AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES IN URBAN
TURKEY IN TERMS OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT

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Especially recently, cooperatives occupy the global agenda as efficient organizations that contribute to mainstream development goals. However, cooperatives, which may also emerge as grassroots organizations, could create an alternative through empowering women socially, economically and politically. In this respect, this study investigates the impact of women's cooperatives on women's empowerment in urban Turkey. Empowerment Approach composes the theoretical framework of this study. Primarily, the mainstream development approach, Women in Development approach and Gender and Development approach are analyzed critically which are the precursors of Empowerment Approach. Later, Empowerment Approach is analyzed, and benefiting from postmodern approaches that emphasize the importance of local ways of knowing and doing, empowerment is defined as a process that fulfills practical and strategic gender needs through *power within*, *power with* and *power to*, which are generative forms of power.

Through field research conducted in Istanbul and its periphery, I concluded that: 1) Women's conceptualization of empowerment overlapped with my conceptualization of *power with* and *power within*. However women did not mention *power to* as power or empowerment. 2) Rather than practical or strategic gender needs, women mostly fulfill psychological and social needs through cooperative involvement. This category emerged as a third category that should be added to practical and strategic

gender needs framework. 3) Women's cooperatives empower women through *power within* and *power with*, which in turn mostly fulfill social, psychological and practical gender needs. *Power to* is not revealed through cooperative membership which is in fact a sin qua non aspect of empowerment.

Keywords: Women's Cooperatives, Empowerment Approach, Gender Needs, Urban Turkey

ÖZ

KADINLARIN GÜÇLENDİRİLMESİ AÇISINDAN KENTSEL TÜRKİYE'DEKİ KADIN KOOPERATİFLERİNİN BİR ANALİZİ

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Özellikle son dönemde kooperatifler dünya gündeminde ana akım kalkınma hedeflerine katkı veren etkin örgütler olarak yer almaktadır. Ancak yerel örgütlenmeler olarak da ortaya çıkan kooperatifler, kadınların sosyal, ekonomik ve politik açıdan güçlenmelerini sağlayarak alternatif bir örgütlenme modeli oluşturabilirler. Bu çerçevede, bu çalışma kentsel Türkiye'deki kadın kooperatiflerinin kadınların güçlendirilmesine olan etkisini araştırmaktadır. Çalışmanın teorik çerçevesini Güçlendirme Yaklaşımı oluşturmaktadır. Öncelikle bu yaklaşımının öncülü olan anaakım kalkınma yaklaşımı, Kalkınmada Kadın yaklaşımı ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın yaklaşımları eleştirel olarak incelenmiştir. Sonrasında Güçlendirme Yaklaşımı tartışılmış ve, yerel bilme ve yapış şekillerinin önemini vurgulayan postmodern yaklaşımlar ışığında güçlendirme pratik ve stratejik toplumsal cinsiyet ihtiyaçlarının üretken güç formları olan *içsel güç* (*power within*) *birlikte güç* (*power with*) ve *değişme gücü* (*power to*) yoluyla karşılanması olarak tanımlanmıştır.

İstanbul ve çevresinde gerçekleştirilen saha çalışması sonucunda şu sonuçlara varılmıştır: 1) Kadınların güç ve güçlendirme kavramsallaştırmaları, bu çalışma çerçevesinde yapılan *içsel güç* ve *birlikte güç* tanımlarıyla uyumludur. Ancak *değişme gücü* kadınlar tarafından güç ve güçlendirme olarak tanımlanmamıştır. 2) Kooperatife dahiliyet sonucunda kadınlar pratik ve stratejik toplumsal cinsiyet

ihtiyaçlarından çok, psikolojik ve sosyal ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaktadır. Bu kategori, pratik ve stratejik toplumsal cinsiyet ihtiyaçları çerçevesine dahil edilmesi gereken üçüncü bir kategori olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. 3) Kadın kooperatifleri *içsel güç* ve *birlikte güç* yoluyla kadınların güçlenmesini sağlamaktadır. Bunlar genellikle sosyal, psikolojik ve pratik toplumsal cinsiyet ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaktadır. Kooperatif üyeliği sonucunda aslında güçlen(dir)me kavramının olmazsa olmazı olan *değişme gücü* ortaya çıkmamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın Kooperatifleri, Güçlen(dir)me Yaklaşımı, Toplumsal Cinsiyet İhtiyaçları, Kentsel Türkiye

To My Father, Mehmet Kaya Varol

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

COPAC   Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives

COOPAfrica   The Cooperative Facility for Africa

FSWW   Foundation for the Support of Women's Work

ICA   International Cooperative Alliance

ILO   International Labor Organization

UN   United Nations

UNDP   United Nations Development Program

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women's emancipation and empowerment[1] has always been the leading goal of women's struggles. These concepts have been defined differently in the history of women's struggles and have taken many different forms according to context and existing power relations; yet, it is possible to argue that in one way or another, these attempts targeted improvements in women's relative positions legally, politically, economically, socially and/or psychologically. While articulating demands and sustaining struggles, getting together and organizing has always been a key factor for being heard, for feeling powerful, capable and for taking action. This is of course quite a well-known practice by women. Many of the attainments of feminist movements and women's struggles in general have been possible through being organized.

In the near past, grassroots organizations[2] are shown remarkable importance, with the new development policies and also with the postmodern touch in social and political theory that put a lot of emphasis on the local forms of knowing and policy making in opposition to grand theories. This perspective also gained prominence among global non-governmental agencies and there has emerged an orientation towards local communities for the implementation of various development projects either social or economic. In a nutshell, it is argued that local people and their knowledge is more valid than any form of top-down intervention; since, grassroots themselves know

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[1] Empowerment is a quite slippery concept and various institutions, which pursue different ideologies, could appropriate it very easily without having a primacy of women. So there is a need to critically discuss what empowerment means, which will be the topic of second chapter.

[2] Grassroots organisations are the organisations that are initiated by local communities and are shaped according to the structure and needs of the community. They are the organisations which function at the local level.

about their needs, their context and dynamics more than anybody else. That is because it is thought that with some facilitation grassroots can figure out the best appropriate strategies for their advancement. In this respect, cooperatives being a form of grassroots organization have given wide significance. They are seen as a key to economic development and empowerment, and in some cases seen as an alternative form of organization for social service provision. Turkish State also put emphasis on cooperatives, articulating them as key organizations for development in the recent development plans.

Besides the above mentioned tendency, following 1999 Marmara Earthquake, which destroyed large regions, especially in the cities of Kocaeli and Sakarya, Foundation of Support of Women's Work (FSWW)[3] worked with women in this region and suggested cooperative as a model for women's organizations. In this period first women's cooperatives initiated which later spread out to various regions of Turkey[4]. These cooperatives are involved in quite different work, from production to service provision. These cooperatives, which are local organizations, are formed by the very people who have firsthand experience. These conditions seemed promising for women's overall empowerment. There are several studies from different parts of the world claiming that women benefit a lot from grassroots organizations such as cooperatives, by gaining some income, getting out of the house, participating in some decision making mechanisms, gaining self-esteem and forming solidarity (DeLancey, 1987; Mayoux, 1995; Wasylishyn & Johnson, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Kamioka, 2001; Koutsou, et. al 2003; Stuart & Kanneganti, 2003; Sumner, 2003; Asher, 2004; Moser, A, 2004; Stephen, 2005; Sanyang & Huang, 2008; ILO, 2010, 2012, no date; Lingga, 2012;). By being involved in such organizations women meet with other women who share similar experiences and who come from similar backgrounds. In such organizations women get the opportunity to talk, to socialize

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[3] Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW) is the leading NGO in Turkey that works on women's cooperatives since the establishment of first women's cooperatives in 2000s. FSWW helped many women to form cooperatives and have given them diverse support, such as tranings, monetary support, material support and the like.

[4] For a list of women's cooperatives in Turkey, see Appendix A. Agricultural development cooperatives are not included in this list.

and in some cases to earn some money. Sometimes these organizations can go further and articulate political demands not only for themselves but also for their community.

Yet, it is not possible to assume a positive correlation between women's involvement in grassroots organizations such as cooperatives and their empowerment. While cooperatives sound promising in different levels, various complex power dynamics within communities shape women's experiences and complicate the process of empowerment. Women may experience certain problems in the cooperatives, such as economic or technical constraints in production and marketing, and such constraints may limit their income (Mayoux, 1995; Koutsou et. al 2003). In addition, since grassroots organizations such as women-only cooperatives create a women's space and generally operate within this space, they may remain incapable of significantly challenging other restrictions and obstacles women have to face outside of this space. Similarly, whether or not cooperative involvement in cooperatives results in redistribution of reproductive work[5] within the household is still a question. In addition, there are serious concerns in the literature whether such organizations could attract poor women or not (Mayoux, 1995).

When all these pros and cons are taken into consideration and given that cooperatives as grassroots organizations are increasingly declared as key development agents, it becomes quite important not to fall into a false consciousness about the benefits of cooperatives. That is why, especially at a time these organizations are regarded as a key to human development and empowerment, there is a need to figure out their true potential. Thus, it could be possible to display the current situation and also to shed some light to future studies through depicting potentials, obstacles and needs of women's cooperatives.

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[5] Reproductive work involves occupations like child rearing, housework, cleaining and cooking, which are unpaid and invisible domestic work. Despite such work is done from day to day, it is invisible and do not have a return in the market conditions contrary to productive work. Reproductive work is gendered as women's work in many societies including Turkey.

Being sincerely concerned about women's struggles I became quite excited when I first heard about women's cooperatives several years ago while I was an intern in the Foundation for Support of Women's Work. Driven by the curiosity and excitement about women's struggles and women's organizations, I wanted to study women's cooperatives in my thesis given that this is a relatively new but promising movement. I felt the need to talk to women who are cooperative shareholders and wanted to figure out whether women can empower themselves through participating into such cooperatives in urban Turkey and whether such organizations could challenge existing power structure of our society which could become detrimental to women at different levels such as social, economic or psychological. In other words, This study aims to investigate the impact of women's involvement in women-only cooperatives in urban Turkey on their overall (em)powerment. How were these cooperatives established, managed, and what factors did motivate women to be cooperative members? What kind of changes did cooperative membership create in women's life in terms of women's self-concept, capabilities, roles, economic and social conditions, political demands; and achievement with respect to all these aspects? These questions will guide this study.

In sum, I expect to find out what kind of changes women's cooperatives could create in women's lives and whether such organizations have a potential for addressing women's practical and strategic gender needs[6] (Moser, 1989). Skepticism regarding cooperatives' benefits will be a guiding principle of this study. It is crucial to study women's cooperatives from a feminist empowerment approach in order to determine the potentials and limitations of such grassroots organizations, to be able to stimulate structural changes and to challenge existing power relations.

This study will be composed of five chapters. In the second chapter, I will lay out the theoretical framework of this study. Given that empowerment framework has

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[6] Practical gender needs, emerge from practical concern and immediate needs of women depending on the situation women find themselves within. Strategic gender needs, on the other hand, involve more structural needs that will lead to a more equal and adequate social environment for women. (Moser, 1989).

emerged from feminist reactions to development; first, I will discuss the mainstream development discourse and then I will focus on "Women in Development" and "Gender and Development" approaches that set the ground for empowerment approach. Then, I will focus on the concept of empowerment, provide a literature review and analyze feminist approaches to empowerment. Finally, I will describe the empowerment framework of this study.

In the third chapter, I will discuss cooperatives as an organizational form that is declared to be a key to development. Firstly, I will focus on the mainstream approach regarding cooperatives and provide a framework of values, principles and mainstream arguments. Then, I will criticize this tendency that sees cooperatives as the power of the market. Secondly, I will focus on women's grassroots organizations and women's cooperatives through a literature review. In this review, I will focus on several cases of grassroots organizations that seem to exemplify an alternative in comparison to mainstream cooperative identity. Thirdly, I will focus on Turkey, and describe the brief history of the cooperatives in Turkey, their current conditions, and the status of women's cooperatives in Turkey.

In the fourth chapter, I will describe my research design and research group. Fifth chapter will be devoted to the analysis of the data derived through field research. In the first section of this chapter, I will describe the main characteristics and structure of women's cooperatives and discuss these characteristics in relation to grassroots cases from the globe mentioned in the third chapter. In the second section, I will analyze the possible relationships between cooperatives and women's empowerment in the light of empowerment literature.

Finally in the conclusion part, I will overview my basic findings and arguments in relation to theoretical framework of empowerment and literature on women's grassroots organizations.

CHAPTER 2

POWER AND EMPOWERMENT: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The most significant dilemma this study has to go through is figuring out an operational definition to the concept empowerment. Most of the concepts in the development framework such as empowerment, development, participation, equality, planning and poverty are quite debated ones (Sachs, 2010). It is quite challenging to provide operational definitions to them, while at the same time being able to keep the ideological standpoint of oneself which provides the framework of one's approach to the issues. Empowerment, being the core concept of this study, is used by individuals, groups or institutions from quite diverse, sometimes even incompatible ideological positions. For that reason, the process of discussing and defining this concept is full of traps. To argue for empowerment and to analyze it as a process, we need a very critical and detailed framework of thought.

This chapter will set about this compelling task by critically discussing the concept of empowerment in relation to gender, simultaneously taking the historical contexts into consideration. The aim is to come up with working definitions, which will bind theoretical discussions to the practical sphere of the field. In the first section of this chapter, I will give a brief framework of the concept of development and critically discuss "Women in Development (WID)" and "Gender and Development (GAD)" approaches, which constitute the copious background "Empowerment" approach stemmed from. These are development-oriented approaches and mainly they are concerned with the question of women's involvement in development. Even though the discussion of these women oriented approaches are given in a sequence in this part, and despite the fact that this sequence is meaningful in the sense that every next approach emerged with a criticism to the previous one, thus benefit from the previous one, this does not mean that the previous approaches are totally renounced. On the contrary, they exist simultaneously; there are policies that follow the

6

guidelines of WID or GAD. Empowerment approach benefited from this background but the concept of empowerment is a lot more inclusive from my point of view as I will discuss in the next section.

In the second section of this chapter, I will first discuss Moser's (1989) framework of practical and strategic gender needs. This framework will lay the groundwork of the conceptualization of empowerment on this study. Then, I will discuss approaches to empowerment by referring to several feminist scholars' studies on this subject. I will try to build these discussions above Moser's (1989) framework. In the third and final section of this chapter, I will clarify the empowerment conceptualization that will be used in this study. Simultaneously, I will describe the theoretical perspectives I benefited from while building the working definition(s) of empowerment to be used.

2.1 Basis of Empowerment: Feminist Reactions to Development

2.1.1   Development: A Brief Framework

The concept of empowerment has its roots in the development framework as it emerged as a reaction to women's absence or "improper" presence within "development" according to women activists or feminists of the time period.

Development as we encountered it in the mainstream understanding, is a product of post World War II era (Parpart, 1993, 2000; Parpart et. al; 2000). This notion of development emerged as a top-down pursuit and can be regarded as a heritage of western enlightenment thought and modernity. This approach to development ended up in a hegemonic discourse and practice oriented towards the so-called "Third World" (Parpart, 2000). Naila Kabeer reminds that "liberal neo-classical economics has always played a central role in the evolution of development studies and formulation of development policy" (Kabeer, 1997: 13). U.S. president Truman's inauguration is regarded to be the signal for the new "development era" as he declared in his speech in 1949:

> We must embark a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. (Truman, 1967, quoted in Esteva, 2010: 1).

This new development rhetoric assumes an evolutionary, or in other words, linear and progressive form of development towards a higher state which is modeled by the western world with its literacy, education, innovating and progressing technology, sciences, industry and urbanization. Development is seen as a "cumulative process of improvements" (Kabeer, 1997: 16) by modernization theory. In that respect, such a definition of development is an adaptation of biological meaning laid on the concept of development accrued in the late eighteenth century, which is undergird by the growth of plants and animals (Esteva, 2010: 4). In this framework social change, which will end up in improvements in the standards of living in the "Third World", is viewed as if almost a natural process, a natural outcome of economic growth, benefits of which will automatically trickle down to all spheres of the society (Rathgeber, 1990). On the basis of this worldview, there lies the idea of rational individual who seeks maximization of individual benefit and utility by competing over limited resources. This idea replaces tradition and superstition based individual behavior. In that respect, existing values and traditions should be replaced by competitiveness, risk-taking, dynamism and innovativeness in order to be attuned to modernizing world (Kabeer, 1997).

Industrialization – which, according to post-structuralist thinkers like Esteva, is just one process among other various possibilities - is seen as the climax of the linear process of social change (Esteva, 2010). In the post-colonial era, West once more declared superiority as the only model that should be followed by the "underdeveloped" to become developed and thus modern (Parpart et. al 2000). This is a process in which all the standards, rules, phases and also the assessment is determined by the western world, where the so called "underdeveloped" is the object of rhetoric and discourse.

When we look at the mainstream discourse of development, what primarily attracts attention is development's equalization with economic development and industrialization on a supranational, national or regional level. However, in the mainstream too, it is now widely accepted that development is more than economic

8

growth and it involves a human aspect that is in some accounts called human development. In the first Human Development Report of UNDP in 1990, the objective of development is articulated as "to create an enabling environment for people to live long, healthy and creative lives" (UNDP, 1990: 9). In this initial report it is also stated that

> Technical considerations of the means to achieve human development - and the use of statistical aggregates to measure national income and its growth - have at times obscured the fact that the primary objective of development is to benefit people (UNDP, 1990: 9).

So, According to UNDP's report, the main idea behind human development is human well-being and other indicators such as economic growth are only a means to human development, not an end in itself. Even though this perspective can be missed within the huge analysis and statistics regarding development; still, this approach should be the basis of development planning and analysis (UNDP, 1990). The concept of human development is reaffirmed, "underscoring sustainability, equality and empowerment" (UNDP, 2010: 11). Political freedom and participation, access to public services such as education and health, enjoying a humane standard of living, human rights and self-respect are included in the human development framework[7]. Gross National Product (GNP) is the necessary but insufficient condition and human choice is crucial (UNDP, 1990).

Postmodern critiques are quite suspicious about such development objectives and argue that "development discourse is embedded in the ethnocentric and destructive colonial (and postcolonial) discourses designed to perpetuate existing hierarchies rather than to change them" (Parpart, 1993: 452). In that framework the so called underdeveloped societies are denied the possibility and opportunity to express their own form of social life (Esteva, 2010) and merely delineated as the other of the west, that is a sum of all adverse characteristics of the west (Parpart, 1993). This underdevelopment discourse made billions of people, who are seen as backward and primitive, something other than what they are, becoming a "inverted mirror of

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[7] These are the defining features of UNDP's human development approach. Whether human development index fits to this definition is another broad discussion external to this study.

other's reality" (Esteva, 2010: 2) and losing all their heterogeneity (Parpart et. al, 2000; Esteva, 2010). Being critical to this western discourse of development, postmodern thinkers proposed an alternative form of development, which will stem from third world fund of knowledge and which will be sensitive to third world needs, recognizing the significance of economic development at the same time (Parpart, 1993).

Postmodern critiques also questioned the linear cause-effect relationship and objected to the idea that first world have the answers for the development dilemmas of the Third World (Parpart, 1993). According to Esteva (2010) the concept of development is just a comparative adjective, a perception of the west that turns into a fact within the modernization discourse:

> It [development] displays a falsification of reality produced through dismembering the totality of interconnected processes that make up the world's reality and, in its place, it substitutes one of its fragments, isolated from the rest, as a general point of reference (Esteva, 2010: 8).

This criticized view of development emerged with the guidance of modernization theorists in 1930s, reaching its heyday in the post World War II era. While European and North American states and societies have been the model; local dynamics, cultural practices and values of the so-called Third World are seen as obstacles to growth. Third World women, when they are taken into analysis, are also regarded as an obstacle too and their productive roles in these communities are largely ignored (Parpart, 1993). In that framework, any divergence from the western model has been regarded as an obstacle to growth and development, and these societies end up as pre-modern (Parpart, et. al, 2000). Development has been regarded basically as a technical and a logistical problem that could be overcame as long as necessary expertise is provided to the Third World (Parpart, 1993, 2000).

Feminist critiques emerged within such a framework of development, where women are largely ignored from productive sphere and recalled with their reproductive roles. While primarily expressing their demands and arguments within the modernist discourse described above, in the time being women critiques and feminists also

benefited from post-modern framework and formed the basis of empowerment approach with their studies.

2.1.2 Women in Development (WAD) Approach

In her informative article Chowdhry (1995) argues that WID approach has its roots in two strands of modernist discourse. These are colonial discourse and liberal discourse on markets. While development has been discussed almost as a meta-narrative in modernization theory, women as a separate category were almost out of the frame of development. Women's productive roles in their community are ignored and they are commemorated with their reproductive roles especially during 1950s and 1960s with adoption of colonial representations of Third World women (Parpart & Marchand, 1995; Chowdhry, 1995). According to Chowdhry (1995), within the colonial and neo-colonial discourse women are represented as veiled and witless members of harem, objects of sexual desire, or victims of male domination, and this discursive creation of Third World women has formed the basis of WID policies. Kabeer (1997) argues that in the pre 1970s period women were not totally out of the development agenda, but they were recognized with their sex-specific roles such as mothers and housewives. Kabeer (1997) refers this divergence as socially functional role differentiation that is necessary for the smooth functioning of society. That is why, during this period women were exposed to welfare programs that were basically about home economics, health care, family planning and nutrition (Kabeer, 1997).

To mention the second strand of WID approach, which is liberal discourse of markets, Chowdhry (1995) refer to World Bank that is established to aid the development of underdeveloped or developing countries through foreign aid, foreign investment and international trade. These frameworks relies on the common dichotomies of the modernization theory such as modern-traditional, egalitarian-authoritarian and rational-superstitious; and acknowledge western style modernization and industrialization as superior, thus signifying the path underdeveloped parts of the world should follow.

Assumption of modernization theory was that benefits of development, as it is achieved in the underdeveloped countries like in the west, will be equally distributed between men and women and even the poorest households would benefit from economic growth through trickle down effects (Rathgeber, 1990; Kabeer, 1997). Thus, women were not given a separate place within development framework's productive side until 1970s when "Women's role in Economic Development" by Ester Boserup is published and various social movements such as civil-rights movement, black-power movement and women's movements gained prominence and staged the climate for Boserup's ideas to be espoused. In addition, the fact that initial development initiatives did not create the expected outcomes has also contributed to the acknowledgement of WID approach especially among development institutions and donor agencies. (Rathgeber, 1990; Chowdhry, 1995; Kabeer, 1997; Moghadam, 1998).

Boserup (1970) was first to illustrate the sexual division of labor in agrarian societies and she emphasized that, women and men are affected differently from the policies introduced to these societies in the name of modernization. She used gender as a variable in her analysis and showed how traditional patterns of women's and men's work affected differently from these interruptions, women largely losing their status and role in the production (Boserup, 1970; Rathgeber, 1990; Parpart, 1993; Parpart & Marchand, 1995). In the 1970s, it is depicted that women's position improved very little in the last twenty years period and even in some sectors women's position have regressed. A main cause was that women's role in the agricultural production is ignored and the newly introduced technologies were directed to men; women being kept out of such education processes (Boserup, 1970; Rathgeber, 1990). Boserup's work was illuminating for understanding women's position within productive economy as she challenged "the orthodox equation between women and domesticity" (Kabeer, 1997: 6). From that point on, certain common concerns emerged especially within liberal feminists who called for women's productive integration into economic systems. This perspective is referred as Women in Development (WID) that has its roots in liberal tradition.

The foremost contribution of WID approach has been the identification of women's and men's experiential difference of development and societal change. As a result of this, women's experiences became a valid research area (Rathgeber, 1990). WID approach in short argued for the recognition of women's productive roles and their equality with men. It is assumed that, this equality can be achieved through education, trainings and resources such as land, credit and new employment opportunities. In that respect, international development policy approach towards women has shifted from welfare orientation to equality. However, discursive shift could not be reflected to real policy situations and implications, since such a perspective change required a serious redistribution of resources (Kabeer, 1997). Thus, women's integration into the market could have only become possible without challenging the gender stereotypes, existing hierarchies and resource distribution (Parpart, 1993, Parpart & Marchand, 1995; Kabeer, 1997; Moghadam, 1998).

As development practitioners realized the fallacies of the existing programs and of expected trickle down effect of these programs, WID approach started to gain prominence within the development community through a focus on neither welfare, nor efficiency but on basic needs. Women became a crucial object of policy when development projects started to focus on the procurement of basic needs "since women were crucial for population control and also disproportionately represented among the poor" (Parpart, 1993: 448). Such a view not only has an economic component but also amicable to male-dominated development framework. Main income generating projects of that time were financially impracticable, sought compatibility with women's reproductive roles and took place basically in sex-segregated environments (Kabeer, 1997)

As large-scale recessions occurred in the world economy and as 1975-1985 period is declared as "Decade for the Advancement of Women" by the United Nations, women's importance within the development agenda has increased and research on women in the context of development became an enviable research area. In that period, policies recognized the importance of women's labor for production and their attention has shifted from welfare and basic needs oriented programs such as

nutrition projects, family planning, family health and education, to productive potential of women's labor as an untouched resource (Moser, 1989; Chowdhry, 1995; Kabeer, 1997). Concurrently United Nations and World Bank have adopted WID approach with the establishment of a separate division, which will deal with issues about Women in Development (Chowdhry, 1995; Kabeer, 1997). In the post 1970s period, international development policies addressing women have been efficiency oriented, which strived for more 'efficient' growth with the recognition of women's contribution to and with the advocacy of women's involvement in development (Chowdhry, 1995).

However, main concern of WID practitioners has been modernizing the Third World women, without feeling the necessity to investigate their experiences and understand their social-political-economic context (Parpart, 1993). WID approach has largely remained within the theoretical assumptions of modernization theory, as advocates of this approach did not challenge modernist understanding of development. WID's scope for critical evaluation of existing institutions, meta-theories and power relations had remained quite restricted.

The Nairobi Conference of 1985, which appreciated the end of Women's decade, enabled new opportunities for alliances and networks among women throughout the globe but especially among Third World women. The organization "Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era" (DAWN) has been maybe the most important output of this process, which emerged as an organization appertained to Third World women's development issues. DAWN emphasized the importance of women's experiences and learning from these diverse experiences. Furthermore, they called for long-term strategies to break the inequalities emerging in the intersections of gender, classes and nations (Parpart, 1993; Sen & Grown, 1987).

Dialogue developed in that period among women from the "first" and the "third world" led an improved understanding and contributed to the future discussions about women and development, underpinning Gender and Development, and

empowerment approaches. However before moving further to discuss these perspectives, I would like to allocate some space to problems of WID approach.

Advocates of Women in Development approach argued for the improvement of women's conditions within the existing social structures. They have not questioned these structures and they paid attention to the ways women can be incorporated into the existing economic structures and development policies. Their advocacy basically remained at the level of equal participation, abstaining from questioning the reasons of women's subordination and disadvantaged position. They did not fret about the deeper structural problems, power relations or other influencing factors such as class, race or culture that in the end disables us to remark crucial experiential differences. That's why WID practitioners and development policy-makers who adopt the WID approach propound policies that basically involve trainings constituted according to western conditions. Policies originated from WID approach ignored local knowledge(s) and differences, and offered foreign remedies to women's problems in the third world (Parpart & Marchand, 1995; Chowdhry, 1995).

Because of such an approach, WID framework remained ahistorical. In fact, a historical framework is quite crucial in order to probe into the structures and relations that leave women in a disadvantaged position in various contexts. WID take "women" as a single category not showing any difference under different conditions. As following critiques will demonstrate, this has been a serious obstacle to pursue women-focused policies; since such a perspective, besides the obstacles mentioned above, fails to determine the exploitation between women (Rathgeber, 1990). In addition, WID approach is basically production focused and tends to ignore the reproductive aspects of women's labor that is mostly a woman occupation in many societies for various groups of women. Access to income is the major concern of policies that lean on WID approach.

In addition, Kabeer (1997) argues that, despite the fact that WID approach is apparently successful; in reality women still slightly occupied a place within development thought and policy. Moreover, when the general harsh economic

conditions of the Third World are considered, such as debt repayment and economic adjustment, it is not really possible to talk about concrete economic advancement of women. Gender and Development approach has its basis on such criticism against WID and tried to approach mainstream development framework more critically.

2.1.3 Gender and Development (GAD) Approach

Gender and Development practitioners and theoreticians have a more critical approach to the existing structures and power relations, which are accepted by WID almost without any scrutiny. GAD approach emerged in 1980s with theoretical roots in socialist feminism (Rathgeber, 1990). GAD approach has taken the reproductive roles of women into consideration besides productive roles and they were concerned about the reasons for why women are put to more inferior roles in comparison to men (Parpart, 1993). In other words, rather than merely focusing on women and their participation on labor market, GAD questions the structures behind gender inequality and unequal power relations paying attention to the construction, structure and operation of gender relations (Moghadam, 1998; Rowlands, 1998; Özgüler, 2007). GAD approach recognizes that gender differences are "shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural determinants" (Moser, 1989: 1800). GAD focused on the prevalent power structures, social order and reasons behind their existence, which are mainly oppressive and restrictive for women especially through putting constraints on women's mobility and economic activity (Moghadam, 1998).

The concept of Gender is central to GAD approach which is conveniently described as "the process by which individuals who are born into biological categories of male or female become the social categories of man and women through the acquisition of locally defined attributes of masculinity and femininity" (Kabeer 1991: 11, quoted in Parpart 1993: 450). The concept of gender enables us to approach masculinity, femininity and social ascriptions related to these categories including discourse, behavior patterns, economic, social and political structures and power relations, as constructs that can be deconstructed. For GAD approach gender analysis is crucial when development issues are concerned:

> An understanding of the processes by which gender relations are negotiated and renegotiated, and the resultant social formations, can assist greatly in understanding the nature of households, of the constitution of labor force, of the 'informal economy' and other basic constructs of development analysis… In particular, GAD approach makes visible the power relations that exist between men and women in most societies, the situation of subordination most women face" (Rowlands, 1998, 15-16).

Not only women's participation to economic activity but also other life dynamics and activities that affect women's prosperity are taken into consideration in such a gender analysis (Rowlands, 1998). GAD pursued a wider perspective in comparison to WID approach by focusing on women's health, sexuality and reproductive rights, intra-household relations and inequalities, women's education, violence against women, women and decision making, and women's collective action (Moghadam, 1998; Rowlands, 1998). Private sphere is crucial for the GAD approach and regarded as a unit of analysis. Furthermore, state is also important for the GAD approach since they think state should contribute to the advocacy for women's emancipation especially by providing certain social services (Rathgeber, 1990). According to GAD approach "women are agents of change rather than passive recipients of development assistance" (Rathgeber, 1990: 494) and men and women should be equal decision makers (Parpart et. al. 2000; Özgüler, 2007). Women's agency in the development should be taken crucial in and of itself, rather than being seen as a means for other development goals (Mahmud, 2003).

GAD, with a holistic approach, takes race and class also into consideration besides gender and development, and pays attention to how these variables interact, connect and contradict (Rathgeber, 1990). In that respect, while seeing women in any society as oppressed, disadvantaged, uneducated, overwhelmed and victimized (Parpart, 1993; Moghadam, 1998), thus perpetuating a homogenizing discourse regarding the category of women (Özgüler, 2007), at the same time GAD theorists acknowledge class and race difference among women arguing that women in different groups will be effected differently from development policies and interventions (Rathgeber, 1990; Moghadam, 1998). GAD not only looks after certain policies of assistance which will lead to improvement in women's conditions or which will increase their

involvement in the labor market, but also it pays attention to social structures and power relations in various levels and argues for social change and shifts in power relations.

Even though GAD approach firmly criticizes WID and argues for structural changes in gender relations and gender roles (Connely et. al., 2000; Özgüler, 2007); still, this approach replicates some of the features of WID which are widely criticized. Moghadam (1998) argues that even though GAD researchers are critical to current neoliberal environment, they do not call for political mobilization and organization in order to transform social and economic conditions as it has done by socialist feminists and Marxists. Critiques claimed that GAD approach has more focused on immediate needs of women and it is expected that certain policy interventions that aims at immediate needs will directly lead to deeper transformations in the societal structure, leading to women's empowerment (Moghadam, 1998; Asher, 2004). Even some scholars carried the criticism that far to argued that the shift from WID to GAD was a rhetorical shift and there was not much considerable variance in their institutionalized versions, especially in terms of touching the issue of power quite insufficiently (Parpart, 1993; Asher, 2004). Furthermore, it is stated that GAD scholars also tend to homogenize women's various experiences and thus maintain modernist stereotypes mentioned in the previous part (Özgüler; 2007). Thus, maybe unintentionally, but still they replicate the victimization discourse of liberal development paradigm.

Being nourished from these criticisms, some scholars, especially post modern feminists with a delicate attention to local knowledge and specific experiences of grassroots, focused on the concept of power as a dynamic discursive category and tried to understand gender structures, relations and challenges to these structures through the concept of power. Empowerment approach, which is the benchmark of this study, emerged on the basis of these criticisms and theoretical discussions.

2.2 Empowerment

Empowerment is a concept that does not have a clear-cut definition. While on the one hand feminist scholars do not have a common definition, on the other hand mainstreaming of the concept has made the issue more and more complex since the feminist connotations of the term is generally omitted in the use of the term by mainstream development agencies (Kabeer, 1997, 1999a, 1999b). Fluidity of this concept results from the fluidity of the concept of power (Rowlands, 1997). In mainstream policies and programs, which appropriate the concept of empowerment so easily, the difference between empowerment and other development goals such as increased income or better health are not made clear (Mosedale, 2005) and main emphasis remained in economic and political empowerment. In this framework, women's empowerment as a concept became the instrument of other "western" development objectives such as economic growth (Rowlands, 1998; Özgüler, 2007). This framework urged some feminists, who are not comfortable with the situation, to discuss empowerment in depth and to try to put an alternative definition of empowerment in order to distinguish their conceptualization from the mainstream use and in order to pursue a gender perspective.

In this section of chapter two I will focus on the concept of empowerment. However, before moving on to the discussion of empowerment, first I would like to focus on Moser's conceptualization of strategic and practical gender needs. I would like to use Moser's framework to lay the groundwork for empowerment since from my point of view, women's empowerment is a process that should meet both practical and strategic gender needs of women. Practical and strategic gender needs framework is quite open to be contextualized and appropriated according to the group we are working with. In the absence of such a framework, it is quite probable to fall into the trap of determining certain categories such as health, education or income as the criteria of empowerment and thus take these categories for granted. Yet, when practical & strategic gender needs framework is used, empowerment could be thought as a process that should fulfill these needs, which seem broad enough to compromise what one can have in mind as "empowering" and flexible enough to be

redefined according to the specific needs - that we may never thought of - of the group.

In that respect, firstly I will describe and discuss Moser's framework arguing that empowerment process should meet practical and strategic gender needs of women. Then, I will overview the main approaches to empowerment focusing on the works of various feminist scholars and finally I will discuss my position in relation to these scholars.

2.2.1 Practical and Strategic Gender Needs as the Basic Framework of Empowerment

Moser (1989) is concerned with gender planning and kind of critical about gender and development framework's adaptation to practice. She claimed:

> Primary concern of much feminist writing has been to highlight the complexities of gender divisions in specific socio-economic contexts, rather than to show how such complexities can be simplified so that methodological tools may be developed enabling practitioners to translate gender awareness into practice" (Moser, 1989: 1800).

Moser (1989) argues that feminist concerns, which are expressed in a theoretical ground, should be incorporated into practice since this is the only way to end women's marginalization within development planning. In Moser's (1989) account, gender planning is something a lot more than just putting a gender dimension to development planning; rather, gender planning should be recognized as a particular approach in itself.

To achieve this, Moser argues that we need to recognize "the triple role of women" (Moser, 1989: 1801). Women have a reproductive role, which is related to the reproduction of labor force through responsibilities like child bearing, rearing and care. Secondly, women have a productive role that is frequently overlooked. Yet, it is widely known that especially in poor households women could work as second wage earners in informal sector or in rural areas as unpaid family labor. Thirdly, Moser argues women also have a community management work, which is performed when

there is a confrontation with local authorities or state about provision of basic rights and services such as water. In organization of protests about these issues, women take responsibility as an extension of their household responsibilities. According to Moser (1989) balancing these three roles put lots of pressure on women, not to mention only productive work is recognized as "work".

Even though we cannot accept this triple role framework as de facto, Moser's remark here is quite valuable. In order to achieve gender aware development, we need to take into consideration other dynamics, which may be hidden from view, this either being roles like community management or something else in a different context. So, we need to move beyond the western assumptions of planning and development; and identify gender interests and thus gender needs of women in various contexts.

When talking about these interests, we need to prefer the term gender interests rather than women's interests in order to avoid false homogenization (Moser, 1989). The term gender is preferred since this concept in itself emphasizes the socially constructed and thus contextual nature of roles and relations of man and woman. In addition, as Moser (1989) points out, it is crucial to differentiate between practical and strategic gender needs. This differentiation is enabling for figuring out gender aware policy practices and also for determining dimensions of empowerment.

Practical gender needs, as its name implies emerge from practical concern and immediate situations depending on the actual situation women find themselves within. Within these circumstances, women who experience these situations themselves formulate practical gender interests and needs. Practical needs generally do not result in wider strategic changes such as a crucial change in gender or power relations. Because of the existing conditions of women, practical gender needs generally involve domestic needs of which women are hold the primary responsible, employment or income-generation needs and needs related to community's basic service demands. But there is a dilemma about practical gender needs:

> In reality, basic needs, such as food, shelter and water are required by all the
> family, particularly children, yet they are identified specifically as the practical

gender needs of women, not only by policy makers concerned to achieve development objectives, but also by women themselves (Moser, 1989: 1804).

This is a serious dilemma, and unless we underline strategic gender needs, women's empowerment will remain scanty since gender and power relations will be left untouched. In other works "practical gender needs only become 'feminist' in content if and when they are transformed into strategic gender needs" (Moser, 1989: 1804). For the same reason it is important to differentiate between practical and strategic gender needs at the theoretical level, in order to bring about policies that are gender aware.

Strategic gender needs involve more structural needs that will lead to a more equal and adequate social environment for women. Strategic gender needs generally cannot be formulated on the basis of daily experiences. A more critical analysis of social relations and power dynamics will be needed, mostly accompanied by a facilitator who is not a member of the community. Since strategic gender needs stem from disadvantaged position of women, they should be evaluated on the basis of contextual relations and dynamics. These strategic gender needs could involve but not limited to

> The abolition of sexual division of labor; the alleviation of the burden of domestic labor and childcare, the removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination such as rights to own land or property, or access to credit; the establishment of political equality; freedom of choice over childbearing; and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women (Molyneux, 1985: 233; quoted in Moser, 1989: 1803).

Certainly, from a postmodern feminist point of view, neither practical, nor strategic gender needs can be assumed in advance, before getting in touch with women in question. In addition, Moser (1989) implies that achieving strategic gender needs that may lead to women's emancipation can be made possible with bottom-up struggles of women themselves.

In sum, Moser's framework of practical and strategic gender needs is illuminating for the empowerment framework I will provide, since empowerment of women could be possible only when both of these needs are fulfilled. In other words, from my point

of view, a process women involved in could be regarded as empowering according to the extent to which it fulfills practical and strategic gender needs of these women. In that respect, I will use practical and strategic gender needs framework as if a bridge that links theoretical framework of empowerment to practical experiences of women, given that practical and strategic gender needs are defined according to the daily experiences of any community.

Still it should be noted that what is meant by practical and strategic gender needs could differentiate from one society to the other that their meaning and content should be worked out in collaboration with women themselves, where the researcher or policy practitioner could only assume the role of the facilitator who cannot expect any control on the outcomes (Rowlands, 1995, 1997). In addition we should remember that practical and strategic gender needs are not really separable but this distinction is an analytical one, which displays the power dynamics more clearly and enables us to approach to issues in a strategic and pragmatic way (Rowlands, 1998).

2.2.2 Feminist Approaches to Empowerment

The use of the concept of empowerment dates back to the 1960s Afro-American rights movements in the US (Stromquist, 1995; Kabeer, 1997). Afro-American movement at that time called for "black power" "to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community… to begin to define their own goals, to link their own organizations and to support those organizations" (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967: 44, quoted in Stromquist, 1995: 13). This conceptualization of power is used within women's movements in 1970s especially by the ones who want to go beyond WID's focus on equality and to establish a gender-focused perspective (Kabeer, 1997).

2.2.2.1 Common Arguments of Feminist Empowerment Approaches

In fact empowerment approach rising out of Gender and Development approach has many common points with GAD and at times it is not really possible to make a distinction between these two approaches. But broadly it may be claimed that, empowerment approach has emerged benefiting from the third-world feminist studies and grassroots experiences (Moser, 1989). Like GAD, empowerment approach

acknowledges that women's experiences of subordination vary by their "race, class, colonial history and their current position in the international economic order" (Moser, 1989: 1815). Feminist empowerment approaches denies power as power over others, in other words, domination over others, and calls for a redistribution of *power within* and between communities and societies. In order to attain such a redistribution and justice in societies, empowerment approach calls for strategic gender needs to be fulfilled and denies the idea that compensation of practical gender needs will directly lead to the fulfillment of strategic gender needs (Moser, 1989: 1816). However, still for feminist empowerment approach, local organizations and movements that started from practical problems is the best strategy to achieve strategic gender needs especially through popular education, consciousness raising and political mobilization:

> The very limited success of equity approach [WID approach] to confront directly the nature of women's subordination through legislative changes has led the empowerment approach to avoid direct confrontation, and to utilize practical gender needs as the basis on which to build a secure support base, and a means through which more strategic needs may be reached" (Moser, 1989: 1816).

In that process, local women's organizations are crucial which will start a bottom-up movement for the fulfillment of these needs.

Even though the definition of empowerment varies, still there are certain aspects that are common in most of the feminist accounts of empowerment. One of the most commonly agreed aspects of empowerment among feminists is empowerment's being a process, not an end product (Rowlands, 1995, Stromquist, 1995; Hainard & Verschuur, 2001). Empowerment approach sees empowerment as a process in which income generation or economic development is only a part of a wider agenda, during which certain structural changes which benefit women will be achieved both in the individual and in the collective level (Mayoux, 1995; Özgüler, 2007).

Second largely agreed aspect is the fact that, to be empowered one must be disempowered first of all (Kabeer, 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). So women are disempowered in different ways and forms, but their disempowerment is mostly gendered. This is not to renounce that women have diverse identities (Mosedale,

2005: 252). Rather, what I mean is that women's sex and/or gender is central to their disempowerment, which interacts with other identities ending up in unique experiences. In other words, gender experiences of women is not external to other struggles in which women can take part, for instance as workers or peasants. That is why it is crucial to look at the gendered relations in communities.

Third common point is that empowerment cannot be bestowed but must be won (Mosedale, 2005: 256). This means, changes in gender or power relations would be empowering for women only if this change is a result of women's actions.

Finally empowerment involves taking action in order to challenge oppressive and hegemonic structures, rules and practices (Rowlands, 1997). Empowerment should have a transformative potential through "reflection, analysis and action" (Mosedale: 2005: 244).

2.2.2.2 Reading Empowerment Through Power: Power Over

Maybe the most "powerful" aspect of empowerment approach is that the concept of empowerment is basically analyzed on the basis of the concept of power (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al, 1999; Kabeer, 1997, 1999; Özgüler, 2007). When empowerment is conceptualized through the concept of power, the meaning of the concept becomes clearer and formulation of an operational definition becomes easier. Approaching empowerment from the concept of power also enables us to pursue a critical view.

Several projects done in rural areas for instance, may claim to empower women by making them generate some income, or getting them involved in certain decision making mechanisms. However, to what extend can we equalize empowerment with economic well-being or participation? Or, is empowerment a sin qua non result of economic strength? From my point of view, at best it can be argued that economic well being is a necessary but insufficient condition for empowerment. However, there are also some examples depicting that on the contrary to what is expected, women's involvement in economic activities could become disempowering for them

and even bring a further burden (Rowlands 1995). For instance, a study conducted with migrant women in Turkey emphasize the role of culture as the mediating factor and argues that it is not possible to assume a positive correlation between women's economic activities and women's empowerment. Furthermore, it is stated that certain dynamics could discourage women from participating in labor market such as cultural codes like family honor, or harsh market conditions which basically offer only low-paid and insecure jobs to migrant women (Erman, et.al., 2002). Thus, it is not possible to argue that economic participation is empowering in and of itself for women since women are subjected to power in different levels, with 'power over' they internalize, with power over them within the household, in economic relations, in certain institutions they participate or in the market. So, determining to what extend different policies are empowering for women is a hard and critical issue that requires a detailed analysis.

Vagueness and fluidity of the concept of power mostly explains why the concept of empowerment cannot be described clearly, since what we understand from the concept of power will shape how we define empowerment (Rowlands, 1995, Sharp et. al, 2003). We can think about power in two distinct ways. One is oppressive/dominating power, which is referred as "power over" in the literature. Power over is chiefly exercised by dominant over the marginalized and it can take different forms. Exercise of power over can take the form of forcing people to do something that they otherwise will not do. This is the most shallow form of power over we can say. In other circumstances, power over may be preventive, such as preventing some people from getting into the decision-making, or preventing the emerging issues or preventing conflict. It is not always necessary to exercise this form of power concretely or materially, since "people who are systematically denied power and influence in the dominant society, internalize the messages they receive about what they are supposed to be like, and how they may come to believe the messages to be true" (Rowlands, 1995: 102). This leads to internalized oppression that operates on a psychological ground. In addition to what is mentioned, manipulation and misinformation are also seen as forms of exercise of power as they have influence on people especially in order to restrain conflict (Rowlands, 1997;

Mosedale, 2005). So, while spending attention to local contexts and appreciating grassroots movements and actions, at the same time it is necessary to avoid the idea that women's personal experiences and ideas are unchallengeable (Mosedale, 2005).

In addition feminist scholars argue that power over is zero-sum in its nature (Rowlands, 1995, 1997, 1998; Mosedale, 2005). Meaning, when there is increase in one's power, there will be decrease in others'. That is why women's empowerment can be seen threatening if power is conceptualized as power over; because women's empowerment will be read as an inversion of power relations (Rowlands, 1997). Due to the mentioned characteristics of "power over" as an oppressive form of power, feminist scholars coined generative forms of power that underpin empowerment approach.

2.2.2.3 Generative Forms of Power

Feminist scholars, who are critical to "power over" with a potential of oppressive force and who are responsive to local experiences and strategies of various women groups, conceptualize empowerment on the basis of generative forms of power. Generative power is not zero-sum and stimulates activities that will hopefully lead to a challenge to power over. Empowerment is based on these generative forms of power; which are not destructive, oppressive or hegemonic, but prolific and productive. When we interpret power as "power over", empowerment becomes loaded with mostly liberal connotations and can be summarized as participation to economic activities and political decision-making. Development as "westernization" and WID approach relies on this definition of empowerment, thinking that possession of power could be possible through participation to formal social structures. However, when a different reading is done from the perspective of generative forms of power, we come up with different conceptualizations of power, which open up new possibilities for understanding and practice.

Generative forms of power are categorized as *power within*, *power with* and *power to* in the empowerment literature (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend, 1999; Özgüler; 2007). *Power within* is about inner strength of one person and related to self-esteem, self-

confidence, self-awareness, self-acceptance, agency and capacity to overcome difficulties (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). So, it is kind of a new consciousness. *Power with*, is about coming together and organizing, it is about collective action, which will give more strength to women to bring about a change, or achieve common goals (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). It is even stated " *Power with* is the opposite of neoliberal ideology, that glorifies individualism and competition, while the women are seeking organization, solidarity and co-operation" (Townsend et. al., 1999: 102). Even though this statement cannot be taken for granted, theoretically *power with* is an alternative form of power that possesses such a potential. *Power to* is explained as the actual capacity/ability to do something, through which new opportunities are created (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). It also involves skills, creativity and sometimes resistance (Townsend et. al., 1999). From my point of view this distinction among different forms of power is more of an analytical one and actually on the basis of a case very probably these different forms of power will be observed in a nested way. In addition, it is not possible to develop a hierarchical model among these forms of power in the process of empowerment. In sum, by reading empowerment through *power within*, *power with* and *power to*, we come up to a different form of empowerment which is regarded as a process in which people regard themselves as capable, become aware of their own interests and act to fulfill these interests by negotiating and collaborating with others which is expected to annihilate oppressive and hegemonic social constructs (Rowlands, 1997).

Rowlands (1995, 1997) relies on the feminist interpretations of the concept of generative power including *power within*, *power with* and *power to*; and in relation to this conceptualization, empowerment is defined as individuals' perception of themselves as able, having the capacity to act and "being able to maximize the opportunities available to them without or despite constraints of structure and state" (Rowlands, 1995: 102). In brief, according to Rowlands, empowerment "is about transforming social relations" (Rowlands, 1997: 131).

According to Rowlands (1997, 1998) empowerment is experienced and realized in three levels. On the personal level empowerment is realized through developing a sense of self, self-confidence, self-respect and discovering the individual capacity to act and resist in the face of discrimination or oppression. In that level, empowerment also includes abolishing the influence of internalized oppression.

At that point, some theoreticians see external change agents and facilitators necessary for women to access new ideas and information, which may make them think more critically (Mosedale: 2005). On the relational level[8] empowerment involves the abilities of negotiation and participation into decision-making (Rowlands, 1995, 1997, 1998). On the collective level, empowerment involves the potential to achieve a structural change or intensive impact especially on a problem area by working together or organizing (Rowlands, 1995, 1998).

On the basis of the study she conducted in Honduras, she identified certain necessary elements of empowerment in these three levels:

Table 1. Elements of empowerment according to Rowlands (1998: 23-24).

Personal Empowerment	Relational Empowerment	Collective Empowerment
-Self confidence -Self-esteem -Sense of agency -Sense of 'self' in a wider context -Dignity	-Ability to negotiate -Ability to communicate -Ability to get support -Ability to defend self/rights -Sense of 'self' in the relationships -Dignity	-Group identity -Collective sense of agency -Group dignity -Self organization and management

These levels, on which empowerment actualize, largely overlap with the generative forms of power. Rowlands' framework is supportive to the theoretical framework of

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[8] In Rowlands (1995, 1998) refers to relational dimension/level of empowerment as the dimension of "close relationships". This is examplified in the household level as women's relationships with husbands (Rowlands, 1998: 23). But I read relational dimension more comprehensive than a dimension of "close relationships" in the household. Through a more comprehensive thinking, relational dimension accords beter with the the concept of power with.

generative forms of power and guiding in terms of measurement of empowerment telling us where and what to look on the basis of her case study.

Even though Rowlands (1998) sees achievement of power over as a part of empowerment, from my point of view we need to refrain from such a conceptualization. Generative forms of power are expected to challenge power of the dominant groups thus decreasing their "power over" and challenging their hegemony. However, in the light of above conceptualizations there should not be an exercise of power over, because empowerment as a process should not violate the rights of others on the basis of equity.

According to Stromquist (1995) empowerment is a process to change the distribution of power. Adult women should be the agents of this process and act as their own advocates; since, their problems and structural obstacles they experience are largely ignored by the states, which primarily recognize them as wives and mothers. Women should be the frontrunners of this process since they are the ones who know about the problems they experience quite well. Their agency and transformation in this process is critical to demolish the structures leading to their oppression (Stromquist, 1995). Stromquist argues that empowerment is more than mere political participation or consciousness rising and have four elements: cognitive, psychological, political and economic. Stromquist is uncritical about some so-called development elements such as economic well being and participation; she does not question the context and the way they are actualized. In addition, she falls short in contextualizing the components of empowerment she identifies. Yet, still the way they are defined could provide some guidance and displays the points of convergence for the definition of empowerment.

Cognitive and psychological components are prominent in this respect as they relate to the individual and can be thought in relation to *power within*. Cognitive component of empowerment involves women's understanding of their own situation, problems, subordination and reasons of their problematic experiences. Cognitive components are basically knowledge based (for example, knowledge about sexuality

or legal rights), which could lead to a different understanding of gender relations (Stromquist, 1995). Psychological component seem complementary to the cognitive one, and involves women's belief in themselves as having the potential to act and change their conditions and situations. Psychological component of empowerment involves destruction of learned helplessness -or internalized oppression in Moser (1989)'s terms - with the development of psychological elements such as self-confidence and self-esteem.

In the community level, the ability to analyze the environment in social and political terms are crucial as the political and collective action is an indispensable component of this process for Stromquist (1995). Community organizations are seen crucial for the actualization of all the aspects of empowerment, making women get out of the house. Economic component is also crucial for Stromquist since even minimal financial autonomy is viewed as empowering for women.

Creating spaces where women can come together, negotiate, discuss, share and give voice to new demands is also quite significant (Stromquist, 1995, Mosedale, 2005). Stromquist argues:

> The creation of critical minds requires a physical and reflective space where new ideas may be entertained and argued, and where transformational demands may occur outside the surveillance of those who may seek to control these changes (Stromquist, 1995: 18).

Spaces are also allocated with meanings and controlled by power relations. That is why spaces where various relations take place should be taken into consideration when the analysis of power and empowerment is being made.

Kabeer (1999) who is one of the leading scholars of feminist development literature conceptualizes power as "ability to make choices" (Kabeer; 1999: 2), in this respect empowerment means gaining the ability to make a variety of choices. Kabeer (1999) argues that the ability of making choices is possible through three main elements, which are resources, agency and achievements. Resources include various material, social and human resources. Agency is defined as "the ability to define one's goals

and act upon them" which is very parallel to the generative forms of power but Kabeer also argues that in the negative sense agency can also involve "power over" (Kabeer, 1999: 3). Still power over as discussed in the literature do not necessitates agency and it can function through the established norms and rules (Rowlands, 1998; Kabeer, 1999). The elements of resources and agency lead to achievements. So, in Kabeer's account we find "choice" on the basis of power, and empowerment is achieved through three different elements which are resources, agency and achievements. Furthermore, there are also levels to these achievements, which are "immediate level – individual agency and achievements, intermediate level – distribution of rules and resources, and the 'deeper' level – structural relations of class/caste/gender" (Kabeer, 1999: 10). In that respect, Kabeer's conceptualization also corresponds to the framework of generative forms of power, especially when immediate level and deeper level achievements are taken into consideration. In sum, Naila Kabeer describes resources and agency as a pathway towards achievements and achievements actualize in three levels that mostly overlap with generative forms of power. This overall process leads to empowerment on immediate, intermediate and deeper levels.

Mosedale (2005) also emphasize the transformative role of empowerment, by defining women's empowerment as "the process by which women redefine gender roles in ways which extend their possibilities for being and doing" (Mosedale, 2005: 252). Similarly Hainard and Verschuur (2001), defines empowerment as a process during which negotiating skills are developed, from the level of family to collective level, and thus a more equitable distribution of power is achieved. Such a definition allocates agency to women to achieve structural changes in gender relations, which is a quite complex process to be achieved.

While the framework of power in generative forms is quite useful in order to measure and analyze women's empowerment, still it cannot be taken for granted. There should be an open door for to integrate women's own views and thoughts to this framework and to reevaluate this framework according to the values, experiences and conditions/context of the community studied (Mahmud, 2003; Mosedale, 2005;

Beşpınar, 2010). Women's agency is allocated a true potential for empowerment and also for the change of structures; yet at the same time it should not be forgotten that "capability for agency varies with women's relations to the structural rules and resources because agency is developed within overlapping economic, social, cultural and legal systems" (Beşpınar, 2010: 524). It should not be forgotten that the existing ideology, which leads to the oppression of women in many respects, also shapes women's perceptions too, as it affects every aspect of the society. So, as Mosedale (2005) puts it,

> It is necessary therefore, when using participatory methods for empowerment, at the same time as appreciating the need for action to be firmly rooted in the local context, to avoid considering women's own perceptions to be unchallengeable. Instead the participatory process of identifying constraints must include opportunities for women to reflect on their situation and develop their awareness of their own interests. (Mosedale, 2005: 253).

In addition, while discussing agency and empowerment we should keep in mind the difference and relations between practical and strategic gender needs. These needs are not mutually exclusive, but still from my point of view it is not possible to talk about empowerment when strategic gender needs are not met. In this study, besides benefiting from this framework, I will also try to discuss with women what they understand from power and empowerment. But at the same time, I will keep in mind that women's experiences and views are not unchallengeable. Thus, being informed about the framework I already described, I will follow the footsteps of feminist theorizing that seeks theoretical profoundness and practical relevance.

2.2.3 Empowerment Framework of the Study

In the first chapter of their edited volume titled "Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development" Parpart et. al (2000) articulates the importance of feminist theorizing. They argue "much of our understanding of the world, our societies, and ourselves, today, rests on theories and knowledge generated historically and predominantly by men of certain nationalities and economic classes" (Parpart et. al, 2000: 1). This is only a partial knowledge since women's experiences and their way of thinking about their own reality is not taken into consideration. Feminist theorizing is crucial at that point. Concepts like development and empowerment

could became buzzwords, by being used also by the mainstream institutions within their neoliberal assistance policies and sometimes its meaning is assumed without being explained (Rowlands, 1998; Mosedale, 2005). In such an environment the concept of empowerment could be used as a buzzword that legitimizes the global political and economic policies through mere inclusion of women (Rowlands, 1998). So, how come we will differentiate our position, argument and approach from those of the mainstream is a theoretical problem in itself (Sachs, 2010). In this part, I will not get into this discussion but rather mark out my position and the approach I will maintain in this study in order to clarify the theoretical framework of the study.

Parpart et. al (2000) articulates the guidelines of feminist theorizing as the following:

> Women's experiences and knowledge; conduct research FOR women; Problems that, when solved, will benefit both researcher and subject; interaction between researcher and subject; establishment of nonhierarchical relationships; expression of feelings and concern for values; and use of nonsexist language" (Parpart et. al, 2000: 9).

How women in different social, economic or political contexts, from different classes and/or races, with different personal characteristics bargain with their environment and insight of these women in that process are particularly important to feminist theorizing; since all these variables in interaction, result in different experiences that should be taken into consideration. Researcher also gets her share in this framework of contextualization and is supposed to situate herself within the context of her research. In other words, researcher cannot come forth as an anonymous voice but should appear as a concrete historical individual. That is because it is now acknowledged that researcher's own assumptions, beliefs and behaviors shape her research and analysis. So, within feminist theorizing, we can say, a historically specific analysis is called for, in which researcher also presents her (Parpart et. al, 2000).

At that point we come up with two different feminist approaches. Feminist-standpoint approach, like its counterparts in the mainstream, has its own broad assumptions and argues that knowledge derived from different women's experiences contribute to the assumed objective reality of the mainstream epistemologies, making

it more thorough. On the other hand, according to postmodern feminist theory, investigation of diverse women's experiences, rather than contributing to a preexisting objective reality, create new knowledges. They argue that there are multiple realities that can be discovered with the investigation of diverse, culturally and historically specific experiences that differ on the basis of race, class, culture and sexual orientation (Parpart et. al, 2000).

Postmodernists are critical about a universal truth, hegemonic metanarratives and discourses of the west and call for historical and contextual analysis of various realities. Postmodern theoreticians question the belief in rational thinking and technology that results in progress. According to these scholars such a belief is only a discourse among many others. That is why postmodernists rather than seeking a universal discourse, focus on "previously silenced voices, for the specificity and power of language and its relation to knowledge, context, and locality" (Parpart, et. al, 2000: 136).

Feminists have reacted differently to such postmodern and poststructuralists accounts and were mostly aware of the paralyzing effects postmodern approach may have on feminist practice. Some feminists worried that postmodern approach may fragment feminist politics and activism that such an ethnocentrism may be as dangerous as totalizing tendencies (Parpart, 1993). In fact, many postmodern thinkers ceased their discussion at a theoretical/philosophical level, at the level of deconstruction. While such accounts are quite illuminating, unless we find a middle ground, such accounts without concrete reference to agency and policy are confined to be paralyzing for feminist politics. That is why feminist theoreticians and researchers have to expose theory with practice and practice with theory in order to be able to pursue studies that are both sensitive to difference and context, and have a political relevance. Fraser and Nicholson's position is guiding in that respect:

> Postmodernists offer sophisticated and persuasive criticisms of foundationalism and essentialism, but their conceptions of social criticism tend to be anemic. Feminists offer robust conceptions of social criticism, but they tend at times to lapse into foundationalism and essentialism" (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990: 20; quoted in Parpart 1993: 446).

Anneline Moser's (2004) remark regarding the fallacies of the idea of heterogeneity is also quite informing. She depicts that discursive celebration of difference, locality and heterogeneity may have unexpected practical consequences. On the basis of her research in Peru, she argues that women from different backgrounds may coexist. Yet, the old issue of unbalanced power relations that emerge on the basis of class could not be overcame by the mere discursive shift to heterogeneity. According to A. Moser (2004), discursive arguments of heterogeneity is a myth and the conflicts stemming from power and privilege between poor grassroots women and middle class women who works in the NGO remain intact despite the discursive shift.

Given the postmodern feminist approach and feminist concerns against this approach, I will argue for a framework which benefits from postmodernism but also is skeptical about the possible paralyzing effects of postmodernism. Such a rigorous perspective is necessary in order to find a basis to criticize existing policies and structures and to argue for alternative approaches that will address practical and strategic obstacles women face which cannot be determined in advance but should be discovered in collaboration with women in a specific context. Parpart (2003) describes the importance of understanding localized knowledges as such:

> A postmodern feminist focus, with its critique of the modern and its focus on the localized, subjugated knowledge/power systems, would encourage development planners to pay more attention to the concrete circumstances of Third World women's lives. The desire to understand the lived realities of Third World women would encourage a search for previously silenced women's voices, particularly their interpretation of the world they inhabit, their successes and failures and their desires for change. The goals and aspirations of Third World women would be discovered rather than assumed, and strategies for improving their lives could be constructed on the basis of actual experiences and needs" (Parpart, 2003: 453-454).

Parpart (1993) argues that, holding a postmodern feminist position does not mean disregarding the socialist feminist concerns of gender and class, but rather means adding to it a postmodern feminist analysis of discourse, knowledge/power relations and difference. Still, following such a route requires being aware of the need for solidarity among women's groups which may possibly be a prerequisite for global, national or regional achievements that meet strategic gender needs (Bordo, 1990). This is maybe the most important point that needs attention in order not to fall into

paralyzing effects of postmodern criticism. When taken with caution, a synthesis of postmodern feminist thinking and practical gender concerns could be quite promising:

> A synthesis of this kind, that incorporates postmodern critiques without losing touch with the insights of feminist thinking, particularly radical and socialist-feminist critiques, holds real possibilities for a deeper understanding of women's multiple realities and for struggles to improve the lot of women throughout the world (Parpart 1993: 457).

In sum, postmodern feminist approach take cognizance of local knowledge, opinions, views and strategies of local people and believe that their experiences and knowledge could be more guiding for "development" than the northern expertise. They acknowledge difference and they argue development policies and programs should be sensitive to diverse needs of different groups. Power is not only a possession of the state but it is exercised and can be observed in the very daily experiences of each of us. Parpart (1993) argues that the connection between knowledge and power should be recognized. Through such an understanding, local knowledges could emerge as sites of power and resistance. Such awareness not only on the side of researcher but also on the side of women is crucial to enhance women's belief in their capacity to act, which will hopefully lead to social change in the long run as an answer to practical and strategic needs. In this framework, working with the concept of empowerment is quite meaningful, because it enables us to think with the concept of power in different forms and in different contexts.

Within the scope of this study, I will argue that empowerment is a process through which women fulfill their practical and strategic gender needs. Yet, as postmodern feminists argued, we cannot assume a universal list of these needs. From my point of view, as researchers and/or facilitators we can just have an idea about what these needs may be in the light of the related literature through gaining some knowledge about problems women face in different societies, and their needs. Yet, we cannot assume that women's needs described in the literature will directly apply to the community we work with. For this reason, there is always a need to work on the experiences of women, besides understanding the social structure of the community, in order to obtain an idea about the process of empowerment as genuine as possible.

At the same time, being informed about the feminist literature, we should beware the possible traps of cultural relativism and should be critical about what women say and do not say about their problems and needs. Since power operates in each and every relation in society, and since it can implement self-disciplining behavior on people, trying to make women question what they have in mind and what they believe in should be the general tendency of especially practitioners, without imposing any single truth.

I argue that fulfillment of practical and strategic gender needs, which imply an empowering process, can be achieved through three levels of empowerment, which are *power within*, *power with* and *power to*. While *power within* and *power with* are more about immediate contexts of women, *power to* relates to a broader agenda, which intervenes with existing hegemonic power structures and gender roles. These levels of empowerment are not hierarchical, meaning one level being the prerequisite for the other one. Rather, hypothetically all the three level could foster each other without any sequence and they may or may not accompany each other. The relation between practical & strategic gender needs and levels of empowerment bear similar characteristics. I do not argue that, a specific level of empowerment will meet practical needs and another level will meet strategic gender needs. Rather, I argue each and every level of empowerment could meet either practical or strategic gender needs, or both of them. So, what I have in mind is theoretically quite interrelated framework. While what I defined as levels of empowerment is more abstract and theoretical, practical and gender needs would be the actual outcomes of an empowering process that is experiences in these three levels. Yet from my point of view meeting strategic gender needs of women is crucial to be able to speak of a thorough empowerment process.

In more detail, I argue that it is possible to talk about an empowering process if women start to discover their personal capabilities and feel self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence and capacity to overcome difficulties. This could include having positive feelings about oneself such as thinking that one is important or the tasks she do is important for her immediate environment. Feeling the *power to* make decisions

and to participate in decision-making could also be included. As mentioned in the feminist empowerment literature, I will categorize this aspect of empowerment as *power within*.

Secondly, we can talk about an empowering process, if women began to socialize with others, communicate with others and involve in negotiations. I assume solidarity and group identity are crucial for empowerment, and also these result in further empowerment for women. So, being involved in community groups, spending time and working together with others are crucial for empowerment. Parallel to empowerment literature, I will categorize this aspect as *power with*. *Power with* could include certain changes women achieve by getting together, or certain opportunities they created together. Even establishment of a women's organization such as a women-run cooperative requires *power with*. On such cases it may be a bit challenging to differentiate between *power with* and *power to*. For that reason, I argue that for *power to* to emerge, vocalized demands or any achievements should be relevant to general public, not only be relevant to one specific organization's or group's needs; or such demands or achievements should challenge a structural aspect of a given society, such as household division of labor. I group specific experiences, needs and demands as *power with*, which actualize in a more immediate environment; and I group more general demands, experiences and/or movements that make sense to the general public or challenge existing structures as *power to*.

From my point of view, *power to* is a sin qua non aspect of empowerment process. This does not mean that in the absence of *power to* we cannot talk about empowerment, but rather I argue that even though women's empowerment could be observed in the individual and relational level (Rowlands, 1997; 1998), still empowerment is a process that should involve structural changes on behalf of women in the existing power relations and gender regimes. I prefer to define *power to* in two pillars: one includes collective efforts, initiatives and/or movements to demand certain rights and services from different authorities. This pillar may not have a gender aspect but still results in structural changes on benefit of general public. The other one includes initiatives and movements that challenge existing

gender relations and that lead to relational and structural transformations on behalf of women. Overall, *power to* includes a collective sense of agency and a collective movement, which possibly requires getting into contact with local or governmental authorities to obtain certain rights and services, be it on the level of legal regulations, government policies or services. Thus, more broadly certain changes could be achieved in gender roles and power dynamics, which in the end benefit women and contribute to women's wellbeing.

How the process of empowerment is achieved naturally depends on the context and local dynamics. For instance, women of Santhiaba, a neighborhood in sub-Saharan Africa (Senegal) never explicitly challenged the status quo and men's authority. However, with the changing socio-economic circumstances women more frequently involved in social and economic issues, and thus intervene through showing their own ways of doing things and showing the success of being organized. Despite not explicitly holding power, they participate in decision-making and articulate their preferences by using social and family networks. However, in Latin American cultures for instance, women's empowerment through open dispute is more common but these are basically occur over specific social issues that are generally short-lived and does not bring about structural changes (Hainard & Verschuur, 2001).

Thus, it is not possible to talk about a thorough and/or linear, ascending empowerment process. It is a dynamic process, which can be enhanced by covert or overt strategies developed by women, or it could shine at a point and wane after a while. It is a long lasting process. In the following parts I will investigate women's cooperatives and seek which forms of generative power is accomplished and actualized in women's lives through cooperative involvement. Such an analysis will shed light to empowerment potential of women's cooperatives and that could provide a potential basis for grassroots and us to work on and take further.

CHAPTER 3

COOPERATIVES: POWER OF THE GRASSROOTS OR POWER OF THE MARKET?

When I first heard about women's cooperatives around five years ago, the image appeared in my mind was more of a grassroots organization women themselves created, which are relatively small in scope where members know each other and collectively work for their own interests, not only economically but also socially and politically. Now, I know that such an image hardly has a counterpart in daily life situations, as I will depict both in this chapter and also in chapter four within this study. Still, I have it in mind since it gives me hope and resilience to pursue this study.

Even a brief search about cooperatives reveals that especially in the last 10-15 years cooperatives became a significant agenda with the liberalization tendency of governments especially after the financial bottleneck of 80s. Mayoux (1995) also argues that since the mid-1970s, women's cooperatives have started to be proposed as a solution to awful working conditions and exploitative payment rates. United Nations (UN), International Labor Organization (ILO), Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) and International Cooperatives Alliance (ICA) have been the leading institutions of this process with the reports and recommendations they published. With the declaration of the year 2012 as the "Year of Cooperatives" by United Nations, cooperatives have been a leading agenda (UN, 2010). Turkish authorities also paid attention to this agenda and declared the "Strategies of Cooperatives and Course of Action" in 2012. Within the global agenda, cooperatives are discussed as the actors of the liberal market. Even though there have been policy actions and recommendations which will benefit also grassroots, still grassroots do not seem to be the leading actor in these discussions about cooperatives.

In this part, firstly I will describe the mainstream cooperative identity as it is declared by international organizations through mentioning structure and core principles associated with cooperatives and main classification of cooperatives. Then, I will critically discuss this mainstream image of cooperatives by linking this image to the previous discussions in the second part on development and women. Secondly, I will focus on the power of grassroots and provide a literature review of women's grassroots cooperatives. Thirdly, I will focus on Turkey and describe the concise history of cooperatives. I will mention the basic focus and structure of cooperatives in Turkey, including the brief history of women's cooperatives.

3.1 Cooperatives in the Mainstream: Power of the Market?

3.1.1 ICA Statement: Values and Core Principles of Co-Operatives

ILO, UN and ICA agree on a common definition, which states that, a "co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise" (ICA, 1995; ILO, 2002; UN, 2002, 2009). Besides this definition, ICA specifies certain values and principles for co-operatives. As declared by ICA (1995), cooperative values include self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. The definition, values and principles complement and coincide with each other.

Seven principles are declared by ICA as cooperative principles. Firstly, cooperatives are assumed to be voluntary organizations and membership is open to anybody without any discrimination on the basis of gender, race, political or religious ideas and affiliations so long as members accept the duties and responsibilities of membership. Secondly, cooperatives are declared to be democratic organizations meaning that all the members equally participate to decision and policy making. Thirdly, members of the cooperative equally contribute to the capital of the cooperative and the principle of democratic control is also valid for the control of the cooperative's capital. Fourthly, cooperatives are expected to be autonomous and independent organizations which are only controlled by their members, meaning that

they should not be controlled by any government or civil organization. Democratic control should be guaranteed in case of receiving any support or external fund. Fifthly, cooperatives are held responsible of education and training provision to their members and/or any other related employees in order to contribute to the development of cooperative. In addition, notifying the public about identity and benefits of cooperatives is also regarded as a principle for cooperatives. The sixth principle argues for cooperation among cooperatives and cooperative associations in local, regional, national and international levels, in order to be able to strengthen cooperative movement. Last but not least, the seventh principle draw attention to concern for community; meaning that cooperatives should contribute to the community they work within (ICA, 1995; UN, 2009)

From my point of view the values and principles declared by the International Co-operative Alliance, which is a global co-operative union founded in 1895, sound universal since they are based on the principles of equal and voluntary participation, democratic control and autonomy which are quite agreeable and not debatable from my perspective. However, there appears a relatively different picture when the recent documents of the United Nations, which spend special attention to cooperatives, are analyzed.

3.1.2   Cooperatives in Social Development

The year 2012 is declared to be the International Year of Cooperatives with a resolution of UN, in order to attract global attention to cooperatives as a crucial agent of social and economic development (UN, 2010). In that resolution, it is stated that,

> Cooperatives, in their various forms, promote the fullest possible participation in the economic and social development of all people, including women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, are becoming a major factor of economic and social development and contribute to the eradication of poverty (UN, 2010: 1)

Cooperatives are seen as self-help organizations, organizations of people to help themselves especially in compelling situations, primarily in the circumstances of market failures and difficult economic times that result in unemployment and poverty (UN, 2009; ILO, 2010). According to ILO (2010), resilience of cooperatives in crisis

situations should be attributed to cooperative model itself with its values like democratic governance. Such values lead cooperatives to conduct on behalf of their members rather than working with profit intention. Cooperatives besides being commercial organizations also follow a broader set of values to promote not only economical but also social development. In that sense, they differ from other commercial organizations, which pursue purely profit orientations (Sanyong & Huang, 2008). Cooperatives are seen as easily accessible organizations for the impoverished, for the disadvantaged and marginalized people and for the ones who live in hardly accessible rural regions. In circumstances where and when governments or private enterprises cannot or do not prefer to access people, cooperatives are expected to fill the space and enable local people to improve their conditions, hopefully by creating employment, encouraging entrepreneurship, thus increasing incomes and contributing to poverty alleviation. Cooperatives are seen as the components of more inclusive and flexible financial systems as they provide services for savings and credit to the ones who are not "eligible" to benefit from private banking services. They play a part in social protection with providing health services and insurance schemes; they can contribute to provision of housing, electricity and water for communities. Overall, they are seen as powerful vehicles of social inclusion and economic empowerment of their members (ILO, 2010). Furthermore, they undertake roles in conflict situations by contributing to communication between conflicting parties and working for peace building. In parallel, they can contribute to social cohesion, and building of social capital. United Nations argues for cooperatives on the basis of their contribution to development goals set by UN (UN, 2009, 2011).

Cooperatives are seen different from other investor owned businesses; because, on the basis of their values and principles they are important institutions for the improvement of living standards and poverty reduction. They are quite able to reach marginalized people including women and the poor. UN report on cooperatives in social development states that The International Year of Cooperatives is especially timely since,

We face the worst financial and economic crisis since the Great Depression, threatening the socio-economic development of millions of people. Promoting cooperatives, as self-help organizations, can contribute to tackling the issue of poverty, unemployment and loss of incomes, food insecurity and the lack of access of the poor to credit and financial services in the light of the current global economic crisis (UN, 2009: 16).

As depicted in the quotation above, the core reason for the support given to cooperatives is enabling the disadvantaged, marginalized and poor people to tackle with the outcomes of global financial crisis, which they cannot hold responsible for, but global investors and liberal financial regimes. The perspective that sees cooperatives as agents of liberal market policies crystallize in the conclusions of an Expert Group Meeting of UN on how to create supportive environment for sustainable cooperatives. In the final report of the meeting it is stated that

The efforts of Governments, particularly in developing countries and in economies in transition, to promote free markets and improve access to the economic and social benefits of globalization can be complemented by the cooperative movement. Cooperatives can play a key role in the establishment of competitive markets by challenging oligopolistic and monopolistic business practices, by defending and expanding consumer choice, and by enabling better access to economic opportunities for groups and individuals who might otherwise be marginalized or uncompetitive in a market exposed to international competition (UN, 2002: 3).

In sum, according to UN, cooperatives are promoted as agents that will enable the poor and marginalized to be affiliated with liberal economic policies; thus, paving the way for the developing world to reach the development goals claimed by UN. In other words, cooperatives will be smoothing the destructive effects of competitive market policies led by capital owners through self-help.

This framework becomes concrete when the Global300 list published by ICA is analyzed. This list, published biannually, demonstrates the 300 major cooperatives in the globe. Not surprisingly, this list is constituted on the basis of revenues of cooperatives, meaning that scope of economic activity and contribution to Gross Domestic Product is the mere criteria to be the top cooperatives. In that respect, although international organizations prate about contribution of cooperatives to –in bold outline- social development, social inclusion, poverty reduction and employment creation, none of these aspects is considered as a criterion to measure

the scope and benefit of cooperatives. We are bunged up with finance again, not surprisingly. The distribution of cooperatives in the Global300 list (ICA, 2011) makes this picture more concrete as depicted below:

Distribution of Continents in the Global300 List (2011)

- North America
- South America
- Europe
- Ocienia
- Asia
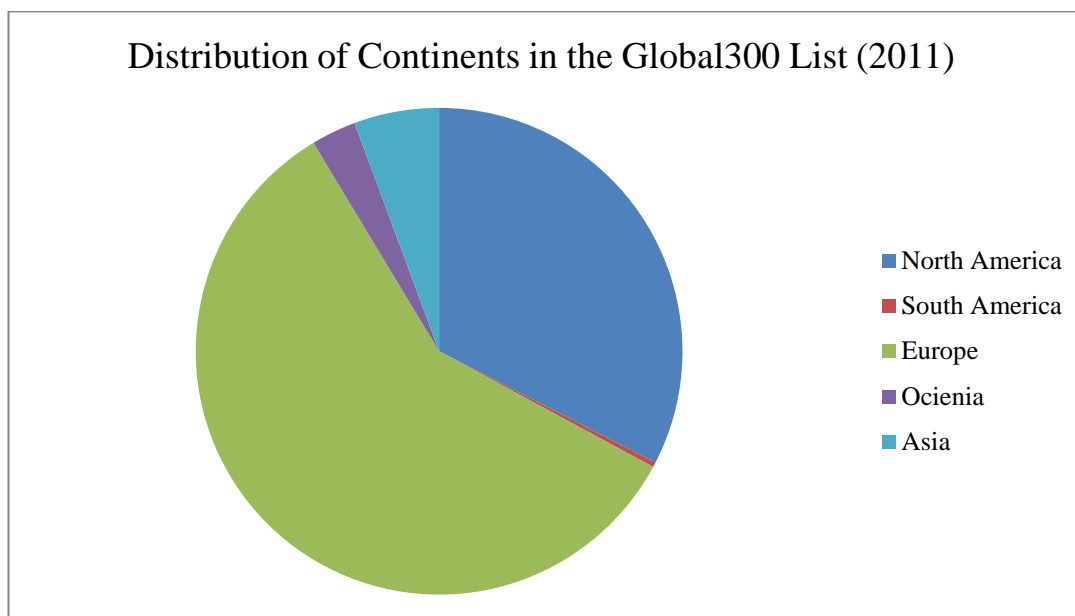
Figure 1. Distribution of top 300 cooperatives that appear in the Global300 List, according to continent. Derived from the data in ICA publication (ICA, 2011).[9]

The total revenue of the cooperatives in Europe and North America compete with the GDP of countries such as Venezuela, Colombia, Nigeria, Israel, Pakistan, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Portugal and Algeria to mention some of them coincidentally according the numbers of 2006 (Gümrük ve Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2011). The cooperatives mentioned here are huge market actors rather than local organizations, which work for the benefit of its members socially and economically. In that respect cooperatives are quite compatible with free market economy, even contribute to it through reducing the impotencies especially during crisis and post-crisis situations. This framework is in line with the current western accounts, which start the modern roots of cooperative movement with Industrial Revolution in Britain in the 19th century and mainly flourished in Western Europe (Gümrük ve Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2011, 2012).

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[9] North America is composed of US (90) and Canada (8) only. The European cooperatives in the list are from western and northern Europe. Central Europe does not appear in the list. There is only one cooperative from South America, which is from Brasil. 8 of the 17 Asian cooperatives are from Japan, which is regarded as a developed economy already.

Despite this financial orientation towards cooperatives in international agenda, and in spite of the fact that cooperatives are basically economic organizations, still cooperatives are theoretically differentiated form the private sector and categorized as the "Third Sector", which basically involves non-profit and/or voluntary organizations. In the recent times with the global neoliberal policies, social policies of states are shrinking more and more and states tend to assign their social roles either to private sector which commoditize social services heretofore a gratis citizenship right, or to the third sector which provide these services as a social responsibility. Cooperatives are incorporated into this structure both as an economic actor contributing to liberal development roles and also as a social actor substituting state in the provision of social services such as social protection and peace building. Cooperatives are differentiated from private sector because their orientation towards providing services to members rather than profit seeking. As stated by Nippierd (2012), "cooperatives are commercial organizations, that follow a broader set of values than those associated purely with profit motive" (Nippierd, 2012: 1). Thus, they appear as optimum organizations for the market, as they do not seek profit and do not seem to take aim at market share, yet at the same time they aim to be efficient enough to benefit their members.

3.1.3 Types of Cooperatives

According to who the stakeholders are cooperatives can be grouped into three types (Birchall, 2009; UN, 2011). Such a differentiation seems to make more sense than a sector based differentiation. Still, it should be noted that there could be a wide range or variability within this classification according to sectors.

3.1.3.1 Consumer Cooperatives

To describe very basically, consumer cooperatives are the ones, which sell goods and/or services to their members with a relative advantage. This can be made through providing more quality goods and/or services, increasing the supply for the consumption needs, thus, lowering the prices for the members and confronting existing monopolies. In addition, consumer cooperatives enable consumers to be involved in the provision of goods and/or services and build trust as a taken for

granted outcome of cooperatives. Such cooperatives may also enable the provision of goods and/or services in a closer distance to consumers, thus providing a convenient alternative to other providers. Consumer cooperatives can function in diverse sectors, from finance to retail, housing, agriculture, water or electricity provision, social and public services such as health related services and childcare (Birchall, 2009; UN, 2011).

3.1.3.2 Producer Cooperatives

Producer cooperatives as its name implies are formed by producers in various sectors from agriculture to handicrafts and enable these producers relative advantage in the market. Through eliminating middleman, these cooperatives attain competitiveness and efficiency, thus maximize the return of members' products. In other words, producer cooperatives can put higher prices for the products, thus increasing the profit of producers and enable a relatively stable and pledged income. Such cooperatives are quite wide spread in agriculture sector but also formed by other self-employed people or small businesses in a variety of sectors such as fishery or forestry (Birchall, 2009; UN, 2011).

3.1.3.3 Worker Cooperatives

Worker Cooperatives are the ones formed by the workers involved in production or services themselves, so these are the cooperatives that are directly involved in production or service provision like any other business. Such cooperative can contribute to employment creation and provide the opportunity of decent work, as there will be no bosses, workers being the bosses of their own business. Thus, workers can control their employment conditions, from income to work schedule, thus enabling a relatively flexible working environment. Such cooperatives can also provide an increased chance of training for the worker members and can be observed in an unlimited number of sectors (Birchall, 2009; UN, 2011).

3.1.4 Critique to the Mainstream Cooperative Identity

International focus on cooperatives, led by UN, depicts widespread and comprehensive support for these organizations. As depicted especially in the UN

reports and resolutions, which are agreed by huge number of member states, cooperatives are seen as the sustainable organizations for global development goals and supported on that basis. However, arguments and goals of such international organizations regarding cooperatives are quite broad, abstract, and apathetic to daily life situations and dynamics. In terms of benefits of cooperatives and strategies for the promotion of cooperatives, all the reports sound pretty good, but they do not tell much about practical dynamics and situations.

Even though such documents produced by international organizations such as UN and ICA pay lip service to the benefits of cooperatives for the disadvantaged and marginalized, the core motive is still global financial equilibrium. This tendency crystallizes in one of the ILO documents in which basis of advocacy of gender equality is expressed from ILO perspective:

> Recognizing that ensuring gender equality is not just the right thing to do, in terms of respect of rights and following the cooperative principles, but also makes good business sense - as shown by the numerous studies which demonstrate that investing in women has high returns at both the level of the individual enterprise as well as at the macro level in terms of poverty reduction and development (ILO, 2010: 8).

Cooperatives are advocated on the basis that they are the key agents to deal with the fallacies of global financial system and capitalist mode of production. As depicted by the success criteria declared by ICA Global300 list and the way the discussion takes place, cooperatives are not advocated for the sake of poor and marginalized with a genuine concern for their suffering. Rather, the advocacy takes place because poverty, unemployment and related sufferings are unfavorable results of the liberal economic policies that should be tackled in order to prevent them from vitiating the "reputation" of liberal policies. In that respect, mainstream progressive development rhetoric that I previously analyzed is pursued and "underdeveloped" is still the object of discourse. Cooperatives are depicted as a business model compatible with liberal economic policies by international organizations; rather than being grassroots organizations, which may argue and fight for alternative forms of social and economic relations. In the mainstream, cooperatives are declared as partner organizations of the existing socio-economic system.

In addition, this international agenda mostly fails to spend attention on gender dynamics and women's role in production and reproduction, as it has been the case for early development initiatives. Women's empowerment is not a core concern and even when women's issues are declared, it is made on the basis of women's contribution to universally declared development goals. In that respect, universal agenda on cooperatives pursues "women in development" approach seeing women as a means for internationally declared modernist and progressive development targets (Chowdhry, 1995; Parpart & Marchand, 1995). Naturally, this perspective towards cooperatives sustains all the problems and fallacies of WID approach, especially in terms of gender responsiveness. I do not argue that such international initiatives are totally disempowering for grassroots or for women. Such an argument cannot be made in advance. However, the development discourse leading the agenda is structuring the practice for sure. That is why I believe; there is a need for another discourse that will progress from bottom to top. From my point of view, only in this way an alternative form of development could be possible which will be shaped by the needs and priorities of grassroots.

In the following section, by reviewing related literature I will provide some examples of women's grassroots organizations and especially of women's cooperatives and I will seek instances where grassroots could be empowering for women. It is not possible to argue that grassroots could totally be independent from mainstream development discourse and local power relations, since we are susceptible to the system we live in. However, my aim in the next part is to depict what kind of alternatives women could create that diverge from the mainstream framework which identifies cooperatives as partner organizations of the market.

3.2 Power of the Grassroots: Women's Cases from the Globe

Especially in the post 1980s period, in the various parts of the globe, women started grassroots movements and established cooperatives. Even though there is not a systematic and wide literature on women's cooperatives, these cooperatives as they appear in the literature, are a lot smaller in comparison to the ones in ICA Global300

list and primarily take aim at the daily well being of cooperative partners. Studies on women's cooperatives are quite dispersed, mostly concentrated on the "third world" despite the fact that the leading cooperatives reside in the first World countries according to the global international organizations. In this part, I will provide some examples of such grassroots cooperatives established by women, and try to depict their characteristics, structure and the ways they are powerful or not.

ILO is maybe the leading organization, which conducted various projects about cooperatives in general and women's cooperatives in particular in various parts of the world. ILO published many reports, briefs, or other form of articles about cooperatives and these documents are intensively concentrated on Africa. ILO pursues a specific technical cooperation program for the promotion of cooperatives in Africa that is shortly referred as COOPAfrica. As depicted in the documents, programs supported by ILO progress through WID approach, encouraging women's participation into economic activities, and seeing women as efficient agents for the economic development of these regions (Chowdhry, 1995; Parpart & Marchand, 1995). It is advocated that, cooperatives are quite efficient and powerful mediums for political and economic empowerment of their members (UN, 2002, 2009, 2011; ILO, 2010) On the basis of mainstream arguments about cooperatives discussed above, ILO and its related organizations and programs not only encourage establishment of new cooperatives, but also they support existing cooperatives and work to increase their efficiency.

According to some cases of women's cooperatives mentioned in ILO documents, women had been able to increase the volume of milk production in Tanzania and through that process women in that group became more brace to take risks and start new business enterprises. Similarly, again in Tanzania, women benefited from support given to beekeeping activities through being organized in cooperatives and similar community based associations. They received technical trainings about production and post-processing of honey (ILO, 2010).

In another ILO report on potential of African cooperatives (ILO, 2012), it is stated that approximately 80% of food is produced by women in Africa. However, women own just 1% of the land, cannot access to credit services and can access only 7% of agricultural extension services. Within this framework, empowerment of women is crucial according to ILO, especially because of the contribution of women to productivity and to the elimination of hunger in the continent. Through cooperatives in Africa, women could access to markets, to which they cannot access individually due to low purchasing power and cultural obstacles. According to an agricultural survey done with women cooperative members in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, it is reported that, after being involved in cooperatives, 59% of members (in a sample of 101) started new productive activities and 84% of members (in a sample of 79) reported that their agricultural production has increased. Furthermore, a sample of 88 members, reported that their income increased by 186% in comparison to pre-cooperative income. Despite being low, there is some decrease in the situation of wives being primary caregivers, after cooperative membership (9% decrease within 43 married respondents). Furthermore there is an observed increase in equal decision making in terms of economic activities (from 45% to 80%) and in terms of children's education (From 57% to 78%) between woman and men following women's cooperative participation (ILO, 2012).

Another ILO originated source mentions that in Indonesia, women started a cooperative to produce juice from nutmeg, which is seen as a waste fruit in the Maluku islands where these women live. While the cooperative initially produce 40-50 bottles of juice, recently they started to produce up to 2400 bottles in a month and at the same time increased their members from 15 to 25. It is reported, that with this initiative, women started to enjoy better conditions of living and also have new plans for the future, such as establishing a saving and credit scheme and selling other daily domestic goods (Lingga, 2012).

One of the territories where external agents played a crucial role for the establishment of women's cooperatives has been Palestine. In the post 2000s, Palestinian women started to establish cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

especially with the incentive and funding of external agencies. Employment rates of Palestinian women were already low (11,7% in Gaza Strip and 15,4% in West Bank) and further lowered in the last ten years because of security issues. In such an environment, women's cooperatives seem to be a viable alternative for women's participation to labor market, for overcoming the traditional obstacles limiting women's movement and for participation. Women most frequently participate to handicraft cooperatives in that region, where low education levels of women and lack of access to common resources are the leading barriers for the development of women's cooperatives (ILO, no date).

When the information provided in ILO documents and the discourse in general is analyzed, it becomes clear that ILO maintains WID approach and favors economic pragmatism. In ILO documents, we cannot hear women's voices. Rather, we see certain numbers that represent women's activities. The main emphasis is on increases in production, income and women's participation. These measures are presented as the achievements of cooperatives and depict the progress being made. The percentages provided about women's participation into household decision-making and level of their responsibility as primary caregivers do not tell much since there is not any further information than bare numbers. These numbers are provided as objective measures and tell nothing about women's experiences. So, even though ILO documents depict that women benefit from cooperative membership especially in economic terms, it is not really possible to discuss these documents from the feminist empowerment approach (ILO, no date, 2010, 2012; Lingga; 2012). In that framework, even though "gender equality" is paid lip service, still economic efficiency and mainstream understanding of development sparkles. Given the mainstream understanding of global international organizations about cooperatives and benefits of cooperatives as depicted through ILO documents, I wanted to consult to different resources where I can find out challenging gender analysis and exciting cooperative cases that can also guide my study.

When I think about cooperatives, what visualize in front of my eyes are either cooperatives that are involved in production, or cooperatives providing wide spread

services such as child care, education or credit. However, cooperatives are quite flexible organizations that may put what we never think of into practice. During my literature review I came up with two such cooperative cases, which sounded weird at first instance but later internalized as possible.

One of these cooperatives is established in Santa Cruz, California, US, that is a self-defense teaching cooperative established by feminist women. Their aim is to empower women "to use their own strengths, experiences and spirit of survival" (Groves et. al, 1995: 16). It is reported that in a 16 year interval they taught self-defense to around nine thousand women with the motive that women has a right to access low-cost or even free self-defense classes. They argue that these trainings are empowering for women psychologically and socially (Groves et. al, 1995).

Another cooperative that sounded interesting to me was a housing cooperative in Canada, established for low-income women. Inadequate housing is regarded as an important problem for poor women in Canada and it is stated that housing cooperatives can enhance women's health through provision of a supportive women's environment, in which women can take advantage of inexpensive housing and develop new skills. Creation of "community" within an urban space is declared as one of the goals of cooperative housing. In such cooperatives, residents of the building are not only neighbors but also shareholders. So, they are expected to undertake responsibility regarding the management of the cooperative. It is reported that this management responsibility within the building women also live in, has been a source of stress for residents, despite the fact that they find cooperative housing more pleasant when compared to their previous life experiences. Furthermore, Women's abusive and hard life experiences created difficulties for forming relations with other women and for creating a common identity, despite they have similar backgrounds. This seemed to be a result of women's tendency to deal with one's own problems rather than being entangled with others'. Absence of such a common identity resulted in negative consequences such as low self-esteem, feeling of powerlessness and increased vulnerability of illness. Still, women argued their control over their lives has increased as they started to live in the housing

cooperative, since in this environment everything "works" and they can learn new skills (Wasylishyn & Johnson, 1998). This study is illuminating in the way it depicts how shelter-like housing for women could be organized through a women's cooperative and how a housing cooperative which seemingly relieve women from previous hard and abusive life experiences could still be perceived as both a source of stress and also a source of empowerment.

Besides these divergent cooperative cases, especially in the "developing world" women's cooperatives are mostly involved in production related activities. Given ILO's mainstream approach towards women's cooperatives, I steered for other independent research on women's cooperatives that look at the issue from a more gender aware perspective. Lynn Stephen's (2005) study on women's weaving cooperatives in Oxaca, Mexico is one of the outstanding and inspiring studies on this subject. According to Stephen (2005) increase in social stratification, neoliberal economic policies, loss of income and decreasing possibility of access to market for weavers were among the leading factors for the establishment of such cooperatives. In that context "cooperatives created new kinds of economic, cultural and political spaces for weavers who were further marginalized in local and global economies of the 1990s" (Stephen, 2005: 273)

In Oxaca women weavers started to establish cooperatives in 1980s in order to bypass the monopoly of local merchants and subcontractors and sell their products directly to consumers as independent artisans. Also, with their efforts to gain political and cultural rights, these women according to Stephen (2005) took the lead for challenging gender relations in their geography. Especially during high tourist seasons, women left their village and went to urban areas in order to sell their textiles, spending the night there on the marketplace for 2-3 days. Stephen (2005) argues that for widows and single mothers or for unmarried women, participation into cooperatives had been easier. Cooperative involvement had resulted in certain difficulties for member women such as harassment, domestic violence or gossip within their community. This resulted from the fact that, such women created alternative gender models for all the women in the community and they began to

challenge local gender regimes. In addition, through cooperatives women learned new decision making skills and also enhanced the processes of production, distribution and marketing of their products, which frequently resulted in increased income especially through forming direct links with the markets. Women, in this process, could have been able to get out of domestic sphere and enhanced solidarity.

Mostly, when women received equal pay to men, their occupation increased the number of hours they have to work in order to fulfill all the household chores. In that respect women's participation to weaving cooperatives in Oxaca enabled only a limited reordering of household tasks within family and this generally comprises the times when women participate to cooperative meetings or go to urban areas for sale during exhibitions. Women's political participation on the other hand has been possible through invitation they received as voting members in community assemblies. Despite being invited, women experienced certain difficulties due to pressure arising from "customs" regarding their attendance in community assemblies (Stephen, 2005). As expressed as "customs" in Oxaca, male opposition and pressure also had adverse effects on women's attempts to improve their position in Anglophone Cameroon too, since women lacked skills and political contacts to protect their interests (DeLancey, 1987).

Women participated to Stephen's study also mentioned that their lack of confidence has been another reason for their absence from community assemblies. It is reported that, only around 2000s women started to participate to these assemblies and mostly women in the cooperatives concentrated on promotion of their products instead. In sum, Stephen's (2005) study depict that, even though not being prevalent, women's participation in weaving cooperatives had resulted in both economic, social and political benefits for them, with rises in their income, with minimal gender role shifts within the household and with their participation into community assemblies.

In Asia-Pacific too women's involvement in green cooperatives has been advocated in order to alleviate poverty and enhance sustainability of rural development where agriculture is still the main mean of subsistence. But besides this frequently declared

contribution of cooperative organization to communities, Sanyang and Huang's (2008) study also emphasized the socio-psychological benefits of cooperative participation on women. Sanyang and Huang (2008) report that apart from being economic organizations, cooperatives also offer socio-psychological benefits to their members which occur as a result of sense of security, belonging and collective problem solving, which in turn enhance self confidence, solidarity and sense of caring for others. Women's cooperative could serve as a support network, as a learning environment and also offer "the opportunity for women to exercise decision making power" (Sanyang & Huang, 2008: 676). Another study on women organic farmers in Canada revive similar conclusions indicating that according to women farmers, cooperatives, other organic organizations and neighborhood relations which constitute the organic community function as a support network, a social group and also as a learning environment for all women farmers (Sumner, 2003). However, Sanyang and Huang (2008) also mention certain problem areas that restrict women's participation in such cooperatives. These limitations include women's limited access to agricultural resources and services for production because of gender inequalities; the double burden of farming and family on women; and lack of social services and government support that may ease this burden.

In her study that is based on a field research conducted between 1984-1992 in 10 women's producer cooperatives in India, Mayoux (1995) states that increases in income has been the primarily aim of women cooperative members. Mostly women are involved in cooperatives because cooperatives has been the only alternative for them to have access to credit, to other resources for income generation and to market. Among the ten cooperative participated in this study, only two cooperatives stated that they selected cooperative consciously as a specific organization type. Thus, Mayoux (1995) concludes that cooperative organization was largely formed through imposed participation to which outside agencies decided.

In terms of existing gender regimes and challenges to these gender relations, women's cooperatives in India could have some potential, even though not widespread. Existing gender regime in the community effect women's marketing

capabilities and their access to resources for production negatively, through restricting their freedom of movement. Furthermore, women's unpaid domestic responsibilities restrict their time thus decrease their income. On the basis of these analyses Mayoux (1995) argues that women's cooperatives cannot make a difference in gender relations and cannot improve women's status within household through merely letting women get involved in production. Especially, poor women do not specifically become interested in cooperatives unless they know that there will be an increase in their income. In such cases women do not show much interest about being a cooperative member, about being involved in cooperative management or decision-making. Poorer women could prefer to work at home because of the flexibility of combining production with other household tasks.

Mayoux (1995) argues that the women who are involved more with management and decision-making activities have more chance and space to challenge existing gender relations. Through travelling for participation into meetings and for marketing, these women had more chance to challenge previous restrictions on their movements outside the home. This had given them both increased prestige and considerable personal satisfaction. From that point of view, it is quite meaningful to conclude that challenge to gender relations and gender related political acquisitions do not emerge as a result of mere involvement in production activities within cooperatives but rather such acquisitions becomes possible through women's abilities about and involvement in management and marketing processes. Furthermore Mayoux (1995) argues, gender-informed initiatives are necessary in order to challenge existing gender relations especially for the poorer women.

Mayoux also reports that the smaller the cooperative, the more participatory the process. When the number of members increases, the management of cooperative can be left intentionally or unintentionally to some core women on the basis of their enthusiasm and, organization and management skills. In such cases, an initiative to develop the skills of all the members rather than these core members is less likely to emerge. This situation is likely to increase the possibility of conflict within the cooperative according to Mayoux (1995).

Given that picture, Mayoux (1995) argues that mere involvement in production cooperatives will not bring automatic changes in women's lives and more explicit policies are needed to address women's gender needs. According to Mayoux (1995) if the only offer of cooperatives would be production related activities and thus income, there would not be any greater change than women could achieve in private employment. To achieve any structural change, women's gender related problems should be specifically addressed through a process in which women could judge and select the best options for themselves. Mayoux (1995) suggest that participatory action research and participatory gender training could be influential in this process both for women and men.

Another study, which depicts the decisive role of gender relations on cooperative participation is Stuart and Kanneganti's (2003) study on women's thrift cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh, India. These cooperatives emerged as a result of men's resistance against women's participation into men's cooperatives. As seen in other studies, membership and women's participation is effected from existing gender roles in the household. The family members in "power" situations have limited women's participation. Even some women have been subjected to psychological and/or physical abuse in response to their cooperative participation. However, such problems have waned after households benefited from women's cooperative membership through having access to large loans without collateral. As depicted in the Mayoux's study (1995), In Andhra Pradesh too, for women in the leadership positions, who were quite keen on being a cooperative member, there has been some apparent positive changes in the hierarchical family structure but at considerable psychological and physical cost (Stuart & Kanneganti, 2003).

As extra agricultural activities such as agro tourism, home/handicraft production and trade of cultural product are becoming more and more common for farmwomen in Europe; farmwomen in Greece also had their share from this process. In Greece, women are encouraged for the establishment of new cooperatives or participation into existing ones mostly through EU funding. Koutsou, Iakovidou and Gotsinas

(2003) argue that cooperative participation provided farmwomen a source of income on the one hand and also independence, power of control and self-esteem on the other. Authors mention three factors that brought success to cooperatives. These are; having a nucleus group of women who were specifically available and had leadership skill; having local agent that support the cooperatives actively, and using bottom-up approaches for establishment.

70% of Greek cooperatives participated into the research stated that (a total of 40 coops) marketing of products and services is a crucial problem. This may be due to low capital and lack of specialized knowledge according to authors. Same applies to women's cooperative is Cameroon. According to DeLancey (1987), lack of access to capital and education has been the primary obstacles for women's cooperatives besides tradition.

Women's cooperatives in Greece demand trainings especially in the subjects of organizational matters, management, marketing, production methods, standardization and packing methods. According to the authors, low production rate within cooperatives hamper promotion of their products and in order to compete within the existing market conditions cooperatives should operate as businesses.

> The lack of business spirit that characterizes the members of the cooperatives may be due to their lack of experience and knowledge or to the fact that, very often, cooperatives are their second occupation… Consequently, cooperatives must, on the one hand, offer products or services that meet the high standards set by the particularly demanding consumers and, on the other, compete with a highly competitive market. Still, most women are not ready for this As a result, they did not provide women the necessary knowledge on the management of the cooperatives and other technical issues related to the production and distribution of their products. (Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003:55).

Very supportive to the argument of Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas (2003), Lowe (1988), in her article describing a factory occupation in 1970s in Britain, as a result of which the first entirely women's cooperative is established, stated that women's cooperative failed due to women's attempt "to run an ailing capitalist firm as a viable enterprise" (Lowe, 1988: 214). So, in many cases, professional assistance is needed for women's cooperatives to flourish. Through such assistance, advertising campaigns and, a distribution and sales system can be created; trainings on technical,

organizational or management issues can be provided; and exhibition centers in the large urban areas can be used.

Another scholar analyzes a network of black women's organizations called Matamba y Guasa, and she depicts that "black women in particular and third-world women in general neither need the dense theoretical language of postcolonial critics nor use the tools of gender experts… they have an independent ability to act and reflect on their own realities" (Asher, 2004: 42). In these grassroots organizations women are involved in cooperative-like activities such as growing plants, informal and formal education, health care projects, and initiatives for the implementation of law and necessary regulations for ethnic rights of black communities. Through such networks and groups black women in Colombia achieved solidarity and became cognizant of social and political relations they live in.

Other illuminating women's organizations emerged in Peru as a reaction to unequal food distribution system for the poor carried out by some philanthropic organization. The very women who are the poor receiving the food assistance, established Comedores Populares (Communal Kitchens) to perform their own fair and need-based food distribution system through controlling their own resources either received from NGOs or government agencies, or purchased by themselves (Kamioka; 2001; Moser, A., 2004). These communal kitchens emerged as a reaction to economic crisis of 70s and eased people's life during the economic crisis of 80s and during structural adjustment programs in 90s (Kamioka, 2001). In these communal kitchens each day 3-4 women prepare the food not only for themselves but also for the entire neighborhood on a voluntary basis. The beneficiaries of these kitchens pay a minimal fee to women's group to ensure the sustainability of the action, but also about 1/10th of the food is distributed free of charge to the most needy. These grassroots organizations are not titled as cooperatives but they are also registered organizations.

Both of the authors writing on Comedores indicate that, these women's spaces went through a transformation and became not only cooking spaces but also spaces for

social organization through which women gained the ability to challenge existing social structure. Through getting together with other comedores, women established central alliances, which became places of learning about topics like nutrition, infant heath, reproduction, management, leadership and women's rights. Thus these spaces increased women's ability of movement beyond the domestic sphere and enabled an empowering experience for these women (Kamioka, 2001; Moser, A., 2004). Despite this unique experience actualized in Comedores, A. Moser (2004) makes a reminder claiming that as long as such organizations remain dependent on external resources, problems experienced will not be resolved due to the fact that "underlying exclusionary structure of wealth and power firmly remain in place" (Moser, A, 2004: 230).

To cover up the reviewed literature, it should be noted that various examples on women's cooperatives and grassroots movements depict that women could benefit from cooperative membership in one way or another. While ILO resources emphasize the increases in production and women's income (ILO, no date, 2010, 2012; Lingga, 2012); independent research depict cooperatives could also enhance *power within* and *power with* through functioning as a support network and enhancing solidarity among women; supporting women not only economically but also psychologically and socially (Groves et. al, 1995; Kamioka, 2001; Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003; Sumner, 2003; Stephen, 2005; Moser, A., 2004; Asher, 2004; Sanyang & Huang, 2008;).

In terms of encouraging women to gain and to actualize *power to* challenge existing power structures and gender relations, women's cooperatives despite seemingly holding a potential, could not actualize this potential much (Stephen, 2005; ILO, 2012). Even on the contrary, some women are subjected to serious pressure, harassment or other kind of obstacles with the pretext of cooperative membership, but because of existing gender regimes (DeLancey, 1987; Mayoux, 1995; Stuart & Kanneganti, 2003; Stephen, 2005;). As Mayoux (1995) argued firmly, initiatives that target specifically power relations and gender hierarchies is needed in order to increase the *power to* potential of cooperatives.

In most of the cases, especially for the cases in the so called developing world, it is seen that women's cooperatives are open to external support and in fact in some cases really need it. This could be funding (Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003; Moser, A., 2004) or other kind of support, such as trainings or credits (Mayoux, 1995; Kamioka, 2001; Stuart & Kanneganti; 2003, Moser, A. 2004; ILO, 2010; Lingga, 2011; ILO, 2012). Koutsou, Iakovidou and Gotsinas (2003) argue that the supports given to women's cooperatives are mostly limited to provision of trainings for women and/or providing assistance and counseling during establishment process. These authors are concerned that state agencies could withdraw the support they provide unexpectedly, without considering whether cooperatives had established required structures and mechanisms for self-reliance.

On the other hand, the leading concern area for cooperative organizations in the literature is cooperatives' inability to access the most disadvantaged and poor population within local communities (DeLancey, 1987; Mayoux, 1995; Milgram, 2000; Cohen, 2000; Sanyang & Huang, 2008). It is stated that the ones who benefit more from such organizations have always been the ones who are in a fairly strong economical and social situation (Mayoux, 1995; Milgram, 2000; Cohen, 2000). For instance, Mayoux (1995) finds out that the women who are elected to power positions within the cooperative are the ones who already hold some power outside the cooperative. She stated "those most active in the relatively successful cooperatives tended to be better off unmarried women with fewer family responsibilities" (Mayoux, 1995: 224-225). This has also been the case for the women's cooperatives in Anglophone Cameroon. According to DeLancey (1987), due to lack of education, leadership did not emerge and few well-educated women filled this role. In this situation women members who lack education also had difficulty in understanding the purpose and methods of cooperative organizations and this situation limits the expansion of cooperative activities. Under these circumstances the women who hold the leadership and management roles are the ones who benefit the most from cooperative involvement, especially in terms of

acquisition of strategic gender needs (Mayoux, 1995; Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003; Stuart & Kanneganti: 2003)

In sum, all the studies depict that cooperatives hold a potential for the empowerment of women especially in terms of *power within* and *power with*. Literature depicts that, through getting together with other women under the roof of a cooperative, women could gain access to income or increase their income and thus become able to meet their practical gender needs. As I already mentioned, empowerment process is quite interrelated with meeting practical and strategic needs and these elements nourish each other. Furthermore, cooperative involvement also empowers women psychologically and socially, providing a supportive environment within their reach. Women's cooperatives are constructed as women's spaces and this situation creates unique opportunities for women to empower themselves especially through *power within* and *power with*, as depicted by the related literature.

However, there are still serious restrictions, especially in terms of enhancing empowerment process and acquiring *power to* access strategic gender needs. Limited resources, traditions, existing power structures, gender relations, lack of gender aware facilitation and the competitive dynamics of neoliberal market limit the potential of women's cooperatives. All the cases depict that to overcome these obstacles, more sustainable, gender and market aware policies are needed.

3.3 Cooperatives in Turkey

3.3.1 Brief Overview of Cooperatives in Turkey

Emergence of modern cooperatives in Turkey dates back to 1863 when national funds (memleket sandıkları) those were a kind of agricultural credit cooperatives are established by Mithat Paşa (Özcan, 2007; T.C. Gümrük ve Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2011). In the second constitutionalist period of Ottoman Empire, cooperative idea is shaped by nationalist economy ideals. In this period, cooperatives as economic organizations are seen as an alternative to socialism and capitalism. Consumer and sales cooperatives are given prominence in that period. In the beginnings of republican period, given that 85% of the country's population is working in the agriculture

sector, cooperatives are given quite a lot importance in order to increase productivity and alleviate poverty of agricultural producers (Özcan, 2007).

With the start of planned economy period in the post 60s, state support in the development of cooperatives has become a part of the 1961 constitution and this has signified a benchmark for cooperatives at least in the discursive level since cooperatives began to be articulated as the agents of development in the periodic development plans (Özcan, 2007; T.C. Gümrük ve Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2011). While at the pre-60s period cooperatives have concentrated on the agricultural sector, given the social and economic structure of Turkey; especially in the post-60s different cooperatives has started to establish especially in the sectors of construction, credit and transportation.

In 2012 Ministry of Customs and Trade published the "Turkish cooperative system strategy and action plan 2012 – 2016". According to this document, in contemporary Turkey construction sector is the leading sector among cooperatives. House Building cooperatives as a sub heading in the construction sector constitute the largest number of cooperatives and have largest number of shareholders on a sector basis. In the ranking of cooperative types according to the number of cooperatives, agricultural development cooperatives are in the second rank, followed by motorized transporter cooperative as the third.

However on the basis of number of shareholders, we see beet producer cooperatives in the second rank. There are only 31 beet producer cooperative in Turkey, compared to 54996 house building cooperatives and 8173 agricultural development cooperatives. However, there are 1.638.981 partners of beet producer cooperatives, in comparison to 1.985.076 partners of house – building cooperatives and 1.082.978 partners of agricultural credit cooperatives. When ranked on the basis of number of partners, agricultural development cooperatives hold the fourth rank with 842.563 partners. In addition, the leading cooperative sectors in Turkey, meaning house building, agriculture and transporter cooperatives outnumber all other cooperatives

also in terms of establishment rate. These are the most frequently established cooperatives in Turkey.

In Turkey, one of the problem areas of cooperatives is lack of cooperative associations or low membership rate to such associations. Only, beet producer cooperatives (100%), agricultural credit cooperatives (100%), agricultural sales cooperatives (100%) and merchants and craftsmen sponsorship cooperatives (99%) become members of cooperative unions with very high rates. In the action plan it is stated that in Turkey overall rate of membership to cooperative unions is 25%, which is quite low.

Cooperatives sector in Turkey has not been able to develop up to the mark. Even though there has been some development in the quantity of cooperatives in Turkey, this development cannot be observed in terms of quality. With the lack of effective cooperative unions and also with the low participation rates to such unions; educational, financial, technical and legal supports provided to cooperatives have been quite limited and there have not been an appropriately working auditing system. Citizen participation to cooperatives has been quite low, and cooperatives have been concentrated on specific sectors such as house building and agriculture. Cooperatives have been unable to broaden their horizon towards sectors like finance, credit, insurance, retail, energy, education and health, which are sectors where cooperatives operate in other countries. Besides, in Turkey there are very limited research about cooperatives, which in fact may restrained the development and dissemination of cooperative model in the community (T.C. Gümrük ve Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2011).

3.3.2   Women's Cooperatives in Urban Turkey

Given the status of cooperative sector and gender relation patterns in Turkey, quite low number of women's cooperatives is not a surprise. Women's cooperatives started to flourish in 2000s and Foundation of Support of Women's Work's (FSWW) initiative has been quite influential for the establishment of these women's cooperatives. FSWW argues that women's cooperatives determined as the ideal need-based organization model especially for the poor women. FSWW's studies on

women's cooperatives started after 1999 Marmara earthquake, which created quite harsh results and conditions for all the people living in this region. Marmara region, Diyarbakır and Mardin have been the initial regions cooperative initiatives started. FSWW argues that women's cooperatives have been the initial examples of women's grassroots organizations in Turkey.[10]

In 2011 Ministry of Customs and Trade put "Women, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative Principle Agreement" into practice as a guideline and facilitator for establishment of women's cooperatives and in 2012 Ministry published a booklet about women's cooperatives in Turkey. Unfortunately, possibly because women's cooperatives are a newly emerging phenomenon, there is almost no official resource or research on this issue that is made public. For this reason, this booklet is an important resource even though there is not much concrete information about condition of women's cooperatives. According to numbers given in this booklet, there are around 90 women's cooperatives in Turkey (See Table 2). For a list of women's cooperatives in urban Turkey please see Appendix A.[11]

These are the cooperatives affiliated with the Ministry of Customs and Trade. There are also 29 agricultural development cooperatives established and led by women. The head of FSWW, Şengül Akçar reports that, around 70 of these 90 urban-based women's cooperatives are active.[12]

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[10]http://www.kadinkooperatifleri.org/koop/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=140&Itemid=100

[11]This list is not possibly a complete list of women's cooperative's in urban Turkey. Cooperative in this list are taken from the web site of Women's cooperatives Communication Network: http://www.kadinkooperatifleri.org/koop/index.php?option=com_sectionex&view=category&id=6&Itemid=55

[12]According to the news report published in 2011 titled "public support to women's cooperatives in http://www.bloomberght.com/haberler/haber/895915-kadin-kooperatiflerine-kamu-destegi accessed in 20.01.2013.

Table 2. Women's cooperatives in Turkey: Numbers and locations (Ministry of Customs and Trade, 2012).

Type of Women's cooperative	Number of cooperatives	Cities
Management Cooperatives	80	Adana, Ağrı, Adıyaman, Ankara, Aydın, Balıkesir, Bursa, Bitlis, Çanakkale, Diyarbakır, Düzce, Erzincan, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kocaeli, Kayseri, Konya, Manisa, Muğla, Mardin, Nevşehir, Sakarya, Sivas, Tekirdağ, Tokat, Şanlıurfa, Van
Crafts Cooperatives	4	Ankara, Balıkesir, İzmir, İstanbul
Production and Marketing Cooperatives	2	Çanakkale, Samsun
Consumer Cooperatives	4	Konya, Osmaniye, Çorum, Mersin
Publication Cooperatives	1	İstanbul

In conclusion, women's cooperatives are quite new phenomena for Turkey and there is a serious lack of resources. Neither government authorities, nor other civil organizations provide reliable resources publicly. Further, very few women's cooperatives have web pages. These are serious obstacles for them to be known publicly. Very recently, especially in the last two years, women's cooperatives appear a bit more in the media and successes of women's agricultural development cooperatives have an important role on that. Urban cooperatives are still largely in silence; a lot of research and support is needed.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

4.1 Methodology and Research Design

Even though empowerment is quantitatively measured in human development reports of UN; as discussed in chapter two, empowerment is a complex concept that requires a detailed in-depth analysis. In order to evaluate empowerment potential of cooperatives, especially in a context where women's cooperatives are just flourishing as in the Turkish case, qualitative methods should be used. Qualitative research investigates situational and conditional knowledge rather than looking for experiences or principles that are true over time and locality (Arksey & Knight, 1999). This thoroughly applies to my study especially given that I am investigating a newly emerging phenomenon for Turkish case. For this reason I preferred to conduct semi-structured in depth interviews with women who are cooperative partners, in order to evaluate the effects of cooperative membership on their daily lives.

I prepared a question list in advance, which covers topics that are already raised as the research question and sub questions in this study. These include cooperative's establishment process, the motivation behind women's cooperative membership, influence of cooperative involvement on women's conceptualization of self and capabilities, influence of getting together with other women on these women's daily life experiences and whether or not cooperative membership led them to articulate political, economic and social demands which in the end result in more gender-equal structures. Besides the questions I expressed within the research focus, I also included questions asking women how they define the concept of power. These questions are asked specifically to see whether women's conceptualizations of power and/or empowerment correspond to my definition of power and empowerment, thus they contributed to the validity of the research. In order to make questions more

concrete, I clarified by asking when and under what conditions they feel powerful and through what means women can be empowered. Before asking these questions I gave an explanation indicating that concepts of power and empowerment are central to my study and their view about these concepts are also crucial for the study.

Questions about the formal establishment process and the supports received in that process are not asked to each and every informant, since this process is standard and not open to interpretation. These questions are asked to chairs and co-chairs, who are also founding members. In other cases, the story is learned from other founding members. Yet all the informants are asked about their story and experience of involvement to the cooperative.

During interviews I had the list of questions with me, I kept track of this list and covered all the issues I aimed for. However, I did not strictly followed the way questions asked in the list or the order of questions. Since the interviews were flexible enough to allow informants depict their experiences and views in their own words through recalling their memory; sometimes they answered some questions in advance, before I asked about. In such cases, I did not forced informants to return where we left off according to the questions list but rather continued to the interview from where informants left. Still, in order to make sure all the issues are covered, through the end of the interview I have taken a few minutes to review the list and raise any topic that is not covered. In addition, at the end of each interview, even though I covered the topics I should cover, I still asked informants whether they have anything to add further. In this part informants either repeated or summarized some issues about cooperatives such as their needs, problems, plans or personal experiences. Only in one interview this part worked quite well, since she replied by mentioning some issues she did not mention before.

Through in depth interviews, I was able to understand women's life dynamics, motives, aims, and experiences regarding cooperative. Also, I tried to understand what they think about the concept of empowerment and whether they see cooperative experience as empowering. In order to increase the truth value (or reliability)

(Arksey & Knight, 1999) of the research, especially for the times and questions during which topic became dispersed, or when the informant used incomplete sentences or meaningless words[13] frequently, I encouraged clarifications and in some cases I summarized what I understand from their expressions and sought confirmation or correction from the informant. I clarified the questions I asked when needed, and I have not provided any approval or disapproval cue deliberately. In order to enhance "validity" I tried to build rapport before and during interviews, fully covered the issues I mentioned in my research question(s), and encouraged the informants to share their personal stories and experiences by asking for concrete examples or cases when appropriate (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

Gorden (2003) specifies certain obstacles in depth interviews. These primarily include, ego-threat (resulting in repression), forgetting, generalization and conscious & unconscious experience. In my study, specifically obstacles created by generalization and conscious vs. unconscious experience have to be dealt with. Informants should be asked to be specific especially because "the generalizations respondents have on top of their mind may not fit the concrete experiences from which they have supposedly been drawn" or "respondents may use evasive generalizations to conceal the real situation" (Gorden, 2003: 173-174). In order to avoid generalizations I wanted informants to specify or exemplify their answers. For instance, to clarify which bodies had supported cooperatives during establishment process, I specifically asked what kind of support these bodies provided. Or, to clarify whether there has been any changes in gender roles within household, I specifically asked who does the "women's chores" like cooking or cleaning and whether and how their time use has changed after cooperative involvement.

Gordon defines unconscious experience as the "behavior respondent cannot report because he was not conscious of it all the time and not because of a fading memory, ego threat, or the uniqueness of the experience" (Gordon, 2003: 175). From my point of view, an internal belief or conditioning created by existing ideologies or male hegemony, which indicates that one's experiences would not be important or not

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[13] What I mean with meaningless words are words like "şey, işte, falan" in Turkish.

worth mentioning, also contributes to the obstacle created by unconscious experience (Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000). In order to avoid this obstacle I verbally reminded that women's experiences and thoughts are central to my study and that is why what they experienced, even the experiences they may think it does not worth mentioning, is quite important for this study. I tried to make women's contribution clear and apparent through reminding them the significance of their experiences for this study.

4.2 Determination of the Research Group

Within the scope of this thesis, my research group is selected from women-run cooperatives in urban Turkey. In fact there are around 30 women's cooperatives in rural areas especially working in the sectors of agriculture and husbandry. However, most of these cooperatives are established as an outcome of credit support given by Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock as a part of development plans targeting women's contribution to agriculture and husbandry in rural areas. So, most of these cooperatives are not established because there emerged such an initiative, but rather because of a specific development policy Turkish government follows. In order to achieve development goals and encourage the establishment of cooperatives, these credits are given to women on condition that they are cooperative members. That is why such women's cooperatives emerged in the sectors of agriculture and livestock where credit debtor became the women but the credit naturally used by family in general or by the husband in particular.

Furthermore it is hard to think that credits are given to women with the intention of women's empowerment. I reach this conclusion because except credits, no other support is provided to women. Rather, now, special thanks to Muhammed Yunus, it is widely known and accepted that women are reliable and faithful credit debtors. His studies on micro-credit and microfinance proved that women tend to pay their debt a lot more faithfully in comparison to men. That is why credit returns of women debtors are quite high. Furthermore, especially in societies where women are seen as family "honor", men also tend to pay their wife's debt, more than their own in order not to be teased and/or condemned in the society they live in (Stuart & Kanneganti, 2003; Yunus & Jolis 2003; Yunus & Weber 2007; Adaman & Bulut, 2007). Given

these conditions, I thought that working with urban cooperatives would be more promising in terms of revealing the potential of women's cooperatives, if any.

In comparison to rural women's cooperatives; in women's cooperative's in urban Turkey, women seem to be more active in participation to cooperative activities, and cooperatives more or less provide women's spaces women can get together when needed or wanted. Since I do not aim to reach a generalization regarding research, I used opportunity sampling and reached some of the informants through snowballing. Primarily I investigated the web site of Women's Cooperatives Communications Network[14] established with the initiative of the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW)[15]. Here, I accessed basic information regarding the existing cooperatives and information about their activities and contact. In addition, I sought counseling from FSWW regarding which cooperatives are active and can be included in the study. They gave me updated telephone numbers and mobile phone numbers of some cooperative members. However, despite the head of FSWW reported there are around 70 urban-based women's management cooperatives in a news report[16], they did not tell me about any other cooperative that does not appear in the web page of Women's Cooperatives Communication Network, which is not an updated list. Despite I asked three times for an updated list of women's cooperatives, they said they will take a look and send me, but never sent.

Because of logistical reasons, I restricted myself into Istanbul and its periphery. There had been some difficulties in terms of accessing cooperatives and getting an appointment. I determined eleven cooperatives within this region to conduct interviews with. Six of these cooperatives are included in the study. About the remaining five cooperatives: one cooperative recently founded a non-governmental organization and did not wanted to participate because they claimed even though they established a cooperative previously, they do not have cooperative experience. Another cooperative in İstanbul did not return to my insistent phone calls, and

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[14] http://www.kadinkooperatifleri.org

[16] http://www.bloomberght.com/haberler/haber/895915-kadin-kooperatiflerine-kamu-destegi accessed in 20.01.2013

always avoided giving a certain appointment. They also avoided saying "no" at the same time. Even though I got into contact with them 6-7 times, I could not get an appointment without an apparent reason. Similar situations apply to two other cooperatives in the periphery of Istanbul. One cooperative did not give me an appointment first because they were in summer vacation. In September they claimed they are too busy, and after a while they claimed they are moving the cooperative, so do not have time to participate. In the other cooperative, even though in the first call they claimed that they would participate, we could not agreed on an appointment and they at the end did not returned for organizing an appointment. In just one cooperative, even though they wanted to participate, interviews cannot be conducted because certain personal and logistical reasons.

In sum, six cooperatives participated in this study. My main research method was conducting in depth interviews with cooperative members. I conducted 10 one-to-one in depth interviews in two cooperatives. In three cooperatives I conducted joint interviews in which two cooperative members participated simultaneously. For all the joint interviews, one of the participants was always the cooperative chair. Other participant was either co-chair or a member. Joint interviews were not occurred as an informed choice but as a necessity. In the cooperatives where I conducted joint interviews (three cooperatives), cooperative members were not coming to the cooperative on a regular basis. Rather they came to the cooperative because of the interview, and in these cooperatives it was hard to access to other members, since they were not coming to cooperative in a regular base either.

Joint interview has certain advantages and disadvantages in comparison to one-to one interview. In joint interviews rapport can be established more easily, since members could feel more confident because of not being alone. The story emerging during interview also becomes more complete since members tend to complement each other filling each other's gaps and memory lapses (Arksey & Knight, 1999). In addition, it is argued that such interviews can be more reliable since "bias in one account may counterbalance that in the other" (Arksey & Knight, 1999: 76). The leading disadvantage of such interviews is the probability of one informant

dominating the other, thus the other informant may remain silenced and could not contribute.

In the three joint interviews I conducted with a total of six people, I benefited from the advantages of joint interviews mentioned above. In order to deal with the probability of silencing, I asked questions -especially the questions which are about member's personal experiences- respectively to each member. Questions regarding cooperative's establishment process are raised without addressing any specific member and contribution of every member is encouraged. Even though totally equal participation has not been possible in any of the interviews, still a fair and meaningful contribution of every member is achieved. Primary contributors have been the cooperative chairs in all joint interviews and only in one interview the other member remained more passive and has given relatively short answers in comparison to other joint interviews despite questions are addressed directly to her.

In one cooperative, again as a result of necessity I conducted a group interview with five women. In that case, group interview is supported by two informal conversations I had with other cooperative members who did not participated into group interview. In this cooperative women were working in production and they were paid on an hourly basis. That is why I could not interrupt their work. I conducted the group interview while they are working in their workshop. In that case too, questions regarding establishment is answered basically by cooperative chair, but with the contribution of other members. For other questions about personal experiences, all participants' contribution is encouraged by addressing questions to specific people. Still, it should be noted that it was harder to ensure equal participation in the group interview in comparison to joint interviews and in the group interview members' tendency to make generalizations and to provide broad answers was higher. Informal conversations occurred during my visits to cooperative café and restaurant with women who are working there. I had taken notes during these informal conversations.

In sum I conducted 10 one-to one interviews, 3 joint interviews (with a total of 6 people) and one group interview. Including the group interview participants, a total of 21 women in six cooperatives participated in the study. One-to-one interviews lasted min 15, max 82 minutes. Joint interviews lasted minimum 104, maximum 152 minutes. Group interview lasted 112 minutes. All the interviews were recorded by a voice recorder and then transcribed by myself. I conducted the analysis on these transcriptions.

The problems I experienced during appointment and interviewing process in these cooperatives in fact tells a bit about cooperative structure. In cooperatives where I conducted more than two interviews and the group interview, cooperative members were coming to cooperative in a regular-daily basis. For these women cooperative became their routine. In such cooperatives women's participation to this study was higher, and I had fewer problems with getting an appointment. However, only three cooperatives out of six were working this way. This process implied that cooperatives in general do not have an institutionalized structure and there was not professionalism in terms of cooperative management. This is not surprising for grassroots cooperatives; yet there is still a need for a more institutionalized cooperative structure in order to compete with existing market actors, to develop the services provided, and in order to access more people in need.

CHAPTER 5

DO WOMEN'S COOPERATIVES HAVE A POTENTIAL FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

Determining whether women could empower themselves through cooperative membership and if yes, how and in what forms do they achieve this, is the leading concern of this study. This part aims to find answers to this research question, which will hopefully shed some light to upcoming women's organizations, through depicting the existing situation by defining their strengths and weaknesses.

This chapter is composed of two sections. In the first section, I will mention and analyze the structure and characteristics of the cooperatives participated in this study, through discussing their activities, establishment process, member's profile, management structure and common problems. In the second section, I will analyze the data on the basis of empowerment framework, focusing on three basic categories of women's empowerment, which are *power within*, *power with* and *power to*. In this section, I will figure out whether or not women were able to empower themselves through cooperative membership, and if yes, in what ways.

5.1 Characteristics and Structure of Women's Cooperatives in Istanbul and its Periphery

5.1.1 Histories of Establishment and Activities of Women's Cooperatives

Taking the categorization about types of cooperatives I provided in Chapter III as a template, it is hard to make a clear-cut categorization of women's cooperatives. According to their cooperative contracts, women's cooperatives can be involved in various activities such as childcare, trainings for women or production of any kind of good. However, because of several restrictions such as limited income, limited personnel, limited space or limited knowledge such services cannot be put into

practice. So, I will try to provide a categorization on the basis of main activities of cooperatives rather than their scope of activities mentioned in the cooperative contracts.

Two among the six cooperatives included in this research are only involved in productive activities. One was producing wooden toys for children (Toy-coop) and the other one was producing gift boxes and packages (Package-coop). These two are the cooperatives with lowest number of members. Toy cooperative has seven members and package cooperative has 12 members with five and six active members respectively. Active members are the ones who are involved in cooperative activities on a regular basis.

One cooperative produces different pastry products in a small workshop (Pastry-coop) and, owns a café and a small restaurant which serves homemade food. They also own and manage a childcare center. This cooperative is the largest cooperative in terms of number of members, diversity and scope of its work.

Another cooperative is involved in a variety of activities (Multi-purpose cooperative). It manages a child care center for normal children, and this center is the only sustained activity of this cooperative in terms of income generation. Despite the limited scope of their activities, multi-purpose cooperative tries to get into sewing related production activities and also involved in selling second hand clothes in the past. They also run various training programs for women living in the district.

Two other cooperatives are established by the mothers of mentally disabled children. One of these cooperatives owns and manages a rehabilitation center that provides services in a private building to only mentally disabled children (Rehabilitation-coop). Since this rehabilitation center has authorization from Ministry of Education, service provision is not restricted with members. The cooperative that provides rehabilitation services is the only cooperative which has authorization from Ministry of Education and functions according to Ministry's rules and regulations. All the other three childcare centers functioning under the roof of cooperatives lack such a

status and has been opened with the permission of district governor. That is why they can only provide services to cooperative members. The other cooperative, which provides services to mentally disabled children, owns a small childcare center where they take care for both normal and mentally disabled children and they try to manage inclusive education (Childcare-coop). Table 3 describes the main characteristics of these cooperatives.

Table 3. Basic information about the cooperatives participated into the study.

Name (as it is used in this study)	Establishment year	Activities	Number of members
Toy Cooperative	2006	Wooden toy production	7
Package cooperative	2005	Production of gift packages – such as boxes and other souvenir products made of cardboard.	12
Pastry cooperative	2005	Production of pastries, ownership and management of one café, one homemade food restaurant and a market place.	35
Multi-Purpose cooperative	2004	Ownership and management of a childcare center, providing of trainings to women in the neighborhood, second hand clothing sales, sewing related production activities.	29
Rehabilitation Cooperative	2006	Rehabilitation center for the mentally disabled children.	9
Childcare Cooperative	2004	Ownership and management of a childcare center, which provide early childhood education services to both normal and mentally disabled children.	20

In sum, on the basis of activities and characteristics of cooperatives, it can be argued that two are worker cooperatives since they are involved in production and the members are also the workers of the cooperatives (Package, Toy); two are consumer cooperatives since they only sell childcare services to shareholders (Childcare, Rehabilitation); and other two (Multi-purpose, Pastry) carry on both worker and consumer cooperative activities (Birchall, 2009; UN, 2011).

In terms of cooperative establishment, two main processes could be mentioned. Cooperatives that are included in this study are established either as an outcome of a project or as a result of women's initiatives. Yet except one case, it is possible to argue that "cooperative" is not an intentionally selected type of organization. Only in Rehabilitation cooperative informants said that they from the beginning thought about what kind of a model should they prefer in order to fulfill their needs and goals. Except the rehabilitation cooperative, cooperative model has not been "preferred" as a specific type of organization. Instead, women somehow came up with the idea of cooperative and they are basically channeled towards forming a cooperative rather than a voluntary association, a foundation or a company. This pattern resembles women's cooperatives in India and Greece, which are also established through compulsory participation. In the case of India women did not have another viable alternative for income generations or in Greece European Union projects were the only option. so that cooperative's has been the preference of outside agencies (Mayoux, 1995; Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003). This picture is also compatible with the general trend in the establishment of cooperatives in Turkey as discussed in chapter three. In Turkey what "cooperative" reminds to public is either construction or agriculture. Cooperative is not a wide spread model in Turkey especially in the areas of small-scale production of handicraft or in the sphere of social services provision.

When looked at why these cooperatives emerged as women-only cooperatives, it is seen that either projects directed women towards women-only cooperatives or the trainings targeted women; thus women came together. So, becoming "women-only" has not been an informed choice except one cooperative. Only the chair of Multi-purpose cooperative stated that she wanted to establish a women-only cooperative because of her previous experiences with a mixed hometown organisation[17]. She

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[17] What I mean with hometown organisation is, organisations established by people who live away from their hometown. These people could form organisations with the name of their own home town, possibly as a call to heir compatriots and such places generally function as meeting places of compatriots. (for instance "Erzurumlular Derneği" in Turkish).

claimed that, when men are involved, they could turn the place into a "kahve"[18] despite the fact that their number is lower than women within the organization.

Still, women internalized the cooperative model and express that cooperative is the best model for such grassroots women's organizations. Women support the idea of cooperative model, especially because organization's responsibility is equally shared among members. In addition, they stated that cooperatives are participatory, lucid and democratic organizations where all members are equal. In that respect Women's cooperatives participated in this study, share cooperative values determined by International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). Women expressed and exemplified the advantages of the cooperatives as such:

> The best one is a cooperative, everyone take equal responsibility. (Toy Coop, 5)
>
> There should be like-minded, giving people in the cooperative. They should not think individualistic. There is no selfishness in the cooperative, there is no "I". Always, it should be "we". You are powerful in the cooperative, there is union of forces. (Package Coop, 2)
>
> Cooperative is majority. (Multi-purpose Coop, 2)
>
> Cooperative organizations drew our attention probably because this is a civil society model. There is no difference between cooperatives and other companies in terms of taxes for instance, but cooperatives could gain recognition various projects. (Toy Coop, 1)
>
> In the cooperative, customers also feel confidence. They look, and see this is an institution; an institution that pays the taxes. A lot of our customers are affected from this situation. They give their orders to an institution not to an individual. We experience the advantage of that. There is difference between taking orders as an individual producer and as an institution. (Package Coop, 1)

When women in pastry cooperative are asked why they preferred to establish a cooperative rather than a catering company for instance, they replied:

> We preferred cooperative since everyone can come and work there. (Pastry Coop, 2)

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[18] Since the Word coffee-house cannot give the true meaning of "kahve" I wanted to use the Word in Turkish. Kahve in Turkish, is a men's place, where they get together, drink tea, play cards or "okey"; it is a place to fool around. "Kahve" is a truly men only place, where women traditionally not allowed to enter, or do not prefer to enter due to uncomfortable feeling of being in a wrong place.

We preferred cooperative for poor women to benefit. (Pastry Coop, 3)

After we leave, this cooperative will sustain and other ladies will come and work. This way you establish a business for other people too. (Pastry Coop, 5)

This place exists as a place where women can come and work as long they want to work but cannot find a job outside. Many years passed, I will be retired in September. Some people leave but there is the hope that others will come. (Pastry Coop, 1)

Two of the cooperatives were established as an outcome of European Union projects, which are conducted in collaboration with municipalities and certain non-governmental organizations. These are two worker cooperatives: Toy and Package. All the participants of this project who established the cooperative claimed that they heard about this project by chance and participated into trainings by chance. These projects mainly aimed to increase employment among "housewives" and informants in both cooperatives stated that formation of a women's cooperative had been planned as an outcome of the project in advance. In order to encourage women's participation, women are given small monetary allowances during trainings. In both cooperatives, which are established as a result of the project, members stated that most of the women who had participated into the trainings returned back to their homes when the training had been over. Cooperative members describe the project process as such:

The aim of the project was providing a future to women. Enabling housewives to earn some money and gain self-esteem. The aim was letting women work and prove themselves through working. (Package Coop, 1)

The aim of the project was letting the depressed women at home join to the society. We were not from this depressed populace. When it is heard that project would give payments to women in dollars, a lot of women came in a hurry. At that period, everyone got out of their home. But when the payments were stopped, everybody again returned to their home. Cooperative was established for idle and passive women. Yet the ones who maintained the cooperative have been women who already have a place in social life. In this respect the project was unsuccessful. (Package Coop, 2)

This project aimed to ensoul historical toys and employ women in the district. There were 60 women in the project but most of them quit at the end of the project. There were payments around 20 Turkish liras, payments for water, coffee and so

> on. They took these payments and left. We were 10-15 women left, who thought about establishing a cooperative and made investigations. (Toy Coop, 1)

Pastry cooperative was established as the result of several training activities conducted by Local Agenda 21[19] which women come together and recognize each other. In time, idea of forming an organization emerged among women especially with the individual initiative of one woman who had some experience with such organizations while she was living in Germany. This member's personal initiative and her contact with Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW) had been quite triggering in the establishment of the cooperative. FSWW should be paid credit for their preference of cooperative as the organization model, since it supported the process with several trainings. Some informants expressed the reason of being a women's cooperative as:

> Bringing out the women who are at home. (Pastry Coop, 2)

> Income; women will gain some income and thus will be independent. (Pastry Coop, 4)

Multi-purpose cooperative also emerged as a result of a single person's initiative, who comes from leftist politics. In a period of unemployment, this woman heard about "district motherhood" program of FSWW out of coincidence, and while she was following the trainings of this program, she learned about cooperatives. Given the previous organizational experiences, such a cooperative model sounded quite attractive to her and she talked to her friends about this issue. The idea has spread from ear to ear and thus cooperative became available with the supports of FSWW and related municipality.

Childcare cooperative, which provides services to mentally disabled children, established again out of coincidence. The woman who is the chairperson and founding member of this cooperative knew about Multi-purpose cooperative and her mentally disabled child benefited from the childcare center of that cooperative for a

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[19] Local agenda 21 is a program initiated by United Nations to support sustainable development and better quality life for everyone throughout the globe. This concept first emerged during Earth Summit 1992 in Rio de Janerio. During this summit UN declared that sustainable development could be best achieved in local level. In Turkey program started in 1997 in 9 pilot cities.

while. Later on she started an initiative to establish a cooperative at her own neighborhood following the model of Multi-purpose cooperative.

Being different from all the other cooperatives, Rehabilitation cooperative is the only organization that consciously selected cooperative as the organization model. The intention was to establish a center where their children can continue their education and training, get into different social activities, thus they would not be alienated at home. They though they could not achieve this goal individually and decided to form an organization collectively to achieve their goal. They needed a participative organization where each member will carry on some of the responsibilities. After examining some cooperative models they realized that responsibilities should be distributed equally in a cooperative and they would be able to receive funds, as it is the fact for other non-governmental organizations:

> I know about civil society organizations, foundations. They are more or less established by volunteers. Administrative body deals with the issues and others come only once in a year. But we needed a different form of organization, we cannot sustain with a foundation-like organization. We need to monitor and manage the organization continuously. So we wanted a participatory organization in which everyone will take some responsibility and could claim that this organization is theirs Furthermore, civil society organizations and foundations work with the idea of social assistance, they receive donations. Our cooperative can do everything other civil society organizations can do. We can take donations. There is another feature there. Because women's cooperatives are also solidarity cooperatives, they can also aim for employment, can create employment. The partners who work there can also receive some award for their work. If needed, they can pay their insurance premiums. Thus, there is both material and spiritual solidarity. Since cooperatives are participatory, transparent and encourages solidarity, we thought cooperative model is appropriate for us. (Rehabilitation Coop, 1)

Rehabilitation and childcare cooperatives, which were established to provide services to mentally disabled children, emerged from practical needs of mothers and their children. These cooperatives addressed mainly practical needs of their members since mentally disabled children's education and social activities is a quite practical problem for these families and especially for mothers who take the primary responsibility of their children. In that respect, these two cooperatives are diverse from other four cooperatives. For others, there is not such a clear and concrete practical need. They are either initiated with the efforts of outside agents, or initiated

by women mostly to meet their social and psychological needs, as it will be depicted later.

Four cooperatives, which involved in production activities, have received support from municipalities of their districts. FSWW also supported them with trainings and in some cases by sending or lending them some materials that are crucial for cooperatives' production activities. These include sewing machines, wood working machines, tables, chairs and computers. Even in two cases the foundation provided prefab buildings to be used as workshops. Municipalities initially supported these four cooperatives by providing them free location to carry on their activities, and also paid related invoices such as electricity, water and heat. Toy cooperative also received basic materials used in toy production from municipality. Currently, only one cooperative continue to receive full support from municipality. Two cooperatives receive semi-support from municipalities, such as quite low rent in the case of Package coop and a plot to put their prefab workshop and a market place in the case of Pastry coop. In the case of Toy coop municipality has taken back all the support very recently and women moved to a workshop with the decision to "try" to survive at least for one year. Quite in line with concerns expressed by Koutsou, Iakovidou and Gotsinas (2003), in the case of two worker cooperatives municipalities withdraw their support quite unexpectedly without considering whether these cooperatives have the necessary means for self-reliance. This situation creates a serious risk for the sustainability of women's cooperatives. Other two cooperatives providing only childcare services to mentally disable did not receive such support from municipality and paid their rents and invoices from the beginning. For Childcare cooperative municipality only provided support by decorating the childcare center at the establishment process.

Municipality support in the form of payment of monthly expenses is more crucial for cooperatives involved in production rather than cooperatives that provide childcare services. One woman from Multi-purpose cooperative expressed the importance of municipality support as such:

> If there is not a location, it is quite hard to sustain for cooperatives like us. For us, the basic reason for being able to sustain is having a place. If there is not a place free of charge, your expenses will exceed your income. Although we do not pay rent, we have barely survived for the last eight years. We still experience problems from time to time. If we had paid rent for eight years, would we have sustained? It is not possible from my point of view. (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

Withdrawal of such support is a serious threat for cooperatives involved in production since they can hardly afford these expenses. However, cooperatives that provide childcare services do not experience such difficulties; at least the difficulties they experience do not seem to be threatening for cooperatives' existence. It comes into view that consumer cooperatives, which provide childcare services, are experiencing fewer problems regarding their sustainable income. This is possibly because they are providing and/or selling a service that is quite crucial for women: childcare.

In Turkish society, childcare is still seen as women's responsibility. In the absence of free or affordable childcare services, women's mobility is restricted with children's needs not only in terms of space but also in terms of time and money. Childcare services are more crucial for the mentally disabled children since they have more detailed and complex needs and bring a double burden to women. In that respect, childcare services provided by cooperatives are crucial for women, especially for the ones who cannot afford private child care centers. This is a practical need for women with children, so women and families are more ready to pay regularly for such a service, rather than spending money for more luxury products. Furthermore, childcare centers of Pastry, Multi-purpose and Childcare cooperatives also provide services to members on a daily and even hourly basis. A woman can bring her child to this center just for a few hours when immediate needs emerge, or register her child on a monthly basis. Thus cooperatives that provide childcare services are able to secure a regular income that is more or less enough to maintain the services. So, I conclude that as long as cooperatives meet practical needs of their neighborhood, maintenance of the cooperative is a lot easier.

To sum up, when stories of establishment are analyzed it appears that cooperatives as a model is not a well-known or preferred model among women. Except

Rehabilitation cooperative, the cooperative model became the organization model either as a result of EU project or as a result of coincidence and/or guidance. Being a women-led cooperative on the other hand was a purposeful choice in only Multi-purpose cooperative, depending on chairperson's personal experiences. Other than Multi-purpose cooperative, none of the cooperatives preferred to be a women-led cooperative because of an intentional "political choice" signifying male hegemony or dominance, but rather as a result of course of events and experiences.

5.1.2 Membership and Member's profile

Women's cooperatives are small cooperatives that are concentrated on the district they are established in. The smallest cooperative has seven members (toy cooperative), which is the lowest limit to set up a cooperative. The cooperative with highest number of members was pastry cooperative with 35 members. Other cooperatives have 29 (multi-purpose), 20 (childcare), 12 (package) and nine (rehabilitation) members. It should be noted that in none of the cooperatives all registered members are participating to or following cooperative activities regularly.

None of the cooperative members who participated in this study are living in poverty. Members I interviewed are at least live in a low-middle income level, and in fact this has been an enabling factor for their cooperative membership. At least their husbands were employed regularly or retired from such jobs. In several cases women also had previous work experience but only two women were retired themselves. Women were not living in desperate need, but were not "rich" either. Women coming from lower income levels generally do not become members, or even if they are members they could not participate in cooperative activities on a regular basis because they need a regular employment to gain income. This seems to be the primary reason that limits women's membership and participation in cooperatives. In that respect, since cooperatives cannot provide women with a regular income enough to support household needs, such cooperatives cannot access to poor women. This problem of inability of access to poor women is not specific to Turkish experience. As depicted in the literature, many scholars argued that inability to access the neediest is an ongoing problem women's cooperatives face (DeLancey, 1987; Mayoux, 1995; Milgram, 2000; Cohen, 2000; Sanyang & Huang, 2008).

Except the mothers of mentally disabled children (four women in Childcare and Rehabilitation cooperatives), only one cooperative member who participated in the interviews has small children who still require intensive care. That single woman's prolonged membership has been possible with her individual efforts and insistence. She was quite strong-minded to be involved in cooperative and struggled a lot for to have the membership status despite producing toys outside of the cooperative. She expressed the process as such:

> Cooperative partners do not want children here. You should come here without children. But I had two dependent children, how long it can go like this? I struggled for around two months. My husband's shop had a garden. I wanted to produce toys in that place by myself. I wanted to produce alone, extrinsic to the cooperative, yet sustaining my membership status at the same time. I struggled for this. I called all the cooperative members and we went to the cultural services director of the municipality. He said, "Only you would benefit from this privilege, since you are very eager to be involved". Other partners also agreed and I started to produce toys from outside. I was taking some premium on the basis of each toy. When my son was in the fifth grade, I said I want to come to the cooperative regularly. (Toy Coop, 3).

All the other cooperative members I interviewed had grown-up children. This has been one of the most important encouraging factors for women's participation into cooperatives since they already fulfilled their primary "motherhood" role and needed/wanted some other activity to occupy themselves. They stated that, they become cooperative members because their children were grown up and they were in a kind of idleness. They wanted to be involved in some kind of "productive" work and/or social activity. This seems to be the main motivation for all informants except mothers of mentally disabled children:

> I wanted to participate into the cooperative because I was already raised my children at that time and I wanted some occupation, some engagement. It was a perfect timing. I also have leadership characteristics. These have been the reasons of my involvement at the very beginning. (Toy Coop, 1)

> I retired from Turkish post offices. After being retired, I felt idleness, it is quite hard to stay at home after working more than 20 years. I was in a quest; we were going to public market to sell our handicrafts. At that time, producing wooden toys sounded nice and attractive. That is why we participated as a group of friends. (Toy Coop, 5)

I wanted to get out of home, have some friends and learn new things. I wanted to improve myself. I came to socialize, to get out of home and help other people. (Multi-Purpose Coop, 2)

After my children finished their schools, we bought a flat in this district and moved there. So, my environment changed, I left my old neighbors. I got really bored at home. A relative of mine was a cooperative member, she said why you are sitting at home, and invited me to the cooperative. I participated this way. (Multi-purpose coop, 3)

I was actively involved in politics. After local elections, I felt alone. My son is already grown up, he does not need me anymore. I could not stand staying at home; I was feeling idle and useless. I wanted to be involved in something. One day I came to the cooperative, we sit, chat. I get involved this way and cannot get out. In sum, I came here because I felt useless and idle after my son grown up. (Multi-purpose Coop, 4)

None of the cooperative members participated into this study joined to the cooperative with an expectation of income. Rather, they had other social and psychological motives and needs as expressed above. Mothers of mentally disabled children also became members not only to meet their children's practical needs such as regular education but also to meet their children's and their own social and psychological needs. In fact, it is mentioned that women with a high expectancy of financial gain quit at the very beginning:

We started to come here without any expectancy. We struggled a lot. We did not think that we will earn a lot immediately. A lot of women did not participate just for this reason. They said "you do it, let's see if it will work or not". Later on they wanted to participate but cooperative could only accept a limited number of partners. (Pastry Coop, 1)

We are eight friends here. We did not come here for monetary benefit. I did not come for monetary benefit; I came for moral - spiritual (manevi) benefit. I was alone at home; one of my children was still going to school. At that time I quit my job. What can I do at home? I got bored. There are not old neighborhood relations any more. I Sit here, sit there, I become bored. But here, there is something different. You do not come here for your personal benefit but to serve your neighborhood. You do not expect monetary benefit. It makes no sense whether I earn money or not. I did not come here for money. Of course we can take purchase orders, we can earn, take money; it is different. Yet, despite the fact that I came here every day, I do not expect monetary return. We have some members in the neighborhood; they come, once, twice, in the third they expect some monetary benefit. They say, "I come here for monetary return". Since they cannot have it, they do not come, they do not come regularly. In addition, neither of us have small children; this also enables our participation. (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

I came here to help other women. I thought I will do my best and we can start something. Because ones who have monetary needs could not come. I do not need

money, I can work free of charge. Others say, "I can go to cropland, I can take 20tl daily. If I come here, I cannot take this money". So we prepared it all, I withdrew myself. This is what I thought. I wanted to achieve something. I believe I achieved. (Pastry Coop, 4)

You may need something in the cooperative; you pay for it by yourself, with your own money and bring it. The ones who have monetary needs can't do this. We aimed to establish the cooperative first, then we aimed to earn. We made great effort, now we can take the returns of our effort. Most of us have children who are in university, for instance this was my case. There was nothing that restricts me. I was feeling useless; I wanted to do something. This was the case for most of our friends. We were bored, wanted to get out of home, wanted to be active. With the cooperative we got out of the district because of fairs, meetings, we participated into various organizations. This way our perspective has changed, both towards life, and towards our neighborhood. (Pastry Coop, 1)

When income decreased, the ones who prefer to take the easy way went back to their homes. Only strugglers stayed there. The classical woman did not come. The ones who can struggle were shelled. Our members decreased to 12 people. (Package Coop, 2)

The ones who work here are not much needy people. They are mostly women who wanted to work but could not work outside. The neediest could not come here, sometimes we worked for 3 TL daily. (Pastry Coop, 4)

One informant explained the reasons for why women do not participate to cooperative as such:

First of all women came to the training for to take 300TL monthly allowance. Ones who came to learn something was quite low in number. Secondly, it is quite hard to bear the dust of the big machine here. It is hard to work within this dust. Some people quit because of dust, because of health issues. Some others had small children; children are problem in the cooperative. Women could not bring their children here. Or at that time some people really needed money. If they had gained in the cooperative, maybe they would have stayed. But here money is shared among many people. So they quit because they did not earn money. So, how can I say, the ones who do not expect much money, who love toys a lot, who love to struggle, the ones who feel this power inside stayed there. (Toy Coop, 3)

Other informants also supported these reasons in their accounts:

We are seven people now. In fact we are agonizing. But stubbornly we try to survive. After all, the ones who can maintain stayed there. Others, you know, do not prefer if there is no monetary return. Already, ones who need to earn money for their survival left, they found other occupations. (Toy Coop, 1)

Some people, who were younger, who were just married, who had small children, they had nobody to look after their children. You get a job, you earn money, and you think, at least I am earning money, it is worth to leave my children. Here, there is not such an environment. Either their husbands did not allow, they said "you do

not earn money, why are you going there?". Or they could not leave their children. Some others needed to work, needed to earn money really, so they left, there were nothing to do. Here, the ones who are more self-sacrificing, who do not expect monetary gain, who devoted themselves to the cooperative stayed. Some friends could rely on their husbands. They survived till now, so they maintain same way by relying on their husbands. The ones who expect monetary gain left, or the ones who say I cannot leave my child, or who do not have anybody to take care of their child left. We stayed as women who are independent and who do not have any responsibility. (Toy Coop, 5)

While in cooperatives that are involved in production activities women became members because of their psychological and social needs; four members I interviewed in cooperatives providing services to mentally disabled children (Rehabilitation and Childcare), get into the cooperative primarily because of practical needs about their children. Either private institution were expensive and far from them (in the case of Childcare coop), or private institutions' schedules were restricted, not providing services for long hours (in the case of Rehabilitation coop). Their aim was to establish an institution that will meet their needs and provide their dependent children necessary opportunities. In that case, women also need such care institutions since women continue to carry on most of the burden regarding their dependent children. So, they also need such services in order to "take breathe", socialize and to realize that they are not alone. In that respect, besides meeting their practical needs, cooperatives also provide a psychological support to these women with disabled children. In cooperatives involved in production, women became active members due to idleness they find themselves within, especially after their children had grown up and after retirement or unemployment. These women were looking for an engagement to keep them occupied. They were bored because of their daily routine at home and wanted some activity in their life.

In sum, while in consumer cooperatives a practical need, which is providing educational opportunities to their children, became more important for women members; still, both worker and consumer cooperatives meet psychological and social needs of their members. When interviews are analyzed, it becomes clear that women mostly became cooperative members because of social and psychological needs that emerge as a result of loneliness and idleness, rather than practical needs such as income. In fact, fulfillment of these psychological needs is also an aspect of

women's empowerment (Stromquist, 1995). Further, literature on women's grassroots movements and women's cooperatives also emphasized the psychological and social support aspect of such organizations (Groves et. al, 1995; Kamioka, 2001; Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003; Sumner, 2003; Asher, 2004; Moser, A., 2004; Sanyang & Huang, 2008). When Moser 's (1989) framework of practical and strategic gender needs is taken as the basic framework of analysis, psychological and social needs cannot be situated in this framework, since these needs neither seem practical nor strategic.

First and foremost, it should be determined if these psychological and social needs are gender needs. Moser (1989) uses the concept of gender since this concept, being different from the concept of sex, emphasize the socially constructed and contextual nature of roles and relations. In that respect women's gender needs emerge as a result of roles and relations women experience just because they are born and raised as women. So, in order to reach an idea about whether psychological and social needs women express are gender needs, it is necessary to look at how and why such needs emerged.

All the people feel the need to socialize and want to feel worthy and productive. This is not a gender based need in essence. However, for the women in production related cooperatives these needs emerged because women felt alone and idle at home. Just two women were retired themselves. Others did not have a regular employment experience. For most of the women, their primary occupation had been their children. Childcare and housekeeping are quite gender-related occupations, done by women just because they are born as women. So, idleness felt after children grew up is gender-related. Thus, from my point of view the needs emerge in this succession of events are gender-related needs.

However, it is not possible to categorize these psychological and social needs as either practical or strategic. They are practical because they are related to women's daily wellbeing, they are also strategic in the sense that such needs make women (desire to) leave their primary occupations of childrearing and housekeeping, and

direct them to different engagements outside of home. In this regard, psychological and social gender needs permeate both practical and strategic gender needs as if an umbrella category that is more inclusive. It is for sure; none of the informants are involved in cooperative because of subsistence needs or with the aim of strategic gender achievements. Psycho-social needs that come into view in women's accounts are ambiguous and abstract, not having a concrete shape, not vocalized in a concrete demand, not having a tangible target, not contextualized. That is why they are not tangible enough to be practical; not ideological enough to be strategic. This overarching source of psycho-social needs could be both an opportunity and an obstacle. In that respect from my point of view, these needs could be analyzed as a comprehensive but additional category to Moser's (1989) framework of practical and strategic gender needs.

In conclusion, psychological and social needs of women have been primary needs that motivated women for cooperative involvement in production related cooperatives. In childcare and rehabilitation cooperatives, despite the fact that a practical need has been the leading motivation for women; still, cooperative involvement meet women's psychological and social needs. Since, cooperative involvement enabled them to realize they are not alone and they are capable to take a step for their children. These feeling contributed to the psychological and social well being of women. In this framework, as I already mentioned, psychological and social needs should be taken as a separate need category for the sake of analysis. In practice, all these need categories are inevitably interrelated, but when analyzed analytically, social and psychological needs emerge as a separate category that is neither practical, nor strategic.

5.1.3   Management Structure in Women's Cooperatives

As stated by international organizations and especially by ICA, cooperatives are supported as promising organizations both for the developed and developing world especially because their unique organizational values including self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity (ICA, 1995). Primarily, these values apply to all the women's cooperatives participated in this study at least

at the discursive level. I should also add transparency to these values which is mentioned by several cooperative members:

> This place is transparent; we make decisions collectively. Everything happens in front of your eyes, even cooperative accounts. (Pastry Coop 2)

> Everything is transparent, open; we make decisions through talking and discussing all together. (Toy Coop, 2)

One member in pastry cooperative expressed that everybody in the cooperative is both employee and employer. Flexibility regarding time is also a frequently declared advantage of cooperatives that support women's participation. Since cooperative is a second shift (Hochschild, 1990)[20] for all the women participated in interviews, they may have other preoccupations such as housekeeping, hosting their visitors, care of the elderly and hospital visits. In such circumstances, they do not need to seek formal permission but only make their friends know that they will not be able to come that specific day. Naturally, this only applies to cooperatives where members come regularly.

All the cooperatives have an administrative body, which is composed of cooperative chair, vice chair and a member. However, in women's cooperatives participated in this study, this body does not emerge out of a need and does not have a functional role in terms of cooperatives' internal operations. Rather, it seems to be a bureaucratic necessity. All the cooperative members I interviewed stated that when a decision has to be taken about cooperative, all the member's ideas are taken into consideration and idea or offer of the majority is accepted. This characteristic of women's cooperatives is compatible with characteristic of democratic control attributed to cooperatives in general by several international organizations (ICA, 1995; ILO, 2002; UN, 2002, 2009). Some members expressed the decision-making process and the role of administrative body as such:

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[20] In fact what Hochschild (1990) means with second shift is reproductive work done within the household, which is unpaid and invisible. However, here I use the concept of "second shift" upside down and refer cooperative involvement as second shift. Because, as I discussed in part on member's profile and as I will discuss in the part dedicated to *power to*, all the informants in this study are "houseviwes" at the time being and they do not see themselves as "regular employees" in the cooperative. Most of the women primarily manage household chores and *then* they come to the cooperative.

Being a chair is just a formality in there. (Toy Coop, 2)

Administrative body has several responsibilities in any institution; here administrative body fulfills these responsibilities. But as shareholders we all have equal right to speak. If there is a decision to be made, we, all the shareholders come together and discuss. Here, if there is some conflict or disagreement, we vote and make decisions together. Administrative body does not make decisions alone. (Toy coop, 5)

Administrative body in the cooperative is a legal necessity. But according to the work system here, everybody will work and will do everything. (Toy coop, 1)

Administration is a bureaucracy. For instance, if someone comes from a bureaucratic authority, s/he expresses her/his wish to talk to the chair, not to anybody else. But the process within the cooperative is not like that. Every partner here is also the administrator. Nobody make decisions by herself, decisions are made jointly. If chair says something, but what she says is wrong according to most of the partners, her idea will not be accepted. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

Nobody can make decisions alone. If we are eight active members here, we make decisions all together. (Multi-purpose Coop, 3)

Decision making mechanism is not related to administration. If there is a problem, we discuss the issue in our meetings, and we follow the decision taken in the meeting. (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

There is an administrative body in the cooperative composed of three partners minimum, seven partners maximum. I am the chair in the administration. But if there is some issue, all the partners meet, if we cannot make a meeting we contact through phone calls. We continuously exchange opinions. All the essential decisions are made together. We can express as such, administration works for service provision, for representation. But decisions are made jointly. (Rehabilitation Coop, 1)

Administrative body is composed of three shareholders. But everyone here has equal right to speak. Administrative body follows the issues regarding cooperative's management. For instance we deal with renewal of materials, follow any problems regarding licenses, mostly issues about finances. But decisions are made communally. (Pastry Coop, 1)

Yet this process seems to be more genuine and participatory in cooperatives where members work on a regular basis. In two cooperatives this process seems to be a bit discontinuous. These are Childcare cooperative and Package cooperative. In Childcare cooperative, chair is the member who pursues almost all the cooperative activities. Even though both of the women I interviewed in Childcare cooperative stated that they keep the contact and try to reach common decisions, this process seem to be mostly a one-way process. The chair of the cooperative, who was one of

the interviewees, stated that she is leading almost all the activities of cooperative, and she is the one who bring new ideas and pursues follow up processes. She exemplified this situation as such:

> For instance there is an activity, If I cannot go, I tell other friends to meet and go to this activity. They say, "No, if you are not coming we won't go too". (Childcare Coop, 1)

She also expressed her disturbance regarding this situation:

> In fact, I am a bit uncomfortable because of this situation. I want them to be active together with me. They tell everything to me. I take responsibility a deal too much. For instance sometimes I assign certain tasks to them, such as calling other members and informing them about an activity. However, after that person informed other members, everybody call me back for confirmation. (Childcare Coop, 1)

In Childcare cooperative chair occupies most of the floor and other members stay a bit more passive. More strategic processes such as getting into contact with different government authorities and expressing needs and requirements is pursued by the chair and other members seem to merely express their support to the chair and see the chair as the leader. So, the chair comes to the forefront as a dominant character, yet this situation does not seem to create any tension between members. However, lack of tension does not necessarily signify a perfectly democratic and participative environment. On the contrary, lack of tension may be a result of learned helplessness.

In package cooperative, administrative staff has more to say about all the operations and processes in comparison to other cooperatives. This situation comes out despite the fact that cooperative is a relatively small one, with 6 active members and a total 12 members. Cooperative chair described the role of administrative body as such:

> For the issues that concern the whole cooperative, such as relations with external bodies, when there is a new purchase order, or for instance now we will register electric meter with our name and make a rent contract, in such situations we call all the members and inform them about the issues. But in some other decisions such as acceptance of a new shareholder, operations regarding resignation of an existing member, or allocation of responsibility regarding a new purchase order, relations with customers, administrative body deals with such issues. Other shareholders are not needed for the decision of acceptance or rejection of an order, since we look at

whether we can complete the order in time and whether shareholders could manage the order or not. We decide the shareholders who will work for this specific order. We inform them in advance and ask whether or not they can do the job, asking "do you have time, do you have any other problems?". Since when there is an order, we need to work quite rapidly. We are accountable to our customers for the order; we are determining a deadline. As the administrative body, we prepare cost account, income and expenses, travel expenses, provision of raw materials. We prepare all that. That is why we decide who will work for a specific order according the size and difficulty of the order. (Package Coop, 1)

As expressed in the quotation; If they receive an order, chair and vice chair are the ones who decide which members will work for this specific order. In other words, administrative body works as if an employer in package cooperative, calling specific members for specific orders. This creates a hierarchical structure to which members cannot interfere. In fact this is not a surprising pattern in terms of relations within organizations. Mayoux (1995) reminds that within cooperatives intentionally or unintentionally some core women on the basis of their skills and existing capabilities manage the cooperative. This situation does not leave much space to other members to improve themselves and have a voice in decision making. Despite Mayoux (1995) argued that this imbalance in cooperative management increases as the cooperative gets bigger, the same tendency of imbalanced cooperative management is observed in package cooperative which is a relatively small cooperative. Informants justified this imbalanced/hierarchical structure as such:

There are some members who say "why didn't you tell me?" But we explain the issue. We say, "you should not always expect monetary return. For you to take the next order, we should give the current one perfectly to the customer. But if you work, you will slow down the process. To avoid this problem, come here, work, practice, and become skillful". But there is no self-sacrifice, no responsibility, and no espousal. Then what happens, when such issues emerge they say "cooperative is turned into your own workplace.". Yes we see the cooperative as a work place. But we cannot establish the cooperative with two people, there should be at least seven people. Then come and be the eighth, push a bit. (Package Coop, 2)

As given, administrative staff justifies this situation on the basis that package/box production requires too much attention and experience. According to chair and co-chair, inexperienced members may ruin all the purchase order when work is given to them, since they work with a band system in which every working member completes a specific part of a single product. They complain about other members' passivity, and this situation seems to create tension between administrative body and

other members. Informants in the package cooperative was quite strict about the fact that cooperative is a work place. They looked for seriousness and professionalism and also want to create the strictness of any other workplace in the cooperative. This seems to be the reason behind tension and their intolerance towards other members:

> There have been ultra ignorant people, ones who never worked in their lifetime; I am so sorry but I see them as the ones who do not even have the characteristics to be a woman. For instance, we meet here, she is occupied with your loose collar. It is none of their business. Simply, rumor. They talk about issues that should not be mentioned in such environments, they should understand that this is a workplace. (Package Coop, 1)

> They turned this place into a women's *kahve*. Our trainer always told us that we may make products wrong, but still we should come here, work and try. She said "your aim in coming here should be making packages, gaining skills in package making". The ones who cannot succeed it, already left. (Package Coop, 2)

This cooperative's case is quite informing and illuminating for not to assume a false solidarity among any women's group. In fact women could create some obstacles for other women through insisting on and sometimes imposing their values and viewpoints to other members. This was apparent in package cooperative's case. While chair come to the forefront in both Package and Childcare cooperatives, the outcomes of their leadership are quite different in these two cooperatives.

In sum, an administrative body that is composed of elected members performs management operations of women's cooperatives, but women are quite aware of cooperative principles and manage cooperative as democratic organizations. Administrative body is seen as a bureaucratic necessity for all the cooperatives but one. In these cooperatives all the active members participate into daily decision making mechanism and there is a democratic structure. Administrative body does not have specific authority in the decision-making mechanisms of such cooperatives. Only in Package cooperative administrative body undertake responsibility of job management through selecting members who will work for a particular order. This structure cast doubt on principle of democratic participation in package cooperative and dominance of administrative body that is felt in cooperative management result in some tension towards some of the other members or ex-members. In childcare cooperative, even though the chairperson comes to the forefront in cooperative

management, chair's leadership does not seem to result in tension, contrary to package cooperative.

5.1.4 Common Problems of Women's Cooperatives

Women's cooperatives participated in this study experience some common problems. First of all, all the cooperatives are experiencing difficulties regarding their legal status and expenditures related to cooperative membership and management. Cooperatives Law (No.1163) currently in effect, is a general law comprising all the cooperatives without making any distinction. All the cooperatives in various sectors and with various sizes are subjected to same law and there is no positive discrimination for small-scale cooperatives such as women's cooperatives. According to the cooperatives law (No. 1163) article 19[21], all the cooperative partners have to pay a share when they join to a cooperative and the value of this share could be increased with a decision of Council of Ministers. In 2009, this partnership share was increased to 100TL, on the basis that such an increase will contribute to the cooperative resources. Yet, on the contrary, for women-led cooperatives this increase created negative consequences, resulting in loss of partners due to inability to pay the partnership share. This increase also limited the participation of especially poor members. For instance, in Multi-purpose cooperative that had once 150 members, number of members decreased to 29 after this increase in membership share. Existing members in multi-purpose cooperative stated that women quit because this was a lot of money for them to pay in advance. In addition, for all the cooperatives, being put into the same category with construction or logistic cooperatives is a source of complaint. All the expenses regarding cooperative management are quite heavy for such women's cooperatives that do not have a sustainable income. That is why they demand a different status that will distinguish them from other big cooperatives.

Second problem women's cooperatives experience is about difficulties in efficient production and marketing. All the four cooperatives which are involved in production (toy, package, pastry, multi-purpose), are experiencing serious obstacles

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[21] http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/445.html

related to selling and marketing their products, or getting orders from other outsourcing companies. This is a chronic and serious challenge for worker cooperatives. Unfortunately income generation is not a simple problem to be solved smoothly and requires fertile marketing opportunities. Toy cooperative, package cooperative and pastry cooperative have workshops for specific production activities and they link the obstacles they experienced about monetary flow to their inability to market and/or sale their products. Pastry cooperative is in a relative advantage in comparison to other cooperatives involved in production; since, they have a café and a restaurant where they sell their products and with this income they can pay their rent and other expenses. Yet, they were still unsatisfied about inability to market their products especially to supermarkets specifically out of their district.

Toy, Package and Multi-purpose cooperatives do not have separate sales points and they articulated this as a main obstacle. Not having a web site and inability to make online sales is stated as an obstacle by the package cooperative. Toy cooperative once had sales points, which were provided by municipality. However, very recently municipality has taken these places back and this cooperative has faced serious challenges about sales. This situation resulted in a sharp decline in their income. While toy cooperative and pastry cooperative has their own sales networks –despite being limited – package cooperative's and multi-purpose cooperative's production activities are mainly restricted with the orders given them by FSWW.

Here it is important to discuss the relationship between FSWW and women's cooperatives as an example of outsourcing. Outsourcing done by FSWW creates an interesting relationship among the company giving the purchase order, FSWW and the cooperative. Further, this relationship is made even more interesting given the fact that FSWW is a foundation working for the benefit of women. It is states that FSWW do not let cooperatives to get into contact directly with purchasing companies. In addition, companies prefer to get into contact with FSWW, because in that case their purchase is free of tax. Under these circumstances, a subcontractor relationship emerges between FSWW and cooperatives, which is a serious limitation for these cooperatives' income. In fact as depicted by Stephen (2005) women's

cooperatives could be efficient organizations to bypass the monopoly of merchants and subcontractors. In Oxaca, Mexico, women bypassed this obstacle through establishing weaving cooperatives, since these cooperative women had the chance to go to urban areas themselves for sale. This was not possible for individual weavers but in cooperatives they achieved this through sharing the responsibility and forming direct links with the market. However, for the cooperatives in urban Turkey the situation is a lot more complex since the subcontracting body is a foundation here, not simply a merchant. Both cooperatives, which are seriously dependent on the orders FSWW provides, stated that FSWW makes profit through the products subcontracted to the cooperative. One of the members of package cooperative exemplified the process as such:

> For instance, we prepared an order to a big foundation, which is established by one of the leading conglomerates in Turkey. But this foundation does not know that it is working with us. Foundation is working with FSWW. The foundation that gives the order is exempted from taxes, since such orders are categorized as social projects. But we give invoices to FSWW. FSWW buys the package from us with a price of 3 TL for instance and sells it to the other foundation with a price of maybe 15 TL. They write "produced in the workshops of FSWW" on the back of packages. They stick this sentence on packages. They do not allow us to put our own name. If they allow us, this big foundation may contact us directly for the next time and we can finish the order with a price that is half of what they actually paid. FSWW earns a lot from such orders, it is kind of a subcontractor. (Package Coop 1)

Similarly, a member of the Multi-purpose coop stated that:

> FSWW do not let us contact with the firm directly. They form the contact and give the order to us. They receive their share; receive profit. FSWW works for itself, FSWW gets the order done by giving it to us, but it sells our products. If FSWW does not receive a share and directly gives the order to us, it would be great. But their motive is profit, there could not be any other concern, FSWW also runs a shop there. There are employees. It does not give orders directly to us. If they give us directly, do you think we won't have any work to do? (Multi-purpose Coop, 2)

One of the members working in these cooperative stated that FSWW menaced the cooperative when they struggled for such a direct link between cooperatives and companies:

> She said 'everything you have in there is ours; I will put the lid on'. (Package Coop, 2)

Both of the cooperatives that are mostly dependent on FSWW argues that FSWW act with a profit motive and that is the reason for not letting a direct relationship between cooperatives and purchasing companies. None of these cooperatives deny the support they received from FSWW during the establishment process of the cooperative; yet they want to be referred by their own name not as the workshops of FSWW. Within free market conditions where they cannot compete as small workshops, they expect FSWW's support through finding cooperatives direct and continuous purchasing orders.

In fact this dependency occurs as a result of the type of production activities they are involved in. Both Multi-purpose and Package coop is producing more "luxury" products. What I mean with "luxury" here is not expensive products but "extra" or optional expenses for a household. Gift packages are certainly "luxury" expenditures. Multi-purpose cooperative on the other hand, produced candles, small cloth dolls and bags made up of waste materials in different time frames. These are also "extra" expenditures for most of the households, especially in their own neighborhoods. This situation makes these cooperatives dependent on FSWW. However, toy cooperative or pasty cooperative are not involved in such a dependent relationship since their products have a larger market share despite the disadvantages stemming from their use of manual labor which is a factor that increases cost and therefore prices of their products when compared to products manufactured in factories or mechanized workshops. In addition, having sales points is also an important aspect. Pastry cooperative have sales points and toy cooperative had sales points until very recently. Through such sale networks it is a lot easier to increase their income.

Multi-purpose cooperative does not have a separate workshop for production activities and women there bring up this issue as the leading obstacle for their access to income beside other problems:

> I negotiated with a firm. They directly ask "how many machines do you have? How many employees do you have?". If there is not a workshop, it is quite hard. If you do not have a workshop, a shop, nobody gives purchase orders. (Multi-purpose Coop, 2)

> Each work do not persist much. The ones that could persist are not given to us. We do not have necessary abilities for the market field. First of all, our space is quite restricted. You cannot do everything here. In addition, I think we are not investigating the market much. Further, you need capital. If you are going to set up a business, you should have certain potentials at hand, and then you may take credit and so on. After all, poor women do not possess such courage. You need courage. You need savings. For some kind of work, you should gain from demand. There is a need for big workshops. Big workshops start a work with lots of people and lots of machines. They complete the work, which you can complete in ten days, within half a day. Then could you take the work under these circumstances? We should compete but we cannot, we cannot compete in such small places. It is impossible. (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

Multi-purpose cooperative once opened a workshop to produce candles, which was a work given them by FSWW as a result of a project. Yet, at the end of the project period, they started to have difficulties and after a while they had to close this workshop because of heavy expenses:

> For instance, we opened a candle workshop. It was a project of a company, and FSWW gave the work to us. We opened the workshop but expenses of opening, taxes; it breaks even. There should be continuous work in such places, if you do not receive orders it is impossible to persist. So, this was also the case in our workshop, we could not maintain, we could not deal with taxes and other expenses and we closed the workshop compulsorily. You cannot maintain with taking works from time to time, there should be continuity. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

These situations limit cooperatives' income and as a result other problems occur. Primarily since such cooperatives cannot provide a regular income, poor women's participation becomes restricted since they need to work outside to fulfill their practical needs. As mentioned by Mayoux (1995), DeLancey (1987), Milgram (2000), Cohen (2000), and Sanyang & Huang (2008) this situation is observed in various cooperatives throughout the globe. In that case only women who have a family member or husband to depend on economically could participate into cooperative activities on a regular basis and benefit from opportunities cooperatives create for women. This is serious obstacle and also paradoxical for women's cooperatives.

Furthermore, income generation is crucial not only to increase the participation of poorer women but also to propose a justification to current members' families. Some of the current cooperative members emphasized the importance of income generation

103

not as a practical need but as a strategic move by stating that their husbands could have created fewer problems if they were gaining some money. According to husbands of these women, their wife is hindering housework for nothing. For instance one of the women stated that:

> We experienced a lot of problems. My husband did not accept the situation. We still experience problems. We do not receive any income here. He said "You go out as if you are working, why are you going? You should be at home when I come home". In that respect we experienced lots of problems. But now he compulsorily got used to it. (Multi-Purpose Coop, 4)

Another woman stated the same obstacle:

> Of course, we experienced lots of problems at the beginning. Since there is no monetary return, my husband said "there is no need, why are you going without earning any money?" But it depends on the person, if I had accepted what he said I would not have been here. (Toy Coop, 1)

Pastry cooperative differs a bit from other production cooperatives both in terms of scope of their activities and also in terms of their establishment process. While pastry production is their primary activity, this cooperative was not an outcome of a project being different from toy and package cooperatives. Furthermore pastry production has been a conscious choice in this cooperative as a result of a brief and spontaneously developing market research. They participated to the annual fair of their district and tried to sell a variety of products, including different handicrafts and pastry products. During that fair they noticed that pastry is selling a lot better than handicrafts and they decided to concentrate their cooperative on pastry production. Their spontaneous market research has provided them with right guidance when cooperative's development is taken into consideration.

Childcare seems to be the least problematic and easily sustained service that women's cooperatives provide. Childcare centers are established as a result of member's needs in all the four cooperatives (Rehabilitation, Childcare, Multi-purpose and Pastry). Yet, only in childcare centers, which provide services to mentally disabled children, provision of these services has been the mere reason for the establishment of cooperatives. Except Rehabilitation cooperative, which provides more professional services with the Ministry of Education authorized rehabilitation

center they established, all the other cooperatives charge families on the basis of the assessment they make on family income and conditions. Yet, in the cooperatives that implement assessment based charges only cooperative members can benefit from this service. In all the cooperatives providing childcare services, charges taken from families are more or less enough for sustaining this center.

It can be concluded that cooperatives or cooperative activities that meet a practical need of members or population in general sustain themselves more easily. Cooperatives providing childcare (or childcare center within a cooperative) could bring in income that is more or less enough to maintain the cooperative and/or center. Pastry cooperative, which also meets a practical need of their district by providing homemade food and pastry products, could also sustain itself. However, as in the examples of toy, package and multi-purpose cooperatives, production related activities that do not meet an immediate and practical need of the public could hardly be sustained without external support in current conditions. Efficient production and marketing is the leading common problem of worker cooperatives.

In sum, women's cooperatives have especially two common problems. First one is about their legal status. They complain about cooperative management expenses and about the fact that they are equated with other big cooperatives; so they demand a separate status for low-income cooperatives with low number of members. Second common problem is about efficient production and marketing. This is a serious obstacle that limits the income of worker cooperatives and risk cooperative maintenance.

5.2 Women-led Cooperatives and Women's Empowerment: Is There Any Promise?

This section will be analyzing whether women can empower themselves through participating into women-run cooperatives in the Turkish context. In that section, I will first give women's expressions about power, and provide an analysis of these expressions. Following this section, I will use my general framework of *power*

within, *power with* and *power to* to analyze whether cooperatives are promising in terms of women's empowerment.

5.2.1   Women's Conceptualizations of Power

Informants' replies to questions regarding their conceptualizations of power and empowerment are specifically significant for this study, since their answers reveal to what extend my analysis of power and empowerment correspond to informants conceptualizations. As expected before the interviews, not all women could have given sound and complete answers to the question of "what do you think about the concept of power, and how do you think can women empower themselves?". Yet, most of the women had some conceptualization in mind and these expressions were guiding in terms of what conditions or characteristics are thought in concurrence with the concept of power and what conditions are never articulated. As much as what is expressed, what is not expressed also tells a lot about women's conceptualizations of power and empowerment.

Women linked the concept of *power to* diverse structures and conditions. The variance in their expressions shows that they are aware of their conditions and they feel capable of doing something within these conditions. All the women claimed that they possess some form of power and/or they feel empowered, despite attributing their *power to* different reasons. *power within* as a generative form of power, which is broadly defined as increases in self-esteem and self-confidence together with the feeling of the capacity and capability to overcome difficulties (Townsend et. al., 1999; Rowlands, 1998;; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007), is a part of their expressions. Stromquist (1995) empowerment has a psychological component, which relates to women's belief in themselves and their capability to act and change their environment. Psychological component according to Stromquist (1995) is about beliefs and perspectives, rather than actual outcomes, as it is also the case for the conceptualization of *power within*. Women frequently emphasized this psychological aspect as empowerment. For instance, some informants defined power and empowerment as such:

A woman's empowerment is about becoming self-sufficient. Gaining power is gaining self-confidence. (Package Coop, 1)

In fact we have powers we are not aware of. I think nobody is powerless. Power is inside of all of us. It is about being able to do something, being able to say "I can do it". Of course there could be situations we cannot deal with, sometimes it may be impossible to do something. But if you say "I can do it" then you are powerful. Primarily, the most important point is self-confidence. If a woman has self-confidence I think there is also power. Nothing happens unless you demand it. Firstly you need to demand, you need to know where to go. This should be through solidarity. Articulation of such demands could be possible through solidarity. (Childcare Coop, 1)

If I start to something, in some way I would direct my life and I would stand by myself. If I argue for the establishment of such cooperatives in different neighborhoods, if I say I can manage such an organization; that is all a result of feeling powerful. I want all these because I feel powerful. If I can participate to a meeting held in another city, if I can participate into meetings in the evenings, If I can say "I'm going there" to my husband, then I am a powerful woman. If we can maintain this cooperative for eight years out of nothing, this means we are powerful. I am powerful. In any case as women we should be powerful. As women, we are dealing with housework, we are rearing children, we are tidying up the house, and we do the shopping. We carry most of the burden. If we carry this burden then we are powerful. (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

One informant defined power as the capability to use one's talents and abilities:

We should add abilities and talents to power. Your talent is also a power, if you can use it. (Toy Coop, 3)

Another woman expressed empowerment as being able to realize one's fallacies and being able to correct them through what she learned from the trainings:

I come here and participate to leadership training. I learned a lot of things in these trainings from diversity among people to communication. When I do something wrong, there is kind of lightning flashes in my mind. You participate to trainings of district motherhood; this training strengthens your relationship with your child. When you do something wrong in your relationship, again lightning flashes appear. All the women here experience this. If these lightnings flash and If I can correct myself, this is empowerment for me. (Multi-Purpose Coop, 1)

A woman recently attended an international conference in Italy. She especially expressed this participation as power, since this situation was not imaginable for her, before the establishment of the cooperative. Even though this participation is made possible with the support of FSWW, this was a unique experience for the woman that shows her capability. She felt proud, confident, and respected:

> Who could have imagined it? A woman who even did not complete third grade at school will participate into an international congress abroad, will express herself in this environment and will receive a plaque there. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

Women declared that having some income and purchasing power is another source of empowerment. In the previous chapters, I argued that, assuming that monetary income will directly lead to empowerment is a false assumption. Several scholars depict that being involved in economic activities could even create a further burden on women given that women may need to struggle within patriarchal cultural codes and harsh market conditions for this income (Rowlands, 1995; Erman et. al, 2002). Yet, informants participated in this study assumed a direct correlation between income and empowerment, supporting Stromquist's (1995) argument that financial autonomy is empowering for women.

> The woman who has economic independence is a powerful woman. (Multi-purpose Coop, 2)
>
> Money is a major source of power. You can do nothing without money. (Toy Coop, 4)
>
> Economic independence is a power. (Pastry Coop, 1)

Women argued that financial autonomy is empowering; but, as depicted in the section about membership profile, in fact most of the informants are economically dependent on their husbands or families. And further, this dependency has been even an enabling factor for their cooperative membership. So, when their assumption of positive correlation between financial autonomy and empowerment is considered within their daily circumstances, it can be concluded that women could regard even earning some daily allowance as financial autonomy. With such allowance women can buy some personal or household needs or "luxuries" without consulting to their husbands. In this case, even though they depend on their husbands regarding basic household expenses, which is seen as men's responsibility on the basis of existing gender roles, being able to make daily expenditures by themselves with the confidence of earning money with their own labor is regarded empowering.

According to women, socializing and being able to express oneself is also an important component of power. Getting into contact and dealing with other people, being able to express thoughts, ideas, needs, and getting involved in different social activities is an important component of power. By getting together women could create women's spaces that are crucial for women's empowerment (Stromquist, 1995; Mosedale, 2005; Stephen, 2005). Carrying on cooperative to this day is seen as another source and sign of power according to women. So, it is possible to conclude that women are aware that getting together in cooperative with other women reveals *power with* which is described as socializing, getting involved in negotiations and supporting each other within the scope of this thesis (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007).

> I meet with a diversity of people and diversity of problems. I learned to deal with all these. You can do all these here. That is why I feel very powerful here. (Toy Coop, 1)

> Socializing is a power for me. Ability to get in different places and talk within these places is power from my point of view. Any step taken for the good, any step taken within harsh circumstances is in fact power. (Toy, Coop 3)

> I came here and participated in trainings. When I go somewhere, for instance I go to district governorship or to municipality, I know how to talk in these places. When you talk appropriately and express yourself, you feel powerful. You even speak differently when you are talking to your husband at home. Since you are trained, you feel more powerful. (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

> If seven women who have not worked in their lifetime could come together, establish a cooperative and maintain this organization for six-seven years, this is power. (Toy Coop, 2)

> Getting together, socializing, these are power first of all. There are people who support you; this is power. You produced, succeeded something, this is also power. (Pastry Coop, 1)

When these expressions are analyzed, it appears that one of the outstanding feature of women's statements is their awareness about the fact that what they had achieved became possible by getting together. In that respect, their practical experiences clarifies how *power with* could actualize.

Furthermore, what empowers women is not mere cooperative membership but being involved in cooperative-related situations such as getting into contact with

government bodies, taking trainings and participating into meetings. So, cooperative cannot be thought as an isolated entity but exists along with various relations women involved as an outcome of cooperative membership. From that point of view, cooperative is not the source of empowerment itself but a mediator that leads women's empowerment through provision of opportunities and spaces for women to empower themselves. This framework is quite compatible with feminist empowerment perspective, which argues empowerment is a process and would only be possible with women's agency (Stromquist, 1995; Rowlands, 1998; Kabeer, 1999; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). Women's accounts depict the significance of agency and eagerness for empowerment. Even though some of the informants rightfully expressed financial autonomy is an empowering factor for women, in neither case income generation is the primary empowering factor and did not articulated as such. Just the women in pastry cooperative have a regular income, quantity of which is not stable. None of the informants is earning enough to meet a family's needs through the cooperative. In this framework, sources of empowerment are mostly cooperative-related features such as dialogue and communication, socialization, sharing, organization, and struggling.

As depicted till now, women's conceptualization of power is basically about themselves and their immediate environments. This is a natural outcome when it is assumed that one's life experiences and immediate environment shapes one's way of thinking and point of view (Mosedale, 2005). As already mentioned, women included what theoretically conceptualized as *power within* and *power with* in their descriptions of power and empowerment mostly emphasizing the psychological aspects of these processes. So, their expressions are consistent with the operational definitions I provided for these concepts within the scope of this study.

However, there is one more aspect to empowerment that is a key factor from my point of view: *power to*. *power to* refers to actual capacity and ability to do something that will contribute to the transformation of social and gender relations and thus contribute to structural changes on behalf of women (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). This aspect is also a crucial

component of empowerment according to feminist scholars since structural changes in power relations is a sin qua non aspect for a more equitable distribution of power and more equitable gender relations (Rowlands, 1995, 1997, 1998; Kabeer, 1999; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Stromquist, 1995; Hainard & Verschuur, 2001). *Power to* is an integral part of empowerment since through *power to* women who feel powerful could create opportunities for other women and also for future generations.

Even though informants mentioned *power within* and *power with* as a part of their empowerment process, they did not have an elaborated idea and clear perspective as to challenge existing inequalities and hierarchies that put women to a disadvantaged position especially with reference to gender relations. What I defined as *power to* as a component of women's empowerment, which is collective efforts, initiatives and/or movements to demand certain rights and services from different authorities as one pillar and challenging gender hierarchies and gender inequalities as the other pillar does not appear in women's accounts. In other words, women do not express that they feel powerful or empowered through collectively struggling for, achieving and attaining certain rights, goals, services or changes on a structural level. From my point of view, this is not an intentional omission. Rather, women may not be subjected to or may not be involved in such activities and this may be the reason for them not to mention *power to*.

In fact, some cooperatives and some members are in fact involved in activities that can be regarded as *power to*, such as demanding certain services, demanding a different status for their cooperatives or getting involved in certain problems or projects that concern the district they live in. However, since neither of these activities is regarded as empowering by women explicitly, I will mention such activities in the part dedicated specifically to the concept of *power to* and I will provide a more comprehensive analysis. Yet within the scope of this section, it can be concluded that while women define empowerment as *power within* and *power with*, *power to* which may require a more abstract, comprehensive and contextual

thinking informed by power dynamics and gender relations does not appear in their accounts about how they define power and empowerment.

5.2.2 Power within: Feelings and Capabilities

Within the scope of this study, *power within* is described as discovering one's personal capabilities and feeling self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence (Rowlands, 1997, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). This may include but not limited to thinking that the person is important and the tasks she does are important for her immediate environment, also thinking she is capable of doing things that previously she did not think she is capable such as being able to make decisions and participate into the decision making. This conceptualization is compatible with women's conceptualization of power as depicted in the previous part.

 In line with this conceptualization I measured *power within* through asking questions about women's self-concept and personal characteristics and about any changes they experienced on their personality and characteristics after becoming a cooperative member. I also asked about their own future plans and goals and I enquired the effects of cooperative membership on the formulation of these plans through asking before & after questions.

All the women participated in the interviews declared that cooperative involvement has created certain positive changes in their lives. Basically this was a result of getting out of home and having some engagement both in terms of work and having an occupation, and also in terms of having friends and a social environment. Some women mentioned that they take heart with the cooperative and felt some increase in their self-confidence. Feeling independent and also feeling useful and capable accompanies the feeling of self-confidence in women's accounts:

> With the cooperative, very simply you gain self-confidence. You can prove yourself to others. Even though we do not earn much money, the way other people see you changes. For instance, they say "she is working outside". In the neighborhood people see you differently. As I said, this applies to most of the women in the cooperative, women gain self-confidence. (Package Coop, 1)

I feel free and more independent. My self-confidence increased. I feel more serviceable. I am happy here with my friends. (Multi-purpose, Coop 4)

I did not benefit from cooperative materially, but psychologically/ spiritually. I feel more powerful here. I can find solutions to everything. I do not sit at home as I did before. I think every problem have a solution. (Toy Coop, 1)

Here you take trainings; you broaden your horizon. Your point of view changes towards everything and everyone. (Pastry Coop, 1)

There have been some women who did not work before the cooperative like us. But after their participation into the cooperative, they gained self-confidence and got a job. (Multi-purpose, 5)

As mentioned in the last quotation, in three cooperatives, several members who were previously housewives, gained self-confidence and found regular jobs outside of the cooperatives. In such cases cooperative membership has been a transitional process, a first step to get out of one's regular life circle. This also supports my argument that cooperative cannot be regarded as the source of empowerment. Rather cooperative can function as a mean for women to empower themselves through benefiting from opportunities, spaces and relations created through cooperative membership.

Naturally cooperative membership creates *power within* through certain opportunities women attained after membership. For some members this has been merely getting out of the house and having some preoccupation as depicted above; for some others different trainings they participated to after becoming cooperative members helped them feel capability and *power within*. For instance, one cooperative member exemplified self-confidence she gained after learning how to use computer that is an important skill for her:

In order to take an appointment from hospital through the Internet I was begging other people. For instance I will wake my daughter up so she will take the appointment. Later on I thought, why not, I could learn and take my appointment myself. Then I participated to computer literacy training given in the cooperative. After this training, I sat in front of the computer; my daughter was surprised. She said "oh mom, are you going to line up too?". I said yes, from now on three people will use the computer. Now I use Internet and at least fulfill some of my needs. (Multi-purpose Coop, 2)

In that case rather than falling in a situation of learned helplessness or internalized oppression with Moser's (1989) words, she benefited from cooperative opportunities

and learned how to use computer by attending a computer training. This is an empowering process since this women learned to satisfy her personal needs such as taking a doctor appointment through Internet.

Members also mentioned that cooperative involvement has changed their relations within their immediate environment. Two members specifically declared that after cooperative involvement they became calmer and capable of handling their relations better than before. So there have been attitude changes and these have contributed to the well being of their immediate relationships.

> Trainings I participated in the cooperative have contributed a lot to me. I became calmer, while I was more impulsive before. I learned to control myself; I learned to behave according to context. I learned having an argument is not a solution and compromise through talking is a lot better. That's why they contributed to my relations with people around me such as my daughter. (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

> I had angry and rebellious character. I was developing an attitude immediately towards certain situations. But this has changed. My friend says me "You are behaving more mature in the last two years". I really learned something. This reflects to the house too. Even my sister told me "I guess *bali*[22] is relaxing you". (Package, Coop 1).

Another woman defined the empowering process as shaking off ill energy and feeling better which she achieved through cooperative involvement:

> Even though I worked in political movements, I cannot find power in there. Since in such movements I had certain concerns and fears. I have three daughters, my own life; people are getting lost, you can be judged beyond all questions. You can be suspended from your duty without any apparent reason. As a person who experienced all of these, I fell into depression. But it is different here. I found the *power to* shake of bad energy in the cooperative. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

Another woman expressed her belief on her capability as such:

> I never liked going to official places. My husband was dealing with such issues, I never had to deal with them. Later I stepped out, I believe I can deal with everything in every environment. (Package Coop, 1)

In various accounts of women, it appears that trainings they received through cooperative occupy a major role for women to feel *power within*. Except

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[22] Bali is a kind of glue used in the production of packages. It may create drug effects.

Rehabilitation cooperative which experienced an accelerated establishment process, all the other cooperatives participated to certain trainings especially given by FSWW such as leadership, district motherhood and respect to diversity during early childhood, or information technologies and computer literacy. These trainings contributed a lot to women's capability.

For women who have mentally disabled children, psychological relaxation aspect of the cooperative became prominent. A disabled child brings a huge responsibility and burden to women psychologically, physically and socially. Because of the special needs of these children women become more tied to home and child's needs. This situation restricts women's social life and creates a psychological rigor. Cooperative in the case of these women is an institution that takes their burden off at least a bit and creates an environment for women where they see they are not alone. Thus they start to feel the capability of struggling against the difficulties they experience. This is especially true for women who are housewives and do not have a regular employment neither in the past nor now. Two women who were housewives and mothers to mentally disabled children expressed the change the cooperative has created in their life as such:

> Of course, before I was in a bad mood psychologically. I was not going out, I was always at home. At those times, I was getting angry with my family due to the fact that they do not help. I was thinking "did god give this only to me?". I told this to my mother, husband, even to my daughter. Now I am not like that, I am also active. I am not kind of a mother who sits at home and works oneself up constantly thinking, "my child is ill". I accepted this situation and I learned to make fun with my mentally disabled child. (Childcare Coop, 2)

> I was always sitting at home and crying. I though why my child is like that, I was unhappy, there was a negative energy on me. There is a world of difference between my psychological status at that time and now. I find myself more powerful. While I was always crying at home before, now I think about things I can do. I am more happy and peaceful. (Childcare Coop, 1)

One member also mentioned she also started to feel physically more powerful after her cooperative membership:

> I feel relaxed when I come to the cooperative, I can chat with other comfortably. I felt more powerful. Physically I feel more powerful, more robust. I relaxed. (Multi purpose Coop, 3)

As depicted in women's expressions, cooperative involvement has resulted in positive changes in women's lives influencing their attitude towards themselves and towards their environment. One of the most important aspects of *power within* is that women started to realize their capability and capacity, and started to re-forming their lives and relations with this belief in their power. In addition they expressed increased self-confidence through which they became more capable of dealing with certain problems and needs. So *power within* actualized in personal level as expected (Rowlands, 1997, 1998). This contribution of cooperatives to the psychological and social well being of women is also observed in different cases such as self-defense cooperative in the US; agriculture cooperatives in Canada, Asia-Pacific and in Greece; and women's grassroots organizations in Peru and Colombia (Groves et. al, 1995; Kamioka, 2001; Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003; Sumner, 2003; Moser, A., 2004; Asher, 2004; Sanyang & Huang, 2008).

Yet, since cooperative is a community organization which becomes possible with women's getting together, *power within* is inseparable from *power with*. All the positive changes women experience in their lives has been the result of involvement in a community organization rather than being a result of an individual initiative. That is why a variety of aspects related to *power within* appear on the basis of *power with* women reveal as they come together. In that respect *power within* and *power with* nourishes each other. That is why the analysis will be more thorough with an analysis of the data on the basis of *power with*.

5.2.3 Power With: Power of Getting Together

In the scope of this study, *power with* is defined as getting together with others, being involved in negotiations, achieving solidarity and defining a group identity (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). *Power with* emerges from collectivity and getting involved in community groups. Thus, spending time or working together could be regarded as the source of *power with*. I interpret the achievements of women within the context of cooperative, including the establishment of cooperative itself, as *power with* since these are the outcomes of

116

their collective power. *Power with* is a crucial level of generative power. When compared to *power within* which actualizes in the individual level, *power with* is about collective initiatives and could lead to empowerment through collectivity and solidarity formed within groups. In that manner *power with* emerges on a relational level (Rowlands, 1995, 1997, 1998) and could create the potential to clear the way for *power to* achieve structural transformations on behalf of women themselves.

As it can be expected, I measured power with through asking questions about the relations among women in the cooperative. I asked the activities they are involved in together, I wanted them to describe their relations with other members; I wanted to know how they feel about getting together with other women and I enquired whether or not such activities has changed anything in their lives. I also raised questions about whether or not they have common plans for the future as the cooperative and enquired what they do to actualize these plans as the cooperative body.

Primarily it should be acknowledged that all these cooperatives are established through *power with* women revived by getting together through different ways and because of different reasons. As depicted previously, either external agencies initiated the process and women took the lead with the guidance of these agencies or women's initiative had been influential, specifically a single woman propounding the idea and commencing the cooperative process. Establishing a cooperative is a concrete step women have taken through the relations they formed with each other. Yet, at the same time women's living conditions and opportunities they have in their personal lives have been determinative for their participation similar to other cooperative cases. For instance while single motherhood and being unmarried have been enabling factors; existing gender roles and poverty have been disabling factors depicted by the cases from the globe (Mayoux, 1995; Stuart & Kanneganti, 2003; Stephen, 2005). Yet, from my point of view, such an initiative could not be possible without *power within* women, despite all the support received.

Cooperatives, by definition, work for the benefit of their members. This may not necessarily mean profit orientation; however, given that cooperatives are commercial

organizations still some form of monetary benefit could be expected. This may include cheaper excess to services or products, or a monetary advantage to members through selling cooperative products directly to the market. Considering this orientation of cooperatives, I wondered whether women see cooperative as a work place or not. In other words, I wondered what kind of a meaning women attribute to cooperative, which is a result of their collective efforts.

Only the informants from package cooperative stated that cooperative is a work place and they experienced some problems with some women who do not have such a perspective. All the other members I interviewed stated that they do not see the cooperative as a work place. Rather, they stated that sharing is more important. In fact sharing and communication between members is the source of *power with* in cooperatives:

> We come here, for instance you tell about your own story, others tell about their own experiences. We are together and naturally somebody talks about something. At the beginning you feel that you are not alone, you are not the only person who experience certain problems. You say "I am not alone". Whether poverty or suffering, in any case everybody experience it. Everybody live some aspect of it. Then you start to know each other better, and you learn about sharing, sharing problems, troubles. It does not remain inside of you. But if you are at home, you cannot talk about it. Since you do not know your neighbor in the next door, you do not know other people, so you cannot share. Even if you know, the return of such sharing could be too much painful. But it is not the case here. When you share here, problems go away, you feel lighter. It is like a therapy. I do not really know how to say, but it is something magnificent. Therapy aspect of it is quite large. You share; feel relieved. You destroy the problems. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

> Sharing outweighs in cooperative. If you see the cooperative as a work place, you expect profit and interest; you expect to earn money. I do not expect to earn money through the cooperative. Here is more like a therapy. (Toy Coop, 5)

> Our relationships are quite good in here, we have conversation there, and sometimes we have disagreements. But during discussion, nobody is fighting or cursing with each other. After half an hour, everybody calms down; we sit and reach to a conclusion. Cooperative is a quite beautiful place, just like a place of therapy. (Toy Coop, 2)

> Unless cooperative exist, we will not come together. Now, as eight women, we are together. We also have other members outside who works in other occupations. We do not work; we are always together. We get strength from each other; we share when we have a problem. For instance I may have some problem at home. Rather than repressing this problem, rather than dramatizing the issue, I share this problem. If there is something I do not know, I can ask my friends. We find

solutions. We produce new ideas, everybody tells about her own idea, thus we empower ourselves. (Multi-purpose Coop, 4)

You come here and can talk about a problem you experience at home with your friends. They can tell you about your rights and wrongs. We can share everything with each other. When I leave cooperative, I go to home being relaxed. As a woman I benefit a lot from the cooperative. For other friends, it is the same. (Multi-purpose Coop, 2)

We support both death and happiness. (Pastry Coop, 1)

If somebody has a problem, we will solve it in a minute. Coming to the cooperative is like taking therapy. (Pastry Coop, 2)

We do not need to go to a psychiatrist, cooperative is enough. (Pastry Coop, 4)

As can be seen in the quotations above, in the cooperatives where members regularly come together, almost all of the accounts about getting together with other women revolve around sharing and psychological relaxation. In that respect *power with* that emerges in a relational level contributes to personal level of empowerment (Rowlands, 1997, 1998). Considering the quotations above, it is possible to conclude that power that emerges through getting together with others relates basically to psychological well being of women. In other words, *power with* is mostly psychological in "nature" for the women who come together with other women in the cooperative on a regular basis. Given the psycho-therapeutic nature of *power with* in these three cooperatives, *power with* mostly promote *power within* contributing to individual well being of women and easing their family relationships through this spontaneous support network. In this respect, rather than creating something external to their individual selves by getting together, mostly women benefit from this collective power psychologically.

Besides psychological support provided through *power with*; *power with* has also been actualized in the activities cooperatives involved. For instance some women mentioned getting together with other women has been crucial and beneficial for them to reach their goals. Not much surprisingly these expressions came from mothers of mentally disabled children who established the cooperative on the basis of a practical need (Moser, 1989). They claimed for instance:

> From my point of view, what we achieved cannot be done alone. But when women come together, they can achieve everything. You cannot proclaim your demands to the public alone by yourself. (Childcare Coop, 1)

> Cooperative has not been a burden for us. On the contrary, it created convenience. Here we can talk about our problems, we can organize social activities. If my daughter was alone, she would not participate into a rhythm group. Even such a rhythm group would not exist. That is why this cooperative has been quite fruitful and propelling for us to reach our goals. (Rehabilitation Coop, 2)

Since their cooperatives are oriented towards meeting their children's practical needs, thus women's indirect practical needs, getting together and collectivity had rather different meanings to them in comparison to other cooperatives. These women, who are mothers to mentally disabled children, established their cooperatives with the aim of creating a place where their children could spend time, socialize and play. Since they had such clear goals prior to the establishment of cooperative, their expressions relating to *power with* diverge from expressions of other cooperative members. Only similar expression came from a member from pastry cooperative which is the only cooperative which enables women to gain not fixed but regular income. Two members abstractly stated they created "power" together, which is impossible individually:

> There is a saying, four eyes see more than two. That fits our case perfectly. (Pastry Coop, 5)

> Here, you are creating power in cooperation. (Pastry Coop, 1)

Actualization of *power with* can be seen in productive activities cooperatives involved in and childcare centers several cooperatives manage, all of which relates to practical needs of the members. As already mentioned in the section about member's profile, none of the informants' children has benefited from childcare centers of cooperatives, excluding the mentally disabled children. However, even though my informants do no benefit from these childcare centers, still some other cooperative members are benefiting from these services established with the collective power and responsibility of cooperative members. This is already the case for informants with mentally disabled children. Similarly, in the examples from the globe, actualization of *power with* occurs especially in the cooperatives or grassroots organizations that emerged to meet a practical need of their members. In Oxaca, women established the

cooperative to bypass the monopoly of subcontractors, in India women established thrift cooperatives due to their need for credit or in Peru women established communal kitchens to meet their daily food needs. In such cases concrete outcomes of cooperatives can be observed (Kamioka, 2001; Stuart & Kanneganti, 2003; Moser, A., 2004; Stephen, 2005). So, it seems that organizations established with a concrete motive, could more easily move beyond meeting social and psychological needs and could create concrete outcomes that meet practical and strategic needs.

In terms of production related activities *power with* women revealed by getting together has created several advantages despite the previously articulated problems cooperative experience regarding marketing and sales. Some informants argued that in terms of getting purchase orders, having an institutionalized structure brings various advantages in comparison to working individually:

> If I produce what we produce here by me, I cannot sell them individually. I cannot even go to the market for sale. (Pastry Coop, 1)

> For instance this year I went to our summerhouse. there I met a woman who gives sewing related product orders. We established a dialogue, around these days she will come here for a purchase order. What she asked first was, "do you have a place?". I said yes, we have a room for such orders. If you do not have a workshop, or another place, nobody give orders to you. You need sewing and overlock machines. I said we have a place, machines, and workers. She asked whether we could make out invoices. Then she said "ok, I will give the order to you. If you are working for the benefit of children, then it is better for you to take the benefit." (Multi-purpose Coop, 2)

In a single case, *power with* can be observed as actualized through a monetary fund founded by cooperative members. Such a fund is only observed in multi-purpose cooperative and stands out as an achievement of women that has been possible through *power with*. This fund is established after they received training from FSWW. One member has based the foundation of this fund on their being credit victims. So, there again lies a practical need (Moser, 1989). They contribute to this fund through share units which worth 10 TL. Each member buys as much share as she wants and this money accumulates in their bank account to be used especially because of health, education, work and household needs. They charge a small interest

rate that brings a serious advantage to women when compared to becoming indebted to a bank. One member expressed the benefit of their fund as such:

> Rather than, going to a bank and taking credit with high interest rates, or leaning on other people; through our fund my friend use her own Money, then bring it back. We do not put pressure on her, she brings when she have money. (Multi-purpose Coop, 4)

None of the members I interviewed withdrew money from the fund. Yet they mentioned that recently a member withdrew some money for her sister who opened a textile workshop. Even if they do not use the fund actively, women can save money through this fund. They described, if the amount in the bank increases to the extent that they experience difficulties in calculating the shares, (an amount like 30000-40000TL) they distribute the money to shareholders and establish a new fund from the beginning. This way, women can also save some money.

In sum, when the activities in cooperatives and informants' expressions about getting together with other women in the cooperative are analyzed in conjunction, it becomes apparent that women's activities within the cooperative remain a bit restricted in terms of *power with*. Despite experiencing the advantages of working as a cooperative in terms of production related activities, these advantages unfortunately remain quite limited due to wider problems regarding marketing and sales. In addition none of the cooperatives could have been able to use this advantage of being an institution to bring practical benefits for their members such as regular income.

In that framework, childcare centers seem to be the most concrete and sustainable outputs of *power with*, as it can be clearly observed especially in childcare centers four cooperatives established. As one informant expressed:

> If we don't come here, upstairs will not function (meaning child care center in the upper floor) (Multi-purpose Coop, 3)

Another embodiment of *power with* is monetary fund, but only one cooperative established such a fund. Other than these activities, *power with* appears as a psychological factor that contributes a lot to *power within*. This contribution stems

from the fact that, women could realize their individual potential and capability by getting together with other women. In addition, they benefit from this collective power as a network of counseling and psychotherapy that eases their personal problems and family relations. This psychotherapeutic contribution of *power with* is also valuable; since, this network women formed meet their psychological and social needs, which are identified in the section dedicated to membership and members' profile. However, inability to actualize and concretize *power with* through new activities and initiatives would also have restrictive effects on *power to*. Given the interrelated structure of these three aspects of empowerment, concrete outcomes achieved through *power with* could be encouraging for women to discover the structural problems they experience and to struggle for achievements.

5.2.4   Power to: Structural Changes and Interfering "Power Over"

From my point of view, and also as argued by some feminist scholars, women's empowerment should involve structural transformations and changes on behalf of women especially in the area of gender relations and existing gender regime women live in (Rowlands, 1997; Hainard & Verschuur, 2001; Mosedale, 2005). This aspect of empowerment is defined as *power to* in the empowerment literature. Through *power to* new opportunities has to be created, and a more equitable distribution of power should be achieved (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). In that level of empowerment women should be able to interfere with existing hegemonic power structures and gender relations so that there should emerge permanent and long-term changes on behalf of women. From my point of view *power to* requires getting out of one's local and determinate environment and getting into contact with other bodies and authorities to achieve certain gains that could be related to specific regulations, rights or access to services.

In order to ease the analysis I would like to use two pillars of *power to* I identified in the end of second chapter. I argued that at the first pillar, *power to* includes certain collective initiatives and/or movements started to demand rights and/or services that will ease women's life and cooperatives' functioning. In that respect first pillar is the practical one: it involves demands and achievements that make sense to practical

needs of a general community rather than meeting just one cooperative's needs. Second pillar involves challenges to existing gender relations and target structural changes both in these gender relations and also in inequitable distribution of power. In that respect, second pillar of *power to* involves strategic demands and achievements that relates basically to power relations and gender. Becauae of these characteristics second pillar requires following a more strategic and organized approach to achieve certain changes.

To measure power to, I inquired whether women participated into any organisation, meeting or campaign together under the name of the cooperative and I inquired about the details of their participation if any. I also asked whether or not activities of the cooperative has lead to any changes in the region they live in, in terms of life circumstances, opportunities and societal rules. In the presence of such changes as articulated by women, I inquired how such changes affected women's lives and whether such changes will have long lasting effects in their community.

As mentioned in the section about women's conceptualization of power, women do not think about power or empowerment on the level of *power to*. Yet, despite they do not conceptualize power as such, still they are involved in some activities or initiatives that may be regarded as *power to* according to the description I just provided.

The leading issue, which concerned women's cooperatives, especially the cooperatives involved in production, has been the status of women's cooperatives. This also covers the recent increase in the amount of partnership shares to 100 TL. More broadly women's cooperatives that are involved in production are concerned about the fact that their status is the same as all the other big cooperatives like construction cooperatives or logistic cooperatives. They complain that they are subjected to expenditures related to executive meetings, membership, taxes and withholding equal to all the other cooperatives including construction, logistics or agriculture cooperatives, despite the fact that they are quite small cooperatives. They argue that this situation is unequal since they pay equal amount of expenditures but

their income is quite low in comparison to other types of cooperatives. Cooperatives involved in production expressed their complaints and demands as such:

> We want a different status in terms of taxes. We do not want to be put into the same category with other cooperatives. In the invoice, we put 18% tax. This means luxury expenditure. (Package Coop, 2)

> We have general assembly; confirmation of our records, all brings expenditures. We have the same procedures with construction cooperatives that maybe have 1500 members. We have equal amount of expenditures with them. These are difficulties we experience. You see, we earn quite little in here. From my point of view, women's cooperatives or such social cooperatives in general should be exempted from taxes. We gather general assembly each year, once in each three year we have general assembly with election, we have an accountant, we cannot manage everything by ourselves. For instance we paid a penalty of around 3000 TL, because one of our account books is lost. What I mean is that, our expenses are equal to all the other huge cooperatives, such as construction cooperatives. We experience difficulties related to these conditions a lot. Time to time we come here without any income. I do not know how we can overcome these obstacles; we are trying. (Toy Coop, 1)

> Our demands are primarily, decreases in partnership shares and taxes. These are our basic problems. Anyway, if we pay less to these, we can allocate our resources to different things. For instance, partnership shares are increased to 100TL. Before, it was quite minimal. It is impossible to demand 100TL from a woman who has no income. We are different from other cooperatives, we are not like construction cooperatives or logistic cooperatives. We do not have much difference from local government authorities. As they work for general public; just like them, we are also working for the women in our district. If there are things to do, we convey the issue to related authorities. In the cooperatives meeting, demands are conveyed to ministries. (Pastry Coop, 1)

> We contacted ministries, we mentioned that there should be a privilege for women's cooperatives, such as, decreases in taxes, or even removal of taxes, easing such practices, opening export ways, decreases in the expenses of general assemblies, making of cooperative law more flexible and so on. We have such demands and ministries are working on these issues. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

All these complaints and demands point at crucial problems for women's cooperatives since all the cooperatives participated in this study are experiencing problems regarding sustainability of their activities. Even in childcare centers, which secure some level of income, there are monetary problems from time to time especially because of unexpected needs and/or situations. Although such problems concern the whole cooperative, only members in the administrative body mentioned such problems and demands. So, even though all these regulations cooperatives argue for directly affect women's cooperatives' sustainability, these issues do not

occupy member's daily routine as emerging needs. Furthermore, women's cooperatives do not have any independent attempt by themselves to reclaim these problems. Rather FSWW undertook the leadership role, organizing meetings, preparing documents mentioning needs and problems of cooperatives and contacting related government authorities. For instance, informants mentioned that with the leadership of FSWW a dialogue process is initiated with the Family and Social Policy Minister of AKP government, Fatma Şahin, through organizing a meeting where women's cooperatives has also participated.

Women's cooperative's relative passivity regarding cooperative's status may be explained by their not being profit oriented. Income generation or profit making is not primarily important for women. Even though they want, they do not have a concrete expectancy or goal to gain more, get bigger and make profit. So, even though having a differentiated status is crucial for them and would have a relieving effect on them; legal status that would bring them a relative monetary advantage is not primarily important for them since their motives regarding cooperative involvement is different as explained previously.

In addition, leadership of FSWW may be regarded as a natural outcome since pursuing such a dialogue with government authorities requires a lot more professionalism and experience. In this process FSWW encourages women's participation by calling them to meetings or by supporting them for the preparation of necessary documents through which needs and problems of women's cooperatives are expressed. So, even though this subject does not occupy women's daily routine in the cooperative, their awareness about the issue and their participation into preparations of this process is still empowering which coincide with the first pillar of *power to*: claiming a different status for women's cooperatives which will contribute a lot to these cooperative's sustainability in general.

In Childcare cooperative, cooperative chairperson mentioned her personal initiative for establishment of a care center for disabled children by government authorities. What she has in mind is a care center that will be able to take care of disabled

children especially when their mothers or primary care givers are absent, such as in case of an illness or other obstacles. This process has been started with cooperative chair's initiative through writing a letter to the prime minister. She expressed that this letter has returned to district governorship and project has started. This is also an important attempt, *power to* start an initiative for establishment of a childcare center for the mentally disabled children. However, it is not possible to see this initiative as a cooperative initiative. This is rather the initiative of cooperative chair, and she pursues all the processes herself.

Multi-purpose cooperative come to the fore in terms of *power to* in comparison to other cooperatives with the two projects they are involved in. They are involved in district related projects that are district mapping project and disaster project. In the district mapping project, they applied surveys to residents of the district and tried to figure out the profile and needs of the district population with a poverty orientation. For instance, they investigated the number of disabled people, number of children and elderly, number of unemployed, number of families living in their own house or in rent. This is an important attempt, *power to* determine district's needs and try to channel requirements of these people. However, a systematic use and update of this study is not mentioned:

> We are making district mapping. We conducted surveys in our neighborhood and determined the numbers of children, elderly, disabled, we determined how many people live in rent or own the house and so on; we determined the needs of the neighborhood. You know, such documents are not shared with anybody. We keep them. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

Another member of the same cooperative explained that they know more than their district headmen (*muhtar*) about their district.

> We are better than district headman in terms of determining poor households, poor children. We visited houses one by one. We have more information than district headman in terms poor households and needs of them. This was district mapping study. (Multi-purpose Coop, 2).

Similar to this district mapping study, they conducted a disaster study to determine district conditions in relation to disasters such as earthquake, which is an ongoing threat for Istanbul:

Are the buildings they live earthquake resistant? Is there any gathering area in case of an earthquake? Have the buildings gone through inspection? How old are the buildings? Are the electricity pylons secure or not? Since there are frequent electric shocks in the roofs of the building. We conducted a study to investigate these issues. Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

This has been a crucial study not only because of disaster risk in Istanbul but also because of urban renewal process going on in many parts of Istanbul. Especially cooperative chair in multi purpose cooperative was quite concerned, conscious and reactive about urban renewal process and pursues a gender perspective. She expressed their position about this issue as such:

Recently we come up with something called urban renewal. We tell municipality these: Include us; take the ideas of women. Women are living here, the ones who will experience the benefits and sufferings of urban renewal most are the women in this district. I do not mean working women, but women who are at home. Include women in such studies. In the disaster study we said that, "you are giving trainings to men. But men forget and do not talk about what he heard at home. But women are different. Women are more sensitive, since she thinks this cupboard will fall on me, or on my children. So participation of women in such studies is crucial. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

This chair in Multi-purpose cooperative was the only informant who speaks from such a gender perspective. Both her point of view and expressions interrogates existing gender hierarchies and power relations. She expresses her dissatisfaction about women's absence in such projects and studies since she is aware that women who are not regarded as addressees by government authorities, are in fact first people to be influenced from changes like urban renewal.

Her gender awareness also come forward as she talks about literacy classes offered by municipality and she emphasizes the importance of including beneficiary women to decision making mechanisms:

We conducted such kind of studies. We informed related authorities about needs of literacy trainings. Immediately literacy trainings started in some schools in the neighborhood. But not many people participated in these training. Because in the provision of such services, target population is women, so you need to ask women and receive the necessary answers. For instance, you should ask to women "when you are available, which day, which hour of the day? If such trainings start, how could you come? Tell us about these, since you are the one who will participate into these trainings, we should program according to your availability". You should

say this. Yet, unfortunately neither ministry of education nor municipalities do this. They say "training will take place at that time. Women could come". Yet at that time of the day women may not have any place to leave their children, or their husband or mother-in-law may be at home so they cannot go out. They may not be available, so they do not participate. Not surprisingly this has been the case; trainings were unsuccessful. Despite we inform them about the needs, they cannot be successful because they conduct such imposed activities. They opened trainings at the evenings, after school hours. So, how many women could participate? Her children will go home, mother will come to training. From our cooperative only five women participated. After a while, only two women left and training ended. So, such authorities could start an initiative, but since they do not consult women, they cannot be successful. We, on the other hand, in our own trainings such as district motherhood, leadership, respect to diversity, organize a meeting with the participants. We ask them "at what hours of the day you are available, you feel relaxed?" We consult them about how long a training session should take. Since we make decisions all together our trainings are maintaining quite successfully. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

This woman was the only informant who had such explicit gender awareness, and she seemed to be the initiator in the cooperative to promote *power to* change gender hierarchies and existing dynamics on behalf of women. She was quite determined to promote women's participation into decision-making, especially in the subject that concern women such as disasters, urban renewal, or trainings targeting women. However, when this cooperative is evaluated as a whole, it is hard to conclude that this gender awareness is penetrated to the whole cooperative. *power to* change existing gender structures and relations is not a general predisposition of the cooperative. Rather, this sensibility stems from the personal point of view of the chair. None of the informants, either within this cooperative, or in other cooperatives expressed such a gender awareness, which can be regarded as *power to* challenge existing gender relations and structures, which I categorized as the second pillar of *power to*.

One of the issues I especially wanted to inquire in relation to *power to* has been whether cooperative involvement results in any changes in gender roles and dynamics both within the general community and also within women's personal relations. As depicted, there is not much initiative taken by cooperatives that can be regarded as *power to* on the level of community and general public. Even where such initiative started to emerge as in the case of multi-purpose cooperative, these seem to

be rather personal concerns and initiatives that cannot be appropriated to cooperative in general.

So, while women's cooperatives tend to have social orientations as already depicted within the activities they are involved in; political orientations and demands do not appear that much. Rather, only the members who are a bit more reactive and concerned about gender relations and power dynamics have some idea about such initiatives. In none of the cases, an organized concrete movement is observed which target to challenge gender relations and achieve structural transformations.

However, following the leading motto of feminism, "personal is political" I felt the need to look at women's personal gender relations and determine whether cooperative involvement has lead to any change in that area. From my point of view, challenging existing gender relations within the household is a crucial step for women's overall empowerment in the long run. However, cooperative members who participated in this study did not mention any concrete challenge or transformation regarding gendered division of labor and existing gender hierarchies within the household. On the contrary cooperative membership generally doubled their burden and resulted in a second shift (Hochschild, 1990). However, through taking this second shift kindly, some women have been able to extend their field of movement, as in the case of women of Santhiaba in sub-Saharan Africa, who never explicitly challenged status-quo but who has been able to participate into decision making through various social and family networks (Hainard & Verschuur, 2001). Chair in Multi-purpose cooperative has described the general tendency of women in all the cooperatives quite efficiently:

> The important thing is communicating with people without hurting them, but not as like a slave. You are a woman you also have some duties, but others also have duties. How can you manage this together? At the end, the other people, other men are your husband, your father, and your son. How can you make them listen to you, how can you have a say, how can you share their rights? What is important is achieving all these smoothly, not with an attitude of freedom, independence. Some friends say "you are teaching slavery to women". No, we are teaching women how to communicate with others without hurting them, and thus they can gain independence and become powerful. If we teach this from top-down, women could hurt other people and challenge them. This benefits neither herself nor her environment. In fact these others are not our enemies, they are our husbands, our

brothers even though they beat us. If our sons, ones whom we grow up, beat us, we need to question ourselves. We are raising these children; we are the ones who differentiate between boy and girl. We clothe girls in pink and boys in blue. No, neither pink, nor blue, let's clothe both of them in red, in grey. We are teaching ways of these. Women could come out of this process quite powerful. (Multi-purpose Coop, 1)

For instance three women from toy cooperative indicated that their husbands do not "share" the household chores but "help" them:

There have been changes in the household tasks with regard to my husband. He can tolerate more. For instance, I may go home late and sometimes I cannot manage cooking. He tolerates such situations. If needed, he can help me to set the table. In any case, he does what he has to do. (Toy Coop, 2)

There have been some minimal changes. My husband tries to help, prepare the salad for instance. Not much, but he tries to help. He accepted that I will not give up (Toy Coop, 1)

My husband helped me in every kind of task while I was working before. For instance, I was coming home at 10pm. I was not caring much about housework. Sometimes he was sweeping home before I came. He was sharing. But once our children were born, I quit my job, and he got used to the comfort. I was doing everything, not leaving many things for him to do. When the children grew up and I left some of the tasks to him again, he did not want to share. Now he does what he needs to do, such as preparing food for children. Since he is self-employed, he may stay at home during day times. (Toy Coop, 3)

Some women in the pastry cooperative stated that through cooperative involvement they gained some freedom of movement:

Before, everyone's husband objected. They said "you cannot go to the market for selling products". But we overcame these. Now, here, all of us can go to the restaurant or cafe, can serve, we can go to the market to sale our products. (Pastry Coop, 4)

Previously most of us could not do anything without asking our husband. Now we only tell, "I'm there, I will go there" (Pastry Coop, 1)

I always wanted to work, but my husband did not allow. At first, my husband did not even let me go to the market. I neither paid bills. But now, I can go anywhere. Pastry, 2

I was working in our own grocery. Then we went bankrupted and I stayed at home. When cooperative was established, my friends invited me, I also wanted to participate but my husband did not allow. I was working with him before but he did not let me work outside. Later on my friends persuaded him telling that cooperative is all composed of women. (Pastry Coop, 5).

131

As seen in women's expressions such gains are quite limited, either involving quite minimal support within household, or some level of freedom of movement. This has also been the case for women weavers in Mexico (Stephen, 2005) and women cooperative members in Asia-Pacific (Sanyang & Huang, 2008). Since men within the household does not share domestic chores, women's involvement in the cooperative brought a double burden for most of the women and this led them to plan their time and responsibilities more carefully and strictly. To sum up, cooperative membership does not create a more equal distribution of household tasks but ironically, made women develop their time planning ability:

> Now, I plan everything beforehand. For instance, you put the dirty dishes to dishwasher, then feel tired and rest for a while, since you are at home all the day. But the situation is different now. For instance, I completed all the household chores and then came there. Because I will take my child to training after the interview, I also prepared the lunch. So, I schedule my time carefully. (Childcare Coop, 2)

> Before, I was at home. I was doing the chores whenever I want. Now, I compulsorily wake up early, in order to organize the house. We wake up at 7 am. After my husband and daughter leave to work, I tidy up the house. Sometimes I do the cooking in advance. Sometimes we leave the cooperative late and I cannot manage cooking. Then I come to the cooperative. We leave the cooperative around 4.30-5 pm. My husband and daughter come around 8 pm. So I can manage everything. (Multi purpose Coop, 3)

> I keep doing all the household chores. Our roles have not changed at home. My husband does not help me, no. I wake up and do all the chores before coming here. When we go home in the evening, we do the remaining chores. Even though my husband wants me to come there, and knows this cooperative is beneficial for me; he still starts to talk if I cannot manage the chores at home from time to time. For instance he says "you leave the house till evening, and look, there is no food to eat", or says "this ironing is not good" (Multi-purpose Coop, 5)

> I wake up early, around 5.30, 6 am. I do the chores, prepare the breakfast for my husband and son, I see them off. I do the cooking for evening and deal with other remaining chores. Then I go out for a walk, and come there. There is no change at home in terms of division of labor among us; I try to deal with both household tasks and the cooperative. I got used to it. All the tasks are done by women at home. Men always hit the hay. (Multi-purpose Coop, 4)

> Nothing much has changed at home; on the contrary I get tired even more. This means I undertake everything. What happened is that, before there was more problem. Now I do the cleaning on Saturdays, I cook when I go home in the evening. Again, I do it all but their attitude has changed. They accepted the situation; they accepted that I would go to the cooperative. But, if I had received more income, my family would have possibly reacted less. They say, "You do not

> earn money, why are you going then?" I say I go to spend my time there. (Toy Coop, 1)

> You should be planned at home. For instance, I do not go back to bed after I send children to school and do at least some of the household tasks, such as cooking. If you plan it, there is not much problem. You can manage everything. But for instance, if you do not feel good psychologically, you may not want to do anything, and you may hinder. The most important thing is boosting the morale. (Toy Coop, 3)

In conclusion, *power to* in women's cooperatives does not become evident much. In terms of the first pillar of *power to*, which I defined as collective initiatives, and/or movements that demand rights and/or services that will ease women's life and cooperatives' functioning, there are some initiatives. These include cooperatives' initiatives regarding their legal status, childcare cooperative's demand from municipality and district governor regarding the establishment of a special care center for the mentally disabled and multi-purpose cooperative's involvement in district mapping and disaster projects. However, these initiatives do not come to the fore as collective and organized initiatives within the cooperative. Rather, they are pursued and/or followed by several individuals in these cooperatives. Cooperative chairs and/or co-chairs undertake the main responsibility. And such initiatives do not involve a concrete and intentional gender perspective.

In terms of the second pillar of *power to* which involves challenges to existing gender relations and target structural changes both in these gender relations and also in inequitable distribution of power, cooperatives are not involved in concrete initiatives or organized movements. Even, such a gender awareness is absent in their accounts. Even while describing the gender relations they experience within the household, despite knowing they are carrying a double burden, they did not describe their experience from a critical point of view. Only the chair of one cooperative expressed explicit gender awareness and had some conceptualization in mind regarding how women could empower themselves within the household. She was also the only member who articulated demands for the involvement of women living in the district into decision making processes regarding the district's life conditions. However, her conceptualizations indicated an ideal situation, rather than an organized and concrete vocalization of such demands.

133

When women's experiences regarding gender relations within the household are analyzed, there comes out only very minimal changes in women's conditions, which includes some help from husbands regarding household chores and some freedom of movement for women. Of course these changes are the achievements of women themselves, without pursuing a theoretical gender perspective and without overtly challenging male authority. So, women who participated in this study, had to give more from them and pay more effort and labor, to be able to attain all the empowering aspects of cooperative membership. In sum, women's cooperatives have not led to revival of *power to* which can lead to organized and concrete attempts to challenge gender relations and unequal power dynamics.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Cooperatives are not new organizational forms; however, especially in the post 1980s period they became more popular and more widespread especially among the grassroots. In the post-1980s period, on the one hand, cooperatives were established by the grassroots as a reaction to global liberal economic policies. On the other hand, leading international organizations such as UNDP and ILO declared that cooperatives are the most appropriate model to flourish development in the third world (UN, 2002, 2009, 2011; ILO, 2010). While such global organizations supported cooperative model since they are efficient organizations for third world to reach globally declared development goals; in some cases, grassroots formed their own cooperatives and other similar grassroots organizations in order to improve their own conditions. Women-only grassroots cooperatives occupy a different place within this framework, since these cooperatives are sustained mostly by women's initiatives and could be promising for women to improve their conditions not only economically, but also socially and politically through challenging existing gender roles and power dynamics which frequently create unfavorable conditions for women. Women's cooperatives are especially intriguing due to their potential to depict organizational forms that is alternative to mainstream and thus resist the development agenda set by global powers through determining their own needs, own methods and own actions.

Postmodern accounts have paid attention to potential of such organizations since they paid credit to validity of local knowledge base and local ways of doing. They emphasized that the social and economic system we internalized is just a single model among many alternatives (Parpart et. al, 2000; Esteva, 2010) and that is why it makes sense to seek more viable, sustainable and peaceful alternatives. Parpart et al. (2000) benefiting from postmodern approach, argues for feminist theorizing, which

will take women's experiences and knowledge into consideration through establishing non-hierarchical relationships. Besides being informed about the paralyzing effects of postmodern accounts (Parpart, 1993) and fallacies of the idea of heterogeneity (Moser, A., 2004), it is still crucial to search for previously silenced voices, focusing on their interpretation of the world, successes and failures.

In this study, moving out of such a concern, being informed that local knowledges can be sites of both oppressive power and resistance (Parpart, 1993); and given the promises of cooperative organizations, I tried to answer the question of whether and in what ways involvement in women-only cooperatives in urban Turkey result in women shareholder's (em)powerment. The concept of empowerment has been used as a buzzword by many accounts and that is way it is crucial to approach the concept critically. Mosedale (2005) reminds that the concept of empowerment can be appropriated very easily and without much scrutiny in mainstream development programs. In such programs development goals set by global agencies and empowerment are not differentiated. However, feminist scholars' studies about the conceptualization of empowerment have been quite informing to develop a more critical approach.

Empowerment approach, which has emerged from feminist reactions to mainstream development initiatives throughout the globe, composed my theoretical framework. Feminist scholars focused on generative forms of power rather than on *power over*, which is oppressive and dominating power (Moser, 1989; Rowlands, 1995, 1997, 1998; Mosedale, 2005) They agreed empowerment is a process (Rowlands, 1995; Stromquist, 1995; Hainard, F. & Verschuur, C., 2001; Mosedale, 2005) and should involve taking action to challenge oppressive and hegemonic structures (Rowlands, 1997; Hainard & Verschuur, 2001; Mosedale, 2005). Moser (1989) emphasized that local organizations that emerge as a result of practical needs exemplify the best strategy to achieve these goals. Women's agency is given wide importance to achieve these goals since empowerment cannot be endowed but must be won through

grassroots' struggles. In the light of conceptualizations of various feminist scholars[23], I argued that empowerment is a process through which women fulfill their practical and strategic gender needs. We cannot assume a universal list of these needs, because these needs emerge as a result of women's personal experiences. These needs can be met through generative forms of power women possess and actualize. Through these forms of power women can determine and fulfill their needs in different levels, whether personal, group or community (Rowlands, 1997; Özgüler, 2007). These generative forms of power are *power within*, *power with* and *power to* (Rowlands, 1998; Townsend et. al., 1999; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007). In the light of empowerment literature, I defined *power within* as discovering personal capabilities, feelings of self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence and capacity to overcome difficulties. I defined *power with* as socializing, getting together and communicating with others and involving in negotiations. I assumed solidarity and group identity are crucial aspects of *power with* that may lead to concrete outcomes. I defined *power to* in two pillars. One includes collective efforts, initiatives and/or movements to demand certain rights and services from different authorities which may not necessarily has a gender aspect but still aims at structural changes. Other pillar includes initiatives and movements that challenge existing gender relations that lead to relational and structural transformations on behalf of women. I argued that empowerment is actualized through these three forms of generative power. Yet, I did not assume a hierarchy of significance among them. I argued that all the three levels could foster each other having their own unique contribution in the fulfillment of practical and strategic gender needs.

Through analyzing my data in the light of this theoretical framework, I reached following conclusions.

Firstly, the empowerment framework I argued for is mostly compatible with women's conceptualizations. Women shareholders' explanations of power and empowerment overlap with my operationalization of *power within* and *power with*.

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[23] Moser, 1989; Parpart, 1993; Mayoux, 1995; Stromquist, 1995; Rowlands, 1995, 1997, 1998; Kabeer, 1997, 1999; Townsend et. al, 1999; Parpart et. al, 2000; Hainard & Verschuur, 2001; Mahmud, 2003; Mosedale, 2005; Özgüler, 2007.

Their conceptualizations are mostly related to psychological aspect of empowerment. They defined gaining self-confidence, discovering capabilities, getting together, socializing, and maintaining the cooperative, ability to express oneself, ability to deal with problems and economic independence as aspects of empowerment. These aspects are also mentioned as aspects of empowerment by feminist scholars (Rowlands, 1995; 1998; 1998; Stromquist, 1995; Townsend et. al, 1999). Kabeer (1999) do not overtly refer to such aspects but in her framework empowerment is achieved through resources and agency. Her definitions of resources as material, social and human resources and agency as ability to define one's goals and struggle to reach them, overlap with these aspects of empowerment mentioned by women. Women do not define the characteristics of *power to* as sources of power or empowerment. Given that women are not involved in activities or movements with the aim of policy making and challenging unfavorable structures, such a conclusion is not surprising.

Secondly, while women shareholders in cooperatives that provide services to mentally disabled children established cooperatives because of their practical needs, in other cooperatives a different need category emerge. These are psychological and social needs. In cooperatives where women are more or less involved in production activities, women's main motive for participation has been the feelings of idleness, uselessness, loneliness and vanity. They did not pursue any practical or strategic interest. None of the studies on women's grassroots organizations referred in this study mentioned such reasons for women's participation in cooperatives. Rather, literature mostly depict that cooperatives are established as a result of practical needs, primarily because of income needs (Mayoux; 1995; Wasylishyn & Johnson, 1998; Kamioka; 2001; Stuart & Kanneganti, 2003; Moser, A., 2004; Stephen; 2005) Contrary to these examples, for women shareholders participated into this study, not having practical needs such as income or food, or not having children to look after have been enabling factors for their cooperative participation. Cooperative membership became an option as a result of such feelings and neither practical nor strategic needs are identified and fulfilled in that process. So, a different need category should be added to the Moser's (1989) framework of practical and strategic

gender needs, since social and psychological needs do not fit into these categories as justified previously. Naturally, these need categories are not mutually exclusive and support each other. Still, given that psychological and social needs come to the forefront to a large extend, a separate third category should be used.

Thirdly, when analyzed thoroughly, women's cooperatives hold a potential for women's empowerment. Women feel empowered through meeting their psychological and social needs, through getting out of home and through fulfilling some of their practical needs such as childcare or minimal income. Without gainful employment women could feel empowered; however, gainful employment is still an important component of empowerment process for cooperative members as Stromquist (1995) emphasized. Income generation not only legitimize women's cooperative participation in the eye of husbands and/or families, but also even a minimal gain could make women feel empowered since through this gain women can meet their own and also their children's daily-practical needs. For instance, through such income women can pay their social security premiums in order to be "retired" by themselves, and this makes them feel secure.

After their participation in cooperatives, women experienced increses in self-confidence and felt they are capable of doing many things. Further, getting together with other people and sharing their experiences and problems also contributed to women's social and psychological wellbeing. These aspects are also mentioned as aspects of empowerment in the related literature as characteristics of *power within* and *power with* (Rowlands, 1995; 1998; 1998; Stromquist, 1995; Townsend et. al, 1999; Özgüler, 2007). Cooperatives function as a space for relaxation and "therapy" if I use their own wording. So, *power with*, which emerges in a relational level, contributes to *power within*, and in women's cooperatives these two aspects of empowerment nourish each other. This situation supports my argument indicating an interrelation between aspects of empowerment (*power within*, *power with* and *power to*). Despite empowerment is mostly experienced on a personal and social-psychological level in women's cooperatives, there are also some other examples in which *power with* can be observed as actualized. Childcare centers, which meet

practical needs of members and ease the burden of reproductive labor, have been the leading outcomes of *power with*. I conclude that *power with* actualize more easily in cooperatives which are established as a result of a practical need. Organizations established with a concrete motive could more easily move beyond meeting social and psychological needs and could create concrete outcomes that meet practical needs through *power with*.

Despite women's cooperatives are promising for women's empowerment through *power within* and *power with*, by meeting social, psychological and in some cases practical needs; empowerment through *power to* cannot be observed. This seems to be a serious obstacle women's cooperatives experience, since according to feminist empowerment literature structural changes in unequal power relations in general and gender relations in particular is a sin qua non aspect of empowerment process (Rowlands, 1997; Stromquist, 1995; Kabeer, 1999; Hainard & Verschuur; 2001; Mosedale; 2005). I should not deny that some of the cooperatives are involved in activities that intend structural changes. Arguing for a different status of women's cooperatives has been the leading and the most articulated demand of these cooperatives. However, even this demand does not emerge as a result of an organized movement that involves at least most of the members. None of the cooperatives articulated challenges to gender relations or unequal power dynamics and did not organize around such issues. In fact, literature on women's grassroots organizations show that women are capable of articulating such demands and could have success through being organized, despite the fact that they experience challenges stemming from existing gender roles and power relations; and despite the fact that women in the leadership positions have more space to articulate demands and create changes (Kamioka, 2001; Stuart & Kanneganti; 2003; Asher, 2004; Moser, A., 2004; Stephen, 2005). However, women's cooperatives participated in this study did not articulate any demand that can be regarded political and that can lead a structural change. Accordingly, any structural change cannot be achieved within the household. Despite feeling empowered through cooperative participation, benefits women experience do not directly lead to more equal gender relations within the household. As Mayoux (1995) argues, mere cooperative involvement does not bring about

structural changes and does not directly lead to fulfillment of strategic needs. In order to understand the reasons behind the absence of *power to* and in order to articulate the ways to flourish *power to*, the broader context women's cooperatives emerge into has to be analyzed. Other external variables that are not embedded into the cooperative structure, such as municipality support, civil society support, political position of the members, professional support that may be related to production, marketing and similar activities could have wide effect in order to flourish gender-sensitive organisations that could realize the *power to* challenge existing power structures and bring about changes.

Consequently, despite the fact those women's cooperatives hold a potential for women's empowerment; in the absence of interventions that target determination and fulfillment of strategic gender needs[24], *power to* cannot be revealed to achieve structural changes. Yet, to be successful, grassroots women should participate in this process and internalize such interventions through realizing the obstacles they experience and believing that these are changeable. Women's agency is crucial (Kabeer; 1999a; 1999b) and women's values, experiences and conditions should be incorporated into the process to fulfill strategic gender needs (Mahmud, 2003; Mosedale, 2005; Beşpınar, 2010) In that process the idea that women's experiences and ideas are unchallengeable should be avoided, given that our experiences and our perceptions of these experiences are shaped by the power dynamics we live in and discourses we are exposed to (Mosedale, 2005).

Fourthly, Women's cooperatives in urban Turkey meet most of the cooperative values declared by ICA, including self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity (ICA, 1995). Despite the fact that women express their complacency with the cooperative as an organizational model, they still experience certain crucial obstacles, which create risks for cooperatives' survival and limit member potential. One of the leading obstacles women's cooperatives experience is related to the cooperative members' profile. Excluding the cooperatives, which provide services to

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[24] Mayoux (1995) suggests that participatory action research and participatory gender training, possibly with the help of a facilitator, could be influential to determine and address strategic gender needs.

mentally disabled children, almost all the cooperative members had grown up children (all members except one) and were dependent on their husbands in terms of main subsistence of the household (all members except three). This tendency towards the membership of women who are in a relatively better economic and social condition is also observed in different cases of women's cooperatives. These women can benefit from empowering potential of cooperatives through participating in this women's space of sharing and solidarity. (Milgram, 2000; Cohen, 2000; Mayoux, 1995). In fact, not being in need has been an enabling factor for cooperative membership in women's cooperatives in urban Turkey. Due to the fact that women's cooperatives cannot provide a regular income, poorer women who need to earn money regularly cannot become cooperative members. Such women need to work as regular employees or at least take piecework to home in order to fulfill their subsistence needs. In that respect women's cooperatives cannot reach the most disadvantaged women in their community. Thus, needy women cannot benefit from this women's space cooperative created, due to either their socio-economic status, or due to power over them or power over they internalize. These conditions dictate them a limited capability. This obstacle of inability to reach needy women is also expressed in the literature and seems to be a chronic problem of women's cooperatives (Mayoux, 1995; DeLancey, 1987; Milgram, 2000; Cohen, 2000; Sanyang & Huang, 2000). In sum, It can be argued that income is not in and of itself crucial for women's empowerment. As long as women could sustain their lives and meet subsistence needs through other means, being the primary earner is not crucial. I do not say this is unproblematic and this situation may be attributed to existing gender roles; but it is still the case.). Yet, even though income generation is not a crucial aspect of empowerment for existing women members, in order to reach more members and to be able to access needy women, cooperatives should offer opportunities for income generation. Rowlands (1995) and Erman et. al (2002) mentioned disempowering aspects of market conditions for women such as low-paid and insecure jobs. These aspects could be defeated in women's cooperatives, if cooperatives could create such income opportunities.

Within current conditions of women's cooperatives in Turkey as depicted throughout this study, if really genius ideas or generous external support does not come through, such women's cooperatives could hardly become something more than spaces of sharing and solidarity for a quite limited number of women. Vicious circle of the market restricts membership of new shareholders. Under such circumstances such small-scale women's cooperatives could hardly maintain. Cooperatives that are involved in food production or that provide childcare services are better off in this framework since they have a market to address. Yet, maybe rather smoothly but they still experience same obstacles. Long-term reliance on external support is another risk women's cooperatives have to face. As long as they do not become self-sustaining in a specific time interval, withdrawal of such support creates a serious obstacles (Koutsou, Iakovidou & Gotsinas, 2003; Moser, A, 2004) A. Moser (2004) argues that grassroots dependence on such external support enable power structures to remain definitely in place. In addition, receiving such support from external authorities could damage independence of such cooperatives. Overall, it seems that cooperatives that are established to fulfill a specific concrete need in their neighborhood such as childcare are more likely to survive more smoothly and successfully. Such need-based cooperatives are also more likely to access the needy women and more likely fulfill practical and strategic gender needs, in comparison to other cooperatives, which are established on the basis of social and psychological needs.

Women's cooperatives in urban Turkey are becoming more popular, and with the recent emphasis put on cooperatives by the Ministry of Customs of Trade these cooperatives could become a gear for mainstream development initiatives. Cooperatives, both through their organizational values such as shared responsibility, equality and democratic governance (ICA, 1995) and through the resistance potential of grassroots could enhance women's agency to achieve structural transformations and to challenge power dynamics. However, current picture as depicted in this study do not possess the potential to initiate such a movement despite women's expressions of empowerment. As Stromquist (1995) argued, critical minds could emerge within physical and reflexive spaces where new opinions can be initiated and discussed,

outside of the surveillance of others in power. Cooperatives could create such spaces for women. Yet, women's agency, and ability define one's aims and endeavoring for them is crucial (Kabeer, 1999a). Kabeer is quite right to put emphasis on agency, given the necessity of women to be subjects of their own struggles. Yet, as Beşpınar (2010) argues, capability for agency develops within existing social, economic and political systems. As individuals living in these overlapping systems of hegemonic power, our perceptions, experiences and thus capability is restricted within these systems. That is why we need to challenge ourselves and struggle with internalized oppression, before aiming to challenge overarching structures. As Mosedale (2005) argues, under such circumstances, intervention of external change agents and facilitators is needed. Unless this is achieved, cooperatives will occupy the global agenda as the power of the market, rather than power of the grassroots.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

List of Women's Cooperatives in Urban Turkey[25]

	Name	Date of Establishment	Location	Activities
1	Ankara Zeytindalı Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2004	Ankara	Trainings for women such as vocational trainings.
2	Bağlar Struggle against Violence against Women Communication, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2006	Diyarbakır	Employment related activities, trainings.
3	Bahçelievler Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2002	İstanbul	Trainings, early childhood education, employment creation
4	Besnili Aktif Kadınlar Cooperation and Solidarity Management Cooperative	2006	Adıyaman	Pastry and homemade food production
5	Beyoğlu Lider Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2005	İstanbul	Souvenir production
6	Biga Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2005	Çanakkale	Pastry production, restaurant management
7	Bostaniçi Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2004	Van	Trainings for women, vocational education.

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[25] Cooperatives in the agriculture sector is not included in this list. This list is based on the information in the web page of Women's Cooperatives Communication Network which is established through a project conducted by FSWW. Since this is not an official site, it may not be updated regularly. So there may be some irrelevant or wrong information. For a more reliable list Ministry of Customs and Trade should be consulted.

8	Çağdaş Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2002	Adapazarı	0-6 years old childcare, activities for women
9	Çanakkale Entrepreneur women Production and Marketing Cooperative	2007	Çanakkale	Paintings, ceramics, fabrics
10	Doğubayazıt Woman, Support, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2003	Ağrı	Carpet and textile workshops, traditional food production, hairdresser for women
11	Erkadın Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2005	Erzincan	Textile workshop, fabrics, bedclothes
12	Gaziantep Woman, Environment, Culture and Development Cooperative	2006	Gaziantep	Trainings for women, workshop
13	Gündöndü Woman, Support, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2007	Çorlu	Childcare center, trainings for women
14	Hanımeli Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2006	Kayseri	Pastry production
15	Hanımeller Home-made Goods Consumption Cooperative	2004	Denizli	Pastry and other food production
16	İlk Adım Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2004	İstanbul	Childcare center, trainings for women, various production activities, monetary fund
17	İncirliova İlkadım Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2005	Aydın	Childcare center
18	İpekyolu Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2005	Mardin	Early Childhood education, trainings for women, soap production
19	Karabiga Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2009	Çanakkale	Pastry production, handicraft production
20	Karaburun Women Agro-Tourism and Management Cooperative	2003	İzmir	Jam production, rest house management, selling natural products
21	Kardelen Woman,	2002	İzmit	Early childhood

				education, trainings for women
22	Kırk Örük Cooperative for Prevention of Violence Against Woman	2005	Ankara	Selling second hand cloths, selling food, trainings for prevention of violence against women
23	Kızıltepe Support, Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2007	Mardin	Local bread production, and fabric production.
24	Körfez Active Women, Environment, Development, Solidarity and Management Cooperative	2007	Çanakkale	Trainings, selling local products.
25	Kozadan İpeğe Home Based Working Women Cooperative	2007	Ankara	Cloth bag production
26	Ladik Fabric Producing Women Cooperation Cooperative	2007	Samsun	Underwear production
27	Mezopotamya Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2008	Manisa	Production of local goods such as fabrics, pastry products etc.
28	Nar Çiçeği Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2010	Eskişehir	Pastry production
29	Nar Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2009	Balıkesir	Pastry Production
30	Nilüfer Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2002	Düzce	Early childhood education, trainings for women
31	Ödemiş Home Based Working Women Craft Cooperative	2005	İzmir	Fabric production
32	Öncü Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2005	Tekirdağ	Fabric and handicraft production
33	Simge Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2002	Kocaeli	Early childhood education, trainings for women, monetary fund
34	Suvarlı Woman Multi-Purpose Management	2006	Adıyaman	Trade and exportation

	Cooperative			
35	Tarihi Eyüp Oyuncakları Woman, Culture and Management Cooperative	2006	İstanbul	Wooden toy production
36	Tekirdağ Woman Solidarity and Management Cooperative	2004	Tekirdağ	Homemade food and soap production
37	Tomurcuk Culture, Solidarity and Management Cooperative	2006	İstanbul	Rehabilitation center for mentally disabled children
38	Umut Işığı Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2004	Diyarbakır	Early childhood education, trainings for women and children
39	Umut Yolcuları Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2004	İstanbul	Early childhood education, also for the mentally disabled, trainings for women
40	Yaşam Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2002	Van	Early Childhood education, vocational trainings for women
41	Yenipazar Woman, Environment, Culture and Management Cooperative	2010	Aydın	Fabric and local handicraft production

APPENDIX B

Guiding Questions Used for the Interviews

1. Establishment and Structure

When and how has the idea of establishing a cooperative emerged?
(Kooperatif kurma fikri ne zaman ve nasıl ortaya çıktı?)

How was the cooperative established?
(Kooperatif nasıl kuruldu?)

During the establishment process which institutions and/or organisations did provide support and what kind of support did they provide?
(Kooperatifin kuruluş sürecinde hangi kurum ve kuruluşlardan ne tip destekler aldınız?)

Could you explain the administrative structure of the cooperative?
(Kooperatifin idari yapısından bahseder misiniz?)

How do you make decisions in the cooperative?
(Bir konuna karar alınması gerektiğinde süreç nasıl işler?)

What kind of problems do you experience in the cooperative and how do you solve these problems?
(Kooperatif içerisinde yaşanan sorunlar nelerdir ve bu sorunları nasıl çözümlersiniz?)

Why has this cooperative been established as a women's cooperative?
(Bu kooperatif neden kadın bir kadın kooperatifi olarak kuruldu?)

2. Membership

Why did you want to become a member? Could you explain your process of membership?
(Siz neden bu kooperatife dâhil olmak istediniz? Üye olma öykünüzden bahseder misiniz?)

What is the importance of being a member to a "women's" cooperative according to you?
(Bir "kadın" kooperatifine üye olmanın sizin açınızdan önemi nedir?)

What do you do in the cooperative?
(Kooperatifte neler yaparsınız?)

After cooperative membership, has there been any change in the way you spend your time and in the activities you allocate your time to? Could you explain comparatively –before and after membership-?
(Kooperatif üyeliğinden sonra, vaktinizi kullanma şekliniz ve vakit ayırdığınız etkinlikler değişti mi? Üyelik öncesini ve sonrasını karşılaştırarak anlatabilir misiniz?)

What does the cooperative mean to you?
(Kooperatif sizin için ne ifade ediyor?)

Do you receive any income through cooperative membership?
(Kooperatif üyeliği dolayısıyla ekonomik geliriniz oldu mu?)

3. The concept of power and empowerment

What does the concept of "power" mean to you?
(Güç kelimesi size ne ifade ediyor?)

What is the meaning of empowerment according to you, How could women become empowered?
(Güçlenmek sizce ne demektir, kadınlar nasıl güçlenir?)

When and in which situations do you feel powerful? Could you provide any example from past?
(Ne zaman, hangi durumlarda kendinizi güçlü hissedersiniz? Geçmişten herhangi bir örnek verebilir misiniz?)

4. Household relations

How your husband/family reacted to your idea of becoming a cooperative member?
(Eşinizin/ailenizin kooperatif üyesi olma fikrine tepkisi ne oldu?)

How does your husband/family react to you in relation to spending your time in the cooperative?
(Kooperatifte vakit geçirmenizle ilgili olarak eşinizin/ailenizin tepkisi ne oldu?)

Has there been any changes in your relations with your husband/family and in their expectancies from you after you started to participate in the cooperative?
(Kooperatife gidip gelmeye başladıktan sonra eşiniz/aileniz ile olan ilişkilerinizde ve onların sizden beklentilerinde bir farklılık oldu mu?)

After your cooperative membership, Has there been any changes in the distribution of household tasks among the poeple in your household?
(Kooperatif üyeliğinizden sonra, ev işlerinin evdeki kişiler arasında paylaşımı açısından bir farklılık oldu mu?)

If there has been any changes, what is the reason behind these changes according to you?
(Eğer bir değişiklik olduysa sizce bu değişiklikler neyden kaynaklandı?)

a. <u>Conceptualization of the self (Power within)</u>

What kind of a person are you, how do you express your characteristics?
(Nasıl birisiniz, kişilik özellikleri açısından kendinizi nasıl anlatırsınız?)

Has there been any changes on your self-conceptualisation after you start to come to the cooperative?
(Kooperatife gelmeye başladıktan sonra kendinizle ilgili fikirlerinizde herhangi bir farklılık oldu mu?)

Do you have any plans and/or goals for the future? What are they?
(Geleceğe yönelik planlarınız ve/veya hedefleriniz var mı? Neler?)

Did cooperative membership played any role in your determination of these plans and goals? In what respects?
(Kooperatif üyeliğinin bu hedefleri ve planları belirlemenizde bir rolü oldu mu? Ne açıdan?)

b. <u>Relations among cooperative members (Power with)</u>

What are the activities or works you are involved in with other cooperative members?
(Diğer kooperatif üyeleri ile birlikte gerçekleştirdiğiniz işler/etkinlikeler nelerdir?)

How are the relations among cooperative members?
(Üyeler arası ilişkiler nasıldır?)

What do you feel about getting together with other women in the cooperative?
(Kooperatifte diğer kadınlarla bir araya gelmek size ne hissettiriyor?)

Do you have common goals or plans as the cooperative?
(Kooperatif olarak ortak planlarınız yada hedefleriniz var mı?)

If you have what do you do to actualize and/or reach these plans and/or goals?
(Varsa bu planları/hedefleri gerçekleştirmek için neler yapıyorsunuz?)

c. <u>Strategic needs & structural changes (power to)</u>

Did you participate into any kind of campaign, meeting or organisations as the cooperative? If yes, what were they?
(Kooperatif olarak herhangi bir kampanyaya, toplantıya yada örgütlenmeye katıldınız mı? Katıldıysanız bunlar nelerdi?)

Does the cooperative and/or the activities of the cooperative lead to any changes in the district/region you live in? For instance, in terms of life circumstances, societal norms and rules and/or physical structure?
(Kooperatifiniz yada kooperatif olarak dahil olduğunuz etkinlikler yaşadığınız mahallede/bölgede herhangi bir değişikliğe sebep oldu mu? Örnek olarak, yaşadığınız bölgenin toplumsal kurallarında, yaşam koşullarında yada fiziksel yapısında?)

If there has been such changes, how do they effect women's lives and circumstances?
(Eğer değişiklikler olduysa, bunlar kadınların hayatını ve koşullarını nasıl etkiler?)

If there has been such changes, will they affect the lives of your children or grandchildren?
(Eğer değişiklikler olduysa bunlar çocuklarınızın yada torunlarınızın hayatını etkiler mi?)

APPENDIX C

Tez Fotokopisi İzin Formu

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	☐
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	X
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	☐
Enformatik Enstitüsü	☐
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Varol

Adı   : Fatma Cansu

Bölümü : Sosyoloji

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : An Analysis of Women's Cooperatives in Urban Turkey in terms of Women's Empowerment

TEZİN TÜRÜ :   Yüksek Lisans   [X]   Doktora   [ ]

1.   Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.   [X]

2.   Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullancılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)   [ ]

3.   Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)   [ ]

Yazarın imzası   ....   Tarih ....