

**NATIONAL POLITICS AND OTTOMAN WOMEN'S PRESS:
A CASE STUDY OF KADINLAR DÜNYASI**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the connections between women's movement and nationalist politics within the late Ottoman context, utilizing first 100 issues of *Kadınlar dünyası* published in 1913. The emergence of nationalism as the dominant ideology of the period provided a new conception of society within which the women could attribute themselves new social positions, roles and duties. Within such a context, women's demands emerged entangled with the national roles attributed them. Depending on new imaginations about their status and roles in "the nation" women did not only re-formulate their demands, but also articulated them more legitimately. Women's activism could find a fertile arena, within which it could flourish in various forms.

Özet

Bu tez *Kadınlar dünyası*'nın 1913 yılı içinde yayınlanmış olan ilk yüz sayısını kullanarak geç Osmanlı dönemi bağlamında kadın hareketi ve milliyetçi politikalar arasındaki ilişkileri inceler. Milliyetçiliğin dönemin hakim ideolojisi olarak ortaya çıkışı kadınların içinde kendilerine yeni sosyal konumlar, roller ve görevler atfedebilecekleri yeni bir toplum mevhumu yarattı. Bu bağlamda kadınların talepleri kendilerine atfedilen milli görevlerle içiçe geçmiş bir şekilde ortaya çıktı. Kadınlar "millet" içindeki statü ve görevlerine dair yeni tahayyüllerden destek alarak yalnızca taleplerini yeniden formüle etmekle kalmadılar, aynı zamanda bu taleplerini daha meşru bir şekilde ifade edebildiler. Ayrıca, kadın aktivizmi kendisine içinde çeşitli şekillerde yeşerebileceği verimli bir alan buldu.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis explores the connections between the Ottoman women's movement and the national politics of the late Ottoman period through a reading of *Kadınlar dünyası*, a prominent women's magazine of its time. This study is mainly concerned with two interrelated questions: 1) How and to what extent Ottoman women participated in the national politics of the time as intellectuals and activists? 2) How nationalist discourses and politics helped in shaping the women's movement and the demands raised through it? However, the scope of the thesis is neither limited to recovering the women's presence in the nationalist politics nor discovering the nationalist tones of women's literary and political activism. Rather, by using gender as an analytic category for understanding nationalism this study also considers the issue of the formulation of a new national identity among the Ottoman Muslim community and the definition of new gender roles and identities for women in this process. In other words, the aim of the study is twofold: The first is understanding the place of women in the national processes and identifying the negotiations and compromises women enter into with the leading forms of nationalism to shape the political agenda of the period. The second concern is pointing at the definition of new gender roles and identities for men and women in parallel to the formulation of new national identities and new loyalties at the demise of the empire.

The central concern of this thesis - that is the connections of nationalism with women's movement and gender- grow out of women's history as one of the

most thrilling subject of the field. The scholarship that examines entanglement of nationalist processes, women's movement and gender grew parallel to the developments in the women's social history as an academic discipline. Women's history as a sub-discipline of history emerged in late sixties and seventies in Euro-American academia in response to the long-lasting exclusion of women and female dominated realms from the domain of history as a scientific discipline. Up to the emergence of women's history as a scholarly field in this period women were demoted to the shadows of history. One important thing that helped to chase away those shadows was the development of social history and the consequent new academic interest and emphasis on the histories of family, everyday life and history from below that give serious attention to the perspectives of those who have been previously ignored or discounted. The rise of feminist consciousness and movement was also crucial for the development of women's history. Feminist women of the period have attempted to search of their forebears to create their own tradition, to make the experiences and role of women in the past visible and to understand the roots of their oppression.

In *Gender and the Politics of History*, Joan Wallach Scott reminds that history is not merely a documentation of past, but a participant of the production of knowledge while referring knowledge in relation to power in a Foucauldian sense. In her groundbreaking work Scott problematizes the gender-blind history writing "not simply as an incomplete record of the past but as a participant in production of knowledge that legitimized the exclusion or subordination of

women.”¹ Through feminist line of historiographical criticism male-dominated history writing was condemned as a process of knowledge production through which men have been established as the universal subject of history and women’s experiences, activities and agency were ignored, hence devalued-devaluation led subordination.

Recovering the experiences of women from the exclusive attitude of the history writing and rendering the place of women as historical subjects has been the main goal of women's history from the very beginning. However, finding the ways of engaging women to history, a domain in which they were neglected from the inception was not free of its particular difficulties. Scott states the major predicaments of women’s history writing as follows:

How could women achieve the status of subjects in a field that subsumed or ignored them? Would making women visible suffice to rectify past neglect? How could women be added to a history presented as a universal human story exemplified by the lives of men? Since the specificity or particularity of women already made them unfit representatives of humankind, how could attention to women undercut, rather than reinforce, that notion?²

In the last fifty years, feminist scholars responded such difficulties by focusing on a vast variety of topics concerning women’s past and applying diverse methodologies. Indeed the efforts to document women’s presence in the past ranged from the recovery of the deeds of great women in history towards documenting the ordinary women's political lives, aspirations and status-with the new emphasis on social history. The history of the oppression and subordination

¹ Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Colombia University Press, 1999. p. 26.

² Ibid. p. 18.

of women and the female resistance to oppression have also been prominent subjects of women's history. Through all these studies the historical significance of the past experiences of women was assessed to a certain degree.

While the scholarship that focused on the status of women as historical subjects flourished on one side, feminist and queer scholarship continued to pose new questions of analysis and perspective. The new challenges that came out within this process lead to a provocative questioning of the essentiality of the seemingly unproblematic categories 'women' and 'men'. Most basically, within the gender theory that was inspired by this questioning, gender referred socially constructed femininities and masculinities without any necessary biological component. With this new challenge women's history took a way towards gender history in which gender is considered a major analytical tool for re-evaluating the past. Within this perspective it is argued that if history was made by male and female agents and if socially constructed femininities and masculinities regulated their experiences it should be a gendered history in the sense that it was defined by gender alongside other historical categories such as class and race. Studying social and political activities of men and women as gendered subjects generates new knowledge both about how gender was constructed in social and political realms and how it operates in these realms and inevitably defines them.

For combining women's history with a gender perspective, Scott offers a broader, Foucauldian notion of politics in which power is not conceptualized as something exercised by an authority, but that operates in every realm that involves unequal relationships. According to her this approach provides an effective understanding of how gender operates in history:

Gender and “politics” are thus antithetical neither to one another nor to recovery of the female subject. Broadly defined they dissolve distinctions between public and private and avoid arguments about the separate and distinctive qualities of women’s character and experience. They challenge the accuracy of fixed distinctions between men and women in the past and present, and expose the very political nature of a history written in those terms. Simply to assert, however, that gender is a political issue is not enough. The realization of the radical potential of women’s history comes in the writings of histories that focus on women’s experiences and analyze the ways in which politics construct gender and gender constructs politics. Feminist history then becomes not recounting of great deeds performed by women but the exposure of the often silent and hidden operations of gender that are nonetheless present and defining forces in the organization of most societies.³

The debates within the field of women’s history, summarized above, have been influential in shaping scholarship on women, gender and nationalism. Parallel to the general chronology of women’s history, the early feminist studies on nationalism emerged as case studies of women’s participation in the nationalist politics and movements, mostly in the former colonial countries. From the early nineteen-seventies on, scholars documented the women’s presence and agency in nationalist processes and tried to understand the women’s own agendas which negotiated with dominant nationalisms to shape the general political agenda. By recovering women’s participation, this literature rendered the generally accepted idea that women have been the passive objects of nationalist processes invalid.

In more recent works, the focus of attention moved towards the gendered dimensions of nationalism(s). Modernist literature on nationalism have convincingly demonstrated that nations were not timeless, naturally occurring phenomena, but they were historical constructs- “imagined”, “invented” or

³ Ibid.p. 27.

“constructed” with the help of myths, symbols, and discourses.⁴ Although, most of the discussions about nationalism have neglected the issue of gender, conceptualizing the nation as a cultural artifact opened up a space for considerations of gender. Inspired by the constantly growing literature on gender, scholars have brought light to the numerous ways in which gender distinctions and hierarchies were constructed through nationalism and the ways in which gendered ideals of masculinity and femininity were constantly reworked to project images of nations. In a highly sophisticated discussion of the issue in the introduction of her book, *Gender Ironies of Nation: Sexing the Nation*, Tamar Mayer maintains the connection of nationalism and gender as follows:

Because, nationalism, gender and sexuality are all socially and culturally constructed, they frequently play an important role in constructing one another – by invoking and helping to construct the “us” versus “them” distinction and exclusion of the Other. The empowerment of one gender, one nation or one sexuality virtually always occurs at the expense and dis-empowerment of another. But because people have multiple identities, the interplay among nation, gender and sexuality often pressures people to negotiate their identities in complex ways.⁵

Despite the prolific expansion of the scholarly research and theoretical reflections on women and gender history from seventies on, non-Western women’s experiences less frequently became the focus of serious historical investigation until more recently. Only by early nineties, the study of non-Western women was propelled to the center of scholarly enterprise. As feminist theory and

⁴ Benedict Anderson, “Imagined Communities”, *Nations and Identities: Classic readings*, ed. Vincent P. Pecora, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms since 1870: Programme, myth, reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1990.

⁵ Tamar Mayer, *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, London, New York: Routledge, 2000, p.5.

women's history have matured, historians were forced to recognize and examine the past experiences of non-Western women.

On the other hand, new insights about colonialism and Orientalism that grew out of social science studies have opened up new historiographical views for non-Western women's history. The critical understanding that evolved from this scholarship has demonstrated the inadequacy of the stereotyping and unifying approaches defined by Eurocentric prejudgments to the diversity and richness of the lives of actual non-Western women and made us awkward to the Eurocentric misconceptions of Middle Eastern women as helpless, passive victims oppressed under a stagnant Islamic regime. Studies concerning the participation and agency of women in the nationalist politics and movements, and latter the connections of nationalism and new gender identities in the former colonial countries flourished under this critical perspective.

Following this trend, a number of works have been published that have attempted to refute the negligence of Ottoman women in history. Although our knowledge of the Ottoman women's past is still strikingly inadequate there is an undeniable development in the field. Serious scholarship concerning Ottoman women's movement was hardly available until early nineteen-nineties. Before then, the studies of Ottoman-Turkish women's history were confined to the narrations that emphasized the state feminism of the early republican era. Such studies mostly focused on the "women friendly" top to down strategy and policies implemented by male politicians. The only female figures that could find a place in such narrations were Halide Edip and the anonymous "Anatolian women". The

possibility of an autonomous pre-republican women's movement was totally neglected in such approaches.

Serpil Çakır's book, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, was published in 1993 as the pioneer work that pointed at the existence of an autonomous pre-republican women's movement that was worthy of serious scholarly interest. It presented a strong challenge to the pervasive opinion that women's rights in Turkey were merely a result of top down politics implemented in the republican era.⁶ Late Ottoman women's history is already constituted as a fertile area of Ottoman women's history, which flourishes with a number of articles and monographs concerning the issue. Connections of nationalism with women's movement and gender is an important subject of this growing literature.

The basic problematic of the present study presents itself at the connection of the theoretical debates over the theme of nationalism, women and gender and the late Ottoman women's history in relation to the already created literature in the field. The primary source of this thesis, *Kadınlar dünyası*, owing to the period in which it is published and the political motivations of its' authors, provides a fertile ground for such a discussion. *Kadınlar dünyası* is a unique historical source to connect the Ottoman women's movement to the making of Turkish nationalism.

Kadınlar dünyası, published by the Society of the Defense of Women's Rights (Müdafaa-ı Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti), first appeared in April 4, 1329/

⁶ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1996.

April 17 1913 as a 4 pages daily newspaper, just after the Balkan Wars. It was not only intended for but also published by women. The owner of the newspaper was Nuriye Ulviye (Ulviye Mevlan after her marriage to the journalist Rıfat Mevlan) and the editor was Emine Seher Ali. Among the authors of the newspaper Mükerrerrem Belkıs, Atiyye Şükran, Aliye Cevad, Azize Haydar, Sıdika Ali Rıza, Safiye Biran, and Nimet Cemil may be counted as the prominent names. Articles signed by male authors were hardly available in the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası*. The newspaper published only women's writings on principle from the inception to the end. The founders of *Kadınlar dünyası* were rejecting the aid of men as they differentiated women from men as a group with their own interests. Considering women as a group if its own interests and the intention for an autonomous enterprise are important indications of the feminist insights that guided the project.

In principle, the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* were open to all Ottoman women without any discrimination depending on religion or ethnicity. On the first page, under the title of the newspaper, there always appeared the following phrase: "Our pages are peculiar to the works of the esteemed Ottoman women without distinguishing race or religion." This motto invited all Ottoman women from all ethnic and religious groups of the Empire to write in *Kadınlar dünyası*. However, a great majority of the authors remained to be Muslim women. The number of the articles written by non-Muslim women could be counted on one's fingers. Non-Muslim women's inability in reading and writing Arabic letters was an important drawback in front of their contribution. As the founders of the newspaper were aware of the problem, they organized weekly acceptance days in

the office of *Kadınlar dünyası* for face-to-face contact with foreign and non-Muslim women who cannot read and write Ottoman Turkish. On the other hand, the social and political atmosphere of the period marked by nationalism might also prevent a more dynamic collaboration. Whatever the reasons were, Muslim women dominated *Kadınlar dünyası* and the articles published frequently had a tone addressing only the Muslim women.

On the side of the Muslim women, the literacy rates of the period can be considered an important restriction to the range of the contributors and the audience of the newspaper. The authors and the audience of the newspaper can be inferred to be limited to a privileged group of women who could read and write. Until very recently, it was argued that the authors and the audience of Ottoman women's magazines were limited to the women of elite families. However, Elizabeth Frierson convincingly argued that with the establishment of new public schools for girls- such as the vocational schools and teachers training schools that targeted the education of middle and lower class girls- the range of women who could read and write extended towards middle and lower classes. According to Frierson, at least some of the contributors and audience of the women's press were lower class women educated in the public girls' schools.⁷

There is not a detailed documentation on circulation numbers of the newspaper. However, an announcement, which tells that the circulation of that

⁷ Elizabeth Frierson, "Unimagined Communities: Educational Reform and civic identity among late-Ottoman women", *Critical Matrix* 9:2, Fall 1995, pp. 57-92.

issue was restricted to three thousand copies due to paper shortage provides an insight that it was of a considerable number. To summarize, *Kadınlar dünyası* was an Istanbul based, autonomous women's magazine established and dominated by Muslim women, which could reach a considerable circulation.

As mentioned above a thorough study of *Kadınlar dünyası* is crafted by Çakır. Çakır picks out *Kadınlar dünyası* as a distinguished instance of women's activism in the late Ottoman period and identifies the demands and discussions – with an emphasis on their feminist tones- raised through its pages. In the preface of her book, she explains the aim of her study as to offer an account of women's demands and activism.⁸

Çakır's approach has undeniable merits from a feminist standpoint. First of all, she introduces a forgotten tradition of an autonomous women's activism and provides a serious challenge to the pervasive understanding that women's rights in Turkey was merely a result of a top down politics. Focusing on women's own voices and activism, whether they are complaining, criticizing, or demanding, her study unearths Ottoman women's willful struggle for women's rights. Through an inspection of women's statements, complains, criticisms and suggestions manifested in the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* Çakır reveals the new familial and social models sought by the authors as well as the feminist insights that led these models.

Çakır's effort to uncover women's imagination and autonomous struggle for a more egalitarian and liberal society is an important contribution to Ottoman

⁸ Çakır, p. 10.

women's history. On the other hand, her book lacks a dimension that concerns women's movement's relation to the social, political and economic atmosphere of the time. The question "How women's imagination and activism was informed by and contributed to the social and political context" is left out from Çakır's work. In this thesis I tried to answer this crucial question through a re-reading of *Kadınlar dünyası*.

As stated above *Kadınlar dünyası* was first published after the Balkan Wars, at a critical period through which nationalism emerged as the dominant ideology to create new moral and political prescripts for Ottoman society. When one considers the atmosphere the time dominated by nationalisms, searching for the connections of feminist struggle with nationalist ideologies and practices grows to be important. Particularly in colonial and Middle Eastern contexts feminist struggles grow from within the nationalist politics. For example, when talking about the Egyptian women's press Beth Baron argues that "National and regional politics formed the backdrop for the press, defined its parameters, and helped to shape the perspectives of the writers. The emergence of nationalism meant re-imagining of the community and ties of loyalty, and, by implication, a rethinking of family and gender roles."⁹ This is also the case for the late Ottoman women's press in general and *Kadınlar dünyası* in particular. On the other hand, women were not only informed by, but also contributed to the nationalist processes. Today, academic scholarship has a consensus on the idea that

⁹ Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society and the Press*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1994, pp. 13-14.

becoming a nation is a construction process and specifically modern. Today, with the contributions of many feminist scholars, women's participation to nation construction- both as activists in nationalist processes and contributors to the biological, cultural and symbolical reproduction of the nation - are included in most of the theorizations of nations and nationalisms exclude women from their analysis of this construction process.

It is usually argued that women's movements and nationalist politics are frequently intertwined to each other, particularly in the colonial contexts. The emergence of nationalisms provides a new conception of society within which women can attribute themselves new social positions, roles and duties. Within such contexts the feminist demands emerge entangled with the national prescripts. Depending on new imaginations about their place and roles in "the nation" women do not only re-formulate their demands, but also articulate them more legitimately.

Feminism raised through the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* is a perfect case of the scheme summarized above. Not only the tone and the content of the letters and articles in *Kadınlar dünyası* reflect the national sensibilities and tensions of the time, but also the demands articulated in it are almost always related to nationalistic ideals such as the salvation of the country and the progress of the nation.

This study consists of 6 chapters. Chapter 2, which follows Introduction, provides a brief overview of the historical milieu into which *Kadınlar dünyası* emerged. In the third chapter, I will explore how the historical context –marked by

a panic of a falling empire and the nationalist efforts to save it—shaped the basic demands raised through *Kadınlar dünyası* and informed the ways these demands were articulated. Chapter 4 examines women’s participation in the 1913- 1914 Ottoman Boycott against foreign/ non-Muslim products and traders and the discussions on this participation as case of women’s activism informed by national politics. How women’s economic agency was defended by utilizing a nationalist discourse constitutes the subject matter of Chapter 5. The final chapter briefly restates the arguments of the study.

Chapter 2

Historical Setting

The Tanzimat era began with the proclamation of *the Rescript of Gülhane* (the Tanzimat Edict) in 03 November 1839 under the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid (1839-61). With the edict, the Sultan was accepting some restrictions on his authority and promising the security of his Muslim and Non-Muslim subjects' life, honor, and property. The Tanzimat Edict was followed by the Islahat Edict (the Reform Edict) of 1856 in which both the actual and legal inequality between Muslim and non-Muslim subjects was assured to be eradicated. The attempts meant toward the replacement of the faith-centered system of the Ottoman Empire with a new relationship between the state and subjects on the basis of Ottoman citizenship.

Throughout the Tanzimat era, the army was reorganized, a new penal code was instituted, the tax structure was reformed, a new provincial administration was set up and modern schools were established. A new civil code, albeit depending on religious rules, was introduced in 1876 as well. The state bureaucrats, responsive to the emergency of achieving an equal position among the international powers to safeguard the Empire, led the modernist reforms and tried to reinforce the centrality of the state's power.

In December 1876, the first Ottoman constitution was adopted under the rule of the new Sultan, Abdülhamid II (1876-1909). The Constitution granted certain individual and constitutional rights to the subjects of the Empire. A parliament composed of a House of Deputies and a House of Notables was convened. However, a year after Abdülhamid II, in accordance to the rights

granted to him by the constitution, dissolved the parliament. Up to the 1908 coup the parliament was not convened again for thirty years.

Although it can be justifiably argued that the seeds of the outcomes of the Tanzimat era were rooted much before 1839, this era was marked by prominent qualitative changes that cannot be minimized or understated. The conditions of the modern state in its contemporary sense “-meaning mass schooling, a postal, service, railways, lighthouses, clock towers, lifeboats, museums censuses and birth certificates, passports, as well as parliaments, bureaucracies and armies-“ were established through the Tanzimat reforms.¹⁰

In the Tanzimat period, one of the most crucial developments of the era concerning women’s lives was the development in the state educational facilities for girls, which was a part, albeit small, of the nineteenth century Ottoman educational endeavor. The nineteenth century Ottoman educational policy that reflected a certain “vigor and resourcefulness” despite the financial constraints, was strongly influenced by an optimistic and widespread belief to the “transformative power of new-style schooling” among the Ottomans. This new-style education was characterized by a “fusion of the new pedagogy with the Ottoman and Islamic elements.”¹¹

Although the major focus of the Ottoman educational policies had been education of male subjects, relatively significant advances in the education of girls took place as well. Certain attention was paid to the foundation of middle level

¹⁰ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, New York: I.B. Tauris: 1998, p.9.

¹¹ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam the State and the Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, New York: Oxford University Press 2002, pp. 4-5.

state schools for girls reflecting the state's attention to and/or recognition of its' female subjects.¹² The first middle school for girls, Cevri Kalfa İnas Rüşdiyesi, was founded in Istanbul, in 1859. By 1883, 418 girls were educated in these schools per year. The same year, the first vocational school for girls whose curriculum was designed to provide occupational training for lower class girls was founded in Ruscuk. The first of these vocational schools in Istanbul was founded in 1869. The expansion of educational facilities for girls, however, precipitated a need for women teachers, which resulted in the incorporation of teachers' training in the program of girls' education. The first teachers' training school for girls (Darülmualimat) was opened in 1870 providing the highest level of education for women in the Empire.¹³

The implications of state education for women (for men as well) are two fold. On the one hand education can be viewed as a disciplinary technology of modern state that serves to mold people into submissive and loyal citizens. Selim Deringil argues that,

In the second half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire came into its' own as an 'educator state' with as systematic program of education/indoctrination for subjects it intended to mold into citizens. Together with the Russian, Austrian, French, British, German and Japanese empires, the Ottoman Empire set about creating what Hobsbawm has called 'a captive audience available for indoctrination in the education system', in a citizen mobilizing and citizen influencing state.¹⁴

¹² For a discussion on the lack of organized and systematic primary education in the Tanzimat era please see, İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, p. 186.

¹³ Ayşe Durakbaşa, *Halide Edip: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, p.97.

¹⁴ Deringil, p.93.

Elif Ekin Akşit argues that in the modernization process, the Ottoman state confronted the necessity of creating new political subjects out of women as well as men in order to hold the social order. According to Akşit, The educational endeavors concerning girls' education were "schooling practices that liberate women from familiar hierarchies but subject them to the modern state more directly".¹⁵

It was strategically crucial for the Ottoman state to educate women not only to prove that the Ottomans were as modern and as advanced as other European powers but also to discipline women's minds and bodies into becoming model Ottoman mother-citizens. Since women were attributed important roles in socializing children, the state required assurance that mothers would appropriately shape these future generations, reproducing good Ottoman citizens and a model social order which was informed by western Enlightenment values on the one side and traditional religious and cultural values on the other.

However, education is also a tool of empowerment and a means of social and political agency for both male and female individuals. In the Tanzimat era, curriculums of girls' schools had frequently been poor and restricted compared to the curriculums of the boys' schools' of the era. The main attention was paid for preparing the girls to their expected role being that of wife and mother. Yet still, public education of women had important effects on women's lives and women's social and political agency. First and foremost, state education increased the

¹⁵ "(kadınları) alışılmış hiyerarşilerden bağımsızlaştıran ama modern devlete daha doğrudan tabi kılan okullaşma uygulamaları": Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği: Kız enstitülerinin uzun tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2005, p. 111.

literacy rates, albeit within certain limits, and extended the social borders of women's literacy, which had been a privilege restricted to elite women before, towards lower classes.¹⁶ No doubt, literacy and education was a crucial condition for expanding women's horizons concerning their social situation and rights. It would be stimulating to consider this two-fold characteristic of education provided for women while analyzing women's political agency.

In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, an Ottoman-Muslim intelligentsia, whose members were particularly different from the reformist Tanzimat elites of the earlier period both in their social roots and in their ideology, emerged. These intellectuals engaged in a liberal critique of Tanzimat policies and the bureaucratic absolutism of the era with an emphasis on parliamentary constitutionalism. The new intelligentsia were composed of intellectual young bureaucrats and men of letters who had been educated in the new Tanzimat schools and positioned in state institutions such as Translation Bureau (Tecüme Bürosu). Generally, these intellectuals were against the authoritarianism of the Sultan and the bureaucracy around him, unsatisfied with the superficiality of the reforms and critical about the indiscriminate adoption of Western innovations and lifestyles. However, they could develop neither a homogeneous ideology nor a program.¹⁷

In the heterogeneity and unsteadiness of their ideologies, the new Ottomans suffered one dramatic paradox. They were faced with the historical task

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 73-110.

¹⁷ Ortaylı, p.214.

of confronting modern Western civilization and leading the changes that were going on in social and administrative domains of the Empire. Paradoxically, they perceived the West as a danger that threatened the very existence of the Empire.

Meanwhile, there grew a public debate around the issue of women's emancipation and a new type of family. Generally, the improvement of the women's situation in their families and society were considered a prerequisite of all social progress. In her article, "Kadın, İslam ve Devlet: Karşılaştırmalı bir Yaklaşım" (Woman, Islam and State: a Comparative Approach), Deniz Kandiyoti states that the earliest advocates of women's emancipation in the Muslim world were frequently educated, nationalist male elites with a focus on the issues of education, sexual differentiation, segregation and polygamy. She indicates that the male concern in women's emancipation frequently coincided with the broader debates on "progress" and compatibility of Islam with modernism.¹⁸ Not surprisingly, the first ones to initiate debates around the issues of marriage, family and women's emancipation in the Muslim circles of the Tanzimat era were the prominent names of the intelligensia, such as Namık Kemal and Şinasi and intellectual Muslim women of the era participated in these debates soon after.

The gender discourse of the era was defined in tandem with the oscillations of these intellectuals and indeed the whole society between the

¹⁸ "19. yüzyılın sonu ile 20. yüzyılın başı, İslam dünyasındaki kadınların durumunu evrimleştirmeyi hedef alan eğitilmiş milliyetçi, ve genellikle erkek seçkinlerden oluşan reformcuların ortaya çıkışına tanıklık etti. Bu seçkinlerin kadın haklarıyla ilgileri eğitim, cins ayrımı, örtünme, ve çok karılılık sorunlarına yoğunlaştı ve "ilerleme"yi hedef alan gündem ile İslamın modernizmle olan uyuşabilirliği sorunu ile örtüştü." Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1997, p.87.

opposing poles, one of Westernization and progress, the other of Islam and tradition. The focus of the early debates concerning women was the family. Through these discussions, traditions and old forms such as forced and arranged marriages; early marital ages for girls, concubinage, and polygamy were criticized as causes and symbols of social retard, which developed through misguiding customs. These traditions were condemned as un-Islamic and contradicting the real spirit of Islam. Also, women were attributed new roles in family such as the education of the children and introduction of the values of Enlightenment in the family. Proper education of women was considered a necessity for them to be good housewives and mothers and to complement their husbands sufficiently in their marriages. However, frequently indoctrination of a strict regulation of women's sexuality and behavior accompanied these liberal criticisms. Keeping women away from the extreme freedom identified with the Western culture was at the core of this new discourse.¹⁹

Family was important because an individual was not an independent being, but an integral member of a family and society. The basic institution that anchors the individual to his society, which would be explicitly named as the Turkish nation from the early twentieth century on and links him to the past and the future, was considered to be the family. Intellectuals of the era believed that the integrity of the family institution was the main guarantor of the surveillance of the Empire. For example, Şemseddin Sami, who proved his interest by publishing

¹⁹ For some excerpts from works of Tanzimat Intellectuals concerning women and family, see, *Sosyo-Kültürel Değişme Sürecinde Türk Ailesi v. 1*, ed. Ezel Elverdi, Ankara:T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırmaları Kurumu,1992.

a magazine and a book on family issues, highlights the prominence of the family for society as follows:

The human society is composed of small societies named as “family”; the prosperity of the human society depends on the prosperity of families. Indeed, by perceiving societies consisting of almost all by men in the bazaars, streets, government offices, business and trade places, we cannot perceive family bodies in these societies; yet whenever we think out that every man we see in a continuous movement, in an effort for work, in hurry, in tumult is suffering these troubles for obtaining comfort in a family and providing his family a good maintenance and whenever we remark that the bazaars, streets and governmental places and the rest of the general places are emptied at night, and the people dissolve into the families we understand that the human society is composed of family societies.²⁰

For Şemseddin Sami like most of his fellow modernists the “family issue” meant almost the same thing as “woman’s issue” because the family was considered an inherently female domain. Şemseddin Sami continues his article with the following words:

Family means woman. When a man is a little child, he is a work in the hands of women; when he gets older he becomes one of the exterior members of the family. When men turn back home in the evening from their work, they want to find their food, drinks, underwear, garment, every comfort and need ready for them. The ones who create all these, these indispensable needs are women.²¹

²⁰ “Cemiyet-i beşeriye “aile” denilen ufak cemiyetlerden mürekkeptir; cemiyet-i beşeriyenin saadeti, ailelerin saadeti ile mütevakkıftır. Vakıa çarşılarında, sokakalarda, hükümet dairelerinde, kesb u kar ve muamelat-ı umumiye mahallerinde hemen bütün bütün erkelerden ibaret cemiyetler görüp, bu cemiyetlerde ailelerin vücudunu görmeyiz,; ancak o cemiyetlerde bir hareket-i daimede, bir sa’y u amelde, bir telaşta, bir dağdağada gördüğümüz her adamın bu zahmetleri evine gidip bir aile içinde rahat etmek ve ailesi halkını iyi geçindirmek maksadıyla çektiğini düşündüğümüzde ve o gece çarşıların, sokakların, hükümet mahallerinin ve sair mahall-i umumiyenin boş kalmasıyla, insanların ailelere munkasım olduğunu gördüğümüzde, cemiyet-i beşeriyenin aile cemiyetlerinden mürekkep olduğunu anlarız” Şemseddin Sami, “Kadınlar”, *Sosyo-Kültürel Değişim Sürecinde Türk Ailesi*, Ankara: Ülke yayıncılık, 1992. p. 1029.

²¹ “Aile demek kadın demektir. Erkek küçükken, kadınların elinde bir iştir; büyüdükten sonra ailenin harici azasından olur. Erkeler gündüzün işlerine gidip akşam evlerine avdet ettiklerinde yiyeceklerini, içeceklerini çamaşırlarını,

According to this view, the female-centered family is expected to reproduce its' male-members who will form the 'human society'. Indeed, identification of the family and the woman finds its roots in the public/private dichotomy. In this construct, the outside world or the public realm is the domain of the male subject, while the private realm or the family is defined by women. The family as the primary and immediate unit of society serves as the reproduction ground of the men and hence the society. I believe that this dichotomy and its' particularities in Ottoman society, to which I will return through my analysis, is crucial for understanding Ottoman feminism.

Another feature of mainstream modernist debates concerning family was the proto-nationalistic tones they carried. The discourse of nationalism did not cohere into a single political project among Ottoman-Muslim modernists until 1920's, yet various strands of proto-nationalism began to emerge in late nineteenth century. For example, Namık Kemal argues that: "A person exists in a home, yet there is a motherland assuring his and his home's future and comfort. This motherland demands service for its' children's expansion and education and for the protection of their future and their comfort."²² In his view motherland conditions the existence and prosperity of the family, hence the family had to pay its' debt to the motherland by the healthy upbringing and education of children. In

libaslarını, her bir rahat ve ihtiyaçlarını hazır bulmak isterler. Hep bu şeyleri, ihtiyacı-ı zaruriyeyi tehye eden kadınlardır.": ibid. p.1029.

²² İnsan bir hanede bulunur, fakat kendisinin, hanesinin istiklal ve rahatına kefil olmuş bir de mader-i vatan vardır ki, bizden evladının tehsir ve terbiyesine ve istiklal ve rahatının hıfzına hizmet talep ediyor. Namık Kemal, "Aile", *Sosyo-Kültürel Değişme sürecinde Türk Ailesi*, Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Aile Araştırma Kurumu, 1992. p.1019.

such kind of discourses on the family it is possible to see some sources of the ideal of “national family” that will rise in the Second Constitution era.

Construction of a new gender discourse around a new type of an ideal family and new gender roles and identities for women and men had soon become an arena where tensions and paradoxes of modernization were reflected and tried to be soothed. Fatmagül Berktaş argues that, through Turkish modernization, the anxieties, fears and even paranoia resulting from the divisions and repressions of the modernization period have been projected to the domain of gender identities and particularly to the domain of the construction of “women’s identity”.

Challenged by new conditions and in search of a new identity the Turkish intellectual has to overcome the feeling of being deteriorated because of the loss of father who symbolizes the tradition. While his ground gets more and more slippery the branch he holds is the same as his western brother’s, constructing himself a new “women image” and to prove that even under the changing conditions there is something stable to produce the old patriarchy in a way complying with the new conditions.²³

Although, the debates concerning the “women’s issue” were initiated by male intellectuals, in the meantime Muslim female intellectuals participated in them.

Nigar Bint-i Osman (1856- 1918) Fatma Aliye (1862-1936), Makbule Leman (1865-98), coming from the elite families, had been three female

²³ “Yeni koşulların zorladığı yeni kimlik arayışı içindeki Türk aydını, çevresindeki bildik dünyanın değişiyor olmasının yarattığı yersiz yurtsuzluk (“muahacirlik”) duygusuyla ve geleneği temsil eden babanın artık varolmamasından kaynaklanan, gerektiğinde sığınabileceği güvenli bir sığınaktan yoksunluğun yol açtığı paranoyayla başetmek zorundadır. Ayaklarının altındaki zemin kayganlaşırken “tutunduğu dal” ise, Batıdaki moderleşmeci erkek kardeşinin yaptığı gibi, kendi denetiminde yeni bir “kadın imgesi” yaratmak ve yeni koşullar altında bile değişmeyen bir şeyler olduğunu kanıtlamak üzere eski ataerkil ideolojiyi yeni koşullara uygun biçimde yeniden üretmektir”: Fatmagül Berktaş, “Doğu ile Batı’nın Birleştiği Yer Kadın İmgesinin Kuruluşu”, *Modernleşme ve Batıcılık*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2002, p. 275.

forerunners in the male dominated Ottoman intellectual life and press.²⁴ Particularly, Fatma Aliye, daughter of the significant Tanzimat reformer, Cevdet Pasha, managed to become the most well-known and respected female intellectual of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. She stepped into the press world with her translation Ohnet's *Volonte* which she signed as "a lady" and continued with her own novels, articles books which made her the symbol of the rise of the intellectual activism of Ottoman Muslim women. In her frequently mentioned work concerning the "women's issue", *nisvan-ı Islam* (women of Islam), Fatma Aliye took a modernist Islamist position arguing for the compatibility of women's emancipation with Islam. However, the existence of women was not restricted to a few prominent women.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, newspapers and periodicals emerged as a major arena of political and social criticism as well as social regulation and discipline. Articles and particular periodicals for women took their place in the scene coinciding with the attention dedicated to "women's issue". The flourishing of the women's press, with the influence of increasing educational opportunities for girls as well, opened a path for female intellectual activism. Particularly, in late nineteenth century female Muslim intellectuals, most of whom can be guessed to be educated in the new schools, aspired to participate in the debates concerning their own fate.

The first women's newspaper in Turkish, *Terraki-i muhadderat*, appeared in 1869 as a supplement to the mainstream newspaper *Terakki*. In Total, 48

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Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fıkrası, Kadın Birliği*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003, p. 43.

weekly issues of the newspaper were published. From then on tens of women's magazines in Turkish were published in Istanbul varying in range of topics, longevity and circulation figures. Mostly, these periodicals were edited by men but women could also find room for their own voice. The longest lasting and most influential women's newspaper before the Second Constitutional Period was *Hanımlara mahsus gazete*. It was published from 1895 to 1908 for 604 issues in total.²⁵

These early women's magazines and newspapers frequently provided guidance about child rearing and education, housework, health-care, family hygiene, cooking, duties of a wife and fashion. In addition, they ran articles that aimed at enlightening women in scientific questions, cultural issues, educational matters and history. Although, these magazines contained a large array of information aimed at helping/regulating the middle and upper class women to participate fully in modernization process, they carefully kept away from politics. Yet still, it was through these early women's periodicals women could find an opportunity to articulate their own voice for.²⁶ Yet, this should not minimize the fact that among many male writes and editors, curious to teach women, women themselves put a serious effort for articulation of their complains, suggestions and demands through their own words. Yaprak Zihnioğlu indicates the rise of the notion of an "ideal of womanhood":

²⁵ Çakır, pp. 22-31.

²⁶ For a detailed documentation of the content of the journals and also for introductory analysis of the content of these journals see Çakır, pp. 22-42.

“The ideal of womanhood” meant the recognition and perception of the problems suffered by women and suggestions for solutions besides the desires of women: what and how they wanted to be. The Ottoman women’s demands concerning being accepted as human beings, participating in the public sphere, getting proper education and entering in all kinds of professions were defined with this concept.²⁷

Despite its historical limitations the female intellectual activism of the late nineteenth century, which developed mostly through women’s magazines, planted the seeds of the feminist movements of early twentieth century.

In July 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) threatened Sultan Abdülhamid to send the army stationed in Salonica into Istanbul and obliged him to re-install the constitution and invite the parliament to convene. The revolt was directed toward the authoritarian regime of Sultan Abdülhamid and it was triggered by the foreign intervention in internal Ottoman affairs.²⁸ From July 1908 onward, CUP dominated the Ottoman political scene, all the while standing for the parliamentary order.

The period between 1908 and 1912 is known as the liberal-pluralist phase of the second Constitutional era. Just after the revolt the constitution was restored, elections were held, and the parliament was re-convened in December 1908. In the pluralist air of the era around ten political parties were active; 353 newspapers

²⁷ “Kadınlık mefkuresi kadınların yaşadığı sorunların anlaşılması, bilinç düzeyine çıkarılması ve çözüm önerileriyle birlikte kadınların toplumsal arzuları; ne olmak istedikleri, nasıl olmak istedikleri anlamına geliyordu. Osmanlı kadınlarının insan addedilme, kamu alanında yer alma, eğitim, tüm mesleklere girme, toplumsal konumlarının yükselmesi talebi ve çözüm önerilerinin tümü bu kavramla belirtiliyordu.”: Zihnioğlu, p. 45.

²⁸ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2003, p.130.

and journals, through which a broad variety of competing political agendas and ideologies was reflected, emerged. In power, CUP promoted initiatives to establish a liberal economy; supported entrepreneurship and foreign investments. On the other hand, workers also utilized this liberal atmosphere for their interests, in the second half of 1908, over 100 strikes were organized across the Empire.²⁹

On the side of women, a flourishing of women's press and activism marked this era.

However, the liberal phase was short lived. In 1913 CUP organized the so-called Bab-ı Ali coup against the government and monopolized the power to the end of the World War in 1918. The coup and the monopolization of power afterwards were justified by CUP with the claim to be the only power capable of defending Ottoman sovereignty. The events such as the independence of Bulgaria, Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Tripoli war, the Balkan Wars and the fall of Edirne prepared the ground for the authoritarianism of CUP.³⁰

Before 1908 and in the first phase of the Second Constitutional Period, CUP stressed the ideal of Ottomanism in an effort to attract the support of various ethnic and religious groups and to appease the nationalist tendencies among them. The union of all Ottomans was promoted as a strategy to prevent the partition of the Empire. The revolt of CUP against Sultan Abdülhamid and reinstallation of

²⁹ Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Ekonomi ve Toplum (1908-1950) Milli İktisat-Milli Burjuvazi*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995, p. 1.

³⁰ Ibid, p.3.

the Constitution was backed by and welcomed among different ethnic and religious groups of the Ottoman Empire as well. In this early phase, CUP seemed to endorse the idea of an inclusive citizenship for all (male) people of the Empire based on equal rights and responsibilities.

However, in the following period, the nationalist ideas, already disseminated among the ethnic and religious communities of the Empire, were fortified under the pressure of internal and external events. With the Balkan Wars came the complete rupture of the ideal of Ottomanism. After the Balkan Wars, CUP explicitly leaned towards nationalism depending on the Muslim-Turkish population of Anatolia. This latter phase of the Second Constitution era was signed as an authoritarian era through which Turkish nationalism advanced in cultural, political and economical domains.

Deniz Kandiyoti reminds that the ideology concerning women and family took its' exact and particular form after 1908. In this era, marked by the advance of Turkish nationalism in cultural, political and economic domains, the dominant gender discourse of the period was informed by an emphasis on 'national family'.³¹ Confirming again Kandiyoti's observations quoted in the introduction part, the advance of nationalism amplified the association between nation and family with an outpouring of discourses relating the national solidarity, progress and morality to family.³²

³¹ Kadınlar ve aileyle ilgili ideolojinin kesin ve gerçek anlamda özgün bir biçim alması, bu dönemden sonraya rastlar. Bu döneme kadar Batılılaşma ile İslam arasına sıkışıp kalan tartışmaya, ideolojik anlatımını İkinci Meşrutiyet'in Türkçü akımlarında bulan Türk milliyetçiliği yeni bazı öğeler katmıştır. Kandiyoti, p.175.

³² Kandiyoti, p. 97.

Zafer Toprak links the centrality of family in discourses of nationalism to the emphasis on sociology as a major guide in the process of nation-state building. Construction of a ‘new family’ or ‘national family’ was claimed crucial for radical transformations in the system of values and the social structure proposed in the sociological works of Ziya Gökalp.³³

Inspired by the Durkheimian notion of solidarity, Gökalp praised the family as “the cell of the nation and state”; as the “source of national solidarity and morality”. In his ideal of “national family”, Turkish family would not be a mere imitation of Western families. It was expected to adapt to the orders of a new civilization while restoring and developing a consciousness of belonging to a particular Turkish culture and past. The change in the family would lead the nation toward Western civilization in an organic process. Indeed, women were attributed a central role in this supposed transformation process. Within a move toward civilization leaded by the men of the nation, women were responsible of embodying and reproducing the national morality and values in the family as well as conveying them to the following generations. They were also to apply the new rules of civilization program (concerning house order, child-caring, hygiene vs.) in the rather isolated and protected domain of their families. A trick of conceptual archaism was called for help to sooth the anxieties concerning new gender roles emerging through this transformation process. In Gökalp’s analysis Turks had

³³ Summarized in Zafer Toprak, “II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Devlet, Ail eve Feminizm”, *Sosyo-Kültürel Değişme Sürecinde Türk Ailesi V. 1*, Ankara: Başbakanlık Aile Araştırmaları Kurumu, 1993, pp. 228-29.

been a “democratic and feminist” nation in their origin, however lost this quality under Arab influences.³⁴

No doubt, this approach had important consequences for the women, one of which was that now gender relations within the family were regulated by a sense of nationalism, whereby the modern family was considered to condition both domestic and national stability. On the one hand, this situation provided women a new imagination of their roles and status within the family and society. On the other hand, it meant new but still gender based moral and practical restrictions this time defined by nationalist imagination and ideals. It can be argued that the emerging nationalism bestowed women public and political agencies that would lead them to citizenship, yet only through their families and hence the men. Indeed, this was not particular for the Ottoman case but valid for most nation-building processes as Anne McClintock points at for Western nation-building processes:

In modern Europe, citizenship is the legal representation of a person’s relationship to the rights and resources of the nation-state. But the putatively universalistic concept of national citizenship becomes unstable when seen from the position of women. In post-French Revolution Europe, women were not incorporated directly into the nation state as citizens, but only indirectly through men, as dependent members of the family in private and public law. The Code Napoleon was the first modern statute to decree that the wife’s nationality should follow her husband’s, an example other European countries briskly followed. A woman’s political relation to the nation was submerged as asocial relation to a man through marriage. For women, citizenship in the nation was mediated by the marriage relation within the family.³⁵

³⁴ Ibid, p. 228-29.

³⁵ Anne McClintock, “Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family”. *Feminist Review* No 44, Summer 1993. p. 65

Nevertheless, the family had been the first transfer point that carried women towards citizenship. Moreover, depending on the national roles attributed them in their families they produced their early feminist demands concerning their own rights and status both in the family and society.

Berktaş also notes that despite the solidaristic and collectivist tendency carried in inherent in CUP's approach, it also prepared ground for feminism. "the transformative and egalitarian discourses, which were also reflected in the Unionists' aims of "new life" and "social revolution", conditioned the Ottoman feminism"³⁶

³⁶ "İttihatçıların "yeni hayat" ve "içtimai inkılap" amaçlarında da yansımasını bulan, dönüşümcü ve eşitlikçi söylemlerin Osmanlı feminizmine ortam hazırladığı da aynı derecede açıktır.": Berktaş, p.104.

Chapter 3

Placing *Kadınlar dünyası* in Its Historical Context

In the chapter below, I will explore how the historical context, marked by a panic of a falling empire and the nationalist efforts to save it, shaped the basic demands raised through *Kadınlar dünyası* and informed the ways these demands were articulated. *Kadınlar dünyası*, as mentioned above, was published in 1913, in a very critical episode of late Ottoman history through which new nationalist responses were devised after the pains and sufferings of consequent wars. Naturally, *Kadınlar dünyası* was shaped in and reflected the social and political sensibilities, tensions and fears of the period it emerged through. One may easily trace a sense of dread and alarm in most of the articles published in it. The “calamity of the country” (felaket-i vatan) was a frequently repeated phrase to describe the gloomy situation of the country. Especially significant in the discussions raised through the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* was the crucial place attributed to women in the struggle for saving the country .

The authors of the newspaper were not only volunteering for a patriotic duty, but also self-confidently stressing their indispensable role for the salvage of the country. After the endless laments and alarming warnings came the emphasis on women’s necessary role for the salvage of the country. The patriotic responsibilities attributed to women provided a base to the creating of spaces for women to participate in the management of their society. In other words, nationalist and patriotic ideals provided the authors sites for negotiation over women’s place and status in the nation.

The authors were not late to point out that urge for the advance of women

was connected to the nationalist ideals such as the salvation of the country and the progress of the nation. Women's pursuit of their rights was presented as a patriotic gesture. They emphasized that their aim was not only the progress and the advance of women, but the progress and the advance of the nation. They claimed that the backward situation of the women was one of the main reasons of the calamities suffered by the nation. Restoring the welfare of the country was only possible by the enlightenment, the awakening and the progress of women.³⁷

In *Kadınlar dünyası*, improvements in women's lives and progress of womanhood were directly presented as necessary conditions for the progress of the nation and the savage of the country. The authors of the newspaper devised the central role attributed to women within this process as the shaft of the crank with which they lifted their demands. The following part will explore some of the ways in which the certain issues of the nationalist politics became sites for negotiation for women over their place and status in the nation. In what follows, I will show how women based their arguments for an improved status in society on a range of social roles introduced by the historical context dominated by nationalism.

As discussed in the preceding chapters, family reigned triumphant in the nationalist rhetoric and projects of late Ottoman period. As family was considered the focal point of social reproduction, its reformation into an institution effective in building a new national society governed by modern, rational ideas became central in nationalist projects. The emphasis on the prominence of family within the nationalist discourses seemed to heighten women's social status as it came

³⁷ Signed as "Kadınlar dünyası", "Gayemiz milletimizin teallisidir", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 43 (1913), p. 1.

with praises to women as the ones to symbolize, introduce, and reproduce the national and progressive values in their families. Hence, family appeared as the major connection point of nationalist politics and feminism as women were quick to utilize the eulogies to women's influence in the family for legitimizing and supporting their demands concerning their rights, interests and status within their families and society.

As one would expect, the articles in *Kadınlar dünyası* were frequently concerned with the family issue and more explicitly, with the issue of constructing the 'national family'. The writers, just like the other modernist intellectuals of their time, imagined a new family which would be the conveyer of new moral and political values—patriotism, nationalism, modernism— deemed essential to the welfare and progress of the nation. Within their discourses families were defined as brick stones from which the nation was produced/reproduced both physically and morally. The authors of *Kadınlar dünyası* defined family as a brick stone from which the nation was reproduced both physically and morally. “Indeed, if there was not the family the nations could not come into being. The spirit and the life of the nations are the family. The primary cell of the nations is the family.”³⁸ The family was pictured not just like a simple part of the nation, but as a metonymy of the nation capable of representing all its characteristics and values. “The family means the nation. The nation means the family. These two are

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“Esasen aile olmasaydı milletler vücut bulmazdı. Milletlerin ruhu, hayatı ailedir. Milletlerin hücre-i ibtidaisi ailedir.”; Aliye Cevad, “Aile-1”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 37 (1913), p.2.

complete with each other. They are the inseparable necessities of each other.”³⁹

The strength of the nation was related to the strength of the families that it is composed of. They idealized the family as the foundation of social and national stability.

The difference between a body of all healthy members and a body of some healthy and some unhealthy members, even a greater one occurs between the nations one of which is composed of strong and influential families and the other is composed in its' opposite way. Relative to the degree of the strength of the family the glory, the dignity, reputation, strength and influence of the nations decrease or increase. Because, since we consider the family as a part of the nation, then we consider the nation as a body.⁴⁰

In the dominant conceptualization, family was considered the uniting element of national loyalty. It offered an affective model for voluntarily bringing people together. The article titled as “Doves”, in which ideal family/nation models were depicted, family metaphor is utilized to sign the nation.

The doves' love for their country is so great that in their accounts the love of the country and the love of the family are almost the same thing. Doves' love of their families and countries to such a degree caused them to inhabit as communities. They live in big forests, a few thousands of them together. Besides, dove communities are not comparable to other communities. Each member is considered a relative, a kin of every other and there is a general strong bond among them.⁴¹

³⁹ “Aile demek millet demektir. Millet demek aile demektir. Bu iki şey yek diğeriyle tamdır.”; Ibid, p.2.

⁴⁰ “Ferdiyesinin hepsi sağlam olan bir cisimle, bazıısı çürük bazıısı sağlam olan bir cisim arasında ne fark varsa kuvvetli ve nüfuzlu bir aileden teşekkül eden bir millet ile bunun aksi halinde teşekkül eden bir millet arasında o derece ve belki daha çok fark vardır. Ailenin derece-i kuvvetine göre milletleri sütutu, şanı şöreti, kuvveti, nüfuzu çoğalır veya azalır. Çünkü madem ki aileye milletin bir cüzü şeklinde bakıyoruz o halde millete de bir cism nazarıyla bakarız .”; Ibid, p.2.

⁴¹ “Güğercinlerde sevda-ı vatan o kadar ziyadedir ki nazarlarında vatan muhabbetiyle, aile muhabbeti adeta bir demektir. Güğercinlerin familyalarına, vatanlarına olan bu derece muhabbetleri kendilerinin bir suret-i cemaatle iskan etmelerine sebep göstermiştir. Bunlar büyük ormanlarda birkaç bini bir yerde olduğu halde yaşarlar. Hem de güğercin cemiyetleri başka cemyetlerle kıyas kabul etmez. Her azası yek

Such an imagination fused patriotism with family love; and devotion to family with loyalty to the nation.

The family was the incarnation of the nation, but that did not mean that it was flawless. The authors of *Kadınlar dünyası* strictly criticized the present situation of the family life and offered a family reformation that was considered as a necessary duty for the solidity of the nation: “Thus, the improvement of this situation is necessary. If the family life does not get into order, the nation also does not get into order. If the national life does not get into order this nation cannot be permanent.”⁴² The distinguishing feature of their discourse was the leading role they attributed women in reformation of family into a modern family functioning as a flawless unit of the nation. They raised many demands depending on this social role they attributed to women.

One major demand supported by the familial roles of women concerned the educational rights of women. From the earliest attempts at modernism during nineteenth century, education has been seen as a central mechanism for constructing national identities, producing new citizens and renovating Ottoman society. Thinkers with wildly different ideological agendas had a consensus on the idea that education was the first necessary step for the welfare and progress of the nation. Writers of *Kadınlar dünyası* advocated the advance of education with

diğerinin hismı, akrabası demek olup beyinlerinde bir rabıta-ı kuvviye-i umumiye vardır.”; Emine Bedii, “Güğercinler”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 39 (1913), pp.3-4.

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“İşte bu ahvalin ıslahı lazımdır. Hayat-ı aile intizama girmez ise hayat-ı milli dahi intizam bulamaz. Hayat-ı milli intizam bulmayınca da bu millet payidar olamaz.”; Signed as *Kadınlar dünyası* (editorial): “Aile hayatı, teavün-ü umumi”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 45 (1913), p.1.

similar arguments.⁴³ On the other hand, they vehemently argued that education was not a privilege to be enjoyed only by men. The education of girls was one of the central concerns of the newspaper. The writers of *Kadınlar dünyası* tried to build a consensus on girls' education, complained about the current illiteracy and ignorance among women and asked for improvements in women's education. In order to legitimize the demand and give it a greater appeal, writers linked it to the greater issues of nationalism and women's national duties mostly in their families. Demand for educational rights was always justified by national benefits and campaigning for educational rights were placed in nationalist struggles. The justification of girls' education was very simple but solid: Educating women would make women better mothers, better housewives and transform them into productive members of the society. Hence, the whole nation would benefit from their advance.

Girls deserved education firstly and far most for being the prospective mothers (of the nation). Preparing girls for their role and duties as mothers had been the most frequently articulated rationale for the demand of educational rights for women. Mothers were the first ones who educated infants. It was necessary to educate the girls for providing them the instructions, skills and knowledge for training the generations who would help the endurance and progress of the nation. This argument provided women a strong position against the conservative views opposing the education of girls. Writers frequently reminded the motherly responsibilities of women to eliminate the hostility towards girls' education.

⁴³

For example see Kasımpaşa: Nazife Mahmud Ali, "Biz yalnız bir şeye muhtacız", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 28 (1913), p.4.

According to them ignorance of women, the primary trainers of the infants, was a main reason for the calamities of the country.

For a nations progress, its women should be saved from ignorance and awoken from the indolent indifference. Unfortunately, we cannot appreciate yet. We cannot comprehend that children (sons) of the country, in the first place, receive an education in their embrace (bosom). A nation that does not have the primary education is like a building without a foundation. Doubtless, such kind of buildings collapse.⁴⁴

The main responsibility of the women was defined as embodying, reproducing and conveying the national identity in the families as mothers. Hence, women's education was considered a necessity for the national good.

The authors of *Kadınlar dünyası* imagined new kind of families in which the emotional, intellectual and physical distance among the spouses was eliminated and the traditional authoritarian relations were replaced with affection and love. However, there was a big gap between this ideal and the reality. The authors frequently indicated this gap and complained about the current situation of familial relations. "In our society a family life, a family happiness could flourish. Because of the tricks towards each other among the ordinary classes and because of the ignorance and being zealot among the elite classes, the family life could not form. The material and moral unification expected from the word family could not flourish."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ "Bir milletin ilerlemesi için kadınlarının cehaletten kurtarılması, gafletten uyandırılması lazımdır. Biz mateessüf henüz takdir edemiyoruz. Evlad-ı vatanın evvela o kadınların kucağında terbiye aldığı idrak edemiyoruz. Terbiye-i ibtidaisi olmayan bir millet temeli olmayan bir binaya benzer. Böyle binalar da şüphesiz yıkılır."; *Kadınlar dünyası*, 31 (1913), p.3.

⁴⁵ "Bizde aile hayatı, aile saadeti inkişaf edememiştir. Kısm-ı ailede tekaid ve sefaattan, kısm-ı ahaliyede cehil ve taassubdan aile hayatı teşekkül edememiştir. Aile kelimesinden beklenen maddi ve manevi ittihad ve iştirak hasıl

The lack of harmony and affection between married couples was considered a main problem that hindered the formation of proper family lives. The quarrels between spouses were found harmful particularly for the children growing in these families. Witnessing the corruption in his/her family a child would grow up as a morally corrupted individual. Terminating this harmful situation and constructing affectionate and lovely relations between wives and husbands and was necessary at the first place for growing morally solid generations This was for the good of the individuals, families and nation. “A corrupted child would not be able to serve neither to himself and his family, nor to his country and nation. The sources of this should be dried so that our children will not be poisoned.”⁴⁶

The authors of *Kadınlar dünyası* connected the disharmony between spouses to educational insufficiencies, mostly to the unbalanced educational levels of women and men. According to them, women could not complement their husbands in the marriages properly because of their inadequate educational levels. Improving girls’ education was necessary for establishing the harmony and mutual understanding among spouses. According to Azize Haydar, a school teacher and a prominent educational rights campaigner, the traditional education of girls limited with the household practices was no more sufficient. As the contemporary men were acquiring a better education compared to the past the

olamamıştır.”; *Kadınlar dünyası* (editorial), “Aile hayatı, teavün-ü umumi”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 45 (1913), p.1.

⁴⁶ “Ahlakı bozulan bir çocuk ne kendine, ne ailesine ne de vatan ve milletine hizmet edemez. Bunun menbalarını kurutmalı ki evladlarımız zehirlemesin.”; Emine Seher Ali, “Çocuklarımız”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 29 (1913), p.1.

educational level of the women should also be improved. “Those times have already have gone away. In the past, as the education and ... of men were also restricted, they contented with their fate and became.... It was possible to coincide wives and husbands who had lived for forty or fifty years with contentment. I wonder what happens among the ones who can only subsist on forty days?”⁴⁷ She herself provides the answer of her question:

According to the rumors, nowadays the couples who live on in ease are seldom met. Whomever you listen to complains; whomever you coincide with mentions her ill-fate and helplessness. I wonder, what is the reason for this? If we attribute the quilt to the men, they will refute. If we burden it to the women they will no way accept it. ! Okay then! Who owns the sin? If the men are asked:
 -Ah! This womanhood, we are burst out, tired of!
 If you ask to the women:
 -Aman men! Aman aman! The nicest of them is as bad as the worst one!⁴⁸

Azize Haydar accepts the fact that the problem flourishes mostly from the lower educational levels of women. However, she is careful to point at men are not entirely blameless in this regard.

It is impossible to decide which of the sides is right!The woman is unhappy, the man is unhappy! Both of them are right? In that case who is guilty? The ignorance. Our men always find us, the women, guilty. In every case they propose the words: Our women are ignorant! Our women are ignorant!Yes, they are, this cannot be denied. Yet who causes them to remain ignorant?

⁴⁷ “Şimdi o zamanlar geçti. o zamanlar erkeklerin de tahsili görgüsü mahdud olduğundan bu kadere kanaat ederlerdi. Kırk elli sene yaşayan zevc zevce görülürdü ki birbirlerinden pek memnun ve hoşnud kalmışlardır. Acaba şimdi kırk gün geçinenler arasında ne olur?”; Azize Haydar, “Bizde kız evladların tahsili”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 13 (1913), p. 2.

⁴⁸ “Rivayete bakılırsa şimdi rahat yaşayan eşlere pek az tesadüf olunuyor. Kimi dinleseniz şikayet eder, kime rastlasanız talihsizliğinden biçareliğinden dem vurur. Acaba bunun sebebi nedir? Kabahati erkelere atfetsek inkar ederler, kadınlara yüklemek katiyen kabul etmezler! Pekala! Ortada günahkar olan kim? Erkeklerle sorulsa:-Ah! Bu kadınlık bıkdık, usandık!Kadınlara sorsanız:-Aman erkekler? Aman aman! En iyisi en fenası kadar fena!”; Ibid, p. 2.

She blames the men, the father, who prevents proper educations of their daughters and invites the women, the mothers, to care for their daughters' proper education.⁴⁹ The anxieties about the unbalanced educational levels of girls and boys and the harm of this situation to the families and hence, to the nation are shared by most of the authors of *Kadınlar dünyası*:

They could not understand that nations are composed of families and families are composed of men and women and if the families cannot advance that nations cannot advance and if men change and women do not families deteriorate. The boys had an intercourse with the science and new scientific branches. Their view of the world has completely altered. They felt the necessity of importing the Western civilization, and changing our life style. On the other hand, the unfortunate girls remained uneducated and imprisoned at home as previously. Ten or fifteen years after, the educated men become unable to come to conformity with the uneducated women. Because, they are alienated to each other.⁵⁰

The ignorant wife spending her time by gossiping with her neighbors and continuously grumbling to her husband was a typical figure depicted frequently in criticisms of corrupted families. The male counterpart of this figure was the husband who was coming home late, spending time in the café shops, drinking alcohol and even having mistresses. Some times critics on the family lives came

⁴⁹ “Tarafinden hangisinin haklı olduğunu anlamak mümkün değil! Kadın bedbaht, erkek bedbaht! İkisi de haklı! O halde kabahat kimde? Cehaletin. Bizim erkelerimiz daima biz kadınları kabahatli bulurlar. Her ne olursa, efendim kadınlarımız cahil! sözünü ileri sürerler. Kadınlarımız cahil! Evet cahil bu inkar olunamaz. Fakat onları cahil bırakan kim?”; *Ibid*, p.2.

⁵⁰ “Milletlerin ailelerden ve ailelerin erkek ve kadınlardan oluştuğunu ve aileler yetiştirilmedikçe milletlerin yetişmeyeceği ve erkek tebeddül edip de kadın tebeddül etmez ise ailenin şirazedden çıkacağını anlamadılar. Erkek çocuklar ilim ve fünun-u cedide ile ihtilat ettiler. Dünya hakkında nazarları büsbütün değişti. Medeniyet-i garbiyeyi memlekete ithal etmek, tarz-ı hayatiyemizi değiştirmek lüzumunu his ettiler. Bedbaht kız çocukları ise, yine eski halde cahil ve hanelerde maphus bırakıldı. On on beş sene sonra tahsil gören erkkeler tahsil görmeyen kadınlarla imtizaç edemeyecek hale geldiler. Zira birbirlerine yabancı olmaya başladılar.”; Signed as *Kadınlar dünyası* (editorial), “Ailede imtizaç”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 151 (1914), p. 2. Also quoted in Çakır, p. 192.

out as complains about the dissolute habits of husbands.

He owns a family at home, he owns children and maids, they all wait for the gentleman. He does not show up in the evening, not in the yatsı, not at three o'clock. The children moan: mammy, we are hungry. Okay, baby. Daddy will come soon! The son: okay. Half an hour later, no daddy. You see, this is a family life? What kind of a happiness can be depicted out of this. Pray conscience to the husbands! ...Does a father, who does not come to his house on time, not disorder his children's nutrition and sleep? Does this situation of a father not let bad results that will occur later allowable?⁵¹

However, to read such words of the authors as daily complains of women would mean oversimplifying these texts. Indeed the exaggerated negative types depicted were utilized for suggesting a new domestic model. Ideals defined as opposites of the old corrupted types. The modernist/nationalist ideals of altered middle-class women's expectations of marriage and family. A new imagination of family legitimized women's demands, and women began to seek more emotional gratification from marriage.

On the other hand, thinking educational and familial issues led most of the writers to rethink the domestic status, public existence and work roles of women. Women considered education as a means of gaining their economic independence. They asked for their rights to work along with men and sought be able to survive without their support. Demands relating to economic independence is a key step in feminist struggles. However, the articulation of this demand was again installed

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Evde familyası var, çocukları var, hizmetçileri var, hep efendiyi gözetiyorlar. Akşam olur, gelen giden yok. Yatsı olur, gelen giden yok. Saat üç olur, gelen, giden yok. Çocuklar sızlanır. Anne biz açız. Peki yavrum baban gelecek! Oğlu: peki.. Yarım saat geçer, babadan yine eser yok. Görülüyor ki bu bir aile hayatıdır? Bunda ne gibi bir mesudiyet tasavvur edilir ve edilmelidir. Evine vaktinde gelmeyen baba çocuklarının yiyeceklerini, içeceklerini, uykularını şaşırtmaz mı? Bir babanın şu hali bilahere tarafından husule gelecek bir semereyi caiz bırakmaz mı? Atiye :Şükran, "Kocalara insaf", 44 (1913), p.2.

within or embedded into a nationalist formulation also. They claimed women's participation to work force as the main influence for the progress of the nations.⁵²

As an interesting example in Belkıs Ferid's article "What is the obstacle for our progress?" nationalist rationales were combined with Islamic justifications. In the first part of the article Belkıs Ferid emphasizes the national benefits of girls' education similar to many articles focusing the same issue, but towards the end of her article she articulates Islamic justifications. She notes the prophet's word: "ask for the science from cradle to grave" and reminds of the Arabic women lecturing in the medreses.⁵³ However, articulation of Islamic justifications are not frequent in *Kadınlar dünyası*.

Serving Islamic justifications was typical for advocates of the women's education in the late nineteenth century. Their counterparts in *Kadınlar dünyası* – although carefully avoided challenging the Islamic rules explicitly- usually articulated secular arguments for their cause and emphasized the national benefits as exemplified above. Islamic justifications were observed very seldom. I think this marks an one important difference of the women's movements of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

The relative secularization of the justification of the educational cause also serves hints for understanding transformations of women towards national citizens defined by new ethical values. Education of women was essential for the

⁵² For example see Göztepe: Senihe Fuad, "Maarif", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 28 (1913), p. 4.

⁵³ Beşiktaş: Belkıs Ferid, "Mani-i terakkimiz nedir?", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 24 (1913), p. 4.

endurance and progress of the nation as exemplified by the development in the Western countries. A proper education would adapt women to their domestic and public responsibilities.

In the chapter above, I explored the ways that the historical context shaped the basic demands raised through *Kadınlar dünyası* and informed the ways these demands were articulated. *Kadınlar dünyası* emerged in a period marked by the sense of alarm and dread after subsequent wars. Especially significant in the discussions raised through the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* was the crucial place attributed to women in the struggle for saving the country. The patriotic responsibilities attributed to women provided a base to the creating of spaces for women to participate in the management of their society. Within this historical context they could more strongly support their demands, which they articulated in a form fused with their patriotic duties.

Chapter 4

The 1913-1914 Ottoman Boycott: Women's Activism and National Economy

National Economy

As stated earlier, the sufferings of Balkan Wars atomized the Ottoman society even more and deepened the conflicts between the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of the Empire. After the Balkan Wars, nationalism steadily gained ascendance among different ethnic and religious communities, both the elites and people whereas the ideal of Ottomanism gradually eroded away. In this process, Turkish nationalism became central for the politics of CUP.

As Zafer Toprak describes in his detailed work on the “national economy”, post-Balkan Wars era was also marked by a change in the economic policies pursued by CUP. One major consequence of the rise of “national consciousness” among Muslim people and elites was an urge for the economic empowerment of Ottoman Muslims. The liberal economic policies pursued in the first years of the Second Constitutional Era highlighted the already existing division of labor between the Muslim and non-Muslim populations as the Muslim population had been relatively slow to adapt the conditions of the growing free market. Non-Muslim bourgeoisie was in control of the economic domains that were developing in the face of liberal economic developments.

After the Balkan Wars, CUP gave up the idea of liberal economy and launched a nationalist economic program that would reach its peak during World War I. Toprak who prepared the most detailed work on the issue describes “national economy” as a neo-mercantilist economic policy. The policy of “national economy” was guided by the idea of maintaining the nation to rely on its

own economic resources and hence to liberate it from the fetters imposed upon by European countries. It urged for the formation of a native Muslim class of traders and industrialists, which would assume the role heretofore played by non-Muslims that were blamed to be the allies of European interests. The national economy was expected to rid the nation of the domination of European capitalism and end the quasi-monopoly of non-Muslim minorities in the Ottoman trade and industry. Privileging Muslim entrepreneurship to the disadvantage of the already existing non-Muslim bourgeoisie became one of the priorities of the nationalist agenda of CUP in this period. To this end consumer and production cooperatives, firms and banks were established by and for Ottoman Muslims under state protection and support. Also the issue was discussed largely in the press.⁵⁴

The policy of national economy was widely echoed and found solid support also among Ottoman Muslim population. The 1913-1914 Ottoman boycott, which marked the turning point of the “national economy” as Toprak states, reflected this common support.⁵⁵

In what follows I will mainly focus on two issues: Firstly, I will dwell on the letters and articles that concern the Ottoman Boycott campaign in *Kadınlar dünyası*. On the one hand, tracing the debates initiated by this issue provides an opportunity to understand the diversity of the political views and loyalties of the authors in the general political arena as the positions they took through these debates were mostly informed by these loyalties. On the other hand, it is also

⁵⁴ Zafer Toprak examines the issue in detail in *Türkiye’de Ekonomi ve Toplum (1908-1950) Milli İktisat-Milli Burjuvazi*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 20-21.

illuminating to see how their arguments were also informed by a sincere devotion to the ideal of improving the social and economic roles and situations of women as they related every argument to this end along with the general good of the country and nation. Also, the activities of *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* (*Women's Philanthropic Association for the Consumption of Local Products*) which was founded by a group of Ottoman women to promote the boycott can be followed through the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* providing a case for a better understanding of the role of nationalist movements in women's mobilizations.

Secondly, I will trace the articles concerning the promotion of the Ottoman entrepreneurship and the advocacy of women's work. It is striking to observe how these two issues were related to each other and debated in close relation *Kadınlar dünyası*. It will be argued that the authors of *Kadınlar dünyası* did not only support the national economy program, but also utilized the new context to raising their ideas concerning women's employment and entrepreneurship.

The 1913-1914 Ottoman Boycott in Kadınlar dünyası

The 1913-1914 Ottoman boycott against foreign/ non-Muslim products and traders was initiated under the post Balkan Wars condition stated above. The main drives behind the boycott campaign were the post-war economic hardships, social upheaval and the dissemination of nationalist ideas. Throughout the boycott campaign the internal struggles for power and wealth between the Muslim and non-Muslim population of the Empire were highlighted.

What triggered the boycott campaign was the issue of *Averof*, which was a Greek battleship donated to the Greek government by Georgios Averof, an

Ottoman trader of Greek origin. The battleship *Averof* played a crucial role in the defeat of the Ottoman army in the Balkan Wars confining the Ottoman navy to the Marmara Sea by taking up a position at the end of Dardanelles. The rhetoric about the maintenance of the boycott utilized the case of *Averof* as a proof for the “treachery of non-Muslim citizens”.⁵⁶

Throughout the boycott campaign, non-Muslim traders were blacklisted. The Muslim population was called for boycotting non-Muslim traders and applying to Muslim traders for their needs. In the pamphlets, which were effectively utilized to promote the boycott, Ottoman-Greek tradesmen were depicted as traitors who supported the enemy in the war. The Muslims should stop shopping from the Greek “citizens” as this actually meant financing one’s own enemy. The term “citizen” which had carried positive meanings in the first years of the Second Constitutional Era was then used ironically as a derogatory label. The boycott gained a considerable success. In a short while, 500 new Muslim trade houses were opened. According to Toprak, the 1913-14 boycott marked a turning point for the “national economy”.⁵⁷

The boycott campaign was based on the mobilization of many segments of the population -men and women. It is observed in the exemplary boycott pamphlet provided by Toprak that some parts of the pamphlet specifically targeted female audience. In the part, addressing at the ladies, for instance, women were particularly warned about their shopping related to clothing and fashion. “Ladies!

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.109.

⁵⁷ Ibid, pp.109-10.

I address you. Especially in the shopping related to clothing, it is your effort, your high and exalted effort, which will release the country from those treacherous and murderer hands, the leeches of money.”⁵⁸ They should not finance the enemy intending to kill their men who earned the money they spent. “Everywhere, and most particularly among us, men earn and women spend the money. Do not cause those men with the intention of murdering your men and yourselves to handsaw the money earned by your men.”⁵⁹ In the following part, which targeted at the notable women calling them ‘Esteemed Ladies of Dignity’ (Büyük ve Kibar Hanımefendiler Hazeratı), notable women were invited to take up a leadership role in modeling exemplary behavior of consuming and using local products.

A small sign of a favorable inclination and kindness of yours toward our local products and Muslim traders will revive our country. I am sure about this as I am sure about my belief on the solitary of the god. A dress, an over garment of local products seen on you will be a great means of modeling. It is on your powerful hands and preference to have the honor and excellence of guiding toward a solid way to save our country.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ “Hanımlar! Size hitap ediyorum. Hele elbiseye ve çamaşıra müteallik alış verişte, memleketi; o para sülükleri olan hain ve cani ellerden kurtaracak ancak, sizin himmetleriniz. Sizin büyük ve ali himmetlerinizdir.”; Ibid, p. 174.

⁵⁹ “Her yerde, ve hassaten bizde, parayı erkekler kazanır, kadınlar sarf eder. Erkeklerinizin kazandığı paraları yine erkelerinizi ve sizi öldürmeye azim ve kastetmiş heriflere kaptırmayınız.”; Ibid, p. 174.

⁶⁰ “Yerli mallarımıza ve Müslüman tüccarlarımıza göstermek lütfunda bulunacağınız küçük bir eser-i teveccüh ve iltifat memleketimizi ihya edecektir. Buna; vahdet-i ilahiye olan imanım kadar emin ve mutmainim. Çünkü sizin arkanızda görülecek yerli malı bir elbise, bir çarşaf, pek çok hanımlarımız için büyük bir vesile-i timsal olur. Bu suretle; memleketimizi kurtaracak en esaslı bir yolda, rehberlik şeref ve

The frequent addresses to women in the boycott pamphlet signify the high recognition of women in their role as consumers, particularly when the products, specifically directed to women-such as textiles- were considered. This call was echoed among the women. It did not only initiate some debates among them, but also provided conditions conducive for flourishing of some particular forms of women's activism. Both the exchanges among women and the women's activities which flourished with the wind if the Ottoman Boycott can in part be followed through the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası*.

Exchanges on the boycott in Kadınlar dünyası

The voices for launching and enforcing a comprehensive boycott on foreign/Christian products and traders were randomly heard in *Kadınlar dünyası*. A lot of articles and letters promoting the boycott campaign and encouraging women to take an active part in it appeared in the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* from the very first issues. However, not all the authors were carrying a homogeneous perspective on the issue. There arose some heated exchanges concerning the boycott, mostly on the issues of the extent of the boycott and the possibility of its success under the lack of necessary material conditions for such a movement.

In the third issue a conference held for women in the conference hall of *Darülfünun* (the Ottoman University) was reported and the full text of the lecture given by Nezihe Muhlis (Muhittin) in the conference was published.⁶¹ The ideas

meziyetini ihraz etmek; siz hanımefendilerimizin yed-i iktidar ve ihtiyarındadır.”; Ibid, p. 174.

⁶¹ Nezihe Muhlis, “Hanımefendiler”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 3 (1913), pp. 3-4.

presented in the lecture initiated an animated debate between Nezihe Muhlis and the editor, Emine Seher Ali, which was extended by contributions of some other authors. The dispute reflected the diverse political sympathies of the authors, particularly on national politics.

The lecture aimed to account for the prominence of the national economy and to promote the Ottoman boycott campaign. In her lecture Nezihe Muhlis pointed at the relation between the political independence and the economic independence of a nation and stated that the political independence was robbed of much of its true meaning if economic dependence still overwhelmed a nation. According to her “Under the chains of economic calamities”, a nation would turn into “a toy in the hands of some other nations”.⁶²

According to Nezihe Muhlis the capitulations, which were economic and juridical privileges held by the Europeans and their protégés in the empire, were the major source of the “economic calamities” suffered by the Ottomans. These unjust privileges were not only preventing Ottomans from using their most basic rights but also threatening their independence and future. She criticized the situation that the Ottomans were neither authoritative to judge foreigners living and earning their money in the Ottoman lands, nor able to collect taxes from these people in return to what they earned. She frequently used cruel and degrading words for the foreigners while reproaching the situation: “Some foreigners, who arrive at our country starving and miserable, are destroying our morality on the one hand, and taking our money on the other hand. In return, they do not pay any

⁶² “İktisadi felaketlerin zincirleri altında”, “başka milletlerin elinde oyuncak”; Ibid, p.3.

taxes for the general expenses of our country. These men are only for getting, robbing us, taking off whatever there is in our pockets.”⁶³ Nezihe Muhlis argued for the very legitimacy of the Ottomans for fighting to take back the rights, which they were unjustifiably left deprived off.

She suggested ignoring the decrees of the Capitulations, which she saw as a source of cruel injustice against the Ottomans for the sake of the country and nation. : “Ladies, the Capitulations are our death warrants. As they preserve their decrees, as their abuse continue to be applied in our country it is not possible for the Muslims, for the Ottomans to flourish.” She continued with fiery encouragements: “Do not refrain to tear down every Capitulation. It is the greatest of the duties for us, for the Muslims to tear down the edicts given by our grandfathers, to abolish, to try to abolish their decrees, against the Europeans who do not see any misbelieve in committing every injustice.”⁶⁴

Nezihe Muhlis promoted a comprehensive Ottoman-Muslim boycott against foreign products and foreign/Christian traders as a practical means of fighting against the economic domination of Europe. According to her Ottoman women were “an important component of the Ottomanhood”, hence they should

⁶³ “Memleketimize aç ve sefil gelen bir takım ecnebiler, bir taraftan bizim ahlakımızı bozuyorlar. Bir taraftan da paralarımızı çekiyorlar. Buna mukabil vatanımızın masarifat-ı umumisi için bir para vergi vermiyorlar. Bu adamlar yalnız almağa, biz, soymağa ve ceblerimizdekini boşaltmağa memur.”; Ibid, p. 4.

⁶⁴ “Hanımefendiler, uhud-u atika bizim katil fermanımızdır. Onlar ahkamlarını muhafaza ettikçe, onların me’zunu yurdumuzda tadbik olundukca Müslümanların, Osmanlıların hayat bulması kabil değildir”, “Her ahdi yırtmaktan çekinmeyin her haksızlığı intikabdan bir his-i cehalet duymayan Avrupalıya karşı da bizlere, Müslümanlara büyükbabalarımızın verdikleri fermanları yırtmak, hükümlerini kaldırmak, kaldırmağa çalışmak, en büyük bir borçtur.”; Ibid, p.3.

participate the struggle against the “Christian and conservative Europeans”.⁶⁵ She called upon them boycotting foreign goods and preferring Muslim traders in their shopping: “If necessary, we should sacrifice a part of the adorning that God ordained for us. If it is not enough, we should shop only from the Muslims. This is the only way for the liberation, the future of the country and the welfare of the nation”.⁶⁶

The lecture reported was not a unique occasion. Nezihe Muhlis continued to conduct lectures on the same issue for women audience in different neighborhoods of the city. We can follow these lectures through the announcements published in *Kadınlar dünyası*. The ideas that Nezihe Muhlis expressed in her lecture were profoundly influenced by the general premises of the “national economy” policy pursued by CUP. When this is considered together with her political closeness to CUP her lectures can be seen as a party work at least in part.

Nezihe Muhlis expressed her ideas by utilizing an intense and aggressive rhetoric. In her lexicon, the components of the word pairs Muslim/Ottoman and Christian/foreign were used in a manner to easily replace each other. What is more, within the nationalist framework of her lecture these two word pairs were placed as the opposite poles of a dichotomy (Ottoman-Muslim versus the foreign-Christian).

⁶⁵ “Hristiyan ve mutaassib Avrupalılarla”; Ibid, p. 4.

⁶⁶ “İcab ederse fitratın bize emrettiği hüsn-ü tezyinin bir parçasından feda edelim. Kaba, saba da olsa zade-i tebaamız olan mahsulat ve ma’mulatımızı giyelim. Bu da olmazsa alışverişimizi sırf evet sırf Müslümanlara hasredelim. Selamet, istikbal-i memleket, saadet ve refah-ı millet ancak bundadır”; Ibid, p. 4.

In the following issue Emine Seher Ali wrote an article titled '*İktisad*' ('Economy') in response to Nezihe Muhlis's lecture.⁶⁷ First of all, she stated that she found Nezihe Muhlis "too fiery and too nervous". Although, she pointed at Nezihe Muhlis's young age as a potential reason for her anger and also her self's mature age for her inability to understand that young spirit, she suggested avoiding overflowingness. She pointed at two problematic points in the lecture: the hardship of launching such an extensive boycott due to the lack of alternative resources (denouncing Nezihe Muhlis's call to women to sacrifice their adornment if necessary) and the extension of the boycott toward Ottoman Christians. However, she did not dwell on the latter in detail, but emphasized the lack of necessary conditions to challenge Europe.

According to Emine Seher Ali, it was in vain to propose challenging Europe for the present as they were empowered by science and knowledge, which were the qualities still lacked by the Ottomans. What Ottomans could do for the moment was to effort for acquiring science:

We should forget about struggling against Europe for the present. This is impossible and improbable. The ignorance is always obligated to the science. We do not benefit from knowledge and science yet; we should work for this, which is not that hard. As continued, genuine desire will increase. Obstacles for victory may be removed by perseverance. We should not forget that our men would progress under the auspices of us.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ "pek ateşin, pek asabi"; Emine Seher Ali, "İktisad", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 4 (1913), p. 2.

⁶⁸ "Avrupa ile mücadele meselesini şimdilik unutalım. Bu gayri kabildir, müstebaddır. Cehalet ilme daima mahkumdur. İlimden fenden henüz nasibdar değiliz, olmak için çalışmak lazım, bu da o kadar müşkül bir şey değildir. Devam ettikçe arzu-u samimi artar, mevane-i galebe de sebatla bertaraf edilir. Erkeklerimizin bizim sayemizde terakki edeceklerini unutmayalım"; Ibid, p.2.

Emine Seher Ali's article reflected her distance from the Turkish/Muslim nationalism, which already characterized many of her contemporaries' political sympathies. She also had a moderate attitude towards Europe.

A few issues latter, Fehamet Handan denounced the ideas expressed by Emine in her mentioned article with a letter directly addressing to her. She defended Nezihe Muhlis's lecture and asserted nationalist ideas akin to hers with a similar kind of passion.⁶⁹ She stated that she did not find Nezihe Muhlis "carried away with neither nervousness nor severity of excitement nor youngness" (ne asabiyete, ne şiddeti heyecana ne de gençliğe kapılmış görüyorum) as argued by Emine Seher Ali. And highlighted the call of Nezihe Muhlis or the boycott by quoting it : "If necessary, we should sacrifice a part of the adorning that god ordained for us. If it is not enough, we should shop only from the Muslims. This is the only way for the liberation, the future of the country and the welfare of the nation". She praised the quote with the words: "what a certain word, what an eloquent fiery speech" (ne muhakkak bir söz ne belîğ bir hitabe-i ateşin).⁷⁰

According to her, it was unnecessary to be reserved in front of Europe and retreat from the boycott, which was a very civil weapon to be used by all the civilized nations. Women of Islam should also use this civil right for the sake of their nation and country without any fears. Addressing Emine Seher Ali she asked: "Now again, if we purchase the things from our coreligionists for the sake

⁶⁹ Fehamet Handan, "Konferans Münasebetiyle Emine Seher Ali Hanıma", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 9 (1913), p.3.

⁷⁰ "ne asabiyete, ne şiddeti heyecana ne de gençliğe kapılmış görüyorum.": "ne muhakkak bir söz ne belîğ bir hitabe-i ateşin. "; Ibid, p.3.

of the liberation and prospect of the country, yes only for the welfare of the future, why and from whom are we afraid of, thinking that Europe will interfere in these also?!...”⁷¹ Just like Nezihe Muhlis’s speech her letter carried a nationalist and overtly anti-foreign/Christian tones:

Can you show me what useful thing, those ungrateful ones, who are immersed in benefactions and happiness enjoying the cursed privileges granted them by our ancestors, have done for the right of existence and endurance of the nation? They provided no benefits except abundantly exerting insulting words such as ignorant barbarous
Turks...Turks...⁷²

Emine Seher Ali continued to explain her position in new articles. In the article “Anasır-ı Osmaniye” (Ottoman communities) she repeated her formerly expressed perspective that the boycott should not compromise Ottoman Christian traders and uttered her political position against Turkish/Muslim nationalist trend of the day in clear and bold strokes.⁷³ This time Emine Seher Ali was explicitly defending the ideal of the union of all ethnic religious communities of the Empire for the good of the country. According to her the only social force that could bring about the salvage of the Ottoman state was an Ottoman solidarity that extended across ethnic religious boundaries,

⁷¹ “Şimdi yine şayet şu aldığımız şeyleri selamet ve istikbali memleket namına evet yalnız atının refahı için dindaşlarımızdan alacak olur isek, acaba bunlarda da mı Avrupa’nın müdahalesine mi uğrayacağız diye neden ve kimden korkuyoruz?!...”; Ibid, p. 3.

⁷² “Atalarımızın şimdiye kadar kendilerine bahş ettiği o imtiyaz-ı menhuse içinde nimetlere, saadetlere, gark olan o nankörler bu memleketin, bu milletin hak-ı vücud ve bekası için ne gibi faydeli bir şey yaptıklarını acaba bendenize gösterebilir misiniz:Faide yerine cahil, barabar Türkler.. Türkler... diye bol bol istihkaramız sözler söylemekten başka ne yaptılar.”; Ibid, p. 3.

⁷³ Emine Seher Ali, “Anasır-ı Osmaniye”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 10 (1913), pp.1-2.

Let us express our intention plainly: Our nation is composed of various components. Their functioning as an un-broken unity, urging our common country toward progress by a united mass, is necessary. Since they also held the name Ottoman, we are not far from each other. Is eliminating the enmity and strife between us unachievable? We had significant faults; we are ascribing our mistakes to ignorance; we shall hope that this conservative idea will cease. In order to get rid of the captivity it is necessary to leave ignorance. It is ignorance that bruise a nation that causes its' everything to pour out.⁷⁴

Instead of accusing Ottoman Christians as traitors like many of her contemporaries did she pointed at the faults of Ottoman Muslims as the main cause of the troubles suffered.

No need for an explanation. We backed off this component. We did not work ourselves we stroke their efforts also. It is true that we did not involve it our men did, yet no doubt we have a share. An inclination towards an idea that we particularly find morbid means walking toward calamities again”⁷⁵

Emine Seher Ali disapproved the idea of dividing the Ottoman population on ethnic religious lines. She argued that maintaining the faults on the issue would lead to mishaps and catastrophes similar to the ones already suffered. She suggested eliminating the former conflicts between the different communities and uniting ever more closely, to forge a common good. It was impossible to eliminate the exterior enemies unless a sense of cohesion was established among different

⁷⁴ “Maksadımızı açık söyleyelim: Milletimiz muhtelif anasırdan mürekkepdır. Bunların bir vahded-i gayri münkesimle çalışması, vatan-ı müşterekimizin yek vücud bir kitle tarafından terakkiye sevk edilmesi muktezidir. Madem ki Osmanlı namını onlar da taşıyorlar, ne biz onlara ne onlar bize irak değildir. Aramızdaki nifak ve husumeti kaldırmak muvaffak olunmaz mı? Büyük kusurlarımız vardı, hatalarımızı cehalete isnad ediyoruz, öyle ümid edelim ki artık bu fikr-i taassub ortadan kalkar. Esareten kurtulmak istersek cehaleti atmak lazım. Bir milleti cürüten herşeyini sab eden cehalettir.”; Ibid, p. 2.

⁷⁵ “İzaha hacet yok. Bu anasırı kendimiz tebrid ettik, kendimiz çalışmadığımız gibi onların da mesaisine müdhiş darbeler vurduk. Vakıa bizim burada dahlimiz yok erkeklerimiz yaptı ama, bize de bir hisse isabet edeceğinden şüphe yok. Hususiyle marazi gördüğümüz bir fikre temayül, felekatlere doğru yeniden ilerlemek demektir”; Ibid, p. 2.

Ottoman communities. “The competence of the country necessitates the removal of the ... that we caused. Our men are not able to comprehend this; they lack the sense of reflection. Let our thoughts drive them. Please, while smashing each other inside yet, how can we resist against outside, the enemies of the country?”⁷⁶

Also in the editorial of the 13th issue signed as *Kadınlar dünyası* a similar position was defended. The editorial provided a subtle criticism of Nezihe Muhlis’s fuzzy and problematic usage of the words foreign and Christian in a way to alternate each other and argued for the necessity of differentiating Ottoman Christians from foreigners.

The introduction part of the editorial provided a general remark on the necessity of being plain and clear while expressing thoughts in newspapers and conferences as the audience, particularly the female audience was not well educated to understand blurry expressions correctly. An explicit warning of Nezihe Muhlis’s vocabulary that she used in the conference followed this general remark. Her uncertain usage of the words foreign and Christian was precisely criticized:

“Therefore, in the speeches, which will be delivered in the conferences, when we say that “We should not do shopping from the foreigners”, it must be expressed clearly that this is not comprehending the Ottoman Christians. These aspects should be explained as much as possible to leave no space for misunderstanding.”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ “Vatanın selahiyeti, sebep olduğumuz cerehatın izalesini icab ettiriyor. Erkeklerimiz bunu düşünemezler, onlarda hasse-i tefekkür kalmamıştır. Onları da bizim fikirlerimiz sevk etsin. Rica ediyorum, henüz dahilde birbirimizi yerken, nasıl olur da harice, vatan düşmanlarına mukavemet edebiliriz?”; Ibid, p. 2.

⁷⁷ “Binaenaleyh, konferanslarda irad olunacak nutuklarda “ecnebilerden, ihaz ve aita etmeyelim” dediğimiz zaman bunun Osmanlı Hıristiyanlarına şümulu olmadığını tasrih etmelidir. Bu cihetler mümkün olduğu halde fazla izah edilmelidir ki, su-i

According to the editorial, all the Ottomans, both Muslim and non-Muslim, should be understood as components of one unified Ottoman community with common interests: “The Ottoman Christians are also children of this country. They share the calamities and troubles of the country with us.”⁷⁸ Readers were also warned against ills and evils of a nationalism defined on ethnic religious lines.” Now, we are living in the age of repulsion of useless ideas. Let us push for the affection of the Ottoman components every time. Insisting on the such ideas is evil, detrimental.”⁷⁹ Mainly, the ideal of having all of Ottoman communities live in peace rather than be in perpetual conflict was defended.

After these criticisms Nezihe Muhlis sent a last letter to *Kadınlar dünyası* to present an answer to all.⁸⁰ She defended her perspective by arguing for Ottoman Muslims’ right to maintain their own existence. The political heart and soul of her attitude was the right of self-defense for the Ottoman Muslim community, which flowed from viewing the Ottoman Muslim population as a community with its’ own interests separate and distinct from Ottoman non-Muslim communities. She proclaimed that the Ottoman Muslims would benefit from acting independently rather than collectively, emphasizing the individual benefits of Muslim community rather than common benefits of all Ottoman

telakkiye meydan kalmasin” ;*Kadınlar dünyası* (editorial), “Vesait-i Tenvir”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 13 (1913), p.1.

⁷⁸ “Osmanlı Hıristiyanları dahi bu vatanın evladıdır. Bizim gibi vatan felaketinden, ızdırabından nasıbdardır.”; *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁷⁹ “Artık hiçbir işe yaramayan fikirleri def etme asrında yaşıyoruz. Anasır-ı Osmaniyeyi daima birbirine ısındırmağa çalışalım. Bu fikirlerde ısrar fenadır, muzurdur.”; *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Nezihe Muhlis, “Bir Mütalaa”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 14 (1913), p.2.

communities. According to her as it was natural for every individual to strive for defending his own continuity due to the natural laws it was natural for every community to strive for its own permanence at the first hand. She argued that it did not mean an offence against Christian citizens. “And why the sentence, we should not do shopping from the foreigners, be such a stale anxiety and discussion? Is every component not an independent social entity? Every person serves for his own continuity and permanence at the first hand. This natural law is irremovable.”⁸¹

Throughout the article she consistently defended the right of the Ottoman Muslims to defend their own existence up to and including the right to struggle against the non-Muslim Ottomans if necessary. “In the first place; ourselves! The advance of our own community! There is no other means for our salvage”⁸² To strive for their own prosperity was a right of Ottoman Muslims as it was Christian citizens: “While our fellow Christian citizens were working for their own welfare and happiness did we attribute to ourselves a right to be annoyed, an idea of disapproval? Because yielding to humble a right is impossible. No doubt, our justified endeavor will be appreciated by our fair citizen fellows”.⁸³

⁸¹ “Hem niçün ecnebilerden alışveriş etmeyelim cümlesi bu kadar bait-i endişe ve münakaşa olsun? Her anasır müstakil bir şahsiyet-i içtimaiye değil midir? Her ferd evvela şahsının devam ve bekasına hadim olur. Bu kanun-u tabi-i laizaledir.”; Ibid, p. 2.

⁸² “Evvela; kendi şahsiyetimiz! Kendi unsurumuzun tealisi! Bundan başka bizi halas edecek vasıta yoktur.”; Ibid, p.2.

⁸³ “Hıristiyan vatandaşlarımız refah ve saadetleri için çalışırken biz kendimizde bir hak- ı iğbirar gördük mü; bir fikr-i itirazda bulunduk mu? Çünkü hakka sefuru etmek imkansızdır. Bizim bu haklı teşebbüsümüzü hakşinas vatandaşlarımızın takdir edeceği şüphesizdir.”; Ibid, p. 2.

The debate becomes more meaningful when it is associated with particular positions of the authors within the wider sphere of politics mentioned in the related part. The controversy above clearly reflected the different political preferences and party alliances and, in particular, divergent views about rising Turkish nationalism and Muslim-non Muslim relations. It should be reminded again that Nezihe Muhlis's ideas reflected the dominant political view of the day. Similar kinds of ideas were largely resonating among Muslim men and women of the time. Some letters published in the following issues of *Kadınlar dünyası*, which were in favor of Nezihe Muhlis, and her ideas can be considered as a sign of the popularity of the views she defended. Belkis Ferid, for instance, stated that:

If local productions become in demand the entrepreneurs and capitalists of our country will open factories without delay, a lot of unemployed people will find jobs, the poor will earn their living, and the government will collect taxes as well. Thus, our unemployed men who spend time by yawning in the cafe shops will tend to trade. In short, a lot of treasures are contained in this great idea!.. We are indebted to Nezihe Muhlis for these successes. Sometimes an individual becomes a channel for the expression of common ideas shared by many people. This time it has been exactly like this. We express our gratitude. The progress of a nation's women leads the general progress.⁸⁴

Indeed, majority of the authors were advocating the boycott campaign and they thought that it was an exalted duty for the Ottoman women to participate in the campaign, which was expected to be a cure for the troubles of the country.

⁸⁴

“Yerli ma’mulatı rağbet görürse memleketimizin müteşebbisleri, sermayedarları bilaihtiraz fabrikalar küşad edecek, bir çok kadro hariçleri iş bulacak, fakirler temin-i mayişet edecek, hükümet dahi vergi alacak bu suretle de kahve köşelerinde esnemekle vakit geçiren işsiz erkeklerimizde ticaret zevki uyanacak. Velhasıl bu fikir-i muhteşemde pek büyük hazine mündemic!.. Bu muvaffakiyetleri de Nezihe Muhlis Hanımefendiye medyunuz. Bazen pek çok kimselerin müşterek fikirlerini beyana bir kimse vasıta olur. Bu sefer de aynıyle böyle oldu. Beyan-ı teşekküredemiz. Bir millet kadınlarının terakkisi umumun terakkisini intac eder.”; Beşiktaş: Belkis Ferid, “Terakkimiz”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 18 (1913), p.3.

The authors were mostly considering women as main actors in the boycott scene. The letters and articles concerning the issue mostly extended towards the appreciation program and activities of *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* (Women's Philanthropic Association for the Consumption of Local Products)

Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi

Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi (Women's Philanthropic Association for the Consumption of Local Products) was founded in 1913 to promote the Ottoman boycott among women. The head of the association was Melek Hanım. *Kadınlar dünyası* was not directly related to the association. Yet still, the founding declaration and program of the association was published in the newspaper. It signifies that the publishers of *Kadınlar dünyası* and the members of Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i could establish bridges of solidarity among each other.

In the declaration the goal of the association was stated as promoting the consuming of the local products with the ultimate goal of endorsing Ottoman trade and industry.⁸⁵ Trade and industry, whose significance for the development of Europe was admitted, were stated as essential for the genuine development of the Ottoman Economy. Consumption local products instead of foreign ones, just like the people of developed countries favored the products of their own countries,

⁸⁵ "Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi Beyannamesi", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 4 (1913), p. 4.

was suggested as an effective means to improve already kept back Ottoman trade and industry, and hence to overcome the serious economic difficulties suffered.

Are they not industry and trade that assured the welfare of Europe? Did our forgotten industry not decline instead of progress? And because of this we are pouring out our lots of money to skirts of Europeans. Let us observe foreigners; none of them apply products other than their own country's. It is because they appreciated the love for the country and the national consumption in the real sense.⁸⁶

The Ottoman women were called to favor local products against foreign in order to endorse the underdeveloped Ottoman industry and trade. The hardship of challenging Europe under the present situation was admitted. Still, the women should not be daunted by the difficulty of the task, but conquer it by perseverance as it would at least mean a beginning:

We, the Ottoman women, are paying attention to the Europeans' work and effort for every of one of our needs. Yes in our present existence, we cannot challenge Europe, but never mind! But let us be preserve. There must be a beginning for every attempt. Confirming to the sublime feeling of our conscience let we devote ourselves to consume the products of our country.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ “Bugün Avrupa'nın refahını temin eden san'at ve ticaret değil midir? Bizim hal-i nisyanda kalan zavallı sanayi'miz terakki yerine tedenniye uğramamış mıdır? Ve bu yüzden kucak kucak paralarımızı Avrupa'nın eteğine döküyoruz. Ecanibe bakalım, cümlesi memleketlerinin ma'mulatından gayrısına müracaat etmezler. Çünkü onlar muhabbet-i vataniyyeyi, istihlakat-ı milliyyeyi ma'na-i hakikisiyle anlamışlardır.”; Ibid, p. 4.

⁸⁷ “Biz Osmanlı hanımları her bir ihtiyacımız için Avrupalıların mesai ve gayretine iltifat ediyoruz. Evet bugün ki mevcudiyetimizde Avrupa'ya meydan okuyamayız fakat ne beis var? Sebat edelim. Her işde bir bidayet lazımdır. Vicdanımızın ulvi olan hissine tebaiyetle memleketimiz ma'mulatını istihlaka vakf-ı vücud edelim”; Ibid, p. 4.

It was also announced in the declaration that the association was planning to establish a clothing workshop in which only local textile products would be used. It was also announced that poor girls and women would get trained as tailors in this workshop.

No doubt, the boycott movement prepared the conditions, which were more conducive for women's activism. Women's engagement in patriotic work was not only tolerated, but also encouraged.

The release of the declaration and the program of the association were followed by letters and articles on *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*, in most of which the authors praised the endeavor and declared their support.

In the twenty-sixth issue, for instance, a reader's letter by Muazzez Cavid was published. Muazzez Cavid glorified *Mamulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* as a zeal for the liberation and welfare of the country and the nation.

Through the association, for whose establishment that you endeavored with a high purpose and a serious aspiration, the service that you will provide for the nation, for the country and for your fellow-women is so great that... All the world owes thanks to you. My appreciating applauses go to the intellectual members of the respected association, who endeavor for the assurance of the liberation and prosperity of the country with an endless zeal, with all my heart.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ "Ulvi bir maksad, ciddi bir emelle teşekkülüne hizmet ettiğiniz cemiyetle millete, vatana ve hemcinsinize edeceğiniz hizmet o kadar büyük ki... Bütün cihan medyun-u şükran kalır. Vatanın selamet ve saadetini temine yorulmaz bir gayretle

Muazzez Cavid also invited women to keep to the program of the association, and asked for their support and contribution for the proposed activities of it.

If we follow the program of İstihlak-ı Dahiliye Kadınlar Cemiyet-i, which zeal for a divine mission as our guide, we will never draw back under the hypocritical eyes! It is true that our local production is not already ordered. However, I hope we will success at this. Nevertheless, in shopping let we purchase even our smallest necessities from the Ottoman stores. And in the clothing factory, whose establishment by the association in the future is certain, let us, women and girls, poor and rich, give hand in hand with a strong unification and effort. Let we profit on the one hand and be proud of our modest service for our country on the other.⁸⁹

On the other hand, Emine Seher Ali wrote an article titled ‘*Tedkik*’ (‘An Inspection’) in which she provided her criticism of the declaration of the association. Emine Seher Ali appreciated the informed and elaborate style of the declaration, which would, she claimed, surprise men who always blamed women with ignorance. According her it was a solid proof of the talents of women.

çalışan muhterem cemiyetin münevver müessislerini bütün kalbimle takdir ederek alkışlarım. Ümid ederim ki bütün alem-i nisvan da benimle hemfikirdir.”; Kadıköy: Muazzez Cavid, “İstihlak-ı Dahiliye Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 26 (1913), p.4.

⁸⁹ “Mukaddes bir vazife uğrunda çalışan: İstihlak-ı Dahiliye Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi’nin programını rehber ittihaz edersek hiç bir vakitede riyakar nazarlar altında çekinmeyiz! Vakıa henüz yerli mallarımız bir devre-i intizara girmese de yakın zamanda buna da muvaffak olacağımızı ümid ederim. Maamafih ahz ve itada lüzum olan en ufak levazatımızı bile Osmanlı mağazalarından iştira edelim. Ve ilerde cemiyete küşadı mukerrer bulunan terzhane için kadın ve kız, fakir ve zengin, kuvvi bir ittifak ile ele ele verip çalışalım. Hem kendimiz müstefid ve hem de vatanımıza edeceğimiz acizane bir hizmetle müftehir olalım.”; Ibid, p.4.

However, she was suspicious of the success of a boycott initiative as local production was still weak and uncompetitive. In order to call upon people to boycott foreign products first of all one should provide them with alternative resources of goods. However, she argued, it was impossible for the present due to the lack of an indigenous Ottoman industry.

The declaration begins with the purpose of the association. The ideas are excellent! Yet, which local goods are we going to buy? Are there any local goods? If there are, where are they found? To tell the truth, first of all it is necessary to strive for the abundance and prosperity of local products. It is because searching for something that does not exist and being unable to find it results at remaining naked or purchasing European goods again.⁹⁰

According to Emine Seher Ali the primary problem was the exploitation of the natural resources due the lack of a competitive local industry.

Everything comes from Europe; all are produced by Europe. The revenues of our natural resources flow toward Europeans not slowly but in a dazzling speed. Crying at this situation is in vain. In order to awaken the economical life in our country we should ponder in long. Europe can produce something, which we can produce by piaster, by two piastres and take our money. Even the flour of the bread that we eat is imported from Europe and even from America while our country is an agricultural country. What happens to the wheat growing up in Anatolia? It is strange that the flour brought from America is cheaper than the flour brought from Anatolia.⁹¹

⁹⁰ “Beyannameye cemiyetin maksad-ı teşekkülü söylenmekle başlanmış. Fikirler ala! Fakat hangi yerli emtiasını alacağız? Yerli emtiası var mıdır? Varsa nerede bulunur? Doğrusunu söylemek lazım evvela mamul-u dahiliyenin takasür ve imaretine çalışmak icab eder. Çünkü olamayan bir şeyi aramak bulmak ya çıplak kalmamıza yahud yine Avrupa malı almaklığımıza sebep olur”; Emine Seher Ali, “Tedkik”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 12 (1913), p.1.

⁹¹ “Herşey Avrupadan geliyor, hepsini Avrupa yapıyor. Bizim tabii servetimizin vürudatı yavaş yavaş değil, baş döndürücü bir süratle Avrupanın eteğine saçılıyor. Bu hale ağlamak, teessüf etmek faide vermez. Memleketimizde iktisad hayatını uyandırmak için uzun uzun düşünmeğe lüzum vardır. Beş guruşa yapabileceğimiz bir şeyi, Avrupa iki guruşa yapar, yine paramızı elimizden çeker. İşte yediğimiz ekmeğimizin unu bile, memleketimiz zirai bir memleket iken Avrupa’dan, hatta Amerika’dan geliyor. Anadolu’nun çıkardığı buğdaylar ne oluyor? Garib şey Amerika’dan gelen un Anadolu’dan gelen undan daha ucuz.”: Emine Seher Ali, “İstihlaka doğru!”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 8 (1913), p.1.

According to Emine Seher Ali in order to improve the national economy the first thing to do was developing the industrial facilities with the aim of increasing the local production and its' competitiveness and profitability.⁹²

Atiye Şükran agreed with the principles of *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* in principle. She was of the same mind that they should try for their best to consume local products, yet they would need to apply European ones indispensably. "Let's boycott Europe!!. What from Europe? Needle? Thread? Thimble? American fabrics? All the goods from Austria? Singer sewing machine? Elaborate silk sheets? What? I could not get it?"⁹³

She proposed for women to come together in order to search for the ways for establishing institutions for local production in their neighborhoods.

With these words, I do not mean I have an inclination toward the West, I do not say that let us give the money in our pockets to the West. West belongs to Westerners; East belongs to Easterners! Of course, we have a goal by telling these words: First of all is the constitution of institutions, for example meetings and consultations of powerful ladies in Erenköy, Kadıköy, Haydarpaşa; in Istanbul in Vefa, Yüksek Kaldırım, and in other neighborhoods. Is it understood?⁹⁴

⁹² Ibid, p.1.

⁹³ "Haydi Avrupaya boykotaj!! Avrupa'nın neyine? İğnesine mi? İpliğine mi? Dikiş yüksüğüne mi? Amerikan bezlerine mi? Avustrurya'dan gelen bütün eşyaya mı? Singer dikiş makinesine mi? Süslü püslü ipekli çarşafılara mı? Neye? Anlayamadım?"; Kadıköy: Atiye Şükran, "Üstümüze Bakalım!", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 17 (1913), pp.1-2.

⁹⁴ "Şu sözleri söylemekle garba temayülüm var, ceplerimizdeki paraları garba verelim demek istemiyorum. Garb garblıdır, şark şarklıdır! Bu sözleri söylemekte tab'i bir maksadımız var. İlk defa müesseselerin teşekülü. Mesela Erenköy, Kadıköy, Haydrapaşa, İstanbul'da Vefa, Yüksek kaldırım. Fatih ve daha sair yerlerde muktedir hanımların bir araya toplanarak istişare etmeleri. Anlaşıldı mı?"; Ibid, p. 2.

Despite her subtle criticism, Atiye Şükran celebrated the devotion of the members of *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* to improve Ottoman trade and industry. "Trade, trade; industry, industry in the factories in the workshops. We shall not get furious. Long live the esteemed ladies who founded the institution of *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı*."⁹⁵

It must be reminded that despite a few criticisms of the authors of the newspaper it can be easily observed that the boycott campaign in general and *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* in particular were highly celebrated among women.

In the seventy-seventh issue of *Kadınlar dünyası* the opening of a clothing workshop, along with a temporary exhibition of local fabrics was announced through a text by *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*: "Ladies, unless an obstruction of God, in the twentieth of the June, Wednesday, we will open the store and the clothing workshop of our association to the demand and appreciation of that Ottoman Women who still preserve their sincere feelings for the country."⁹⁶ The reasons of the association's effort for promoting the consumption of local products were explained as follows:

As long as the consumption remains on the local production the money spent to obtain them remains in the country. That is to say the money is transmitted from one pocket to the other. If the money remains in the country firstly no deficits will occur in the national wealth, then the total wealth of the country increases due to the growth of national

⁹⁵ Atiye Şükran, "Ne Güzel!", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 13 (1913), p. 2.

⁹⁶ "Hanımefendiler, Bimani-i teali Haziranın yirminci çarşamba günü cemiyetimizin mağaza ve terzihanesini vatan his-i samimini daima himaye etmiş siz Osmanlı Hanımlarının rağbet ve takdirinize açıyoruz"; "Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesinden", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 77, p. 4.

productivity. To this effect the civilizing capacity of the nation spreads out. Our state gains power. Our glorified country ascends.⁹⁷

To this end Ottoman women were called upon to pay attention to the work of the association: “Our association besides everything else serves the assurance of the general good. No doubt every beneficial activity is honored by demand. Thus with this statement and stipulations we apply to the noble feelings of the Ottoman ladies.”⁹⁸

The editorial of the eightieth issue was also devoted to the presentation of the exhibition and the workshop. We learn that the exhibition was prepared with the cooperation of *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* and the *Hereke Factory*.⁹⁹ The title of the editorial, *Cooperating with Men (Erkeklerle iştirak)* draw attention to this cooperation. It was proclaimed that men gradually had come to accept the prominence of the activity of the womanhood. Also the gratitude to the director of the *Hereke Factory*, Akif Bey for his active cooperation in activity was presented. The exhibition was described with the following words:

⁹⁷ “Halbuki istihlak olan emval ma'mulat-ı mahalliyeden olursa bunların tedariki için sarf olunan par da yine dahil-i memleketde kalır. Yani bir cebden çıkan diğerine girer. Para dahil-i memleketde kalırsa bir kere servet-i milliyeye noksan tari olmaz sonra da ma'mulat-ı mahalliyenin ziyade vücuda getirilmesi yüzünden servet-i umumiye-i memleket tezayüd eder. Bu sayede de milletin kabileyet-i temdiniyesine inbisat gelir. Devletimiz kesb-i kuvvet eder. Vatan-ı muazzezimiz itila bulur.”; Ibid, p.4.

⁹⁸ “Cemiyetimiz her kat-i nazardan menfaat-i umumiye-i temine hadimdir. Şüphesizdir ki menfaat temin eden her faideli iş ise rağbete mazhar olur. İşte bu maruzat ve şeraitle vatanımızın en sevgili bir unsuru olan Osmanlı Hanımefendilerinin hissiyat-ı necibanelerine müracaat ediyoruz.”;Ibid, p.4.

⁹⁹ *Kadınlar dünyası* , ‘Erkeklerle iştirak’, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 80 (1913), p. 1.

Akif Bey provided an active support to *Mamulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*, established the exhibition in Bab-ı Ali street whose opening ceremony was announced in our 77th issue. We deem talking about the neatness of the exhibition, the exquisiteness of our various kinds of local products redundant. The exhibition must be visited once. It is because there is a difference between seeing and description.¹⁰⁰

For the period, the *Hereke Factory* was the most prominent of a few local factories on textile. Their cooperation with *Mamulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* is a sign of the prominence of the women's activism.

The Boycott and women: Some Implications

How does women's participation in the boycott campaign illuminate the relationship of men's activism to the nationalist processes in the late Ottoman Empire?

First of all, the direct calls for women's participation in the boycott campaign imply a change in the public attitudes towards women's societal and patriotic roles. It can be seen as the extension of the patriotic significance of women beyond the limits of their formerly defined duties such as the patriotic mothers and housewives. These formerly defined duties were fully consistent with the popular belief that "women's place was at home," that their talents should be applied solely within the domestic setting. Although women's consumption activity can be seen as a part of their domestic duties, no doubt it has something to do with the public setting.

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“Akif Bey *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*'ne faali müzaharatlarda bulundular. 77 numaralı nüshamızda resm-i küşadını ilan ettiğimiz Bab-ı Ali Caddesinde tesis edilen sergiyi vücuda getirdiler. Serginin intizamından, teşhir olunan mütelevvi ma'mulat-ı dahiliyemizin nefasetinden bahsi zaid ad ederiz. Sergiyi bir defa olsun ziyaret etmek lazımdır. Zira görmek ile tarif arasında fark vardır.”; Ibid, p.4.

Second, the need to invite women in full participation to the boycott campaign offered a fertile field for women's activism. The kind of activities like Nezihe Muhlis's lecture series and the activities of *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* could be realized under the wind of the boycott company. Nezihe Muhlis's lecture was conducted in the conference hall of *Dar'ülfünun*; and *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi* cooperated with the Hereke Factory for the preparation of an exhibition, the director of the factory was individually involved in the process. If these facts are considered it is seen that women's activities were not only tolerated, but also largely supported. No doubt this significant support for women's activities outside the home arose from the fact that they were engaged in patriotic work during a national emergency.

Chapter 5 National Economy and Defending Women's Economic Agency

“National Economy” and Entrepreneurship

As stated above liberal economic policies were abandoned and “National economy” policy was launched under the control of CUP government just after the Balkan Wars. In this process motivating the Muslim population to overcome their initial reluctance to take the plunge into entrepreneurship had been a key public concern of the period. Toprak describes the context with quotes from the journal of *Müdaafa-i Maliye ve İktisadiye* as follows:

The wreckage caused by the Balkan Wars also marked the end of the liberalism of the Second Constitution. From then on, liberal discourse was left aside and the principles of the “national economy” were began to be appropriated. It was stated as “The Turkish and Muslim nation is being suppressed under the chains of an inauspicious financial and economic captivation” in the journal of *Müdaafa-i Maliye ve İktisadiye* and “vehemently defending the financial and economic rights of Turkish nation” was advocated. As the principles of “national economy” were put on the agenda the journal made room to those lines: “The current government is following a big national goal. The occurrence of this national goal depends on economic and financial supports. For this we are in need of a national economic and social awakening.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ “Balkan Savaşları'nın toplumda neden olduğu çöküntü II. Meşrutiyet liberalizmine de mezar oldu. Bundan böyle liberal söylem bırakılarak “milli iktisat” ilkeleri benimsenmeye başlıyordu. “Türk ve Müslüman milleti(nin) menhus bir esaret-i maliye ve iktisadiyenin zinciri altında ezilmekte” olduğunu kaydeden *Müdaafa-i Maliye ve İktisadiye dergisi* “Türk milletinin hukuk-i maliye ve iktisadiyesi(ni)

The issue of promoting entrepreneurship received a large coverage in *Kadınlar dünyası*, coinciding with the political and economic tendency at the national level. In the pages of the newspaper idleness, which was a concept used to refer the disinclination of Muslim population to attempt at commercial or industrial businesses, was considered as one of two evils, along with ignorance, that explained the troubles of the country and the nation. While the advanced nations were improving their welfare and prosperity by hard work, trade and industry the Ottoman nation was consistently falling back because of idleness and lack of propensity towards trade and industry.¹⁰²

Yes, the calamity that we dragged in the national life up to now is a result of idleness. Being afraid of, drawing back from enterprising descended us to the stage of misery that we are on today. No doubt, it maintains its move. The nation continuously drags. This much is enough to perish. No need to exterior destruction. Nevertheless, it still comes in, because everything attracts each other: Calamity follows calamity; prosperity follows prosperity.¹⁰³

Economic empowerment of the nation was considered as an indispensable condition for saving the nation from backwardness and perishing. For instance, in

şiddetle müdafaa”dan yanaydı. Nitekim “milli iktisat” ilkelerinin gündeme gelişiyle birlikte dergi şu satırlara yer veriyordu: “Hükümet-i hazıra büyük bir gaye-i milliye takip ediyor. Bu gaye-i milliyenin husulü iktisadi ve mali müzaheretlere bakar. Bunun için de milletçe bir ikaz –ı içtimai ve maliye muhtacız. Türkler artık iş hususunda rüşlerini ispat etmelidirler.” Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye’de Ekonomi ve Toplum (1908-1950) Milli İktisat-Milli Burjuvazi*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, pp. 112-13.

¹⁰² For an example Beşiktaş:Belkıs Ferid, “Mani-i Terakkimiz Nedir?”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 30 (1913), p.4.

¹⁰³ “Evet, hayat-ı milliyede bugüne kadar sürüklendiğimiz felaket, hep mahsul-ü atalettir, teşebbüsten çekinmek, korkmak bizi bulunduğumuz derece-i sefalate kadar indirdi. Şüphesiz ki seyrini hala da muhafaza ediyor, millet de gittikçe sürükleniyor, mahv olmak için bu kadarı kafidir, hariçden gelen, ya gelecek olan tahribata lüzum yokdur. Maamafih, o yine gelir, çünkü herşey birbirini celb eder, felaket felakete, saadet saadete daimdir.”: *Kadınlar dünyası*, “Ciddi olalım”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 78 (1913), p.1.

the editorial of the twenty-first issue, economic power was indicated as a major vehicle of defense along with political and military strengths of a civilized nation: “A civilized nation prepares its own vehicles of defense to prevent other nation’s domination. These vehicles are many and various. Yet, they are not only politics and weapons as we consider. The most important force is economy; it is industry, it is labor”¹⁰⁴ Within this perspective the European goods sold in the stores were seen as their weapons to enslave the Ottoman nation. It was claimed that if the Ottomans would not endeavor for an improvement in the realms of trade and industry, the poor economic situation would lead them to a deserved fate of European domination.

The industry of the civilized nations is not limited to wooden spoons, wooden clogs, a bit of roasted chickpeas candy, a few looms of fabric and towels. Let us have a look at the stores in our bazaars; are they not full of European textiles? Is it not to take our money, to make us destitute, indigent and even captive?¹⁰⁵

More than men, women were considered to hold the potential power to rouse this economic empowerment. Hence, they were called upon to actively participate in the struggle for economic empowerment of the nation:

Of, who will save us from the economical yoke of Europe? Our men? No, we are no more expecting their zeal. If our women advance and be able to form a future generation it may

¹⁰⁴ “Medeni bir millet diğer medeni milletlere kendini ezdirmemek, bağ ettirmemek için vesait-i müdafaasını ihzar eder. Bu vesait çok ve muhtelifdir. Fakat bizde zan olduğu gibi yalnız siyaset, yalnız top tüfek değildir. En büyük kuvvet iktisaddir, sanattır, işçilikdir ”; *Kadınlar dünyası* (Editorial), “Cesaret-i Medeniye”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 21 (1913), p.1.

¹⁰⁵ “Medeni milletlerin sanaii bizim gibi tahta kaşık, tahta takunyadan, biraz da leblebi şekerden, bir kaç destegah kumaş ile havludan ibaret değildir. Çarşılarımızdaki ticaret mağzalarımıza bakalım hep Avrupa mazruatıyla tezyin değil mi? Paramızı almak için bizi sefil muhtaç hatta esir etmek için değil mi?”; *Ibid*, p.1

be.. Yet, at the present our hope is at womanhood. We should not merely clamor. Let we make a productive and active move forward. Let we get familiar with industry.¹⁰⁶

The authors of *Kadınlar dünyası* frequently stressed the significance of entrepreneurship as a main factor accounting for the nation's economical and political independence and its international competitive position. It was believed that for the sake of national endurance and progress Ottoman trade and industry should be developed to a competitive level.

Fatma Zehra in her article titled ‘What is Private Enterprise?’ indicated private enterprise as the main reason behind the progress of Western countries. According to her the common disinclination among the Ottoman Muslims towards entrepreneurship was a major reason of the nation’s backwardness. According to her, it was also an important problem that Ottoman Muslims had not educated their children with a motivation toward entrepreneurship that this case was also harmful for the future of the nation. “Because we cannot train our children in their childhood unlike the progressed nations. They cannot also witness such ventures or enterprises among their parents. There is no one talking about such things in our schools. Certainly, our situation will be like this.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ “Of, Avrupanın iktisadi boyunduruğu altından bu zavallı milleti kim kurtaracak? Erkeklerimiz mi? Hayır, biz onlardan artık gayret beklemiyoruz. Belki kadınlarımız teali eder de bir nesli ati vücuda getirebilirse o başka. Fakat hali hazırda ümidimiz biz kadınlıkda kaldı. Yalnız bağırıp çağırılmayalım, müessir, faal bir hareket gösterelim. Sanaata, sanatkarlığa alışalım!”; Ibid, p.1.

¹⁰⁷ “Çünkü evladlarımıza çocukluğunda sair müterakki milletler gibi bir terbiye veremiyoruz. Büyüklerden de öyle bir cesaret, bir teşebbüs göremiyorlar. Mekteplerimizde öyle şeylerden bahs eden yok. Elbette halimiz böyle olacak.”; Fatma Zehra, “Teşebbüs-ü şahsi nedir?”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 21 (1913), p.1.

She saw the boycott campaign and the resulting inclination towards local products as an opportunity for new local enterprises that would save Ottoman Muslims from unemployment and idleness. For the benefits of entrepreneurship the prosperous situation of non-Muslim citizens was demonstrated as an example:

Everything in this world is an opportunity. We shall not miss this last opportunity. Nowadays, a widespread tendency prevails. There occurs an inclination toward local goods, affection toward productions of the country. At least for this time we should awaken. Our men who are unemployed, who sit in the coffee shops idle and vain, should urge toward an occupation. Our daughters should relate themselves with handcrafts, sewing and such things when they are free at home. If we cannot observe the far we can have a look at the situations of our other citizens, with whom we live together, and awaken. The god does not like idle human beings. I don't know how a nation we are. Let's my sisters and brothers, let's get works.¹⁰⁸

Atiye Şükran, who was a was a passionate crusader for the Ottoman entrepreneurship and also for women's employment, devoted almost her every article to the issues of flourishing the spirit of entrepreneurship among the mass of Ottoman people and endorsing women's economic agency and empowerment. What was particularly striking in her articles were her commitment to provide practical suggestions and guidance on some specific commercial and industrial activity. In an article inspired by a chocolate advertisement given by *Nestle Company* she complained that there were no Ottomans to establish a similar kind of company and to prevent Ottoman people paying a lot of money to a foreign company for their children's nutrition. She used a harsh nationalist rhetoric to

¹⁰⁸ “Dünyada herşey fırsattır. Bu son fırsatı olsun kaçırmayalım. Bu günlerde herkesde bir hevesdir uyandı. Yerli mallarına rağbet, vatan mamulatına bir muhabbet başladı. Bari bu defa olsun uyanalım. Boş gezen, kahvelerde akşamlara kadar atıl ve batıl oturan erkeklerimiz birer işe sevk etsin. Kızlarımız dahi evlerinde boş kaldıklarında el işlerine, dikişe vesaireye işlemeğe başlasınlar. Hiç olmazsa uzaklara bakamıyorsak beraber yaşadığımız diğer vatandaşlarımızın hallerine bakıp intibaha geelim. Cenab-ı Hak atıl kullarını sevmez. Bilmem ki biz nasıl bir milletiz. Haydi kardeşler iş başına.”; Ibid, p.2.

communicate her view: “I told that!! We have neither blood, nor vigor, nor an activity! Even our children’s food is sent by Europe. Even our children’s sturdiness is cared by Europe. They mean that our children should carry their burdens better in the future, they be better porters.”¹⁰⁹

She denounced buying even chocolates from a foreign company and called for establishment of a chocolate company by an Ottoman entrepreneur. Paying a lot of money to a foreign company for chocolates was defined as strange by Atiye Şükran, which she claimed resulted from the inherent idleness of the nation. However, more than a complaint the article meant to provide suggestion and encouragement for a prospective local enterprising. She proclaimed that if an Ottoman entrepreneur produced chocolates they would buy his product even if they were not as good as Nestlé’s.

Oh my god how strange creatures we are!! As I said, how an idle nation we are. We give lots of money from our pocket to a company to which we have no relation at all. Don’t we have any doctors, any men who love his country, the children of his country that he will establish a very small firm. Even if it is not just like Nestle - it may not be at the beginning- he will establish and we will buy from them...”¹¹⁰

In another article Atiye Şükran encouraged Ottoman traders and artisans for utilizing advertising to make consumers aware of their products and to persuade them to buy, and hence to improve their business just like their Western

¹⁰⁹ “Dedim ya! Biz de ne kan var, ne can, ne de faaliyet!! Çocuklarımızın yiyeceğini bile Avrupa gönderiyor. Çocuklarımızın gürbüz olmasını bile Avrupa düşünüyor. İleride bunlar daha iyi yük taşınsın, iyi hamallık yapsın demek istiyor.”; Kadıköy: Atiye Şükran, “İşlerimiz hep buna benzer”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 26, p.2.

¹¹⁰ “Aman yarab ne garib mahluklarız!! Dedim ya ne atıl bir milletiz. Cebimizdeki paraları, hem de yığın yığın paralarımızı bize kat’iyen münasabeti olmayan bir şirkete veriyoruz. Bizim hiç doktorumuz, bizim vatanı, vatan çocuklarını seven hiç bir insanımız yok mudur ki nestle gibi olmazsa bile –tabii birden bire olmaz- ufacak bir şirket yapsın... Yapsın ki biz onlardan alalım?”; *Ibid*, p.2.

counterparts. She argued that Muslim/Turkish traders and artisans were not able to sell their goods because their potential costumers did not know which product was available and where due to the lack of proper advertising. She also provided a couple of examples of how foreign companies advertised their products.¹¹¹

Please pay attention. What do the Westerners do? All advertising! They make known! He says: "There is everything in the store. It is cheap. Please honor us by visiting once." Another one produces cochleae. He sells them in gilt paper. He puts various pictures in them. And announce it to everybody in the newspapers..."¹¹²

She also reminded that advertising was legitimate and necessary part of trade: "We will also incite our people with advertisements. There is nothing reprehensible in advertising. It is legitimate."¹¹³ No doubt, Atiye Şükran's rather naïve remarks on the benefits and necessity of advertising were indeed part of a more general effort to promote a new culture within society. In her enthusiastic manner of writing, Atiye Şükran meant instilling into the mass of readers new social values that would allow for the development of a new economy and a new culture.

The authors' effort to promote the idea of "national economy" in general, and the Ottoman entrepreneurship in particular demonstrates their concern in the

¹¹¹ Kadıköy: Atiye Şükran, "Çalışmayı, çalışdırmayı bilelim", Kadınlar dünyası, 40 (1913), pp.2-3.

¹¹² "Dikkat ediniz. Garblılar ne yapıyor? Bütün reklam! Malum ediyor! Mağazada herşey var. Ucuzdur. Bir defa teşrif ediniz diyor. Başkası çukolata yapıyor. Yıldızlı kağıtlarla satıyor. İçine de dürlü dürlü resimler koyuyor. Herkese de gazetelerle ilan ediyor..."; Ibid, p.3.

¹¹³ "Biz de ilanlarla halkımızı teşvik edeceğiz. İlançılıkda ayıp yoktur. Meşrudur."; Ibid, p.3.

social and economic issues of their day, as well as their zeal to shape the nation's political, social, and economic life.

“National Economy” and Women’s Work outside the Home

Advocating women’s work outside the home was an important part of the agenda of *Kadınlar dünyası*. In many of the articles the authors fought against the negative public attitudes towards women’s work to ensure access of women to economic life and strongly encouraged women for enterprising and taking jobs. In the late Ottoman Empire, popular belief held that "women's place was in the home," that their roles should be defined solely within the domestic setting. Women, particularly Muslim women, were unwelcome in public life, albeit this attitude was slowly changing.

What *Kadınlar dünyası* attempted was a re-definition women’s "place in society" by challenging prevailing home-centered and inferior image of womanhood. The radical challenge of *Kadınlar dünyası* to the prevailing definitions of womanhood was stunningly unsettling for Ottoman Muslim society. By arguing for women’s work outside the home *Kadınlar dünyası* distinguished themselves from the previous women’s rights advocates. Their position marked the peak of Ottoman feminism.

What is worthy of interest in this challenge is that many of the articles advocating for women’s work proclaimed the necessity of women economic agency as an inalienable component of development of the “national economy”. Women’s economic agency was promoted as a necessity to improve local industry and trade, noting that economic empowerment of the nation was not able to be assessed through men’s effort alone, but would require women’s participation.

In what follows, the ways in which two socio-political concerns, promotion of “national economy” and advocacy of women’s work overlapped in the general discourse of *Kadınlar dünyası* will be examined.

The editorial of the nineteenth issue, “Working is Our Right” was an explicit manifestation of women’s right to work as it is clear from the title. In the article women’s work was claimed an indispensable contribution for both the salvation of womanhood and the nation:

What is the reason of political, economic, scientific supremacy of Europe over us? We must admit that, we should confess painfully that science and education is always supreme over ignorance and bigotry that is build on ignorance. We, the Ottoman women, are no more compelled to the life of middle ages. The evils that we suffer, that our country suffer due to the ignorance of our men is enough. We must assure our situation, even fearlessly. On this land, we also have a right to live, a social life. We also want to work. We want to work in respect to our national decency and religious commands.¹¹⁴

The editorial radically challenged the views that opposed women’s work. Not only such views were condemning to a life of Middle Ages, but they also lead the nation to an inferior position in the international arena. Women were called upon to fight for taking the right to work both for the sake of womanhood and the nation.

The editorial of the thirty-first issue “Every Family is a Company” also dwelled on the same issue reflecting a similar approach as its rhetoric connected

¹¹⁴ “Bu gün Avrupa’nın bize siyaseten olsun, irfanen olsun, iktisaden olsun galebesi nedendir? Teslim etmeliyiz ki, acı acı itiraf etmeliyiz ki ilim, maarifet, daima cehalete, cehalet üzerine bina edilmiş taassuba galebe etmiştir. Biz Osmanlı kadınları artık kurun-i vustai hayatı yaşamağa mecbur değiliz. Erkeklerimizin cehaleti yüzünden kendimizin, vatanımızın çekmekte olduğu mesaib artık yeter. Mevkimizi temin etmelidir. Hem de pervasızca temin etmelidir. Bu yurd üstünde bizim de bir hakkı hayatımız, bir hakkı içtimamız vardır. Biz de çalışmak, adab-ı milliye, ahkam-ı diniyemize riayetkar olarak çalışmak isteriz.”; *Kadınlar dünyası* (editorial), “Çalışmak Hakkımızdır”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 19 (1913), p.1.

the advocacy of women's work to the well-being of the nation.¹¹⁵ In the editorial, idleness and ignorance were pointed at as the two major causes that led to the calamities of the nation. Hence, the cure was possible only through creating a wave in favor of economic development, for which both men and women should work together. Improving the educational facilities for the next generations was also a crucial part of this process.

Ignorance, idleness is a general calamity. We need to cure this; we shall not remain obedient to a lazy submission. We must comprehend what working men and women together means and urge to work. We must also spread education with all our power that we will be able to grow up a very active next-generation that maybe will compensate for our loss.¹¹⁶

The women's role in this process was highlighted: "The assurance of this goal is our responsibility. Unemployment, idleness drag us to a whirlpool of decline. It decays our existence, national and religious existence."¹¹⁷ It was claimed that women could provide a modeling example for men with their zeal in education, science and work:

Let us consider awakening the life of education and life of work and utterly eradicating the ignorance in our country. If our men are idle, if our men are ignorant, if our men are

¹¹⁵ *Kadınlar dünyası* (editorial), "Her aile bir şirkettir", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 31 (1913), p.1.

¹¹⁶ "Cehalet, atalet bir facia-i umumidir. Bunu tedavi etmeliyiz, bir teslimiyet-i miskinane ile muti beklememeliyiz. Kadın erkek çalışmak ne demek olduğunu artık idrak edip çalışmağa var kuvvetimizle sarılmalıyız. Maarifi dahi var kudretimizle taammüm etmeliyiz ki pek faal bir nesl-i ati olsun yetiştirebilelim, yetiştirebilelim ki zaiyatımızı belki onlar telafi edebilirler.;" Ibid, p.1.

¹¹⁷ "Bu gayeyi temin etmek biz kadınlara aiddir. İşsizlik, atalet bizi girdab-ı inkıraza sürüklüyor. Mevcudiyetimizi, mevcudiyet-i milliye ve diniyemizi çürütüyor"; Ibid, p.1.

not comprehending we, the women, shall attain education, science and employment. Let us provide them an example; let us revive them.¹¹⁸

Towards the end of the article it was also stated that every member of a family could work in order to contribute to the family economy just like members of a company: “Let us consider once more: What does a family mean? Is it not a small-scale company? Does a company not hold a head as it holds members of all degrees? Do they not work separately? Do they not separately earn money and leave it to the company?”¹¹⁹

A relatively elaborate article advocating women’s work was provided by Pakize Nihad. Pakize Nihad exemplifying the handcrafts created by women in their homes argued for the competence of women’s mental capacity and talents for working outside like men. According to her working was a right stolen from women. There was no real obstacle in front of the Ottoman women’s work: “Since women have an intelligence of work and an ability of invention why should we halt? Let us work: Let us demand our stolen right. Why do we not work like foreign women ?”¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ “Memleketimizde hayat-ı maarifi, hayat-ı mesaiyi uyandırmaya cehaleti ataleti kökünden söküp atmağa bakalım. Erkeklerimiz tembel ise, erkeklerimiz cahil ise, erkeklerimiz müdrik değil ise biz kadınlar, maarif sahibi, ilim sahibi, iş sahibi olalım; olalım da erkeklerimize ibret gösterelim. Onları biz canlandıralım.”; Ibid, p.1.

¹¹⁹ “Bir daha düşünelim: Aile demek ne demektir? Ufak bir şirket değil midir: Bir şirketin reisi olduğu gibi ufaklı büyüklü azası da vardır. Bunlar ayrı ayrı çalışamazlar mı? Ayrı ayrı kazanıp getirip şirkete bırakamazlar mı?”; Ibid, p. 1.

¹²⁰ “Madem ki kadınlarda da erkekler gibi mesai-i dimağiye, kabiliyet-i ihtiraiye var o halde niçün duralım? Biz de çalışalım; hukuk-u mesrukemizi istirdad edelim. Niçin biz de nisvan-ı ecnebiye gibi çalışmayalım?”; Ibid, p.3.

Pakize Nihad also indicated that Europeans could maintain their present powerful situation thanks to men's and women's working together. "For example, the Europeans, who seem to us very powerful today, had not been like this in the past; yet, as they were industrious they worked men and women without a distinction in accord; they opened perfect industries, trade-houses and well arranged schools. They paid the utmost attention to the education and training of their children."¹²¹

Pakize Nihad denounced the inadequate educational facilities, lack of opportunities and the unfavorable social climate for women's work.

In our country, neither the number of the vocational schools were increased, nor they were organized, nor industrial realm was opened to ladies. For this reason women cannot attempt at any serious enterprises. Poor women, particularly the young girls become the target of offensive and loathsome words of a band of unemployed and idle vagabonds who corrupt the clear and pure air of our country and, hence they cannot decide what to do, which aim to follow, because of the t burden of the degradation they are afflicted to. If every male and female individual in our country occupy his/herself with the profession that he/she follows by acknowledging his/her own eminence of work everybody owns his/her own identity. Also the nation and country gain strength.¹²²

Although the rhetoric, which was used to advocate women's work, frequently connected the necessity of women's work to the national good as

¹²¹ "Mesela bugün nazarımıza pek muhteşem görünen Avrupalılar vaktiyle böyle miydiler; fakat mesaiperver olduklarından bilatefrik erkek kadın bir mesai-i müttehid ile çalışdılar; mükemmel sanai; ticarethaneler ve muntazam mektebler küşad, çocuklarının tahsil ve terbiyesine son derece itina ettiler.;" Ibid, p.3.

¹²² "Bizim memleketimizde ne sanayi mektepleri tezyid ve tensik edilmiş ve ne de sanai hanımlara küşad edilmiştir. Bunun için kadınlarda ciddi bit teşebbüse girişmiyorlar. Zavallı kadınlar hususiyle genç kızlar memleketimizin temiz saf havasını ifsad eden bir takım işsiz, atıl gezen serseri güruhunun tecavüzkarane müstekreh lakırdılarına hedef oluyorlar ve dışar oldukları bar-ı zilletden ne yapacaklarını, hangi gayeye süluk edeceklerini takdir edemiyorlar. Eğer memleketimizde erkek, kadın her ferd kendi vazaif-i nebresini bilerek takib eylediği meslek ile iştilal edecek olursa herkes kendi şahsiyetini bilir. Millet ve vatan da kesb-i selabet eder.;" Ibid, p.3.

exemplified above, the necessity of women's work for economic self-sufficiency of womanhood was also highlighted. The complete financial dependence of women to male relatives was denounced as a problematic situation through which women were left with no way to support themselves when they lost their male protectors. For instance, in an editorial of the newspaper it was claimed that:

We, the Ottoman women, were living in idleness up to the present day, we have always lived on our men's work, and once we lost our men we have fallen in to a misery and poverty. It was because we were ignorant, we were idle, we were not maintaining our lives with our own work. Let us be more sensible from now on, giving hand in hand with each other, in mutual assistance in order to revive the educational life and labor life. Let us get enlightened. Let us save ourselves from the misery and poverty, which always threaten us. We cannot maintain ourselves with our own means.¹²³

In another editorial women were called upon to establish associations through which women's economic self-sufficiency would be promoted by providing them with necessary skills and opportunities of earning an income.

We, the women, should not halt. Let us found associations and found schools. By supporting industry, let us awaken the labor life also among our class. We, the women, are the ones who suffer most. Whenever we remain deprived of a protector, a father; or a husband, we become destitute, remain wretched. Because, we are not familiar with any work, we do not have a skill.¹²⁴

¹²³ “Biz Osmanlı kadınları bu güne kadar atalet içinde yaşıyor, daima erkeklerimizin mesaisiyle geçiniyor, erkeksiz kaldığımız anda da sefalet ve zarurete kurban oluyor idik, çünkü cahil idik, çünkü atıl idik, çünkü iş bilmiyor, kendimizi kendi mesaimiz yaşatmıyor idik. Artık aklımızı başımıza alalım, birbirimize el vererek bir teavün-ü umumi ile işçilik hayatını ihya ederek, maarif hayatını ihya ederek hem tenvir, hem de bizi daima tehdit etmekte olan sefalet ve zaruretden kurtulalım.”; Kadınlar dünyası (editorial), “El ele verelim”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 61 (1913), p.1.

¹²⁴ “Biz kadınlar durmayalım, cemiyetler teşekkül ederek mektebler açalım. Sanayi-i himaye ile sınıfımızda dahi işçilik hayatını uyandıralım. En ziyade felaket içinde yaşayan biz kadınlarız. Veliden, hamiden peder olsun; koca olsun mahrum kaldık mı sefil oluyoruz, perişan kalıyoruz. Çünkü iş bilmiyoruz, sanaatımız yokdur. Kendimizi kendi sayemizde geçindiremiyoruz.”; *Kadınlar dünyası* (editorial), “Aile hayatı teavün-ü umumi”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 45 (1913), p.1.

Women and Trade

Besides women's access to paid jobs, the authors of *Kadınlar dünyası* also promoted women's access to trade businesses. In one issue, for instance, Atiye Şükran came up with the idea of women's bazaar in defense of women's right for trade activities. In order not to violate the segregation rules she suggested to establish a women's bazaar in which women could pursue trade freely with no direct contact with men.

Trade is free. Why can women not open stores? Of course by saying this we do not mean a woman in her yeldirme or ferace should open a store in the bazaar. Trade can also be conducted in places particular to women as it can be conducted in the bazaar. Women will visit the stores that are owned by women. Hence, they will not have any contacts with men.¹²⁵

Also, in an article two female vendors who were selling handicrafts on a modest counter in the bazaar were mentioned with praising words. The endeavor was appreciated as means to maintain the women's livelihood and their economic independence.¹²⁶ “While we were proclaiming that we can work, working is not forbidden, we saw ladies engaged in trade. We are delighted. Actually, this lady is doing a small, insignificant work yet, she is showing how to work, and every body is capable of work. It is worthy of congratulations.”¹²⁷ After reminding the

¹²⁵ “Ticaret serbesttir. Biz kadınlar ne için mağaza açamıyoruz. Mutlaka açamıyoruz demekle çarşı ortasında yeldirmesiyle, feracesiyle bir mağaza açsın otursun demek istemiyoruz. Ticaret çarşıda olduğu gibi kadınlara mahusus bir yerde de olabilir. Kadınlar tarafından açılacak ticarethanelere kadınlar gelir. Bunların erkeklerle münasabetleri yokdur”; Kadıköy: Atiye Şükran, “Kadınlar ne için mağaza açamazlar?”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 60 (1913), p.1.

¹²⁶ Unsigned, “Bir kaç misal”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 28 (1913), pp.1-2.

¹²⁷ “Çalışırız, çalışmak memnu değildir; derken ticaret eden hanımları da gördük memnun olduk Vakıa bu hanım tüccare pek cüz’i, ehemmiyetsiz bir iş yapıyor

necessity of working in order to earn one's livelihood the author asked:" In that case what kind of an obstacle is there to view those sisters with respect?"¹²⁸

The social and economic troubles suffered were linked to the idleness by the author: "There is no need to count the calamities that occurred as consequences of idleness and inability in trade. If we can not manage out the money in our hands properly, of course we starve."¹²⁹ It was claimed that as every individual of the nation shared the same kind of reluctance against working and trade, the result was a national trouble: "The source of the national calamity is this. It is because we are all like this. Even when we perish personally it has a common consequence. It is because what is general is in individuals. Because the nation means the individuals."¹³⁰

What was particularly criticized was the common reluctance against working and trade: "For instance, when we have four or five hundred liras at hand we spend it slowly. No body thinks of opening a store and assuring her living with her own work by obeying the religion and chastity. As we have not seen we cannot think of any other alternatives."¹³¹ The general awakening considering the

ama, nasıl çalışılacağını, herkesin mesaide iktidarı olduğunu ibraz ediyor. Şayan-ı tebrik."; Ibid, p. 1.

¹²⁸ "O halde bu hemşirelerimizi nazar-ı ihtiramla görmeğe ne mani var?"; Ibid, p.2.

¹²⁹ "İşsizlik, ticarete vukufsuzluk yüzünden uğradığımız felaketleri saymağa hacet göremeyiz. Elimizdeki parayı hüsn-ü idare edemezsek elbet aç kalırız."; Ibid, p.2.

¹³⁰ "Felaket-i miliyenin menşei de budur. Çünkü hepimiz böyleyiz. Aynı ayrı mahvolursak da neticede iştirak vardır. Umumiyet ferdlerdedir. Çünkü millet demek efrad demektir."; Ibid, p. 2.

¹³¹ "Mesela elimizde dört, beş yüz lira paramız olunca aheste aheste onu yer, bitiririz. Bir mağaza açmak; dine, iffete riayet şartıyla kendi mesaimizle te'min-i maişet

necessity of work in the society was appreciated but it was also necessary to eliminate hesitations about women's work." However, we have already understood that we need to work. Wish we eliminate the hesitations caused by vain customs also."¹³²

As exemplified by the above articles, women's right to access to every kind of economic agency, including trade was defended by the frequently repeated idea that women's economic participation was indispensable for the restoration and improvement of the national economy as well as for female economic empowerment.

Cooperatism and Women in Kadınlar dünyası

The cooperative movement began to be publicly debated in the Ottoman press of the 1910s, albeit the issue was addressed since the end of the nineteenth century. Cooperates was suggested by the Ottoman intelligentsia as an alternative way of capital formation to make up for the scarce Muslim capital accumulation.

In the Second Constitutional era, cooperations emerged as a response to the Ottoman Empire's gradual loss of power and attaining a dependent position. Due to insufficient capital accumulation, foreign capital was provided large opportunities. Ottoman artisanship or small-scale production was impoverished, possession day to day. Under these circumstances, Ottoman intelligentsia

etmek kimsenin hatırına gelmez. Görmediğimiz için bundan başka bir şey olacağına ihtimal verilemez."; Ibid, p.2.

¹³² "Fakat artık çalışmak lazım olduğunu anladık. Bir de adet-i batıladan mütevellid tereddütleri ortadan kaldırsak."; Ibid, p.2.

approached the accumulation problem from the viewpoint of cooperation, suggested small producers to organize and gain power through cooperations.¹³³

Cooperatism developed as a component of the ‘national economy’ policy and became a pillar of both the national movement and the economic struggle. Authors of *Kadınlar dünyası*, explicitly referring to it as cooperatism or not, tried to promote an interest by women in cooperative enterprising. They suggested some endeavors through which women would collect money among themselves and form the sufficient capital for some prospective trade and industry businesses. Women’s cooperatives had two fold benefits: On the one hand, they would promote women entrepreneurship and employment. On the other hand they would contribute to the improvement of local production.

Atiye Şükran came up with the idea of a collective women’s entrepreneurship that women from different neighborhoods should establish as weaving workshops for knitting socks. Her suggestion was inspired by the work of a socks weaver who knitted socks on a hand machine in his small shop around Beyazıd. Atiye Şükran was driven to the shop by a modest hand written announcement on its window. The national emphasis of the announcement and Atiye Şükran’s recounting of it are particularly striking:” The add was a Turk’s

¹³³ “II. Meşrutiyet döneminde kooperatifçilik Osmanlı ekonomisinin giderek gücünü yitirmesine ve dışa bağımlı bir nitelik kazamasına bir tepki olarak ortaya çıktı. Sermaye birikimi yetersizliği nedeniyle, 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren yabancı sermayeye geniş olanaklar sağlandı. Osmanlı zanaatı ya da küçük üretimi, eşit olmayan rekabet koşulları altında her geçen gün yoksullaştı, mülksüzleşti. Bu koşullar altında Osmanlı aydını birikim sorununa kooperasyon açısından yaklaşmış, küçük üreticinin kooperatiflerde örgütlenip güçlenmesini önermişti.”; Toprak, p.126.

add, the thing it was advertising was local product socks for the health of Turks”.¹³⁴

Atiye Şükran did not only appreciate the modest effort of the weaver for local production but she was also inspired by his effort for her suggestion that women from different neighborhoods should establish small-scale weaving workshops equipped with reasonably priced machines similar to the one used by the socks weaver.

Ladies in all neighborhoods, if they are ladies in truth, if we want our children to wear local socks, we should obtain a few machines. We should make our hands familiar to them just like sewing machines. This situation becomes possible through coming together. There must be enterprising women in Vefa, Fatih, Çarşamba, Küçük Mustafa Paşa, Şehzadebaşı and in many other places. Let us see them.¹³⁵

There was no direct address to cooperatism in the article, nevertheless the suggestion was clearly inspired by the principles set forth in the foregoing debates concerning the cooperations.

In another article titled “A Trade Opportunity with 240 Mecidiye” the address was again implicit, but the inspiration was clearer. In the article, Atiye Şükran suggested women to organize monthly meetings through which they would collect small amounts of money every month for a collective enterprising. She argued that the small amounts provided every month by women, who would

¹³⁴ “İlan bir Türkün ilanı, ilan ettiği şey de Türklerin sıhhatini temin eden bir yerli çorabı ilanı idi.”; Kadıköy: Atiye Şükran, “Neden bahsedeyim? ”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 27 (1913), p.2.

¹³⁵ “Her bir mahalle hanımları, eğer hanım iseler, eğer çocuklarımıza yerli çorablar giydirmek istiyor isek iki üç makine tedarik etmeliyiz. Dikiş makineleri gibi buna da ellerimizi alıştırmalıyız. Bu keyfiyet birleşmekle olur. Vefada, Fatihde, Çarşamba’da, Küçük Mustafa Paşa’da, Şehzadebaşı’nda ve daha çok yerlerde müteşebbis hanımlar vardır. Görelim onları.”; *Ibid*, p.2.

be around ten in number, would make a considerable amount in six months. That would make a sufficient amount to establish a small-scale business. Her particular business suggestion was creating tableaus by publishing Ottoman sceneries on silk. She pondered on every detail of the work and calculated every expense providing a detailed guidance for the endeavor.¹³⁶

Following Atiye Şükran's article, two women, Süreyya Lütfü and Asiye Cahid, wrote letters to *Kadınlar dünyası* in which they separately expressed their willingness to contribute to such a project.¹³⁷ And in the nineteenth issue Atiye Şükran stated that she dealt with a publisher, who was ready to do the job.¹³⁸ There are no more reports on the outcome of the project. Most probably it turned out to be a failure.

Emine Seher Ali encouraged women for a cooperative endeavor by claiming that women could perform almost every kind of work once they decided to do. "Let us tell what has to be done: We shall decide to work. Once we reach at this decision it is possible to find works to carry on."¹³⁹ She offered to organize a cooperative, by calling it with the name, to collect money and establish a small-scale weaving workshop with the money collected at the first hand.

¹³⁶ Atiye Şükran, "240 Mecidiye ile bir ticaret kapısı", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 61 (1913), pp.1-2.

¹³⁷ Süreyya Lütfü, "Atiye Şükran Hanım Efendiye", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 68 (1913), p.4. Asiye Cahid, Acıbadem, "Süreyya Lütfü Hanımefendiye", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 78 (1913), p.1.

¹³⁸ Atiye Şükran, "Evvel Nazariyat ba'de ameliyat", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 99 (1913), p.2.

¹³⁹ "Ne yapmak lazım geldiğini söyleyelim: Çalışmağa karar verelim. Bir kere bu kararı alırsak yapacak şeyler bulunur.": Emine Seher Ali, "İş Görebiliriz!", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 26 (1913), p.1.

What to do? Let us unite, hold a consultation. Let we collect money. If we have money at hand no work is impossible. With the first money collected let we establish a family cooperative, a small institution similar to a bank. On the one hand, we will remove our need by ourselves. On the other hand, our money increases and we save ourselves from the foreigners. A weaving machine, a loom is for twelve liras. It may be more. If twenty families unite and buy ten of them, it is a business! As small it starts as large it gets.¹⁴⁰

She hoped the cooperation would spread out to other cities of the country and enlarge to a hundred thousands of female members in a year. In that case it would be possible to establish larger scale factories whose benefits for the country would be indisputable.

A big association like this may open four factories a year later! What serve the country are manufacturing and money more than official employment! The services of such an institution cover to what extend! For example, from the perfect sewing cottons can be produced from Adana cotton. There is a Greek factory there! Greeks! produce sewing cotton in our country. There is no need to think far more.¹⁴¹

The authors' call for cooperative enterprising shows how the socio-economic setting of the period opened up new opportunities for women to propose new forms of female activism. The calls for women's cooperations meant more than calls for capital-raising agencies dedicated to a particular business. Through these calls women were searching ways to pursue individual and group interests—of gender, religion, ethnicity, or some combination thereof—and to validate

¹⁴⁰ “Ne yapmalı mı? Birleşelim, istişare edelim. Para toplayalım. Elde para olunca yapılmayacak bir iş yoktur. İlk toplanacak para ile bir aile sandığı, küçük bankamsı bir müessese meydana getirelim. Hem ihtiyacımızı yine kendimiz def ederiz. Hem de paramız çoğalır, ecnebilerden yakamızı kurtarırız. Bir dokuma makinesi, küçük bir tezgah on iki liradır. İsterse daha fazla olsun. Yirmi aile birleşerek on tane alsa, işte bir iş! Ne kadar küçükten başlanırsa büyümek o kadar çok olur.”; Ibid, p.1.

¹⁴¹ “Böyle büyük bir cemiyet bir sene sonra belki dört fabrika küşad eder! Vatana hizmet eden ise memurdan ziyade imale ve paradır! Böyle bir müessesenin edeceği hizmetler nelere teşmil olunur! Mesela Adana'nın pamuğu, en mükemmel tire çıkarır. Orada bir Yunan tire fabrikası var! Yunan! Memleketimizde tire yapıyor. Artık ötesini düşünmeye hacet yoktur.”; Ibid, p.2.

collective public female action. The cooperation would on the one hand contribute to increase local production and the economic empowerment of Muslim/ Turkish population. On the other hand, it was a way to facilitate women's economic agency.

Associations Facilitating Women's Employment Improving Local Production

There is no evidence in the pages of *Kadınlar dünyası* for the success of any women's cooperations of the time. Nevertheless, some small-scale projects concerning cloth production to promote women's employment and improve local production could be facilitated by women's associations. The first call for such a project came from a reader, Güzin Nadir. According to her it was possible to employ poor girls in a clothing workshop that would be established by a women's collective.¹⁴² Such a workshop would provide income for women in need, promote the idea of women's employment in general and improve local production as well. "We hope that if such an institution is opened, our ladies will have their clothes produced here. And they should make their sisters, but not some foreigners profiting with their money."¹⁴³

Indeed, as stated above a similar endeavor was facilitated by *Ma'mulat-ı Dahiliye İstihlakı Kadınlar Cemiyet-i Hayriyesi*. *Osmanlı Hanımları Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti* opened a clothing workshop. The opening of a clothing

¹⁴² Bab-ı Ali'den: Güzin Nadir, "Sevgili Kadınlar dünyası Müdiriyyet-i Aliyesine", *Kadınlar dünyası*, 29 (1913), p.4.

¹⁴³ "Ve ümid edelim ki böyle bir müessese küşad edilirse hanımlarımız çamaşırlarını burada imal ettirir. Ve paralarıyla bir takım ecnebileri değil kendi hemşirelerini müstefid ederler."; Ibid, p.1.

workshop by *Osmanlı Hanımları Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti* was announced in the editorial of the sixty sixth issue. The aim of the workshop was expressed as developing employment facilities for women.

We wrote that “*Osmanlı Müdafaa-i Hukuk-u Nisvan Cemiyeti*”, whose members increase due to the haste of the ladies who consider serving the country as a duty, began its activities. One of the aims that the association follows was to open workplaces. It was to employ girls and women, make them familiar with working life, and by this way alleviating their misery and poverty.¹⁴⁴

Moreover, women were called upon to have their clothes created in this workshop as it would contribute the advance of Ottoman women on the one hand, and prevent the inflow of the Ottoman money to foreigners on the other hand.

We vehemently suggest the ladies, who wants to have cloths sewed, this tailor house. Thanks to this tailor house a part of the ladies’ money will remain to themselves, and the other part will remain in the country. They will feel an exhilaration in their conscience knowing that it will be spent for the progress of our unfortunate womanhood. It is because every body wants to serve her country- by whatever the means it is.¹⁴⁵

The experiences of clothing workshops enable us to see once more how women fit their collective activism concerning empowerment of women into the nationalist movement, and how they used associations to achieve both national and gender goals together.

¹⁴⁴ “Hidmeti vataniyeyi bir vazife bilen hanımefendilerin şitabıyla, azası günden güne tezayüd eden “Osmanlı Hanımları nisvan-ı hukuk”un devin faaiyete girmekde olduğunu yazmışdık. Cemiyetin takib etmekde olduğu gayelerden biri de mütenevvi işyerleri açmaktı. Bunlarda hanım kızları, kadınları işledmek hayat-ı mesaiye alışdırıp, ısındırmak, bu suretle de sefalet ve zaruretlerini tahfif etmekdi.”; Kadınlar dünyası (editorial), “Terzilik”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 66 (1913), p.1.

¹⁴⁵ “Dikiş dikdirmek isteyen hanımefendilere bu terzievini şiddetle tavsiye ederiz. Bu terzihane sayesinde hanımefendilerin paralarının bir kısmı kendilerinde, bir kısmı da dahilde kalarak, bedbaht kadınlığımızın terakkiyatına sarf edeceğini bilerek vicdanında bir inşirah his edeceklerdir. Çünkü herkes vatanına –ne suretle olursa olsun- hizmet etmek arzusundadır.”; *Ibid*, p.1.

Child's Training and Entrepreneurship

Another important duty assigned to women to promote entrepreneurship was training their children in a way that they would tend to jobs related to trade and industry. For example, Emine Seher criticized the fact that Ottoman Muslim mothers were training their children with the hopes of getting them pasha. It was an odd situation as official works were always considered favorable against the works in industrial fields even when the latter was much more profitable.

Let us consider the benefits of the training we provide our children, there will remain no strangeness, because our lullabies are imprinted to our children's minds. Our wishes as 'my son will be a pasha' of course, burden the repetition of the official duty to those little minds. Which women mention her son trade or industry? Wish that my son will be a machinist or a worker a factory? God forbid! In our opinion an official employee working for thirty piasters a month is much different than a worker in the reji factory for twenty five piaster a day. We do not cease from that mountly thirty piasters and despise seven eight hundred piaster.¹⁴⁶

According to Emine Seher Ali the reason of his unreasonable attitude was the over pride of the Ottoman Muslim people.

A similar view was also articulated in an editorial. The general tendency toward official jobs were denounced as a factor that led to the present and future misery of the nation.

The theory that education is only for taking official jobs is erroneous: A nation needs shepherds, farmers, blacksmiths and carpenters more than official employees. All these offer distinct services for the country. If a nation tends to official works more than labor

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“Evladlarımıza vereceğimiz terbiyenin ifa edeceği hizmeti düşünelim, mesailde gariblik kalmaz. Çünkü bizim ninilerimizdeki arzu yavrularımızın dimağına nakşolunur. Oğlum paşa olacak temennileri elbet, hayat-ı memuriyetin, o küçük dimağlarda tekrarını mucib olur. Hangi kadın var ki, oğluna ticaretten, sanaatdan bahsetsin? Oğlum makinist, fabrikada amele olacak desin? Maazallah! Nazarımızda mahiye otuz kuruş maaşla kalemde müstahdem bir gençle reji fabrikasında yevmiyesi 25 kuruş alan bir genç arasında dağlar kadar fark vardır. Otuz kuruş aylıktan vazgeçemez makkhiye yedi sekizyüz kuruşu istihkar ederiz.”; Emine Seher Ali, “Hayat-ı Sanaat”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 9 (1913), p.1.

then that nation is unfortunate, condemned to misery and decline. Thus, it is because all of us are in demand of official positions we became poor. Training our children for official jobs we killed their inclination toward industry, made them miserable.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ “Her okuyan; mutlak memur olmak için okur nazariyesi hatalıdır: bir millete memurdan ziyade çoban, çiftçi, demirci, marangoz vesaire lazımdır. Bunların vatana ayrı ayrı hizmetleri vardır. Bir milletde işçilikden ziyade memuriyet hevesi olunca o millet bedbahttır, mahkum-u sefalet ve zeveldir. İşte biz hepimiz memuriyet talebinde olduğumuzdandır ki fakir olduk. Evladlarımıza da memuriyet terbiyesi vererek sanayiye muhabbet etmek hislerini öldürdük, sefil ettik.”; *Kadınlar dünyası (editorial)* “Marangoz, Başvekil Damadı”, *Kadınlar dünyası*, 35 (1913), p. 1.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Women's movement of the late Ottoman period developed in the midst of nationalist politics. The emergence of nationalism as the dominant ideology provided a new conception of society within which the social positions and roles of men and women were re-defined. Within this process, the construction of a new national identity and new political loyalties intermingled with the definition of a new gender order and roles. Although, men dominated nationalist projects and agenda- it is for this reason that nationalist projects mostly reflected men's interests and values- a new conception of the society opened up a space for women to negotiate their social positions and roles. Therefore, nationalism had a prominent effect on the demands and strategies of the women's movement.

In this study, I have explored some of the diverse ways that the national issues became sites for negotiation and compromise over women's place and status in the nation. The study showed how women with a variety of political positions have developed and defended their arguments for an improved social status for women by depending on the prescriptions of nationalist ideology dominating their time.

In other words the aim of the study was twofold: The first was understanding the place of women in the national processes and identifying the negotiations and compromises women enter into with the leading forms of nationalism to shape the political agenda of the period. The second was pointing at the definition of new gender roles and identities for men and women in parallel

to the production of new national identities and new loyalties at the demise of the empire.

Over all, nationalism introduced women to a wide range of "modern" social roles and a discourse of freedoms and rights associated with being a member of the nation. The attempts to build national identities have often been negotiated by women as they claimed that the pursuit and defense of their rights was to yield a prosperous country and modern nation.

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