

Chapter 2

Searching for Feminism in Psychology in Turkey

Hale Bolak Boratav

Positioned as a cultural as well as a geographical bridge between Europe and Asia, and with a population that is predominantly Muslim, Turkey offers an interesting vantage point for interrogating the relationship between feminism and psychology. In Turkey, as elsewhere, psychology is said to have a long past but a relatively short history (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1994). A similar point can be made regarding the women's movement and women's studies. Although there has been a growing women's movement and a slow but steady increase in academic work about women since the 1980s, psychology has remained largely unaffected by feminism. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the possible reasons for why there is still very little feminist psychology in Turkey. I will argue that there are historical, political, intellectual, and cultural factors that have affected feminism's influence on psychology. I will start by sketching some of the contours of the organized women's movement in Turkey, then describe how feminism has affected the work of social scientists. I spend the rest of the chapter exploring my original question: Why has psychology been resistant to feminist influence?

The History of the Organized Women's Movement in Turkey

To understand the development of a feminist perspective in the social sciences, one must connect it with the history of the organized women's movement in Turkey. A recent overview of the evolution of women's struggle for empowerment in Turkey illustrates how this process has involved "contest" as well as "collaboration" both among women themselves and with the modernizing state (Arat, 2008). As two of the earliest examples of the overlap between nationalist considerations and women's needs, adopting the civil code (1926, adapted from the Swiss civil code) and granting women suffrage in 1934 served to "pre-empt" women's demands for group rights (Arat, 2008, p. 393). Arat describes the next four decades in terms of a "pact"

H.B. Boratav (✉)

Department of Psychology, İstanbul Bilgi University, İstanbul, Turkey
e-mail: hale.boratav@bilgi.edu.tr

between the state and women, where more urban and educated women, particularly, enjoyed a relative expansion of opportunities in turn for a non-critical stance towards the state. After a limited first-wave feminism in the early years of the Republic (see Çakır, 1994), second-wave feminism developed in an era where democratic rights were suspended and political opposition was silenced following the September 1980 military coup. Most of these women were questioning their experiences of sexism in the left. Diversely positioned close to “socialist,” “radical” or “liberal” feminisms, while simultaneously interrogating these categories, these women claimed their rights as individuals, and distanced themselves from the state (Arat, 2008, p. 397), in contrast to Kemalist women whose vision was limited to protecting the few rights that were granted to women during the early years of the Republic.

It was during the 1980s that feminists began to publicly interrogate the limits of the official discourse of “equal rights.” In 1986, feminists organized a petition drive for the implementation of the United Nations’ Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), that had been signed by the state the year before. Next, an organized effort to combat domestic violence, up until then a “private” concern, culminated in the first major campaign and march against domestic violence in 1987, followed by the purple needle campaign against sexual harassment in 1989 and the establishment of Purple Roof Women’s Shelter Foundation in 1990. In the early 1990s, younger women, most without a background in political activism, started organizing around the slogan “our bodies belong to ourselves” (“bedenimiz bizim”). The 1990s was also the decade for the institutionalization of the women’s movement through the establishment of and increase in NGOs and associations such as KA-DER concerned with the promotion of women’s political representation, Ka-Mer concerned with the fight against violence, including violence committed in the name of “honor,” and Women for Women’s Human Rights (WWHR) concerned with women’s sexuality, bodily integrity, and with violations of women’s rights in related areas.

Some of the major feminist gains of the early years of this century include the important, although partial, amendments of the civil code (2001) and the penal code (2005). These, as Arat (2008) notes, were important concessions by the state, partly in response to the requirements of the CEDAW and the European Union accession process, which required the Turkish legislation to be in line with the CEDAW framework. The amended civil code introduced some changes towards gender equality by removing the articles about the man being the head of household and the woman needing to get her husband’s permission to work or travel, and replaced the separation of property regime with the shared property regime. The amended penal code criminalized sexual harassment and marital rape, and increased penalties for sex crimes.

The third wave of feminism that developed in the late 1990s presented a bolder confrontation to conservative nationalist ideology, reflecting an awareness of the need to recognize and understand differences along lines of ethnicity (e.g., Kurdish women’s movement), religiosity (e.g., Islamist women’s demands to be allowed to attend the university with the headscarf), and sexual orientation, and the need for alliances across different borders. Very importantly, Kurdish women’s assertive

presence in the women's movement opened up a discursive space for a critical discussion of, and confrontation with, nationalism within the movement. An edited book published in Turkish *Cinsiyet Halleri (Manifestations of Gender)* by Mutluer (2008) reflects an intersectional perspective and a closer engagement with issues of activist concern in Turkey and their history, including sexual minority rights, the headscarf issue, nationalism, and the Kurdish problem. The feminist collective Amargi, which means "freedom" in the Sumerian language, was formed in 2005 to provide a space for women to come together around different projects including a quarterly journal and academy. It attempts to forge connections between feminist theory and politics. With an editorial and advisory board that brings together activists and academics, the journal has put out special issues on such debated topics as sex work, morality, headcovering, sexual orientation, and militarism.

During the past decade, several networks such as Kadın Sığınakları ve Dayanışma Merkezleri Kurultayı (The Assembly of Women's Shelters and Solidarity Centers) and Internet platforms such as Kadın Kurultayı (Women's Assembly), and TCK Kadın Platformu (Women's Platform on the Penal Code) that involved the collaboration of numerous women's organizations played an instrumental role in facilitating effective campaigning and lobbying around these issues. More recently, in 2005, a women's media watch group (MEDİZ) was started with the collaboration of more than 20 women's NGOs. MEDİZ carried out a year-long media campaign with the theme "Ending sexism in the media" that culminated in an international conference in April 2008. Another platform "birbirimize sahip çıkıyoruz" (we stand by one another) that aims to further respectful dialogue and solidarity among diverse groups and denounces any type of control over women's bodies in the name of religion, modernity, or morality, is another noteworthy development. All of these networks have facilitated more efficient organizing in the way of petition drives and press releases. However, at the same time that different groups of actors are emerging on the activist scene, the representation of women in local and national politics is still very dismal.

The Development of a Feminist Perspective in the Social Sciences in Turkey

The history of the development of women's studies in Turkey has been discussed by different social scientists (Arat, 1993; Özbay, 1990). In her review article, Arat draws attention to the fact that social sciences developed in close interface with the West. This would correspond to the period of societal transformation beginning with the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and accompanied by the introduction of the secular reforms of Kemal Atatürk such as the 1924 Educational Reform Act, the 1926 Civil Code, and the 1934 suffrage. But, just as importantly, Arat illustrates how historically-specific factors contributed to the changing priorities and perspectives of social scientists studying women in Turkey. Based on the rhetoric of major improvements in women's rights and status through Republican reforms, the

Kemalist ideology has been a powerful discourse, and is still salient, although more contested. The work in women's studies in the Republican era has been categorized in three stages (Arat, 1993): 1. The stage of sociological research on Turkish villages (1940–60); 2. The stage of modernization studies (1960–80); and 3. The stage of feminist influence (post 1980) (p. 120). Initially, the large-scale social transformation prompted social scientists to study society using scientific methods. This research yielded rich descriptive data about village life, including information about women's lives. Similarly sparked by an interest in understanding the effects of social change, and mostly from a modernization perspective, scholars in the second stage focused on the correlates of women's higher status, such as education, and problematized their roles and status in the various contexts of family, migration, and political life. Much of this work was compiled in an anthology titled *Women in Turkish Society* (Abadan-Unat, 1981), now considered the first major milestone in women's studies in Turkey.

Anticipated by the work of women's studies scholars in this second stage, the work in the third stage tended to be more explicitly feminist. The late 1980s witnessed a burgeoning of academic research in sociology, political science, and economics in which women, their problems, and perspectives became the center of the inquiry (Arat, 1993). Issues such as why there were so few women in politics, the connections between women's employment outside the home and their roles and power inside the home, the mechanisms and processes which maintain women's subordination in the labor force, women's strategies of empowerment, and new topics such as domestic violence and sexuality, were some of the focal areas of study. As Arat (1993) also notes, this body of work was informed by controversies and analytic concepts such as gender, feminism, and patriarchy developed by feminist scholars in the West, and attempted to understand the unique aspects of the situation in Turkey. In this context, an attempt was made to understand how patriarchal structures worked in Turkish society. Arat (1989), for example, unpacked the paradox of men being both *supporters* of women's initiation into politics and presenting *obstacles* to their success in politics. Studies on the relationship between women's work outside the home and their responsibilities and power inside the home challenged some findings in the West, and showed the importance of culturally salient factors such as women's networks and extended family relationships as important mediators of this relationship (Bolak-Boratav, 1997a, 1997b).

That feminist academic work burgeoned in the 1980s is not surprising. This was a period of major momentum in women's studies in the West. The majority of the scholars doing research on women's studies in Turkey were either graduate students in the West or had recently returned from doing their graduate work there. Hence, they were influenced by Western theoretical and methodological perspectives as well as the feminist movements they had been exposed to. At the same time, the growth of feminist sensibility in Turkey during this time also had a sensitizing influence on their work. One of these women, Cindoğlu, a sociologist, notes that all of the topics she studies (e.g., Cindoğlu, 2000) have been influenced by one or another issue of deep concern from her own life such as sexuality, medicalization of life, the Internet, and a discourse of democracy that doesn't include gender

(Cindoğlu, personal communication, February 1, 2010). The work from this period culminated in an anthology titled *Women in Modern Turkish Society* edited by Tekeli (1995), reflecting a more self-consciously feminist outlook. As a case in point, my contribution to this volume (Bolak, 1995), based on my PhD research on marital power dynamics, was inspired through my work with Kandiyoti who mentored me in looking at issues of gender from an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective (Kandiyoti, 1987). It was also inspired by my work with Chodorow on feminist methodology and psychoanalytic feminist theory (Chodorow, 1989). This volume and an anthology published on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Republic, *Women and Men in the 25th Year* (1998), both addressed women's activism as well as academic work in women's studies in Turkey.

The Scope and Visibility of Feminist Social Sciences in Turkey Today

It is safe to say that academic work in women's studies has found a place in Turkey. Feminist work is better represented in social sciences that are more macro in focus such as sociology and political science, and to some extent, economics. At a quick glance, women's studies scholarship exists as a major in only four universities. In 17 others, there is an attempt to do this work under the umbrella of "women's issues research and application centers," but many admit to not being able to carry out research projects due to lack of funding and do not even have active or accessible websites. It is fair to say that much of the work has so far been carried out in the context of insufficient institutional support and on individual initiative alone. This should not come as a surprise as until less than ten years ago social science research was not even eligible for support from the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (Tübitak), the major source of funding for scientific research in Turkey. On the bright side, a major nationwide collaborative field study on violence against women by a feminist anthropologist and a feminist political scientist was recently funded by the same agency (Altınay & Arat, 2008).

The areas of research in women's studies are quite diverse. A comprehensive survey of the field is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, some snapshots can be provided using different entry points. One approach is to explore the extent to which gender and feminism have been featured in articles from Turkey published in citation indexed journals from 1980 to the present. Crossing "Turkey" and "feminism" in the Web of Science only yields four articles! Crossing "gender" and "Turkey" yields no articles for 1980–1989, but yields 25 articles for 1990–1999 and 77 articles for 2000–2005. Due to the paucity of scholarly journals from Turkey that get indexed in this database, all of these articles are published in English. An overwhelming majority of the articles are based on biomedical research using gender as an individual difference variable. The most common emphasis of the 13 articles published in psychology journals in Turkey between 1990 and 2005 with the keyword "gender" in the title is on gender roles, their relationship to

identity, mental health, relationship satisfaction, and women's employment status. In the publications since 2000, the words "patriarchy/patriarchal" and "sexual harassment" start to appear in the titles. Research on violence against women may be among the few areas of interdisciplinary focus (Arat & Altınay, 2008; Bora & Üstün, 2005; Zara-Page & İnce, 2008; Yüksel, 1995).

Another invaluable Web-based resource is "Who is who in women's studies?", developed in 2007 and currently in the process of being updated almost single handedly by a feminist sociologist (www.yildizecevit.com/trk). It can be gleaned from this website that the themes that characterize current feminist work in Turkey are very diverse, and not very different from what one may find in a similar database in a different country. Feminist work is best represented in the disciplines of sociology and political science/international relations/public administration, followed by economics. Engineering is not represented at all, and there is only one woman from medicine. Of the 86 academics represented on this site before the current attempt at an update, only six are from psychology/psychiatry, with one living abroad. The research interests of these women are diverse, including such topics as the career development of professional women, gender roles, sexuality, women's rights, and violence against women. Although limited to those women who were easily accessible and willing to send their information, this list can be seen as another example of the meager representation of feminism in psychology. A perusal of the research interests of the academic staff at various psychology departments reveals only a few other names. Individual undergraduate and graduate courses on gender are offered in 28 universities (out of about 140), but currently, only four of these 28 universities (all four in İstanbul) offer a course through the psychology department. Reasons for the limited influence of feminism on psychology will be elaborated later.

Another useful database should be the list of graduate theses in areas related to gender, women's studies, and feminism. MA theses in psychology at Boğaziçi University, one of the top universities in Turkey, were taken as an appropriate sample to address this question. History and political science appeared to be the areas where a gender emphasis was more salient. The fact that the majority of these theses were written since 2000, and particularly in the last five years, could be largely due to the entry of new academics who have been exposed to feminism during their PhD work abroad. Only 28 out of all 264 theses written between 1978 (when the psychology graduate program first started) and 2009 were identified as having key words such as sex, gender, or sex roles. The word "feminism" was not included among the key-words in any thesis produced at this university to date. On another interesting note, theses that primarily studied gender as "difference" were in the minority. Rather, theses that situate women in their relational contexts, and particularly in the context of their families, appeared to predominate, addressing such themes as relationship satisfaction, working and mothering, and the effect of divorce on well-being. On the other hand, the total number of theses on more specifically gendered issues such as eating disorders, sexuality, dating violence, prejudice towards different groups of women, and women in poverty numbered only ten.

Thus, it is fair to say that we cannot talk about a systematic influence of feminism on psychology in Turkey and that feminist-inspired work in psychology has been largely an individual initiative. Women social scientists and clinicians in particular are generally aware of the patriarchal nature of the society and of the traditional family in Turkey, and this sensitivity is reflected in their work. For example, Fişek (personal communication, January 10, 2010) thinks that a female therapist in Turkey, especially if working with couples, could not remain unaffected by the feminist literature. In the clinical area, her contributions have been particularly notable. We see that as early as 1990, she wrote an article titled "Gender and psychology: A critical review" in which she made the argument that gender had not been a research focus as a "context variable" (Fişek, 1990). She problematized the "gender blind" as well as "androcentric" approaches in psychology, introduced audiences in Turkey to the debates in feminist psychology about "equality" and "difference" and called for a contextual conceptualization of gender as a socio-cultural category. In another article, she provided an analysis of intimacy in terms of gender and culture, and discussed the implications of "modern" expectations for couples raised with a traditional relationship ideology (Fişek, 1994). Her most recent argument for the need to expand the contextual vision of relational therapies beyond the therapeutic dyad to include the cultural context and indigenous beliefs and practices that can influence the relationship, such as the "virtual kinship" discourse, is a very significant contribution to the clinical literature (Fişek, 2010).

Indeed, although in the minority, there is a small contingent of female clinical psychologists and psychiatrists who use a feminist paradigm in their work, whether they are doing individual or group work with women, or couples therapy work. While some only see clients in private practice, others also work in battered women's shelters and with women's NGOs, particularly in South East Turkey. Some of these women appear in key positions in associations such as the Turkish Psychiatry Association and The Association for Sexual Education, Therapy and Research (CETAD), and use their leverage to make a difference among their colleagues. Among these women, feminist psychiatrist Yüksel (Yüksel, 1995; Yüksel, 2000; Yüksel, Cindoğlu, & Sezgin, forthcoming; Yüksel & Sezgin, 2007) deserves a special acknowledgment for having pioneered some of the earliest efforts to put violence against women on psychiatry's agenda. She has conducted sustained and made publicly visible research and advocacy work in the area of physical violence against women, but also in other forms of abuse and trauma such as sexual abuse. The latter includes the not rare but taboo issues of incest, torture, and homophobic practices. Her leadership and mentoring have touched many young clinicians, and have led to some of the most meaningful contributions to feminist psychology in Turkey. İlkaracan (2000), one of the founders of WWHR, is another notable feminist psychotherapist and researcher who combines her academic work with an activist stance.

There have not been many social psychologists who have prioritized issues of gender and sexism in their academic work. There is some work on gender roles and sexism which, like most research done in psychology in Turkey, is largely quantitative in nature. For example, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) has been

adapted into Turkish (Dökmen, 1991) and is probably the most popular instrument used in research on gender. Dökmen has related this measure to depression as well as to work status (Dökmen, 1997). Researchers have been interested in seeing how the factor structures compare with the findings in the United States, and how they have changed over time. For example, a relatively recent study with university students found higher femininity scores for both young men and women compared to before, and higher masculinity scores for young women compared to a similar sample used for the adaptation of the scale (Özkan & Lajunen, 2005). Another scale that has been adapted more recently is the Ambivalent Sexism Scale. A researcher in social influence and attitudes, Sakallı-Uğurlu has been doing many studies where she looks at the differential relationship of the hostile versus benevolent sexism components of this measure to various other attitudes including those toward wife beating, women managers, homosexuality, and premarital sexuality of women (Sakallı, 2002; Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2001, 2002; Sakallı-Uğurlu & Beydoğan, 2002; Sakallı-Uğurlu & Glick, 2003). On the one hand, it is obvious that this has been a very productive area of social psychological research. On the other hand, overreliance on an adapted scale may have foreclosed a more culturally grounded understanding of sexism.

My own doctoral dissertation research with working-class couples (Bolak-Boratav, 1997a, 1997b) was an attempt to situate the negotiation of marital power dynamics in the context of gender and culture. For instance, as an example of the variability in the “psychological” impact of controls over women, I made the argument that for most women in my study, the traditional justification of “might makes right” often retained its validity as a cultural script, as normative, without being internalized as a sense of inferiority. Elsewhere, I have made a plea for a more nuanced understanding of the contradictions in the lived experiences of women, and to place these understandings within their respective cultural and political discourses and contexts (Bolak-Boratav, 2002). More recently, I have been doing research in the broader area of sexuality including sexual harassment (Sigal et al., 2005), sexual orientation (Bolak-Boratav, 2006), and the gendered experiences of young heterosexual people’s sexuality, including issues of power and consent (Bolak-Boratav & Çavdar, forthcoming).

In social psychology, the work of Göregenli easily stands out from the rest, as she prioritizes work that aims not only to understand social realities but also to transform them. She integrates her theoretical sophistication with a political sensitivity and is probably the best representative of political social psychology in Turkey. While some of her work is explicitly feminist, such as her research on legitimization of violence against women (Göregenli, 2009a), she also studies other urgent issues including torture of political activists, discrimination against gays and lesbians, militarism, and the Kurdish question. What sets her apart from most of the academics in social psychology is that she also takes an activist stance on these issues, works with NGOs, and contributes actively to the feminist journal and academy (Amargi) from a social psychological perspective. An essential theme of her work is the importance of coming to terms with differences across social-class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation as axes of possible oppression, and avoiding essentialist and

universalistic conceptualizations of womanhood. For example, she questions the usefulness of “consciousness raising” work among women, asking the question of to what extent sharing our “similarities” based on common experience of gender oppression can “equalize” the share of injustices that are experienced by “women who hire cleaning women and those women who clean these women’s houses” (Göregenli, 2009b). Interestingly, Göregenli (personal communication, February 20, 2010) states that the reason why the extent of her feminist contributions is less than she desires is not a matter of choice, but the heavy social psychological agenda in Turkey which demands her attention to various issues of current political concern.

Hence, some version of feminist psychology is carried out at universities, in clinical practice, and in NGOs. Feminist psychologists also come together in platforms such as the recently formed anti-homophobia platform of psychologists and psychiatrists. Although there is no unique division of women and gender within the Turkish Psychological Association, the bi-annual conferences provide an occasion for us to see each other. This year, for the first time, the conference hosted a panel on feminist psychotherapies. Last year, feminist psychology also had a chance to be represented at the First Multidisciplinary International Woman’s Conference (October 13–16, 2009). Interestingly, among more than 400 participants, only five were psychologists, and not all the contributions were from a feminist perspective! Although, as feminists, we were excited that such a conference was taking place, we were also disappointed that many of the presentations had the “add women and stir” feel, a reflection of a growing trend in Turkey.

A related and equally serious problem is the apparent proliferation in the granting of academic titles in women’s studies to those women who may not be found eligible for such appointments in their respective social science disciplines. These problems and issues relating to feminist epistemology and method constituted an important part of the agenda of a recent workshop “Feminist criticism in women’s studies” (June 5–6, 2010) which brought together a small group of feminist scholars and was the first such meeting after about 15 years. We shared our hopes to remain connected as a “community of feminist scholars” and to more actively assert ourselves as such both through our engagement with important issues of feminist concern and doing work that is publicly accessible and recognized.

Why Has a Self-Consciously Feminist Psychology Not Developed in Turkey?

It appears that, among the social science disciplines, psychology has been the least affected by feminism. The consensus among the few academic psychologists who responded to my survey was that one could not talk about a meaningful relationship between feminism and psychology, and that attempts have been at an individual level rather than a systematic one. Göregenli argues that the numbers of psychologists who have been influenced by the women’s movement and feminism are barely a handful.

The question of why a self-consciously feminist psychology has not developed in Turkey can be approached from several different angles. First of all, it is important to note that although there were very few undergraduate psychology programs in the 1970s, this number has increased exponentially since then, with most of the departments opening in the last 15 years. The current number is estimated to be over 50 as the popularity of psychology has increased, particularly over the last decade, and new departments are opening at a swift pace. Unfortunately, the numbers of graduate programs at the MA or the PhD level have not increased at the same pace. This means that only a small percentage of graduates have been able to receive a graduate education in Turkey, and even a smaller percentage have had access to graduate education abroad. Hence, we are talking about a relatively young academic discipline.

It is safe to say that some of the newly hired academics in the psychology programs have only recently returned from doing their PhD work in the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom, where they may have been exposed to feminist theorizing or activism. It may be a few more years before we see the impact of this exposure on their teaching, research, and applied work. It is telling that only five of the members of the online network of academic psychologists responded to my short survey regarding the relationship between feminism and psychology; two of them had recently returned from doing their PhDs in the USA and reported that they did not get introduced to a feminist perspective in their own undergraduate education in psychology in Turkey, but that they were themselves interested and thought it was important to connect feminism with psychology (Çelebi, personal communication, December 15, 2010; Kafescioğlu, personal communication, December 17, 2010). An industrial/organizational psychologist who has been developing a feminist interest in her work notes the biases in her field, such as studying work–family balance only with women, and overestimation of the effect of “sex” as an individual difference variable (Işık, personal communication, February 22, 2010). These responses are promising regarding the future of the discipline.

Another angle on why, historically, academic psychologists have not been interested in feminism may have to do with the structure of the professions in Turkey. We know that one explanation for the relatively early influence of feminism in psychology in the USA was female psychologists’ direct experience with sex discrimination in academia (Unger, 1998). It is likely that women in the professions in Turkey, including in psychology, have not had to deal with as much sexism as their counterparts in the USA. Noting that women’s opportunities for careers have been better in academia, medicine, and law, and pointing to the somewhat higher social class background of women in professions compared to men, Öncü (1981) makes the provocative argument that women’s entry into the professions is largely a function of social class inequalities, that women’s greater representation in professions can be explained by state policies of the Republic in favor of elite recruitment patterns. Rapid expansion of elite cadres with specialized and technical education would necessitate the recruitment of individuals from manual or peasant origins if upper- and middle-class women did not begin to enter professional schools. The recruitment of such elite cadres into the prestigious professions has been possible through

the education of women from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. According to Öncü, these women posed less of a threat to the system than the upwardly mobile men from more modest (manual, peasant) origins. Relatively less sex-typing of professions may have been one positive result of this elite recruitment pattern for women in Turkey.

The entry of women into professions was an essential aspect of the project of modernization. However, the particular ways in which women were incorporated into the professions and their subjective experience of this process tell another story. Based on the oral histories she did with the first generation of professional women who graduated in the late 1930s to early 1940s, Tüzel (2009) emphasizes the dual importance of both the Kemalist ideology and professional ideology for these women, and illustrates, by unpacking the complex relationships between professional practices and Kemalist practices, how the particular manifestation of patriarchy within the professions was deeply affected by the unique conditions of the early Republican period (p. 44). So, for example, women in medicine were more likely to be in pediatrics or gynecology, areas which were seen as natural extensions of their historically assigned responsibilities as nurses or midwives, and hence, gender appropriate, albeit less prestigious than the male-dominated area of surgery. At the same time, both the Kemalist ideology and professional ideology required “degendering” of women, which resulted in a conscious suppression by women of their feminine characteristics, coupled with an internalization of the sexist nature of the professions and a denouncement, despite all the inequality they experienced first hand, of any connection between the professions and gender relationships (Tüzel, 2009, p. 42). Interestingly, these professional women’s insistence that women should get themselves accepted not on account of their gender but by such “objective” criteria as hard work and competence still exists as a salient discourse among women in the professions.

At a more general level, the Republican ideology has not resulted in a change in the definition of women’s primary role in society in terms of her family roles as mother and wife, also glorified in religious discourse; in fact, educating women has been with a vision of enabling them to be more “informed or knowledgeable mothers” raising stronger and better quality generations of men/soldiers (Kancı & Altınay, 2007), who would, in turn, “protect” not just the national borders, but also women as the representative symbol of the nation and the culture. Hence, whereas a small group of elite women were encouraged to enter the public sphere, most other women were encouraged to contribute to the modernization project through their roles in the domestic sphere. Kadioğlu (1998) has noted that the same modernist men claiming certain rights for women also had a particular image of the ideal woman, namely, that she be “domesticated” and “affectionate.” As at that time Westernization was almost synonymous with sexuality, denouncement of female sexuality became a crucial aspect of the modernization project, with the balance between modernization and tradition protected through rendering women “asexual.” The result was the “modern but modest” woman of the Republic.

Kandiyoti, arguably the first Turkish feminist social psychologist, noted early in the 1980s that the changes in Turkey have left the most crucial areas of gender relations, such as the double standard of sexuality and a primarily domestic definition of the female role, essentially unchallenged (Kandiyoti, 1982). Later, in an attempt to unpack the situation of women in Turkey as “emancipated but not liberated,” she has argued how in Turkey, and more generally in the Middle East, corporate controls over female sexuality, sex-segregated networks of sociability with extensive informal support systems, and a life cycle involving a continued valuation of women’s nurturing roles combine to produce a specific experience of one’s gender.

Given this history of privileging women’s domestic roles and the force of patriarchal ideology, it is perhaps not surprising that issues of female sexuality and even violence against women have only recently become a research focus in Turkey. A recent study among the political elite who were in favor of the EU accession showed that gender equity and sexual liberalization continue to be the red lines in the discourse of democracy in Turkey (Cindoğlu, Akyüz, Bekaroğlu, & Boynukara, 2007). Whether conservative, liberal, social democrat, or Islamist, most participants had conservative values regarding women’s political participation, their sexual liberties, positive discrimination, public involvement with the private sphere, and gay and lesbian rights (p. 472). Conservative and anti-democratic relationship norms are particularly pervasive in the private sphere (Bora & Üstün, 2005).

The lack of a self-consciously feminist psychology may also be related to the trajectory of social psychological research in Turkey over time. Social change has been an important aspect of the cultural context within which psychology developed (Bolak-Boratav, 2004). The wide-scale social change starting in the late 1950s became a focus of researchers with an interdisciplinary orientation and would become the first area of interdisciplinary collaboration between psychologists and other social scientists (e.g., Kağıtçıbaşı, 1973). Changing family structure and dynamics, attitudes, and values, socialization and gender roles have been studied in relation to both internal migration fostered by urbanization and industrialization, and out emigration of workers to European countries, particularly Germany, starting in the 1960s. This strand of social-psychological research has continued to date in studies situating attitudes, values, and family practices in the context of social change (Bolak-Boratav, 1997a, 1997b, 2009; İmamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu, 1999; Sunar, 2002).

Over time, social psychology in Turkey seems to have increasingly lost its “social responsibility” focus. Feminist/critical social psychologist Göregenli notes that the discussions in the USA and Europe around the epistemology and socio-political responsibilities of social psychology have not had an impact on mainstream social psychology in Turkey, and that, in fact, the changes in the editorial priorities of the most reputable psychology journal *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi* (*Turkish Journal of Psychology*) since its start in 1978 can be read as an attempt to keep up with mainstream social psychology in the USA (Göregenli, 2007). A notable reduction in qualitative studies and in interdisciplinary approaches, along with a growing privileging of technical sophistication in language and a distancing from the social problems of the country, are cited as some reflections of this trend. The

rare pieces on social problems such as poverty, migration, torture, and violence have remained exceptions, not just in this journal, but in other publications of the Turkish Psychological Association as well. Göregenli's survey of the key words used in the articles published in *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi* between 1978 and 2006 revealed fewer than 20 gender-related keywords, including "woman," "sex," "sex roles," and only four counts of "sexism" (e.g. Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2002)! My review of the journal since 2006 revealed only two articles relating remotely to gender. The only obviously feminist-inspired articles in the other academic psychology journal *Türk Psikoloji Yazıları* (*Turkish Psychological Articles*) since my own review article on feminist psychology (Bolak-Boratav, 2001) have been two review articles, one on trauma related to sexual abuse (Zara-Page, 2004) and another on domestic violence (Zara-Page & İnce, 2008), and three articles relating ambivalent sexism to various social psychological variables (Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2003, 2006; Sakallı-Uğurlu & Ulu, 2003). The only other coverage of relevant material in the serial publications of the Turkish Psychological Association was a special focus on gender with five translated pieces on different topics related to gender in an issue of the *Türk Psikoloji Bülteni* (June 2005), a twice-yearly bulletin (*Turkish Psychological Bulletin*) which includes short discussions regarding current issues about the discipline and the profession.

There also appears to be a visible gate-keeping or resistance to change in mainstream academic psychology, led by what might be considered as the old guard; the increasing interest among the young scholars in critical perspectives makes this resistance more visible (Göregenli, personal communication, February 20, 2010). A recent overview of the attempts at critical and socially transformative work in psychology in Turkey makes the point that such work has remained very limited, but also draws attention to the danger that the development of an interest in theoretical positions such as postmodernism and social constructionism might serve to diffuse the political and transformative potential of critical psychology (Batur & Aslıtürk, 2006).

Growth of a Culturally Grounded Psychology in Turkey and the Case for a "Familial Self"

On the one hand, it appears that feminist criticism of androcentric psychology has not existed much within psychology in Turkey. On the other hand, an uncritical acceptance of psychological paradigms and tests that were developed in the "West" has been challenged, albeit by a minority (Vassaf, 1987). I remember being very indignant when hearing my social psychology professor Kağıtçıbaşı, currently a leading scholar in the cross-cultural field, problematizing the finding that Third World samples were more likely to score at lower levels of Kohlberg's scale of moral development. In fact, this sensitization to cross-cultural issues in the 1970s was a major reason for my attraction to Gilligan's criticism of Kohlberg in the early 1980s, as it stimulated my thinking about the parallels between cultural and sexist biases.

In the late 1970s, some social psychologists, such as Sampson (1977), began voicing criticisms of the dominant ideology of social psychology in the USA and its

narrow conception of self and subjectivity (e.g., Sampson's "self contained individualism"). This critique also resonated with some social psychologists in Turkey who began to look critically at psychological paradigms. For example, challenging the dichotomous and stereotypic classification of societies in terms of individualism-collectivism, Göregenli (1997) demonstrated empirically that among young people in Turkey, both tendencies can be found to co-exist. Likewise, some social psychologists began to assert the need for a more local or indigenous knowledge base to guide the development of theory, methodology, and effective practices.

A limited amount of culturally-informed theory development emerged, particularly in the areas of family and human development (Fişek, 1991; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990, 1996). Advocating the compatibility of indigenous and universalistic conceptualizations, Kağıtçıbaşı has made a strong plea for the use of "integrative approaches" by psychologists in the "majority world" (developing countries). A particularly well-received example of integrating indigenous psychological knowledge and culture-sensitive theorizing is her problematization of the conflation of autonomy with separateness, and her own conceptualization of the construct of the "autonomous-related self" and the possibility of "relational-agency" (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996). The implications of a very relatedness-oriented cultural context and a relationship-oriented "familial self" (Roland, 1988) typical of the traditional self in Turkey, for the relational process of therapy, have also been discussed (Fişek, 2010).

Very speculatively, the salience of the familial self may have also delayed the emergence in Turkey of not just feminist psychology but also other psychological/political paradigms that inscribe a discourse of "individualization," but this idea needs to be explored in other similarly relationship-oriented cultural contexts. The feminist notion that "personal is political" is less likely to take hold in a social geography where self and identity development including gendered selves are more contextually shaped compared to one where individualistic social norms predominate. Based on her theoretical work and clinical observations as well as some empirical research, Fişek (2002) argues that with education and rapid social change, the familial self moves in the direction of an "expanding self" (Roland, 1988). This has implications for changes in some aspects of the familial self, such as the facilitation of more autonomous developmental trajectories and personal choices for individuals, or what Fişek calls "individualized familial self." It is in this process of the development of the "expanding self" that individuals start asking the question "Who am I?", and develop a tendency to protect their personal autonomy vis a vis others. The few studies with young university students suggest indeed that the expanding familial self of this more "westernized" segment of the population may be between the traditional and the new. This trend in the direction of individualization may possibly be another factor that will facilitate the expansion of feminist psychology in the near future.

The Current Challenges for Women in Turkey

As elsewhere, women in Turkey negotiate their lives and construct their agency in the context of a system of opportunities and constraints and how they perceive

them. Currently, women are presented with many challenges that affect their representation in the public world. A report recently released that synthesized the findings of the previous reports on social inequalities in Turkey (Candaş, 2010) points to the continuing predicament of women as getting the short end of the stick in terms of socio-economic disparities as well as discrimination. For example, Turkey ranks 120th out of 123 countries in terms of women's labor force participation. Half of the young women between 15 and 19 are neither in school nor in the labor force! A major reason for the fall in women's labor force participation below 30% is the shrinking of the agricultural sector, where historically the female labor force was concentrated. Migration to the cities typically results in women's confinement to the home, leaving her altogether outside of the labor force.

On the one hand, Candaş (2010) argues that the exclusion of women from the labor force and their confinement to the home is compounded by the increasing conservatism in the society. On the other hand, discriminatory practices against head-scarved women (both secular and Islamist) has been pointed out as a major obstacle to women's presence in the labor force, especially in the professions (Cindoğlu, 2010). Arat (2010) draws attention to a more threatening development than the headscarf ban, pointing to the increasing "propagation of patriarchal religious values, sanctioning secondary roles for women through the public bureaucracy as well as through the educational system and civil society organizations" (p. 869). She makes a valid argument that the promotion of Islamist values may facilitate the spread of restrictive roles and life styles for women, serve to narrow their opportunities and choices, and make it increasingly more difficult for them to aspire to alternative means of self-fulfillment including roles in the public world. She points to the importance of an alliance between different forces in society that may be against the oppression of women towards the expansion of opportunities and autonomy for women outside the domestic sphere.

The Potential Role of Social Work Applications at Community Centers Towards Women's Empowerment

A discussion of feminist psychology in Turkey would be incomplete without addressing the potential role existing structures can play in their empowerment and individualization as social actors. It is in this context that social work applications carried out at community centers, catering to women and children in more disadvantaged urban neighborhoods which lack access to urban resources, are potentially important. With urbanization and socio-economic change, the psychological value of children goes up (Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005), and informed rearing and education of children become included among the important responsibilities of mothers, requiring an expansion of the public spaces that women have to negotiate. But, many obstacles ranging from lack of education and social status to social controls and the internalization of traditional gender roles that define women as wife and mother, rather than as an individual, prevent women's ability to function as active and engaged urban citizens.

A recent social work graduate thesis project conducted in three major community centers points to their importance as alternative public spaces that women can participate and socialize in (Dalyanoğlu, 2007). Started in 1993 as a project of the office of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency of the state, community centers offer various forms of preventive, educational, and rehabilitative services depending on local needs, and in collaboration with different state institutions, universities, and NGOs such as AÇEV (Mother Child Education Foundation) and Women for Women's Rights-New Ways (WWHR-New Ways). Dalyanoğlu's study found a positive relationship between regular participation at these centers and a higher level of interaction with bureaucratic, social, and cultural organizations of the urban space, which she explained as being due to the positive effect of such participation on their level of individualization and psycho-social development. Dalyanoğlu did point out the limitations of the existing services in terms of increasing woman's status in the family, and argued that it would take a service policy that is more explicitly feminist to effectively facilitate women's empowerment.

Conclusion

Among the social science disciplines in Turkey, psychology has been the least influenced by feminism. In this chapter, I discussed some reasons for this, including the relatively recent expansion of the discipline in terms of numbers of academic programs, the structure of the professions in Turkey in general which favored an elite recruitment pattern, the force of the Republican ideology which has failed to challenge a primarily familial definition of women's roles and a familial definition of "self" in general, the political propagation in the past decade of conservative religious values, as well as the changing priorities of social psychological research in Turkey away from a social issue focus. I also noted that some work that gets done outside of academia with the aim of facilitating women's empowerment also deserves attention in the context of women's situation in Turkey.

I am hopeful that the new generation of scholars will be more likely to have been sensitized to and interested in a feminist perspective. Indeed, there seems to be more openness and sensitivity among the young scholars and students in Turkey to feminism as well as to other critical perspectives. It is also safe to say that with increasing "individualization" in society, and psychological insights increasingly being called upon (and necessary, in my view), the future of feminist psychology in Turkey looks more promising.

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