Chapter 18

Women in Management in Turkey

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Introduction

The Republic of Turkey has 68 million inhabitants, and covers an area of 297,000 square miles. It is situated at the middle eastern part of the world, located mainly in Anatolia (west Asia) and partly in the Balkans (southeast Europe). The country has been a convenient bridge between east and west for all periods of history. The analysis of women in society and in management positions conveys the simultaneous influence of eastern and western cultures on the Turkish context.

Turks migrated to Anatolia in 10th century from central Asia and had frequent contact with Muslims, which facilitated their conversion to the Muslim faith. They established the Ottoman Empire in the 13th century, conquering and expanding into north Africa, east and central Europe and the Middle East. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the World War I, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turks won the War of Independence and established the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The new republic achieved a series of social, political, linguistic, and economic reforms that were led by Atatürk. These reforms had serious implications for the modernization and emancipation of Turkish women.

The series of reforms and Kemalist principles that were established by Atatürk, carried values of secularism, nationalism, and modernism and tried to incorporate westernization into society. Women were assigned an important part in this modernization project and their progress was interpreted as a significant measure of success in attaining modernity (Arat, 1999). Based on the new state ideology, the emancipation of women from their inferior role during the Ottoman Empire would go hand in hand with the development of the nation and westernization. On the other hand, the duality between secularism and religiousness and the patriarchal middle eastern values still exists in contemporary Turkish society.

The cornerstones of the emancipation of women in the Turkish Republic were widely distributed education, legislative and administrative reforms, political rights, public visibility, and professionalism. The impact of the reforms has been significant among middle- and upper-class families, while their influence has been only partial among lower socioeconomic groups and in rural areas.

Despite the significant attempts at the modernization of women, some conflicting and traditional roles are simultaneously present in Turkish society, even
among middle and upper classes as part of middle eastern culture. These traditional roles promote segregation of gender roles, the role of women as mothers and wives and traits that are considered to be feminine.

Labour force characteristics

In order to understand women’s labour in the Turkish context, it is necessary to categorize labour force as market vs. non-market labour (Özbay, 1994). In Turkey, women’s participation in agriculture as unpaid family labour is officially considered to be market labour. On the other hand, there is a large informal sector in Turkey and a sizable number of women are working in the informal sector that is not reflected as women’s market labour.

Census data, in Table 18.1, shows that in 1955, 83.7 per cent of the population over 12 years of age was economically active, while this ratio dropped to 60.7 per cent in 1990. The drop in the economically active population over the years can be explained by massive migration to urban areas where there are not enough job opportunities as paid workers. The economically active population rates for women were 72 per cent in 1955 and 42.8 per cent in 1990, and for men these rates were 95.3 per cent in 1955 and 78.3 per cent in 1990 (SIS, 1994). While census data after 1990 is missing, Household Labour Force Survey Results, which is a nationwide study conducted by the State Institute of Statistics, portray more recent findings regarding labour force participation based on gender for the post 1990 period (SIS, Household Labour Force Survey Results, 1989-1999). Table 18.2 reflects these more recent statistics, where women’s participation in labour force was 30.3 per cent in 1995 and 29.7 per cent in 1999, and these ratios were 70.2 per cent in 1995 and 68.3 per cent in 1999 for men. In 1995, 14.9 per cent of adult women in urban areas were economically active and this ratio increased slowly to 15.8 per cent in 1999. In rural areas, 48.4 per cent of women were economically active in 1995 and this ratio dropped to 47.6 per cent in 1999.

Table 18.1  Economically active population rate, 1955 and 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population over 12 years of age (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>95.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIS, Center for Population, 1994
Table 18.2 Participation in labour force (1995 and 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Turkey Women</th>
<th>Turkey Men</th>
<th>Urban Women</th>
<th>Urban Men</th>
<th>Rural Women</th>
<th>Rural Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIS, Household Labour Force Survey Results, 1989-1999 April

The labour market in Turkey experienced two major changes after 1955 (Özkar, 1994). First, as a consequence of massive mechanization in agriculture, there has been significant migration from rural to urban areas, leading to an increase in the urban labour force. Second, industrial and services sectors grew at high rates after the 1960s. As a result of these two trends, the agricultural labour force dropped significantly and the non-agricultural labour force portrayed an upward trend. Parallel with the fall in the agricultural labour force, the women’s percentage in the total labour force dropped from 43.1 per cent in 1955 to 35.0 per cent in 1990 (SIS, Center for Population, 1995 and 1990). Furthermore, the Household Labour Force Survey results revealed a declining trend in women’s participation in the labour force from 34.0 per cent in 1990 to 27.4 per cent in 1999.

Women’s share in the agricultural labour force was 53.3 per cent in 1955 and 55.0 per cent in 1990 and their share in non-agricultural labour force was 8.3 per cent in 1955 and moved up to 14.4 per cent in 1990. Moreover, women constituted 12.3 per cent and 13.8 per cent of industrial workers in 1955 and 1990, respectively, while these figures were 6 per cent and 14 per cent in the services sector for the two respective periods. Household Labour Force Survey results show that 56.8 per cent of economically active women were employed in the agricultural sector, 28.8 per cent were employed in the services sector, and 14.4 per cent were employed in the industry in the year 2000.

The above statistics show that the agricultural sector continues to be the main source of employment for Turkish women. The growth in the non-agricultural sectors was not able to absorb women who migrated to urban areas in a way to change the labour composition. In general, it can be concluded that a majority of women who are considered to be economically active, work as unpaid family workers in agriculture. In 1990 the SIS Population Census statistics showed that 74.8 per cent of economically active women work as unpaid family workers, while only 17.3 per cent of men work unpaid in the family.

Participation of both men and women in the labour force is high in rural areas. The majority of rural women work in agriculture and the number of women in agricultural workforce is higher than men. Participation of rural women in non-agricultural activities is limited. The most frequent non-agricultural participation takes place in weaving, while they earn very little in exchange for very hard work (Berik, 1987). It is also possible to see women engage in economic activities like cotton production, tea and hazel nut production (Özbay, 1982). Women usually
engage in these productions in their homes and do not generally demand higher wages as they combine several house duties with economic activities.

Urban women engage in various economic activities that are not reflected in formal market statistics, and there are few studies that investigate urban women's participation in these informal sectors. These studies show that waged domestic labour is very common among urban women from lower socio-economic groups (Zeytinoglu et al., 1997; Kalaycioglu and Rittersberger, 1998). These women are typically first or second-generation migrants, have little or no education, and work without social security or legal protection. Although they contribute, on average, 42 per cent of the total family income, they regard their self-contributions as only minor. Kalaycioglu and Rittersberger (1998) point to the commonality of this perception regarding female earnings in Turkey. Given the fact that women's earnings are mainly used for daily needs rather than investments and purchase of durable goods, they are perceived as unimportant and minor.

Another pilot study in a lower income rural area of Istanbul points to a high percentage of migrant women working in the informal sector (Ilkkaracan, 1998). In this study, 530 women were interviewed and it was found that 22.6 per cent were economically active while 69.2 per cent of the men in their families were working. Of those economically active women, 57.8 per cent were blue-collar workers in the textile and ready-made garments sectors. Moreover, 62 per cent of the working women were wage earners in a formal private company, while 27 per cent were working either at their home or at somebody else's home. Only one-third of these women were covered by the social security system and the rest were not registered as labourers. In addition, those women who were working at home were receiving very low wages (Ilkkaracan, 1998). Another study (Eyuboğlu et al., 1998) that included 5,646 women living in four major Turkish metropolises showed that 54 per cent of women who had work experience were employed without social security and only 6 per cent were union members.

Women who are from lower socio-economic groups and who have little or no education, usually work in adverse conditions. A study conducted in the ready-made garments sector showed that very few women have any social security, work under undesirable environmental conditions and have little work satisfaction (Eraydin, 1998). These conditions probably contributed towards the negative attitudes these women had towards work, as most women surveyed indicated that they preferred not to work (Eyuboğlu, Özar, and Tannöver, 1998). Furthermore, the majority of Turkish women prefer to stop working after they get married or give birth. In Ilkkaracan's (1998) study, 'family-related' reasons were cited most frequently as a reason for leaving work. These studies are in parallel with role perceptions and expectation regarding women's role in family and society as wives, mothers, and home care-takers. Society as well as women themselves, perceive women's main role as restricted to inside the house rather than participating in economic activities.

Parallel with the state ideology that promotes women's progress as part of the modernization project, the public sector employs significant numbers of women. In
the years 2000 and 2001, women constitute 33.1 per cent of labour employed in the public sector (KSSGM, ‘Women in Turkey’, 2001). Moreover, this relatively high percentage of women in this sector is significant, since they are covered by the social security system and have relatively more favourable working conditions, compared to those working in the public sector.

Wage differences based on gender

A nationwide study conducted in 1987 points to a large wage gap between men and women, where women receive as little as 60 per cent of men’s wages (Tan, Ecevit, and Üşür, 2000). Part of the reason for differences in the incomes of paid workers could derive from their concentration in different sectors (Tekeli, 1982). Turkish women are mainly concentrated in labour-intensive and low paying jobs, like textile and ready-made garments industries. In addition, the wage gap is likely to be a manifestation of the glass ceiling phenomenon, where women are concentrated at lower hierarchical levels in organizations.

It is interesting to note that the wage gap decreases as education level of employees increases. When wages of men and women with an elementary school diploma are compared, it is seen that women receive only 41.8 per cent of men’s wages (Tan, Ecevit, and Üşür, 2000). Among university graduates, women’s wages increase to 59.1 per cent of men’s wages. Therefore, while education helps in improving female wage, there is still a big gap based on gender.

A comparison of the wage gap between men and women in different sectors shows interesting findings regarding the prevalence of discrimination in different types of sectors and organizations. As seen in Table 18.3, women directors, entrepreneurs and managers earn nearly as much (95.6 per cent) as their male colleagues in the public sector. Although comparably lower, women managers’ wages are 84 per cent of men managers in the private sector. The wage gap increases among groups with lower education and in lower status jobs. The gap is biggest in the agricultural sector, where women receive 23 per cent and 40 per cent of men’s wages in the public and private sectors, respectively.

Other than in the agricultural sector, the wage gap between men and women increases in the private sector, particularly at large organizations with more than 20 employees. These statistics are striking in the sense that private sector organizations, which have more discretion regarding the levels of wages, discriminate significantly more against women in terms of their earnings.
Table 18.3  Women’s wages as percentage of men’s wages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Public Sector</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs/directors/upper level managers</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in agricultural sector</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific/technical/professional workers</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations having 10-19 employees</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations having more than 20 employees</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Planning Organization, 2000

Women pursuing education

Kemalist principles and state ideology that aims to improve women’s position in society has achieved some success in providing widespread education for Turkish women. Primary education is compulsory for both girls and boys; parents who do not send their children to school are liable to imprisonment. Primary education has been increased from 5 years to 8 years in 1997 and it is expected that the years of formal education received will increase for both girls and boys in the coming years.

In the early years of the republic, the rate of literacy was very low among women and throughout the years there has been a significant increase in the rate of literate women. In 1935, only 9.8 per cent of women and 29.4 per cent of men were literate, while in 1955 the literacy rate increased to 25.6 per cent for women and to 55.9 per cent for men and in 1990, 72.0 per cent of women and 88.8 per cent of men were literate (SIS, Population Census, 1935-1990). Furthermore, in 1999, combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratios were 55 per cent for women and 68 per cent for men (Human Development Report, 2001). In the same year, enrolment to universities was 3.7 per cent for women and 6.2 per cent for men (SIS, 1999) and women constituted 40.6 per cent of all students studying at Turkish universities (Gürtüz, 2001).

Despite the improvements in women’s education, there are a few points that need to be addressed. Although primary education is compulsory for both girls and boys, the discrepancy in the literacy and primary enrolment ratios of girls and boys show that laws are not always applied and more boys are sent to school. This is related to the dominant patriarchal values in society, which perceive women’s role as restricted to duties and roles at home rather than achievement in the public arena. When a family’s income is restricted, the scarce resource that is to be spent on sending children to school is likely to be allocated to boys rather than girls.

The influence of patriarchal values is observed in other aspects of education, such as the textbooks, curriculum, vocational schools, and area of subject choice at universities. There are studies that show that textbooks assigned at primary and secondary education are gender biased and portray women in the role of mothers and housewives and that a genderized curriculum was used in applied courses
where boys spent more time on creative subjects such as handcrafts and calligraphy and girls spent more time for sewing and home economics (Tan, 1979; Gök, 1990; Arat, 1994; Gümüşoğlu, 1998). Gender roles are particularly distinct at vocational schools, where girls are placed in schools that can be considered to be consistent with the traditional female role, such as home economics, child rearing and sewing, and boys are placed in schools that provide skills with a higher market value, such as electricians and carpenters.

Gender roles are apparent in university education as well, as there are distinct differences between the concentration areas of female and male students, where the ratio of female students in engineering is significantly lower compared to social sciences (Tan, 1979). In the 1999/2000 academic year, women constituted 57.8 per cent of university students in language and 55.2 per cent in arts, while their representation fell to 23 per cent in technical sciences (ÖSYM, Higher Education Statistics, 2000). These figures show that women students are concentrated in non-technical occupations. When more specific statistics regarding education in the management departments are considered, women made-up 35 per cent of all students in this area in 2000/2001 (ÖSYM, Higher Education Statistics, 2001).

**Women in management**

As part of the modernization project of the republic, professionalization of women was of significant importance. Beginning with the early years of the republic, middle- and upper-class families placed a high importance on the education of their daughters in highly prestigious professions. The percentage of women in high status professions can be considered to be a high ratio even in comparison to industrialized western societies. Considering some of the prestigious professions, 60 per cent of pharmacists, 19 per cent of physicians, 30 per cent of dentists, 34 per cent of lawyers, and 23 per cent of professors are women in Turkey (Koray, 1991; Gürüz, 2001). In general, there are 46 women per 100 men in scientific, technical and professional workers (SIS, 1990). Table 18.4 shows the percentage of women in professions.
Table 18.4 Percentage of employed population by occupation, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scientific, technical, professional workers</th>
<th>Admin., managerial and related workers</th>
<th>Clerical workers</th>
<th>Commercial and sales workers</th>
<th>Service Workers</th>
<th>Agriculture, forestry, fishermen, hunters</th>
<th>Non-agricultural production &amp; related, transport equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women per 100 men</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: SIS, Population Census, 1990*

The success of women in prestigious occupations is not reflected in the same proportions when decision-making positions are taken into account, with only 8 women per 100 men in administrative and managerial positions (SIS, 1990). While women are accepted into high skill and technical professions, when it comes to decision making for others, their representation drops sharply (Kabasakal, 1998; 1999). For example, Koray (1991) compared the rate of women in professions with their representation at the chamber boards of the professions and found that the rate of women at chamber boards fell to 20 per cent in pharmacy, 6 per cent in medicine, 9 per cent in dentistry, and 7 per cent in law. A similar trend is perceived in the education sector where women have high representation rates. Although women made up 44 per cent of the teachers employed by the Ministry of Education, only 7 per cent of school principles were women (Kadmınlar, 1990).

**Women managers in the public sector**

In the Turkish bureaucracy and public sector, women bureaucrats constituted 27.5 per cent of all supervisors, middle and upper level managers in 1996. As portrayed in Table 18.5, the representation of women at managerial ranks decreases sharply as one goes up the hierarchy from supervisory level to middle and upper levels. While women’s representation at supervisory levels was 37.1 per cent, it fell to 13 per cent for department heads, 7.6 per cent for general managers, and 2.1 per cent for general secretary of ministries.
Table 18.5 Women managers in the public sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Secretary of Ministries</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ass. General Secretary of Ministries</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Managers</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Heads</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory Levels</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of State Personnel, *Public Personnel Survey Results*, 1996

Table 18.6 Women in managerial positions in some occupations in the public sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Ambassador</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambassador</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor and Assistant Governor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Manager</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rector</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An analysis of the key managerial positions in the public sector reveals that women's representation in the higher levels of the public career ladder is rather low. Table 18.6 illustrates the percentage and number of women holding some managerial positions in the foreign affairs, public administration, and education sectors. At the level of ambassadors, there are 8 women out of 38 (21 per cent), while the ratio of women chief ambassadors decreases to 4.3 per cent. Women's representation in public administration is almost non-existent. There are no women assigned to the position of governors and assistant governors, whereas the percentage of women district managers is only 1 per cent. In the 79 public universities in Turkey, 9.8 per cent of all the deans are women while only 3.8 per cent of rectors are women.

*Women managers in the private sector*

Although there is no census data that portrays the percentage of Turkish women managers in the private sector, there are several small-scale studies, which shed light on the women managers' status in this sector. All of these studies point to the sharp decline in women's representation as one goes up the managerial hierarchy. A survey of manufacturing firms in the 1970s in a highly concentrated industrial
area showed that women constituted 25 per cent of all employees in these firms, while their ratio decreased to 14 per cent in middle management and to 4 per cent in top management positions (Özbaşar and Aksan, 1976). Later in the 1980s, Tabak’s (1989) study of the 500 largest manufacturing companies in Turkey showed that in the firms that employed more than 100 people, women made-up 17 per cent of all employees and 15 per cent of managers, whereas the ratio dropped to 3 per cent among top managers.

Women’s labour distribution shows that following the agricultural sector, the second highest concentration of women is in the services sector. Thus, one would expect that there would be a higher representation of women in upper levels of the hierarchy in the services sector compared to the industrial sector. However, this hypothesis was not supported by a study conducted in the banking and insurance sectors (Kabasakal, Boyacıgiller, and Erden, 1994). This investigation included more than half of the banks and insurance companies operating in Turkey and showed that women constituted 43 per cent of all employees in these firms, yet their representation in middle management was 26 per cent, and in top management fell to 4 per cent.

Glass ceiling phenomenon

National and pilot studies show that women’s representation in managerial positions is low in respect of their numbers as employees. There is a sharp decline in women’s percentages as one goes up the managerial hierarchy in both public and private sectors. The number of women in senior executive positions is particularly low, pointing to the existence of the glass-ceiling phenomenon. In the public sector, only 7.6 per cent of general managers and 2.1 per cent of general secretaries of ministries are women. Several studies conducted in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s point to the fact that the percentage of women senior executives does not surpass 4 per cent in the private sector. Although not comparable, these statistics imply that there has been no increase in the percentage of senior management positions filled by women during these three decades.

When one analyses the representation of women managers at general assemblies of prominent chambers, it is seen that women constitute 8 per cent of the members in the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and 0.6 per cent in TUSIAD (Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association). There are no women represented on the boards of directors of these two institutions. Considering the fact that these associations have influential power over the government for shaping economic policies and sectoral strategies, it is significant that firms appoint their male managers as their representatives in these strategically important organizations.

Based on a comparison of women’s representation at senior management positions as opposed to other prestigious professions, it is seen that women’s high numbers in professional occupations significantly diminishes at key managerial positions. The more strategic the position becomes, the lower the representation of
women, such as in key political positions, senior administrative positions in public offices, boards of chambers, and senior executive positions in profit-oriented private organizations.

**Women in politics**

Turkey was the first Islamic country to grant women the right to vote and to be voted. Women were given political rights in the 1930s – the right to vote and to run in municipal elections in 1930, and in national elections in 1934. Turkish women were granted these rights much earlier than their counterparts in many western countries. On the other hand, parallel with the above argument that women are uncommon in positions that are related to making macro decisions, the proportion of women elected to the Turkish parliament in 1999 was only 4 per cent (‘Women in Statistics’, 1927-1992, SIS). When the history of parliament is considered, the highest number of women was reached in the first parliament (4.6 per cent) but was as low as 0.6 per cent in 1950. In politics women have mainly been of symbolic importance and only in periods when the emphasis on modernization and westernization was stronger, women’s representation in politics increased (although not in a way that would threaten male dominance) (Güneş-Ayata, 1994).

Women parliamentarians in Turkey carry mainly an ‘elite’ background (Tekeli, 1982; Arat, 1984, 1989). Probably because of their elite status, rather than promoting women’s rights, they were involved in non-female areas such as modernity, nationalism, and westernization (Güneş-Ayata, 1994). The elite background is also common amongst women ministers who took posts in cabinets. The first women minister was assigned in 1971 and until 1999, a total of 20 women ministers assumed a post in Turkish cabinets. There are no women presidents in the history of the republic yet, whereas there is only one prime-minister, T. Çiller, who served in this post in the mid 1990s.

The representation of women in local politics follows a parallel picture to national politics. Only a symbolic number of elected posts in local elections were granted to women. In 1999, only 5.5 per cent of mayors and 1.6 per cent of municipality commission members were women (Higher Election Committee, 1999).

**The socio-cultural context: gender roles**

Turkish society is simultaneously characterized by traditionalism versus modernity, religiousness versus secularism, and eastern versus western values. These dynamics create role conflicts and identity crisis on the part of professional women. Professional women face the issue of satisfying the sex-role stereotypes that are prevalent in society and the role of a professional woman.

Based on GLOBE data, including 61 countries, Kabasakal and Bodur (2002) compared the cultural practices and norms that are prevalent in the Turkish-Arabic cluster with other nine clusters in the world. The cluster including Turkey, Egypt,
Morocco, Qatar, and Kuwait is found to be significantly higher in gender inequality and is characterized by highly masculine practices and norms compared to other country clusters in the world. The dominant masculine practices in these Islamic middle eastern societies may partly be explained by verses of the Koran. It can also be argued that the masculine middle eastern cultures promote a more masculine emergence and interpretation of the Islam religion (Kabasakal and Dastrmalchian, 2001; Kabasakal and Bedur, 2002). Thus, Turkish women professionals are operating in a highly masculine society that shares masculine practices and values, yet at the same time the dominant Kemalist ideology of the Turkish state is promoting a more western and modern status for women in society. As a result of the westernization and modernization project of the state, there are relatively high percentages of women in highly prestigious professions, like medicine, law, pharmaceuticals, or academics. On the other hand, it is not possible to see a high percentage of women at executive and decision-making positions, including senior managerial positions, as members of parliament, or as entrepreneurs. It is most likely that the sharp differences in gender roles and dominant sex role stereotypes in society, serve as barriers for women to assume roles that require use of power and influence on others.

Gürbüz (1988) analysed the pervasive sex-role stereotypes and social desirability of these traits in Turkish society. She found that six socially desirable characteristics – ambitious, analytical, enterprising, forceful, insisting on one’s rights, and risk taker – and three socially undesirable characteristics – dominant, jealous, and autonomous – were identified as masculine. Four socially desirable characteristics – loves children, dependent, elegant, and thrifty, – and five socially undesirable characteristics – submissive, cowardly, weak, insecure, and naïve – were identified as feminine characteristics. This study indicates that femininity in Turkish society is associated more with negative attributes and with passivity. Thus, the concept of a relatively negative and passive femininity is likely to be incompatible with managerial roles.

A study conducted among business administration senior students at a prominent Turkish university, highlights the perceived incompatibility between the traits associated with femininity and management (Türk-Smith, 1991). In this study, students were provided with a sex-role inventory and were asked to evaluate the characteristics of an ideal manager, an ideal female, an ideal male, an ideal female manager, and an ideal male manager based on this inventory. Findings show that characteristics of a manager were perceived to be compatible with characteristics of an ideal male and an ideal male manager. On the other hand, characteristics of both an ideal female and an ideal female manager were perceived to be dissimilar in all the other categories. There was not even a perceived compatibility between an ideal female and ideal female manager, pointing to a severe identity crisis for women in managerial positions.

As part of the conflicting roles of women professionals, the role of mother and wife conflicts with career roles. A 1992 study compared twenty female and twenty male Turkish white-collar workers and found that marriage had a negative effect
on women’s careers (Kabasakal, 1998, 1999). In this study, 50 per cent of women indicated that marriage had an adverse impact on their careers, while not a single man indicated so. Furthermore, 75 per cent of women indicated that being a mother affected their careers negatively, while only 5 per cent of men pointed to a negative influence of being a father on their work life. Similar findings were reported by Aycan’s recent study (2002) which also suggested that men had more negative attitudes towards women in management (i.e., believing that they are not suitable for managerial jobs) due to women’s family-related roles and responsibilities.

For Turkish women in managerial and highly prestigious professions, the conflicting roles of wife, mother, and career result in these women having different dynamics compared to women in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs or to other career women in more developed countries. Turkish women in high status jobs and who come from a privileged background, are in a more advantageous position in reconciling the conflicting demands of their career and home duties by delegating the housework and child-rearing responsibilities to low-paid domestics (Öncü, 1979). Given the fact that wages paid to domestics in developing countries are relatively low, professional women with a high socio-economic background can easily employ at least one domestic at home. In addition, Turkish society is characterized by high levels of family collectivism (Kabasakal and Bodur, 1998), where there is high interdependence between members of larger family members, and it is common practice that grandmothers and aunts take on part of the housework and child-rearing responsibilities for career women in the family.

Studies on the characteristics of the few women who were able to move into senior managerial positions, show that senior women managers come from a privileged background (Kabasakal, 1998, 1999; Arbak, Kabasakal, Katinli, Timurcan day and Zeytinoglu, 1998). It is likely that the elite background of women helps in overcoming the lower status associated with femaleness and provides the prestige that is required for execution of power and influence in executive positions (Kabasakal, 1998a, 1998b).

**Women entrepreneurs**

As can be seen in Table 18.7, in 1990 only 0.2 per cent of economically active women were in the position of employer and 7.3 per cent were self-employed. When the percentage of women among all entrepreneurs is considered, there are only 7 women employers per 100 men employers, and 13 self-employed women per 100 men in this category. These statistics show a negligible amount of women engage in entrepreneurial activities.
Table 18.7 Percentage of employed population by employment status, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Self-employed</th>
<th>Unpaid family worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women per 100 men</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the fact that women are not able to find paid jobs as much as their male counterparts, it would be expected that they would engage more in starting a new venture, which would provide them the opportunity to work in exchange for economic gain. Studies conducted in the industrialised Western countries show that a significant number of women have engaged in entrepreneurial activities as a reaction to the barriers they faced in organisations (Davidson and Cooper, 1993). On the other hand, entrepreneurship is a rare activity among Turkish women. Among all types of labour, entrepreneurship seems to be the category with the lowest representation among Turkish women.

The low levels of entrepreneurship among women may be related to the dominant patriarchal relationships in society and family. Because women's main role is perceived as being restricted to inside the house, many entrepreneurial activities that family members engage in are considered to be under the ownership of men. Berik's (1990) study on weaving activities show that women conduct the weaving operations at home and male members of the family engage in selling the carpets at market and receiving the money. Thus, even when women engage in entrepreneurial activities, they are restricted to production indoors, whereas men deal with outside relationships.

A study carried out on 220 women entrepreneurs in the capital city, Ankara, showed that entrepreneurship entails serious difficulties for women (Özgen and Ufuk, 2000). Although most of the women (88.6 per cent) perceived themselves as successful entrepreneurs, 87.7 per cent stated that they experienced stress related to work and family matters. Moreover, 71.4 per cent of women entrepreneurs in the sample experienced conflict between their entrepreneurial roles and family roles as wife, mother, and housewife; and faced difficulties in balancing their work and family lives. In another study on 463 dual-career family members with preschool children, Aycan and Eskin (2000) found that women experienced significantly more work-family conflict compared to men.

While the number of women entrepreneurs is negligible and pilot studies point to the difficulty of reconciling their entrepreneurial roles with family roles, some Turkish women entrepreneurs have achieved great success economically. As an example, the United Nations European Commission of Economics included nine Turkish women in their list of outstanding women entrepreneurs in the world (www.unece.org). A qualitative analysis of information that was released by the
media about these women points to the fact that most of them come from an elite background, are highly educated and graduated from prestigious universities.

**Country legislation supporting women in the workforce**

One of the targets of the modernization and westernization project based on Kemalist principles and the new republic was offering free, widespread education at all levels for both girls and boys. Parallel with this mission, primary school education was made mandatory for both sexes in 1923. As a consequence of this application, the education level of both sexes, and particularly of females improved drastically. Another cornerstone of the reforms was related to family structure. The Swiss Civil Code, which included the Family Law, was adopted in 1926. The new Family Law abolished polygamy, granted women the right to choose their spouses and initiate divorce, and recognized women as equals of men in legal areas, such as witnesses in courts and maintaining property. To serve the purpose of improving women’s place in the public arena, women were granted the right to vote and be elected in municipal elections in 1930 and in national elections in 1934.

In addition to the laws that influence the general status of women in society, there are two sets of laws that cover the employment-related issues of individuals in Turkish society (Zeytinoglu et al., 2001): the Constitution and the Labour Law.

According to the latest Turkish Constitution, which was accepted in 1982, all individuals are equal before the law, irrespective of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, belief, religion and sect, or any such consideration. It also states that state organizations and authorities shall act in compliance with the principle of equality in all proceedings. Under the Constitution, every individual has the right and duty to work and no one shall be required to perform work unsuitable for her/his age, sex or capacity. Minors, women, and persons with disabilities shall enjoy special protection with regard to working conditions. Every individual had the right to work in the public service and no criteria other than merit, shall be taken into consideration for employment in the public sector. The employment related laws are, in general, gender-neutral in their wordings in most articles, yet there are few articles that are discriminatory against women.

According to the Labour Law, there is a restriction to the employment of women in underground and underwater work, night work and dangerous or heavy work. This work in general is higher paid, and although it could be argued that this legislation discriminates against women, it has not been challenged in Turkish courts. With some exceptions, women are not allowed to work in industrial night work. The night work restriction limits women’s employment in high paying jobs such as mineral exploration and extraction, manufacturing and processing, construction, energy and gas generation operations (Zeytinoglu et al., 2001). Thus, although these articles in the Labour Law aim to protect women from adverse conditions, they lead to discriminatory practices.
The understanding of 'equal pay for equal work' has been accepted since 1950. However (as previously discussed), there is a big gap between men and women's pay in practice. The ratio of female to male earned income is estimated to be 0.45 (HDR, 2001), pointing to the fact that, in general, women's income is less than half of men's income. In addition to outright discrimination, other possible explanations of the wage gap are likely to be women's lower education, their concentration in lower paying sectors and their lower hierarchical level. Thus, it can be argued that laws have not been completely successful in promoting the status of women in employment.

Initiatives supporting women in the workforce

In order to understand if private and public organizations in Turkey apply any policies to enhance the status of their women employees, interviews with managers of two management consulting firms were conducted by the authors. These two consulting firms have a wide customer-base and provide services in human resources applications. As reported by the interviewed managers, no firm among their customers was identified as providing any initiatives to enhance the status of women in management.

On the other hand, there were some initiatives by public offices that were targeted at improving economic value of women's labour in the free market. In 1990, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security established the Directorate of Women's Status and Problems with the aim of coordinating and initiating research projects, training programmes, pilot projects, research, and publications that were likely to improve women's status in economic activities and society. In 1993, the Directorate of Women's Status and Problems, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, started the National Programme for Supporting Women's Contribution to Economic Development. This programme included sixteen research projects, many training programmes, and a database about women's labour. Furthermore, among the pilot projects at local level, one included the establishment of a sales centre targeted at marketing the home-made food products produced by women at home and another, the establishment of a weaving workshop where women could use the weaving facilities to be later sold in the market.

Another example of support for women's labour and entrepreneurship by public organizations is the extension of a special bank credit targeted at women entrepreneurs. In 1993, Halkbank, which is a public bank, offered credit with relatively lower interest rates to women, with the purpose of motivating entrepreneurship.

In addition to the efforts of some public offices to support women's economic contribution, another area where there is a need to support women is politics. Like other organizations and companies, political parties do not engage in any organizational initiatives to promote women's representation in the national
assembly, nor in municipality elections. On the other hand, KADER (Association for Training and Supporting Women Candidates) was established in the late 1990s as an NGO (non-governmental organization) by a few elite women with the purpose of increasing women's participation in politics. KADER's activities include training women candidates and voters, lobbying, and getting media coverage.

The future

The Turkish Republic, founded in 1923 by Kemal Atatürk, has a strong state ideology that promotes westernization and modernization of society. The new republic achieved a series of reforms, which has serious implications for modernization and the emancipation of Turkish women.

Kemalist principles have been successful to a significant degree, particularly among middle and upper income groups in urban areas, while their influence had been limited among lower socioeconomic groups and in rural areas.

The Turkish state achieved significant success in providing social and political rights, and widespread education for Turkish women. The laws of the republic recognize women as equal to men in major legal areas and women were granted the right to vote and be elected in the 1930s.

The employment related laws are, in general, gender-neutral in their wording in most articles, yet there are a few articles that are discriminatory against women. Primary education has been compulsory for both girls and boys, and as a result, the literacy rate of women has increased drastically, although there is still some gap between the education levels of women and men.

Despite significant reforms and improvements in their status, the participation of women in economic life seems to be concentrated in unpaid family work, including agriculture or home-based production. When paid work is considered, women seem to be heavily concentrated in low-paid, labour intensive sectors, such as the textile or food processing sectors. In addition, women seem to be frequently employed in the informal sector, such as domestics or cooks, where these jobs do not provide any social security. Women's lowest contribution to economic life seems to be in entrepreneurship, as the number of women entrepreneurs in society is negligible. There is a big wage gap between men and women particularly in the private sector, while women's wages come close to the wages of their male counterparts in the public sector.

Contrary to the disadvantageous position of women in general, women with middle and upper socioeconomic backgrounds enjoy high levels of participation in high status professions, such as pharmacology, medicine, law, and academia. The number of women in high status professions can be considered to be a high ratio even in comparison to many developed western societies. In addition, in line with the state principles, the public sector provides significant employment
opportunities for women in both unskilled and skilled jobs. Furthermore, the wage gap seems narrower in the public sector compared to private organizations.

While the number of women in prestigious professions is relatively high, women’s representation in executive and decision-making posts are scarce. The number of women in parliament, boards of chambers, and senior executive positions in both public offices and private companies is very low. The existence of the glass-ceiling phenomenon seems to be a reality for Turkish women.

Despite the attempts at modernization, Turkish society is characterized by masculine middle eastern values and practices (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002). Modern and traditional roles are simultaneously present in Turkish society, even among middle and upper classes. Traditional values promote segregation of gender roles, the role of women as mothers and wives and traits that are considered to be feminine. The dominant sex-role stereotypes associate femininity with characteristics that are considered to be negative and passive, whereas masculinity is perceived to be more positive and active (Gürbüz, 1988). The attributes associated with femininity and managerial roles seem to be in conflict with each other, posing an identity crisis for women in management (Türk-Smith, 1991).

Those few women who are able to get promoted to decision-making and power positions as executives seem to come from privileged backgrounds (Kabasakal, 1998, 1999). Furthermore, the few women entrepreneurs who were elected as being outstanding in their performance, also come from an elite background. It can be argued that the prestigious background of these women provides them the necessary status needed to be accepted for powerful decision-making positions.

Looking into the future, in order to improve the status of women in all segments of society, there is a need to improve their education level and close the gap between the two sexes in terms of their education. While primary education is mandatory for both girls and boys, the Turkish state needs to strictly enforce this legislation on families, particularly in the case of girls. It is expected that the increase in primary education from 5 to 8 years will significantly improve the education level in society, yet there are discussions in society and among politicians about the possibility of further increasing primary education to 11 years.

In general, laws that influence the general status and employment related issues of women are gender-neutral. On the other hand, there are a few articles in the Labour Law that lead to discriminatory practices and the Turkish parliament needs to remove these articles. Furthermore, CBOs (community based organizations) and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) can be more proactive in providing training to unskilled women that would help them in improving the market value of their labour. CBOs and NGOs can focus on training women in starting their small businesses, which would aid in improving the employment status of women as well as contribute to the growth rate in the economy in general.
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