

## CHAPTER 1

# CONTRADICTIONARY PROCESS OF WOMEN LIBERATION DURING THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN TURKEY: THE CASE OF THE JOURNAL “KADINLAR DÜNYASI”

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### Abstract

The literature on Turkish modernization presumes a linear and positive relationship between modernization and women’s liberation. According to this literature, the process that began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has increasingly improved the social position of women by establishing a secular order and making women legal subjects as well as equal citizens. Such a positive perception neglects the contradictory nature of the modernization process. The modernization process could be seen as a *contradictory process* which brings not only rights but also new types of obligations and subordinations as well as a *contradictory movement* conducted by the struggles of women. Thus, “new women” is not a political project just imposed from above but a consequence of a contradictory process on three levels. The first level signifies the change in women’s position in the relations of production, that is, their process of becoming a productive labor force. The second level indicates their position at home which is the change in their reproductive functions. The third level comprises the change in the position of women as mothers manifesting itself in reproducing the nation. This article argues the process of women liberation by referring to the contradictions in these three levels at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century and by addressing the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women’s World) published between 1913-1921 and known as the first feminist journal of Ottoman women.

**Keywords:** Women, Liberation, Contradiction, Labor, Production, Reproduction, Work, Nation.

“We, poor women, are always just a fruit, just a commodity in the eyes of men. Our actions, our right to live have been restricted. Besides, we could never be a heartfelt friend or companion and a partner to men in its fullest sense. We are not even the regulators of our houses, the ministers of our dominions either. They have always insulated us in a separate living space, enslaved us and obliged to men. The situation has been the very same in the times of ancient people and in the present civilized nations!... Each nation has enslaved its women according to its customs and laws”

*Women's World*, 1<sup>st</sup> issue, 17 April 1913

In the first issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*<sup>1</sup> (Women's World), the article published under the signature of *Kadınlar Dünyası* defined enslavement as a universal question of womanhood not specific to Ottoman women. The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* considered Ottoman Women to be a part of the universal movement of women against male domination. They used the expressions “our sisters” or “the member of our class” when they spoke of women in Europe as well as in Ottoman society. They defined womanhood as a “class”, and woman as a “commodity” in the hands of men by referring to common experiences of all women despite the socio-economic differences among them. The term “commodity” used to signify objectification of women as a labor force both in production and reproduction. In this way, the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* -just before the First World War- attracted attention to the contradiction of the modernization process identified with equal citizenship, the contradiction of the capitalist social relations promising wealth and freedom as well as the contradiction of the nation which appeared as a coherent unity.

The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* dealt with these contradictions in a contradictory way. They mostly applied to modern, capitalist and nationalist means and discourses while they were struggling against its devastating symptoms. They did not stand for a homogeneous worldview or respond to existing questions coherently. In this sense, one can define the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası* as a common ground for women from different tendencies and approaches who sought the ways of changing their social position. Rather than complete

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1 *Kadınlar Dünyası*, published between 17 April 1913 and 21 May 1921, is a journal whose editors were solely composed of women. Men were not allowed to write in the columns of the journal for the purpose of driving attention to the sexual hierarchy between women and men. The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* declared their aims as to defend the rights and interests of womanhood without discrimination against sex or religion. This journal is defined as first feminist journal whose editors and readers are composed of various segments of the society (Çakır, 2007).

responses, they formulated questions related to the society they lived in and to the social change arising from modernization and capitalization processes that crystalized the main social contradictions. They asked why men dominated the public space and controlled the mobility of women, why women were subjected to harassment because of their clothing, and why women could not share the same places with men in the public space. They also asked why women were excluded from many sectors of wage labor and fell into poverty or became obliged to men. As mothers who reproduced all the society why did women have no right to choose their husbands and why were they deprived of the means to improve their positions at home? In this way, they expressed how the devaluation of women was reproduced in a different way despite the liberal atmosphere which reigned after 1908 revolution.

Hegemonic approach in Turkish historiography, in line with modernist discourse, tends to explain these questions as results of the immature modernity specific to peculiar state-society relations in the Ottoman Empire. These questions are presumed to be gradually eliminated in parallel with modernization. From this perspective, the social position of women improved and progressed from the Tanzimat reforms to the republic era. On the other hand, the critical approach emphasizes the negative impacts of modernity by describing it in terms of disciplining bodies and minds that produce new forms of subjection. In this context, modernity has reinforced the dependence of women to men through invisible means of control. Both positive and negative approaches discuss modernity as a static project imposed from above and regard women as simple carriers of this project. Both of them presuppose an identity between state elites and women, and in this way, they ignore the political and social struggles as well as the challenges of women in the face of the conceptualization of modernity of state elites. Secondly, both these approaches tend to analyze the questions of modernization regardless of its relation to immanent contradictions of capitalism. Turkish historiography frequently identifies capitalism with natural but dependent development which is unable to change the relations of production sufficiently because of the peculiarity of state-society relation in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, it cannot properly analyze the economic violence related to primitive accumulation such as dispossession and proletarianisation which are also preconditions of the change in relations of production. This issue makes it difficult to define the struggle of women against “pre-modern” forms of domination as a struggle also against their new roles within capitalist social relations. Thirdly, both approaches analyze historical facts and events as the justification or affirmation of the intended results. They do not see facts and events as open processes which include various potentials, possibilities and conflicts that make the result unpredictable. In this context, they do not deal with the contradictions

within which women struggle either nor discover the potential paths in which the struggle of women channels itself.

Regarding modernity as neither a positive nor a negative project imposed from above but as an open process in which women take part in a contradictory way, this article aims to discuss how the contradictions of capitalism, modernity and nation have been discovered from a gender perspective and the types of struggle during the change by examining *Kadınlar Dünyası*.

### **1. Duality within Historiography of Ottoman Women**

The historiography on Ottoman feminism has predominantly attempted to analyze feminism with respect to its relationship with the formation of the modern nation state. This historiography either deals with ideological stances of some feminist figures who took sides with the ruling class or concentrates on the aims of the institutions founded by an organized segment of women. From this perspective, feminism is not a social movement but rather a current of thought which is supported by upper class women who took part in political discussions of the era. For this reason, historiography mainly discusses to what extent Ottoman feminism may be thought as a kind of state-feminism; and how Ottoman feminists contributed to Turkish nationalism and formation of the modern state (Altınay, 2013; Berktaş, 2009; Durakpaşa, 2000; Kandiyotti, 1987; Sancar, 2014; Sirman, 1989; Tekeli, 1995; Zihnioglu, 2003). Such a state-centered and institutionalist approach derives from some objective difficulties. First of all, Ottoman archives provide a limited source for writing ordinary people's history. In many cases, historians are obliged to benefit from state documents which give quite limited place to information about the lower classes (Faroqi, 1994). The case gets more difficult in studying the history of women because the existence and activities of women are mainly invisible in Ottoman social formation. Information about women began to be registered in a relatively late period because the Ottoman state would only recognize the man as the legal head of the household (Faroqi, 1994). For this reason, feminist studies dealing with the history of women were firstly obliged to challenge the gender-blinded historiography and to make women visible before discussing their real practices and social relations. Among these studies, Serpil Çakır's study on the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası* (1994) provides extensive knowledge about the way of thinking of feminist women who organized themselves independent from not only men but also ruling class. Thus, this study may be defined as an important contribution to defining feminism as a social opposition rather than a thought or a debate within the state.

In addition to feminist literature, certain works within labor studies pay specific attention to the history of women workers (Balsoy, 2009; Güzel, 1985; Os, 1997; Quataert, 1991, 2001; Shahr, 2001). These works contribute to an understanding of the subjectivity of working women who participated in the labor market, and in this way, to the gender division of labor which functioned during capitalist development. In addition, Yavuz Selim Karakışla (2015), Yiğit Akın (2014), Elif Mahir Metinsoy (2016) and Müge Özbek (2010, 2016) deal with how women were economically impoverished and became dispossessed in rural and urban areas as well as how they reacted against dispossession processes. Zafer Toprak (2016) analyzes the change in women's economic, social and political conditions during the modernization process from the state and society perspective.

Despite the attempts at revealing women subjectivity in history, the duality between feminist historiography which examines institutional and political history of feminism and the historiography on lower class women which mainly handles women's social and economic history remains constant. In other words, the struggle of women is sought outside of the class struggle and vice versa. To overcome this duality, one should think of the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism as well as gender and class.

### **1.1. Gender as a Class Relation and Transition to Capitalism**

A modernist approach to history presumes a negative relationship between patriarchy and capitalism by claiming that capitalist development would dissolve all previous social relations and modes of domination via liberating labor from personal ties and placing it within free market relations. This assumption, on the one hand, derives from the "progressist" thesis which regards the origin of capitalism as self-development of productive forces through the development of world trade instead of transformation of property and class relations.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, political processes of primitive accumulation -such as separation of free producers from land as well as from the means of production and reproduction- cannot be understood as the basis or preconditions for capitalism. Turkish historiography, in line with such a progressist approach, presumes that state functions exist outside and above society as a result of dependent capitalist development and peculiar state-society relations in Turkey. Thereby,

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2 Some political Marxists criticized modern perceptions of capitalism which handle capitalist development as a natural accumulation enabled by an invisible hand of market and trade or a phenomenon emerged only related to bourgeois revolutions. Contrary to the modern and progressist thesis, they emphasized transformation of relations of production at the origin of capitalist mode of production. To better understand the discussions of political Marxists see: Robert Brenner, (1982). *The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism* in Introduction to the Sociology of "Developing Societies" eds.H. Alavi et al. (pp.54-71) Macmillan Publishers Limited; Ellen Meiksins Wood, (1991). *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism: A Historical Essay on Old Regimes and Modern States*, London: Verso.

it assumes the state to be the main actor of the accumulation of capital. From this perspective, the extensive role of the state on capital accumulation prevented transformation of relations of production and emergence of social classes. In this way, social change in Ottoman state and society which has become more open since the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries could not be attributed to primitive accumulation but rather discussed as conflicts within the state.

Another aspect of the progressist approach is about the concept of free labor. This approach identifies free labor with the source of value, more generally the source of wealth, and considers the forms of unfree labor as the anomalies of capitalism which will be increasingly eliminated along with capitalist development. This assumption denies that the inner movement of capitalism is not based on liberating labor but extracting surplus through exploitation. Unfree labor is not an anomaly but the necessity of capitalism, which could be seen in the exploitation of slave labor during capitalist accumulation (Federici, 2009, p.198). However, the progressist thesis locates women's domestic labor outside of capitalist relations by associating it with unfree labor or pre-capitalist mode of domination, and expects it to be eliminated through participation of women in the labor market during capitalist development.

In addition to modern historiography, socialist feminist critics in the 1960s and 1970s theorized patriarchy and capitalism as two different systems external to each other. Dual system theory formulated mainly in the works of Hartmann (1979) and Mitchel (1974) implies that patriarchy and capitalism are two distinct systems which are historically independent social relations but interact in concrete social formation (Osterud, 1993, p.16). From this perspective, patriarchy cannot be simply reduced to capitalism, firstly because it predates capitalism, and penetrates into not only labor relations in the public space but also into male-female relations in private spaces (Hartmann, 1979). Secondly, patriarchy refers not only to economic exploitation through wage labor but also to domination in cultural, ideological and psychological sense (Mitchel,1974). In this dual perception, female subordination is realized through two forms of exploitation in which capital exploits women as wage labor and men exploit women as domestic labor (Delphy, 2013; Walby, 1991).

Dual system theory is criticized since it dehistoricises patriarchy by representing it as a universal, untransformed system and ignores the dialectic relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring through gender division of labor (Eisenstein, 1979; Young, 1981). While hierarchical sexual structuring in the production process is associated with capitalism, the roles of women performed in the reproduction process are attributed to patriarchy. The theorists of dual system theory describe ostensible separation

between production and reproduction as a real separation. Therefore, they claim that patriarchy and capitalism correspond to two different contradictions which may be intersected in some situation, rather than a single contradiction of capital accumulation which operates as *patriarchal capitalism* (Eisenstein, 1979; Mies, 1986; Young, 1981). For this reason, they cannot explain how the family becomes a unit of capitalist accumulation like the workplace. In addition to the dualistic feature, this theory ignores the historical formation of the relationship between gender and class which could only be understood through researching concrete moments and relations in history and social processes (Pollert, 1996).

Certain studies which are concentrated on capitalist accumulation through women's reproductive labor may serve to transcend the dichotomy between gender and class (Dalla Costa & James, 1975; Federici, 2009; Fortunati, 1995; James, 2012). These studies argue that women's unpaid domestic labor is directly related to capitalist accumulation since women produce and reproduce the means of production. As mothers and housewives, women produce value during their reproduction work, because they produce and reproduce all the workers of the world (James, 2012; Dalla Costa & James, 1975). The value form of reproduction corresponds to the specific form of female subordination under capitalism. The economic aim of the previous modes of production depends on the reproduction of human beings. However, the aim of the capitalist production is not the reproduction of human beings but production of exchange values by way of devaluation of human beings under the form of labor power (Fortunati, 1995). Reproduction work has been feminized and devalued in parallel with the devaluation of human beings who become mere labor powers and commodities within capitalist social relations. In this way, gender becomes an issue of class relations as well as class struggle, firstly because a woman is directly exploited by capital as the unpaid producer and reproducer of the means of production; and secondly, she is exposed to systematic capitalist devaluation and degradation to guarantee the continuity of her practice.

Feminization and devaluation of the reproductive work is historically constructed in parallel with working class formation, and it became a crucial aspect in the transition to capitalism. Federici (2009) explains how women were reduced to mere reproductive workers and became dependent on men via dispossession and degradation during the primitive accumulation process. She states that this process was realized firstly by expelling women from not only many waged jobs but also public spaces and streets. This was an attempt at confining women to houses and making them more obliged to men through both sexual violence and references about the biological inferiority of women. Secondly, traditional midwives who had knowledge and experience of traditional birth control methods were

criminalized and annihilated through witch-hunts during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The third aspect of the process was that of the social policies of state which promoted marriage and fertility for women in parallel with discourses on moral inferiority of those who refused marriage and applied for abortion.

Turkish feminist historiography has typically not handled the women's struggle as related to a struggle against primitive accumulation and devaluation with respect to the change in the relationship between production and reproduction. They interpret Ottoman feminism as a modern thought that complied with a modern project of state elites and emerged in parallel to Westernization. On the other hand, when one considers gender as an internal contradiction of capital accumulation which is historically constructed, a modernization history of Turkey reveals quite different results about gender relations.

## **2. Alternative History of Gender Relations**

Turkish historiography supposes a systematic progress in women's social position by emphasizing promulgation of the Land Code which defines legal inheritance in a more egalitarian framework in 1858 and the legislation of universal suffrage enacted in 1934. However, some works which examine gender relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century show that this process indicates the formation of the preconditions of a new form of patriarchal relations developed through dispossession and devaluation of women, and emergence of modern state controls on women bodies as well as their reproductive capacities. For example, Madeline Zilfi's study (2010) on women slavery in the late Ottoman Empire examines the restriction of women's physical mobility through social surveillance, the state decrees promulgated between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century for regulating women's clothing and the forms of punishment in the case of breaking the rules.

In addition to this, some works deal with the Criminal Code of 1858 which adopts a gendered citizenship rather than equal citizenship via a new type of sexual agreement (Tuğ, 2014; Ze'evi, 2006). The penal code which regulates sexual crimes and adultery defines women as victims and passive subjects whose rights of honor should be protected by the state in the cases of sexual assault (Tuğ, 2014, p.11). However, women should accept their legally unequal position in terms of sexual liberty and consent to state control over their sexuality for benefiting from state protection. In this way, the state becomes responsible for protecting a woman not as an equal citizen but protecting her as a reproductive member of the family (ibid: 11). With this penal code, women become more subordinated to men in parallel with redefinition of their role within the family. On the other hand, some other works emphasize



that this process signifies also the loss of the right of women to have control over their reproduction capacity. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while policies and discourses which aimed at the rise of population became widespread, fertility became the subject of public health through registration and control by the agents of state. Ameliorating infertility through modern medical applications and financial support for promoting fertility became the main policies of the state. In parallel to this, antiabortion state policies through surveillance and criminalization of traditional midwives and punishment of women who committed abortion become significant during this period (Balsoy, 2012; Demirci&Somel, 2008; Fahmy, 1998; Hatem, 1997). In terms of state promotions, Mehmet Alkan mentions legal regulations in the Tanzimat period which facilitate marriages by recognizing the right of marriage to young girls and widows and prohibiting financial constraints that prevent marriages to men from lower classes (Alkan, 1990, pp.90-91). In parallel to this, he refers to state control on social mobility of woman through restrictive legislation during the same period.

Although these works imply that the modernization process does not signify improvement of social positions of women, but rather regulates their reproductive roles, many of them explain this regulation as an aspect of the modernization process of the state which penetrates more and more into social life by controlling and disciplining bodies. However, one can think of these regulations as an aspect of transition to capitalism, in other words, devaluation and dispossession processes of women related to primitive accumulation as Federici points out. The signs of primitive accumulation became more apparent in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Ottoman society. Gradual integration to world economy, commercialization of agriculture and privatization of the fiscal system had created dispossessed and indebted peasants who abandoned the land, migrated to cities during 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and began to work in small production areas (Shahr, 2001). Women from different ethno-religious communities who participated mostly in textile production by working in their homes in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries became the main part of the cheap labor employed in textile and tabaco industries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Quataert, 1991, 2001). Women who migrated to cities due to dispossession, and female refugees and widows dispossessed by wars and conflicts constituted lower class women of the city in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Özbek, 2010). In this period, prostitution became more widespread among women which also indicates the rise of urban poverty. These dispossessed women who were also free from male control worked mostly as domestic servants in the cities. They were seen as social and moral threatnd criminalized by the state. In line with it, some state policies aimed to control and eliminate their visibility in public spaces by exiling them from the city (ibid:556).

Therefore, the Tanzimat period does not only refer to modernization and secularization of the state-society relations but also to the process of primitive accumulation and transformation of pre-existing social relations by force. Male control on women's bodies through laws and state policies and devaluation of women in the society are the main concerns of this process due to feminization of labor power in production and reproduction. Since gender relations were materialized via mediation of the state and men in this period, the capitalist movement behind these relations remained invisible. For this reason, social oppression on women which increasingly continued during Abdulhamid's reign (1876-1908) (Yalman, 1918), was examined mostly in line with Islamism or legitimacy policies of Abdulhamid rather than the social and economic crisis which emerged with respect to development of capitalist social relations. However, in this period, one can think of the oppression of women in line with the laws for regulating "vagrants" and "beggars" which reflects the aim to control the struggle of the lower classes against devastating impacts of primitive accumulation.

The law on "Vagabonds and Suspected Persons" promulgated in 1909 shows that new the Constitutional regime founded after Abdulhamid's reign (1908-1918) did not reduce social exclusion of the urban poor but rather made it permanent through legislations (Özbek, 2009). Similarly, contrary to assumption taken for granted in historiography, the Constitutional era does not mean a pure liberation process for women. The members of the Committee of Union and Progress which came to power in 1908, did not pursue a program for improving the social position of women, but rather they expressed more clearly the capitalist aims of the state. In parallel with this aim, they handled the question of women not as an issue related to the rights but to the needs of the economics. They did not support women's right to work unquestioningly but turned it into a debate in which a group of members objected to women employment by referring to the vital importance of the reproductive role of women (Toprak, 2016). They were suspicious about the activities of women's societies and for this reason they subject them to high level of surveillance (Maksudyan, 2014, p.109). This tendency seems to be changed during the First World War regarding conscription of men in military service, and in parallel to this, an increase in participation of women in paid workforce. Nevertheless, state policies on the one hand encouraged women employment in army and state enterprise, on the other hand promoted the marriages of widow or single women (Karakışla, 2015). In sum, family and labor policies pursued during the war time not only developed the notion of national family, but also capitalist family in which women were identified with reproductive works.

On the other hand, women were not passive receivers of these socioeconomic changes, but active subjects who tried to negotiate and object to them. One can observe that they

struggled with the impacts of the primitive accumulation in different ways. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thousands of woman peasants revolted against hunger and famine in many Anatolian villages (Güzel, 1985). Similarly, they participated in tax revolts which emerged in many provinces in 1906-1907 (Kansu, 1995). In the same period, working class women took part in strikes and machine breaking actions even by leading these events in some cases (Güzel, 1985; Karakışla, 1998; Os, 1997; Quataert, 1991, 2001). In addition to organized struggles, unorganized forms of resistance could be observed as well. Disobedience to clothing regulations with rule-breaking strategies (Zilfi, 2010), conserving traditional birth control methods against state control on fertility (Bahar & Duben, 2013) escaping from male guardians despite criminalization and degradation of single unattended women (Özbek, 2016) were the means used by women in some cases. In this way, womanhood became a contradiction of patriarchal capitalism which leads to a struggle of women that cannot be identified simply with state-feminism. Additionally, Ottoman feminists from educated middle class were not completely indifferent to contradictions and struggles practiced by lower class women. Degradation, dispossession and subordination to men were common experiences for all women although they had different resistance strategies. Therefore, rather than defining as a homogeneous viewpoint of middleclass women, Ottoman feminism can be regarded as a contradictory, open-ended process, an implicit dialogue between different segments of women. In the next section, I will discuss these common experiences expressed and challenged by Ottoman feminists by examining the journal *Kadınlar Dünyası*, which is defined as the first feminist journal in Ottoman history.

### **3. Signs of Primitive Accumulation, Production and Reproduction in *Kadınlar Dünyası***

The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* handled capitalism in a contradictory way. They, either explicitly or implicitly, leaned on two opposing approaches to capitalism. The first approach considered capitalism a source of wealth and a way to escape from misery. For this reason, many articles published in the journal mention the necessity to establish capitalist enterprises and encourage working life in society. On the other hand, the second approach tackled capitalism as a system which harms social relations, and which brings dispossession, degradation and poverty. In this way, the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* were, on the one hand, affirming capitalist social relations, while, on the other hand opposing them. In this section I will discuss these contradictory perceptions of women on capitalism. Primarily, the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* were aware that all women were subjected to a process of devaluation, degradation and dispossession. The right to private property did not liberate women or change their social position due to male monopoly over the use of property. Therefore, upper and

middle-class women ran into poverty in the absence of men. In an article in the 20<sup>th</sup> issue of the journal, dispossession and proletarianisation of women is expressed as common experiences among Ottoman women:

“Ottoman women, surely are in need of freedom to exercise their right-to-work in order to avert the misery in their social lives. This is our legitimate right. The wife of an artisan falls into poverty and misery with her children when her husband dies or even becomes sick. Her life perishes and she is mostly obliged to beg. Even rich families become miserable when they lose their men. Because they do not know how to manage their assets. They were not trained accordingly. If our women had large job opportunities and access to the right-to-work, would these disasters have occurred? Would women have groaned in need as helpless and worthless beings? No, right?” (*Kadınlar Dünyası*. (1913, May 6). *Hürriyet İsteriz [We Want Freedom]*, 20)

In another article, Atiye Şükran speaks of the life story of a Greek woman whom she encountered in a ferry: the story of a rich woman falling into poverty, being obliged to work in several jobs after losing her father and the hospitalization of her husband (*Ticaret Ayıp Değildir [Commerce is not a shame]*, (1913, June 23), 68). While many women from lower classes already entered working life in rural and urban areas, women from middle and upper classes were mostly confined to their houses in which the properties were under the control of a male guardian. Therefore, in the absence of men, women were destitute of the opportunities to transform these properties to means for capitalist investments. Yavuz Selim Karakışla (2015) records a similar story in his work on *Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti* (Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women) founded in 1916. A woman from the upper class gradually loses all her properties after her husband's death and she becomes obliged to work in the Women Workers' Battalion founded by the Society. The World War period was indeed critical for creating appropriate conditions for capital accumulation by intensifying dispossession, economic impoverishment, proletarianisation, even though the historiography perceives the war rather as economic devastation and regression. In relation to the impoverishment of women, Karakışla emphasizes the immense number of applications received by the job advertisements of the Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women. During the war period, due to the military conscription of the male population, women from different ethno-religious communities frequently faced dispossession and separation from their means of production and subsistence (Yavuz Selim Karakışla, 2015; Yiğit Akın, 2014). State officials not only removed male labor power from rural production with the law of conscription but also had a means to seize villagers' means of production like mules, horses, sheep, cattle, depending on the military requirements (Akın,

2014, p.12). As such, women undertook all the burden of production and subsistence in the rural areas of the country during the war times. In the cities, one of the impacts of dispossession and economic impoverishment was the rise of prostitution among women, so much so that this issue appeared in almost every novel published in that period (Toprak, 2016) and the Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women declared it a mission to protect women from leading a dishonorable life (Karakışla, 2015). This process which began long before the war is expressed in *Kadınlar Dünyası* as follows:

The need [for subsistence] is above all laws. Neither honor nor religious belief can exist without money... Women in Anatolia are working all day long with chapped cheeks under the burning sun. Despite all efforts and sufferings, majority of them cannot meet their annual subsistence... Unfortunately, I might say that the recent spread of prostitution in spite of the strictness of the veil law derives from the very need [for subsistence]... Economy and austerity is the sole mainstay of the governments, especially the contemporary ones. They sacrifice religion, friendship, and everything for them” (Sacide. (1913, July 25) *Kızlarımızın Çeyizi Ne Olmalıdır: Terbiye-i Ahlakiye?* [What Should Be the Dowry of Our Daughters: Moral Education?], 99)

Dispossession and devaluation of women that intensified during the war period make clear the relationship between gender and class. Although the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* did not associate these experiences directly with the contradictions created by the capitalist accumulation, they were aware of the fact that all women were affected by the disastrous results of dispossession and devaluation in different ways. One of the main common experiences shared by all women was the male control over the mobility of women. Women walking on the streets were frequently subjected to harassment by men due to their clothing. In this sense, as indicated by Medline Zilfi, it is noteworthy to underline the continuity of the social control over, and the punishment of, the mobility of women during this period with that of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many articles of *Kadınlar Dünyası* indeed refer to this issue.<sup>3</sup> Men who were responsible for these harassments were mostly depicted as “vagrant”, “bigoted”, “jobless” men of the “common people”. However, Nesrin Salih’s expressions show that this issue cannot be restricted to a certain lower-class tendency but is related to more general degradation policies operated by state officials and opinion leaders. She states that conservative segments of the society that define women as immoral beings object to their rights over education and support their subordination to their husbands.

3 For example, Ferit, B. (1913, May 10) *Mani-i Terakkimiz Nedir?* [What are the obstacles to progress], 24; Nihat, P. (1913, May 16). *Sanayi-i Nisvan* [Women’s Industry], 30; Kamuran, N. (1913, May 17) *Kıyafetimiz* [Our Clothing], 31; Canan, M. (1913, July 15). *Zavallı Kadın* [Poor Woman], 90.

“Because a woman who is a tiny bit *soignée*, a lady who has a bit of freedom and a girl who knows to speak well and to defend her rights is unchaste and immoral for them. Ironically, these people who do not know the actual meaning of morality, honor, and religion yet pretend to be savants are mostly the ones that rape and assault women. ... In ferry ports, subways, train stations, bazaars, in everywhere you will endure not only their invective language and insults, but also the grope of their nasty and vile hands. If you stand up and remind them of their turpitude, their vulgarness, you will end up being the guilty and the faulty. Because you are impudent, worthless and vulgar. Because you are defending your rights. You cannot report them to the police. In that case, the police would do nothing but dispersing the crowd with a verbal warning, because the police too... might run wild enough to forget his duties in a secluded place.” (Salih, N. (1913, June 5) Türk Kızları [Turkish Girls], 52)

Degradation, on the one hand, was related to the confinement of women to the private life in the houses and their condemnation to their reproductive roles via domination over their bodies; on the other hand, it resulted in expelling women from many fields of wage labor. For this purpose, discourses on the biological inferiority of women were operated as a way of degradation. In many articles, editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* refer to examples falsifying these discourses. They emphasize that inequality between men and women is not biologic but rather social, meaning that it could be eliminated through education and participation in working life. They objected to the perception which naturalizes gender division of labor by referring to brave women warriors in world history and successful women working in the historically male-occupied areas as engineering, science sector, police forces.<sup>4</sup>

The use of the conception of advocating the biological and moral inferiority of women can be thought of in the context of Federici’s argument about the relationship between the dispossession and degradation of women during the period of transition to capitalism. Federici argues that the feminization of the reproductive labor force on behalf of capital accumulation was the main point leading to an internal relationship between gender and class. However, as Fortunati states, this relationship becomes invisible as it derives from the contradiction between production and reproduction. Although both productive and

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4 For example, Mükerrerem Belkis congratulates a Muslim woman who graduated from a faculty of law in Russia and criticizes the perception that relies on the backwardness of women as compared to men by giving the examples of Marie Curie who won the Nobel prize in 1912 and the recruitment of women police officers in Strasbourg. (Şiddetle Ret Kadınlar Nakışatı’l-akl İmiş! [It is reportedly said that women are weak-minded! I absolutely refuse], (1913, July 10), 85). An article published with the signature of *Kadınlar Dünyası* speaks of the woman warriors as Kara Fatma, a Kurdish woman soldier who took place in the Crimean War, and gives the example of women who fought in the French Revolution and the communards of Paris. (Erkekler! Kadınlık Yalnızca Meyve Değildir [Men! Womanhood is not just a Fruit], (1913, May 24), 38). ament, tears” for women. On the other hand? kadınlar have. ed. ing household consummation, equal citizenship, equal rights ament, tears” for women. On the other hand? kadınlar have. ed. ing household consummation, equal citizenship, equal rights

reproductive labor force are devalued during the accumulation of capital by the degradation of women, the relationship between production and reproduction appears to be a zero-sum relationship. From this perspective, it seems that the more women participate in production, the more liberated they would be from gender relations. This contradiction results in a contradictory perception of freedom among women, as it leads to two different forms of struggle which are presumed to improve their social position. The first is to be liberated from reproductive duties via participating in the productive labor power, while the second is to revalue reproductive labor by defining reproductive work primarily as women's work as mothers and housewives and consenting to it. The articles published in *Kadınlar Dünyası* mainly reflect the debates about these contradictory struggles.

Women demanded participation in the working life firstly to be protected against the disastrous impacts of dispossession. Many women fell into poverty because they could not manage their income after the death of their husbands or when their husbands went bankrupt or lost their occupational prestige. In addition to this, there were cases when the wages of men were not sufficient to maintain the household, and they needed to be supported by women. In an article published in the 31<sup>st</sup> issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası* it is stated that every family is a small enterprise whose members contribute to the income (Her Aile Bir Şirkettir [Each Family is an Enterprise], (1913, May 17), 31). On the other hand, working was crucial for women to become independent of men. Mükerrerrem Belkıs explains that male domination derives from the power of men with respect to the powerlessness of women:

“The cause of the enslavement and the persecution of women is women's deprivation from the power to sustain their lives by themselves, women's inability to maintain their livelihoods outside [home]... A woman needs a man to feed her, to keep her alive. She cannot sustain herself if she stays alone. The situation is like this at present. For this reason, she is afraid of getting a divorce. She says that she dies if she gets divorced. She decides that she must comply with her husband's all kinds of behaviors in order to survive.” (Belkıs, M. (1913, July 21) Kadınlıkta Esaretin Müvellidi [The Birth of Woman Enslavement], 96).

Economic powerlessness of women combines with their legal inequality with men. Sharia law gives men a unilateral right to *talaq* (repudiation) which could be exercised unconditionally. Although sharia law awards alimony to women, this is not sufficient for her to maintain a life, or else men could avoid or postpone the payment. An article published in the 142<sup>nd</sup> issue of the journal describes *talaq* as one of the most important problems that women faced and appeals to state authorities to prepare a divorce law to limit men's right over repudiation. (Cemil, N. (1914, May 9). Talaq [Repudiation], 142)

For these reasons, the right to work and women's employment became the most crucial demands of the women's struggle. Women were already working in the agriculture sector, and in low paid industries like textile and service sectors, however, their employment in the public sector was still restricted. From the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 36<sup>th</sup> issues of the journal, we witness that the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* struggled for the approval of the job application of a woman named *Bedra Osman Hanım* by a French Phone Company. Her job application was refused because the company stipulated foreign language skills for employment. The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* criticized this attitude of the Phone Company, as it meant that all Ottoman Muslim women were excluded from the job opportunity. For this reason, they applied to the ministry of public works and repeatedly published their petition for an explanation in their columns. In the end, *Bedra Osman Hanım* was employed by the Phone Company<sup>5</sup>.

The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* believed that working women had more rights in the public sphere than the others. In particular women who worked in factories had more autonomy from men compared to rural women workers engaged in household production. Pakize Sadri, in her article series entitled "Anadolu İhtisasatı" (Impressions from Anatolia) compares the social positions of women in several Anatolian cities. She describes women living in Bursa as the most distinguished, and the most honorable members of the working life who share the public space, bazaars and markets, with men, completely free from male domination. (Sadri, P. (1913, June 19), 64). On the other hand, women who live in Balıkesir are represented to be the most oppressed women suffering under multiple forms of male domination. They are oppressed by both their husbands, and local religious authorities, as well as land-owners (Sadri, P. (1913, June 23), 68). Women's participation in factory production strengthened them against employers and men; thereby, giving them the opportunity to improve both their labor and gender relations, while their reproductive roles remained unchanged. However, this progress was not the natural result of the capitalist development, it was rather achieved through struggles and conflicts. Women were a part of the working-class struggle for a long time. Especially in Bursa, women were highly employed in the silk industry, and they became the main subject of strikes to improve working conditions (Os, 1997). Their struggle not only aspired for the improvement of working conditions but also opposed degradation and unequal gender relations. For example, a petition published in the socialist journal titled *İştiraki* with the signature of "Five Thousand Working Women"

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5 The article published in *Kadınlar Dünyası* expresses the demand for an explanation from the minister of the Public Works and criticizes the popular journals that keeps silent against this discrimination. (İzahat İsteriz Tarziye Bekleriz [We Demand an Explanation We Expect an Apology], (1913, May 12), 26).[We Want Freedom].e-i Ahlakiye?"d not be feminism omen ices. discussed es of the journal rprises and encouraging working relati



included complaints and demands of woman workers about wages and working hours as well as physical violence and insults of employers (Hükümetimizin nazar- Dikkatine [To the Attention of Our Government], (1910, March 5), 2). Therefore, women were not free from gender relations by participating in production since production and reproduction are not two distinct entities but they form a contradictory unity. For this reason, women's struggle against devaluation and unequal working conditions gives rise to the improvement in relations of reproduction as well.

An article published in the 140<sup>th</sup> issue of the journal shows that the editors were aware of the devaluation of woman workers. The article refers to the wage discrimination against women: "Ottoman women's economic position is based on injustice and worse as much as her social position" (Sanayide de Sefaleti Nisvan, [Misery of Women in Industry], (1914, May 8), 140). According to the article, women would work long hours for lower wages. For this reason, the article calls women not to keep silent against this injustice: "protecting our sisters from the insults of employers is our upmost duty" (ibid). Despite the bad conditions of working women, the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* evaluated work as a means to obtain relative autonomy from men and become active agents taking decisions about their lives. An article entitled "Free Love" published in the 142<sup>nd</sup> issue of the journal emphasizes that many women from the bourgeois class envy working women's life because they could act according to their free will. (Serbest Aşk [Free Love] (1914, May 22), 142). Similarly, the difference between lower and upper class lifestyles is expressed in the literature of Armenian feminists. Sırpuhi Düssap, in her novel, implies that upper class women could not participate in the decision-making process about their own lives, while the lower class women had the right to work, thereby, develop a more equal relationship with their husbands (Bilal & Ekmekçiöglü, 2006, p.59).

In parallel to the participation in the working life, the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* attempted to change the inferior social position of women by emphasizing their crucial roles in the reproduction process. They struggled with the degradation of women in the family by referring to the reproductive labor. They were aware of the fact that women were reproducing humankind, being the main source of production, civilization, progress and nation. For this reason, they used their force coming from their reproduction capacities to improve their position in the family and society. In the 32<sup>nd</sup> issue of the journal, Meliha Canan discusses the question of female slaves. Despite the legal prohibition upon the declaration of the 1908 Constitution, women slavery was still an ongoing practice. In the article, she objects to women being sold like animals by stating that this issue lowers their social position. She goes

further to criticize men for not appreciating women for their fertility and care labor. (Cariye Meselesi [The Question of Slave Woman], (1913, May 18), 32). In addition to enslavement, many articles also condemn marriage customs for reducing women to a commodity. The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* object to early and prearranged marriages and demand a family law which regulates the conjugal union. In these objections, they assert that children who are brought up in unhappy marriages cannot serve the country in a healthy manner.

As such, women attempted to participate in the decision-making processes about their lives and improve their social conditions to establish more equal relationships with men by referring to their functions in social reproduction. The majority of articles in the journal do not oppose the basic family structure based on the gendered division of labor. However, they object to work hierarchies between men and women or between productive and reproductive works. Aliye Cevat, in her article series entitled "Family" mentions the ideal age of marriage for men and women and describes their duties based on the gender difference.

"Duties of wife: The wife, being the spirit of family, has two important duties: supervising the housework and the childcare. In fact, the husband supplies the needs of the household, while the management of the household is woman's duty. But the supervision of husband to these issues is not necessary. Otherwise, his work becomes deficient. Because he is obliged to work for his family all day long". (Cevat, A. (1913, June 10). Aile 6 [Family 6], 55)

Women consent to reproductive works mostly with the aim of reevaluating their labor and gaining autonomy from men by having a control over the household consumption, as well as the aim of obtaining equal citizenship and social and economic rights already granted to men. To what extent can these strategies be identified with a family-centered feminism (Os, 2009) or *patriarchal bargains*<sup>6</sup>? Indeed, the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* did not unconditionally support the family structure, rather they problematized it. Additionally, not all the women consented to the work of reproduction. Alternative approaches are also present in the journal. For example, Nesrin Salih, in her article published in the 47<sup>th</sup> issue of the journal, states that the woman is not a machine nor a means for the production of children. She implies that women would be destitute of bargaining power as long as the master-slave relationship remains between men and women (Türk Kızları [Turkish Girls]. (1913, June 2), 47). In this sense, the journal can be seen as a common ground in which editors from different points of view challenge each other. On the other hand, women would bargain with not only the patriarchy, but also each other. Therefore, these strategies can rather be described as part of

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6 Deniz Kandiyoti uses this concept to "indicate the existence of set rules and scripts regulating gender relations, to which both genders accommodate and acquiesce, yet which may nonetheless be contested, redefined, and renegotiated" (Kandiyoti, 1988, p. 286)

the women's struggle against capitalist devaluation in both production and reproduction by means of a contradictory consciousness revealed in practices and dialogues between different tendencies.

#### 4. Contradictory Perception of Modernity and Nationalism in *Kadınlar Dünyası*

Women studies have emphasized the relationship of feminist movement to nationalism and modernism during the late Ottoman and early republic period. The subjects of the Ottoman feminist movement frequently referred to nationalist and modernist discourses and some of them had close relationships with political actors who took place among founders of modern nation state. Nevertheless, have feminists completely been objectified within modernization process of state elites and simply repeated the nationalist discourse of the political actors? Have modernist and nationalist discourses in late Ottoman and early republic eras led to a homogeneous viewpoint among feminists?

It is possible to detect clear traces of Turkish nationalist discourse in *Kadınlar Dünyası*. For example, it particularly promotes bringing up patriotic children that are ready to sacrifice themselves for the country in times of war, to help build the national economy and to defend values of a specific form of family. Some of the articles in *Kadınlar Dünyası* encourage women to consume domestic products, boycott foreign products and start small-scale national enterprises. In line with the nationalist discourse, *Kadınlar Dünyası* also fosters modernist discourses. While the journal uses the concepts of “enlightenment”, “awaking of women consciousness”, “civilization” and “age of freedom” to implicate a specific sense of contemporaneity; it delegates the notions of “bigotry”, “despotism”, “ignorance” to the previous periods. Nevertheless, one cannot totally identify Ottoman feminists' approaches with modernism and nationalism as they also underline the contradictory character of these notions. Although these groups have taken up modernity and nation as the resilient facts of their times, they have problematized these notions from a gender perspective. Consider the following remarks by the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* that underscore the failure of modernism despite its promises of universal freedom:

“[T]he men began to revolt against the institutions which restrict their freedom from 15th century onwards. At first, they strived to regain their liberties from priests for centuries. Wars of religion and inquisitions didn't work. They resisted all in order to exercise the truths manifested by Volter. Finally, the liberty of their sects is obtained. Afterwards, emperors' and kings' turn arrived. The men were more violent against them. They declared their liberty through grand revolutions. In the meantime, there remained a mass, a great mass that was not yet provided with liberty. That is us, poor women.... Yes, although men

apparently seem to be freedom-lovers they are nothing but small despots in reality" (Y. Naciye, "Erkekler Hakikaten Hürriyet-perver midirler? Kadınlar ne İstiyor? [Are men really freedom lovers? What do women want?], *Kadınlar Dünyası*, no. 7, 10 April 1329 [23 April 1913])

In the anniversary of the 1908 revolution, 10<sup>th</sup> July 1913, the editorial of *Kadınlar Dünyası* expressed gratitude to the leaders of revolution for saving women from "cruelty, despotism, torture, lament, tears" that the previous Abdülhamid rule (1876-1908) inflicted. On the other hand, the mentioned article states that the revolution primarily served men. The enslavement of women, the article notes, still continues. For this reason, the journal calls on women to obtain their freedom by force (10 Temmuz İyd-I Ekber-I Hürriyettir [Tenth of July is the Great Feast of Freedom], (1913, July 23), 98). In another article in the journal, Nebile Akif questions the promises of French Human Rights Declaration and Ottoman Constitution for women. According to Akif, although these two texts claim that all human beings are born free, women are expelled from the thresholds of the concept of human beings. To her, "this means explicitly oppression, violation, usurpation" (Hikmet-i İctimaiye ve Nisvan [Reason of Society and Women], (1913, July 18), 93).

All these expressions refer to a crisis of modernity rather than its unconditional affirmation, and manifest the differentiation of woman's vision from that of men. In addition to this, the nationalist discourse of women diverges from the state discourse. The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* frequently use nationalist discourse for increasing the value of their social position and struggle against degradation. For example, another editorial piece of *Kadınlar Dünyası* adduces the weakness of the military power of Turkish state not to deficiencies in weapons but to human power that prioritizes male bodies. The editorial argues that if women remained uneducated and ignorant, human resources would be materially and morally weak (Taksim Belediye Bahçesi [Taksim Municipal Garden], (1914, May 22), 142).

From the articles published in the journal, it is understood that women do not have a homogeneous viewpoint about the concept of nation. The content of this concept is rather a debate among women. Many articles speak of nation as a social unity rather than a politically constructed entity. Furthermore, some others emphasize that political attitudes of men produce hostility among different communities in Ottoman society and damage the social unity.<sup>7</sup> These articles use the notion of "politics" with a negative sense and identify it as a male vocation. In line with this, some articles criticize the engagement of women organizations

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7 Ali, E.S. (1913, April 26) Anasır-ı Osmaniye [Ottoman Communities], 10; *Kadınlar Dünyası* (1913, April 30). İhsan-ı Şahane [Great Endowment], 14.

with political parties. For example, in another issue of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, Emine Seher Ali criticizes the relationship between the Committee of Union and Progress, and the Association for the Protection of Ottoman Turkish Women – the latter being founded under the leadership of Nezihe Muhiddin as a charity association for providing poor women and children with vocations after the Balkan Wars. Emine Seher Ali stated that women associations should be independent from all political and social organizations of men (Teşebbüste İttihat [Progress in Entrepreneurship], (1913, April 19), 3). She also criticizes Nezihe Muhiddin’s national economy approach that excludes non-muslim entrepreneurs and aims a boycott of the products of these entrepreneurs. The editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* agree with this approach on prioritizing the consumption of locally produced products and boycotting foreign products. However, the editorial exhorts that the boycott should not be directed to non-muslim entrepreneurs within the country as they are the constituents of Ottoman Society (*Kadınlar Dünyası* (1913, April 29). Vesait-i Tenevvür [The Means of Enlightenment], 13)

Discussion between Emine Seher Ali and Nezihe Muhiddin indicates that Ottoman feminists had different viewpoints about the horizon of nation-state project especially before the First World War. In addition, the editors of *Kadınlar Dünyası* described women as a universal community that suffered from the male domination, and thus had common interests against men. They defined all women from different communities and countries as “sisters” and seemed to be inspired by international movement of women, and particularly by the activities of the Suffragists:

Today, all civilizations dispatch women to a different way of action. The will to obtain the same rights with the man has awakened. Doubtlessly, whether in Britain or in United States, the excitement of women is going to call for a new life in the domain of womanhood. Necessarily, they will cooperate with men politically and economically. This civilized movement of women is a natural one. Law of nature is irrepressible. Undoubtedly, we, Ottoman women, cannot remain indifferent to the movements and excitements that occur in the universe of womanhood. We are obliged to unite. Otherwise, our national and religious existence will be assimilated (*Kadınlar Dünyası* (1913, July 7), Tenevvür Edelim [We need Enlightenment], 82)

The war period interrupted the publication of the journal. In the post-war writings of *Kadınlar Dünyası*, the relationship between nationalism and feminism appears to be clear as the “Ottoman womanhood” becomes substituted with “Turkish womanhood”.<sup>8</sup> This shift accompanies the reinforcement of the alliance of women and men. For example, an article by

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8 For example, Sıdika Ali Rıza emphasizes improvement of the social position of “Turkish Woman”. (Kızlarımızdan Temenniler [Requests of Our Daughters], (1918, April 9), 168).

Ulviye Mevlan published in 1918 emphasizes the activities of women in Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti (Women's Branch of the Ottoman Red Crescent) and in Workers Battalion that serves war economy by providing labor power and health services. Mevlan celebrates women for proving to have the same levels of courage, strength and capability as men. In this way, she reasons the women should obtain their economic and political rights (Düşünüyorum [I am Thinking], (1918, April 9), 168).

## 5. Conclusion

Reading through these discourses expressed in *Kadınlar Dünyası*, one can see that nationalism and modernism was not the essential character of Ottoman feminism. Rather, the Ottoman feminist horizon unfolded in a dynamic process along with the challenges and struggles of women against the contradictions of modernity and nation. Such a process includes also a heterogeneity among the actors of Ottoman feminism, and contradictions and struggles between these various actors. I argue that we cannot grasp this process without an analysis of World War politics that has remarkably shifted the trajectories of social movements at a global level. Secondly, we cannot completely identify the horizon and aspirations of Ottoman feminists with those of state elites. A notable part of the subjects of Ottoman feminism perceived their struggle not as a supplement of male-dominated political movements but as a problematization and, sometimes, even a negation of them. For this reason, one can argue that Ottoman feminism was more like a social force than a current of thought. That is because the Ottoman feminists aimed to reach out to all women and to understand the conditions of women from different segments of society, and employed the concept of "class" to cover all women. Thirdly, Ottoman women contradicted modernity and nationalism, and permanently struggled with capitalist social relations and its devastating processes such as dispossession and degradation. The unequal position of women in production and their non-valued labor in reproduction comprise the main themes discussed in *Kadınlar Dünyası*.

These points reiterate the need to challenge the main assumptions of Turkish historiography on Ottoman feminism and gender relations. The hegemonic approach in Turkish historiography obtains an optimistic expectation about the impacts of modernity and capitalism on the social position of women. In this way, it neglects the fact that the promises of modernity about the liberty and equality are restricted by the inner contradictions of capitalist social relations that reduce women to being low-paid workers of production as well as unpaid workers of reproduction. A critical approach to the problem demonstrates the contradictions of capitalist modernity regarding gender relations, i.e. disciplining women through controlling the bodies

and the reproductive capacities of women. Yet it does not explain the relationship of such contradictions with capitalism and ignores the possible struggles emerging from these contradictions. In both approaches, modernity is defined as an end in itself and seen as imposing itself on world history to shape all societies in a one-dimensional sense. In this way, the questions of why and through which relationships sexual hierarchies are reproduced in a specific manner in a modern world are left unanswered. And historical connections between patriarchy and capitalism remain ambiguous. A dialectic approach can provide methodological tools for answering these questions and challenging existing historiography. Looking at history from a dialectic perspective, perceiving modernity as a social change in a contradictory and relational process and as an open-ended *movement* directed by social struggles can clarify historical connections of patriarchal capitalism. It can also help us overcome the dualistic approaches in gender theory that deals with gender and class as distinct entities.

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