RIGHTS-BASED CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND
DEMOCRATIZATION IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

RIGHTS-BASED CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND
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This thesis investigates the role of the rights-based civil society organizations in promoting democratization in Turkey. I consider rights-based civil society organizations as focal actors for democratization because they initiate, secure and advance democratic rule by upholding liberties and freedoms. From the late Ottoman period to the 198ights-based civil society organizations were absent. However, after the 1980s, they emerged to represent different right themes. By employing the existing literature on Turkish politics and civil society, I attempt to explore how rights-based civil society organizations became major actors in society and discuss their strong influence on Turkish politics since the late 1980s. I provide examples of rights-based civil society organizations which have been working on various rights areas to trigger democratization. These organizations have been benefiting politically and financially from the European Union to stress their own democratizing visions. In that aspect, the rights-based civil society organizations, which promoted democratizing ideals, realized a positive trend after the accession negotiations with the European Union began. I also present how rights-based civil society organizations in Turkey promoted democratization in politics and refer to their significance on political parties, ministries and municipalities. The thesis also follows the growth of the rights-based civil society

organizations especially after Gezi Park protests in 2013 when they became central to the political struggles for democratization.

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DE HAK TEMELLİ SİVİL TOPLUM ÖRGÜTLERİ VE DEMOKRATİKLEŞME

Tanca, Dersu Ekim

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Başak Alpan

Bu tez hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinin Türkiye'deki demokratikleşmeye sunduğu katkıyı incelemektedir. Tezde hak temelli sivil toplum örgütleri, özgürlükleri savunarak demokratik ilkeleri başlattıkları, korudukları ve ileri taşıdıkları için demokratikleşmenin ana aktörleri olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Osmanlı döneminden 1980'lere kadar, sivil toplumun zayıf olduğu, hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinin ise var olmadığı göze çarpmaktadır. Fakat 1980'lerden itibaren, bu girişimler farklı hak temaları çerçevesinde örgütlenmeye başlamışlardır. Tez, Türkiye siyaseti ve sivil toplumu hakkında yazılmış literatürlerden faydalanarak, hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinin nasıl toplumdaki başlıca aktörler haline geldiklerini anlatmakta ve 1980'lerden itibaren Türk siyaseti üzerindeki etkilerini tartışmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, demokratikleşme çabasıyla çeşitli hak temaları üzerinde çalışmakta olan hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinden örnekler verilmektedir. Bu örgütler hem siyasal hem de finansal olarak Avrupa Birliği'nden destek görmüş ve bu sayede kendi demokratik görüşlerini duyurmuşlardır. Demokratik fikirleri savunan hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinin bu nedenle, Avrupa Birliği'yle müzakerelerin başladığı tarihten itibaren olumlu bir yükseliş gösterdiği söylenebilir. Tez ayrıca hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinin siyasal zeminde demokratikleşmeyi nasıl zenginleştirdiğine değinmekte

ve siyasi partiler, bakanlıklar ve belediyeler üzerindeki etkisinden bahsetmektedir. Tez, ayrıca, hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinin özellikle 2013'teki Gezi Parkı eylemlerinden sonra demokratikleşme mücadelesinde kilit rol oynadığını belirtmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sivil Toplum Örgütleri, Hak Temelli Yaklaşım, Demokratikleşme, Türkiye, Avrupa Birliği

to my mother and sister,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AK Party	Justice and Development Party
AKUT	Search and Rescue Association
ANAP	Motherland Party
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women
CHP	Republican People's Party
CSO	Civil society organization
ÇGD	Progressive Journalists Association
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
ÇYDD	Association for Supporting Contemporary Life
DP	Democrat Party
DSP	Democratic Left Party
DTP	Democratic Society Party
DYP	True Path Party
EC	European Community
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEC	European Economic Country
EU	European Union
FP	Virtue Party
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party

IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistant
İGAM	Research Center on Asylum and Migration
İHD	Human Rights Association
İHOP	Human Rights Joint Program
KADAV	Women's Solidarity Foundation
KA.DER	Association for Support Training of Women Candidates
Kaos GL	Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Researches and Solidarity Association
LİSTAG	Families and Relatives of LGBTs in İstanbul
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and plus
MAZLUMDER	Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed
METU	Middle East Technical University
MGK	National Security Council
MHP	National Action Party
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ÖDP	Freedom and Solidarity Party
ÖZ-GE DER	Association for Solidarity with Freedom Deprived Youth
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
RP	Welfare Party
SP	Felicity Party
SPoD	Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association

SGDD – ASAM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
TEMA	Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats
TİHV	Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
TİP	Workers' Party of Turkey
TOG	Community Volunteers Foundation
TÜSİAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association
UN	United Nation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For a long period of time, Turkish politics had mostly been defined in reference to the strong state and the political parties (Heper, 1985). Many observers perceived the use of the term, "civil society," in Turkish politics as Western-oriented and thus, non-existent in Turkey. Scholars generally point out the weakness, or even insignificance, of such a term to explain the political trajectory of Turkey (Mardin, 2016). The relationship between civil society and notions including "rights", "liberties" and "freedom" neither received a positive attitude from different segments of the public nor did their existence arouse curiosity for civil society itself. After Turkey was recognized as a candidate country for the European Union (EU) in 1999, popular debates revolved around the economic benefits of the candidacy and the identity issues of Europeanisation, although the EU highlighted the problematic areas including democracy, rule of law, independent civil society and the prospect of rights and freedoms (European Commission, 2004). Especially for the last two decades, rights-based civil society organizations (CSOs) and their right claims have attained a greater interest. This interest did not only emerge from the political parties, which advocated and supported such demands, but also from the public, who held protests and demonstrations. In that aspect, many observers ignored the role of the EU and its political, institutional and financial contributions in the rise of rights-based CSOs (Ketola, 2016). These CSOs have been able to shape the mainstream political agenda by presenting the claims of different identities, discussing liberties of the oppressed and advocating the demands of the disadvantaged.

This thesis aims to explore how civil society in Turkey has acquired a rights-based approach from the late 1980s and how the CSOs have transformed the political space and structure in terms of promoting democratization with their own demands and

targets. For that purpose, the thesis aims to investigate the emergence of the rights-based CSOs and discusses the ways that they affected the terrains of the Turkish civil society and politics, especially with the beginning of the full membership negotiations with the EU. In order to reveal such a socio-political trajectory in Turkey, the thesis benefits from the theoretical framework on democratization, discusses the literature on Turkish politics and underlines the scholarly use of civil society. In the thesis, I explore the relationship between civil society and state, and reveal its political effects starting from the late Ottoman era towards the late 1980s. Since this thesis considers rights-based CSOs as the agents for generating democracy and regards them as the carriers of pluralism, it underlines the rise and the socio-political impacts and analyzing the transformative power of the EU. I also point out how the rights-based CSOs representing varied themes and issues within Turkish society gained significant momentum and became a powerful element for democratization.

At the same time, the thesis pinpoints that the rights-based CSOs, growing in number and power, are able to transform political debates and provide solutions thanks to their networks with political parties, municipalities and society. In that regard, I provide the following three main arguments: First of all, non-existent in Turkish civil society until the end of the 1980s, rights-based CSOs flourished and diversified by addressing varied social and political problems in Turkish society. Secondly, recently regarded as one of the most important fundamental elements within the civil society, rights-based CSOs benefited from the institutional and financial programs of the EU institutions from the early 2000s and generated democratization and provided inclusion by upholding the rights of the disadvantaged, underrepresented and socially/culturally oppressed (Ketola, 2013; 2016). Thirdly, with expanding power and prevalence, rights-based CSOs are competent at carrying their visions on politics thanks to their effects on the socio-political actors and they are capable of promoting their frames and ideas in daily Turkish politics.

The introduction chapter is then followed by the second chapter which seeks to establish the scholarly links between the concept of civil society and the notion of democratization. Relying on various theoretical approaches to civil society, the chapter investigates conventional accounts in order to understand the use of this concept in

different settings. Many theories on "civil society" nearly equate such notion to any voluntary associational behaviour and organization in any given society; and tend to project a positive correlation between civil society and democratization in various different geographies (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1994; Cohen and Arato 1994). This chapter opts for a critical stance on conventional theories because these theories do no restrict the use of civil society and they generally cherry-pick the correlation with democracy, which results in flawed measures. Thus, the thesis presents the importance of the rights-based CSOs, in terms of their reliance on promoting democratic governance and practices including inclusiveness and recognition for the disadvantaged. As being a specific example in civil society, rights-based CSOs differ with their promotion of rights because they frame their claims to target the state (Jonsson, 2003). Thus, they are a constant reminder that the state is responsible for an action to be taken on behalf of the oppressed. In addition to that, I analyze the rights-based CSOs for their ambition to create methods and practices. The fact that they play a major role in coining a new understanding, can, in turn, open space for further democratization. In that specific aspect, unlike any voluntary association, this thesis presents the rights-based CSOs as the agents of democratization. This attribution directly addresses the socially excluded or culturally oppressed people's call for recognition and acceptance. Thus, this chapter scrutinizes the positive reinforcing relationship between civil society and democratization in regards to the works and the contributions of the organizations and initiatives which promote a rights-based approach.

After the presentation of the concepts and notions concerning civil society and democratization in different sites of the academic literature, in the third chapter, the study operationalizes these same terms in the case of Turkey from the late Ottoman era. The Turkish case has been cited as a distinct example compared to the Western/European geographies, in regards to its weakness, or even in regards to the absence of a civil society against a strong state that encapsulated a unique tradition (Kalaycıoğlu, 1998, pp. 132-133). In such a social-political trajectory, the 19th century signified the period when the Ottoman state attempted to catch up the Western/European perceptions on social, political, cultural and technical

advancements (Okyar and Landau, 1984). The weakness of the civil society and the lack of significant voluntary associations remained to be the defining characteristic of the early Republican era, an era where a state-led one-party project almost diffused and dominated every section of the society in Turkey. Though the civil society in the 1950s could only be understood by what media, with only limited power, had offered, the first relevant examples of a civil society date back to the late 1960s when students, workers and some sections of the society gathered across the axis of the political left and right. Unlike the common perception of the civil society and the contributions of the CSO's for attaining a certain consensus-building, the activities and presence of such initiatives were dealt with its polarizing mission. That meant that such initiatives were deepening the line between leftist/socialist and conservative/nationalist/Islamist organizations and groupings in the 1970s (Saktanber and Beşpınar, 2011, p. 274). I aim to articulate what triggered the civil society into acquiring a human rights perspective and a democratizing vision, and into incorporating rights-based applications from the late 1980s towards the late 1990s, in a period when the official negotiations for being a full member of the EU started.

The fourth chapter covers the transformation and the enlargement of the rights-based CSOs from the beginning of the EU process which had resonances on judicial, social and political arenas. Thanks to the powerful anchor effect of the EU and Turkey's willingness to undertake a democratizing trajectory, the early 2000s realized the proliferation of the CSOs. Many CSOs in Turkey then adopted the language of human rights and a rights-based approach, followed by an increase in the related themes and social issues (Ketola, 2013). With the relaxation of the bureaucratic blockades over the right to organize as well as relaxations of the regulations for the right to protest, Turkey attempted to embrace a pro-democratic agenda. This chapter intends to analyze how rights-based CSOs began to be considered as one of the defining elements/actors in civil society in Turkey. While the initiation of such rights-based CSOs date back to the early and mid-1990s, the impacts of the positive social and political environment with the accession negotiations are warranted. In order to discuss the emergence of the rights-based CSOs and their historical trajectory during the 1990s, I examine the social action repertoire and the transformation of the political outlook. In that respect, the

chapter argues that most of the rights-based CSOs, which were initially based on the Kemalist/bureaucratic ideas or leftist/socialist cleavages, opted for a significant alteration in regards to their socio-political demands as well as their methods. Therefore, the promotion of the rights-based themes over the needs-based approach, and CSOs' aim to question the state's practices rather than being a substitute for the state and its organs all signify a crucial turn in this period.

The chapter on the transformation of the CSOs and the adoption of the language of rights are followed by the fifth chapter which is devoted to the history of EU-Turkey relations, EU's grants and funds for civil society and the specialization of the CSOs and their framing methods of the social and cultural issues. Being active organizations during the late 1980s and 1990s, the growth and acceleration of the capacities of these rights-based CSOs during the 2000s and 2010s influenced Turkish society in a variety of aspects. Thus, such specialization and expansion of the socio/cultural issues within the Turkish society are presented with the specific trajectories of the right areas: This chapter emphasizes especially the contributions of the LGBTI+[1], women, human rights advocacy, environmental rights-based CSOs, and animal rights activism. The chapter also includes the aims of the CSOs working on refugees, minority, child, youth etc. Utilizing the theories of democratization which pinpoint the importance of pluralism, consensus-building of the promotion of oppressed groups in policy areas, this chapter matches the efforts and targets of these rights-based CSOs with such concepts. As rights-based CSOs expand the area of politics in Turkish society and question the social/cultural issues that had never been pointed by any political party or organization before, I explain how these rights-based CSOs promoted different categories of people and boost democratization in Turkey. Despite the ongoing democratization processes in the 2000s, the chapter stresses the resistance and struggle of the rights-based CSOs against the increased tone of authoritarianism especially since the early 2010s (Özyürek, Özpınar, Altındiş, 2019). For that purpose, the protests and demonstrations including Gezi Park protests in 2013 reveal the significance of the

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[1] LGBTI+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and plus. In order to encompass diverse sex, sexuality and gender categories, I will use LGBTI+ as an umbrella term.

rights-based CSOs against the backlashes from the government and inflation of new rights themes.

The sixth chapter depicts the shift of the politics towards the rights-based themes thanks to the contributions of the rights-based CSOs and explains how such organizations have stimulated democratic understanding in public. This chapter discusses the efforts of the rights-based CSOs at connecting with the political parties and working with the municipalities. Using the academic terrain of democracy, the political channels including parliament, political parties, and autonomous municipalities can be considered as driving factors for pluralism in varied sections within society (Randall, 2012). Being the fundamental actors of Turkish politics, rights-based CSOs' relations with the political parties and reflections in the area of recognition and legislation allow space for further democratization. To point out such a shift, the relationship between different right themes and areas and the agents of politics and society need a significant investigation. The preeminence and the significance of the rights-based CSOs have been dominant in Turkish civil society for the last two decades, therefore, this chapter aims to propose the idea that these rights-based CSOs have achieved to become the political actors in Turkey and succeeded to affect the agenda of daily politics. Despite the mounting exercise of authoritarianism during Gezi Park protests in 2013 and tolling anti-democratic policies aftermath of the failed coup in 2016 where rights-based CSOs seem to be weak, the objective of the thesis is to highlight how resistance and struggle of these CSOs against a strong state tradition differ from the other eras in Turkish social history and how they cooperate with the opposition parties.

In the conclusion part, I sum up the findings of the research questions regarding CSOs' adopting a rights-based approach and their ambition to democratize. After I study the relationship between civil society and democracy, I argue the positive correlation between these two concepts from the perspective of the rights-based CSOs. From the late Ottoman era to the late 1980s, civil society had neither been solid against a strong state nor had it been defined upon its rights-based character (Mardin, 2016). However, as the rights-based application and rights-based CSOs accelerated with the help of the EU and democratizing agenda of Turkish governments during the 2000s and early

2010s, the CSOs of different themes were founded and they contributed to the further democratization experiences for the disadvantaged and the oppressed (Ketola, 2013; Özyürek, Özpınar, Altındiş, 2019). Since many of the democratic indicators have been pointing a significant trend of authoritarianism especially after the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the transformation of the political structure and resistance of such CSOs against the backlashes of anti-democratic practices occupy a space in the thesis. In that regard, the thesis shows how the political structure has been inflated by the rights-based CSOs as the rights-based application has become a crucial component of the Turkish civil society. While the EU's political and social directions within the negotiation process for the full membership benefited from such organizations and rights-based application, these CSOs also affected the Turkish political parties and daily politics by going beyond the borders of the civil society.

Fundamentally, the thesis delves into flourishment of the rights-based CSOs and discusses the ways that they affected the terrains of the Turkish civil society and politics, especially with the beginning of the full membership negotiations with the EU. By investigating such a trajectory, the socio-political discrepancies on the notions covering civil society and democratization are compared and contrasted in a period spanning from the late Ottoman era from 19th century to 2019. In order to conduct such research, I benefit mainly from the scholarly works and academic literature on the issues including democratization, civil society and Turkish politics. Throughout the thesis, aside from the theoretical framework illuminating the civil society, democratization and the relationship between these two concepts, primary and secondary literature covering the academic papers, articles, and scholarly books on Turkey's socio-political trajectory are addressed. Moreover, in addition to the scholarly literature, I present the works and contributions of the rights-based CSOs by using their publicly disclosed documents including policy papers and their data on the varied right fields, and the reports and info notes of the international agencies like the EU and United Nations (UN). I evaluate the trajectory regarding these socio-political and cultural issues which cover especially the interplay of civil society and democratization in Turkish history in the subfield of both comparative politics and political sociology.

In order to present the trajectory of the civil society in Turkey and pinpoint the significance of the rights-based CSOs through that social history, I evaluate certain developments and evolutions through a specific timeline. In that regard, I underline the change by pointing out the milestone events and/or evolution of the socio-political environment. Thus, the thesis reveals such development and shifts by analyzing the historical process. For that specific reason, I link the sites of history to prove my central assumptions and arguments. With that application, I outline the socio-political transformation of civil society in Turkey in a period between the 19th century Ottoman Empire and the 1980s and an investigation from the emergence of the rights-based CSOs during the late 1980s up to the 2010s. Through this historical line of events, I aim to capture the appearance of the rights-based language, the beginning of the accession process for the EU membership and the struggle against the authoritarian backsliding of Turkey. Via this study, it would be possible to present the significance of the rights-based CSOs and their effects on the expansion of democratic politics in Turkey. Moreover, rather than presenting a one-dimensional socio-political history of Turkey, I present the emergence and flourishment of the varied rights themes in different sections. As every right theme did not encounter the same trajectory, I evaluate the paths of the different rights-based movement in each turn separately.

CHAPTER 2

CONSEPTUALISING CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIZATION

2.1.Introduction

The relationship between civil society and democratization has widely been discussed in regards to their positive reinforcing connection (Cohen and Arato 1994; Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1994). However, both notions have different, sometimes contradictory meanings and practices, which provide them with a vague connotation. In order to assess this seemingly overstated relationship, in this chapter, I investigate the literature of the civil society, democratization and the connection between these two concepts.

As mentioned before, this thesis centers on the socio-political historical trajectory of Turkish democratization by analyzing the convergence and the moments/periods in regards to civil society. In line with this focus, in this chapter, I scrutinize the evolution of the rights-based CSOs and the emergence and flourishment within civil society in terms of their effects on Turkish democratization. To account for the relationship between these concepts and to situate these in Turkish politics, I provide an academic understanding of civil society, democracy/democratization. For that purpose, theoretical approaches in the literature are presented and explained thoroughly.

This chapter is structured as follows: First of all, the notion of "civil society" is explored thoroughly in a historical as well as a thematic manner. In addition to the conventional wisdom on civil society, I also discuss the critiques regarding the relationship between civil society and democratization. In response, I offer a new outlook for the civil-society and democratization conjunction based on the rights-based CSOs. In such a way, rather than holding a holistic understanding of civil society, I associate the contributions of the rights-based CSO with the elements of a democratic rule. Secondly, in order to situate the works and input of these CSOs, I explore how the rights-based CSOs project democratization as a "political" tool so as

to argue against the traditional manifestations of political activism. In that way, the thesis pinpoints the reliance of the rights-based CSOs on further democratization by questioning the power relations and problematizing the exclusion of many communities/identities. Thirdly, I discuss the promotion of democracy by the rights-based CSOs. The chapter presents the democratic potentials of the rights-based CSOs and shows the major steps that the CSOs took for democratization in society.

2.2. The Relationship Between Civil Society and Democracy

2.2.1. Civil Society in Its Historical Trajectory

The notions of "civil society" and "democracy" have been used as mutually reinforcing, if not the same, concepts in the literature for many cases around the world. As it is widely discussed in its theoretical operationalization in the literature, the relationship between civil society and democratization was also employed in the Turkish case (Mardin, 2016; Ketola, 2013). In order to situate the relationship between democratization and civil society in Turkey, it is crucial to stress how such a theoretical perspective between these two notions emerged and evolved in its historical context around the globe.

The concept of civil society has dominantly been used to explain democracy and democratization in a given country. Tocqueville, who employed one of the earliest use of the term "civil society", puts an emphasis on the voluntary associations in the United States in order to demonstrate the democratic culture which was then absent in the French polity (1969, p. 313). For him, "the health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens" (1969). In his writings of *Democracy in America,* Tocqueville relates the high salience of associationalism with the rise and establishment of a political regime that on one side promotes freedom and liberty and on the other side rejects the tyranny of the majority and any forms of repression (1969). From this line of thought, Tocqueville illustrates the associations of civil society as the "schools of democracy" (Tocqueville, 1969): Whereas the voluntary organizations provide individuals with information and enhance citizens' political deliberation on public issues, civil society works as a

double-facet phenomenon on advancing the civil virtues including toleration, trust, and sense of reciprocity (Warren, 2011). For Tocqueville, the emergence and sustainability of the democratic culture are direct results of any civil engagement within a community.

Various examples of literature exploring the relationship between civil society and democratization underline how the principles of a democratic political regime are correlated with the emergence of the intermediate associations (Cohen and Arato 1994; Edwards, 2011). In that particular, Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti's widely recognized research, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* is essential to cite (1994). In their accounts, civil society, associationalism, and voluntarism determine the prospect of a vibrant democracy in a country (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1994). In their book, authors highlight a high-degree correlation between the density of associations and the government responsiveness by employing a comparative research based on the Italian cities (1994). In addition to that, the central finding suggests that political and social equality correlates with civil participation (Kohn, 2011). The fundamental focus of the study is to find how the voluntary association play a preeminent role in defining the quality of democracy in our modern age. In another influential work of Putnam, *The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* he interprets the decline of the group activities as a signifier for the downward trend of the civil society, which is directly connected to the health of a democratic society (2007). That is, plural society, in which diversity and inclusiveness are the prime symbols, could easily diminish in a time when society realizes a loss of its voluntary groups and networks (Putnam, 2007).

Furthermore, the arguments attributing positive relationship between civil society and democracy are not limited to Western cases. Although the theory and the cases could sound Eurocentric on the associations that function as "schools of democracy", these provide that voluntarism and associationalism also work positively in line with cooperation, trust, and empathy in the non-Western context: By testing the strength of civil associations through the conflict-prone regions in India, Varshney illustrates how existence of the voluntary organizations is central in determining the salience and effect of a religious conflict between the Hindu and Muslim population (2003). In his

book, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, Varshney pinpoints the promise of the civil society by bridging the sections of the society with its cross-cutting nature (2003). In addition to that, Heller (2009) investigates the case of South Africa where he realized the "deepening" role of civil society in democratization in regards to the distribution of wealth. Not only limited to the Western or European cases, but many scholars also cite different cases to demonstrate the positive effects of civil associationalism and voluntarism on democratization seen in different parts of the world.

I want to emphasize that civil society is directly associated with all forms of voluntarism and associationalism. In other words, for Tocqueville and many other theories, there is no sociopolitical or categorical prerequisites or thresholds for any organization to be counted as a part of civil society. Thus, a bird-watching club, hunter's associations, Lions Clubs as well as a choral society, could be cited as members of civil society in the same purpose as a charity or an association could be in that paradigm (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1994; Putnam, 2007). Therefore, in that line of thought, the determinants of the democratization encompass all the associational organizations and these organizations hold sufficient power to trigger the very basis for a democratic society.

2.2.2. The Critiques: Limitations of the Civil Society in Democracy

Despie the dominance of these theories in the literature for a long time, varied studies have been criticized because of their limitations and flaws in regard to their empirical and theoretical aspects (Berman, 1997b; Bermeo and Nord 2000; Encarnación, 2003): In order to test Putnam's theories, Tarrow analyzed the political behaviour of Italian citizens spanning from the 1920s to the 1930s (2000). In contrast to the supposedly positive association between civil society and democratization, Tarrow concluded his research on the fundamental finding in which over-articulation of the voluntary organizations were correlating with the attempts to end democracy (2000). During the interwar period, in Italy, the very same cities which were promoted due to their high institutional responsiveness and governmental success in Putnam's study were correlating with the success of Mussolini and his fascist party in the elections (Tarrow,

2000). Moreover, rather than pointing out the presence of the civil society as the guardian of democratic values, Berman asserted that a strong civil society in Germany actually enabled Nazis to establish totalitarianism (1997a). In his empirical findings, Nazi party members who were present in every one-third of the total CSOs in German polity strengthened their influences and mastered their effects by turning them into weapons of the voluntary organizations (Berman, 1997a). For him, malevolent civil society associations in Germany benefited from trust and solidarity, but this was not to strengthen the institutions and procedures of democracy but to tear down to the ground to forge a dictatorship (Berman, 1997a). Last but not least, Varshney's findings on India was also challenged: Many observers criticized the interpretation of the overlook and overstretch in civil society as the focal signifier for the ethnic/religious tensions (Chandra, 2001). Adding to voluntary organizations, scholars urged to discuss the importance of business interest and economic activity in the regions of India to determine a salience of conflict (Chandra, 2001). Thus, many research have been criticized since civil society is utilized in a certain way for democratization whereas the examples of the associationalism and voluntarism also impede or block democratization contributing to authoritarian purposes (Levi, 1996).

It is argued that civil society should not be directly connected to the idea of democratization, this may help or disrupt a democratic regime (Sewell Jr, 1992). In that aspect, employing the concept of civil society in a very vague and a larger form, as a form of associationalism, does not directly produce democratization, pluralism and free society (Payne, 2000). In that regard, one should avoid using the term civil society for explaining democracy in either positive or negative manner. Thus, one could point the importance of applying such a concept in a neutral way which could or could not serve to democracy, authoritarianism and even totalitarianism.

2.2.3. Approaches to Civil Society: Rights-based CSOs

As I discussed in the previous sections, studies stress associations and voluntary organizations as the elements of the civil society. The associational nature of the civil society in the theoretical approaches is best translated into "organizations". In the first usage of the term, Non-governmental Developmental Organizations (NGDOs) are

assumed to promote socio-economic progress and social change, these structures are operationalized to embody a global discourse from "developed" to "developing" world. However, since the hierarchical nature was enforced by the word "developmental", the common use of the term for these organizations was transformed into Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Fowler, 2013). Nonetheless, the debates over these organizations' name and identification continue due to their hierarchically formulated underpinnings; these contributed to the inflation of names such as BRINGO (Brief Case NGO), MONGO (My Own NGO), GONGO (Government NGO), PONGO (Political NGO) and many more (Fowler, 2013).

As I discussed, civil society does not always go hand in hand with democracy. As there are cases where the rise of civil society contributes to democratic rule, other cases show the elements within civil society as responsible for the end of democracy. In order to rethink the relation between civil society and democratization, many scholars investigate some specific forms of associationalism which explicitly promote the ideas of human rights, freedom, and liberties (Veneklasen, 1994). In that specific aspect, despite dealing with the civil society in a holistic way, many scholars and international agencies promote the concept of "human-rights based organizations" to underline the causational link with the form of civil society that paves the way for democratization (Fowler, 2011). In addition, whereas the varied approaches do not opt for defining specific baselines for their concepts, human-rights based approach is specific and limited with certain thresholds and definitions (Hilhorst, 2003). In that view, while the duty bearers are monitored and lobbied to ensure the necessary rights, right-holders are informed for their use of rights and encouraged to claim their rights from the state agencies and institutions (UNFPA, 2014).

One of the fundamental views on civil society argues that it involves democratic pressures. In that regard, Mercer embraces the role of the NGOs and CSOs as the democratic actors (2004). However, the mix blessings of civil society are also relevant for the NGOs and CSOs regarding their presence as the carriers for democracy, inclusiveness and pluralism. In that aspect, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) (2004) presents the democracy and NGO work in its 8th article:

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The preamble to the Fundamental Principles on the Status of NGOs in Europe stresses the importance and value of NGOs' contribution to a democratic society, which is made in fields as varied as promotion of human rights, environmental protection, sport, public health and defense of the interests of various sectors of the community. The text lays particular emphasis on NGOs' role in public awareness-raising and education for democracy, while pointing out that these aims, albeit essential in a society adhering to the values of democracy and the rule of law, are not the sole purposes fulfilled by NGOs. The nature of NGOs' input in the different fields is equally varied.

To address the contribution of such CSOs, scholars mostly tend to account for CSOs that rely on the organizations projecting a rights-based vision for the disadvantaged and underrepresented. International and local CSOs like human rights organizations, perform a disciplinary role in promoting legislation and the protecting of rights (Kubiek, 2005). The human rights-based approach identifies rights holders, their entitlements, corresponding duty-bearers and their obligations. It works towards strengthening the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims and duty-bearers meet their obligations (UNFPA, 2014). Likewise, while seeking to analyze the inequalities, human rights approach targets the marginalized and disadvantaged in order to voice and practice their rights in the public sphere. The institutions of the EU (2008) define human rights and rights-based approach as follows:

Human rights defenders are those individuals, groups and organs of society that promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights defenders seek the promotion and protection of civil and political rights as well as the promotion, protection and realization of economic, social and cultural rights. Human rights defenders also promote and protect the rights of members of groups such as indigenous communities. The definition does not include those individuals or groups who commit or propagate violence.

In spite of the contributions of the human rights-based approach to the theories regarding civil society-democratization enigma, the paradigm is called androcentric and regarded to represent the egocentrism of the human perspective (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011; Regan, 2001): The critics, through a universalist and non-human

centered project, advocate the term "rights-based approach" without the noun "human" to emphasize and prioritize the struggles of environment and animal rights. From the outlook of these theories, only the extension of this perspective through the non-human areas could be valid in building a truly democratic and free society (Pianta, 2005). Therefore, the contemporary version explaining a general understanding of democratization entails the non-humanitarian perspectives as well, including the environmental movements and animal rights.

The civil society actors have been debated for their "deepening" missions against authoritarianism and for consolidation of democracies around the globe (Heller, 2009). Organized in the non-state and non-market areas, the actors in civil society constitute the public sphere which serves as a common ground to public discussion for many of the undervalued and underrepresented sociopolitical concerns (Cohen and Arato, 1994; Habermas, 2018). However, utilization of civil society with a holistic approach should not be directly related to democratization as the actors may carry xenophobic, anti-immigrant, ultra-nationalist and non-democratic demands (Kopecky and Mudde, 2003). Thus, rights-based CSOs known for their contribution to human rights and the environment underline this relationship and surpass such mixed blessing of civil society on democratization.

Rather than drawing a direct line from civil society to democratization, one should relate specific forms of organization within civil society to underpin its significance on democracy. To that end, unlike an overarching formulation in civil society as a type of associationalism, the scholars and the international institutions promote the investigation of rights-based CSOs to demonstrate the flourishment of ideas including freedom, liberty, equality, and toleration. In other words, democratization in a country should be directly addressed to the ambition and works of the rights-based CSOs, not to the private enterprises, any voluntary associations or state-centric mechanisms. For that reason, I would like to refer to the rights-based CSOs in regards to their promotion of elements in democracy.

2.3. Political Contributions of the Rights-based CSOs

As mentioned before, this thesis aims to reveal the significance of the rights-based CSOs in the aspect of Turkish trajectory of democratization. In spite of the recognition of the rights-based CSOs for their contributions and their ambition on socio-political change, existing literature on these organization tends to give limited reference to their political salience. In this section, I offer a new approach to underline the efforts of the rights-based CSOs' in changing the political environment.

Armstrong and Bernstein differentiates political activities and manifestations into two contrasting views as "political process" – traditional – and "multi-institutional politics" – contemporary – due to their opposite understandings of society, power, goals, and strategies (2008). The political process model emphasizes that "political" and economic structures of society are primary and the domination of society is organized around only one source of power. On the other hand, the alternative contemporary model widens the debate on power which includes the relevance of society and culture. Most of the literature on the efforts of the rights-based CSOs employ this multi-institutional approach on politics. In that way, it allows a more complex representation of power relationships and domination for social actors within the culture (Sewell Jr, 1992).

First of all, since the fundamental target is the state; and since it aims at policy changes for the political process, the focus of any movement could be legitimized in the pursuit of seeking any changes in the state policy (Tilly, 2019). Collective action, from the logic of political process approach, is not considered 'political' unless it targets the state. Likewise, the actors for the state-centric view of a political approach are seen as politically and economically disadvantaged in society. On the other hand, rather than putting any restrictions on the focus of the actions, the contemporary model sets a more ambitious target on state and its institutions by means of the struggles towards cultural structures and meanings. In other words, more than referring to the state power arbitrarily, the sites of cultural domination seen in varied webs in the society are formulated to indicate exploitative relations (Bernstein, 2005).

Secondly, cultural change is perceived as secondary by the traditional view and the grievances of the actors are regarded as definite, trusted for formulating policy changes and offering new benefits (McAdam, 2009). The objective of the strategies that the political process approach utilizes, is an instrumental conception which disregards expressive methods. Nonetheless, since cultural goals are prioritized by the contemporary approach, material and symbolic reforms are recognized as political goals. In that regard, despite a holistic emphasis on instrumental change, expressive changes are welcomed and culture-specific understanding of institutions are partially highlighted.

Thirdly and lastly, these two models, which affect the political behaviour on the struggle, change considerably in reference to the key questions over challenges and methods for success. While the traditional view legitimizes its actions by grasping the state power or at least using the efforts directed at the state-level, the contemporary model refers to the state as only one of the sources of power in a multi-dimensional prospect embedded in society and culture (Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008). Therefore, the key questions for the latter approach aim to provide the nature of domination and various forms of challenges which could arise from the hidden meaning of everyday life. In that regard, the organizations operating in these fields intend to make the invisible enemy visible. They rely on dominated identities and analyze alternative institutional logic for exploring liberating ways and methods against cultural meanings. That is, for multi-institutional politics approach, the non-traditional objects are important because they target their strategies against any other embody than the state and because they propose struggle against the state in favor of the laws and regulations seen as the agents of the cultural meanings (Snow, 2004).

Primarily, the main emphasis on this section is the following question: How and in which ways have these applications of the rights-based CSOs been reframing the issues on the basis of politics. Upon presenting the political objectives of the new outlooks, it is important to note that the flourishment of these movements have been generally constituted by the efforts of the rights-based movements. In that particular regard, rights-based CSOs could be regarded as a "triggering factor" for democracy with their works specializing in women, environment, LGBTI+, animal, refugee etc.

Therefore, the relationship between the rights-based CSOs and their objectives in politics and the public sphere can be warranted. In general, such attempts and actions could be related with the liberal and leftist understanding which promote individual rights, liberties and identity claims. Following that point, in the literature review, I explore the avenues and areas and discuss the possible ways that the efforts of the CSOs translate into the objective for further democratization.

2.4. Rights-based CSOs on Democratization

From the perspective of one of the dominant paradigms, Schumpeterian understanding views democracy as a very minimalist term, which limits the democratic regime type into a method of election among the elite groups within a democracy (1976). In that aspect, the minimalist approach only recognizes one threshold for democracy, which can be differentiated in the countries that introduce elections for more than one groups or parties. Notwithstanding the fact that elections are the necessary factors for democracies, the importance of a civil society is underlined as it is a driving force for democracy to function democratically (Dahl, 2008). Due to the historical examples and applications, the strength of the civil societies and the quality of democracies have been regarded as two variables that reinforce one another (Cohen and Arato 1994; Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti, 1994; Edwards, 2011).

By taking the relationship between civil society and the process of democratization into consideration, the individuals are dealt with their capacities for democratic citizenship. From that point of view, more than the activity of voting in the regular elections, collective decisions of the individuals should be prioritized in the search for the democracy promotion (Warren, 2011). Through the lenses of this paradigm, it is possible to evaluate CSOs as the ones that link public officials with constituents and as a key site of collective decision and organization which initiates de-centered forms of governance (Urbinati and Warren, 2008; Leighninger and Bradley, 2006). Last but not least, civil society's contributions to flavor democratic practices could be considered in terms of its power on external checks, its watchdog groups, unions, and association; as these all voice the interest of public goods and promote pluralism (Warren, 2011). In that way of thinking, as opposed to a limited account of democratic

rule by Schumpeter, I opted for the Dahlian concept of democracy which covers the notions of equality and inclusion. Being a proponent of inclusionary methods for democracy, Dahl underlines the importance of granting equal opportunities for shaping political power (1989). Only from this point of view, it is possible to understand the rights-based CSOs' struggle for recognition and their ambition to liberate from the limits of democratization. Rather than minimizing the meaning and application of democracy as a method of election, rights-based CSOs play a dominant role in expanding the language of rights and put pressure on states which do not conform to such standards. In that regard, denouncing the legitimacy of a government only through the majority of votes, CSOs constitute the understanding of "rights-based democracy" to underline the importance of freedom, inclusion, pluralism, and participation (Dworkin, 1990).

Although the right to vote is one of the absolute elements of a democracy, for the disadvantaged and the underrepresented, inclusion on a legal basis is not generally limited to voting. While inclusion is mostly characterized by the responsiveness of individual or groups, the inclusion of disadvantaged categories like minorities happen to be the most neglected area in the issue of democratization (Holden, 2006). To secure equal participation and responsiveness from the state and its institution, rights-based CSOs are well-equipped and demand certain amendments, regulations, and reforms in the legal arena. For instance, women advocacy groups focus on sexist working rights and environmental activists struggle for a better way to define pro-nature laws. From such a point of view, one might articulate two main effects of the rights-based CSOs for the impetus for democratization: On the one hand, rights-based CSOs can be seen as the intermediatory systems since they contribute many identities to become visible in the public arena. On the other hand, by promoting new identities and groupings within a society, rights-based CSOs frame new demands and responsibilities to restructure the relationship between the state and society. These two factors of the rights-based CSOs on the issue of democratization could be critically laid out.

First of all, rights-based CSOs can be seen as the motors of the democratization processes where inclusion of many under-represented groups into the political mechanism may be realized: In various societies, the organization of power and the

deliberation of the rights are often contested. In its essence, many of the contestations are based on the unequal and/or repressed nature of power towards certain groups such as minorities, sexes and etc. due to cultural, political, and/or economic reasons. In that regard, rights-based CSOs are established along these lines – on these disadvantaged groups – to sustain equal standing, recognition, and inclusion of a community.

Secondly and more importantly, the identities and repressed groups' ideals can be framed in ways which enables society, state and its institution to reflect, legislate and apply on the lines of the demands. In that specific regard, adding to the role of civil society to guaranteeing certain rights and freedoms, rights-based organizations also "define" new rights and understanding in order to expand the democratic environment. For instance, environmental rights in the urban spaces, LGBTI+ rights, and animal rights could be grasped in such a context where many established democracies face new demands thanks to the existence of the civil society. Thus, these organizations attribute new frames and outlooks on the issues and subjects which are directed to the flourishment of new areas in a democratic polity. In that way, democratization is a process which entails the existence and rise of different themes and demands through the society.

2.5. Conclusion

The conventional theoretical underpinnings refer to the relationship between civil society and democratization in a mutually re-enforcing way. The conceptualization of every element in the sphere of civil society as a positive element for democratization simply ignores the non-democratic nature of sections within civil society. Civil society could be destructive for democracy as it was the case for Italy in the 1920s and Germany for the 1930s. To that end, rather than presenting civil society as an overarching concept, I particularly consider the rights-based CSOs as significant for democratization. To that extent, I draw a positive relationship between the existence and significance of the rights-based CSOs and a potential for democratization. After that, I deal with policies and aims of the right-based CSOs in regards to their contested "political" nature: Although the traditional views about the meanings of "politics" and "democratization" are limited, I present new underlying views on the political nature

of the CSOs. In other words, rights-based CSOs reveal and politicize varied cultural and social issues including oppression of minorities and repression of identities. Lastly, after I discuss the works of the right-based CSOs and the recent understandings in a political aspect, I deal with these efforts alongside with their capacity on democratization in a given society. With their attempts to struggle on the right subjects, many rights-based CSOs become the central actors to enhance democratic applications in society.

CHAPTER 3

TURKISH POLITICAL HISTORY AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the varied theoretical applications between civil society and democratization and pointed out the significance of the rights-based CSOs within that debate. In this chapter, I focus on the historical development of the relationship between civil society and democratization in Turkish political history. Throughout the chapter, I investigate the long history of civil society from the late Ottoman period to the beginning of the EU candidacy process which I put under five main eras based on their specific socio-cultural and political themes: I illustrate the Ottoman era up to the establishment of the Turkish Republic (19th cc. -1923); the one-party rule of Republican People's Party *(Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – CHP)* (1923-1950); introduction of the multiparty politics and Democrat Party *(Demokrat Parti – DP)* (1950-1960); Turkey between the coup of 1960 and the coup of 1980; and the period from 1980 till 1999 when Turkey became an official EU member candidate.

During the late Ottoman era, civil society was very weak and repressed by the state. Afterwards, in the Republican era from 1923 until 1950, the state and bureaucracy were dominant and left no room for independent civil society. Following, the multiparty era and DP's taking office in 1950 did not promise a liberalization and an open space for the civil society either. For most of the period from the 1960s to 1980, the civil society was no more than the representation of the political cleavages between the leftist and rightist groups. From the late Ottoman Empire era to the end of the 1980s, there were only a handful examples of the rights-based CSOs which only existed for a short period and had almost no impact on Turkish society and politics. The rights-based approach firstly emerged during the late 1980s as a long-standing

segment within the civil society and flourished with its different themes during the 1990s. Despite their limited strength due to the heavy state repressions and prejudices from society, the rights-based CSOs signify the early democratic potentials of Turkey during the late 1980s and the 1990s. They established a rights-based culture on many different rights areas and identities which had not been pronounced in the mainstream politics before.

3.2. Modernization under the Ottoman Rule

Many concepts regarding the state-society relationship in Turkey including "civil society" are residues of the predecessor, the Ottoman Empire. The formation of the political structure is the outcome of major decisions made by Ottomans beginning from the early 18[th]century (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). Similar to many empires, Ottoman Empire also initiated fundamental reforms in the spheres of economy, military and education to tackle with its humiliating defeats on the international scale and to meet the necessities of the modern world in the socio-political and cultural areas (Okyar and Landau, 1984).

The socio-political reform process in the Ottoman Empire dates back to 1808, Charter of Alliance (Shaw and Shaw, 1977). This charter referred to written rules between Sultan and local powers, and the first time in the Ottoman history, it held use of Sultan's power based on the rules and regulations. As the Chapter of Alliance was withdrawn in the upcoming years, another potential reform was put into the agenda in 1839 when the Tanzimat period adopted certain rules and procedures for modernization (Shaw and Shaw, 1977, p. 55). That reform period was followed by the initiation of Royal Edict of Reform in 1856 and most importantly, by the adoption of the first Ottoman constitution, Kanun-i Esas-i. Kanun-i Esas-i aimed to curtail some of the powers of the Sultan, introduced a parliamentary system and advanced the rule of law in 1876 (Shaw and Shaw, pp. 174-175). Being equipped with very strong monarchical power over the parliament and judiciary, the first constitution hardly resembled a liberal framework. In this era, Young Turks were one of the major political actors who were mostly composed of educated elites and who pushed the absolutist regime towards liberalization and constitutional democracy (Mardin, 1969). Although

the social and political process was ongoing thanks to ideas and resistance of the Young Turks, such progressive trajectory was interrupted by Abdul Hamid II who suspended the constitution and dissolved the Parliament, scaling back the Empire into an absolutist regime (Mardin, 2016). In that timeline, most of the Young Turks formed the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) to struggle for liberal reform movement. Although the revolution led by the Young Turks in 1908 was successful and the constitution came into effect again, the second parliamentary democracy was marked by cross and internal divisions in the political parties and was short-lived due to the massive defeat in the World War I (Shaw and Shaw, 1977; Zürcher, 1984; Kansu, 1997). Despite this short parliamentary period ruled by CUP, some kind of civil society activity, though very limited, flourished within the Ottoman polity: The publication of women and non-Muslim minority magazines like "Flower Garden" and "The World of Women", the labor strikes including May Day protests in Istanbul from 1908 to 1912, activism of different political parties such as Freedom and Accord Party and Ottoman Socialist Party, and a free press to monitor and promote democratic ideas among others are the main examples that arose in this period and some even remained under the reform period of the late Ottoman Empire (Çakır, 1994; Zürcher, 2014). However, these sorts of democratic practices within the Ottoman civil society were neither widespread nor powerful among public and had little political significance. Rather, in general, one might argue that the Ottoman state displays a neo-patrimonial rule which signifies the combination of both powerful ruler and quasi bureaucratic statist institutions (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). Even though such neo-patrimonial and Sultanist tendencies were challenged in specific periods, the significance and impact of civil society was limited and often questioned.

3.3. One-Party Rule and the Absence of Civil Society

During the Turkish War of Independence (1920-1923), the parliament in Ankara which was formed by the delegates from different parts of the remaining Ottoman territories prepared a constitution in 1921 and was a venue also for the oppositional (Zürcher, 1984). After the Turkish War of Independence, however, the Turkish Republic was founded on the basis of a one-party state in 1923. From the establishment of the Turkish Republic to the introduction of the first multiparty elections in 1946,

the non-state/non-governmental elements were almost absent in the Turkish society (Zihnlioğlu, 2013, p. 99). Especially with the introduction of Law on the Maintenance and Reinforcement of Public Order *(Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu)* in 1925 in the pretext of protecting the country against the Kurdish insurgency groups, Turkey was ruled with draconian applications which did not secure a free place even for political parties and free media (Cizre, 2001b, pp. 235-238). In 1931, in command of President Atatürk, Turkish Hearths *(Türk Ocakları)* were merged with the ruling CHP and that ruined one of the last major examples of the presence of a civil society. The closure of Turkish Hearths, whose political ideals coincides with those of Atatürk and CHP in regards to Turkish nationalism, modernism and statism, is a significant example of the intolerance of the regime towards an independent civil society. The political landscape was heavily dominated by CHP which single-handedly ruled the country up to 1950 and the elections were of symbolic value (Özbudun, 2011). Under the unchallenged rule of CHP, the parliament was the mere instrument of the regime. In such an environment, there was no actual member of any CSOs that could address the social and political issues regarding citizens. The era was also marked by the state-sponsored raid against Tan Newspaper which was a critical leftist news agency criticizing the governing CHP.

In 1923, upon the establishment of the Republic, fourteen women aimed to found a Women's People Party *(Kadınlar Halk Fırkası)* in Turkey (Ecevit, 2007). Due to the Election Law of 1909 which was restrictive on women, the party could not be officially established. Afterwards, this movement turned into a foundation called Turkish Women's Union *(Türk Kadınlar Birliği)* and voiced the rights of the Turkish women. However, the Union was closed down by the ruling CHP in 1925 (Ecevit, 2007).

CHP's twenty-seven years of uninterrupted rule had decisive impacts on the political culture of Turkey and on the formation of center-periphery cleavages (Mardin, 1973). That particular cleavage manifests the polarization between laicist, urban, bureaucratic elite and pious, rural and economically disadvantaged sections of the society. Especially after the Great Depression in 1929 when the economically liberal ideas were discredited, CHP aligned itself with many policies which are best defined as corporatist and étatist (statist) in its formation of the economic structure of Turkey

(Keyder, 1987). As the socio-political reflection of this economic model, CHP idealized an organic conception which projects a classless and united society (Parla and Üstel, 2005). Such an illiberal and anti-pluralist representation of Turkish society by the political elite of the Republic produced the image of 'Papa State' (*Baba Devlet*) (Heper, 1985), an omnipotent and limitless formation of the control mechanism. The combination of the organic society view and the illustration of the strong and cruel 'Papa State' left no room for free and independent civil society to organize till the end of the 1940s (Kansu, 2001). Thus, as the official doctrine of the regime undermined the elements of the civil society, legal applications were used to repress independent activities. There are two exceptions in this period in terms of human rights associations: Human Rights Society (*İnsan Hakları Cemiyeti*) by Fevzi Çakmak, founded in 1946 and Association for Spreading Free Ideas (*Hür Fikirleri Yayma Cemiyeti*) founded by Ali Fuat Başgil in 1947 (Çaylak, 2008, p. 123). However, trajectories of these associations were limited as the organizations were shut down by the CHP in the following years.

In various ways, the basis of the Kemalist idea for shaping the Turkish state can be defined as "passive-exclusive" (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002): It is passive because the Republic ignored the issues coming from the society such as the Kurdish and Islamic sections of the society. On the other hand, the exclusive character of the Kemalist conception of the state rejects the very idea of differences on the basis of ethnic and religion. In such a state-dominant tradition and a very unbalanced relationship with society, civil society is non-existent in the one-party era between 1923-1946 (Mardin, 1973). This period left a negative legacy to the civil society in the Turkish state tradition and this legacy remained after the CHP rule. That is, beyond its oppressive reflections towards Kurdish and Islamist right claims, the state benefited from its authoritarian legacy to counter different demands of its society (Cizre-Sakallioğlu, 1994).

3.4. Introduction of Multiparty Elections and DP

After the end of the World War II and the victory of the Allied Powers, the ruling cadre of the Republic introduced the multiparty system and elections to signal its international alignment to the Western countries in the Cold War (Sayarı, 1975). Even

though the multiparty elections were introduced in 1946, the elections were neither free nor fair as the open ballot system was applied. However, CHP's power drained away in the 1950 election and DP, which promised freedoms and liberties, secured an absolute majority in the parliament (Dodd, 2011). Although the newly founded DP succeeded a landslide victory and ousted CHP in the first free and fair elections in 1950, the one-party era had dominant effects on the political environment (Sayarı, 2011, p. 186).

The beginning of the 1950s with DP's taking office promised a new path for further liberalization, democratization and free space for civil society. During the first term between 1950 to 1954, Turkey accomplished, to a certain degree, an open environment which paved the way for the establishment of new media outlets and organizations (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002). The four-year-long DP's first term opened a space for independent media and relaxation of laws and regulations over freedom of expression and right to protest. However, beginning with its second term in 1954, the tone of the government became very authoritarian and nationalist. Manipulation of the election system and gerrymandering of the local areas were on DP's agenda to sustain its majority in the Turkish parliament. Second and third (1957-1960) terms of DP governments were marked with a state-sponsored pogrom against the non-Muslims in İstanbul, successive restrictions on the opposition parties and restrictions towards media (Kuyucu, 2005, pp. 377-78). The political opposition and protests of the students in search of liberties and freedoms were violently repressed by the government (Ahmad, 2014). While Turkey was headed to a snap general election in 1960 under the heavy protests, DP was not ousted from the government with the elections but the party and its ruling cadre were toppled down by a junta in the Turkish military in 1960. Without any political dissent from the public, the Turkish military's coup was welcomed and celebrated by the large sections of the opposition groups who were mostly inhabited in the largest cities in Turkey. This first coup in Turkish Republic history in 1960 had divisive impacts on the Turkish political culture and history in regards to the civil-military relations and the democratic culture (Karaosmanoğlu, 2011, p. 153).

As discussed above, despite its achievements in creating a democratic environment in terms of media freedoms and the rights of organization in its first term between 1950-1954, DP gradually changed sides to authoritarian policies. One of its core policy was the promotion of the rights of the Turkish Cypriots in the Cyprus issue, and their policy was supported with a strong tone of Turkish nationalism against the Greek Cypriots. During the second period in the 1950s, one of the turning points for the "civil society" was the organization of the nationalist groups targeting the non-Muslim minorities in Istanbul. Backed by the state and security apparatus, nationalist Turkish people began to organize marches and demonstrations to support the "Turkish case" in Cyprus (Grigoriadis, 2011). While the Christian and Jew population could not gather outside their religious sites, the nationalist groups began to address their potential followers openly. Their aim was to "counter" the acts of the Cyprus government's behaviour against the Turkish minority on the island. These political meetings and organizations ended up with violent pogrom against the non-Muslims population in İstanbul, Beyoğlu on 6-7 September 1955 (Grigoriadis, 2011, p. 285). Three years later, DP initiated the Fatherland Front *(Vatan Cephesi)* to counter the mounting political opposition and declared that organization as an initiative of civil society (Uyar, 2001). While the new members of the Fatherland Front were regularly announced on the radios and in the printed media, the polarization was significantly escalated. In a broader sense, as DP assumed office in Turkey in 1950 when civil society and independent agencies were totally absent, the "civil society" under DP was utilized as the arena to create its own paramilitary forces to target the disadvantaged communities and the political opposition.

3.5. Between Two Coups: The Rise of the Politics Upon the Left and Right Axis

The junta left the political space back to politicians with the free elections in 1961. The rule of DP ended with the coup d'état in 1960 and the military regime adopted a new constitution which was generally regarded as the most liberal and democratic constitution for Turkey in 1961 (Özbudun, 2018). With the relatively open and democratic articles of the 1961 constitution, the political and social forces were organized in the labor unions and youth organizations that were mostly founded in the universities in the metropolitan cities. In that regard, Turkey facilitates the extension

of the civil society which was mostly dominated by the leftist initiations. The new constitution was seen as a relatively libertarian and moderate one, mainly because of its articles securing guarantees for labor organizations and because of its democratic stance on the elections methods (Gençkaya and Özbudun, 2009). Approximately in 1965 and onwards, a new cleavage based on the leftist/Marxist ideas aroused in addition to the center/periphery cleavage with the emergence and rise of the labor unions and the increased effects of the student organizations (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). Turkey's first leftist/socialist political party, Workers' Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi – TİP)*, was formed and began participating in the elections after 1965 (Çulhaoğlu, 2015). The representative of the "center," CHP, and the bureaucratic elite declared that the party's political stance was on the "left-of-center" (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 252-3). However, the relatively free sociopolitical environment ceased with the second military coup in 1971. The coup suspended many of the democratic articles of the 1961 constitution. The political rift was mainly manifested in the left/right spectrum during the 1970s when labor organizations and university initiatives were considered as the fundamental promoters of the leftist/socialist ideas in the sphere of civil society. Towards the end of the 1970s, the political arena became increasingly violent among the opposite groups (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 253-8). Using that environment as the pretext, the Turkish military suspended the democratic environment with its third coup d'état in 1980.

With the rising urbanization and the beginning of the migration towards the industrial European countries, Turkey realized the proliferation of hometown associations/organizations *(hemşehrilik dernekleri/örgütleri)* to create local links in the metropolitan areas in Turkey and the cities around Europe (Hersant and Tourmarkine, 2005). In the 1970s, polarization and politicization of the Turkish political environment between the leftist/socialist student movement and nationalist/conservative groupings were deepening (Saktanber and Beşpınar, 2011, p. 274). During the same years, civil society seemed to be founded alongside the political cleavages within Turkish society. In that sense, the leftist movement in Turkey began making use of the public squares and streets and promoted its ideals in the May Day Protests (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 272-3). One of the most important protests was the

leftist/socialist students' powerful resistance against the United States' fleet presence in Istanbul. It is important to note that the political environment during the 1970s was very polarized and the actors within the civil society were mostly regarded as the central actors in this tension. Such political tension between left and right could also be validated to the cold war in world politics and rise of the leftist/socialist ideas through globe in the same period. Especially from the 1960s, the labor unions were granted the right to strike and thus these organizations could be mentioned as the supporters of the worker's rights in Turkey (Zürcher, 2004). A turning point in the 1970s happened when the business people/employers organized in civil society. With no previous history and no political power in that time, Turkish Industry and Business Association (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği - TÜSİAD*) was founded in 1971 (Buğra, 2017). Despite the flourishment of many elements within the civil society in the Turkish political spectrum, I underline that social issues were not multidimensional and can be evaluated in a very narrow sense: Whereas the leftist student organizations and labor unions targeted the material conditions of the workers and asked for social transformation, the national/conservative groups were reactionary to the rising themes of those leftist initiatives.

As the political cleavage between the elitist/Kemalist and peripheral/conservative tendencies shifted towards a more leftist/socialist and nationalist/Islamist with the emergence of the students' organizations and labor unions, the right-based themes attracted only a limited sense interest by each block. Since these organizations in the civil society represented mostly the common cleavage of left versus right, there were no independent CSOs that could cover different right claims. The rise of the political and social freedoms was curtailed by the memorandum of the Turkish military in 1971 which was followed by the authoritarian and military-backed governments (Zürcher, 2004, p. 258). The closure of TİP due to its policies on Kurdish rights claims and heavy repression on the leftist organizations narrowed the civil space. The foundation of the Turkish branch of Amnesty International and the emergence of the Progressive Journalist Association *(Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği – ÇGD)* in 1978 intended to promote the rights and freedoms(Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği, 2019). Amnesty International led a campaign to introduce its program and works in Turkey during the

mid-1970s thanks to the contributions of Mümtaz Soysal, one of the preeminent professors in constitutional law (Uluslararası Af Örgütü, 2019). However, as Amnesty International could not base its structural formation like associations or foundations, the organization worked as an initiation and was forced to close down with the 1980 coup. The rising power in the civil society, as opposed to organizations of students, was the employer association of TUSİAD and it became a political actor in the 1970s.

3.6. Turkish Politics After 1980 and the Emergence of Rights-based CSOs

The rising tension in the political environment and violent attacks between the leftist and rightist groups were seen as the alleged reason for another coup in Turkey in 1980 (Zürcher, 2004, p. 278). The effects of the 1980 military coup on the civil society and democracy were very severe: While all the active labor unions and student clubs ceased activity, military regime interrupted any organizations to be formed (Heper and Evin, 1988). The third coup d'état in Turkey which lasted about three years, had severe consequences on the shrinkage of the democratic and open environment. But above else, the military regime single-handedly crafted the most authoritarian constitution of Turkish history and applied certain regulations to curtail social and political freedoms (Özbudun and Genckaya, 2009; Özbudun, 2018). After the undemocratic referendum in 1982, the military regime permitted a handful of parties to participate in the elections. As many of the leftist labor unions and political organizations were banned and many people were convicted, no political force could be active and powerful in the 1980s. In control of the mass media, the military closed down every political party and jailed the main political leaders. Although the 1982 constitution initiated the parliamentary elections in the following year, the leader of the coup, Kenan Evren, automatically became the President of the country signaling the swords of the Damocles upon the civilian politics.

With the election victory of Özal's Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi – ANAP)* in 1983, Turkey opted for neoliberal economic policies to foster privatization, de-regulation and promoted non-state intervention into the market (Boratav and Yeldan, 2004). In the socio-political sphere, the lift of the prohibition on private TV and radio channels partially contributed to a free path for the media. Moreover, the relaxation of

the rules and regulations restricting the right to assembly and the right to protest triggered some organizations in the sphere of the civil society (Aral, 2001). Despite the ongoing moderate amendments to the current highly authoritarian 1982 constitution, a new violent and armed struggle in the Southeastern part of Turkey began between Kurdish communities, mainly Kurdistan Workers' Party *(Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê – PKK),* and the military in 1984. Due to the growing tensions in the armed struggle and the tolling alleged crimes of war against the Turkish military, the Human Rights Association *(İnsan Hakları Derneği – İHD)* was founded in 1986 by leftist intellectuals and the relatives of the political prisoners to scrutinize the problems regarding torture, maltreatment and human rights abuses of the Turkish authorities during the coup in 1980-1983 (Türkmen, 2002, pp. 80-1). The establishment of the İHD symbolizes the first examples of the rights-based institutions in the sphere of the CSOs (Cizre, 2001a, p.69).

PKK led insurgency starting from the second period of the 1980s remained unchanged and the civil war intensified in the 1990s. Throughout the 1980s, new pro-Kurdish leftist parties emerged and the movement questioned the previous Kemalist underlying of the state and the citizenship (Cizre, 2001b). Alongside with the Kurdish issue, another challenge arose within the Islamic sections of the society. Although the Islamic parties were on the political arena from the 1970s, Islamic organizations and the ideas proliferated in the with Özal era (Göle, 1997). While İHD devoted its work to the maltreatment of the Turkish State in the Southwestern region of Turkey in the war against PKK, Islamic human rights CSOs started to flourish in the 1990s. Despite such a trend, "Papa State" conception was still present in the minds of the people: As the state and its actors are seen as sacred, majority of people did not approve the CSOs that question and problematize the state and its actors (Kalaycıoğlu. 2002). In that specific regard, as Turkish society did not have a totally negative connotation on the issues of founding organizations, they fundamentally differentiated such CSOs between "pro-state" and "anti-state". In other words, while state-related or the CSOs that cooperated with state and its institutions enjoyed a relative legitimation, the CSOs that fundamentally criticize state actions like İHD or The Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed *(İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma*

Derneği – MAZLUMDER) – an Islamic and conservative-oriented human rights organization – received a very negative outlook from the citizenry (Kalaycıoğlu. 2002, p. 263).

After the establishment of İHD in 1986, many movements representing different right areas emerged in the 1990s: As Islamic human rights organization MAZLUMDER was founded in 1991, Turkey's one of the most institutionalized environmental organizations, the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats *(Türkiye Erozyonla Mücadele, Ağaçlandırma ve Doğal Varlıkları Koruma Vakfı – TEMA)* became a foundation in 1992 and Women's Solidarity Foundation *(Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı – KADAV)* became official in 1993. Kaos Gay and Lesbian, as the first unofficial LGBT organization in Turkey, started to work in gender commission under İHD in 1994 and Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants *(Sığınmacılar ve Göçmenlerle Dayanışma Derneği – SGDD – ASAM)* was founded in 1995 in order to enhance the living conditions and legal backgrounds of the refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey. Thus, during the 1990s many rights and activism were defined and promoted through the official CSOs. In that same trajectory, Alevi and Kurdish organizations came out to present religious and ethnic rights in the society. Despite the ongoing process of the emergence of an "organized society" in Turkey in the 1990s, the war between the Turkish military and PKK intensified, and many violent acts and events caused fears along the secular/religious, left/right, Alevi/Sunnis and Kurdish/Turkish cleavages in the society (van Bruniessen, 1996; Soner and Toktaş, 2011). For instance, the destruction of thousands of towns and villages in the Kurdish populated regions by the Turkish military, the murder of secular journalists by the allegedly Islamic terrorist organizations, the massacre of the Alevi people in Madımak Hotel and the massacre by the PKK in a Turkish/Sunni Başbağlar village resulted in a massive polarization and division in the society (Zürcher, 2004). Despite the rise of the CSOs, the organizations were helpless to establish links among society. In fact, the growing polarization in society was also noticeable within the newly established human rights organizations.

The end of the 1990s had effects on Turkish politics and the state-society relations in Turkey: First of all, as a pro-Islam party, Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi – RP)*, gained fundamental success in the local elections in 1994, received the highest votes in the 1995 general elections granting 21% and became the senior partner in the coalition government in 1996 (Zürcher, 2004). During the term of the government, secular/religious cleavage became a highly polarized topic in which the Turkish military publicly endorsed a secular position against the government. On the 28[th]of February 1997, the government was forced to sign a package of decisions that voiced the demands of the Turkish military in the National Security Council *(Milli Güvenlik Kurulu – MGK)*. This particular event was latter called as the "post-modern coup" and the government officially declared its resignation three months later (Özdalga, 2011, p. 212). Until the general elections in 1999, the governments were formed under the tutelage of the Turkish military and prioritized the package that was adopted in the MGK. Right before the general and local elections in April 1999, Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK was arrested. That major shift in the politics had helped the Prime Minister's Ecevit's charisma. Alongside with Ecevit and his center-left Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti – DSP)*, hardliner nationalist party, Nationalist Action Party *(Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – MHP)* were the other winners of the elections. Together with ANAP, the coalition government took office in 1999. Just four months after the formation of the coalition government, Turkish society faced its biggest humanitarian crisis: the earthquake of Gölcük. The earthquake of Gölcük was tragically followed by the earthquake of Düzce in November. These two earthquakes devastated the country and nearly 20 thousand citizens lost their lives. The state's response to these natural disasters was behind time and insufficient. During the aftermath of the earthquakes, the inability of the state institutions left a negative mark on the "Papa State" image in the society (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002). Unfortunately, the contributions of the civil society and help organizations were not sufficient either.

While some reform packages to the authoritarian articles of 1982 was applied to a certain extent, the political environment slowly started to organize and flourish: As mentioned earlier, in order to investigate the military regime's violations on the prisoners and to reveal the torture practices of the military, Turkey's first human rights

association İHD was founded in Ankara in 1986. While the founders of İHD were dominated by the activists of the leftist student movements and labor unions during the 1970s, İHD's perspective of human rights did not have a liberal democratic language including recognition of identities or promotion of plurality (Türkmen, 2002, pp.82-3). In that regard, I argue that the first initiations for human rights activism were embodied mostly by the leftist action repertoire and dominated by the human resources of the leftist organizations in the 1970s. Thus, while the end of the 1980s could be seen as the beginning of the human rights activism in Turkey in an institutionalized sense, the activism was mainly based on the previous leftist/socialist cleavages. Especially by the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, İHD became active in monitoring the actions of the Turkish military in southern Turkey during its conflict with PKK (Türkmen, 2002, pp. 83-4). Turkey's first human rights association was founded in 1986, nevertheless, in the 1990s many rights areas were not well-organized around civil society. In that specific aspect, modern Turkey's first women, LGTBI+, environmental, minority (including Kurdish and Alevi), refugee and pro-Islamic CSOs were established during the 1990s. Rather than becoming a part of the state and its institutions or compensating the service that the state should provide, these organizations aimed to create awareness raising in terms of the rights of the citizens and to equip them with such rights. Despite their existence in the public, their appeal to the political arena was rather limited and the political culture during the 1990s was headed to a significant polarization between laic/Kemalist bureaucratic elite and conservative/Islamic groups. In addition to that, many of the earliest forms of the CSOs did not directly use the frame of human rights to promote their rights and claims. In contrast, many of those organizations projected themselves as the disadvantaged and the repressed in search of recognition and equal citizenship. Despite its limited power within the society and politics, the rights-claims of the minority and the disadvantaged groups flourished in the 1990s. Moreover, this decade was also significant as TÜSİAD climbed upwards in attaining power in politics and political parties (Buğra, 2017). Overall, while the right-claiming CSOs were founded and organized, their extent was very limited and the powerful organizations in the civil society were still regarded as the business organizations for the political elite and religious/Islamic communities for most of the society.

3.7. Conclusion

From the early 19th cc., the Ottoman Empire began initiating political reforms for the ideals of Westernization, and Young Turks attempted to accomplish liberalism including a constitution and a parliament. Despite the adoption of the first constitution, first elections for parliament and the emergence of a free civil society, a potential path to democratizing was restricted and short-spanned (Shaw and Shaw, 1977). With the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the newly founded Turkish Republic prioritized statism and idealized an organic conception of a society which allowed no room for independent associations. Under the Draconian laws restricting political and social initiatives, the Turkish Republic banned many CSOs and left no space for the flourishment of free organizations. The introduction of the multiparty elections and DP's taking office in 1950 signaled some sort of reforms for independent organizations. However, DP took authoritarian measures with its second term and blocked independent organizations. The 1960 coup against the DP government finalized the relatively free environment and marked the rise of the Turkish military's political power over the civilian rule. From the late 1960s, the civil society was mainly composed of oppositionary leftist/socialists and nationalist/Islamists student organizations mirroring the left/right axis of Turkish politics. After the coup in 1980, the military regime banned every social and political activity, and many elements within the civil society perished. In that long trajectory, the right-based claims and CSOs were hardly noticed in Turkish politics. Civil society mostly consisted of needs-based, charity-based, religious/nationalists or leftists/unionist organizations. Turkey's first rights-based CSO, İHD, founded in 1986 after the introduction of some packages to alleviate the authoritarian character of the constitution against political freedoms including the right to organize. The rights-based CSOs and initiatives for the varied right claims and identities such as women, LGBTI+, environment and asylum/refugee flourished during the 1990s when public perception for such organizations was mostly negative (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002). In that aspect, the rights-based CSOs represented only a small section within the Turkish civil society and emerged receiving no particular public support during the late 1980s and 1990s. In contrast, thanks to the contributions of the activists in that period, rights-based CSOs represented many demands and

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claims for varied identities and communities. Thus, the late 1980s and 1990s revealed the democratic potentials of the rights-based understanding for multiple numbers of groups and for contrasting issues.

CHAPTER 4

CSOs, 1999-2019 FROM EU'S ANCHOR FOR DEMOCRATIZATION TO THE RESISTANCE OF THE RIGHTS-BASED CSOS, 1999-2019

4.1. Introduction

From the late 1980s to the early 2000s, Turkey demonstrated a certain degree of liberalization in the laws and regulations. As a result, many "new" identities and rights claims appeared in the legal arena (Keyman and Gümüşçü, 2014, pp. 153-5): In this period, from women, LGBTI+, refugee and minority rights to Islamic, Alevi and Kurdish associations, various demands became visible in the public space. In that aspect, rights-based CSOs, within the Turkish civil society, emerged as the actors for promoting democratization. The ongoing EU-Turkey relations for the full membership facilitated the opening of a space and sustained a free political environment for many of the rights-based CSOs to organize (Aydin and Keyman, 2004). As rights-based CSOs became a major actor within the Turkish civil society, these organizations could promote their democratizing ideals through public and in state institutions. Gezi Park protests in 2013 became an open space for many rights-based CSOs where they declared and discussed their democratic projections with society (Tuğal, 2013). On the other hand, with the introduction of the state of emergency in 2016, repressions towards the peaceful demonstrators against Gezi Park protesters and taking authoritarian measures against any right claims resulted in a downward trend in regard to the struggle of rights-based CSOs (Özyürek, Özpınar, Altındiş, 2019). In that time, opposition parties, Peoples' Democratic Party *(Halkların Demokratik Partisi – HDP)* and CHP became the political centers for promoting a number of newly emerging rights claims. Therefore, since the governing party repressed the right claims and increased its pressure over the rights-based CSOs, their merit strengthened in these opposition parties and in Turkish society. Many rights-based CSOs implemented their targets and advocated their democratizing agenda through the political opposition

parties and attained a greater significance from the public in their protests and demonstrations. In that way, rights-based CSOs both became a central actor in civil society and contributed to democratization in various ways. That is, the periods from the beginning of the full membership negotiations with the EU towards the end of 2019 could point out the significant shifts and transformations in both Turkish politics and rights-based CSOs.

4.2. Start of the EU Negotiations under the Coalition Government, 1999-2002

Under the political effects of the so-called post-modern coup against the coalition government, whose senior partner was an Islamist RP, and the unpredictable arrest of PKK leader Öcalan, the biggest winners of the election were the secular/nationalist DSP and ultra-nationalist MHP. Excluding the political predecessor of RP's new political group, Virtue Party *(Fazilet Partisi – FP),* and punishing its coalition partner True Path Party *(Doğru Yol Partisi – DYP)*, a three-party coalition was formed among DSP, MHP and ANAP (Zürcher, 2004, p.302). During the short time, three and a half years, in office, Turkey experienced a lot of massive turmoil in terms of economic, social and political issues. The aftermath of this coalition government marks important transformations in Turkish political history since all the dominant political actors in the 1980s onwards were toppled down.

The two earthquakes happened in 1999, as mentioned earlier, proved the Papa State to be weak since it failed to help its citizens to overcome natural disasters. Furthermore, in just a one-and-a-half-year time, Turkish society had to realize the most severe economic crisis that affected its financial sector in 2001. As the unemployment and inflation numbers were skyrocketing, the Turkish government had to sign a rescue plan with International Monetary Fund (IMF) which initiated austerity in the economy. Through that process, as the vice-president of the IMF, Kemal Derviş, was officially invited to Turkey to become minister for the economy (Zürcher, 2004, p. 305). That humiliating trajectory was also destroying the strong picture of the Turkish state. Thus, in the early 2000s, there was a dominant legitimacy crisis of the strong-state tradition in Turkey (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003). Whereas the response to the societal crisis in times of earthquakes and economic crisis disclosed the weakness of the Turkish state,

the image of the state began to diverge in the eyes of the people. In such a trajectory, some argued that CSOs could fill the empty space since the state created a power vacuum.

However, the general public attitude towards the civil society was still based on a complementary view: Especially with the devastating consequences of the 1999 earthquakes and the state's inefficiency in responding to the disasters, people now had a bad memory (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003, p. 227). Whereas the Turkish state was blamed for its late and insufficient attempts, many of the CSOs, which were specializing in the search and rescue, earned a better place in the eyes of the public. Moreover, in order to cover the deficiency of the Turkish state, civil society was only idealized to be "complementary" to the needs of the citizens. Therefore, it can be said that the public and many of the CSOs promoted the "needs-based approach" to cultivate the demands of the disadvantaged.

One of the greatest examples of such CSOs can be the Association for Supporting Contemporary Life *(Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği - ÇYDD)* which aims to help financially disadvantaged students. On the other hand, CSOs that represent the "rights-based approach" have longitudinal perspectives and hold the state institutions responsible for the ongoing inequality and discrimination (UNFPA, 2014). As such, Search and Rescue Association *(Arama Kurtarma Derneği – AKUT)* which was founded in 1996 attained public attention and enjoyed huge public admiration due to their efforts to rescue citizens stuck in the disaster areas (Kubiek, 2002, p.6). Regarded as a needs-based CSO and an organization that aims to cooperate with the state, such organization did not encapsulate the potentials for transforming or scrutinizing the applications of the state (Kubiek, 2002, p.8). In addition to the statist and the significance of the needs-based CSOs, associations and foundations are also relevant to the discussion as their charity works have been appreciated by the society (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003, p. 227-8). From the 1990s onwards, the charity work was mostly carried out by the conservative and the pious actors whose intention was to help economically disadvantaged Muslim people. Therefore, it is no wonder that the Turkish society is still preserving its positive stance for statist or religious

establishments in regards to the CSOs which work on the basis of charity-based and needs-based applications.

By the end of the 1990s, Turkish foreign policy has gone through a major transformation. The EU considered Turkey as the candidate country for the Union (Müftüler-Baç, 2000; Öniş, 2003). During the negotiations, the main obstacles Turkey experienced were the absence of independent CSOs, meaning a civil society, and the absence of democracy, namely the harsh conditions affecting political parties and activists. One of the major crises between the EU and the Turkish government occurred due to the trial of PKK leader Öcalan, who was meant to send to death row by the public prosecutor (Zürcher, 2004, p. 321). However, the death penalty was prohibited according to the EU law as well as according to the articles of the Helsinki Conference of the EU. So, Turkey proposed a law and regulation change and lifted execution. The public, on the other hand, perceived the abolishment of the criminal punishment as EU's effort to save the PKK leader and thought of EU's so-called hidden agenda for Turkey (Martin, 2011, p. 231). At the same time, the public was mostly disillusioned by the government, a body heavily dominated by the secular/nationalist and ultranationalists (Öniş, 2003, p. 14; Müftüler-Baç, 2005, p. 24).

Thanks to the improved relationship between the EU and Turkey, the government promoted a democratizing agenda by changing and drafting the articles of the constitution, laws and regulations. The foundation of the Amnesty International's Turkey Branch and the first campaigns on right to expression and freedom of organization date to the last years of this government (Amnesty International, 2019).

4.3. Justice and Development Party *(Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AK Parti)* in Office: EU Process and Democratization Agenda, 2002-2007

The elections in November 2002 signaled the beginning of a new era with the rise of the AK Party. The party secured a super-majority position in the parliament, guaranteed a mandate of more than 34% of votes and formed a one-party government, a success which no other political party had succeeded since 1987. Originating from a hard-liner Islamist tradition and serving as a Mayor of Istanbul of an Islamist party for

more than four years, the leader of AK Party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was regarded as a threat (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 304-6). Erdoğan was thought to pose a threat against the principles of the establishment in an era when Turkey was called a laic and a Western country. Being the main opposition party, CHP mostly represented the secular/laic cleavage in the society and opened up a political rift between the Islamist/conservative ruling party and the bureaucratic/elitist opposition forces.

Among many political and discursive changes came with the formation of AK Party governments in 2002 and 2003, Prime Minister Erdoğan and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Gül, opted for a very pro-EU agenda (Eralp, 2009, pp. 157-158). Their stance characterized a certain reliance towards the political will that began in the late 1990s with the help of different governments and their varied political leanings. More than a continuation of state policy, the AK Party government put a significant emphasis on the accession talks (Müftüler-Baç, 2005; pp. 27-9). The intensification of a major constitutional amendment resulted in the change of more than twenty articles in 2004, all changed in the name of democratization and Europeanisation. Especially by means of these major adjustments in the constitutional articles, laws and regulations during the 2003/4 judicial packages, Turkey took a democratic path and lifted many prohibitions and abolished the bans on right to organize and freedom of assembly (Zihnioğlu, 2013, pp. 144-5). These changes reduced the bureaucratic and political burden on many potential human rights CSOs and many of the unofficial initiatives easily became official and were allowed to get in touch with the official bodies of state and institutions.

The official negotiation talks to become a member candidate began in 2004/5, the EU offered certain fund programs to help rights-based CSOs to emerge and sustain. During the 2000s, the rights-based CSOs gained a significant impetus from the institutions of the EU both economically and politically. Many of the rights-based CSOs benefited from the fund and grant mechanism for retaining and sustaining their organizational structure (Ketola, 2013, pp. 114-122). Meanwhile, Turkey's EU agenda forced the political environment in the domestic politics to respect for the rights claims and decided on a democratizing path. During the same period, a lot of CSOs adopted the language of rights, a human rights discourse, with the help of the EU's institutional

mechanisms. In that regard, rather than a limited focus on the right claims of its targeted community, the CSOs became equipped with the tools in responding intersectional areas; and they eventually aimed to hold the Turkish state more responsible for meeting the demands of the oppressed communities (Ketola, 2013, pp. 160-1). This period, thanks to the increased collaboration with the EU and its agencies, could be regarded as the climax of the relationship between the EU and the right-based CSOs. With the help of the EU, CSOs could find the opportunity and environment to voice their demands, speaking through the rights-based approach (Ketola, 2011; 2012; 2013). Furthermore, there are more advantages to the negotiation process: such as the relaxation of bureaucratic rules and regulations against founding and directing organizations in Turkey. With the introduction of amendments in line with the EU membership, the power and strengths in the CSOs were accelerated in varied groups and right-based areas (TUSEV, 2013). Although the rights-based CSOs had low potentials, severe bans against political parties were lifted and right to organize, relaxation and liberation were partly realized with the recognition of new laws and regulations. Regarded as one of the indispensable elements of democratization, the EU directly funded and formed grant programs to create and sustain a civil society in Turkey (Ketola, 2011).

Despite the promotion of the EU agenda by the government, EU's capacity building on rights-based CSOs and its anchoring effects on democratization, Turkish political culture was still mostly dominated by the previous cleavages; namely conservatism/Islamism versus secular nationalism/etatism/statist laicism. One of the shocking events in this period was the murder of the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. Dink had been targeted both by the Turkish military and by ultra-nationalist groups due to his claims aired in Agos Newspaper. (White, 2007, pp. 130-1) Sabiha Gökçen, Atatürk's adopted daughter, was claimed to be of an Armenian origin by Agos in 2007. The protesters who revolted against the murder by shouting "We are all Hrant, we are all Armenians" were denounced both by the governing AK Party and Kemalist CHP as it thought to be undermining for the Turkish identity. Secondly and most importantly, the oldest political cleavage between the bureaucratic elite and the conservative/Islamist government began with the undemocratic decision in terms of

the election of the President method by the Constitutional Court in 2007. After that, the Turkish Army announced a memorandum and it was supported by CHP. CHP reinforced Atatürk's vision of laicism and warned the government not to elect a candidate who is not laic (Yavuz and Özcan, 2007, pp. 122-5). First appeared as a crisis in the Presidential election in 2007, many of the "CSOs" sided with the Kemalist establishment and promoted the e-memorandum proposed by the Turkish military, which underlines the principles of the statist laicism with so-called "Republic Protests".

The first governing period of AK Party (2002-2007) was marked with the introduction of the laws and amendments. This was an attempt to fulfil the EU's criteria. In that aspect, rights-based CSOs were in a free and open environment where they could organize in the public and received political and financial support from the EU. Despite that significant transformation, especially in 2007, the power of the oldest cleavages of Turkish politics limited the area of the early-initiated rights-based CSOs. That era was marked by the political interruptions of the Turkish military towards the AK Party in the process of election of President.

4.4. AK Party's Second Term and Negotiations with the CSOs, 2007-2011

Due to the political and constitutional crisis over the election of the eleventh President of Turkey, AK Party announced a snap general election on 22th of June in 2007. Holding almost the half of the registered votes, AK Party easily managed to form its second government under Erdoğan and elected its candidate Gül as the new President of Turkey.

At the end of 2007, the Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court opened a case to close pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party *(Demokratik Toplum Partisi – DTP)* which had gained 21 seats in the 2007 elections. In addition, just eight months after the elections, AK Party faced with the same trial by the Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court for closing down the party and demanding bans for many of the high-ranking AK Party politicians (Gumuscu and Sert, 2009). Intentions to halt parties and to introduce political bans targeted mostly the pro-Islamic and pro-Kurdish parties from the 1970s

(Watts, 2006, pp. 133-5; Gumuscu and Sert, 2009). They, as it was thought, leaned towards anti-laic proposals and political demands that threaten the unity of the state. At the same time, such practices operated by the Kemalist bureaucracy in the judiciary had been implemented as one of the setbacks for a democratic regime. These were responsible for the political and civil space to shrink. The Kemalist CHP and Turkish Military supported the halting of parties in favor of the prosecutor. As the closure of the AK Party was rejected just by one vote, pro-Kurdish DTP was closed and bans for the politicians were accepted by the Constitutional Court in 2009. Such party closures represented the weakness of the civil society and democratic culture within.

One of the most cited view on the blockades against the Turkish democratization, namely the tutelary power which had been exercised primarily by the judiciary and military, significantly lost its power to the elected civilians (Karaosmanoğlu, 2011). While the powers of the military in the MGK was curbed and the military branch of the judiciary was transformed into a mechanism under civilian law, many levels and ranks within the judiciary were elected by the politicians either in the executive or legislative branches (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016, pp. 1584-5). As the trials of Ergenekon and Sledgehammer *(Balyoz)* targeted to reveal the tutelary powers within the state, the methods of the courts were highly criticized (Aydın-Düzgit, 2013). In that period, however, the influence of the tutelary power declined and agreed on empowering the civil initiatives and creating a space for the civil society.

During the second term of Prime Minister Erdoğan, AK Party initiated many democratic openings, allegedly in favor of the oppressed. The Kurdish Opening, for instance, aimed to scrutinize the legal, cultural and political demands of the Kurdish people and formal meetings began with the Kurdish CSOs and pro-Kurdish party, DTP (Çandar, 2009). In meantime, the governing party started negotiating with the Alevi CSOs to underline the problems on compulsory religion lessons and state guarantee on Alevi's religious places, Cemevi (Gumuscu and Sert, 2010, p. 66; Soner and Toktaş, 2011, pp. 426-9). In addition, the government attempted to pass legislation to end the problems of the non-Muslim minorities regarding their religious places. To that end, the AK Party negotiated with many of the non-Muslim associations to stress the legal and political discriminations on the regulations (Grigoriadis, 2011). Thus, as

the AK Party opted for a democratic path, such leaning was addressed by the rights-based CSOs of Kurdish, Alevi and non-Muslim minorities. In that aspect, it was a very significant transformation for the Turkish political history which aimed to propose solutions for the minorities and ethnic/religious right claims by means of the representatives of the rights-based CSOs.

Especially during the local elections in 2009, Association for Support of Women Candidates *(Kadın Adayları Destekleme Derneği - KA.DER*) pioneered a popular campaign to support women candidates in the elections and disclosed the male-dominant culture in Turkish politics (Bainet, 2019). Along with such pro-women campaigns, women CSOs also formed women coalitions in many big cities to organize 8 March Women's Day. In the end of the 2009, the TEKEL workers called for a general strike in Ankara against the neoliberal policies of AK Party (Yalman and Topal, 2019). More than a labor strike, the protests were accompanied and supported by many rights-based CSOs including women, environmental and LGBTI+. For some, the strike and protests were turned into a coalition of many varied elements within civil society (Özuğurlu, 2011). For that sense, the TEKEL strike can differ from the past labor strikes due to its relationship between the rights-based CSOs.

During the mid-2010s, after the leader of the CHP, Deniz Baykal, resigned in 2010, a major transformation took place within the leadership and administration of the party (Tosun, 2010). One of the fundamental discussions during this leadership change included the transformation of party position towards Kurdish issue, military-civil relations and a less statist approach on rights and demands of the different section of society (Gülmez, 2013, pp. 316-7). From that date onwards, CHP adopted a more sympathetic approach on the works of the rights-based CSOs and cooperated with them to formulate its policies.

During its second term, the AK Party announced its plans for major amendments in the 1982 constitution and promoted the creation of a civil constitution for Turkey (Ciddi, 2011). While this constitution was being drafted, the AK Party benefited from thoughts and contributions of many rights-based CSOs. In that specific aspect, the plans for establishing an institution of Ombudsman could serve to subside the

problems that arise between the disadvantaged and the state. In addition, for the 2010 Referendum package, the AK Party amended a new article. This made the party closures by any court decision almost impossible (Turam, 2012). During the campaigns, the opposition denounced the new amendments whereas the governing parties promoted them; but both of their arguments based on democratization of the constitution (Ciddi, 2011). Thus, democratization and a plural society became the central component for both major parties. For the first time in Turkish history, the public directly organized meetings and public conferences to discuss the new amendment for the constitution. I find this example unique as it reflects the rise of rights-based CSOs and the increase in voicing their demands and proposals.

4.5. Nativism and Reactionary Policies of the AK Party, 2011-2015

Despite the delayed appearance with a narrow public support, rights-based CSOs gained a significant power during the late 2000s and early 2010s. As the AK Party government announced the fundamental projects, that are, democratization and reform, many of the rights-based CSOs were actively engaging with such openings. The fourth government of AK Party and the third government of Erdoğan began in June, 2011 when the party celebrated more than 49% of total votes (Müftüler-Baç and Keyman, 2012).

In early April 2013, the government announced its plan to create a Wise Men Commission under the provisions of the Kurdish Opening (Ensaroğlu, 2013, p.15). The 63-member-commission was dominated by the members of the civil society and academics who aimed to open the space for rights, liberties and freedoms. As their search resembles those of the rights-based CSOs, this commission became a bridge between the state and the society and created a dialogue to stress the importance of the Kurdish Question.

Gezi Park protests were one of the most fundamental demonstrations of the CSOs in Turkish politics (Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2014). During the protests in June 2013, many of the metropolitan city centers were filled with the coalition of different groups, who were framing their slogans and demands through the rights-based areas including

environment, city rights, women rights and etc. (Sofos, 2014). These peaceful demonstrations and protests in more than 70 cities in Turkey welcomed many of the ethnic, political and cultural minorities. This was a pioneering example in the political history of Turkey. Baring the Gezi Protests in mind, its force in the change of ideas, political understanding in the Turkish society should be emphasized.

Though the Gezi Park protests were one of the largest peaceful demonstrations in whole Turkish history, it could not promise a total change in the political spectrum: On one hand, contributions of Gezi Events to political change was rather limited, given the fact that AK Party sustained its leadership position in the local elections. On the other hand, it is far from evident that the potentials of the social movements cannot be measured for its success in the elections. Rather, the factors and indicators that would trigger a political shift through discursive and behavioral changes in the opposition bloc and a polity itself require special attention. During these protests, many of the rights-based claims including women, LGBTI+, environment, city rights and animal rights could find a place to promote their vision within society (Sofos, 2014). However, as these rights claims and protesters gained an oppositionary character against the AK Party, the government adopted a more sceptic and reactionary position against the coalition of forces that supported different right areas (Gumscu and Keyman, 2014). On the other hand, in contrast to AK Party's lack of the vision to consider Gezi Protests, a major transformation arose in the leftist opposition parties especially in CHP and HDP (Grigoriadis, 2016). In other words, the more the government became authoritarian, the more the opposition parties addressed the rights-based CSOs ideas regarding plurality and diversity. Before the local elections in 2014, CHP announced its will to cooperate with the candidates who could advocate the demands of the Gezi Park protest in the main opposition party. In that sense, CHP nominated two openly-queer[2] candidates for the local parliament first, held meetings with the Alevi CSOs and discussed the women quote for the party regulations. In addition, the newly-founded HDP officially adopted actors that promote the rights of the women, LGBTI+ and animals. In 2015, HDP's candidates for the general elections

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[2] In this thesis, I will use the terms queer and LGBTI+ interchangeably.

included the members of the rights-based CSOs including Armenian diaspora, Kurdish human rights defenders, LGBTI+ and women associations, and the environmental movement in Turkey.

On the one hand, in the early 2010s a free and relatively open space for the rights-based CSOs and such organizations were present; and they were recognized by the political parties and by the society for their varied right claims. On the other hand, AK Party, despite its discourse on democratization and a pro-EU agenda, had a very narrow vision on democracy (Gumscu and Keyman, 2014, pp. 49-55). It limited to term to fit into elections and made a public declaration that it held conservative/Islamist ideals for the Turkish youth. However, beginning with AK Party's authoritarian response to the peaceful demonstrations of Gezi Protests in 2013, Turkey's relatively democratization path shifted towards a more authoritarian and nativist one (Müftüler-Baç and Keyman, 2015). As AK Party opted for a discourse that entails a reactionary political attitude towards any claims that went against the nativist understanding, many of the rights-based CSOs were criminalized in the eyes of the public.

The retarding relationship between the EU and Turkey in the second term of AK Party in 2007-2011, deteriorated especially with AK Party's heavy oppressions against the peaceful demonstrations during the Gezi Park protests (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016). While officials of the EU opted for a sympathetic position towards the protesters, AK Party responded by promoting a more nativist and a reactionary agenda. During this term, besides the Gezi Park protests, various rights-based CSOs significantly increased in regards to the shifting nature and action repertoire of the protests and demonstrations: Dominated mostly by the labor unions and leftist/socialist parties before, May Day Protests became a commonplace for feminist, queer, vegan and environmentalist activists to promote their ideals. Moreover, the different identity and right movement managed to organize public protests and demonstrations attracting thousands of people in the major cities: The LGBTI+ Pride Parades were filled with more than tens of thousands during this period, the 8 March Women Days and 25 November International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women protests received a significant attention. At the same time, thanks to Gezi Park protests, many

of the public meetings were organized in parks across the state and city rights became a major political issue.

4.6. The Rise of the Authoritarianism and Resistance of the Rights-based CSOs, 2015-2019

With HDP's securing more than 13% votes and having significant loses for the AK Party, the major effect of the 7th June 2015 general elections was the loss of the parliamentary majority of AK Party in the parliament after 12 years of its uninterrupted rule (Grigoriadis, 2016). The parliament attained the highest number and share of the women representatives and included many figures from the rights-based CSOs.

Not more than two months after the general election, the member of the youth organizations was targeted by terrorist organization, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS). After that massacre, the tone of the politics became highly polarized and AK Party declared an election government which was formed to hold snap parliamentary elections. While the Kurdish Opening was officially ended by the government, ISIS again targeted the members of the civil society composed of mostly leftist demonstrators in Ankara on the 10th of October. On the 1st of November general elections, the AK Party restored its parliamentary majority with securing 49,5% of votes (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016, p. 1596). Within a month, human rights activists and chairman of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, Tahir Elçi, was murdered. That particular event symbolized the repressions over HDP and Kurdish rights-based CSOs.

During this period, the LGBTI+ Pride Parade in Istanbul was officially banned for the first time under the AK Party's rule in the pretext of the concerns over sustaining security in 2015. As such, the environmental CSOs and activists faced state repression and criminalization mainly due to their critical approach to the building of new two nuclear power plants. Especially with the escalating crisis in Syria, the immigration and refugee problem became a defining topic in the EU-Turkey relationship (Eltiok, 2019). In that regard, while the EU's transformative powers and its anchor for democratization realized a downward trend, the Turkey-EU relations became more involved in the issues of Syrian migrant and EU's border regime (Şenyuva and Üstün,

2016). For addressing such socio-political issues, the EU and the UN contributed financially to alleviate the problems of the immigrant in Turkey and a specific treaty was concluded between the authorities of the EU and Turkey in 2016. During this era, refugee rights-based CSOs and many other CSOs that interlink immigrant issues in their agenda benefited from the financial programs under the EU and the UN supervision (İçduygu and Millet, 2016). These CSOs stood against the increasing xenophobia and racism in Turkish society and projected to sustain and demanded the rights of the immigrants.

On the 15th of July, a junta cadre in the Turkish military attempted for a coup to oust AK Party from the government (Esen and Gumuscu, 2017b). For the first time in Turkish history, the coup attempt failed thanks to the resistance of the people and the majority of the army's not involving in such an attempt. Despite the fact that the civilian rule was restored and the junta's move was failed, on the 20th of July, MGK announced the emergency rule which symbolized very restrictive, oppressive and unlawful regulations over the members of the CSOs and the activist, working on rights and liberties (Çalışkan, 2018).

The downward trend for restrictions and the rise of authoritarianism with Gezi Park protest reached its new highs with the introduction of the emergency rule. The political tone of the government encapsulated more authoritarian discourses directed on successive bans on the internet, violating the right to protest and targeted media freedom (Çalışkan, 2018). For the last two years, government policies were marked with arbitrary detention and expulsion of many state officials including judges, academics, the policemen and army officers. In addition to the expulsions of hundreds of thousands of the state officials, AK Party increased its repression over civil society by using the decree by laws to close down thousands of association and foundation in the pretext of their involvement into the coup (Çalışkan, 2018). In that specific regard, the arrest of the national and international human rights activists in Büyükada, the trials of Gezi Park protests and the house charge on Anatolia Cultural Foundation *(Anadolu Kültür Vakfı)* members remarked the government's intolerance over the elements of the civil society. For the first time, the governor of Ankara declared an

indefinite ban on any LGBTI+ activity, LGBTI+ Prides were restricted over the biggest cities and 8 March Women Day's Marches were strictly regulated.

The arrest of the co-chairs of HD, Demirtaş and Yüksekdağ, and the waves of custody towards pro-Kurdish CSOs shrunk the space for civil society. Officially ending the peace process with Kurds and appointing state administrators to the Kurdish towns and cities with the detention of the elected pro-Kurdish mayors due to the charges of terrorism intensified Turkish political space on sliding back to authoritarianism (Çalışkan, 2018, p. 22). In addition, AK Party's political alliance with the far-right MHP oriented the political arena to a blend of Ottomanism and Turkish nationalism and contributed to the introduction of an "à la Turca Presidential system" (Kalaycioğlu, 2015) which resides in donating so many powers to a president that no president in a democratic system has ever had. Under the allegations of voter fraud and election irregularities, the referendum for the Presidential system which was denounced by the EU's institution due to its authoritarian character passed with a small margin of 51.5% (Esen and Gumuscu, 2017a).

In spite of the end of the emergency rule that was applied nearly for two years, the AK Party opted for severe limitations and restrictions over the civil space and on the CSOs. In contrast, one could also argue that the rights-based themes crystalized on the opposition parties especially in CHP and HDP. In the general election in 2018, the election of Cihangir İslam from Felicity Party *(Saadet Partisi – SP)* and Ayhan Bilgen from HDP who were activists in MAZLUMDER could be one of the examples of the rights-based CSOs effects. The 8 March Women Day's Demonstration in 2019 became a focal discussion of the campaign period for the local elections due to the Ezan debate. For several days, as repressions towards the Women rights CSOs increased, the opposition opted a sympathetically view on the women's right CSOs. Lastly, thanks to Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association *(Sosyal Politikalar, Cinsiyet Kimliği ve Cinsel Yönelim Çalışmaları Derneği – SPoD)* and Young LGBTI+ Association *(Genç LGBTİ+ Derneği)*, 27 candidates for the local elections signed a petition to protect the rights of the LGBTI+, and for the first time a signatory of this petition, Tunç Soyer, elected as mayor for a metropolitan city of İzmir from CHP (Yilmaz, 2019).

4.7. Conclusion

The rights-based CSOs which initially flourished in the late 1980s and emerged with different themes and areas during the early 1990s were neither a powerful actor within the civil society in Turkey nor politically relevant in terms of legislation and its impact on society. As negotiations began with the EU for the full membership, the EU became an anchor for democratization, resulting in the relaxation of bureaucratic rules and regulations against the civil initiatives (Keyman and Gumuscu, 2014). Despite its relatively restricted area in civil society compared to the needs-based CSOs including charity work and social help, the rights-based CSOs started to be funded by foreign donors and became politically significant (Ketola, 2013). Under the early years of AK Party, the declining power of the tutelary regime which was composed of the military and judiciary and the legislation of laws and amendments in line with the EU's *acquis communautaire* allowed a free place for the works and contribution of the rights-based CSOs. In that period, rights-based CSOs addressed the needs and demands of various groups towards law-makers and state institutions and created awareness through society. The Gezi Park protests in which many of the right claims could easily promote its democratic vision through public was heavily repressed by the AK Party with the adoption of a nativist and authoritarian discourse. In contrast, despite such restrictions and blockades, which were followed by the upcoming years and peaked in the aftermath of the coup in 2016, opposition parties positioned themselves with rights-based themes and identity claims more than ever, especially in comparison to their history. In consequence, oppositionary political parties, especially BDP/HDP and CHP, adopted many democratic ideals of the rights-based CSOs. Thus, the perspective of the rights-based CSOs is worth mentioning and relevant in Turkish society and politics.

CHAPTER 5

TURKEY-EU RELATIONS AND THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE RIGHTS-BASED CSOS

5.1.Introduction

Turkey's transition to being a member country in the European Economic Community (EEC) dates back to 1959 when the Turkish government applied for association with the newly created community (Eralp, 2009, p. 150). Hereof, the Ankara Treaty of 1963 set out the general principles and conditions as a three-step process towards creating a customs union and the governments exercised these until 1978 to secure Turkey's full membership. The relationship between the EC and Turkey which deteriorated during the 1970s has been rejuvenated with Prime Minister Özal's official application for membership in 1987, which was followed by the completion of the Customs Union in 1995 and the designation of EU candidacy status to Turkey in 1999 (Öniş, 2003). From that onwards, Turkey introduced many packages and regulations to adopt the *acquis communautaire* that opened space for civil society and democratization.

The rights-based CSOs firstly appeared in the late 1980s and flourished during the 1990s with the foundation of many CSOs promoting specific right themes. The recognition of Turkey as an official candidate country for the EU in 1999 and the beginning of the accession negotiations in 2005 facilitated the amendment of rules and regulations for the right to organize and right to protest which empowered the rights-based CSOs. With these political shifts, many rights-based CSOs could promote their ideals on society and became active actors to transmit democratic visions through public (Ketola, 2013). Furthermore, thanks to the socio-political and legal impacts of the Turkey-EU relations, varied rights-based CSOs could institutionalize and frame their ideals within the public. Despite the AK Party's authoritarian tendency, especially since the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the rights-based CSOs remained

relevant in Turkish politics and their visions affected different opposition parties. Thus, the activism of the rights-based CSOs became one of the centers for the struggle towards democracy and attained larger interest from different sections of the society.

5.2. Turkey-EU Relations: Democratization and Political Agenda for the Civil Society

5.2.1. Turkey-EEC/EC/EU Relations Towards 1999

The relationship between the EEC and Turkey dates back to 1959 when Turkey applied for association with the newly established community (Eralp, 2009, p.150). Without any candidacy process and regulations in that time, Turkey and EEC signed the Ankara Treaty to project its future relationship and to decide the conditions to become a member of the Community. From the beginning of the formal relations to the end of the 1970s, bilateral relations were largely dependent on economic treaties and regulations covering the issues on trade and agricultural production. The CHP government, however, froze the relations and stopped regulating the articles in the Ankara Treaty in 1978 due to economic problems (Eralp, 2009, p. 152). The frozen and deteriorated relations with the EEC officially ended with the coup in 1980.

The freezing of the relationship with the EEC due to the 1980 coup altered as Prime Minister Özal made an official application in 1987 for Turkey to become a full EC member. Though the application received a negative answer in 1989, Turkey was still recognized as an eligible country for candidacy because of its geographical consideration and political situation (Eralp, 2009, p. 154). During the 1980s and especially in the 1990s, there were major structural shifts in the EC/EU in order to create a more political union advocating democracy, freedom, and liberty (Monar and Wessels, 2001). In that aspect, the economic and trade basis of the EEC shifted to more social, political and cultural themes with the introduction of the treaties for the EC and especially for the EU. Therefore, during the 1990s, the institutions of the EC/EU raised significant attention towards the allegations over misconduct and torture on the ongoing conflict with the PKK (Müftüler-Bac, 1998). Completing the conditions that were outlined in the Ankara Treaty, Turkey became a member of the Customs Union

of the EU in 1995. However, due to the mistrust between the two actors and rising concerns over democracy and civil society, the EU did not announce the establishment of a full membership process with Turkey in Luxembourg Summit 1997. No later than the political environment between Turkey and the EU became nourishing did Turkey secure an official candidate for the EU in 1999 in the EU Summit in Helsinki (Öniş, 2003, p.12).

From the beginning of the official relations in 1959 to the halt of the Treaties' regulations, the Turkey-EEC relations promoted economic cooperation and benefit. Moreover, EEC/EU was an important actor on social and political issues between 1980-1999 such as the end of death penalty and relaxation of laws for the political prisoners. However, during that period, EEC/EU institutions did not have institutional mechanisms to fund CSOs in Turkey.

5.2.2. Turkey-EU Relations: Official Candidacy in 1999

EU Summit in Helsinki in 1999 marks a significant milestone for the Turkish political history as Turkey is now recognized as an official candidate country for joining the EU membership. That particular event symbolized Turkey's will to implement certain political, judicial and economic reforms in the line of the EU's *acquis communautaire* (Kubiek, 2002, p. 10). Including many different criteria, Turkey directed to implement new laws and regulations to foster and enhance its ambition to become a political democracy under the EU's provisions.

The coalition government of DSP, MHP and ANAP were in office when the EU announced Turkey as the thirteenth official candidate country for the Union. The coalition government declared that they will decisively try to meet the Copenhagen Criteria to become a full member. After 1999, EU Commission began publishing the first progress reports on Turkey and the Turkish parliament passed the harmonization packages covering the laws of associations, political parties and media in order to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria (Müftüler-Baç, 2005). During the coalition government, the parliament passed many harmonization packages to meet the accession criteria (Zihnioğlu, 2013). In that same trajectory, an upward trend on the

establishment of the CSOs for voicing their demands is an important point happened in the same period (Ketola, 2013).

From November 2002 onwards, AK Party's government maintained the relationship with the EU and the government declared its full support to the accession process. The AK Party government succeeded in preparing and legislating the political criteria of Copenhagen Criteria. Thanks to the ongoing reform process on the legal arena and political will to implement certain regulations, in 2004, EU announced the beginning of the official negotiations for the full membership beginning with 2005.

Within years, in 2004 and 2005, Turkey, under the rule of AK Party, was involved in the formal negotiation process with the EU and try to comply many chapters to become an official member (European Commission, 2004, European Commission, 2005). In the negotiation process to become an official member, the EU and its institutions underlined the principles of democracy and procedures for Turkey which fall short in regard of many aspects including media freedom, and right to organize (Aydın-Düzgit, 2013). In that specific aspect, the elements within the civil society have been further prioritized by the officials of the EU to scale Turkey up for achieving certain pre-requisites in its democratization trajectory. From the viewpoint of the EU, civil society and the associations have been considered as vital and crucial to upgrade democratization and secure liberties.

From the announcement of Turkey's official candidacy in 1999 to the beginning of the accession negotiations in 2005, the EU contributed to the opening up of the civil space in two fundamental ways: First of all, the EU-Turkey relations entailed a political anchor on democratization which included monitoring the EU institutions via progress reports on Turkey (Keyman and Gumuscu, 2014). In that aspect, Turkish governments promoted a more liberal agenda on the rights-based CSOs and activists. Secondly and more importantly, thanks to the harmonization packages, the Turkish governments introduced certain laws and regulations which paved the way for the alleviation of many blockades over civil society and rights activism.

In October 2005, formal accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU have been launched thus, the EU increased its financial aid and grants for many sectors including civil society. To that end, the EU provided economic and institutional cooperation with the present and potential sections among society. In that regard, one could further scrutinize the institutional relationship between the EU and right-based CSOs in Turkey to position and strengthen many organizations from various right themes (Ketola, 2013). In that period, the accession process with the EU has significantly improved and helped the initiation of the right-based CSOs in regard to both decreased bureaucratic procedures and economic funding.

From various points, the EU has significantly affected the right-based CSOs in Turkey and provided economic funds and institutional programs to expand their capacity (Ketola, 2012; 2015). First of all, the EU helped the CSOs to democratically voice their demands and thereby contributed to the consolidation of right to speak and right to protest. In sum, one of the aspects of the EU- Turkey relationship could be stressed due to the factors on achieving a consolidated democracy in which disadvantaged groups, minorities, and political forces could easily organize and challenge the prevailing order. In the light of these theories on the role of the CSOs on democratization, I would like to draw attention to the contributions of these rights-based organizations in Turkey through the negotiation and accession period with the EU: one of the major aspects within these issues is about how the EU directly assisted and offered institutional managements towards these right-based CSOs (European Union, 2009; Ketola, 2015). In various aspects, EU's grant programs have sustained an opportunity for many organizations to work on the right themes (Ketola, 2011; 2012).

During the second term of the AK Party starting in 2007, many observers pointed out diminishing EU compliance and decreasing EU support by the governing party as well as the parties in opposition. Unlike the 1999-2005 period, the debates in the politics were much more oriented towards domestic issues with the crisis of the Presidential elections in 2007. Despite the slowdown of the EU reforms and government's tendency to deprioritize the EU agenda, the EU adopted the first Instrument for Pre-

Accession (IPA)[3] for the 2007-2014 period which provided economic grant schemes including the CSOs (Zihnioğlu, p. 46). With such an instrument, the fund and grant programs, which began during the 2000s, intensified and addressed many sectors. Such economic grant and fund mechanisms have been particularly significant for two fundamental reasons for the rights-based CSOs: First of all, Turkish public donated a very limited amount of financial aid to the CSOs compared to many Western cases mainly because it distrusted such organizations (Çarkoğlu and Aytaç, 2016). Thus, many rights-based CSOs could not create their own self-funding to promote its vision. Secondly, aside from the EU's own funding mechanism for the civil society, there is only a certain European government fund for the CSOs and no longitudinal financial grant program for the rights-based CSOs by the Turkish state. Moreover, the EU's grant mechanism prioritized the principles of objectivity and selected its beneficiaries mostly on the rules and regulations (Ketola, 2013). With such an application, especially the LGBTI+ and women CSOs which faced many moral and societal blockades could easily benefit from such mechanisms. Overall, the rights-based CSOs in Turkey could manage financial sustainability thanks to the existence of the EU's IPA apparatus.

The period spanning from 1999 to the 2010s, EU-related programs have offered benefits towards CSOs with different right-based groups including groups that promote LGBTI+, women, environment, disabled, children, refugee, minority rights, animal rights and etc. (Kaliber and Tocci, 2010; Updegraff, 2012; Ketola, 2013). Especially with such programs which were designed for the elements of the civil society, many organizations learned and adopted the language of rights and promoted right activism. In such a way, the EU's apparatus transformed the members of the civil society towards more rights-based themes and activities. Likewise, not only those EU's beneficiaries but also many other CSOs working in these fields realized improvements with the spread of these practices since the EU's regulations targeted success in the whole society. The rising population of Syrian immigrants in Turkey and its effects on the refugee crisis for the EU, Turkey and the EU signed a treaty

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[3] The IPA is one of the main mechanisms of the EU for funding. Such mechanism has been provided for the EU candidate countries including Turkey since 2007.

which included financial aid and capacity for the CSOs in 2016 (Şenyuva and Üstün, 2016). For the last years, refugee rights-based CSOs became one of the fundamental beneficiaries of the EU's programs for civil society.

Although the deterioration of the relations with the EU and Turkey began with Turkish government's violent response towards the peaceful Gezi Park protesters, the fund/grant mechanism continued with IPA-2 which entailed the 2014-2020 period. In that aspect, such financial mechanisms continued even under the introduction of emergency rule in 2016 after the failed coup. In contrast, Turkey closed down many of the rights-based CSOs in the pretext of their relations with terrorism (Çalışkan, 2018). The EU, on the other hand, denounced such attempts and stressed the importance of the rule of law and independent civil society.

Despite the climax of the passing harmonization packages in line with the *acquis communautaire* during the heydays of the EU-ization, the second and third term of the AK Party marked the slowing pace of Turkey's bid for the EU membership (Keyman and Gumuscu, 2014). From the end of the 2000s, the progress reports highlighted the slowing down of the democratization and opted for a critical voice due to the shrinkage of the civil space especially with the Gezi Park protests in 2013. In that regard, the EU's political anchor for democratization noticed a downward trend in the aspect of opening the space for the civil society in Turkey. In contrast to the declining political power of the EU on Turkey's democratizing agenda, EU's financial supports boosted with the IPA for the 2007-2014 and 2014-2020 programs which included economic grant and financial support for the rights-based CSOs. Therefore, the EU's institutional apparatus has been significant in the financial sustainability of a lot of rights-based CSOs in Turkey. With such a way, as many CSOs adopted a rights-based approach, many of the rights-based CSOs sustained their activities and activism.

5.2.3. Democratic Conditionality and EU's Role on Democratization

Since the democratic rules and regimes became the currency around the globe and democracies were regarded both desirable and realizable, many Western governments initiated programs that can be put in the context of "democracy promotion" (Youngs,

2012). Although the literature on democracy promotion has largely been analyzing the sanctions and leverage of the Western governments against the semi-democratic or authoritarian countries, "democratic conditionality" attains mere attention. Unlike punitive measures, economic aid and social harmonization are prioritized because sanctions alone do not enforce democratization in targeted countries (McFaul, 2010). For its international applications, EU's policies for enlargement could be underlined as the most applicable form of democratic conditionality (Youngs, 2012). Especially for the EU's tools for the democratization of candidate countries or third partners, support for independent civil society has been regarded as one of the central points. In its essence, the EU's democracy promotion agenda is built upon the idea that the rise of the civil society actors and freedom go hand in hand. However, democratic conditionality programs have benefits only when the two sides of the bilateral relationship are dedicated and willing.

With the introduction of Treaty on EU, democracy and human rights became the core objectives and the EU assisted in providing structural programs for consolidating democracies and in strengthening the rule of law, media freedom (Pace, 2012). In order to frame its democracy promotion agenda, the EU puts a significant emphasis on the role of civil society for promoting human rights and pluralism. For such efforts, the EU aims to build relations and implement projects with independent bodies including CSOs. Especially over the last years, the support for the rights-based CSOs has now often been articulated because these organizations are considered as the domestic agents that can flourish democratic practices in the targeted countries. I apply the scholarly literature on the EU's structural transformation power on democratization to the Turkish case since the EU's grants and funds provide excellent benefits for civil society from the beginning of the candidacy process. Throughout this process, the rights-based CSOs in Turkey has been engaged with the technic and bureaucratic nature of the support programs which intended to promote fundamental freedoms.

5.3. Rights-based Activism in Various Fields

In the previous section, I explored the political and economic impacts of the EU for the rights-based CSOs in Turkey. In this section, I aim to articulate the activism of the

rights-based CSOs and try to relate such contributions to the promotion of democratization in Turkish society.

5.3.1. LGBTI+ Rights-based CSOs and Activism

The LGBTI+ rights and queer activism were one of the least emerged themes which have always been repressed due to the legal and sociocultural limitations in Turkey. Despite the emergence of the queer identities with the hunger strike of the 37 trans sex workers in Gezi park in Taksim in 1987, the strikers could not form an initiative or an organization (Çetin, 2016, p. 10). After six years, in 1993, LambdaIstanbul Homosexual Civil Society Initiative *(Lambdaİstanbul Eşcinsel Sivil Toplum İnsiyatifi)* became the first unofficial queer organization in Turkey. Following that, in 1994, a small group of queer students created a pressure-group called Kaos Gay and Lesbian *(Kaos Gey ve Lezbiyen)* in the İHD's headquarter in Ankara and became a commission for rights of the gay and lesbians. Just two years later, Turkey's first queer university club, Middle East Technical University (METU) Lesbian and Gay Community *(ODTÜ LEGATO)* unofficially founded in 1996. During the 1990s, such organizations promoted their right-activism though these were small-scale cultural activities. In that regard, despite the flourishment of the early queer organizations, these organizations were unofficial due to the legal framework and limited to the biggest cities in Turkey. In 2001, Kaos GL became the first queer organization to participate the May Day marches with their own rainbow flags and slogans (Çetin, 2016, p. 12).

The harmonization packages for the EU candidacy process which addressed the relaxation of laws regarding associations passed during the 2003-4 period. Just after the issue of these laws, Kaos GL applied to become an official CSO. Although public prosecutor's trial against Kaos GL due to its "immoral" nature, the trial became void and null, and therefore, Kaos GL as Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Researches and Association *(Kaos Gey ve Lezbiyen Kültürel Araştırmalar ve Dayanışma Derneği)* became Turkey's first official queer CSO in Turkey in 2005 (Çetin, 2016). With such a decisive shift thanks to the reform packages under the acquis communautaire, the queer initiatives began to become official and gradually received grant and funds from the EU and the Western embassies/donors.

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The planned gay prides, which attempted to make queer identities visible in public spaces, were banned by the Istanbul governor in both 1987 and 1993. However, in 2003, queer activists organized their first gay pride march with twenty people in İstiklal street and the gay pride march was attended by more than a thousand people in 2007 (Bianet, 2019). In the same year, Rainbow LGBT (*Gökkuşağı LGBT*) became Turkey's first official queer student club at Bilgi University. In the early 2010s, the Pride Week Committee was established by several LGBTI+ CSOs in Istanbul, and more than ten thousand of the people started to attend the annual LGBTI+ Pride with the representatives of the Peace and Democracy Party *(Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi – BDP)* and CHP. The LGBTI+ CSOs became specialized in different themes by forming first trans men, trans women/sex worker organizations like Voltrans in İstanbul and Pink Life LGBTT Solidarity Association *(Pembe Hayat LGBTT Dayanışma Derneği)* in Ankara. Thanks to Turkey's first members of the LGBTI+ family initiative, Families and Relatives of LGBTs in İstanbul *(LGBT Bireylerin Aileleri ve Yakınları –LISTAG)*, the experiences of the families became a movie called "My Child" in 2013.

Gezi Park protest became a very critical point for the LGBTI+ rights activism when many of the different societal group recognized the existence of the identity and claims of the queer people (Yalçın and Yılmaz, 2014). While the LGBTI+ pride in 2013 reached its peak after the Gezi Park protests, the LGBTI+ CSOs started to establish in the cities other than biggest metropolitan areas like Antep, Çorum, Kars, Malatya and Trabzon. In that period, as the LGBTI+ unofficial student clubs rose in the universities in İstanbul and Ankara, those clubs at Boğaziçi University and Koç University became official student clubs in 2014. During this period, especially the civil society funds of the EU were important for the LGBTI+ rights-based CSOs to achieve their goals. In that particular regard, Kaos GL, SPoD and Black Pink Triangle *(Siyah Pembe Üçgen)* organized media training, meetings against homophobia, held conferences to increase the visibility of the queer people and implemented institutional support for the other LGBTI+ CSOs (Engin, 2015). Thanks to these CSOs, Turkey's first queer football clubs, *Sportif Lezbon* in Ankara and *Atletik Dildoa* in İstanbul, founded to counter masculine and sexist nature of the football/sports. During the mid-2010s, many CSOs

including Hevi LGBTI Association *(Hevi LGBTİ Derneği)*, Genç LGBTİ+, Amed Keskesor LGBTI *(Amed Keskesor LGBTİ)* promoted the intersectional areas like old, young, sex worker, Kurdish, HIV + and refugee queer people.

Despite its rise in the public, police violently repressed the official and legal LGBTI+ pride for the first time in 2015. The legal blockades accelerated after the introduction of the emergency rule: Istanbul governor banned the LGBTI+ Prides for three continuous years and Ankara governor announced an indefinite ban on al LGBTI+ activities in Ankara in 2017 (Kaos GL, 2019). Despite such shrinkage from the legal area, many of the rights-based CSOs, international foundations and opposition parties showed their support for the struggles of the LGBTI+ CSOs. For instance, student clubs and unions declared a strike at METU against the banned Pride in METU in 2019.

5.3.2. Women Rights-based CSOs and Activism

Despite the emergence of the women rights initiatives in the Ottoman Empire, such attempts were limited to Istanbul. Such women struggle, like the formation of Türk Kadınlar Birliği, was also repressed during the one-party era of CHP (Ecevit, 2007). In the 1960s and 1970s, women began to participate in the political arena through the socialist/leftist student clubs and unions (Kabasakal Arat, 2011, p. 265). However, during that age, women's struggle was mostly subsumed into the politics of class and capitalism, and there were no feminist women CSOs to promote such a vision.

The 1980 coup created a vacuum in the Turkish politics and during the mid-1980s, many women started to gather around reading and discussion groups in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir and attracted interest with petitions and street protests. In the 1990s, as the women/feminist movement diverged with different sections including Islamic, Kurdish, socialist and radical, the first rights-based women CSOs like Purple Roof *(Mor Çatı)* emerged and they promoted women's shelters against domestic violence (Toktaş and Diner, 2011). In 1997, KA.DER was founded to support the women candidates in the political arena where masculine culture was prevalent (Kabasakal Arat, 2011, p. 264). Despite its flourishment from the unofficial initiatives in the 1980s

to the foundation of dozens of women CSOs during the 1990s, the women rights activism was mostly limited to metropolitan cities and not common in the public.

The beginning of the negotiations for the full membership with the EU created a hope for many of the women rights CSOs and new emerging women CSOs were founded in the Kurdish cities. The EU-Turkey relationship contributed positively to the works of the women rights-based CSOs in two major ways: As the EU became the largest donors for these CSOs, women CSOs benefited from the political legitimacy of the EU-Turkey relationship for their own agenda (Boşnak, 2015).

Especially with the flourishment of the women rights activism in Kurdish cities in the 2000s, the women rights-based CSOs promoted campaigns against the honour killings and domestic violence against women. Starting with the full membership process with the EU, the civil society grant programs included themes including awareness on gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women, which in turn contributed for many women rights-based CSOs. Thanks to the relationship with the EU's institution and grant programs, Flying Broom *(Uçan Süpürge)* politicized the issue of child brides in early 2000s. At the same time, Uçan Süpürge began to organize annual women film festivals to publicize the issues of child brides, domestic violence and oppressive masculine dominant culture.

In addition to their works and contributions for raising awareness, women initiatives began to use the public spaces to celebrate the 8 March Women's Day which started in 1984. In that trajectory, rights-based CSOs began forming women coalitions in the major cities. They wanted to include many sections of the women in order to celebrate the event together in the 1990s and 2000s. In addition to the 8 March, women rights-based CSOs also utilized the UN's recognized 25th of November International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women with memorial marches. In the 2010s, thanks to the women rights-based CSOs, the 25th of November also became a major day for protests in the public squares in many cities all over Turkey. During this timeline, participation and public attention towards such protests noticed an upward trend in the 2000s and 2010s: It began with hundreds of people in the 1980s, and more than ten thousand people attended 8 March Demonstrations in Istanbul in the 2010s

and turned such protest into a "Feminist Night" to stress the insecurity of women at nights on the streets of Istanbul. As such, only commemorated by the women rights-based CSOs in the 2000s on media and with leaflets, the 25th of November became a central day for protest in the major cities of Turkey. Despite the police blockade against these protests with the emergency rule in 2016, women's day and the 25th November attained more attention. "Ezan" debates in 2019 when President Erdoğan falsely claimed that the women activists protested against Ezan and Islamic values resulting in a major attention (Teyit.org, 2019).

Began with the women reading/discussion clubs during the mid-1980s, women activists formed CSOs to address the social problems regarding domestic violence and masculine culture on politics and work-life in 1990s. Emerging in small and Kurdish cities during the early 2000s, the beginning of the accession process with the EU provided both economic and political leverages for the women rights-based CSOs to stress the importance of gender equality and counter against gender mainstreaming. With the attendance of tens of thousands of people for the annual 8 March and 25 November protests, the women rights-based CSOs mainstreamed the issues of domestic violence and masculine culture in the Turkish public.

5.3.3. Human Rights and Advocacy CSOs and Activism

Despite the emergence of civil society and democratization during the last periods of the Ottoman Empire, there were no human rights advocacy groups. During the early republican era, as I discussed in Chapter 4, İnsan Hakları Cemiyeti in 1946 and Hür Fikirleri Yayma Cemiyeti in 1947 were closed down by CHP short time after their foundation and had a minor effect on Turkish society (Çaylak, 2008, p. 123).

The civil society could be mostly characterized upon the leftist/socialist and nationalist/conservative cleavage from the late 1960s and 1970s where there were no independent group or organizations that supported human rights and rights advocacy. The two exceptions for that period were the foundation of Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği (ÇGD), which advocated the freedom of expression in 1978 and the initiative for the

campaigns of the Amnesty International in Turkey in 1978. However, their attempts and the extent of their works remained limited due to the coup in 1980.

In order to politicize the issues regarding trials, torture and loss of people during the military rule during 1980-1982, İHD was founded mainly by the leftist activist and became the first longitudinal rights-based CSOs in Turkey in 1986. As a part of the Europeanisation and democratization agenda, the ANAP government recognized the application for the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and its ruling in 1987 and 1990 (Öniş, 2003). With such a political shift, İHD aimed to continue its struggle by revealing the human rights abuses with the trails on ECtHR. In order to document the claims regarding torture, village evacuation and Turkish military's misconduct during the armed conflict against PKK, Human Rights Foundation of Turkey *(Türkiye İnsan Hakları Derneği – TİHV)* was founded in 1990. During the 1990s, both İHD and TİHV were the fundamental centers in the civil society which increased awareness for the cultural and political rights of the Kurdish people. Thus, in relation to Turkey's Kurdish issue, the work and contributions of these two rights-based CSOs were monumental for politicization among the public. These CSOs later began voicing demands through ECtHR and documenting the abuse during the armed conflict. The Helsinki Citizens Association (*Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği)* was founded in 1993 to monitor and document the process of EU-Turkey relationship in regards to Turkey's human rights policies.

The beginning of the EU-Turkey relationship for the candidacy process in 1999 was also characterized by the institutionalization of human rights and rights activism: As the branches of the İHD and TİHV multiplied through Turkey especially in the Kurdish cities, Amnesty International's Turkey branch officially founded in 2002 and began its campaign on right to expression. To monitor the government's agenda of democratization and to sustain an independent civil society, the activists founded The Human Rights Joint Program *(İnsan Hakları Ortak Platformu – İHOP*) in 2005. Especially after the murder of the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007, human rights CSOs organized protests against the articles and regulations that went against the right of expression and right to organize (White, 2007).

During the 2000s, many human rights CSOs worked for democratizing the agenda for the Turkey-EU negotiation process and played a major role during the democratic opening for the Kurdish issue from 2009 (Tocci and Kaliber, 2008; Cizre, 2009). Many human rights CSOs participated in international and EU-based conferences and enhanced the progress reports on civil society, rule of law and democratization of Turkey. The human rights advocacy groups and CSOs were one of the main groups for the public discussions and visit of the wise man committee regarding the Kurdish problem in 2013.

İHD, TİHV, İHOP, Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği and Amnesty International were the main human rights CSOs which documented the state repression and use of violence against the peaceful demonstrators in Gezi Park protests in 2013. Following that, especially İHD and TİHV reported the misconduct and the human rights violations during the Trench Operations *(Hendek Operasyonları)* in 2015. After the introduction of the emergency rule in 2016, many rights-based CSOs were closed down. Human rights CSOs reported these acts and called the government to adopt a democratic attitude. Since August 2018, the meetings of The Saturday Mothers (*Cumartesi Anneleri),* which addresses government and asks for their missing relatives were banned directly by the Minister of Interior. The human rights CSOs were the main promoters for such activism and participated in the meeting afterwards. That is, the human rights CSOs aimed to increase the use of the civil places to prevent the impunity of the state officials.

In that regard, these human rights advocacy groups have always been the organizations which documented and reported the misconduct of the state even in the hardest times. Founded in the late 1980s, the human rights groups became the most important civil initiatives to publicize the Kurdish issue in the public during the 1990s. With the beginning of the EU bid, these human rights CSOs were the main actors to report and monitor the human rights violations of the state and they flourished in the many cities. Contributed as an element in the civil society for the Kurdish issue, these CSOs were struggling against the shrinkage of the civil space which has been narrowing since 2013.

5.3.4. Environmental and Animal Rights-based CSOs and Activism

From the early republican era to the 1980s, natural conservation and environmental protection organizations were existent (İçduygu, 2011, p. 382). However, absent from their rights-based or an activist outlook, many organizations acted as semi-government institutions (Boşnak, 2015). However, the character of the environmentalist CSOs has widely changed during the 1990s when most environmental activists adopted a rights-based language and many CSOs including TEMA began to be institutionalized with the help of the UN agencies. The sociopolitical shift of the environmentalist activism noticed a significant shift with the marches and protests against the building of the gold mine in Bergama (Boşnak, 2016, p. 78). Supported by various different sections, environmental CSOs and protesters became highly politicized during the mid-1990s. With the beginning of the EU accession process during the 2000s, many of the environmental CSOs utilized the priorities of the *acquis communautaire* to legitimize their targets and opted for financial grant programs to implement their actions. Thanks to social media activism and public protests, environmental CSOs helped Turkey to become a part of the Kyoto Protocol in 2007. Especially since the mid-2000s, environmentalist CSOs became the sole actors to reveal the environmental disasters with the hydroelectric central in Karadeniz region and for the two planned nuclear plants. The activism of the many environmental CSOs have been crystalized with their work on judicial arena: In order to prevent such buildings, environmental CSOs contributed for the trials and organized protests with the support of the local communities.

One of the latest emerging right-based themes in Turkey was animal rights. During the 2000s, many local and short-term initiatives flourished to protect the welfare of the street pet animals like dogs and cats in the streets. In 2008, Turkey's first animal rights-based CSOs, Animal Rights Federation (*Hayvan Hakları Federasyonu)* was founded to create an institutional body to monitor violation against street animals. During the 2010s, the number of the animal rights CSOs rose with the foundation of the organizations in cities like Adana, Kocaeli, Mersin and Aksaray and they started social media campaigns and petitions to address the needs of the street animals. However, during the mid-2010s, there was a significant shift in the animal rights struggle as

many of the animal activists demanded protection for non-pet animals as well. It started a struggle against the spiciest culture of society. In that aspect, Vegan Association Turkey (*Vegan Derneği Türkiye*) and Committee for Monitoring Animal Rights (*Hayvan Haklarını İzleme Komitesi*) publicized the enslavement of the animals in zoos and problematized the carnivore eating culture. Founding official relations with the environmentalist CSOs, animal rights CSOs were the main actors to reveal the harm against every kind of animal and promote non-harm methods for living. Celebrating the 4th of October as the Day for Protection of Animals and 1st of November as the World's Vegan Day, animal rights CSOs were the fundamental actors in the campaigns and held protests against the use of horses for the phaetons in the Prince Islands in İstanbul. Organized on an ad-hoc basis for the news of the harm against animals, animal rights-based CSOs have been monitoring violence against animals and enslavement and raising awareness among the public.

5.3.5. Other Rights-based CSOs and Activism

One of the central socio-political problems were the ethnic and religious identities/minorities in Turkey because the dominant Turkish identity was claimed to be every individual's first and foremost identity since the foundation of the Republic. As discussed above, the rights and claims of the Kurdish people were voiced under the agenda of Turkey's first rights-based CSO, İHD. However, especially with the beginning of the negotiations with the EU, Kurdish communities were able to form their own rights-based CSOs and represented their identity in the public. From another point of view, Alevi people who mainly define themselves as a distinct Muslim sect identity began organizing under the cultural/social organizations through the early 1990s (Soner and Toktaş, 2011). For Alevi identity, the Sivas massacre in 1993 when Alevi and secular intellectuals were killed became a turning point and some of the Alevi CSOs adopted a rights-based approach. From the 2000s, Alevi-Bektashi Confederation *(Alevi-Bektaşi Konfederasyonu)* demanded the abolishment of the publicly financed Directorate of Religious Affairs. For other Alevi CSOs including Cem Foundation *(Cem Vakfı)* utilized ECtHR to change the Sunni-based outlook of the compulsory religion classes in primary and high schools. Moreover, Roma people who founded their organizations like Turkey Roma Federation *(Türkiye Romanlar*

Federasyonu) during the 1990s, began to implementing EU programs/project under Turkey Roma Rights Forum to counter cultural prejudice and societal stigma against the Roma in the society. Regarding the minority rights, the Hrant Dink Foundation was one of the rights-based CSOs representing the Armenian identity in Turkey. Funded mainly by the EU, the association targeted to create memorial centers and aimed to create tolerance between Turkish and Armenian communities in Turkey.

The rights-based CSOs which struggle against the oppressive culture due to ageism could be regarded as a new form of organization: In order to monitor the sexual and physical harassment against children, many children rights-based CSO began their works in the 2000s. In 2010, The Agenda of the Child Association *(Gündem Çocuk Derneği)* monitored and reported many child rape allegations and began activism on the judicial stage. As such, Association for Solidarity with Freedom Deprived Youth *(Özgürlüğünden Yoksun Gençlerle Dayanışma Derneği – ÖZ-GE DER)* which carried out many UN and EU grant programs was one of the significant rights-based CSOs specializing on children in prisons. In addition, the youth rights CSOs significantly flourished with the grant programs by the EU like EU Plus and the National Agency's funds for the youth area. The early period of the funds addressed the participation and integration of the Turkish youth with their European fellows. However, especially from the late-2000s, youth CSOs acquired a rights-based language and problematized the ageist approach against youth in education and workplaces. Lastly, Turkey's first elder rights association, 65+ Elder Rights Association *(65+ Yaşlı Hakları Derneği)* was founded in 2014 to renounce the prejudice against the elderly in Turkey. Being a beneficiary of an EU program, the association used a rights-based language for the elderly and promoted activism.

The first refugee organizations were founded during the 1990s to address the sociocultural and economic problems of the refugees in Turkey which did not recognize the 1951 refugee convention of the UN. SDGG – ASAM was the first refugee-rights based CSOs to promote their rights in Turkey. During the 2000s, İHOP initiated a specific commission for monitoring the abuses towards refugees and in 2008, a major İzmir-based refugee CSO, Association for Solidarity with Refugees *(Mültecilerle Dayanışma Derneği)* was founded. The first major shift in the area of

refugee rights was realized with the start of the UN's specific missions on Turkey the number of Syrian migrants rose since 2011. SGDD – ASAM began opening offices in more than forty cities and other refugee rights-based CSOs like Research Centre on Asylum and Migration *(İltica ve Göç Araştırmaları Derneği – İGAM)* carried out UN programs. In that area, the second major shift could be seen as the refugee deal with the EU in 2015 when the EU provided certain grant schemes and programs for Syrian migrants in Turkey. As a result of that, many rights-based CSOs promoted refugee rights with these specific grant programs. During the 2010s, the number and effectiveness of the refugee-rights based CSOs have risen dramatically and they work to scrutinize xenophobic and racist behaviour/language against these socio-cultural group.

5.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I argue two fundamental points: First of all, starting from 1960s, the EU increased its political influence on Turkey especially with the recognition of Turkey as an official candidate country for the membership in 1999. Such a political influence was predominantly evident in terms of civil society in Turkey. In that regard, harmonization packages for the *acquis communautaire* paved the way for opening the space for the right to organize and freedom of speech. With the launch of the official membership negotiations and opening of the chapters in 2005, many rights-based CSOs became the beneficiaries of EU's civil society grant programs and the Turkey-EU relations sustained a positive political environment for various right-based CSOs. Secondly and more importantly, the rights-based CSOs which were non-existent towards the end of the 1980s flourished with different identities and agendas in the 1990s and became major actors within the civil society during the 2000s and the 2010s. After the formation of İHD in 1986 as the first human rights CSO in Turkey, rights advocacy groups, women rights activists and environmentalists formed rights-based CSOs and promoted their agenda in public with protests and demonstrations during the 1990s. As EU-Turkey relationship intensified, many rights-based CSOs benefited from the judicial changes and the nourishing political environment. Besides, the EU's political priorities became a legitimizing factor for many of the rights-based CSOs as many activists adopted a rights-based language (Boşnak, 2015). Despite the rise of the

nativist and authoritarian tendencies of AK Party with the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and the shrinkage of the civil space after the introduction of emergency rule in 2016, rights-based CSOs became one of the central sites in Turkish civil society for monitoring the violation of rights. They were also the pioneers in claiming their rights via protests and demonstrations in a democratic manner.

CHAPTER 6

RIGHTS-BASED CSOS AND THEIR DEMOCRATISATION EFFECTS ON THE POLITICAL ACTORS IN TURKEY

6.1. Introduction

Before focusing social and political issues such as inclusion of the minorities and the promotion of the rights of the oppressed, the literature on democracy and democratization had underlined the importance of the economic variables. After the flourishment of literature on rights-based CSOs, the focus was on the importance of the activists, rights advocates and CSOs. This line of thought also stressed the rights-based CSOs' impact on the political parties, state institutions and municipalities to empower democratization. In that aspect, I limit political actors as political parties in Turkey, ministries of government and municipalities in Turkey. Thus, the rights-based CSOs are now regarded as the central institutions to enlarge the meaning and the application of democracy. I aim to reveal how the works and activism of the rights-based CSOs in Turkey resemble to such theoretical underlying of democratization in Chapter 6.

After their emergence and flourishment from the late 1980s and 1990s, many of the rights-based CSOs came out and forged relations with a lot of mainstream political parties, municipalities and state ministry/institutions. Thus, throughout the 2000s and 2010s, the rights-based CSOs could receive policy applications in favor of the rights of the disadvantaged or the oppressed. 2013 onwards, the transformative power of many rights-based CSOs on the governing party AK Party and on different ministries/state institutions weakened significantly due to the rise of the authoritarian applications. However, in that same period, the mainstream opposition parties and their municipalities benefited from these rights-based CSOs and were fond of the democratizing vision on social, cultural and political issues. In this chapter, I focus on the relationship between rights-based CSOs and political actors in Turkish politics.

6.2. Democratization and the Role of the Rights-based CSOs in the Politics

In the making of inclusionary politics and strengthening the democratic procedures, political parties and their ideals/vision are profoundly influenced by the contributions and works of the rights-based CSOs. More than their relationship between the CSOs in general, political parties have an indispensable role in the process and achievement of democratization (Burnell, 2004). Building democracies, pro-democracy political parties may have many advantages to transform authoritarian practices and emphasis a way forward to inclusionary methods. One of the essential characteristics of the political parties is to sustain the representation of its citizens, which is embodied by the plural forces of the social, cultural and economic groupings. In that particular regard, grass-roots organizations and their positions determine the selection and representation of their parties (Birch, 1972). Thus, rights-based CSOs become dominant in pointing out certain sections of society and in relating these identities to the arena of politics.

Secondly, political parties can be regarded as actors to instill democratic values and habits into its members and supporters (Randall, 2012). In other words, political parties could enhance the inclusive and democratic ways on certain groups and voice the demands of these sections through the institutionalized methods in a democracy. In that way, in order to frame the needs and struggles of such underrepresented sections in society, rights-based CSOs can guide. That particular fact entails democratizing potentials of the political parties through municipalities, their work on parliaments and support for the law-making. However, I do not claim that all the political parties are inherently democratic or pro-inclusionary as many parties' function to create obstacles for democratization (Manning, 2010). Rather, the argument entails the premise that rights-based CSOs could influence and change some pro-democratic parties to uphold inclusionary policies and practices that could strengthen the rights of the disadvantaged.

6.3. The Role of the Rights-based CSOs on Turkish Political Actors and Turkish Democratization

6.3.1. LGBTI+ Rights-based CSOs and Their Effects on the Political Actors

Being one of the most socially excluded groups in Turkey, queer people could only gain their official status in 2005 and formed relations with other political actors when the legal barriers for the formation of the LGBTI+ associations were lifted. However, during the 1990s, the social activism of the first queer initiatives including Kaos GL and Lambdaİstanbul had an impact on Freedom and Solidarity Party's (*Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi - ÖDP*) charter which banned discrimination on sexual orientation and sexual identity for the first time in a political party. Moreover, ÖDP nominated Turkey's first openly queer/trans candidate in the 1999 local elections, Demet Demir, a member of the İHD's Istanbul branch and formed a sexual minority commission (İnce, 2019).

Although Turkey's first queer associations Kaos GL and Lambdaİstanbul are officially recognized by 2006, their effects on the mainstream political parties and municipalities were strictly limited as LGBTI+ themes were hardly recognized in the terrains of the political for the Turkish society. Towards the end of the 2000s when there were trails to close down the queer associations and when first LGBTI+ prides/activities faced threats from the Islamist and ultra-nationalist groups, a handful of the rights-based LGBTI+ CSOs could not find any major political actor to represent their rights. In 2007 general elections, Demet Demir became the first openly queer candidate for the Turkish parliament and Baskın Oran was the first widely-known candidate who directly supported LGBTI+ rights and attended 2007 Pride in İstanbul. After the murder of Ahmet Yıldız, an openly gay person, by his father in 2008, media attention towards the LGBTI+ honor killings rose and some media outlets covered news regarding these issues. A protest was held in 2010 against Minister of Family and Social Policy Selma Aliye Kavaf who declared homosexuality as an illness. However, queer CSOs were mostly left alone and not supported.

In order to voice the queer people within the political arena, SPoD was founded in 2011 and a specific politics section was created for the Hormonal Tomato LGBTI+phobia Awards *(Hormonlu Domates LGBTİ+fobi Ödülleri),* aimed at naming and shaming homophobic/transphobic individuals and institutions. Thanks to the

activism of SPoD, LGBTI+ rights and claims appeared for the first time in the minutes of the Parliament's commission for the constitutional reconciliation in 2012 (Engin, 2015). Owing to the recognition of the LGBTI+ movement from different sections of the society with the Gezi Park protests, many political party representatives from CHP and BDP and the chairman of ÖDP, Alper Taş attended the LGBTI+ Pride in 2013 in Istanbul. Before the local elections in 2014, SPoD started its first political campaign with petitions for the nominees for the local elections and received 40 signatures highlighting the responsibilities of the municipalities (Engin, 2015). In that time, CHP decided to nominate two openly queer people, from the LGBTI+ movement and members of the queer CSOs, for the local parliaments in Şişli. During 2014-2019, queer CSOs especially Kaos GL and SPoD were significant actors in promoting LGBTI+ rights in Şişli, Nilüfer, Çankaya municipalities by holding conferences for awareness and founding free health service for the Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

As a successor of the BDP, HDP adopted its charter regarding the LGBTI+ rights and nominated the first openly homosexual candidate Barış Sulu, an activist in Lambdaİstanbul, for the June 2015 elections in Eskişehir. During the election process in 2015, thanks to the political campaigns of the SPoD, 61 nominees for the national parliament signed the petition promising to uphold the rights of the queer community and 29 of them were elected. Many of the CHP and HDP MPs denounced the bans of the LGBTI+ pride marches from 2015 and opened discussion on this issue. Genç LGBTİ+ Derneği continued the same campaign with the petition for the 2018 general elections under the political environment of the emergency rule. In that time, 44 candidates from HDP, CHP and İYİ Party *(İYİ Parti)* signed the petititon and and 18 of them (11 from HDP and 7 from CHP) became Member of Parliaments (MPs). Against the indefinite ban on the LGBTI+ activities in Ankara, the representatives of CHP and HDP supported the legal activism of Kaos GL and denounced the police violence in METU Campus against the METU LGBTI+ Pride which was organized by the METU LGBTI+ student club. In 2019 local elections, the queer themes became of the political aspects for the candidates in İstanbul including Beyoğlu CHP candidate Alper Taş and Şişli CHP candidate Muammer Keskin. As 27 candidates from more

than four party signed the petition, four of them became mayor and for the first time a mayor of a metropolis, Tunç Soyer as the mayor of İzmir, elected as a signatory of the LGBTI+ petition. As many politicians from HDP and CHP protested the ban against LGBTI+ Pride March in İstanbul in 2019, nearly 30 CHP and HDP municipalities celebrated the Pride month and used social media to promote LGBTI+ rights.

6.3.2. Women Rights-based CSOs and Their Effects on the Political Actors

In the late Ottoman era, women struggle flourished by means of different feminist magazines where women activist discussed social and political issues concerning women. However, as highlighted in Chapter 4 and 6, the women activists were neither organized around CSOs nor politically significant to create leverage on the political parties or actors in the Ottoman Empire. At the beginning of the Republican era, women activists alongside Nezihe Muhiddin attempted to establish Turkey's first women political party, Women's People's Party *(Kadınlar Halk Fırkası)* in 1926. However, in the pretext of the 1909's prohibitive laws on political rights of the women, CHP restricted the founders of the party to stand in an election (Ecevit, 2007). Continued as a semi-governmental organization, the association was closed down by CHP as the party argued that the association fulfilled its mission on the issues covering the political and social rights of women.

Despite the emergence of women in daily politics and in protests from the 1950s onwards, as discussed through Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, there were no independent women rights initiatives or CSOs until late 1980s and 1990s. The Progressive Women's Association *(İlerici Kadınlar Derneği)* was exceptional as it was one of the very few examples of women activists' forming CSOs (Boşnak, 2015). However, unlike an independent organization, the association was a semi-official organ of TİP in the 1960s and 1970s. In that aspect, despite the presence of women in especially leftist/socialist parties and student clubs, women were not organized through CSOs to influence the political actors and state institutions.

Especially with the rise of the women rights initiatives thorough reading/discussion clubs and public protests in the 1980s, such activism turned into a petition campaign

for the UN Convention for the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Turkey signed this convention in 1985 (Boşnak, 2015). In the 1990s when first women rights-based CSOs founded and established institutional relations with the international organizations, the impact of the women struggles on political actors significantly increased: Thanks to the activism of the women rights-based CSOs, crucial changes on both Penal Code and Civil Code happened in favor of women in the 1990s.From the establishment of the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs in 1990, women rights-based CSOs have always attempted to shift the ministry's attention to the domestic violence, socio-economic rights of the women and impunity of the men after their attacks on women for honor crimes.

With the intensification of the EU-Turkey relationship after the Helsinki Summit in 1999, women rights-based CSOs pushed the government to legislate pro-women laws on Penal Code and Civil Law. As the women rights-based CSOs were active, in 2004/5 regulations were transformed in a time when penalties such as sexual abuse and rape increased. The women rights-based CSOs were successful in their campaigns against the criminalization of adultery in 2005 when these CSOs raised concerns with the women-rights-based CSOs in Europe and protested the attempts on the EU level (Boşnak, 2015). One major example to the impact of the rights-based CSO on the political actors can be their work and contributions to the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities between Men and Women where many women rights-based CSOs provided their opinions on gender perspective and aimed to shape the legislation process (Boşnak, 2015).

In the aspect of political representation of women in elections, KA.DER was founded in 1997 to support women candidates in national and local elections in a non-partisan manner. Growing in power from the 2000s, KA.DER was one of the fundamental rights-based CSOs to promote the agenda of women quote for the mainstream political parties (Kabasakal Arat, 2011, p 264). During the local elections in 2019, KA.DER campaigned for "Women Friendly Municipality Commitment" which was signed by 70 candidates including elected mayors Ekrem İmamoğlu as the mayor of İstanbul, Tunç Soyer as the mayor of İzmir, and Ayhan Bilgen and Şevin Alaca as the mayors of Kars.

The effects of the women rights-based CSOs reached climax during the 2010s when multiple municipalities began working with these organizations and held seminars and conferences on gender equality and organized events to raise awareness. In that regard, women quotas are important to voice the women rights from municipal levels.

6.3.3. Human Rights and Advocacy CSOs and Their Effects on the Political Actors

Although early steps for democratization were taken and a relatively free political space was realized during the late Ottoman Empire, there were no established human rights or right advocacy initiative/organizations. From the Republican era to the late 1980s, the short-term human rights initiative and association which I argue in Chapter 4 and 5, could not even have a societal impact.

The foundation of İHD in 1986 was one of the milestone events for Turkey's struggle for human rights and rights activism. Four years later, in 1990, some members of İHD founded TİHV specially to work on the torture and maltreatment of the state. Despite these CSOs' being one of the oldest and most institutionalized organizations, these CSOs happened to have only a little impact on the state institutions and ministries since these CSOs were regarded as "anti-state" due to its activism on the Kurdish issue. Mainly because of their political position on Kurdish rights, these associations were regarded as "separatist" from the securitizing perspective of Turkey in the 1990s.

With the outset of membership negotiations with the EU in 1999 and the lift of the emergency rule in the Kurdish cities in 2002, the blockades over human rights and right advocacy CSOs decreased. In 2002, Amnesty International's Turkey branch started its campaign on freedom of speech and organization and demanded reforms from the lawmakers. In order to create a semi-official body for respecting human rights and monitoring human rights violations in 2005, many human rights organizations were invited to discuss the structure and formation of the body. Many of the human rights activists and CSOs criticized the formation and law of the semi-official body for human rights. In order to monitor that body and publish shadow reports on human rights abuses, many human rights-based CSOs including Helsinki Association, İHD,

Amnesty International and Human Rights Agenda Association *(İnsan Hakları Gündemi Derneği)* created the body of İHOP in 2005. Working as a secretariat for documenting the state abuses and being a watchdog organization for the government actions on human right, İHOP also published public documents to reveal the impunity on human rights violations, actively followed the legal and executive regulations after the ECtHR convictions on Turkey. In that regard, during the very controversial changes of the Law on Duties and Powers of the Police, and regarding the 301st article of the Turkish Penal Code, İHOP was an important institution to analyze and show the benefits and shortcoming of the changes.

Especially as a result of Turkey's official announcement of its candidacy, Turkish government established new institutions to monitor in the legislative and executive area in accordance with the human rights notions. These institutions are the Human Rights Presidency, the Human Rights Board, the Human Rights Consultation Boards and the Investigation Boards (Boşnak, 2015). Many rights-based CSOs came closer with these new institutions to promote their agenda and highlight the abuses of the state during the early 2000s.

With the start of the debates for the new constitution after the elections in 2011, many human rights CSOs and right advocacy groups presented their drafts on the different amendment to the Parliament's commission for the constitutional reconciliation in 2012. As I discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, human rights CSOs and rights advocates were significant actors for the government in regards to the Kurdish issue and many activists served as "Wise Man" to provide societal solutions for the problem in 2013.

The cooperation and advice mechanisms of the human rights CSOs for the state and its institutions which were relatively available from the beginning of the 2000s realized a sharp decline after the Gezi Park protests in 2013. Going back to the securitizing perspective of the 1990s, AK Party criminalized a number of human rights CSOs and showed these organizations as the donor of the protests against the government. From that point, however, a convergence between the human rights CSOs and the opposition parties became more relevant and important from the 2010s: The chairman of the İHD's chairman Sezgin Tanrıkulu was invited to CHP and served as vice-chair of the

party in 2010-2016. In 2018, Canan Kaftancıoğlu who worked at TİHV on case analysis on tortures and who was a founder of the rights-based Social Memory Platform *(Toplumsal Bellek Platformu)* was elected CHP's head of İstanbul branch, and CHP created a vice-chairmanship for human rights. From the beginning of the Kurdish political movement, there were a lot of politicians who actively worked in İHD and TİHV. Promoting many right-based fields, HDP as the predecessor of the Kurdish movement, included representatives from Islamic human rights organization MAZLUMDER.

6.3.4. Environmental and Animal Rights-based CSOs and Their Effects on the Political Actors

Although the environmentalist or natural conservation organizations date back to the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, such organizations were mainly dependent on state institutions, did not opt for a rights-based approach and could not have impacts on political actors. The foundation of the Green Party in 1985 with the support of the environmentalist activists created only a limited space for the movement to engage with the mainstream political actors in Turkey.

Through the 1990s when environmentalist and ecological organizations professionalized and institutionalized, some of the CSOs contributed to the policy-making process in regards to nature conservation and environmental articles on international agreements (Adem, 2016; Boşnak, 2015). Despite the rising attention towards the Bergama Gold Mine Protests during the mid-1990s, the activists and the CSOs did not have a direct impact on political parties or state institutions (Boşnak, 2016, p. 78).

From the 2000s, the environmentalist and ecological rights-based CSOs were particularly successful at stressing natural disasters. The demands arose with the building of the Hydro Electrical Centrals and Nuclear Power plants. Many opposition parties, especially CHP and BDP/HDP promoted pro-environmentalist agenda to stand with such CSOs. Monitoring and acting as the watchdog CSOs for Turkey's responsibilities on the international environmental treaties, these CSOs influenced the

creation of bodies in the political parties including CHP and HDP. Thanks to the environmental activists' and CSOs' struggle in the Gezi Park protests, the themes regarding nature and green places became apparent in the political sphere in the opposition. The rise of the coverage regarding environmentalist themes in the local elections for both 2014 and 2019 elections could be regarded as a success of these CSOs.

The animal rights initiatives were disorganized during the 2000s when the activists demanded shelters and foods from the local municipalities to protect street dogs and cats. With the rise of the foundation of the animal rights-based CSOs and adoption of a more inclusive language on the rights of all animals, the activist began forming relations with the political parties, municipalities and state institutions. Animal Protection Law, which was issued in 2004, criticized by many of the animal rights-based CSOs due to its ineffective character and recognizing impunity on the violators. Starting from 2012, these CSOs organized large-scale demonstrations in İstanbul and Ankara to draft a new law to protect animals from violation and regulate their use by humans.

Especially from 2017, one of the successful campaigns of the animal rights-based CSOs was regarding the use of horses as phaetons in various sites in Turkey. Politicizing this specific issue on media, animal rights-based CSOs attracted support from the representatives of CHP and HDP. During the local elections in 2019, these CSOs attempted to raise their voices to take guarantee on nominees to ban the use of animals for human services. For the first time in Turkish history, the mayor of İzmir prohibited the use of phaetons in the city. As such, thanks to animal activism, Ankara municipality organized a workshop to discuss street animals.

6.3.5. Other Rights-based CSOs and Their Effects on the Political Actors

As I discussed in Chapter 4, 5 and 6; the rights and claims of the ethnic/religious communities have always been neglected due to the Republic's old tradition of a presumed superiority of Turkish identity. Despite the rise of discussions around

Kurdish, Alevi and non-Muslim communities to scrutinize social and cultural rights, their demands did not turn into laws and regulations.

In both of the new constitution discussions in 2006 and 2012, human rights associations like İHD and Kurdish rights-based CSOs brought the issue of "Turkishness" in the constitution into the agenda. Against the reductionist approach on assuming Turkishness as a feature of the citizenship, many CSOs advised the use of other ethnic backgrounds or the term *Türkiyeli* (people of Turkey) as an umbrella term. Receiving significant criticism from ultra-nationalist MHP and secular nationalist CHP, such a clause did not find any place for the drafts in the constitution.

As discussed in Chapter 5, 6 and 7; the 301st article of the Turkish Penal Code which brings imprisonment for insulting Turkishness was an obstacle for freedom of expression and was utilized to legitimize silencing the ethnic/religious minorities (Ketola, 2013, p. 79). After the murder of the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink who was targeted by ultra-nationalist groups, the law was amended (White, 2007, pp. 133-6).

Many Alevi rights-based CSOs criticized the structure and legal status of the Presidency of Religious Affairs which only sustained religious services for Sunni people despite founded as a public institution. Alongside with the demands of the Alevi CSOs from the 1990s, Selahattin Demirtaş as the Presidential candidate of HDP in 2014 elections, declared to change the structure of this presidency. From 2015 elections, HDP added into its charter to abolish such an institution which only served for a specific religious community and which went against the secular understanding of the constitution.

Most non-Muslim CSOs acted on religious and cultural purposes and did not generally apply for rights-based activism. However, these religious/cultural CSOs held meetings with the state bodies to re-gain their previously used churches and cultural centers. Thanks to the activism of such organizations and the heyday of the EU-Turkey relationship, Turkey recognized their rights of non-Muslim communities on their property. Though a loosely-organized non-Muslim CSOs, Garo Paylan became

Turkey's first Armenian MP from HDP in 2015 and promoted an agenda on the rights and problems of the minorities in the parliament.

Regarding the youth rights-based CSOs' impact on the mainstream political actors, I cite the contributions of the Community Volunteer Foundation *(Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı – TOG)*. While drafting the new constitution in 2011-2012, TOG's vision for the rights of youth included the lowering the voting age, increasing the mechanisms for protecting youth, extending the rights for organization and recognition of the conscientious objector (Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı, 2012). Although the demands of many youth rights-based CSOs was not met, the age for standing in the general election was lowered to 18 from 25 with the 2017 Referendum. Many youth rights-based CSOs targeted some changes in the strategic planning of the municipalities to include youth-oriented projects and create positive conditions. The legal changes regarding the rights of the children were mostly realized in terms of child abuse, child protection and child rape. Thanks to the persistent struggle of the child rights-based CSOs, the penalties on child abuses were increased. Through the city/local councils, many children rights-based CSO supported child-based policy on the municipalities. One of the remarkable examples was to announce of petition, "Child Network Strategy Document" by several child-rights-based CSOs in Diyarbakır to the municipalities of the city. Since the first rights-based elderly rights CSOs, 65+ Elderly Rights Association, was founded in 2016, the activists could not have longitudinal effects on the political actors in Turkey.

6.4. Conclusion

As already explored in Chapter 2, whereas the early understanding of democracy/democratization solely stresses the importance of the competitive elections among certain elite groups, the contemporary approaches argue the indispensability of pluralism, respect for minorities and representation of the culturally/socially oppressed groups. In that aspect, CSOs, as the primary representatives of such groups, could be grasped as the carriers and promoters of the demands and claims towards political parties, lawmakers, municipalities and state institutions. Defined as the promoter of the rights of a specific group or a thematic area, rights-based CSOs could sustain and promote democracy with their effects on the mainstream political actors. From that

point, secondly, I discussed how the activism and contributions of the rights-based CSOs in Turkey fit into that contemporary paradigm and therefore, into the promotion of democratization. The rights-based CSOs which emerged and flourished with different thematic areas from the late 1980s and 1990s began institutionalizing and participating in the law-making process during the 2000s. Despite varied trajectories of the different rights-based themes, many CSOs could negotiate with the state institutions and was able to implement their visions on the programs of the ministries in the 2000s during the heydays of the EU-Turkey relationship. State and its institutions neglected the agenda of the most rights-based CSOs starting from the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and some of these CSOs were even criminalized and banned by the government after the state of emergency in 2016. However, many rights-based CSOs could easily form relations and could negotiate with the opposition parties, especially with BDP/HDP and CHP, from the early 2010s. Thus, these parties became the promoters of the many different CSOs' agenda in their party politics by representing such issues in the lawmaking process and applying their vision into their municipalities.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Turkish civil society, which was represented as weak and passive against the "strong state" from the late Ottoman era, transformed with the emergence of the rights-based CSOs in the late 1980s. Even squeezing in a very little section within the civil society, rights-based CSOs began promoting different groups, identities and themes during the 1990s. Thanks to the beginning of the official relationship with the EU as an official candidate country in 1999, many rights-based CSOs benefited from both positive political environment, regarding the extension of the space for the freedoms and liberties, and EU's financial programs, which were addressed to sustain CSOs' economic and institutional needs (Ketola, 2013). Growing in number and expanding their capacities by means of institutionalization, the rights-based CSOs contributed to the democratization of Turkey in terms of recognition of the oppressed identities; broadened the political space for the excluded communities, and advanced the rights of the disadvantaged. Despite an increasingly aggressive and a nativist approach on many rights-based themes from the Gezi Park protests in 2013 by the AK Party government, activists and rights-based CSOs were able to struggle for their visions and politicized various social and cultural issues through their activities, protests and demonstrations (Özyürek, Özpınar, Altındiş, 2019). At the same time, the effects and the potential of the rights-based CSOs crystalized especially on the opposition parties including BDP/HDP and CHP from the 2010s. In that regard, embracing their agenda through society, the rights-based CSOs became the central actors for the opposition parties which included, adopted and promoted various right-themes in their targets and implement policies through their local governments in the name of democratization.

In this thesis, I benefited mainly from the theoretical framework and literature written on the issues including civil society and democratization in Turkish politics. By doing that, I elaborated the meaning and existence of the civil society against the state and

analyzed the shift/transformation of Turkish civil society since the emergence of the rights-based CSOs in the late 1980s. In addition to the scholarly works on these subjects, I made use of the reports and documents from international and institutional agencies which refer to the issues around the rights-based CSOs, and Turkish government's responses on a political and social level to the rights-based themes.

From the beginning of its conceptualization, most scholars have positioned civil society as one of the prerequisites for democracy or the carriers of democratization. Many scholars relate the advancement of the state responsiveness and creation of a free society to the organization of the individuals around initiatives, organizations and activities. In contrast, many civil or non-state elements contributed not to democracy but even to the demise of the democratic rule and promoted authoritarian/totalization methods in many of the historical cases. In order to revisit the positive relationship between civil society and democracy, I specifically employed the rights-based CSOs, rather than opting a holistic approach to integrate every element in civil society. Rights-based CSOs, by their definition, promote activism on recognition of identities, problematize the inequalities of the oppressed and pressure the lawmakers and institutions to uphold certain provisions. As such, rights-based CSOs work as watchdog institutions to monitor and supervise the application of the state organs on regulations and are the principal agents to remind the responsibilities of the state. Therefore, rights-based CSOs can be ideal examples of democratization with their impetus on public debates; of opening up the political space for the disadvantaged; and of mainstreaming the agenda.

From the beginning of the reformation attempts in the Ottoman Empire on social and political areas in the 19th cc., the civil society was very weak against the state and was not represented by any rights-based CSOs. Despite the presence of some efforts of the civil society and the emergence of some-sort of early examples of the rights-based initiatives during the early Republican period (1923-1950), CHP dominated the whole political space and none of the CSOs could provide any meaningful effect on society. During DP's period (1950-1960), there were no rights-based CSOs and other oppositionary civil engagements were heavily repressed especially in DP's second and third periods. Starting from the mid-1960s to the coup in 1980, in the absence of the

rights-based CSOs, the left and right political axis of the Turkish politics was dominantly represented by the student/youth clubs, labor unions and nationalist/Islamic association/foundations. After the introduction of elections in 1983 and opening up the political space, İHD was founded in 1986 and became the first long-lasting rights-based CSO in Turkey. The 1990s are characterized for the expansion of the rights-based CSOs and the earliest examples regarding the foundation of many varied right themes including women, queer, environment and refugee. However, these rights-based CSOs represented only a very small portion of the Turkish civil society and were not powerful in terms of their societal and political effects for democratization.

With the outset of Turkey's EU bid in 1999, the Turkish coalition government embraced a reform agenda on political liberties and freedoms (Öniş, 2003). With EU's anchor for democratization, many CSOs found themselves in a favorable environment regarding freedom of speech and right to protest from the early 2000s. Being able to form a one-party government after the massive victory in the 2002 elections, AK Party declared its ambition at negotiating with the EU and opted for a number of major legal changes to meet the requirements of *acquis communautaire*. With the abolishment of the legal blockades on bureaucratic steps for the associations/foundations and with the creation of relatively open space for the social/political discussions, rights-based CSOs increased its effects on society, lawmakers/commissions and state institutions. On the one hand, AK Party's harsh response towards Gezi Park protests in 2013 and the introduction of the state of emergency after the failed coup attempt in 2016 marked downward trends for the rights-based CSOs which were criminalized in the eyes of the society, excluded from political processes and outlawed. On the other hand, the rights-based CSOs became central to the struggle with rising interest from the society for their protests and demonstrations and contributed to the opposition parties, especially BDP/HDP and CHP, in terms of adopting new political agenda for democratization.

The EU-Turkey negotiation process entailed the beginning of the grant schemes and funds which include certain mechanisms for the civil society sector in Turkey. Alongside the positive political factors for raising their political effects, the EU also provided financial and institutional support to provide sustainability for many of the

rights-based CSOs. From the late 1980s and during the 1990s, especially human rights and advocacy groups faced severe repressions from the state and could not mainstream their agenda through the public. Thanks to these political and economic contributions by the EU, the visibility and the effectiveness of many of the rights-based CSOs increased among the public from the 2000s. Activists could easily establish CSOs with their legal status and flourished in many other peripheral cities to promote their democratizing ideals in society. Especially since the Gezi Park protests in 2013, AK Party aimed to delegitimize the works and visions of many rights-based CSOs in the eyes of people. In contrast, many rights-based CSOs attained even more attention and interest regarding demands and claims of the disadvantaged communities and the oppressed through activities, demonstrations and protests. That said, the democratizing potentials of the rights-based CSOs transmitted to a larger section of the society.

The contemporary theories of democracy/democratization pinpoint the importance of the pluralist culture consisting of respect for the rights of the minorities, freedom of expression of socially/culturally repressed groups and right to organize for many dissident/oppositionary sections within a society. Through these lenses, rights-based CSOs project the ideals of democratization through claiming and reminding the rights of many groups by participating in law-making processes, negotiating with the political parties and lobbying with the municipalities. From the late 1980s and 1990s, the newly emerging rights-based CSOs were not institutionalized and only a limited number of the organization representing a handful of varied right themes could promote their agenda on parliament and state institutions. With their rising capabilities, many rights-based CSOs could easily speak about their demands by addressing the parliament commissions and they applied their projections in the ministries from the 2000s and in the early 2010s. The AK Party government increasingly adopted authoritarian, nativist and reactionary language against the right themes from Gezi Park protests in 2013, leaving almost no room for a lot of rights-based CSOs to work and negotiate with state and its institutions. Despite the widening distance between the state and rights-based CSOs, oppositionary political parties including BDP/HDP and CHP oriented their political agenda in the line of varied right themes. In that aspect,

many rights-based CSOs advanced their democratizing missions in the policy applications through the oppositionary parties and municipalities.

To sum up, I stressed three main arguments in my thesis: First of all, whereas the civil society was not a significant actor in politics to counter and shape the state from the late Ottoman era to the Republican period, rights-based CSOs emerged in the late 1980s and developed into a significant element within the civil society and addressed varied right themes in the 1990s and the 2000s. Merely absent in the weak Turkish civil society, rights-based CSOs became relevant in the public and represented various rights claims which had never been pronounced in Turkish politics before. Secondly, from the time Turkey was recognized as an official candidate country for the EU in 1999, the rights-based CSOs benefitted both politically and economically from promoting their democratizing ideals. In that regard, with an open political environment and being able to sustain themselves financially, rights-based CSOs could advocate their agenda and transmit their claims to the Turkish civil society. As a result, rights-based CSOs attained a greater significance in the public for recognition of identities/communities and for the promotion of many right claims. Thirdly and lastly, beyond the terrains of the civil society, rights-based CSOs successfully established relations with the political actors including political parties, state institutions/ministries and municipalities. Therefore, the democratizing potentials of the rights-based CSOs could affect Turkish politics via the changes in the policy applications of the state institutions. Especially from the early 2010s, opposition political parties aligned with the visions of the different rights-based CSOs and carried their democratizing ideals into reality in their municipalities and in the parliament.

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APPENDICES

A. TÜRKÇE ÖZET / TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tezin amacı, Türkiye'deki hak temelli sivil toplum örgütlerinin (STÖ) Türkiye'deki sivil toplum içerisinde öneminin arttığını ve özellikle 1980'li yıllardan itibaren Türkiye siyasetinde ve demokratikleşmesinde önemli bir konuma geldiğini vurgulamaktır. Bu amaçla bu tezde 2019 yılına kadar gelen Türkiye siyasi tarihi incelenerek sivil toplumun rolü, hak temelli STÖ'lerin çıkışı ve hak temelli STÖ'lerin Türkiye siyasetindeki ve demokratikleşmesindeki öneminin altı çizilecektir. Böyle bir çalışma yapılırken, Türkiye tarihi ve siyaseti ile ilgili akademik literatürden yararlanmanın yanı sıra, hak temelli STÖ'lerin ve hak temelli STÖ'lere ekonomik ve siyasi açıdan yardım sunan Avrupa Birliği (AB) gibi kurumların açıklamalarına ve raporlarına yer verilecektir. İlk olarak, sivil toplumun tanımı, sivil toplumun demokratikleşme ile bağı ve hak temelli STÖ'lerin anlamı ile ilgili bir literatür taraması yapılacaktır. Literatürde sivil toplumun, Tocqueville gibi bu konu üzerine ilk incelemeleri yapanlardan itibaren, demokrasi ve demokratikleşme gibi kavramlarla pozitif ilişki içerisinde olduğu iddia edilmiştir (1969). Ancak Tocqueville ve Tocqueville'in bu bakış açısından hareket eden sosyolog ve siyaset bilimciler, sivil toplum kavramını sınırlandırmadıkları ve belli bir tanımını yapmadıkları için bahsedilen pozitif ilişki her toplumda ve ülkede görülmemiştir. Buradan hareketle, bu tezde demokratikleşme ilişkisi, sivil toplum içerisinde hakların korunması, devlet tarafından garanti altına alınması ve geliştirilmesi için çalışmalar yapan STÖ'ler ile kurulmaya çalışılacaktır. Literatür taramasından ve tezde kullanılacak kavramların tanımlanmasından sonra Türkiye'deki sivil toplumun gelişimi ve Türkiye'de ilk hak temelli STÖ'lerin ortaya çıkışı Geç Osmanlı döneminden, Türkiye'nin AB adaylığının resmen onaylandığı 1999 yılına kadar incelenecektir. Türkiye'de 1980'lerin ortalarına kadar uzun soluklu faaliyet göstermiş bir hak temelli STÖ bulunmazken, bahsedilen aralıkta Türkiye'deki sivil toplum birçok dönemde baskılanmış ya da Türkiye siyaseti karşısında güçlü bir konuma erişememiştir. 1980'lerin ortalarında kurulan ve

1990'larda çeşitlenen hak temelli STÖ'ler, devlet tarafından yasal ve siyasal olarak baskılansalar ve toplum tarafından olumsuz bir bakış açısıyla karşılansalar da, farklı alanlarda çalışmaya başlamış ve çeşitli sorunları siyasetin alanına taşımışlardır. AB adaylık sürecinin başlaması ve 2000'li yıllarda Türkiye hükümetlerinin siyasi ve sosyal özgürlüklerdeki yasal sınırlamaları kaldırmasıyla, hak temelli STÖ'lerinin toplumsal etkisi artmış ve birçok kimlik ve grup için demokratikleşme girişimleri için katkıda bulunmuşlardır. Özellikle 2013 yılındaki Gezi Parkı eylemlerine karşı AK Parti hükümetinin baskıcı tutumu ve özgürlük alanlarını kısıtlama girişimleri birçok hak temelli STÖ'nün alanını daraltmayı amaçlasa da, bu dönemde hak temelli STÖ'ler siyasetin ve demokratikleşme taleplerinin temel temsilcilerinden olmuşlardır. Türkiye'nin AB aday ülke olması ile hak temelli STÖ'lere verilen finansal ve siyasal destek artmış ve bu örgütler Türkiye'nin demokratikleşmesine katkılarda bulunmuşlardır. Bu bağlamda, LGBTİ+, kadın, insan hakları ve savunuculuğu, çevre, hayvan, göçmen/mülteci ve diğer birçok alanda çalışma yürüten hak temelli STÖ'ler; bakanlıklar, parlamento, belediyeler ve diğer kamu kurumlarıyla temasa geçmiş ve çeşitli kimliklerin taleplerini temsil etmişlerdir. Böylece, 1980'lerin ortalarına kadar Türkiye siyasetinde neredeyse varlık gösteremeyen hak temelli STÖ'ler, birçok alanda çeşitli faaliyet göstererek Türkiye siyasetinde önemli bir noktaya gelmiş ve demokratikleşme taleplerinde öncü konuma gelmiştir.

Literatürde, sivil toplum ve demokratikleşme ilişkisi baskın bir şekilde birbirleriyle olumlu olarak ilişkili ve birbirine bağlı kavramlar olarak ele alınmıştır (Cohen ve Arato, 1994; Putnam, Leonardi ve Nanetti, 1994). Böyle bir pozitif ilişkiyi ilk olarak kuranlardan olan Tocqueville, Amerika'daki sivil toplumun "demokrasi okulu" işlevi gördüğünü ve gönüllü örgütlerin demokratik kültürü sağladığını iddia etmiştir (1969). Bu gelenekten beslenen Putnam, Leonardi ve Nanetti (1994), İtalya'daki bölgelerde karşılaştırmalı olarak yaptıkları araştırmada sivil toplumun demokrasinin gelişmesindeki önemini vurgularken; Varshney (2003) ve Heller (2009) gibi akademisyenler bu bağın Batı'ya özgü olmadığını ve Hindistan ve Güney Afrika gibi ülkelerde de sivil toplumun demokratikleşme ile pozitif bağının olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Ancak, bahsedilen pozitif ilişkinin birçok örnekte ortaya çıkmadığı, hatta sivil toplumun artması ve gelişmesinin demokratikleşmeye değil tam aksine demokrasinin

yok oluşuna ve totaliter rejimlerin kurulmasına öncülük edebileceği gösterilmiştir (Berman, 1997b; Bermeo ve Nord, 2000; Encarnación, 2003). Demokrasi ile sivil toplum arasında pozitif ilişki kuran bakış açıları, sivil toplum ve STÖ'lerin içeriğini tanımlamamakla eleştirilmiş ve bundan dolayı bulgularının her ampirik durumda gerçekleşmediğinin altını çizmiştir (Payne, 2000). Sivil toplum ve demokrasi arasında iddia edilen pozitif ilişkiyi kurmak için insan hakları ve özgürlükler üzerine mücadele eden gönüllü örgütlerin çabalarıyla ilişkilendirilebileceği iddia edilmiştir (Veneklasen, 1994). Birçok uluslararası kurum ve kuruluş, devletlerin bireyler özelinde sorumluluklarını yerine getirmesi, devletlerin insan haklarını tanıması, uygulaması ve bu hakları genişletmek için çalışmalar yapan örgütleri "hak temelli STÖ" olarak tanımlamışlardır (OSCE, 2004; EU, 2008; UNFPA, 2014). Bahsedilen özgürlükler ve haklar, daha sonraları çevre ve hayvan haklarını da içine alacak şekilde genişletilmiştir (Pianta, 2005). Bahsedilen bu hak temelli STÖ'ler, birçok toplumda hem siyasal alanın tanımını genişletmiş hem de siyasetin temel öznelerinden biri haline gelmiştir. Siyasal alanı sadece devlet ve kurumlarını yönetmek olarak gören sınırlı bakış açısının aksine, birçok hak temelli STÖ toplumlarda sosyal ve kültürel olarak görülen güç ilişkilerini problematize etmiş ve siyasetin alanına sokmuşlardır (Armstrong ve Bernstein, 2008). Bahsedilen hak temelli STÖ'lerin üzerine yoğunlaştığı alanlar kadın hakları, çevre hakkı, LGBTİ+ hakları, hayvan hakları, göçmen/mülteci hakları gibi sıralanabilir ve bu hak temelli örgütler siyasal oldukları kadar aynı zamanda demokratikleşme için önemli aktörler olarak görülebilirler. Schumpeter'in (1976) demokrasiyi elit gruplar arasındaki rekabetçi bir sistem olarak gören sınırlandırıcı tanımı dışında, demokratik rejimi sosyal eşitlik sağlamayı amaçlayan ve baskılanan grupların içerilmesi olarak tanımlayan Dahl'ın (1989, 2008) düşüncesinin önemini vurgulayabiliriz. Bu bağlamda, birçok farklı alanda mücadele eden hak temelli STÖ'ler; temsil gücü sosyal, kültürel ya da ekonomik sebeplerle kısıtlanmış ve daraltılmış grupların haklarını politize ederek demokratikleşmeye katkıda bulunurlar. Bunun yanında, hak temelli STÖ'ler birçok alanda hakim olan eşitsiz güç ilişkilerini afişe ederek, baskılanan grupların temsil güçlerini toplumda ve çeşitli kurumlarda artırırlar.

Modernleşme ve demokratikleşme hareketleri Geç Osmanlı döneminde Jön Türklerin ve daha sonrasında İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin anayasal bir düzen kurma

çabalarına kadar dayandırılabilir (Mardin, 1969; Kansu, 1997). Bu tür hareketlere rağmen, Geç Osmanlı döneminde sivil toplum, devlet karşısında güçlü bir aktör olamamıştır. Geç Osmanlı döneminde hak temelli STÖ'ler varlık göstermezken, sivil toplumun siyasi gücü zayıftır ve bu dönem genel olarak neo-patrimonyal ve Sultanist olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). 1923 yılındaki Cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan, 1946 yılındaki ilk çok partili seçimlere kadar sivil toplum devlet tarafından baskılanmış ve birçok STÖ bu dönem içinde yasaklanmıştır. Türk Ocakları'nın ve kadın hakları için çalışmalar yapan Türk Kadınlar Birliği'nin faaliyetlerine bu dönemde son verilmiştir. 1923 ile 1950 yılları arasında iktidarda olan Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), 1946 yılında kurulan İnsan Hakları Cemiyeti ve 1947 yılında kurulan Hür Fikirleri Yayma Cemiyeti gibi Türkiye'nin ilk hak temelli sayılabilecek STÖ'lerin faaliyetlerini kısa bir süre sonra durdurmuştur (Çaylak, 2008). 1950 yılında yapılan seçimle beraber mecliste çoğunluğu sağlayan Demokrat Parti (DP) iktidar olmuş ve 1950-1954 yılları arasındaki ilk döneminde sivil toplumu ve medyayı baskılayan yasalar ve uygulamalarda rahatlamalar görülmüştür (Dodd, 2011). Ancak bahsedilen bu görece özgürlük ortamı DP'nin özellikle ikinci döneminden itibaren kaybolmuş ve yerini medyaya, siyasi partilere ve azınlıklara karşı baskı uygulayan politikalara bırakmıştır (Kuyucu, 2005). DP'ye karşı yapılan 1960 askeri darbesinin Türkiye siyasal tarih açısından sivil-askeri ilişkilerine ve demokratik kültüre olumsuz etkileri olmuştur (Karaosmanoğlu, 2011). 1960 askeri darbesinden sonra 1961 yılında kabul edilen yeni anayasa, sosyal ve politik özgürlüklerin alanını genişletmiştir (Özbudun, 2018). Böyle bir ortamda, genel olarak üniversitelerde örgütlenen öğrenci hareketleri ve sendikalar sivil toplum içerisinde gelişmiş ve güçlenmiştir. Özellikle 1960'lı yılların sonu ve 1970'li yılların başıyla beraber, bahsedilen öğrenci örgütleri ve sendikalar "sağ" ve "sol" kimlikler kazanarak siyaset içerisinde kendisini tanımlanış ve Türkiye siyasetinin ana hatlarını oluşturmuştur (Zürcher, 2004). Aynı dönem içerisinde, sivil toplum içerisinde güçlenen bir başka oluşum ise büyükşehirlere ve endüstrileşmiş Avrupa ülkelerine artan göç ile ortaya çıkan hemşehrilik dernekleri/örgütleridir (Hersant ve Tourmarkine, 2005). Bu dönem içerisinde, bahsedilen bu STÖ'lerin hak temelli bir karakteri olmazken, 1970'lerin ortasında kurulan Af Örgütü'nün Türkiye şubesi ve 1978 yılında kurulan Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği (ÇGD) gibi hak temelli oluşumların etkileri oldukça sınırlı

kalmıştır. 1980 askeri darbesi ile beraber tüm STÖ'lerin faaliyetleri yasaklanırken, 1982 yılında kabul edilen anayasa ile sosyal ve siyasal özgürlükler çok büyük ölçüde kısıtlanmıştır (Heper ve Evini, 1988; Özbudun ve Genckaya, 2009; Özbudun, 2018). 1983 yılında iktidara gelen Anavatan Partisi (ANAP), 1980'li yılların ortasından itibaren 1982 anayasasının sosyal ve siyasal kısıtlamaları karşısında görece iyileştirme adımları atmıştır. Bununla beraber, çoğunluğunu solcu entelektüellerin ve 1980-1982 askeri yönetim altında yaşanan işkenceleri araştırmak isteyen kişilerin oluşturduğu İnsan Hakları Derneği (İHD) 1986 yılında kurulmuştur (Türkmen, 2002, pp. 80-1). Siyasi etkileri açısından Türkiye'nin ilk hak temelli STÖ'sü olarak kabul edilen İHD'yi, 1990'lı yıllarda çevre, kadın, göçmen/mülteci alanlarında çalışmalar yapmaya başlayan hak temelli STÖ'ler takip etmiştir.

Demokratik Sol Parti (DSP), Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP) ve ANAP'ın oluşturduğu üçlü koalisyon hükümeti döneminde Türkiye, 1999 yılında AB için aday statüsünü kazanmış ve Birlik'e üyelik için yasal, ekonomik ve siyasal koşulları yerine getirmek için reform politikası izlemeye başlamıştır (Zürcher, 2004). Bahsedilen reformlar, örgütlenme ve ifade özgürlüğü gibi hakların sınırlarını geliştirmiş ve hak temelli STÖ'ler için olumlu bir ortam oluşturmuştur. 1999 yılında ağır kayıplara sebep olan depremlerde devletin geç ve yetersiz mücadelesi ve 2001 yılında yaşanan ekonomik krizin sarsıcı etkileri toplum nezdinde "güçlü devlet" algısının sorgulanmasına sebep olmuştur ve oluşan boşluğun STÖ'ler tarafından doldurulabileceği iddia edilmiştir (Keyman ve İçduygu, 2003). 2002 yılındaki seçimlerle beraber tek başına iktidara gelen AK Parti, üçlü koalisyonun başlattığı AB adaylık sürecini desteklemiş ve bu sayede Türkiye 2005 yılında adaylık için müzakerelere başlamıştır. Özellikle 2003/4 döneminde anayasada yapılan ciddi değişikliklerle dernek ve vakıf kurmak kolaylaştırılmış ve siyasi/sosyal özgürlüklerin alanları genişletilmiştir (Zihnioğlu, 2013). Bu dönemde her ne kadar farklı temalarda hak temelli STÖ'ler kurulsa ve hak temelli STÖ'lerin aktivitelerinde artış olsa da, bahsedilen örgütler partiler arası geçen siyasetin gölgesinde kalmıştır. AK Parti'nin 2007 yılında ikinci kere tek başına iktidar olduğu ve 2011 yılına kadar devam eden dönemi, AK Parti'nin "açılım" dönemi olarak adlandırabiliriz: Bu dönem içerisinde, AK Parti hükümetinin başlattığı "Kürt Açılımı", "Alevi Açılımı" ve "Azınlık

Açılımı"nda birçok hak temelli STÖ ile görüşmeler yapılmış ve çeşitli hak temelli STÖ'ler demokratikleşme konusunda taleplerini müzakere etmişlerdir. Aynı dönem içerisinde, 2009 yılında yaşanan TEKEL işçi direnişleri sırasında birçok hak temelli STÖ'nün sendikalarla kurduğu ilişkiler güçlenirken, 2010 yılında CHP'de yaşanan lider ve kadro değişiminin partinin demokratik hak ve taleplere bakışının olumlu yönde gelişeceği düşünülmüştür (Özuğurlu, 2011; Gülmez, 2013). AK Parti'nin 2011 yılındaki üçüncü seçim zaferinden hemen sonra başlayan yeni anayasa tartışmaları esnasında ve Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinde (TBMM) kurulan Anayasa Komisyonunda, hak temelli STÖ'ler birçok kimliğin haklarını ve sorunlarını gündeme getirmiş ve farklı siyasi partiler ile görüşmeler yapmıştır. 2013 yılının Nisan ayında hükümet tarafından açıklanan ve Kürt sorununun çözümü için çalışmalara başlayan Akil İnsanlar heyetinde birçok hak temelli STÖ'nün temsilcisi de yer almıştır (Ensaroğlu, 2013). 2013 yılının özellikle haziran ayında, İstanbul'da başlayan ve neredeyse Türkiye'deki tüm şehirlere yayılan Gezi parkı eylemleri, birçok hak temelli STÖ'nün taleplerinin ve hak temasının toplum genelinde görünürlük kazanmasını sağlamıştır. AK Parti hükümetinin Gezi parkı eylemlerine karşı takındığı otoriter ve baskıcı uygulamalar, birçok kimlik ve grubun toplumsal alanda öne çıkmasına engel olamamıştır (Sofos, 2014). AK Parti'nin ilerleyen yıllarda artan otoriter politikaları, her ne kadar hak temelli STÖ'lerin ve bu alanda çalışan aktivistlerin alanlarını kısıtlamayı amaçlasa da, siyasal düzlemde hak temelli STÖ'lerin görünürlükleri artmış ve baskılanan çeşitli kimliklerin talepleri ön plana çıkmıştır.

Türkiye'nin 1958 yılında kurulan Avrupa Ekonomik Topluluğu (AET) ile resmi ilişkileri 1959 yılında AET'ye üyelik başvurusu yapması ile başlamıştır (Eralp, 2009). 1960'lı ve 1970'li yıllarda ağırlıklı olarak ekonomik ve ticari anlaşmalar üzerinden ilerleyen AET ile ilişkiler 1980 darbesi sonrası dondurulmuştur. 1987 yılında dönemin başbakanı Turgut Özal'ın Avrupa Topluluğu'na (AT) tam üyelik başvurusu yaparak tekrar kurulan ilişkiler, Türkiye'nin 1995 yılında Gümrük Birliği'ne girmesi, 1999 yılında AB'ye aday statüsünü kazanması ve 2005 yılında üyelik için müzakerelerin başlamasıyla devam etmiştir (Müftüler-Baç, 2005). 1980'li yılların ortalarından 1999 yılına kadar sosyal ve siyasal yönden oldukça etkili olan AT/AB kurumları, etkilerini 1999 yılından sonra artırmışlardır ve hak temelli STÖ'lere hem siyasi hem de

ekonomik yönden katkı sunmuşlardır. Bu bağlamda AB, hem devlette hem de toplumda hak temelli STÖ'lere karşı var olan negatif algının olduğu ve sivil toplum için maddi kaynakların sıkıntılı olduğu bir ortamda, bahsedilen hak temelli STÖ'lerin kurulması, gelişmesi ve görünürlüklerini artırmasında önemli bir aktör olmuştur (Zihnioğlu, 2013; Ketola, 2013). 2003-2004 yıllarındaki AB reform paketlerinden sonra yasal engellemelerin kalkmasıyla dernekleşen LGBTİ+ inisiyatifleri, öncelikli olarak büyükşehirlerde örgütlenmeye ve Onur Yürüyüşleri düzenleyerek görünürlüklerini artırmaya başlamışlardır (Çetin, 2016). Özellikle 2000'li yılların sonu ve 2010'lu yıllarda çeşitli kimlikler ve alanlar üzerinde özelleşmeye başlayan ve Türkiye'nin birçok şehrinde de kurulan LGBTİ+ hak temelli STÖ'ler, 2015 yılındaki İstanbul Onur Yürüyüşünün yasaklanması ile başlayan süreçte baskılanmaya çalışılsa da, birçok alanda yürüttükleri faaliyetlerle toplumda bilinç oluşturmuştur. 1980'li yılların ortalarında okuma/tartışma grupları üzerinden örgütlenen ve büyükşehirlerde imza kampanyaları ve sokak protestoları düzenleyen kadın örgütleri, 1990'lı yıllarda kadına karşı aile içi şiddetle mücadele ve kadınların siyasi temsilinin arttırılması için çeşitli hak temelli STÖ'ler kurmuşlardır (Toktaş ve Diner, 2011; Kabasakal Arat, 2011, p. 264). 2000'li yıllarda AB ve Birleşmiş Milletler (BM) gibi kurumlarla ortak olarak yürütülen programlarda, kadın hak temelli STÖ'ler namus cinayetleri ve çocuk gelinleri toplumsal alanda politize etmiş ve 8 Mart, 25 Kasım gibi günlerde geniş katılımlı protestolar düzenlemişlerdir. 1986'da İHD'nin kuruluşu ile başlayan insan hakları savunuculuğu ve insan hakları aktivizmi 1990'lı yıllarda Türkiye İnsan Hakları Derneği (TİHV) ve Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği'nin kurulmasıyla kurumsallaşmış ve Türkiye'nin insan hakları sorunlarında gözlemci konumda olmuşlardır. 2002 yılında resmi olarak Türkiye şubesini açan Uluslararası Af Örgütü ve hükümetin insan hakları politikalarını gözlemlemek için 2005 yılında açılan İnsan Hakları Ortak Platformu (İHOP), Gezi eylemleri başta olmak üzere örgütlenme özgürlüğünün engellendiği ve orantısız gücün kullanıldığı toplumsal olaylarda raporlamalar yapmıştır. Özellikle Bergama eylemleri ile 1990'lı yıllarda hak temelli bir bakış açısı kazanan çevre STÖ'leri, 2000'li ve 2010'lu yıllarda yapılması planlanan Hidroelektrik Santralleri (HES) ve nükleer santrallere karşı eylemler düzenlemiş ve çevrenin korunması için birçok planı yargıya taşımıştır.

Sivil toplumdaki aktörler ve STÖ'ler, politikanın aktörleri ile kurdukları ilişkilerle toplumda çeşitli sorunların gündeme getirilmesine, farklı kimliklerin görünürlük kazanmasına ve demokratikleşmeye katkı sunarlar. Bu bağlamda, STÖ'lerin siyasal partilerle kurdukları kurumsal ilişkiler ya da bu partilerde yaratıkları etkiler, toplum geneli için demokratik süreçleri hızlandırma potansiyeline sahiptir (Burnell, 2005; Randall, 2012). Bununla birlikte, STÖ'ler sadece siyasal partilerle kalmayıp belediyeler gibi kamu kurumlarıyla ve bakanlıklar gibi devlet kurumlarıyla da çeşitli bağlar kurup, politize ettikleri konuları görüşebilir ve etki yaratırlar. Buradan hareketle, Türkiye'deki hak temelli STÖ'lerin; çeşitli kimliklerin tanınması ve haklarının geliştirilmesi için siyasal partiler, belediyeler ve devlet kurumları nezdindeki çabalarının demokratikleşme ile bağını vurgulayabiliriz. 1990'lı yıllarda LGBTI+ aktivistlerin çabalarıyla Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi (ÖDP), parti programında cinsel yönelim ve cinsel kimlik temelinde ayrımcılığı yasaklayan ve açık LGBTİ+ kimlikli aday gösteren ilk siyasal parti olmuştur. 2000'li yılların ortalarından itibaren bu hak temelli STÖ'ler özellikle Barış ve Demokrasi Partisinin (BDP) LGBTİ+ politikalarında etki yaratmışlardır. 2011 yılında kurulan Sosyal Politika Cinsiyet Kimliği ve Cinsel Yönelim Çalışmaları Derneği (SPoD), LGBTİ+'ların kimliklerinin tanınması ve yasal anlamda haklarının belirtilmesi adına 2012 yılında Anayasa Komisyonu için raporlarlar hazırlamış ve 2014 yerel seçimlerinden başlayarak LGBTİ+ dostu aday kampanyasını başlatarak konuyu gündeme taşımıştır (Engin, 2015). 1980'li yıllarda kadın hakları inisiyatiflerinin çabalarıyla başlayan ve 1985 yılında hükümetin BM'nin Kadınlara Karşı Her Türlü Ayrımcılığın Önlenmesi Sözleşmesini (CEDAW) imzalamasıyla devam süreçte, 1990'lı yıllarda kurumsallaşan kadın hak temelli STÖ'leri, Türk ceza kanunu ve medeni kanununda değişikliklerin yapılması için büyük çabalar göstermiştir (Boşnak, 2015). 1999 yılı sonrası AB ile müzakere sürecinin hızlanmasıyla, kadın hak temelli örgütler 2000'li yıllarda kadına karşı cinsel istismar ve tecavüz cezalarının artmasında ve zinanın suç olmaktan çıkarılmasında büyük rol oynamıştır. Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinde (TBMM) "Kadın Erkek Fırsat Eşitliği Komisyonu"na önemli geribildirimler sunan kadın hak temelli STÖ'ler, belediyeleri stratejik planlarında kadınlara yönelik oluşturulması gereken politikalar konusunda da teşvik etmiştir. Hükümetin özellikle AB ile üyelik müzakerelerinin resmi olarak başladığı 2005 yılından itibaren, hükümetin insan

hakları alanında gölge raporlar hazırlayan insan hakları STÖ'leri ve insan hakları savunucuları, Türkiye İnsan Hakları ve Eşitlik Kurumu (TİHEK) gibi kamu kurumlara monitörlük yapmıştır. 1990'lı yıllarda kurumsallaşmaya ve hak temelli bir perspektif kazanmasına karşın siyasal partiler ve aktörlerle doğrudan bağlar kurmayan çevre hakları STÖ'leri, 2000'li yıllarda HES'lere ve nükleer santrallere karşı muhalefet partileri ile temaslara geçmişlerdir. Çevre hakları örgütlerinin Gezi eylemleri sürecinde ön plana çıkması CHP ve Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP) gibi muhalefet partilerinin çevre ile politikalarının şekillenmesinde etkili olmuştur. 2000'li yıllarda belediyelerden hayvan barınakları talep eden hayvan hakları STÖ'leri, özellikle 2012 yılı ile birlikte hayvanları koruma kanunun değiştirilmesi ve hayvanların yük taşıma için kullanılmasının yasaklanması için sokak eylemleri yaparak belediyelerle ve siyasal partilerle temaslarda bulunmuşlardır.

Özetlemek gerekirse, 1980'lerin ortalarında kurulmaya başlayan hak temelli STÖ'ler 1990'lı yıllarda birçok farklı temayı toplumda temsil etmiş, birçok konuyu politize etmiş ve çeşitli kimliklerin hak mücadelelerini yaparak sivil toplum içerisinde önemli bir konum almışlardır. Aynı şekilde, daha önce görünürlüğü olmayan ya da az olan grup ve sorunları toplumsal planda ön plana çıkararak, hak temelli STÖ'ler Türkiye'de demokratikleşmeye zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, özellikle 1999 yılında Türkiye'nin AB için aday statüsünü kazanmasıyla, AB ve kurumları Türkiye'deki hak temelli STÖ'ler için önemli finansal katkı sunmuş ve politik açıdan pozitif bir ortam yaratmıştır. Sivil toplum ve demokratikleşme literatürü, aralarında bir bağ olduğunu iddia eden ilk bakış açıları tarafından hep olumlu ve birbirini destekleyici olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Ancak bu bakış açıları, sivil toplumu açık bir şekilde tanımlamadığı için birçok ampirik durumda teorize edilen bu bağ kurulamamıştır. Bu amaçla demokratikleşme bağının, hak ve özgürlüklerin geliştirilmesi ve devleti çeşitli kimlikler ve gruplara karşı sorumluluklarını hatırlatan hak temelli STÖ'ler ile kurmak önerilebilir. Geç Osmanlı döneminden 1980'li yılların ortalarına kadar Türkiye'deki sivil toplum devlet karşısında oldukça güçsüz olarak tanımlanırken, bu dönemde hak temelli STÖ'ler belli dönemlerde kurulmalarına rağmen kapatılmış ya da etkisini uzun süre sürdürememiştir. Türkiye'de hak temelli bir bakış açısı ile 1986 yılında kurulan kurulan İHD'yi, 1990'lı yıllarda birçok alanda çalışan ve faaliyet gösteren diğer hak

temelli STÖ'lerin kurulması takip etmiştir. 1999 yılında Türkiye'nin AB aday ülke olmasını kesinleşmesi ve 2005 yılında resmi müzakerelere başlaması, temel hak ve özgürlüklerin alanını genişletmiş ve hak temelli STÖ'ler için yasal ve siyasal kolaylıklar sağlamıştır. Bu dönem içerisinde hak temelli bakış açısı üzerinden kurulan STÖ'ler ve faaliyetler artarken özellikle 2013 yılındaki Gezi eylemleri ile birlikte birçok hak temelli STÖ'nün politize ettiği konular toplum tarafından daha görünür hale gelmiş ve Türkiye siyasetinde yankı uyandırmıştır. AK Parti hükümeti, özellikle Gezi eylemlerinden sonra sivil toplumun alanını daraltmaya çalışsa ve hak temelli STÖ'lerin çabalarına karşı reaksiyoner bir tavır alsa da, bahsedilen hak temelli STÖ'ler siyasetin alanında birçok aktörle bağ kurarak çeşitli sorunları gündeme taşımışlardır. Finansal kaynak konusunda sıkıntılar yaşayan birçok hak temelli STÖ için katkı sunan AB ve kurumları bu STÖ'lerin hak temelli perspektifte baskılanan kimliklerin ve çeşitli sorunların görünür hale getirilmesinde yardımcı olmuştur. Hak temelli STÖ'ler, düzenledikleri sokak eylemleri ve etkinliklerle toplumla doğrudan bağ kurmayı başarmışlardır. Aynı şekilde, hak temelli STÖ'ler kuruldukları zamandan bugüne kadar bakanlıklar, belediyeler ve siyasi partiler gibi Türkiye siyasetindeki çeşitli aktörlerle iletişime geçmişlerdir. Bununla beraber, hak temelli STÖ'ler kendi bakış açılarını ve taleplerini siyasetin aktörlerine taşıyarak bu alanlarda değişim oluşturmuş ve Türkiye'nin demokratikleşmesine ve kimliklerin görünür hale gelmesine büyük katkı sunmuşlardır.

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