

WOMEN IN TURKEY OF THE 21ST CENTURY AND THE PARADOX OF POLITICS: NON-IDEOLOGICAL PARTY OF WOMEN

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-Abstract-

This study defines the characteristics of the “Non-Ideological Party of Women” and presents the findings of the field study. Based on data obtained, we propose solutions to overcome the paradoxical situation of the women in politics in the 21st century. The concept of the “Non-Ideological Party of Women” was first developed within the context of this research project, which was supported by the Dokuz Eylül University Scientific Research Office and published. The concept points out the collective movement of women that support different ideologies as well as the support of men to the party. Besides, we evaluate the importance and the future of the Non-Ideological Party of Women in political life.

Key Words: *Women, Women’s Party, Democracy, Elections*

JEL Classification: K16, K19, Z00

1. INTRODUCTION

Women during the Ottoman period proved their capabilities in defending the country with their active involvement in the First World War. With the formation of the Turkish Republic in the post-war era, they gained their social, political and economic rights. It was first during the National Independence War that women started to be active in Turkish political life. Within this context, the party program and manifesto of the “Women People’s Party” was submitted by Nezihe Muhittin to the government in June 1923 (Negiz & Üçer, 2012: 3). Once the government did not approve

the foundation of the party, Nezihe Muhittin and her colleagues founded the “Turkish Women Association” in 1924. The association aimed to solve not only the political problems of the Turkish women but also their social and economic ones (Okuducu, 2014: 788).

1930 local elections were the first elections that women’s suffrage was introduced. During the elections, both the Republican People’s Party and the Free Republican Party nominated women candidates (İnönü, 1996: 188). Although the Free Republican Party was dissolved in a short time, women served as municipal council members. Women’s suffrage for the parliamentary elections were introduced in 1934. In 1935 general elections, 18 of the 395 deputies were female and the share of women in the legislature was 4%. However, women deputies took part in commissions that dealt with issues, such as children, family, education and health. In this sense, during the single-party period, women deputies could not develop political skills and were mainly concerned with women affairs (Arat, 1998: 255-257).

From 1935 to 2009, only 236 female deputies as opposed to 8794 male deputies were elected to the parliament (Ertan, 2012: 46-48). With the transition to multiparty regime, various attempts to form women’s party could not turn into viable political actors (Coşkun, 1995: 302). Male-dominant political system that lacked democratic, transparent and participatory candidate selection methods posed a challenge to the representation of the women. It is a misconception to explain underrepresentation of women in political life with reference to their reluctance to engage in politics. It seems impossible for women to be represented adequately as long as they do not take active part in social life. The depoliticization attempts since the last 30 years especially hit the women and the youth. Mistakes in the education systems avoids women to develop self-confidence, question the order and engage in male-dominated political arena. Formation of gender equality commissions in the parliament and increasing functions of these commissions is one of the proposals to solve the problem of women underrepresentation (Gülmez, 2012: 58-59).

2.WHAT SHOULD BE THE DISTINCTIVE METHODS OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL STRUGGLE?

Effective involvement in political life depends on the methods to be developed. Women’s state of mind is evident covertly in habits that are vital

for the survival of civilizations. Although it remains in subconscious and is not translated into action, this state of mind finds its expression in words (Bergson, 2013: 247-248). The important point is maintaining social development through the efforts of both male and female. Either in primitive or modern societies, neglecting the role of women is equal to neglecting the society itself. For centuries, women struggled to take part in public sphere, especially in politics. However, compared to men, the struggle of the women has not been supported by the society (Cott, 1887:28-29).

Struggle of women in political life should be considered with the Western concept of “human rights”(Harris, 2015:60) that is associated with concepts, such as rule of law, legal rights of individuals and equal treatment (Fukuyama, 2014: 23). The concept of human rights neglect gender discrimination and assume the existence of ideal women. The following characteristics of women are stated for effective women struggles (Aydinli, 2013: 106): a perfect body for struggling when needed; the capacity to understand and perceive; a strong memory; high intelligence; receptivity; intelligible speaking; love in learning; disinterest in material wealth; being just and working for justice; and, determination. We believe that these characteristics, which may be available for both men and women, are required for “strong politics”.

3. BEING SIMILAR TO MEN IN POLITICS? SOCIAL BALANCE WITH DIFFERENCES?

Gender discrimination is one of the most important types of discrimination in societies. Existing studies suggest that strong dynamics of the social structure depends on a strong political system and government that removes inequalities in “power relations” (Aulette & Wittner, 2012: 3). It has been expressed that the individuals should determine their values and prefer a lifestyle based on his/her values and that the deformation of the human nature due to the obstacles created by the traditions is the primary challenge for free decisions of the individuals (Silier, 2013: 412).

When the role of women in politics is considered, in addition to the gender-based statements, the issues that are targeted from the perspective of the social gender are tried to be stated in the right context (Dökmen, 2012: 17-18). Today, “women and politics” and “women and authority” (Malala, 2015:35-36) are considered as fundamentally distinct concepts. What makes

the women unrelated with the terms of power, authority or political activity? Different theories provide different explanations to this question. According to the political socialization theory, as a consequence of the direction of males and females to different interests from their childhood, men acquire the active decision-making role whereas women are attained a passive, dependent and secondary role during their socialization (Koray, 1996: 13-14). For Lawson and Barton (Wedel, 2013: 38), “women constitute the majority in active political participation. Household issues, which are essential for ‘social reproduction’ are within the domain of women; men are socially dependent on women within this context and this context is socially sensitive. Furthermore, activities of women within the household context are acceptable by the husbands...”. Rather than being similar to men, women should take active part in politics with their unique characteristics.

4. AMBIVALENT AND PARADOXICAL SITUATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE

The paradoxical situation of women in politics is not unique to Turkey, but widespread across the world. Regarding the issue, Lenin tells that without free and active involvement of women in not only political life but also the public services, neither socialism nor a democratic order can be maintained. Besides, Lenin reminds that women, who carry the burden of the society by providing services, including aids to patients or taking care of the abandoned children, are not equal with men in using their rights. Therefore, Lenin concludes, women should be able to use their rights in real life (Marx & Engels, 2014: 130). Regardless their ideology, political rights cannot be won without having equal rights for women.

Social gender is the expectation of the society from individuals from different sexes about their proper roles and behaviors. Social gender is not related with the physical differences between men and women but is about the socially constructed roles and characteristics assigned by the society to men and women (Bayhan, 2013: 154-155). In terms of social gender, the relationship between women and language is considered as a reflection of the socially constructed gender roles (Ünüvar, 2012: 114-115). As long as women are able to speak on behalf of themselves and their demands, they may engage in active political life. Kristeva states that “regardless of the dominant discourse, the suppressed women’s language will find a way for expression” and adds that women should challenge the existing meanings

that are considered as unchangeable rather than constructing a new language (Ülker, 2012: 146-148).

In addition to taking care of the family members, women are required to pay attention to the demands of the family elders. This role is one of the factors that restricts the women into the private sphere. Women invest emotional labor in the family. Politics is only for the women that could gain access to public sphere (Giddens, 2013:280-282). In terms of social gender, the role and duties of men about their families are less than women. By emphasizing the cooperative, non-hierarchical and non-aggressive style that is attributed to women, activities that can increase consciousness levels may be increased (Toprak, 2009:210).

Identity politics is a response to the question of “who are we?”. (McGuire, 2010:70) Expressions of the identity politics in the second-wave feminism are various. Identity can be re-constructed around various principles, including social gender. Critiques of identity politics claim that identity politics miniaturize the human dimension of the individuals by overemphasizing the group membership and intensify identity differences and conflicts by adopting an exclusionary conception of identity (for example, the relationship between the feminists and the patriarchal religious fundamentalists (Heywood, 2013: 233). Inactive position of women in the society leads them to face with paradoxes in the political life.

Based on the explanations above, we conducted a field study in Izmir in 2016 on the members of the women branches of the Justice and Development Party (AK Parti), Republican People’s Party (CHP) and Nationalist Action Party (MHP) in order to find out whether the formation of a “Non-Ideological Party of Women” is required for the expression of the women. Findings of the field study are presented below.

5. FIELD STUDY ON “NON-IDEOLOGICAL PARTY OF WOMEN” THAT WAS CONDUCTED ON THE PARTICIPANTS FROM WOMEN BRANCHES OF THE AK PARTI, CHP AND MHP WOMEN BRANCHES IN IZMIR

5.1. Aim

The party of women in Turkey has been a subject of debate that came to the agenda in 1923 and intensified with the transition to multiparty regime. However, the women parties that have been formed centered around the

problems of the women and remained similar to the women branches of the conventional political parties. If the women parties are not supported by men and if they continue to overemphasize “women problems”, they will not be able to overcome the vicious cycle. In the struggle for women rights and freedom, ideologies have failed to solve the problems of women in public and private spheres. Due to these reasons, women parties have remained short-lived.

The primary aim of this study is to find out whether the formation of a “Non-Ideological Party of Women” is a solution to overcome the underrepresentation of women in political life. Non-Ideological Party of Women refers to a political party that may be formed by women of all ideologies and supported by men in order to maintain collective action to solve women problems. The term ‘non-ideological’ does not mean that party members will not have any ideological beliefs; rather it refers to the possibility of collective action of women from various ideologies under a single political party in order to solve political, social and economic problems of women. Whatever their ideologies are, women may cooperate in order to solve their common problems in public and private spheres. We assume that women’s common problems may not be solved by ideologies but by developing rhetoric and activities. Hence, we assess whether there is a need for a Non-Ideological Party of Women that approaches the problems of women underrepresentation and inefficient in the parliament from a common perspective without prioritizing any particular ideology.

5.2. Importance

This research, which aims to propose solutions to the underrepresentation of Turkish women within the context of the Non-Ideological Party of Women, may provide data and guidance for the researchers, politicians and women associations that are interested in the subject of political participation of women. Besides, the study investigates to what extent that the perception that “politics is within men’s domain” holds true from a scientific perspective.

The concept of ‘Non-Ideological Party of Women’ is suggested as a novel concept for political science. This is the first research that assesses whether the concept may be useful for providing a solution to the problem of underrepresentation and ineffectiveness of women in politics. The study describes the characteristics of this novel concept and provides empirical

data on the concept. In this sense, the study makes contributions to the relevant literature.

5.3. Research Method

This field study was conducted with the participation of 159 female members of the provincial and district women branches

of the AK Parti, MHP and CHP in Izmir and its districts. The field research aimed to provide data about the necessity and possible activities of a 'Non-Ideological Party of Women', the possible place of the party in the process of policy-making, the possible impact of the party on women awareness, women underrepresentation in the parliament and solutions to other problems of women and the possibility of the development of a discourse within the party.

5.4. Data Analysis

We used survey method in order to find out the role of the Non-Ideological Party of Women in increasing representation and effectiveness of women in the parliament. Data obtained from the survey on 159 participants was analyzed by using the SPSS 11 statistical package program.

6.FINDINGS

We obtained the following data by conducting survey on 159 members of the women branches of the AK Parti, CHP and MHP that are located in Izmir.

6.1. Descriptive Findings on the Participants

Table 1: Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Participants

Age								
Range	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	Total		
Freq.	13	37	52	48	9	159		
%	6,2	17,7	24,9	23	4,3	100		
Marital Status								
Range	Single	M.	Divorced	Total				
Freq.	29	99	31	159				
%	13,9	47,4	14,8	100				
Education								
Range	PrimSch.	Sec.Sch.	High Sch.	Bach. Degree	Grad. Degr	Total		
Freq.	6	12	57	69	15	159		
%	2,9	5,7	27,3	33	7,2	100		
Income								
Range	0-1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001-5000	5000+	Total	
Freq.	4	8	15	38	55	39	159	
%	1,9	3,8	7,2	18,2	26,3	18,7	100	
Number of Children								
Range	0	1	2	3	4	5+	Total	
Freq.	34	28	54	33	7	3	159	
%	16,3	13,4	25,8	15,8	3,3	1,4	100	
Profession								
Range	H.W	Teacher	Self-employed	Retired	Lawyer	Engineer	Other (private sector, finance, nurse, tourism and studen)	Total
Freq.	34	19	10	26	10	5	55	159
%	16,3	9,1	4,8	12,4	4,8	2,4	26,3	100

Table 1 shows the responses of the participants on demographic questions, such as age, marital status, education level, income, number of children and profession, in order to reveal the impact of these factors over the participation of women in politics. Accordingly, the age of the 159 participants that took part in this study ranged between 18 and 56. 47.4% of the participants were married, 14.8% were divorced and 13.9 were married. Education levels of the participants ranged between primary school and graduate degrees. Income levels of the participants ranged between the groups of 0-100 TL and 5000TL and above. The number of children ranged between 0 and 5 and above. The highest percentage of the number of children was for the participants with two children (25.8%) whereas the lowest percentage was for the participants with 5 or more children (1.4%). The professions of the participants also varied.

The analysis of the demographic characteristics of the participants show that the Non-Ideological Party of Women was mostly supported by the married women between the ages of 36 and 45 and with children. Single women did not support the formation of such a party. As income and education levels increased, the support for a possible Non-Ideological Party of Women increased. Finally, women with profession had higher support to the party initiative.

7. FINDINGS ON THE FORMATION OF THE NON-IDEOLOGICAL PARTY OF WOMEN

7.1. Factor Analysis

Based on the results of factor analysis, we collected the questions under one factor. This factor explained nearly 74% of the total variance. Based on the answers to the questionnaire, we found that the questionnaire was a reliable one.

7.2. Hypotheses

Based on the answers of the participants, we used mean and standard deviation values for each question in the factor. We developed the following six hypotheses in our research:

H1a: Age of the participants have an impact on the answers of the participants on the Non-Ideological Party of Women.

H1b: Marital status of the participants have an impact on the answers of the participants on the Non-Ideological Party of Women

H1c: Number of children of the participants have an impact on the answers of the participants on the Non-Ideological Party of Women.

H1d: Education levels of the participants have an impact on the answers of the participants on the Non-Ideological Party of Women.

H1e: Professions of the participants have an impact on the answers of the participants on the Non-Ideological Party of Women.

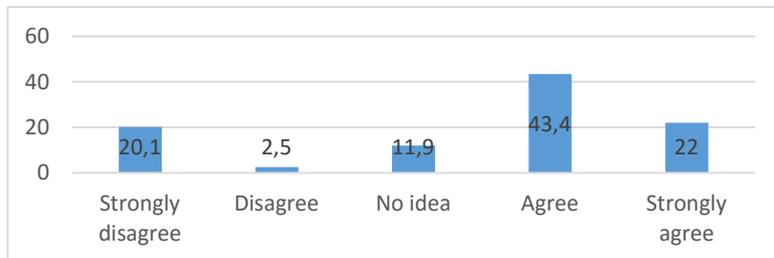
H1f: Income levels of the participants have an impact on the answers of the participants on the Non-Ideological Party of Women.

We used ANOVA analysis to test these hypotheses. Based on the analysis, we found that only the marital status had an impact on the answers of the participants regarding the Non-Ideological Party of Women. it was only the marital status (0,13) that had Sig. value above 0,05. Consequently, all the hypotheses other than H1b are rejected.

7.3. Evaluations of the Participants about the Formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women

The following figures deals with the answers of the participants about the formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women.

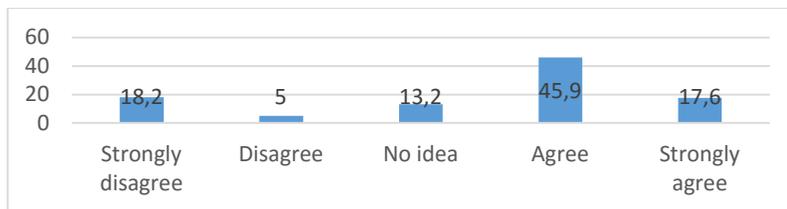
Figure 1: Opinions of the Participants on the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women for solving Women Problems



Source: prepared by author.

Figure 1 illustrates that 20.1% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement that the Non-Ideological Party of Women can solve women's problems. The percentages of the answers that disagreed, agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that the Non-Ideological Party of Women can solve women's problems are 2.5%, 43.4% and 22%, respectively. On the other hand, 11.9% of the participants did have no idea about the statement. In this sense, 87% of the participants believed that Non-Ideological Party of Women may bring the problems of women into the agenda and solve these problems.

Figure 2: Opinions of the Participants on the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on Women Awareness in the Parliament



Source: prepared by author.

Figure 2 shows that 18.2% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement that the Non-Ideological Party of Women may increase women awareness in the parliament. The percentages of the answers that disagreed, agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that the Non-Ideological Party of Women may increase women awareness in the parliament are 5%, 45.9%, and 17.6%, respectively. On the other hand, 13.2% of the participants did not have any idea about the statement. Based on these, we may conclude that 77% of the participants were in the idea that women awareness may increase if the Non-Ideological Party of Women takes place in the parliament.

Figure 3: Opinions of the Participants about the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on Women's Active Political Involvement

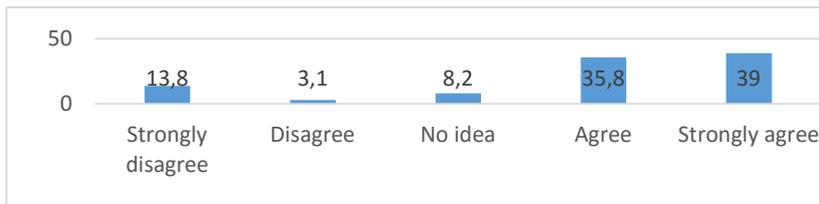


Source: prepared by author.

Figure 3 illustrates that 18.9% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement that women may take active part in political life if the Non-Ideological Party of Women is formed whereas 4.4% of the participants disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, the percentages of the participants that agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that women may take active part in political life if the Non-Ideological Party of Women is formed were 40.3% and 18.2%, respectively. Finally, 18.2% of the

participants stated that they had no idea on the statement. In this sense, 76% of the participants believed that formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women may have an impact on women's active involvement in political life.

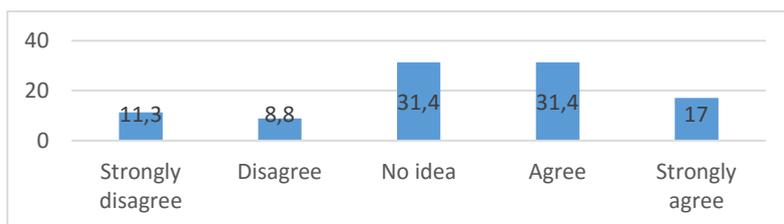
Figure 4: Opinions of the Participants on the Cooperation between Men and Women in the Non-Ideological Party of Women



Source: prepared by author.

Figure 4 illustrates that 13.8% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement that men and women should work together in the Non-Ideological Party of Women whereas 3.1% were opposed to the statement. On the other hand, the percentage of the participants that agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that men and women should work together in the party were 35.8% and 39%, respectively. 8.2% of the respondents did not have any ideas on the statement. In this sense, 83% of the respondents were in favor of cooperation between men and women in the Non-Ideological Party of Women.

Figure 5: Opinions of the Participants on the Potential Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on Women Representation in the Parliament

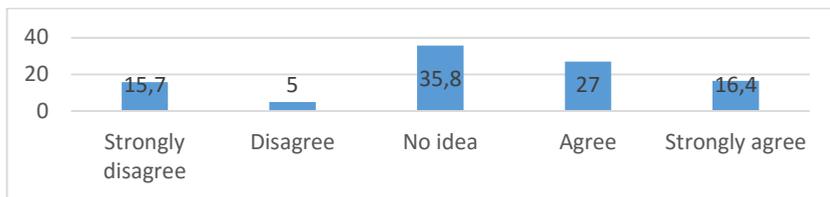


Source: prepared by author.

Figure 5 shows that 11.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that the Non-Ideological Party of Women may increase women

representation in the parliament, whereas 8.8% opposed to the statement. In contrast, 31.4% of the respondents stated that they agreed with the statement and 17% expressed that they strongly agreed with the statement on the impact of the party on women representation in the parliament. Finally, 31.4% of the participants expressed that they had no idea on the statement. In this sense, 79% of the respondents believed that the formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women may increase women representation in the parliament.

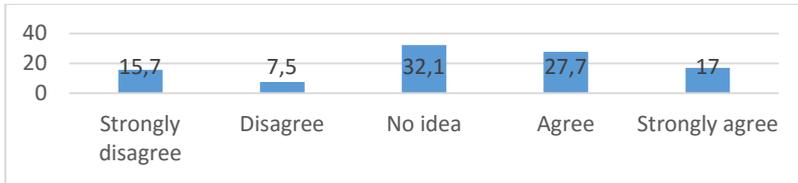
Figure 6: Opinions of the Participants about the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on the Country's Problems



Source: prepared by author.

Figure 6 shows the opinions of the respondents about the statement that the formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women may provide solutions to both the women's and the country's problems. The percentage of the respondents that strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement were 15.7% and 5%, respectively. On the other hand, 27% of the participants stated that they agreed with the statement whereas the percentage of the respondents that strongly agreed with the statement was 16.35%. finally, 35.8% of the respondents had no idea on the possible impact of the formation of the party on the country's problems. Given the high rate of no-idea response to the statement, we may conclude that the respondents had doubts about the possible impact of the Non-Ideological Part of Women for the country. Only 34% of the participants believed that the party may solve both the women's and the country's problems.

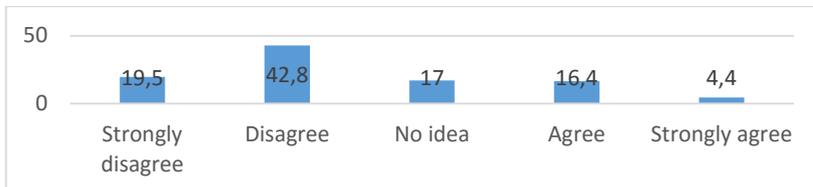
Figure 7: Opinions of the Participants about the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on the Seats held by Women in the Parliament



Source: prepared by author.

Figure 7 illustrates the opinions of the participants about the statement that the formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women may increase the seats held by the women in the parliament. Accordingly, the percentage of the respondents who strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement were 15.7% and 7.5%, respectively. On the other hand, 27.7% of the participants stated that they agreed with the statement whereas the percentage of those that strongly agreed was 17%. 32.1% of the participants had no idea about the possible impact of the party on the number of seats held by the women deputies, indicating a considerable doubt. It is only 45% of the participants that believed that the formation of the party may lead to an increase in the number of seats held by the women deputies.

Figure 8: Opinions of the Participants about the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on the Effectiveness of Women Deputies in the Parliament

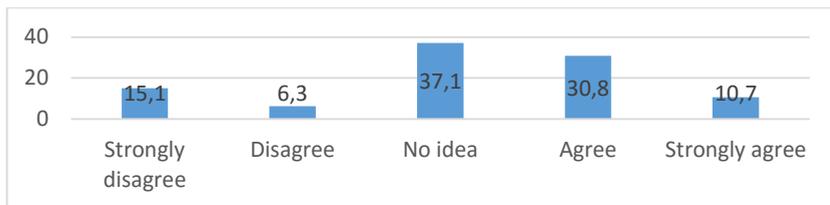


Source: prepared by author.

Figure 8 shows the opinions of the respondents about the statement that the formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women may increase the effectiveness of the women deputies in the parliament. The percentages of the respondents that strongly disagreed and disagreed were 19.5% and 42.8%, respectively. On the other hand, the percentages of the respondents that agreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 16.4% and 4.4%. Besides, 17% of the participants reported no opinion on the impact of the

party on effectiveness of the women deputies in the parliament. In this sense, 80% of the respondents believed that the Non-Ideological Party of Women may lead to an increase in the number of women deputies but may not positively influence the effectiveness of the women deputies.

Figure 9: Opinions of the Participants about the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on the Development of Women’s Own Discourse



Source: prepared by author.

Figure 9 illustrates the opinions of the respondents regarding the statement that the formation of the Non-Ideological Party of Women may lead to the development of the women’s own discourse. 15.1% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement whereas the percentage of the respondents that disagreed were 6.3%. In contrast, the percentages of the respondents that agreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 30.8% and 10.7%, respectively. Finally, 37.1% of the participants had no idea about the statement on the relationship between the party and the development of women discourse. The high percentage of the no-idea response indicates the women’s doubts about the development of women discourse in a patriarchal society. 42% of the participants believed that the Non-Ideological Party of Women may help women to increase awareness and develop a discourse of their own.

Figure 10: Opinions of the Participants about the Impact of the Non-Ideological Party of Women on Other Parties in terms of Candidate Selection and Representation



Source: prepared by author.

Figure 10 illustrates the opinions of the respondents about the statement that the Non-Ideological Party of Women may constitute an example for other parties in terms of nomination of women candidates and women representation. Accordingly, the percentages of the respondents that strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement were 11.3% and 11.9%, respectively. In contrast, the percentages of the participants that agreed and strongly agreed with the statement were 34% and 15.7%., 27% of the participants expressed that they had no opinion about the impact of the party on other parties. In this sense, 77% of the participants believed that the Non-Ideological Party of Women may constitute an example for other parties in terms of nomination of women candidates and women representation in the parliament.

8. CONCLUSION

This project, which was prepared to reveal the paradoxes between women and politics in the Turkey of the 21st century, aimed to propose solutions to the question of how the Turkish women may become effective in political life and the struggle for political rights. Within this context, we proposed a new concept, entitled “Non-Ideological Party of Women”. We investigated the reasons behind the failure of the previous women parties in Turkey and proposed a roadmap for a new party of women. Non-Ideological Party of Women is defined as a party that aims to exactly define the women’s problems and that includes women from all ideologies in order to propose solutions to these problems. The term ‘non-ideological’, refers to a platform of women from all ideologies rather than ideologyless women. The uniting point for the women with different ideologies will be the development of practical solutions to women’s problems.

The responses of the participants from the women branches of the three main Turkish parties in Izmir showed that the Non-Ideological Party of Women, in which men and women cooperated, may define women’s problems, propose accurate solutions, increase women awareness and representation in the parliament, have positive impact on active involvement of women in political life, effectively solve the women’s problems, increase the number of women deputies in the parliament, help the women to develop their own discourse, and constitute an example to other parties in terms of women representation. However, the participants had doubts about

the potential of the party to maintain the effectiveness of women deputies and to solve the country's general problems.

The points that are important for raising awareness on women and politics should be determined in order to solve the problems of women in politics and to remove the paradoxical situations in the Turkey of the 21st century. Paradoxically, although it is generally acknowledged that women should actively engage in politics, women cannot find their proper place in terms of representation in the political parties and the parliament. The Non-Ideological Party of Women that we proposed in this study is required in order to maintain the active involvement of women in political life. The solution proposals may include the followings: educational activities to raise awareness about the fact that politics is not the domain of men and that women may be successful as men in politics; debates on socially constructed gender roles; increasing the number of seats held by the female deputies; increasing the effectiveness of female deputies; constantly emphasizing the fact that family has an important effect on the involvement of women in politics; promoting ideal families that enable women to engage in politics; transforming the parliament from a patriarchal parliament to an assembly in which gender inequalities disappear; promoting intraparty democracy within political parties that will challenge male discourse; removing male-biased attitude in candidate nominations so that practices such as quotas and positive discrimination are no longer required; and, maintaining safe seats for women in candidate lists.

A possible initiative of the Non-Ideological Party of Women is important since it may increase awareness in politics; maintain cooperation between men and women; construct a new discourse and style; propose applicable solutions for women's problems; cooperate with other parties for the solutions; overcome the previous experiences of the women parties that did not provide room for cooperation between men and women; enable women from different ideologies to engage in collective action; maintain a platform that will enable discussions with men about gender-bias in politics; increase effective participation of women in determination of public policies and decision-making mechanisms; overcome the socio-economic limits in increasing political participation of women; sustaining efforts to include women in political mechanisms; revealing the women's political tendencies in an objective manner; and explaining the important place held by women in the society.

Such a party may remove the obstacles for women in politics together with men; have the capacity to develop independent policies to increase awareness, increase the number of stakeholders, maintain cooperation of men and women in policy-making on an equal basis; change the traditional image of women to an image that is based on division of labor based on gender; change the perceptions and about the role and place of women in politics and political culture; overcome the biases about gender equality; help women in their struggles in social life; maintain self-esteem for women; maintain a development in which some of the women in politics act as models for other women; promote programs that will increase active involvement of women in politics and boost public opinion; and, contribute to the development of a democratic culture by promoting active positions for women in political life. Inability of women to engage in political affairs is a serious challenge for the consolidation of democracy in a country.

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