

The Evolution and Intersection of Academic and Popular Islamic Feminism in Turkey

La evolución e intersección del feminismo islámico académico y popular en Turquía

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ABSTRACT

Islamic feminism in Turkey is neither monolithic nor static. The article argued that from the 1980s onward there are three phases of Islamic feminism in which Islamic feminism evolved and changed in its discourse, methods, and concerns. The first phase is the late 1980s and 1990s where pious women integrated into the political system. This first phase can be considered as the emergence of Islam (ist) feminists. The second phase, starting from the Justice and Development Party - AKP rule, 2002 to 2013, shows the transformation from Islam (ist) feminism to Islam(ic) feminism. In that respect, Islamist feminism refers to pious women, who take an active role in participating in the social and political arena for the success of the Islamic cause. To put it in other words, they question the secular state structure and try to open a space for Islam in the government. The third phase is currently in the formation stage in the post-2013 Gezi Park protests. This era is the emergence of true Islamic feminists, which is marked by the extensive use of social media and the process and challenges become more secular.

Keywords: Islamic feminism, AKP, Islamist feminism, secular state, social media feminism, Turkey, political Islam

RESUMEN

El feminismo islámico en Turquía no es monolítico ni estático. El artículo sostiene que a partir de la década de 1980 hay tres fases del feminismo islámico en las que éste evolucionó y cambió en su discurso, métodos y preocupaciones. La primera fase es la de finales de los 80 y los 90, en la que las mujeres piadosas se integran en el sistema político. Esta primera fase puede considerarse como la aparición de las feministas islámicas/islamistas. La segunda fase, a partir del gobierno del Partido de la Justicia y el Desarrollo-AKP, de 2002 a 2013, muestra la transformación del feminismo islámico/islamista en feminismo islámico/islamista. En este sentido, el feminismo islamista se refiere a las mujeres piadosas que asumen un papel activo en la participación en el ámbito social y político para el éxito de la causa islámica. En otras palabras, cuestionan la estructura secular del Estado e intentan abrir un espacio para el islam en el gobierno. La tercera fase se encuentra actualmente en fase de formación en las protestas posteriores al Parque Gezi de 2013. Esta era es la emergencia de las verdaderas feministas islámicas, en la que está marcada por el amplio uso de los medios sociales y el proceso y los desafíos se vuelven más seculares.

Palabras clave: feminismo islámico, AKP, feminismo islamista, estado secular, feminismo en las redes sociales, Turquía, islam político

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INTRODUCTION

Up until the 1980s, the dominant feminist discourse both in academia and the social life in Turkey was secular and influenced by Western feminism's ideology and discourses. In that respect, Nükhet Şirman identifies 3 stages in the Turkish feminist movement (Şirman, 1989). The first stage is the final era of the Ottoman Empire between the mid-19th century to early the 20th century which criticized the Ottoman family system. The second stage was during the 1930s in which the state gave certain rights and liberties to women in its way to modernize the new Republic. This stage is often labeled as state-sponsored feminism and one of the major points of reference in the evolution of later feminist movements. The third stage, which is the main focus of this article, criticize the state feminism in excluding certain groups from the state structure.

The Turkish Republic's modernization process involved specifically women's participation in social life. The republican reforms gave women the right to vote and elect, annulled polygamy, introduced co-education. However, at the same time the Turkish reformers saw the the headscarf as an identity marker of the past, and although they did not pass a law against wearing it, they strongly discouraged women from wearing it (Kandiyoti, 1987), and not-wearing these garments became an unwritten precondition for upward social mobility. Leaving the traditional Islamic dress behind did not present such a huge problem for many women, but for others it did, particularly for those who joined the Islamist movements after the 1970s (Özcan, 2018). From the 1980s onwards pious women started challenging the dominant secular (read Western) state structure and its designation of ideal feminism where the pious (headscarved) women were seen inferior, un-modern, backward and/or essentially different than the secular women. Having said that, Islamic feminism since then is not monolithic or unchanging. The article argues that in addition to the 1980 military coup, there are 3 ruptures that shaped the evolution of the Islamic feminist movement in Turkey, the first one being the rise of Islamist Refah Partisi in 1996 as a coalition government, the second one being the rise of AKP as a conservative political party and finally the 2013 Gezi Park protests. In line with these developments, the article also argues that there is a change in the academic and journalistic writings of these feminist women regarding the pious women's struggles.

The article bridges the academic evolution of Islamic feminism with the social evolution of the movement in Turkey and argues that in the post-1980s one can see 3 phases of the evolution of Islamic feminism. The first phase is the late 1980s and 1990s where pious women are integrated into the political system. Although at this rate, coining the term Islamic feminism is not very appropriate because it is more about pious women's activity for/within the Islamist movements. This phase is important because it gave rise to Islamic feminist thought and social movements. This first phase can be considered as the emergence of Islam(ist) feminists. The second phase, starting from the AKP rule, 2002 to 2013, is when pious women started questioning individual rights and liberties and also criticizing the Islamic movement's male counterparts. This phase shows the transformation from Islam(ist) feminism to Islam(ic) feminism. In that respect, the term Islamist is used to describe, particularly in the 1980s, "the act of using Islam as a source of political activism rather than practicing it as a non-political daily ritual" (Marshall, 2005). Therefore, Islamist feminism refers to pious women who take an active role in participating in the social and political arena in order for the success of the Islamic cause. To put in other words, they question the secular state structure and try to open up a space for Islam in the government.

Islamic feminism on the other hand refers to "a new discourse or interpretation of Islam and gender grounded in ijthad, or independent intellectual investigation of the Qur'an and other religious texts" (Badran, 2005, 3). Islamic feminism does not aim to achieve a religious political structure, rather it aims to enhance pious women's conditions with an Islamic discourse. Islamic feminists question the patriarchal interpretations and practices of Quran which subordinates women into a secondary position. To put in other words, it is a feminist discourse and practise articulated within an Islamic paradigm. It derives its understanding and mandate from the Quran, demanding equality and justice for women and men in the totality of existence (Badran, 2005). Concordantly, the article points out that unlike Islamist feminists, Islamic feminists have mutual ground with secular feminists as both are located within and context of the secular nation-state parameters.

The study found out that in the first two phases the term feminism is most of the time denied by pious activist women. Despite this, due to their contribution to the headscarf problem, living piously in a secular state, improving women's rights in Islamic and patriarchal societies necessitates including them in the feminist literature and the evolution of the movement in Turkey. The third phase is currently in the formation stage in the post-2013 Gezi Park protests. This era is the emergence of true Islamic feminists in which they own being feminists, and the feminism process is becoming more secular. In this phase, the use of social media platforms gained impetus. Furthermore, it is also found that although in Turkey Islamic feminism emerged around the same time as in the rest of the world, there are serious differences between the emergence of Islamic feminism in Turkey and the rest of the Muslim world.

The article is a qualitative case study consisting of the writings and speeches of pious women who are active in politics with respect to pious women's struggles. The time period spans from the 1980s to 2019, beginning from the third military coup of Turkey, which in the aftermath saw pious women starting actively challenging the secular ideology and the governments, till today when the pious women start challenging the conservative-religious government and their patriarchal discourse. The article particularly focuses on the AKP period starting from 2002 onwards because this is when the transformation to Islamic feminism takes place. Since 2002 during the conservative AKP rule, the government co-opted pious women who were politically active and who challenged the former governments for their approach to pious women. For example, Sibel Eraslan, one of the most prominent figures in the pious women's movement who challenged the pre-AKP governments including the Islamist Refah Partisi and their ideologies, started writing columns in pro-government newspapers in 2003 and became in 2018 the ministerial counsellor. When analyzed all the columns of Sibel Eraslan, written between 2003 and 2012, it is found out that Sibel Eraslan did not question any of the decisions of the Party that put women in secondary positions or subordinates them. Contrarily, Hidayet Tuksal, another prominent figure in the cause who criticized the

government policies, was fired from Star newspaper in 2014 and later joined Taraf newspaper (Arat, 2016) and other non-governmental online platforms. This, along with other events, led to the current and final evolution of Islamic feminism where, particularly in the post 2013 era, put pious women and their struggles within secular or conservative patriarchal state structures at the forefront rather than the Islamist cause.

FIRST PHASE: LATE 1980S AND 1990S

The secular feminist discourse in Turkey up until the late 1980s was marked by criticisms of religion (Sayari, 1981) and capitalism (Kandiyoti, 1981) which they argued worked for the patriarchy. In line with the rest of the world that started challenging feminism's exclusively White/Western and middle-class stereotyping (Spivak, 1988; Mernissi, 1987; Ahmed, 1992), Postcolonial feminists in Turkey also criticized Turkish modernity and the state-sponsored feminism (read Western, secular) particularly in its incapacity of referring the pious women's struggle and their double victimization by patriarchy and secular state system (Ahmed, 1982; Kandiyoti, 1987; Arat, 1990). About some time the terminology related to Islamic feminism emerged first in a weekly publication *Nokta* as "Türbanlı Feministler" (Turban Feminists) article published on December 20, 1987. In this publication, Hidayet Şekatli Tuksal, Sibel Eraslan, Nazife Şişman and Cihan Aktaş were labeled as headscarved feminists. The article featured these women's arguments. Aktaş argued that "the system worn men out and in response they take revenge on women", Mualla Gülnaz argued that "number of children born needs to be limited, men who brag about their seeds must share women's burden", Fatmağül Meriç argued that "Information of the Quran belonged to men, now women have that information too (Nokta, 1987)". The choice of words in the article, such as the use of "turban" which has a political ideological connotation instead of "başörtüsü" (headscarf) which is an Anatolian cultural head-covering style, and the labeling of feminism at the time was considered offensive and derogatory. Similar to turban the turban, the word "feminism" was not used in positive content, at the time it connoted with "lesbianism" and "sexual promiscuity" which particularly pious women did not want to be associated as. Indeed in early 2000s, Cihan Aktaş criticized the article for ascribing them as feminists and the choice of the word turban. Aktaş argued that this is what white Western women's elitism of feminism is, although in the 2000s she accepted that feminists along with headscarved women helped and allowed pious women to exist with their own identity in the public sphere (Aktaş, 2006). Afterward, it was in Nilufer Göle's *Modern Mahrem* (Forbidden Modern) book published in 1991. She explains the tensions and conflicts between men and women within the Islamist cause. In it she explains the Islamist women's support to feminists who are wrongly accused by Islamist male journalists and authors such as Ali Bulaç that if feminism becomes a way of life, then it would cause hatred between two sexes and eventually lead to homosexuality and lesbianism (Göle, 1996). What is important in these writings is that Islamist women who defend feminists in their struggle with patriarchy use the pronoun "they" in describing feminists. Despite both groups challenging the male oppression and the use of the headscarf as a political insignia, during the 1980s pious women did not see themselves as feminists. Indeed, in the 90s Nazife Şişman, Cihan Aktaş, Yıldız Ramazanoğlu and Sibel Eraslan denied being identified as feminists, Tuksal although did not particularly deny the term, did not use it openly either (Rezaei & Nemati, 2017; Reyes et al., 2016; Vaezi, 2018).

There are several things that differentiate this first phase of Turkish Islamic feminism from the other parts of the Muslim region. In the Muslim world the leading scholars in the early era were Fatima Mernissi, Leila Ahmed in the 70s and 80s and then followed by Margot Badran and Amina Wadud in the 2000s. Mernissi, a Moroccan sociologist educated in the Europe discussed sexuality in Islam and advocated a progressive, secular reading of Islam (Mernissi, 1987). Leila Ahmed, an Egyptian-American Islam scholar, in a similar note argues that women's taking up veil for true Islam may unintentionally strengthen the political Islam which may have devastating effects on women (Ahmed, 1992). She separates the political Islam, the establishment, institutional one and the ethical Islam. Similarly, in Iran, Shahla Sherkat, the founder of *Zanan* in 1992, a monthly women's magazine with allegiance to feminism and banned in 2008. The term feminism for the first time used in this magazine and it challenged gender inequalities and political Islam, supported a progressive reading of traditions and Islamic law. She was not educated in the West however, she was born and raised in secular Pahlavi dynasty where women had more freedoms and rights than in the Islamic Republic. Furthermore, the first Arab, male feminist Egyptian, Qasim Amin, also advocated for a progressive reading of Islam, and advocated for removal of veil, education of women in his book *Tahrir al-Mar'ah* (Liberation of Women) published in 1899 (Amin, 1899). In Saudi Arabia, anthropologist Mai Yamani who was educated in Oxford, focused on honor killings and construction of gender in Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia. These examples show that the Islamic feminism borrows from the secular and also Western tools and discourses such as human rights, equality and justice with an Islamic reading. Secondly, they advocated for a progressive, more equality-based, female reading of Islam. Thirdly, they criticized the West's orientalist perception of the veil and perception of Islam as an inherently oppressive religion to women.

In Turkey, the emergence of Islamic feminism similar to its counterparts emerged in an interaction with a secular environment. Contrary to its counterparts though, it was a reaction to secularism and Western style modernization of Turkey. Secondly, in other parts of the Muslim world the Islamic feminism rose as an internal criticism towards the patriarchal and essentialist reading of Quran. These feminists advocated for more equal footing, female reading of Quran and Islamic religion. They challenged political Islam, used as misogynistic polity suppressing women. Contrarily, in Turkey the main aim of emergence of Islamic feminism was not questioning the patriarchal or oppressive structure of Islam or political Islam, the primary aim was to integrate Islam into social and political sphere. Another difference is that, in Turkey the rise of political Islam allowed pious women to integrate into public space and join a political cause. This, in retrospect caused the emergence of Islamist feminism because the early pious women's movements prioritized the Islamic cause rather than the women's cause. In that sense, Islamic feminism's entrance into literature and academic debates coincided with the entrance of the Islamist women into Turkish social

and political sphere as significant actors.

In the social and political realm, after the September 12, 1980 military coup, 1980s and particularly the '90s was marked by rise of several Islamist movements and political Islam. Political Islam at the time was critical of Westernization and West's cultural, political and economic dominance over Muslim countries including Turkey. The Islamist women also were against imperialist forces on grounds that they intervened the god and his servants, the prophets and the people, husband and wife (Bozarslan, 2011) which according to them the main reason of suppression and marginalization of pious women from social sphere. University students through the religious congregations that they joined, tried entering into faculties with their headscarves on which eventually led to Higher Education Council's December 20, 1982 notice that ban entering the universities with headscarves. The state's control of religious symbols in public sphere did not have impact on men as it did on women. The headscarf ban at the universities became the arena of major argument. As the Islamists sought way to integrate into the system which prevented religious freedoms due to secularism, headscarf ban became their major case and pious women joined them in what they constitute as their right to practice their religion. The religious congregations started opening up associations and foundations particularly for women (Çakır, 2000).

The main political actor at the time was Necmettin Erbakan and his National Outlook ideology based political parties. The most important among those parties were the Refah Partisi (RP) which in 1996 created the coalition government and Necmettin Erbakan became the Prime Minister. Indicating that secularism is a Western concept, he preferred and attempted to develop economic cooperation with the Islamic world. Throughout his premiership, by highlighting the brotherhood among Muslims and Muslim identity in all of his speeches, Erbakan shifted the threat perception towards the West (Aydındağ & Işıksal, 2018). Ideologically National Outlook movement and its political parties have anti-western rhetoric with ideals such as secularism or feminism are considered as occidental ideologies that are not compatible with Islam (Keskin-Kozat, 2003). The Women Commissions of the Party, which was founded in late 1980s by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was then the Head of the Istanbul Party Center, played a very important role in the Party's electoral victory. Pious women through their daily door to door visits to the houses of the electorate explained to other women, the party program and the benefits the Party would offer to women, children and families in need. Their informal and fuss-free distribution of party propaganda in a friendly manner created sympathy and reflected positively in the ballot box. The number of women actively seeking votes for the party just in Istanbul was about eighteen thousand (Çakır, 2000). These visits allowed normally home-bound pious women to enter into social life and become politicized.

Despite women's active role in boosting party's popularity and electoral victory, in party administration they had very limited or no role, their presence was mainly symbolic. The successor of RP, the Fazilet Partisi (FP) tried to break the anti-women reputation and image of the party by adding women to the Central Decision Women Board. However, the women who were recruited in the party were again not the women who worked for the party out in the field but upper-class women who were educated in secular and Western schools, such as Nazlı İlicak and Oya Akgonenç (Narlı, 2003). These women's Western outlook, western dress sense did not truly represented the pious headscarved women. The presence of these women reproduced rather than changed the symbolic presence of women in the party (Amini et al., 2018).

These circumstances established the second turning point of Islamic feminism in Turkey. Pious women who worked for the Islamic cause and who entered the political arena for an Islamist party in the hopes that their voice would be heard, excluded or marginalized them. The politicized, Islamist women of the cause questioned the gender equality, their male counterparts and the patriarchal characteristics of the religion and the party (Keskin-Kozat, 2003). The cause allowed them to move out of their homes, allowed them to have a life outside the patriarchal home, allowed them to socialize and work and pious women who saw that they can have a life for themselves did not want to lose that. Sibel Eraslan, at the time head of the Istanbul Women's section of RP had helped mobilize huge numbers in successful support of the Party, became disaffected when women were subsequently shunted aside (Göle, 1996). In an interview with Badran, Eraslan argued that the shallow promises of the Islamist men caused her politicization as a feminist and led to her eventual creation, with other Islamist women, of a legal office for women's human rights (Badran, 2005). Islamist women also have tried to show the hypocrisy of Islamist men when these men were using computers at work, they criticized the use of washing machines at home, in addition to that women tried to show that Islamist men used religious marriage ceremonies to legitimize keeping mistresses in their lives (Çakır, 2000). These disappointments aligned Islamic feminists with the secular feminists on the grounds of shared challenges of suppression, exclusion and/or marginalization by patriarchal state structure particularly when, even the governing party is Islamically oriented.

THE SECOND (TRANSITIONAL) PHASE: 2000-2013

The 2000s is marked by the Islamist feminist women's active contribution to patriarchy. Their contribution came in two forms. The first form was through unpredicted silence of feminists of the first era in response to their marginalization from the party politics particularly in decision making processes. In an interview with Ruşen Çakır, Sibel Eraslan calls this silence as "erudite silence" (hikmetli sessizlik), she argues that despite their marginalization in the Islamist cause, pious women did not wish to lose the limited freedoms that were gained through the party (Refah Partisi) and also through the religionization of the politics (Çakır, 2000). Second form was through the AKP co-optation of these feminists into important positions in the party or pro-government organizations, institutions or businesses.

The two forms are in line with what Deniz Kandiyoti coined as "patriarchal bargain". In 1988, Deniz Kandiyoti introduced the term "the patriarchal bargain" to explain ways in which women in patriarchal societies, through varied

opportunities, achieve some sort of security and power but also shape women's gendered subjectivity and determine the gender ideology (Kandiyoti, 1988). With the rise of the AKP many of the Islamist women found a place in the political organization and its civil branches. The integration of these pious women to party in a way muted the feminist discourse. To put in other words, political empowerment of these women created a new patriarchy through the AKP government (Özcan, 2018).

The AKP came to power in 2002, one year after the party's establishment. With the break from Necmettin Erbakan's National Outlook movement, the AKP identified itself as a 'conservative democratic' party rather than an 'Islamist' party, which strongly emphasized good ties with the West, universal values of democracy, human rights and plurality. Prior to the 2002 elections, the AKP highlighted three objectives. Firstly, because of the increased demand for better representation of ethnic and religious groups and better human rights standards, consolidated democracy was promoted. Secondly, because of the heavy burden of the 2001 economic crisis, strong emphasis was given to economic welfare. Thirdly, Turkey's membership of the EU was promoted. The AKP distanced itself from the anti-Western discourse of the previous Islamist parties through a dedication to human rights, democracy and secularism. The Party particularly highlighted women's rights through improvement of gender equality. In its first two terms in office between 2002 to 2011), in line with Turkey's EU accession policies, the party adopted the notion of gender equality in the Constitution (2004 and 2010), the Labor Code (2003), the Penal Code (in 2004), and by establishing an Equal Opportunity Commission in the Parliament in 2009 (Marshall, 2013).

The problem is that, the AKP's improvement of women's condition stem not from internalizing equality of men and women, rather it stems from its "conservative democrat" identity in which protection of family and tradition (both patriarchal structures) gains utmost importance. From the second term in the office, particularly then-PM Erdoğan's rhetoric and AKP government's actions reflected the Party's main mindset regarding women. In 2010 Erdoğan said that he does not believe in gender equality, in the same meeting with women delegates of NGO's he also refused to have gender quota for elections (Vatan, 2010). In 2011, the Ministry for Women and the Family was replaced with Ministry of Family and Social Policy. Despite secular women's organizations protests the PM Erdoğan said, "we are a conservative democrat party, for us family is important" (Belge, 2011). During that time, Sibel Eraslan's articles in star focused on Mecca and Ergenekon organizations, without a reference to any of the party policies regarding women. Similar silence can be seen in Cihan Aktaş and Nihal Bengisu Karaca. In 2015, the Constitutional Court decriminalized religious marriage unaccompanied by civil marriage, abolishing a legal measure that was adopted in 1936 in order to protect the rights that women gained through civil marriage (Kuyucu, 2016). In 2010 prime ministerial circular, issued to increase women's employment and ensure equal opportunities, was revised. In the new draft of the circular the word "equality" was omitted, together with the previously adopted measures of equal pay for equal work, inspection of the establishment of crèches and daycare centers to support women's employment, and inclusion of women's organizations in decision-making processes regarding gender equality at work. None of the former Islamist feminist refer to these derogations of women's conditions despite public protests against them. In 2016 the Minister of Family and Social Policy, Sema Ramazanoglu, an Islamist woman, regarding the rapes of 45 kids by Ensar Foundation which has strong connections with the AKP said "It was a one time event, nothing happens from a one-time event". Regarding these, Acar points out that it becomes a lot more difficult for Islamic women's movements to sever ties with the government and question it's position because the governing party is conservative (Acar, 2014). Zehra Yılmaz also pointed out that, the women's increasing visibility in the public space does not directly provide equal conditions for women and men; on the contrary, the women's bargain with patriarchy discourages the women rights defenders' arguments/claims and also marginalizes them in the Islamist movement (Yılmaz, 2013). Korteweg and Yurdakul also points out conservative women's organization could only indirectly support pious women who call for better representation of headscarved women since they don't want to harm AKP members of the organization (Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2016). This shows a disengagement between the AKP co-opted Islamist women, Islamic women's organizations with close connections with the AKP and Islamic feminists.

During this phase the academic discourse is also started to put emphasis more on similarities between the Islamic and secular feminism and less on its binary opposition. Main common ground being the patriarchal reading of Islam. Tuksal pointed out to the necessity of a new reading of hadiths. She argued that the existing patriarchal structure in the hadiths makes women a lower and secondary position than men (Tuksal, 2012). The focus of these articles on commodification of female body, exploitation by politics and media, violence against women close the gap between Islamic and secular feminisms. For example, at the time Gül Aldıkaçtı Marshall focused on a comparison of secular feminist and Islamic women's approaches to headscarf issue (Marshall, 2005) and their compatibility (Marshall, 2008), Margot Badran in a similar line compared Islamic and secular feminists in the Middle East (Badran, 2005). Another group focused on the AKP policies and their impact on women, among them Berna Turan compares the secular activism with pious nonresistance (Turan, 2008). Contrarily the writings of the first era Islamist feminist continued on focusing on the headscarf case and suppression of headscarved women in the pre-AKP period (Aktaş, 2006).

One of the more prominent and interesting approach came from Nilüfer Göle in her "İslam ve Modernlik Üzerine: Melez Desenler" (Hybrid Designs) book. In the book she discusses the creation of mixed patterns by Muslims with modernity and secularism. The young Muslims interpret Islamic culture based on modernity and try to "open the door of a new human, time and civilization by reminding mysticism instead of actuality that captures modern man, preserving privacy against exhibitionism, giving priority to self rather than individual defined by desires and passions, increasing worldliness with transcendence, making hearts talk instead of mind" (Göle, 2002). She argues that both sides, the secular and Islamic sides start to hybridize and the difference between them decreases. This approach is important

particularly in the third phase where it can be seen that the Islamic feminism becomes more secular in their discourse and expectations. The boundary between the Islamic and secular feminists start to disappear.

THE THIRD PHASE: SOCIAL MEDIA ISLAMIC FEMINISM

This phase can be distinguishable by both pious women's concentration less on the Islamic cause and more on individual and female selves, in that respect this phase is the beginning of the real Islamic feminism. By focusing of individual and female selves the third phase also sees Islamic feminism becoming more secular. Secondly the phase is characterized by a generational shift in pious women. Social media feminism gained more prominence where instead of joining to a political party or a party's women's branch, women voice their concerns through blogging and/or social media communities. These social platforms allow Islamic feminists from varying backgrounds without a traditional power to be heard and allow both online and offline mobilization and recruitment through creating networks and increased online interaction. In these platforms feminists not only discuss their everyday struggle with patriarchy, but also focus on normally restricted issues such as abortion, female sexuality and criticisms of governments' family and women-oriented discourse and policies. The relatively good privacy these social media establishments provide, allow women to more freely discuss issues where otherwise they would be unable or unwilling to.

The Gezi Park protests were also important in the third phase in symbolizing the transformation of Islamic feminism. If social media is the method of feminists in voicing their concerns then Gezi Park protests set the agenda of the concerns. The protests began May 29, 2013 in Gezi Park located in Istanbul Taksim Square. Taksim square and Gezi Park were symbols of secularism and progress the AKP's attempt at building a mosque in the square and Erdoğan's persistence in demolishing the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM), the secular symbol of Westernization through ballet and other performances became the concrete examples of cultural transformation of Erdoğan from conservative democracy to a forced Islamist identity. The protests which started as a peaceful environmental demonstration against the confiscation of a historical park for the building of a shopping mall, faced with denial of the right to peaceful assembly and unproportional police attacks. From the very beginning the Gezi protests were not solely a crisis at the environmental sector. The protests were against the AKP's, particularly Erdoğan's patriarchal rhetoric such as "C-section made our people infertile, they (secular parties) tried to decrease our population" (CNN Turk, 2013), "women shall bore 3 or more kids" (BIA Haber Merkezi, 2014), and especially comparing abortion to Uludere massacres, "every abortion is an Uludere" (NTV, 2012). Uludere massacre was an airstrike by Turkish military on December 28, 2010 which was thought to be against the PKK terrorists entering to Turkey from Iraqi border, which turned out to be 34 civilian Kurdish citizens smuggling goods from Iraq.

The major issue of violence against women particularly domestic violence, did not found much coverage by the AKP unlike the importance of abortion. Gezi Park protests were the largest mass protest in a decade. In that respect an alliance between pious Muslim women and secular feminists were demonstrated at Gezi in their joined chant: "Take your hands off my body, my identity, my veil" (Tekay & Ustun, 2013). Following the news that a woman wearing a headscarf was harassed in Kabataş (which later proved to be false news), women's groups came together on June 7 and walked from Kabataş to Gezi Park; They showed their solidarity with slogans such as Resist not with blasphemy but stubbornly", "We want nights, streets, squares and mosques". On June 8, feminist groups organized a "profanity workshop where they shared non-sexist alternative profanity with their participants". On June 13, the then governor of Istanbul Hüseyin Avni Mutlu and Prime Minister Erdoğan made a statement saying "Take your children away from Gezi" and the women who made up the human chain carried a banner with the words "Dear police mothers, get your children out of the park." With this action, the women who brought a different perspective to the role of motherhood assigned to them by the state authorities, underlined that they were a part of the resistance. Among the first phase Islamist feminists only Hidayet Şevkatli Tuksal argued that AKP attempts to politically divide covered and uncovered women or to "instrumentalize" the experiences of women for their own political gain (Tuksal H. S., 2014). Sibel Eraslan on the other hand, argued that the protests were against headscarved women and against Tayyip Erdoğan, she later focused on victimization of headscarved women in secular system without referencing to protests underlying cause being AKP policies which suppress women in general (Eraslan, 2013). Similarly Nihal Bengisu Karaca, journalist at HaberTurk, a pro-government daily, focused on victimization of Erdogan in Gezi protests (Karaca, 2013).

What is seen in this phase is that as old Islamist feminists started gaining important positions in the party and working for pro-government newspapers, they estranged and kept their distance from gender-based debates and also from criticizing the government. This created the third turning point in Islamic feminism in which they distanced themselves from the Islamist feminists in their modality and primary challenges. One of the prominent groups in the protests, the Anti-Capitalist Muslims, argued that "men and women are equal, Adam and Eve was equal" (Hürriyet Gündem, 2013). They argued that "the essence of Islam is based on universal values such as justice, equality, love and compassion. The Holy Quran says, 'There is no compulsion in religion'. Religion here means worldview and lifestyle. No one can be forced to believe in a worldview. When Islam comes, it is wrong for women to have their heads covered and forced" (Hürriyet Gündem, 2013). The Gezi protests showed that firstly, pious people especially women, ask for social and liberal Islam not political and restrictive Islam where there is no place for progression. Secondly, their criticism mainly was not against the secular structure anymore, it was against the patriarchy.

Reçel blog is one of the earliest examples of these post-Gezi phase Islamic feminists of social media. It is a social platform created by the volunteers of Muslims Initiative Against Violence Against Women. The six founders of the blog are pious women aged in their early 30s and educated in various universities. One of the founding members of Reçel blog,

Rümeysa Camdereli, criticize the patriarchy over then deputy PM, Bülent Arınç's argument that "women shall not laugh loudly in public". She wrote "Uncle Bülents, 'uncle Tayyips, don't want the state of mind that I'm getting away from with one laugh, to go away, because the other kind is dangerous to every kind of power. They want "headscarved sisters" who ask those "uncles" everything about their own life, who cannot decide about anything related to their own life. We're bored, they're not bored!" (Camdereli, 2014). Aside from criticizing the conservative, Islamist government's patriarchal suppression, what is new in Reçel blog is the discussions over female sexuality, virginity and female sexual satisfaction. In 2018, the guest writer Silahsız Avrat explained her own first experience which was out of wedlock along with the inability or unwillingness of the pious married women in her family and surrounding to explain her what she may expect or experience. The responses to her writing were mixed. Some of the respondents explained their own fathers' or partners reaction to virginity, others criticized the author, arguing just because the men act immorally, the women should not act similarly. None of the commentators discussed whether or not such a discussion was in line with Islamic religion, whether or not it is a sin, or whether it is appropriate to discuss in a public platform. This alone shows the changing attitudes of Islamic feminists but also pious women (Reçel Blog, 2018). In another article the unwanted pregnancies and pious women's hopes, dreams outside of the marriage and childbearing were discussed and most of the commentators were supporting the writer for encouraging women to follow their dreams.

A more recent organization established in October 2018 called Havle. Havle is the first openly feminist Muslim women organization in Turkey. Their main objective is to increase the inclusion of Muslim women in the feminist movement. They argue that this inclusion is possible by making the differences visible. This will take place in two dimensions: First, addressing specific problems, such as discriminatory expressions and approaches to Muslim women's choice to cover / not cover their heads, and the problems women experience in mosques. Second dimension is related to all women in Turkey; the forced marriages and marriages at a very young age. These problems are fed by supposedly Islamic grounds and Havle women try to show that it is patriarchal suppression not Islamic duty (Meryem, 2019).

The shift can also be detected in the academic discussions where the second phase focused on Islamic feminism's compatibility with secular feminism, the more recent articles are focusing on transformation of feminism in the post-Gezi era (Dorroll, 2016), criticizing patriarchy without a separation of Islamic and secular feminisms (Dönmez & Özmen, 2013), Islam and feminism's mutual grounds (Arat, 2016), and mostly on gender politics of the AKP (Özcan, 2018; Yaraş, 2019; Koyuncu & Özman, 2018; Ayata & Dođangün, 2017). Furthermore, in the second phase there wasn't a common ground or even discussion on issues such as sexual freedom, abortion and birth control. Despite the beginning of discussions about compatibility and similarity between Islamic and secular feminisms, these issues were considered somewhat taboo. As seen in the third phase however, the Islamic feminists started to debate on these issues on public platforms and raise their voices on discussions of motherhood, sexuality, womanhood and their efforts to own the final decisions regarding their own body.

Unlike the earlier phases of Islamic feminisms this third generation of Islamic feminists do not shy away from the term feminism, particularly the post Gezi feminists identify themselves as Islamic feminists such as the Reçel blog platform. The change is also seen not just in the new feminist groups, but also in the formerly existing groups who used to shy away from being labeled as feminists too, such as Bařkent Kadın Platformu (Öztürk, 2018). This symbolizes the next stage in the Islamic feminism whereby Islamic and secular feminists come together and break down boundaries and binaries. This way, the two feminisms can produce Islam's gender revolution (Badran, 2005).

This has shown that civil Islamism with the back up of social platforms has opened a new frontier for Islamic feminist women through encouraging solidarity and emphasizing shared experiences. In a study at the Qatar Computing Research Institute (Magno & Weber, 2014), researchers found that in countries with large gender inequities in offline life, women were more likely to have significant online presences. This seems to also prove Margot Badran's foresight as Islamic feminism would be becoming more secular in the future. She argued that it would become part of a complex weave of multiple voices clamoring for gender justice and gender equality. She called this new secular feminism whereby a secular feminism re-invigorated by a more robust discourse of gender equality in religious language—which celebrates inclusivity (Badran, 2010).

CONCLUSION

What is found out in the research is that the Islamic feminism in Turkey is neither monolithic nor static. The article argued that from the 1980s onward there are three phases of Islamic feminism in which the Islamic feminism evolved and changed in its discourse, methods and concerns. It also differs from the emergence of Islamic feminism in the rest of the Muslim world. One particular reason for this is, unlike the other countries Turkey is a secular country and the state sponsored feminism at the time marginalized the pious, headscarved women. Despite this similar to other countries, the emergence of Islamic feminism owes much of its existence to interaction with the secular world, whether living in a secular state or being educated in secular countries.

The first phase in Turkey is coined as Islamist feminism due to its reaction to secularism and Western style modernization of Turkey. In Turkey the main aim of emergency of Islamic feminism was not questioning the patriarchal or oppressive structure of Islam or political Islam, the primary aim was to integrate Islam into social and political sphere. Islamic feminism's entrance into literature and academic debates also coincide with the political atmosphere of the era where both Islamist parties and the Islamist women entered into Turkish social and political sphere as significant actors.

The second phase is the transitional phase emerging in early 2000s to 2013. Although the Islamist feminists of the

first era continue to dominate the political and social sphere, criticisms emerged regarding their contribution to AKP patriarchy. A disengagement is observed between the AKP co-opted Islamist women, Islamic women's organizations with close connections with the AKP and Islamic feminists. The first era's pious active women gained important positions in the party and pro-AKP organizations, in return remained silent on women's suppression or commodification for political causes.

The current phase saw the concretization of Islamic feminism in the post Gezi resistance. Feminists of this era focus on individual and female selves. By focusing of individual and female selves the third phase also sees Islamic feminism becoming more secular. Secondly the phase is characterized by a generational shift in pious women. Young pious women in their late 20s and 30s become the locomotive behind the social media feminism. Civil Islamism gained more prominence in this phase and secular and Islamic feminists have much more common ground than the previous eras focusing on not just secular but Islamist governments patriarchal suppression of women.

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