

The Contemporary Debates on Conservative Family: The Case of the Istanbul Convention

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ABSTRACT: In 2011, 11 May, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence was signed in Istanbul and Turkey was the first country to sign the Convention which entered into force in 2014, August, by the initiatives of ruling government of Justice and Development Party. The Convention, which is the first binding document on violence against women and domestic violence in the international arena, redefines certain concepts such as woman, domestic violence, violence against woman and gender. This redefinition brought about certain legal amendments and the most prominent one was the No 6284 Law on Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women. While many feminist NGOs and groups, by drawing attention to the historical and traditional context of the violence, construe the convention as a step towards support and remedial the women's rights, and supported the Convention, for some conservative groups the Convention became the potent symbol attacks to family institution through the intervening years. Hence, during the writing process of this article, on March 22, 2021, Turkish Republic declared unilateral cancellation by a presidential decree. Yet still, the debates go on. This paper intends to analyze the arguments of conservative groups on the Convention.

KEYWORDS: Conservatism, feminism, family, the Istanbul Convention

Introduction

The world in the first quarter of the twenty-first century is tremendously different from what it was even a few decades ago. Societies, families, and individuals tackle the issue of change 'caught between yesterday's norms, today's new realities and an uncertain future.' (Skolnick & Skolnick 2009, 11)

"Among all the changes going on today, none are more important than those happening in our personal lives—in sexuality, emotional life, marriage and the family. There is a global revolution going on in how we think of ourselves and how we form ties and connections with others. It is a revolution advancing unevenly in different regions and cultures, with many resistances."(Giddens 2006, 247)

Says Giddens about the transformation of families and describe it as the "the most difficult and disturbing transformations of all" due to the unforeseen ratio of anxieties and disadvantages. In that sense, the debates on families are universal in variety of ways. Although there is a dramatic change of families in last several decades, there is no consensus on what the changes refer to. Furthermore, not only different disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history, archaeology, economics, genetics and so on touch on the familial issues, religious and ethical authorities also lay claims which turns family studies into an interdisciplinary, disputed, and contested area. Accordingly, the question of how to define a family becomes a stormy political issue.

In line with the rest of the world, the conservative family and women in Turkey have been symbolizing changing meanings for different groups depending on changing political contexts since the establishment of the Republic. These meanings have been attributed by second or third parties on behalf of the women themselves. However different from earlier decades, during the last few decades, women have been experiencing a transformation together with the rest of the society. This transformation engaged the women with the concepts of individuality, identity, objectification, secularism, and normalization which

directly affects the nature of the family. As a result of this process, approaching to the religious women as if a homogenous group is no longer possible. The diverseness of attitudes, worldviews and lifestyles precludes to mention the Muslim women as a united category.

As the world has been changing irreversibly, the family faced with myriad of challenges, yet in Turkey, these challenges were degraded to a matter of policy making and became a hot topic in which many parties take part in intellectuals, academia, and media. The critiques consolidated around the issue of the Istanbul Convention. This article intends to analyze both the pro and con arguments about the convention that also frame the historical trajectory of conservative movement in Turkey. While doing that, the arguments that takes place on media will be evaluated together with the views of the prominent figures among intellectuals and NGOs.

Conservative Thought on Family

For conservative thought, the society is an entity constituted by various institutions and norms and the most vital institution is family. The defective individual, to choose the right and wrong and to fulfill its psychological and physical needs in legitimate ways, requires the institutional support of the family. In that sense, family, as an indispensable value of the traditional society is currently experiencing a structural change and risk of dissolution which means the disappearance of the building block that holds the society as an organic unity and provides the order of the society. Hence, conservative thought approached all the transformations cautiously and protect the family institution in an absolute manner to protect the society from the potential risks they convey. (Özipek 2011, 93–94)

In addition to this, conservatism protect the society as opposed to the individual, religion as opposed to reason, morality as opposed to liberation and tradition as opposed to modernity. The secularization of religious practices and the recession of religious affiliations caused cultural and moral weakening that paved the way for the breakdown of traditional families, increasing divorce rates, illegitimacy and spread of adultery. Correspondingly, the society must face the future generations to raise with father absence, school failure, poverty, tendency to crime, drug use, unemployment, and antisocial behavior. According to conservative perspective, the adults' short-term personal desires, selfishness and policy supports deepen the social illnesses. The only remedies of ongoing problems, for conservatives are restoring family commitments with religious faith and re-institutionalizing marriage institution by revitalizing values. (Giele 2009, 76–97)

In Turkey, together with the electoral alliance of the Justice and Development Party and Nationalist Movement Party in 2018, the Islamist, conservative and nationalist electors united and that eventually paved the way for a contention between men and women in due course. Although the Convention was put in the action in 2014, these groups began to attack to the Convention with the claim of destroying the family. The groups that support assumed natural responsibilities and roles that imposed to women by men traditionally, found the Convention incongruous with the women's nature. As religion, morality and politics could easily intervene to the issues of womanhood, this transformation brought about by the convention impetuously targeted and criticized heavily by the conservative groups.

Women Demands Faced Off Tradition

In Turkey, women faced headscarf ban in public and education institutions and labeled as a threat to the secular nature of the state for more than four decades and the ban was lifted in the 2013 with strong support of men to women. However, unlike the mutual understanding on the issue of headscarf ban, the men could not foresee the forthcoming demands of the well-educated and working women which created one of the largest divisions among conservative

groups. Contradicting with men's support to the right to work and education of the veiled women, the contemporary demands of the women were perceived as the feminist demands and the signals of corruption. The Muslim women were situated in an unchangeable symbolic domain by the men, and this dynamic transformation of the women by producing their own cultural and ideological codes as equal societal actors as men were reacted against. This reaction became violent when the interests of the men and women began to collide in different spheres. As the world has been changing irreversibly, the family faced with myriad of challenges which were discussed and among the women NGOs and the crises of families aimed to be overcome through strengthening the women. However, what conservative men did was turn a deaf ear to the actual demands and problems of the youth and women by preferring comfort of criticizing the ongoing transformation instead of offering feasible suggestions. The critiques consolidated around the issue of the Istanbul Convention.

The Conservative Critiques on Convention

The concepts of gender equality and domestic violence created tensions among the conservative men. The term of domestic violence was binding for all people who live together under the same roof for any reason without obligation of being a family. Not only married couples, but all partnerships are subjects of the Convention. In addition to this, the Convention does not merely refer to family violence, but also includes out-of-home oppression to its scope. Which means, the Convention requires providing security for women not only at home but also at the public spaces. Although this item was translated into Turkish as '*aile içi şiddet*' (family violence), not the translation but the original manuscript is legally binding. Furthermore, the practices proved that the authorities tend to approach the issue as domestic violence.

This tendency became clear in the case of a popular singer who preferred charges of battery, physical coercion, and psychological violence against her partner. The Minister of the Family, Labor and Social Services called the singer and thanked to her for not staying silent against violence and stated that as ministry, they were determined to fight against victimization of women.(Ntv, n.d.) In a short while, the Ministry involved the case and as a result, the perpetrator was sentenced.

This support of the Minister was criticized heavily by the right-wing *Yeni Akit* newspaper writers. Bahadıroğlu claims that the Ministry of Family was established to protect the family, not to support those who wished to destroy it and adds that the family is the strongest institution of Turkey despite all these attacks. "If I were her, I would ask whether her husband beat him, and when I was replied 'not my husband but my boyfriend' I would hang up on her", he says and adds that, he was fed up with all these so-called artists to marry and divorce, change their partners constantly, extramarital lives, drug addictions, scandals, homosexuality, aesthetic surgeries, nakedness, ignorance, keep courts busy unnecessarily, living as if teasing the sacred values of the society.(Bahadıroğlu 2018) As a result, according to this group, the Convention is the part of a transcendent plan to destroy the moral values and ethics of the country.

According to Article 4, "...the victims shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status." (Council of Europe, n.d.) The term of sexual orientation in this article creates concerns about corruption of the future generations. While the only reference is about protection of victims without discrimination, according to conservatives, description of LGBT individuals as "humans" by the state presents a threat of degeneration.(Bergen 2019) Using the sexless term of partnership is another bothering issue for the conservatives who claim that

this term enables to regulation and liberty of LGBT individuals. “The approach that accepts homosexuality as a natural human right”, says Dilipak, “soon enough will accept gay marriage too”.(Dilipak 2019) Akan, by criticizing handling the issue of social gender equality as equality between men and women, claims that the fact of the matter is creating a misidentified and corrupt generation distant from ideology, politics, religion and tradition by collapsing the family (“Murat Akan: LGBT-İ Barış, Sevgi, Demokrasi, Özgürlük” ile Süslenerek Meşrulaştırılıyor” 2019)

The 6284 Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women is one of the most discussed issues about the Convention, which signifies the importance of the Convention in domestic law. For feminist groups, the laws are not enough to protect women and they do not correspond gender mainstreaming policies, which provide a basis for combating violence against women in the Convention, although there are some articles that underline equality of women and men (Ezgi 2014). Still, the conservative groups are harshly challenging this law and blame it for destroying families.

The conservative newspapers such as *Milli Gazete* and *Yeni Akit* give wide publicity to this article by labeling it as “oppression code” claiming that it oppresses families. Declarations of the conservative NGOs and prominent figures about the law were frequently published in these platforms. The ones who support the Convention were also published and criticized heavily even if they have sympathy for the ruling party. In that sense it could be said that the issue of women’s rights drew the lines of being a conservative free from political preferences. The code was blamed for destroying the nature of the women by claiming absolute equality between men and women. The critiques state that the Convention deviously damages the society by using the concepts of political participation of women, the oppression of women, the protection of women, freedom and equality as tools that sounds nice for them. Furthermore, statistical data of increasing divorces is used to demonstrate the fatal consequences of the legal arrangement.(“İstanbul Sözleşmesi aile bağlarını kopartıyor,” 2018)

Dilipak, going one step forward and claims that, everybody joins this “War Against Family” including United Nations, European Union, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Family, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Council of Higher Education, NGOs. Moreover, he adds, despite their divergences on other issues, all political parties make consensus about these disastrous laws. By reminding verses of the Qur’an about not to cooperate about wrongfulness and injustice yet goodness and *taqwa* (piousness), warns the government party about losing support in case of insistence on these policies.(Dilipak 2019)

The femicides in Turkey dramatically increased from 127 in 2011 to 143 in 2012, 229 in 2013, 289 in 2014, 293 in 2015, 284 in 2016, 349 in 2017, 402 in 2018, and 410 in 2019. According to feminist groups, in cases of carrying out the law against violence properly, it protects women, nevertheless in many cases women suffer from misapplication.(“Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu” n.d.) On the contrary, the conservative group blames the Law Nr:6284 for driving men mad by granting more rights to women.(Arslan 2017b) On account of the allegation that the law is prepared by the imported ideas ignoring the traditional Turkish family structure, it promotes the women murders.(Arslan 2018) “As a poor copy of the Western policies, this law is a dynamite placed into the homes that triggers family tragedies”, says Arslan, and states that this law ruptures the father from the home.(Arslan 2017a) This assertion stems a principle of “women’s testimony is fundamental”, which meant the greatest jeopardy for the conservative men.

The principle of “women’s testimony is fundamental” has been emerged as a feminist demand to protect the victims of the sexual assaults. As these assaults by its very nature takes place without witnesses or evidence, when the victims of this kind of attack apply to court, the accused generally tended to walk free due to failure of evidence. It should be added that, the sexual assaults that go unpunished because of sexist prejudices also includes marital rape. In order to prevent these situations, by paying regard to the position of the accusant, the courts

began to adopt this principle recently. This principle aimed to preclude women's victimization, is insufficient to protect women and paved the way for men's unjust suffering in case of abuse. This situation is regarded as the violation of the presumption of innocence, which imposes on the prosecution the obligation of proving the charge and guarantees that no guilt can be presumed until the charge has been proved beyond reasonable doubt, by the conservatives. Furthermore, the stories of the men victims are highlighted to criticize the law by making no reference to women's oppression.

According to the new Criminal Code, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and marital rape are heavily punished. However, it should be stated that, there is no consensus about how to refer to the principle of "women's testimony is fundamental" and it is not taken for granted in judgement. In Turkish criminal procedure, conscientious testimony system is adopted to which provides liberty to the judge and judicial discretion to apply to this principle in case of lack of evidence (Kırbaş Canikoğlu 2015). Despite its debated position, this principle is treated as the mainstream practice which considered as the calamity of the Law. "It is observed that 985 denuncements out of 1000 are slandering which ended up by removal of men from homes and still no women were accused for calumny" says Ramazan Tan, the vice president of BABA-DER and adds, "these laws imported from the West are vitiating the society"(Çağlar 2019).

The writers of this conservative group are in cahoots about the violation of men's rights through the Convention and the most fanatic advocator of men's rights is Sema Maraşlı who blame the Islamist women with demands as man-haters. In the Convention, the women NGOs are crucial actors to fight against violence and oppression, hence they should be efficiently supported and strengthened to raise awareness of the public. Maraşlı has been expressing severe criticisms to the NGOs found by the Islamist women and directly targets KADEM (Women and Democracy Association) which was established Sümeyye Erdoğan, the daughter of the President Erdoğan. Further, she wrote an open letter to the President about revisioning the laws on family and bring them into conformity with the societal norms. By claiming that the laws are the means of oppression and they were not based upon justice, but they intend to curry favor with the European Union and the enemies of religion and the state, she warns about the heavy price of liken a Muslim society to non-Muslim ones (Maraşlı, 2019).

Within the scope of the law, in order to take acute precautions in case of violence, the court can apply temporary debarment to men to protect women without asking for evidence. However, in case of trial, evidence is required to prove violence. Referring to this implementation, Maraşlı states that, "in this country, hundreds of thousands of men were thrown out of their homes unjustly by only a phone call of the women, without any evidence or document, despite they did not engage in violence but only scolded each other, on the pretext of psychological violence". Further, she adds, "if the husband wishes to make peace with his wife, he was imposed fine and sentenced to imprisonment... these sanctions are against the constitution laws, against human rights, against Islam already"("Sema Maraşlı'dan Cumhurbaşkanı Açık Mektup: Aileyle İlgili Kanunları Gözden Geçirin" 2018). She points out that the law paved way for women's terror and it is the greatest danger for the society because it is a gendered law that turn wives against their husbands; it is unjust; it legalize homosexuality; it destroys family; it names the men as violator; it initiates public prosecution to family disputes; it put the laws under women's order against men; it break up family of the youth; it enables Western countries to intervene our domestic policies (Maraşlı 2019).

From the perspective of this group, the violence against women has increased dramatically throughout these policies instead of decreasing it. By ignoring the high rates of oppression against women, they ask, why the policies protect the women from men but not the other way around. Accordingly, men began to use violence because of the indignation caused by these policies. These writers are supported by certain NGOs such as *Yedi Hilal Derneği* (The Association of Yedi Hilal) and *Türkiye Aile Meclisi* (Turkish Family

Assembly). Adem Çevik, the spokesmen of Turkish Family Assembly claims that the number of women homicides soared from 121 in pre-Conviction time to 400. In 5 years, he says, “1 million 973 thousand men have been removed from their homes in the last five years and this is a national security problem and a threat for the future of the country. When considered with their families, the number of 2 million means exposure of 5-6 million people which meant a disaster for the state economy. The prevention of the men from seeing their children paved the way for murders and led the children to use drugs.” By criticizing the Ministry of the Family harshly, he claims that the previous minister was unseated because she did not lend countenance to the feminist policies and the Convention, however, the current one does, and the ministry does not approach family institution as ‘family’ but intends to strengthen only the women. He says, “we should say ‘no’ to all kinds of violence and the gendered approach of the state is state violence. By immediately desisting from these feminist politics, he offers returning to national values and supporting motherhood”(Aşkın 2019).

Dignification of motherhood and condemning the women’s employment is another attitude of the conservative groups. Şevki Yılmaz offers “The Islam Convention” as the mere solution for humanity instead of “The Istanbul Convention”, that aims to destroy the family and the state by dethroning women from the dignity of motherhood and identifies the women employment program as the suicide of family. In order to protect the women from the traps of ‘independence and liberty’ he calls to the path of Qur’an and sunnah that prevents both kingdom of men and queenhood of women that stems from the illness of feminism. “The women’s employment at home is peace, richness and happiness till to the Heaven” he says (Ş. Yılmaz 2019).

This argument is adopted by the Women’s Branch Head of Felicity Party Ebru Asiltürk who reacts to the financial incentives to mothers in regard of separating the children from their mothers (Vefa 2019). “By this way, the mothers will be supported to leave their children to strangers which will eventually led to the emergence of a generation who were brought up lovelessly with a tendency to violence.” says Maraşlı. Adnan Kalkan , the head of *Aile Bilim Kültür ve Eğitim Derneği* (The Association of Family, Science, Culture and Education) adds, mothers grow up the future generations by being a role model, instead of working women, stay-at-home moms who are needy should be financially supported and motherhood should be motivated by the state policies (Bilir 2019).

In all these debates, Yusuf Kaplan, a prominent intellectual and academician of the conservatives gave support to the attacks against women’s NGOs by warning against the threat of homosexuality which aims to destroy the biological sexes. He claims that this devious virus first of all intends to destroy the family and then the sexes and the human beings and instead, the societies will turn into cyborg societies which are easier to rule. The postmodern third world women’s movement, by impelling women out of their homes, masculinized them and alienated them from their femininity by the promise of women rights over the issue of women’s bodies and liberty of sexuality, which eventually paved the way for the emergence of a third sex. In order to prevent the collapse of family, the last fortress of humanity, he stresses the importance of recalling the Istanbul Convention (Kaplan 2019). When he directly attacked to KADEM, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Family on social media, different parties began to take part in this discussion and numerous hashtags about family life and the moral values became trend topics and Kaplan began to gain support from the conservatives and prominent figures such as İhsan Şenocak, Abdurrahman Dilipak, Ahmet Şimşirgil and many others.

Responses to Critiques

The accused group did not stay silent to these accusations and began answering them in return. As direct addressee of the critiques, conservative women rights NGO KADEM refuses the

accusations about international funding and redefines feminist terminology from the conservative point of view. Instead of using the term of “social gender equality”, they introduce concept of “social gender justice” that pays regard to the biological differences between the sexes and demands by reference to religious doctrines. Declaring an open opposition to sexual deviance, she challenges the idea of associating the term of social gender with homosexuality. In terms of the Istanbul Convention, she claims that the unrivalled thing is not the Convention, but fighting with violence against women and it should be supported by legal arrangements (Okur Gümrukçuoğlu 2019). This approach can be considered as the common ground of this conservative group who also feel anxiety about the current issues of family institution yet deal with the issue in a broader perspective with multiple aspects instead of oversimplifying it through certain legal changes or institutions. The second-generation women of the Islamist women’s movement, such as, Cihan Aktaş, Fatma Barbarosoğlu, Ayşe Böhürler, Nazife Şişman, Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal who created a switch in 1990s stand behind this approach to a large extend. Unlike the first generation that emerged during the 1970s and created arguments against the secular system together with men, they intended to create a synthesis of tradition and modernity and began to criticize the men of the Islamist community severely. By utilizing feminist theory, they refused the patriarchal comments on women and subordination by men (Z. Yılmaz 2015). As a colleague from this generation, Ayşe Böhürler wrote:

“...For many years, I have seen that the religious women are fighting in two fronts, against seculars and against the bigot men in our own side and I realized that this war is still continuing... These accusations were not different from the ones that were prevalent 30-40 years ago. There was no Istanbul Convention, but the whole charges of ‘family is destroying’ were directed to us”(Böhürler 2019a).

Then she adds that discussing multilayered problems of family merely from the point of a certain NGO or a convention is ridiculous. Böhürler criticized the conservative community for being deaf to the women’s issues not only in Turkey, but all the countries she travelled and added that not even a single NGO was established in the countries that have the highest rates of violence against women. Because they approach women issue as concerns of leftist women imported from the West, they ignore high murder rates. A proper Muslim should only think of decreasing these horrible numbers of violence, if not, this means that this group finds the base for a political opposition and asks, why they make opposition to the political party through the women’s issues (Böhürler 2019b).

Another colleague İsmail Kılıçarslan also positioned against the Islamist men who are easily calling the tradition in case of women’s issues, despite their secular attitudes in financial issues. ‘It is the side effect of defining religion and religiosity as “a power domain” instead of “an exact way of life to live”, he says and adds that the easiest fierceness is the one that is enforced to the “mutes and defenseless”. He also comments that in today’s conditions, Turkish religious men hardly earn a living for their families without the financial support of their wives, and this is a quite modern situation. However, says Kılıçarslan, instead of facing this reality, when it comes to women, they refer to the most ancient and threadbare traditions under the name of religion because it is easier (Kılıçarslan 2019b). In terms of Kaplan’s critique, he tries to arbitrate and claims that both groups are actually on the same side about the crises of families whose problems stem fundamentally from secularism. He invites all groups to gather on this issue and began converse in correct way (Kılıçarslan 2019a).

In oppose these well-intentioned interpretations, Nihal Bengisu Karaca openly calls this attitude misogyny instead of hidden opposition to the ruling party and reminds hundreds of women who were killed because of the laws that does not find the principle of “women’s testimony is fundamental” adequate. She states that they are against all the good intentions and practices of the women NGOs just because the legal and social gains of the women put a spanner in the works of men (Karaca 2019). Yıldız Ramazanoğlu blames the men for not

seeing one step beyond while fighting against the ban on headscarf and claims that it was obvious the well-educated girls would take place in the public spaces and transform it with their demands. She asserts that estranging to families under the wheels of capitalism is prevalent for men more than women and it is ridiculous to stamp women as homewreckers while the father's devastating neglect is proven by statistical data. "The division of labor inside the house has no ontological reasoning and it is all about culture", she says and claims that fair relationships and foresight are not possible unless we survive from the illness of gendered domination (Ramazanoğlu 2018).

Looking from a broader historical perspective to men's positioning in families, Fatma Barbarosoğlu claims that the suffering of the family is not peculiar to last thirty years but its problems date back to Industrial Revolution and the most injured is the fatherhood institution which is replaced by the state. This is the origin of collision because in Islam, the religion settles fathers to protect the family and transfer values to the next generations. In this situation, interestingly the fathers handed over all familial responsibilities to women just like the Western men, she says, and this is the reaction to the women's changing career planning (Barbarosoğlu 2019c). She points out to the decrescent men identity in order to understand violence. Moreover, she warns about the effects of internet revolution which builds a new perception of time, place and culture while contravening the limits of privacy; and calls to consider about the outcomes of corroding social norms (Barbarosoğlu 2019a).

Barbarosoğlu points out to the role of conservative writers together with "YouTube preachers" that constantly teach how to be a good mother and father to children and how to protect their husbands from the hell, to the women and the men have no objection to this situation. "The men just want their wives to achieve these goals without money, and if needed, they want their wives to earn it; and once the women began working out of their homes, other men try to fix the Turkish family structure through giving seminars", she says (Barbarosoğlu 2019b). Another critique oriented towards the conservative wise men is their unreliableness about the women oppression. Although the women had a great deal of trouble, raise their voices, and worked too much to prevent violence, still, if the pressure of the social media and the society releases, the suspects began to be released and the men began finding excuses to the violence by blaming women. Ramazanoğlu, not only blames the conservative men, but also some group of women preachers and spokeswomen who even do not have time to go to their homes yet dehumanize working women in their seminars. These writers all warn about the conspiracy theories about international plans that aim to destroy the family and invite all parties to be realistic about the momentousness of the family issues and reconsider the role of tradition in case of gendered issues.

In addition to intra community prejudices, Karaca agrees with Böhürler in terms of battling on two fronts and expresses that she wished to see the support of feminist women, who were aware of the attacks that came from their own community, to KADEM by understanding how hard conditions the conservative women face during their struggle. Nonetheless, she says, "they loved the hidden possibility of critique against the President over KADEM and preferred to gloat over". This stand of feminist NGOs are also criticized by Hidayet Tuksal who wants to confront with and expects apology from the feminist movement. She claimed that, despite three-generations-long ban of headscarf in Turkey, the feminists did not manifest a solid opposition instead of a few reflections. Astonished at the espousal of modernist/Islamophobic recitations adamantly despite their hypercritical attitude, she realized that this progressivist minority group of women can only sustain their moral and material advantages throughout protecting a certain distance between themselves and the "reactionist", "conservative", "religious" segments. That is why, still today the conservative women do not trust to feminist movement who stayed silent during their hard times (Şefkatli Tuksal 2013).

Conclusion

The winner of the ongoing debates is the nationalist-conservative alliance of Justice and Development Party and Nationalist Movement Party. With the presidential decree published in the Official Gazette on March 20, 2021, it was decided to terminate the Convention for Turkey. Abrogation was criticized by feminist NGOs, conservative women's NGOs, opposition parties, foreign presidents, Council of Europe and many different groups inside and outside country. In the official statement made on 21 March 2021, the Presidency's Directorate of Communications claimed that the withdrawal was made in accordance with the 80th article of the contract. The government officials claimed that Turkish Legal System is the protector of the women's rights and a new legal arrangement, a domestic and national one, will be done for further protection.

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