

Two Arguments About Women's Rights in the Türk Kadını Magazine 1966-1974*

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Abstract

This article presents two arguments about women's rights in Turkey and the lack of their implementation, as developed in the Türk Kadını magazine, published between 1966 and 1974. Our study is qualitative rather than quantitative, aiming at pointing to the existence of a certain discourse rather than to prove its impact. The results of our study contribute to the wider field of Turkish women's studies, by showing the presence of certain arguments concerning women's rights that has not been previously studied; moreover, our study points to the value of historical media studies to the wider field of empirical women's studies. The two arguments are the incomplete emancipation of Anatolian women argument (IEAWA) and the emancipated but unliberated Turkish women argument (EUTWA), respectively. While the two arguments point to different explanations for the lack of implementation of Turkish women's rights, both focus on the context and conditions of Anatolian women.

keywords: *Türk Kadını, Turkish women, Anatolian women, women's rights, rights gap*

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Résumé

Deux arguments sur les droits de la femme dans le magazine Türk Kadını 1966-1974

Cet article présente deux arguments sur les droits des femmes en Turquie et le manque de leur mise en œuvre, développés dans le magazine Türk Kadını, publié entre 1966 et 1974. Notre étude est qualitative plutôt que quantitative, visant à montrer l'existence d'un certain discours plutôt que pour prouver son impact. Les résultats de notre étude contribuent au domaine plus large des études féminines turques, en montrant la présence de certains arguments concernant les droits des femmes qui n'ont pas été étudiés auparavant; de plus, notre étude souligne la valeur des études sur les médias historiques dans le domaine plus large des études empiriques sur les femmes. Les deux arguments sont l'argument de l'émancipation incomplète des femmes anatoliennes (IEAWA) et l'argument des femmes turques émancipées mais non libérées (EUTWA), respectivement. Alors que les deux arguments suggèrent des explications différentes pour le manque de mise en œuvre des droits des femmes turques, tous deux se concentrent sur le contexte et les conditions des femmes anatoliennes.

mots-clés : Türk Kadını, femmes turques, femmes anatoliennes, droits des femmes, écart de droits

Öz

Türk Kadını Dergisinde (1966-1974) Kadın Hakları Hakkındaki İki Argüman

Bu makale, 1966 ve 1974 yılları arasında yayınlanmış olan Türk Kadını dergisinde geliştirildiği şekliyle, Türkiye'de kadın hakları ve bu hakların uygulanmaması hakkında iki argüman sunmaktadır. Çalışmamız nicel değil, nitel bir çalışma olup, sadece belli bir söylemin varlığına işaret etmeyi amaçlamaktadır; söz konusu söylemin etkisini ispat etmek çalışmamız kapsamına girmemektedir. Çalışmamızın sonuçları, kadın haklarıyla ilgili daha önce çalışılmamış bazı argümanların varlığını göstererek Türkiye'de kadın çalışmaları alanına katkıda bulunmaktadır; ayrıca çalışma tarihsel medya çalışmalarının daha geniş ampirik kadın çalışmaları alanı için olan değerine işaret etmektedir. Çalışmada söz konusu olan iki argüman sırasıyla, Anadolu kadınlarının eksik kurtuluşu argümanı (IEAWA) ve kurtulmuş ama özgürleşmemiş kadın argümanıdır (EUTWA). Her iki argüman Türk kadınlarının haklarının uygulanmaması hakkında farklı açıklamalara işaret ederken, her ikisi de Anadolu kadınlarının bağlam ve koşullarına odaklanmaktadır.

anahtar kelimeler: Türk Kadını, Türk kadını, Anadolu kadını, kadın hakları, haklar açığı

Introduction

In this article, we intend to present and discuss two arguments relating to the (lack of) realization of Turkish women's legal rights as these arguments were developed in the *Türk Kadını* [Turkish Woman], a magazine published between 1966 and 1974. Our study is a contribution to the wider field of Turkish women's rights as well as to media studies. According to the existing literature on Turkish women's rights, the argument that there was a gap between the rights that Turkish women were granted by the laws of the republic and the rights that they actually enjoyed was presented first in the 1980s. However, in our study we have found that this argument was made already in the 1960s in the *Türk Kadını* magazine, and that it was the continuation of yet another, earlier, argument about Anatolian women and their rights.

The reasons for choosing the *Türk Kadını* as an object for study are two. First, this magazine was, at the time, an important contributor to the debate concerning Turkish women's rights. The *Türk Kadını* was closely connected to the Turkish state, being supported by state agencies frequently advertising on its pages, and continuously expressing support for the Kemalist republic and its legacy. Among the contributors to the magazines were prominent political figures, such as the former minister of labour and later prime minister Sadi İrmak, quoted below. Hence, its views can be considered as representative of the official views on women's rights in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. Our study of the *Türk Kadını* also points to the relevance of historical media studies to the wider field of empirical studies of women's rights.

Second, the *Türk Kadını* survived for a quite long period of time – eight years and 97 published issues – which makes it a good source for longitudinal textual analysis. Moreover, the years in which this magazine was published as well as the Cold War era in general, have received very little attention by previous scholars in the field of women's studies. While there is a rich literature on women's rights and social conditions during the early years of the republic as well as after 1980, the time between these two periods represents "missing years", at least in terms of academic research. Hence, the choice to study the issues of the *Türk Kadını* is also intended as a contribution to the filling of a gap in the literature.

This choice has also made it possible for us to uncover two historically important arguments about why Turkish women failed to have their legal rights implemented and realized. While the first argument has never been mentioned in the theoretical literature before, the second has indeed been given a prominent position in the literature, but has on the other hand mistakenly been thought of as a discovery of the 1980s.

The Two Arguments

The first argument, which has not been discussed in the literature before, we will call the *incomplete emancipation of Anatolian women argument* (IEAWA). This argument holds that although Turkish women were given legal rights in the early years of the republic, these rights were never fully implemented for Anatolian women. Lack of public services, such as education and health care, is presented as one major reason for the incomplete emancipation of Anatolian women. According to this argument, the solution is to invoke the solidarity of educated urban women as well as of idealist men, pointing to the gratitude these privileged groups owe to Anatolian women who fought alongside men for the independence of Turkey, and so make it a national concern to bring state services to the rural women of Anatolia.

The second argument developed in the *Türk Kadını* magazine is the more well-known *emancipated but unliberated Turkish women argument* (EUTWA). The EUTWA was formulated in 1982 by Binnaz Toprak, opposing the prevailing Kemalist view that Turkish women were liberated when the republic provided them with legal rights. Toprak argued that despite Turkish women being *emancipated*, that is, despite their possessing legal rights, even educated urban Turkish women were still far from being *liberated*, in the sense of being able to make choices of their own. Emancipation could be considered as a pre-requisite of liberation, but it did not guarantee liberation itself (Toprak, 1982, pp. 361-362). According to Toprak, women were “still captive in a society that teaches them to be docile, economically dependent on men, and geared to housework and childrearing” (Toprak, 1990, p. 43). For women living in rural areas, legal reforms had not made a lot of difference:

The civil code's provisions concerning marriage, divorce and monogamy are sometimes ignored in favour of the more traditional arrangements Islam has sanctioned for centuries (...). Similarly, the education of females has remained limited, as the wide gap between literate men and women in census findings demonstrates. Women in most small towns and villages are still socially secluded. For women, sexual promiscuity is a taboo and a question of family honor in rural and urban communities alike, although similar behaviour in men is not only tolerated but countenanced as a sign of virility. Male authority is unchallengeable in most families of rural background and manhandling of women is quite common. In short, the success of legal reforms in changing the condition of women has been limited largely because Islamic beliefs and traditions concerning sex roles continue to be socially valid (Toprak, 1990, pp. 42-43).

The EUTWA was later supported and applied by other scholars such as Deniz Kandiyoti (Kandiyoti, 1987), Nermin Abandan-Unat (Abandan-Unat, 1991), and Zehra Arat (Arat, 1998). Similar arguments were made in different terms by other scholars, such as Ayşe Durakbaşa (Durakbaşa, 1998a; 1998b), Ayşe Durakbaşa and Aynur İlyasoğlu (Durakbaşa and İlyasoğlu, 2001). Yeşim Arat

(Arat, 2000) complements and develops Toprak's work, arguing that Turkish women became both emancipated and liberated in the post-1980 period.

In this article we intend to show that the EUTWA existed, at least in a tentative form, already in the pages of the *Türk Kadını* magazine, more than a decade before Toprak's first article. In the magazine, it is pointed out that although Turkish women do indeed have legal rights to education as well as to health care, these rights are very far from being implemented in the Anatolian countryside, due to traditionalist and conservatively religious resistance.

Here there is a continuity between the IEAWA and the EUTWA, as they both focus on Anatolian women. However, there are also important differences between the two arguments, regarding not only how Anatolian women are being described, but also regarding the problems identified and the solutions suggested. While the IEAWA conceives of the Anatolian woman as a national heroine to whom educated urban women and men owe a substantial gratitude for past contributions to Turkish independence, the EUTWA describes her as a victim of patriarchal and traditionalist oppression. While the IEAWA explicitly names Anatolian women as the target group for rights implementation, the EUTWA refers to Anatolian women only implicitly, preferring to discuss in terms of the conditions of Turkish women in general while at the same time supporting its claims with examples from rural Anatolia.

While the IEAWA identifies state neglect and incomplete implementation of rights as the main reasons why Anatolian women are disadvantaged, the EUTWA instead blames local culture and traditions. And while the IEAWA looks for the solution in the solidarity of urban educated women and idealist men and in their advocacy of increased state intervention in Anatolia, the EUTWA looks for a more radical change of the values and traditions of rural Anatolia or at least that Anatolian girls and women should be protected from the negative impact of these values and traditions.

Both the IEAWA and the EUTWA identify the conditions of Anatolian women as central to the realization of Turkish women's civic rights. The introduction of the EUTWA in the early 1970s suggests that at that time the contributors to the *Türk Kadını* no longer believed that the realization of Turkish women's rights could be effectuated only by means of building more schools and hospitals in Anatolia. Instead they look for a *liberation* of Anatolian women, a process which would involve these women escaping the limiting norms and values of their local community.

Method

Our study is based on a close reading of all the published issues of the *Türk Kadını*; in total 97 issues. Here we will limit ourselves to just a few issues

and quotations to illustrate the two arguments mentioned above. After all, the purpose is only to point to the *existence* of these arguments, not to say anything about whether they were dominant or not. Hence, we have no intention to address quantitative questions of representativity here.

Our study can best be described as an example of qualitative research. When such research is applied to historical documents – in this case, the issues of the *Türk Kadını* – it treats these documents as “social facts”, that is, as representations of particular descriptive or normative views of the world, specific to some social context (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004). Our qualitative study of the *Türk Kadını* is also supported by basic conceptual analysis, in which one tries not only to uncover the meaning of the terms used in a particular discourse but also to establish how these terms fit with a particular historical and social situation (Harris 2007, p. 5). In the context of the *Türk Kadını*, our conceptual analysis reveals a certain normative representation of the Turkish woman in general and the Anatolian woman in particular, supportive of an argument about mutual rights and duties of Turkish women. By analysing the claims put forward in this discourse of the *Türk Kadını* about women’s rights and duties, we were also able to distinguish two different lines of argument. These are the IEAWA and the EUTWA mentioned above.

Historical Background

The roots of Turkish women’s emancipation can be found in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. The Young Turks (1908–1918), adhering to the 1908 revolution motto “liberty, equality and fraternity” (which, of course, was taken over from the French Revolution of 1789), included Ziya Gökalp’s idea of the “New Family,” or the “National Family,” as the germ cell of the nation-state. The idea of the new family was based on the allegedly egalitarian gender practices of Central Asian Turks, according to which the nuclear family should replace the extended family and marriages should be monogamous and characterized by partnership instead of patriarchy. Zafer Toprak has argued that this in turn led to Ottoman feminism and the emancipation of women (Toprak, 1991). However, legal reforms regarding women’s rights came into effect only after the declaration of the Turkish republic.

The Ottoman Empire was defeated in the First World War and the Turkish people under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk fought a successful national War of Independence from 1919 to 1922 against the European powers. As a result of this war, the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk adopted Westernization as a political path for the new republic, and, as part of this Westernization policy, laws changing the legal status of women were introduced (Arat, 2001, p. 27). In this context, the shari’a law, a remnant of the Ottoman Empire, was replaced by the 1926 Swiss Civil Code. According to this, women and men were equalized in relation to divorce and inheritance

while polygamy was abolished and civil marriage was made a requirement (Arat, 1996, p. 29). In 1924 women were granted equal rights with men to receive education, including higher education, and in 1930 they received the rights to vote and to be elected in local elections, from 1934 also in national elections (Arat, 2005, p. 105). All women's rights, according to the official discourse in Turkey, were granted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in a top down manner without any activism coming from women themselves. However, it has been known at least since the 1990s that there was, in the last decades of the Empire, an Ottoman women's movement formed by upper class Ottoman women who were actively propagating women's social rights in women's magazines (Çakır, 1996). However, these women were forgotten and later republican generations had to rediscover them only a couple of decades ago.

The Category of “the Anatolian Woman” in the Literature

The distinction between the İstanbul woman and the Anatolian woman is a well-established one (Toska, 1998; Çaha, 2011; Durakbaşa, 2011). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself applies this distinction in some of his speeches, defining the Anatolian woman as the real woman of the republic (Toska, 1998, p. 77). Ömer Çaha, reporting a memory of İffet Halim Oruz, writes that Atatürk wanted Oruz, who demanded voting rights for women in 1930, to give up on this question and instead educate the peasant women about the revolutions that had taken place (Çaha, 2011). Likewise, Yaprak Zihnioğlu notes the following statement made by the Kemalist women's movement after 1946: “The women did not know the rights granted to them by the ‘Great Leader’ Atatürk. These rights should be taught to them” (Zihnioğlu, 2009, p. 808). Teaching Anatolian women about their rights would be the task of urban educated women. Durakbaşa, too, mentions that the modernizing women's movement in the early years of the republic focused on saving women from backwardness in order for the nation to progress (Durakbaşa, 2011, p. 463). The term “Anatolian woman” in the *Türk Kadını* magazine is used in contrast to educated urban upper class women; mostly it refers to peasant Turkish women living in the rural Anatolian part of Turkey.

The Incomplete Emancipation of Anatolian Women Argument (IEAWA) in the *Türk Kadını*

In the matter of women's acquisition of their rights, the *Türk Kadını* magazine supports the official discourse, claiming that women's rights were granted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in a top down manner. However, the *Türk Kadını* elaborates on this official claim and relates it to the frontline and homefront efforts of Anatolian women in the Independence War. The *Türk Kadını* emphasizes that Anatolian women earned their civic rights in the 1920s and 1930s by fighting side by side with men on the frontline as well as on their own on the homefront.

The Anatolian woman earned this right, fighting on the frontline, carrying ammunition and food to the soldiers, plowing and harvesting the fields, grinding the flour, feeding her children, confronting the sicknesses and adversities in a home which was left manless. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:1, 1966, p. 3)

Muazzez Aruoba, in her article titled "Turkish Women's Campaign In the Service of the Nation" repeats the same message in January 1967:

Our sisters in Anatolia. Our women, who gave their hearts, strength and blood to our Independence War... These women! It is their services that were valued by the Great Atatürk and made us earn those woman's rights and freedoms which provide us with the order of today's life (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:8, 1967, p. 4)

The above excerpt was written by an urban female writer and underlines the Anatolian women's contributions in the Independence War, stressing that it is these women's frontline and homefront efforts that paved the way for the granting of women's rights by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. However, historical speeches by Ottoman upper class women about their womanhood condition were also given place in the pages of the magazine on two occasions. This shows that the circle of the *Türk Kadını* was at least informed about Ottoman women's rights activism; despite this, they chose to side with the official discourse on the issue of women's rights, which more or less denied this early pre-republican kind of women's activism.

The *Türk Kadını*, being published almost three decades after the launch of women's and men's equal rights in Turkey, problematized the issue of the actual implementation of these rights. In the magazine, it is argued that today (that is, the 1960s and 1970s), although it has been a long time since women were granted their rights and since Atatürk died (1938), there are still women in Anatolia who cannot make effective use of their rights. In other words, according to the discourse of the *Türk Kadını*, there is a rights gap between urban educated women and Anatolian women. The magazine targets these women who cannot use their rights, expressing a desire to serve them:

In Anatolia, which has benefited the least from these rights, there are still women who live in darkness, in ignorance, in countless deprivations and whose children are doctorless, medicineless, schoolless. The *Türk Kadını* magazine is being published for these women. The *Türk Kadını* magazine is being published for the ones who want to make their resources reach the remote villages. The *Türk Kadını* magazine is being published to make our sisters' voices, calling to us from the steppes, heard by the educated women and idealist men. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:1, 1966, p. 3)

Here, the lack of implementation of Anatolian women's rights is presented as being caused by insufficient provision of state services in Anatolia. According to the discourse of the magazine, the state could not provide women with schools in which they could apply their right to education; nor could the

state provide them with doctors or hospitals to support their and their children's right to a scientifically based healthcare. This is *the incomplete emancipation of Anatolian women argument* (IEAWA).

However, this criticism regarding insufficient supply of state services does not turn into a complaint directed against the state. Instead, the magazine assumes for itself the role of a civil society institution supporting the state in its duty to bring needed services to Anatolian women. In other words, the *Türk Kadını* does not only recognize the rights gap between urban, educated women and Anatolian women but also presents itself as at least part of the solution to this problem. Here, the magazine chooses the role of a mediator between the ones who are in need and the ones who have resources to offer. The magazine aims to contribute to the distribution of resources to remote parts of Anatolia by raising the general consciousness concerning the rights of Anatolian women. The magazine also aims to make the voices of the women of the Anatolian rural parts heard by educated women and idealist men.

The Türk Kadını magazine continues to problematize the rights gap issue of Anatolian women over the years. For instance, in 1972, Demet Işık, in her article "Turkish Woman in Law", overtly talks about the lack of implementation of women's rights among Anatolian women:

Isn't there something insufficient, inappropriate or missing in our contemporary legal status? Of course there is. Isn't it necessary either to make the laws work or to change them? Of course, it is necessary. Turkish women will fight for this, too. But the real problem for Turkish intellectual women is that our legal liberties are not being used by all Anatolian women. The real problem is about us all coming together, understanding our existing rights and raising our consciousness about them. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 6:68, 1972, p. 24)

In the above excerpt, the writer not only focuses on the rights of Anatolian women but also makes a call for sisterhood and for a united effort to implement the legal rights of women all over the country.

Educated Urban Women's Duty to Improve the Condition of Anatolian Women

Educated urban women's duties to Anatolian women and the issue of closing the rights gap between these two groups of women are recurring topics in the magazine. In her article titled "Our Republic and Us" published in the fifth issue of the magazine, Aliye Coşkun says the following:

We know that we were born on that day [the day the women acquired their rights with the establishment of the republic], we proved our coming of age in the light of that regime. However, nobody can deny that we, as Turkish women, deserved this blessing fully. In the earning of it, there are the prayers, labour, blood and countless martyrs of Turkish woman.

From here, the writer passes to the post-Independence War duty of the Turkish woman as a citizen:

This country was not saved easily and these revolutions were not won easily! We don't have the right to just sit on them, to forget about them and especially to use them as if they are only the property of the intellectuals. In the saving of the country, there is the sweat and the labour of the self-sacrificing and long-suffering village woman who carried cannon balls on her back and ammunition and provision in her cart and made her dress a cover for the ammunition. How can we forget that her sacred and calloused hands provided us with the opportunity to hold a pencil! We owe her forever. Anyone who holds a pencil, all intellectuals owe her. It is our duty to be with them not only by words, but by heart and body, and to follow our case and revolutions. Only then, I am sure, Atatürk will be comfortable in his eternal sleep. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:6, 1966, p. 8).

In the above quote, the Anatolian peasant women's frontline and homefront contribution to the Independence War victory is stressed. The quote was written by an educated urban woman formulating a duty of reciprocity based on a historical narrative, saying that the intellectuals owe their privileges to the Anatolian peasant women. Now their duty is to side with these Anatolian women, and to contribute to the implementation of the women's rights revolutions in Anatolia.

As part of this effort, Muazzez Aruoba, in an article carrying the title "The Shiny Pill" and published in the first issue of the *Türk Kadını*, says that the magazine aims to be a window opening to Anatolia. ("The shiny pill" is a Turkish equivalent of "the quick fix".) The writer refers to her experiences in the East of Turkey. "There is no water, no electricity, no doctor, no medicine in Ardahan." This is, of course, the argument that we know as the IEAWA. When the situation in the East is considered, the writer is embarrassed by her own more advantageous position. Women there live in deprivation. They call the writer "pasha sister" which is a way of address that recognizes her upper class status. Erzurum saw six wars, she reports. The population decreased from 65,000 to 8,000. The locals say that for those who are saved from death, other problems remain trivial. The pasha sister has a different opinion. She wants to say that faith is lightened by the hardships endured. She thinks that these women have big hearts. The strength of Anatolian women emanate from the greatness of their pain. The writer is not without hope, the future of the ones whose background is full of pain should be bright. Self-critically she continues:

The sources of my worry, my pain, refer to ourselves. They concern the educated women. They concern the women who have a lot of free time and opportunities ...We cannot give what our country wants from us. We are not with our sisters who want light from us! We are imprisoned in our little worlds, supposing that we are doing something, but we are deceiving ourselves and our environment (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:1, 1966, p. 5)

Despite this, if the *Türk Kadını*

with a conscious and constructive love of service, brings light to the problems of all women of Turkey, it will see to it that common sense will gain the upper hand in the general public who is supposed to want "the shiny pill" (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:1, 1966, p. 5).

Here Muazzez Aruoba mentions her disappointment with the educated, urban, wealthy women – that is, with her class sisters. She points out that the educated women with resources are not helping their sisters in Anatolia and that they live in an illusion. However, according to Aruoba, the *Türk Kadını* magazine is a candidate for redressing the problems of women in Turkey.

The Hierarchy of Sisters and the Idealization of Anatolian Women in the *Türk Kadını*

It is significant that in its proposal to bridge the rights gap between urban and Anatolian woman with the help of educated women and idealist men, the *Türk Kadını* magazine relies on a stratified account of Turkish women. In the pages of the magazine, Turkish women are being stratified according to criteria such as lack of economic resources, being rural, lacking education, gender, and not being able to benefit from state services. This also implies a hierarchy of sisters, ranking urban, educated, rich woman above peasant Anatolian women. Such a hierarchy is also implicit in the account of the people of Erzurum addressing Muazzez Aruoba "pasha sister". To overcome the social distance between these groups of Turkish women, Aruoba wants the educated urban women to show solidarity with the Anatolian women. She does not look down upon Anatolian women; on the contrary, she depicts them in positive, idealizing terms, making it a matter of pride rather than pity for urban women to side with her Anatolian sisters, who are "[f]aithful, patient, hopeful, honest, respectful, sincere, strong in national feelings, loyal to the home and the soil, brave and hardworking TURKISH NATION" (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:2, 1966, p. 4)

At the same time, Anatolian women are depicted as living in poverty, struggling against all kinds of hardship. The courage of Anatolian women is contrasted with the self-satisfied and spoilt manners of urban privileged women. The contributors to the *Türk Kadını* magazine, although they themselves belong to this class of privileged women, communicate a sense of being morally inferior to their Anatolian sisters. The latter are described as being more true to the ideals and needs of the republic:

When I got to know and live with our women in Anatolia, I was embarrassed by my dreams, emotional sufferings, inappropriate rebellions, dysfunctional complaints. These women who live in thousands of deprivations, with bravery and with peace and happiness, gave me strength and guided me.

Their hardworkingness, their standing, their skills which create possibilities out of nothing, their power of life taught me how our country, torn by lack of resources, could stand up free and independent. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:2, 1966, p. 5)

The aim of the *Türk Kadını* is to function as a bridge between the incompletely emancipated Anatolian women and their more privileged urban sisters. By giving a voice to Anatolian women and by relating the fate of these women to the ideal of republican equality that the readers of the magazine are already assumed to share, the *Türk Kadını* formulates a moral argument about the rights of Anatolian women as well as the corresponding duties of their urban sisters:

Our women in the villages, reaching out their calloused hands, are addressing us, their sisters in the cities:

“Come... When we live here in darkness, waterless, doctorless, medicineless, in a thousands of deprivations, can we be a great and civilized nation? Come, let’s join forces. Difficulties cannot frustrate us. The faith in our hearts, the blood in our veins give us strength. We add our strength, you add your knowledge. Join our labours on the path of civilization. Present ourselves as a united body confronting the ones who want to divide us.” (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 1:2, 1966, p. 5)

The actual material inequality existing between Anatolian and urban women is contrasted with a moral equality that should exist between them, according to the *Türk Kadını*. Moreover, in case the urban female readers of the magazine might be unwilling to identify with their Anatolian sisters, they are reminded that their very identity as free citizens of the Turkish republic depends on the historical sacrifices made by Anatolian women in the War of Independence. The readers are reminded that their double role of being Turkish women as well as Turkish citizens involve important mutual rights and duties of support. (A similar argument was invoked by the *Türk Kadını* to justify a duty of Turkish women, in their double role of being mothers as well as citizens and against the background of the Cold War, to protect their children from being influenced by the ideas of Communism (Tepe, 2017).) Hence, solidarity with the Anatolian women is not a matter of charity but rather one of *duty*:

The symbol of educated women. Our symbol is in Anatolia. She is the glorious peasant woman who carried ammunition to the front. That woman who, as she was carrying out that duty, took the cloth of her child and wrapped it around the ammunition as the rain started to fall, saying “now the country needs ammunition more than it needs the child”.

This woman will eternally continue to carry ammunition along the borders of the nation.

We belong with those glorious women.

I hope that when I write these lines, I carry my ammunition along the borders of the nation. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 3: 36; 1969, p. 15)

The Introduction of the Emancipated but Unliberated Turkish Women Argument (EUTWA) in the *Türk Kadını*

In the *Türk Kadını* magazine until 1971 the question of the rights gap is approached from the point of view of the unavailability of state services in rural Anatolia. This is what we have called the incomplete emancipation of Anatolian women argument (IEAWA). Now, beginning with 1971, the *Türk Kadını* starts to publish material supporting the argument that in the 1980s was to be called the *emancipated but unliberated Turkish women argument* (EUTWA). Although the target is still women living in rural Anatolia, they are now referred to as *Turkish* women rather than Anatolian women. The contrast is now no longer between urban, educated, and wealthy women on the one hand, and rural, Anatolian women on the other. Instead it is between those Turkish women who have been able to realize their rights and those Turkish women who have not. Moreover, the problem is no longer that Turkish women in Anatolia are incompletely emancipated because of the unavailability of state services such as schools and hospitals. Instead the problem is that they, in spite of being emancipated in the sense of having their rights recognized by the state, are prevented by their traditional and religiously conservative local community from exercising these rights. For instance, in her article "Turkish woman and Education" Feriha Baymur notes the following:

Today in our country, from the primary school to the university level, all educational institutions are, at least legally, open to the class of woman. Turkish girls, for the first time in our history, have in the Republican era reached the possibility of studying and training to the fullest of their talents. However, when we look at the real situation, we see that the Turkish woman benefits from this opportunity only to a very limited degree.

As noted in the report of the Turkish National Educational Commission, the great revolutions which came with the republic have greatly changed our conception of the family; however, the new mentality has not been adopted by all our citizens equally. It has been observed that in the villages, towns and even in some small cities, an important part of the female children are still not being sent to schools. ...

The reason why female children are not being sent to school is society's neglect and lack of interest in women's education in general. According to the report of the State Planning Organization, low literacy rates and low levels of education can be connected to two reasons: the first being that in the villages there can be no guarantee that girls go to school at all, and the second being that girls who do go to school leave schools after attending only a few years.

It is very sad that women, making up half the population, cannot benefit to a sufficient extent from education. It will be an important future educational goal

for us to correct for this. In this field, very serious work is needed; perhaps the institutions best equipped to achieve this will be women's institutions. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 6: 67, 1971, p. 24–25)

Here we should note that the word “society” refers to the local community, the village, rather than the state. The problem is defined in terms of local resistance to women's education rather than in terms of insufficient state provision of services. It is not that there are no schools, but rather that girls are not allowed to go to school. Nor does Baymur ask for more state intervention; she suggests instead that “women's institutions” should address the problem of girls' insufficient education. It is as if the problem of the rights gap between educated urban women and uneducated rural women has left the arena of state politics and governmental intervention and moved to the arena of cultural reform and social change, in which there could be room for a plurality of agents, including non-state ones.

Forty years after the women's rights revolution, Sadi Irmak visits the central parts of Anatolia, concluding that the situation of Turkish women there can be best described as “tragic”. He continues:

All heavy work and responsibilities, including the ones which require male strength, are loaded on the shoulders of the woman.

In the fields, the main agricultural work is carried out by women. While women are doing this back-breaking work under the hot sun, one sees men in the coffee houses or resting in the shadow. No smiling face or sweet language is waiting for the women who return home tired, even exhausted.

I have seen 25–30 years old women who looked like they were 50 years old. Innumerable births and miscarriages are added to all this labour. Most of the time men do not help women with child care, either.

To rid themselves of unwanted pregnancies, women take steps which cost them their health, even their life. The number of women who die because of this has increased to a degree which is saddening. Men are most of the time ignorant or indifferent about these situations.

The number of men who leave their wives and go to unknown places is increasing as well. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 6: 67, 1971, p. 14).

Here, once again, the problem is the local patriarchal culture rather than the absence of state services. It is about women being exploited by their fathers and husbands rather than about their being neglected by the state. There are schools, but girls are not allowed, or at least not encouraged, to attend classes. Irmak blames the local traditionalist interpretation of religion for this:

Girls are not being sent to school. Some men of religion encourage parents not to send girls to school, saying that “it is enough if they memorize the prayer”.

Consequently, this kind of indoctrination fits well with male egotism. This kind of *hodja effendi* strips the verse “man is the protector of woman” in the Qur’an of its real meaning and interprets it as meaning “man’s domination of woman”. In this way, women are presented as second class human beings. ... It is not difficult to imagine what kind of children a woman will raise under these conditions! ...

The only solution for all these troubles is certainly to educate woman. The first measure that comes to mind is to open regional boarding schools for girls.

It seems like the law concerning girls’ attendance to primary schools has almost fallen out of practice. If the (political) party who wants such attendance is informed about this, they would not call this situation patriotism.

In the fortieth year of the women’s rights revolutions, our conscience is not clear and our heart is not light. They told me that in many villages widows don’t accept remarriage and they prefer being wage-labourers. Only in this way, women express their protest. As long as fifteen million women do not reach *de facto* equality, greatness and strength remain just a dream for this country. (*Türk Kadını*, vol. 6: 67, 1971, p. 14-15)

Interestingly enough, as the discourse of the *Türk Kadını* moves from the IEAWA to the EUTWA, it also moves from an idealizing account of the Anatolian woman to an account of her in which she is the victim of patriarchy and religious traditionalism. Now it is no longer sufficient to call on the solidarity of urban educated woman, nor is it sufficient to provide rural Anatolia with schools and hospitals. What is required now is a radical change of rural values. As a first step, young girls should be provided with an education regardless of whatever traditionalist opposition there might be. Sadi İrmak’s suggestion that there should be boarding schools for girls implies that he considers separating the girls from their families and village background as a necessary means to their education. Hence, this is no more about the *emancipation* of women in the narrow legal sense, but rather about their *liberation*, in the sense of making them independent agents, controlling their own lives in accordance with their own choices instead of being controlled by traditionalist village values.

Concluding Comments

In the years of its existence, the *Türk Kadını* magazine developed two different arguments regarding Turkish women’s rights and Anatolian women’s lack of such rights. The incomplete emancipation of Anatolian Women argument (IEAWA) claimed that it was the lack of state services such as schools and hospitals that made civic rights inaccessible to Anatolian women. The solution proposed in the pages of the magazine was to make urban educated women aware of how much they owed to Anatolian women for their own civic rights, and to mobilize them in solidarity with their Anatolian sisters. Urban educated women were supposed to voice their concerns about the poorly implemented

rights of Anatolian women and so encourage the state to take action and to provide the required services to rural Anatolia.

Beginning with 1971, the magazine opens its pages to a second argument, holding traditionalist local communities and conservative interpretations of Islam rather than the state responsible for the limited options of Anatolian women. This is the emancipated but unliberated Turkish women argument (EUTWA). Although this argument usually has been associated with the 1980s, it exists in the *Türk Kadını* magazine at least in an embryonic form already in the early 1970s. With the EUTWA, focus is no longer on the state realizing the legal rights of Anatolian women by building schools and hospitals. Instead something more radical is envisaged, namely, that traditionalist norms and values should be deprived of their dominant position, or, if such a reform is not possible, that Anatolian girls at least should have access to an education that is not controlled or constrained by local traditionalists.

The move from an argument focusing on Anatolian women being incompletely emancipated to one focusing on Turkish women being unliberated indicates two potentially significant developments. First, to talk of “Turkish women” instead of “Anatolian women” suggests an awareness that the issue is no longer just about bridging the gap between urban educated women and their Anatolian sisters, but rather one about Turkish women’s rights in general. Second, the new focus on traditionalist and religious norms and values as the major obstacle to rural Turkish women’s realization of their rights suggests that the contributors to the *Türk Kadını* are no longer content with the modernist engineering approach to politics which assumed that a progressive society could be built with schools, hospitals, roads, and airports. Modern equipment will not realize any progressive ideals unless the people who are going to use them have a progressive mindset.

The move from the IEAWA to the EUTWA hence heralds an important shift in Turkish feminist political thinking, from a focus on laws, institutional frameworks, and technological development to a focus on norms, values, culture, and religion. While the IEAWA concentrated on the surface structure of society, the EUTWA aimed at the deeper layers of social life, namely, the norms and values that determined the life prospects of Turkish women in general and Anatolian women in particular.

The years in which the *Türk Kadını* was published (the 1960s and 1970s) witnessed the development of new and critical ways of conceiving of the lack of implementation of women’s rights in Turkey. These are also years that have received little attention up to now, at least from the point of view of women’s studies. As has already been mentioned, the IEAWA has never been studied before, and the EUTWA has mistakenly been understood as a discovery of the 1980s. While there exists a rich literature on Turkish women and their rights in

the early years of the republic as well as after 1980, the Cold War era has so far been mostly ignored. The present study, although it is very limited, shows why this is a mistake and why there are important lessons to be learned from these "missing years".

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