studied. Paraphrasing Jirina SIKLOVA, KNOTKOVA-CAPKOVA explains discussions and the self-searching that proceeded Czech feminism(s) and other post-communist countries' feminisms in the 1970s and 1980s. According to KNOTKOVA-CAPKOVA, post-communist countries had to choose thoughts from various branches and schools, and enrich the accepted ones with their own experience. Obviously, these concerns found parallels with Asian, African, or Latin-American feminist experiences.

In general, the emergence of a renewed relationship between hegemony and gendered relationships pushes scholars to take seriously what are often marginalized in theory, methodology and in terms of empirical contributions – (see eg. Butler, 1997, 1999; Harraway, 1991; Havelkova, 2005; Lovell, 200, 2003; Moi, 1991, 1999; Navarro, 2008; Rhouni, 2009).

The analysis of Manuel ANTUNES DA CUNHA (**41-60**) attempts to bring more insight into marginalised women's experience in a specific setting, avoiding unnecessary generalizations. Through Portuguese women in French public sphere, he explains how migrant women have been confined to their "gendered" role of wives and/or mothers, and consequently their central position in the migratory dynamic has been concealed.

As in the example of the (re)presentation of Portuguese women, it is crucial to recognize that social situations are constantly recreated and "gender" as a term actively engages the social, in overt -and covert- terms. Deniz KANDIYOTI (2010) succinctly argues that "Women strategize within a set of concrete constraints that reveal and define the blue print of the 'patriarchal bargain' of any given society; moreover, patriarchal bargains are not timeless or immutable entities, but are susceptible to historical transformations that open up new areas of struggle and renegotiation or the relations between genders".

For Hatun KORKMAZ (**95-112**), the "Glass Ceiling Syndrome" is one of these key areas. It refers to all sorts of invisible obstacles that can't be explained clearly between women and senior management positions at the work floor. In the case of female academics, Laurence CORROY and Emanuelle SAVIGNAC speak of "Men's Organizational Power" in the French Academia (**22-40**). As men control organizational power, so are norms and networks. Seemingly objective criteria such as age or management responsibilities are androcentric.

In this "androcentric" conception of the World, Cemile ARIKOĞLU-ÜNDÜCÜ analyses the fight against women violence in a gendered world (**1-21**). In such a

world, an increasingly prominent role is given to decision-making places at the local, national and international levels to fight all kind of violence against women. However, specific contexts produce their own specificities and patriarchal structures have their own unique characteristics that are constantly recreated by the gender relations they configure.

The project of a "gendered" world is; as explained by Pierre BOURDIEU (2001:29) a symbolic form of domination par excellence, and submission to the doxic order of "genders" is secured through symbolic violence. Such practices definitively contribute to the obscuring of women's progress, and hence to their exclusion. Yet, efforts are growing to fight such practices and to promote gender equality for all.

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