

A RESEARCH ON THE STATUS OF THE WOMAN FIGURE IN THE TURKISH POLITICAL ADVERTISING HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

For centuries, womens' place in social life has been a constant topic of discussion for the men. While the issues such as how women dressed, what and when they did or what they could not do, what their boundaries would be occupied the agenda; the status of women in the political arena has been a great mystery. Taking part in political advertising of the women, who gained political rights after several challenging processes in almost every country, was realized after a long process. In Turkey where political advertising began to germinate with the transition to multi-party life in 1950, advertising activities accelerated in order to both aspire the women's votes and include them into the political life. In the study, after explaining how women in Turkey and leading countries in the world had gained their political rights, the discourses in political advertising towards women in the case of Turkey were examined, and it was tried to found out the place of women in political advertising and how the discourses towards women were formed.

Keywords: *Political advertising, feminism, elections, womens' rights.*

INTRODUCTION

In almost every country of the world, women's struggle in order to gain social rights as well as participate in the political life reached a conclusion after great challenges, long processes, and discussions. Women reached their political and social rights after long-standing struggles, however during that time, as stated by Dahlerup, they were asked, "to be socially invisible" (Koray, 1991: 1, Baykal, 1970: 63). The economic and political developments that first emerged in the Western Europe in the 18th century led to a number of changes in the status of women as well. The industrial revolution, in particular, allowed women to participate in the working areas outside their traditional roles in the family, in other words, directly in the production of the country. This led to women's entering the working life and undertaking some new responsibilities, and as a result, demanding new social rights. Starting from the beginning of the 19th century, the women's place in the society, the position of a woman as an individual and a citizen began to be discussed intensively; and especially the political rights acquisition struggles launched by the British women at the end of the 19th century reached their

peak in the early 20th century. In many countries of the world, the women first started to benefit from the voting rights equal with men and after World War I, then this trend continued after World War II. However, it is observed in our country, as in many countries, that the right of the women to elect and to be elected that was secured before the law has not been able to be realized in the daily life.

In many countries, the women have fought for rights they demanded in the political sphere for nearly 200 years. The origin of the struggle goes back to 1789 when the women first went to the scene as masses to request their political rights (Say, 1998: 4, Tekeli, 1982: 69). The French Revolution held in 1789, which is the most democratic revolution according to many researchers, brought together the commitment for all people to be free, equal and brothers. Indeed, with the revolution in France, a number of improvements were observed in the social and political rights of women. For example, women in France have begun to issue newspapers, founded political clubs, and even fought in the army of the Republic. However, the human rights declaration brought by the revolution did not take the women in, for the majority of the philosophers who drafted the declaration at the level of thought did not

consider the women's having a say on their behalf necessary, and instead, they took fathers' or husbands' having a say on behalf of the women as natural. For example, Rousseau, one of the philosophers who drafted the declaration commented, "Women should be a creature that gives pleasure to men" and Moliere "The only mission of your gender is to bow down." And thus, they ignored the women's demand for political rights. Despite these thoughts, Condorcet criticized not recognizing the women's right to vote by saying: "If the objection that the right of the women to vote would lead them to ignore their home and family, which is used to justify depriving the women of their political rights, were valid, then the women must be dismissed from their professions" (Tekeli, 1982: 71). With the revolution, women started several struggles to be accepted as citizens in France. Before the acceptance of 1791 Constitution prepared after the revolution, Olympe de Gouge, who is accepted as the first woman feminist in the history, wanted to determine the gender equality by law and enroot it by presenting to the revolutionary government of the period the "Women's Civil Rights Declaration" together with the "Civil Rights Declaration" which was intended only for men. However, these Gouge's requests were not accepted, and she was executed in 1793; one day after the execution, all women's clubs were closed, and from all revolutionary laws, only the right to divorce by mutual consent was left for women. In the 1848 revolution occurred in France again, the women played major roles in the clubs, demonstrations as well as on the barricades. Universal suffrage debate started during this period. Victor Considerant presented a proposed law to the parliament to recognize the right to vote for women, but this proposal could not be discussed. During 1848 elections, Jeanne Drain, who was an elementary school teacher, put her candidacy with the support of the Social Democratic Party. However she had only 15 votes and lost the elections, and what is more, she was arrested for provocative actions. Although, the first schools for girls were opened in 1867, girls' high schools were opened in 1880, and the first woman doctors were admitted to hospitals in 1883 in France, the women had to wait until the end of World War II for the right to vote¹.

In the UK, which was affected by the French Revolution, Mary Wollenstonecraft published "The

Vindication of the Rights of Women" in London in 1792, namely the first document of British radical feminists. In this declaration, Wollenstonecraft opposed especially to Rousseau's views and argued that all people should have the right to determine their destiny, and to achieve this, all women should have an equal education with men. The "Suffragette Movement" that emerged in the UK in the 19th century took massive and deadly initiatives for the sake of equal voting rights (Say, 1998: 4). Equal suffrage to women in England could be recognized in 1918 as a result of the great struggle². In the USA, women firstly found National Woman Suffrage Association and Suffrage Association to win their political rights (Flexnes, 1959: 76). Following these organizations, the struggles carried out to win the political rights were in the form of fierce fighting as in the Western Europe, i.e. the UK and France. Following the clashes, with the Congress held in 1787, the right to vote was demanded for the women. As a result of these struggles, women were given the right to vote in Wyoming in 1869, and one day before the elections to be held in September 1918, Wilson announced in the Congress that women's right to elect would be recognized in the USA as the whole country. In 1919, the law was adopted officially.

Referring to the situation in the Nordic countries, Mathilde Fibiger in Denmark invited women to protect their rights with her 12 letters in 1850. As a result of her efforts, women were allowed to get an education in 1875, and their right to dispose of their earnings at their own discretion was recognized in 1880. In 1915, the certain equality between women and men's rights was accepted, and, thus, the first female MP entered Parliament. In Sweden, between 1919 and 1937, the law on the voting rights of women, the new marriage law, and the law on the equality of the rights between women and men were adopted. In Finland, women's movement dates back to very old times. In ancient times in Finland, women worked in the fields while the men were doing their military services. The fact that the country's territory was loamless, and the necessities resulted from it revealed the idea that men and women have the same rights. Accordingly, the first women's association in the country was founded in 1835, and it was followed by the recognition of women's education rights in 1870. Following the

¹ By Decree adopted on 21 April 1944, women were given full equality in terms of the right to elect and to be elected.

² The new Election Law adopted on 6 February 1918 granted the right to vote to women who were over 30 years old, married to a property-owner, had a job with an earning of at least 5 pounds a week or graduated from a university.

Russo-Japanese war, women were granted the right to vote. In 1907, Finnish women went to the ballot box for the first time in Europe (Torkak, 1955: 18). In Germany, the women's movement began in 1848. German Women's Association was established in 1865, and the International Women Congress was held in Berlin in 1904. Women were granted the right to education in 1908 and right to elect in 1918. In 1948, the full equality of rights between men and women was achieved. In the studies carried out, it was observed that the women's movement in West Germany refused the institutionalization in the 1970s. However, at the end of 1970, the importance of corporate activity gradually began to be understood. The institutionalization emerged perceptibly at various levels in the 1980s; for the first time, in 1978, in Berlin, a non-university research institution, the Women's Studies, Women's Education and Women Information Center was established. In 1979 Women Studies Department at German Sociology Institution, in 1980 the first women's shelter fully financed by the Berlin Senate, in 1981 Women and Social Research Institute, in 1983 Interdisciplinary Feminist Research Institute, which is a non-university organization, in 1984 Munich Female Academy were established. Those who actively worked within these formations were generally militant feminist women. These militant feminist women formed the first generation of the new women's movement that emerged after the 1960s. These women left behind the discussions on the institutionalization or non-institutionalization, analyzed the positive and negative effects of the institutionalization and continued their effort towards a healthy institutionalization of women's movement. In Austria, the first women's association was founded in 1899, and women's right to elect and to be elected was recognized at the end of 1918.

In Switzerland, which is defined as one of the world's oldest democracies, Switzerland Women's Union was established in 1900. In 1953, the people of Geneva and Basel were asked whether they were eager for the voting rights of Swiss women, and women of that time refused such a request due to some practical reasons. The recognition of women's right to elect and to be elected was realized in 1971. In studies on the involvement of women in political life in the Netherlands, it was revealed that women had gained the right to elect in 1919. However, the date when the women's movement started to be realized was the 1970s. In the 1980s, women's movements in the Netherlands, which had accelerated, showed parallelism with the

feminist movement as in other countries. The traditional and modern women's movements became widespread in all areas, especially in 1980-1982 years. Accordingly, women are found in the administrative branches of companies and trade unions and every area of politics. Except for the extreme right-wing parties, every party has an active women's branch (Akkent, 1991). With the law introduced in 1997, the principle of equal participation in the bodies that were created with the appointment at the governmental level started to be applied. This application legalized the quotas set for women and was intended to provide an increase in the number of women in state administration.

In Greece, the first women's union was established in 1871. In Greece, the women's newspaper published from 1884 to 1918 fought for the recognition of women's right to vote. As a result of this struggle, the right to vote was recognized to women who are literate and over 30 years in 1930. In 1952, women gained the right to vote without any restrictions and used this right. In Russia, following the 1917 Revolution, a series of laws started to be introduced in order to regulate the status of women³. However, together with the seizure of power by Stalin, retrogression started in terms of women's rights struggle and women's participation in political life.

Womens' Struggle for Political Rights in Turkey:

When assessing the issue from the points of the cultures of the genders, in the period before Turks adopted Islam, that women and men were at equal social status had been discussed in terms of scientific and ideological aspects in many sources. What emerged in most of these discussions is that in the Turkish communities that lived as nomads before the adoption of Islam, women had not been excluded from the social life, monogamous marriage rule had been valid, and the women had equal rights with their husbands in the family (Tekeli, 1982: 193). At the same time, in the old Turks communities, particularly in the Shamanist period, men and women arranged joint religious meetings, joint religious ceremonies were held in the same place, and women were never excluded from the social life. When the status of women in the political life in ancient Turkish communities is considered, "the equality of the Khan and the

³ Among these laws, the one which was important in terms of women's participation in political life, was the introduction of the law, which granted equal education, working and political rights to women as men.

Khatun” argument emerges, which almost all researchers mention. In the old Turkish communities, the Khatun (wife) always stood beside the Khan and fulfilled his duties when the Khan went to war. The examples of this are as follows: In the 14th century, Arab traveler Ibn Battuta wanted to see the Sultan when he visited Bursa, but he couldn't find the Sultan. The Sultan's wife accepted him on behalf of the Sultan, and she administered the state affairs (Yaraman, 2001: 14). Although it does not form evidence for a governmental tradition, in the Turkish communities before the adoption of Islam there were several individual examples of female rulers. For example, in the 10th century, Sultan of Bukhara was a woman. In the 11th century, Seljuk sultan Tugrul enthroned the woman he married with great respect. Raziye Khatun in 1236, Ebes Khatun, who reigned of Salgurlu between 163 and 1286, Padisah Khatun (1292), who was the 5th ruler of Kutluk State, are some examples of female rulers. Turkish women were mentioned with respect in the 8th century Orkhon Inscriptions and the studies of Oguz princesses in social and political life were stated. In addition, bringing a daughter into the world in the old Turkish family was not considered as an unhappy event or dishonor like other tribes, on the contrary, some women asked Oguz princesses to praise God for giving them daughters (Yaraman, 2001: 17).

To give a few examples from the point of view of other societies against women; for example, in ancient China, women were considered as the slaves of their husbands and were not allowed to seat for dinner with their husbands and children. In the ancient Indian society, women were deprived of inheritance; and according to law, women were forced to be dependent on their fathers in the childhood, on their husbands in the marriage and on their sons or one of the relatives of their husbands after the death of their husbands. In the ancient Greece, which is known as the cradle of civilization, women were equated with almost slaves. Men could give their wives to someone else as a gift, and the right of inheritance belonged only to sons. In addition, in ancient Greece, calling a man “woman” was considered to be one of the greatest insults. In the countries that adopted Christianity and Judaism, which had descended to the Earth before Islam, women had been given almost no value. For example, according to Israeli law, the male was defined as the absolute dominant in the family. In addition, fathers could sell their daughters, and the right to divorce belonged only to the husband who could use this right anytime at his

option. In the Arabian Peninsula, being a woman was an embarrassment itself. Therefore, daughters could be burned alive there. In Arabia, women were nothing else but slaves to their husbands (Arat, 1986: 16). As can be understood from this information, summarizing briefly, before the adoption of Islam, the status of women in Turkey was in a much better situation compared to other communities. In fact, it can be said that women had more rights at that time than today in some respects.

The Turks who had adopted Islam with the effects of Arabs and Iranians started to come under the influence of the ways of life of the Arab and Iranian societies, including language while fulfilling the religious rules and requirements of this religion. The consideration of the Turks, whose way of life started to change in time, about the position and status of women started to change and go back. Especially during the Ottoman Empire period, the society that had been heavily influenced by the Iranian and Byzantine traditions gradually forgot the old Turkish traditions, and new inequalities started to emerge between men and women. Some social roles given to women at the beginning were gradually taken back from them particularly in the big cities, and Ottoman women were forced to live in separate groups under strict conditions of life for a long time. During the Ottoman Period, women could get an education only in the schools that only girls under nine could attend, they were tried to be excluded completely from the work life, polygamy was allowed, and the right to divorce was granted only to the men. Thus, married women were deprived of all kinds of guarantees. In the period when women in the West started their struggle for political and economic rights, the women of Ottoman Empire did not fight for political-economic rights, instead, they were deprived of the rights such as walking on the streets, participating in the social

life (Topaloğlu, 1992: 16, Akdemir, 1991: 20).

The unequal status of men and women in the Ottoman Empire started to be the subject of debates in the Tanzimat Period. During this period that the ideas spread around the world after the French Revolution were associated with the solutions sought to solve the problems of the Ottoman Empire led to the creation of a movement for the reform of the status quo, and in this context, women's status became one of the basic issues of the period. In this context, certain rights that could be considered significant were granted to the women. For example, with “the Land Code” adopted in 1856, daughters were granted equal inheritance rights with their brothers on the land

inherited from their father. In addition, although limited, women were granted the opportunity to benefit from educational facilities. In 1842 midwives were brought from Europe, and through the courses given by these women, education and, in particular, vocational training started to be given to Turkish women. In addition, the first female high schools were opened in 1858, the first industrial schools were opened in 1869, and the first female teachers' schools were opened in 1870. During this period, a number of arrangements were made in the rules about women's dressing, and the curfew applied to women was removed. "Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete" ("The Newspaper Specific to Women)," almost all-editorial team of which were women, also started to be published (1895) in this period. Many women associations were also established in the Ottoman Empire during this period. The purpose of the majority of these associations was to support financially women who were in need of help. In the Ottoman Empire, the first institution to introduce women's rights struggle was "Osmanlı Müdafası Hukuk-u Nisven Cemiyeti" ("The Ottoman Association for Protecting Women's Rights"). Through "Kadının Dünyası" ("Women's World") magazine that was the publication of this organization, a struggle was started against the inequality of women compared to men, lawlessness and their lack of education. Certain rights were demanded such as the opening of high schools and universities for girls, recognition of the right of women to divorce, the abolition of the arranged marriage and the participation of women in the business and political life. In the country, the women first started political action in 1919, that is, during the Independence War. In this period, women tried to make their voice heard by making speeches in demonstrations and establishing associations. During a demonstration held in Sultanahmet Square on 13 May 1919, Halide Edip Adivar made the women take the independence oath. In this period, women started to join the army as volunteers, and those who did not join the army provided material contribution by organizing campaigns to collect money and help for the army (Sertel, 1978: 44). Following such developments, Turkish women became a part of the public opinion in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, it was necessary to overcome the obstacles to be able to produce solutions to the problems on the agenda and take part in the political decision-making. In other words, social legitimacy made the legal conversions necessary.

Indeed, immediately after the Independence War and the declaration of the Republic, women's

political claims started to be debated in Parliament. In April 1923, Bolu deputy Tunalı Hilmi demanded, at least, the right to vote to be granted to women, but he was silenced by a great response. In 1924, during the constitutional debates, this issue was once again brought to the agenda but was rejected again. Although women were not granted the right to elect and to be elected, it was meaningful that in the elections held following these debates there were votes for women in the ballot boxes such as Halide Edip and Latife Hanım. In parallel to these developments, "Women People's Party" was established in June 1923 under the leadership of Nezihe Muhiddin, the purpose of which was to provide the rightful place of women in social and political life and that demanded the right to vote and right to be elected for women as the starting point for their participation in the public life. However, the party was closed in a short time, for having the same name with the party that would be established by Mustafa Kemal and his friends. In this case, "Women's Union" was formed, containing a special provision as "the association has nothing to do with politics" in its charter. Through "Turkish Women's Road" magazine that started to be published after the establishment of this union, the demands for women's political rights were brought to the agenda again. "The association has nothing to do with politics" provision in the charter of the women's union was amended at the Congress held in Istanbul in 1927. Upon this change, the Union, which had been falling upon disputes with the political authorities, was forced to change its management in September 1927, and its records kept in the headquarter were sealed (Yaraman, 2001: 48).

When it came to 1931, women gained their political rights in municipal elections and in the elections held in 1933 they were elected for municipal councils and as reeves, primarily in Istanbul. On 5 December 1934, the 10th and 11th articles of the Constitution were amended as "All Turkish citizens, women or men, completing age 22 have the right to vote. All Turkish citizens, men or women, completing age 30 can be elected as MPs." And this date was the day when the gender equality was declared in the Republic of Turkey. In order to realize this amendment, the decision to renew the elections was taken, and 18 women MP in total entered the new Parliament⁴.

⁴ The decision was taken by Ismet Inonu and 191 friends, 53 MPs did not participate in the meeting. 6 memberships were empty.

The discussions on this law and the process, in which women were granted equal political rights with men, focused on two separate thoughts in general. One party argued that this law was the result of Atatürk's and his supporter MPs' demands and insistence while the other party argued that it was the result of the increasing pressure from the public opinion and the foreign countries. For example, Afet İnan argued that these rights were granted to women as a result of the leadership and insistence of Atatürk stating that "To teach the democratic governance, which was in the curriculum of civics, had been very difficult. These issues led to serious discussions between Atatürk and his friends and finally resulted in constitutional amendments" (Abadan, 1979: 27). Doğramacı also drew attention to the importance of the reforms of Atatürk in the introduction of this equality by commenting as "Women's taking their places as social beings is a stage of civilization and the most prominent of Atatürk's principles and reforms. All other reforms are dependent on the success of women's rights revolution that reintroduced women into the society as social values." (Doğramacı, 1997: 89). While Ayşegül Taraman argued that one of the reasons for giving right to elect and to be elected to women was to suppress the opposition, Tekeli argued in his comments that recognition of the right of women to elect and to be elected was a tool used by the political leaders of the period to prove the difference from the dictatorships, which was gaining momentum in the same period.

As the common point of these two ideas, we can mention that the women's acquisition of political rights occurred in the unusual circumstances and top-down manner, as we see in many other countries. The process of acquisition of these rights by women showed the ups and downs, upon which they did not even have the control and monitoring capabilities, and as a result, it was realized by the will of a small revolutionary group and its leader who wanted to overthrow the old order in the country, not with the demand of women.

The Women's Gaining Visibility in Political Campaigns in Turkey:

The right to elect and to be elected granted to women in Turkey in 1934 is significant when compared with other countries. The women representation in the Parliament was also given a symbolic importance, and 18 women MPs entered Parliament with an implicit quota system⁵.

Unfortunately, following the recognition of the right to elect and to be elected for women, Republican People's Party (CHF) that had taken the lead for the recognition of this right did not make any efforts to make women more active in politics. Such that, CHF party programs did not even dwell on the position and status of women. Perhaps, the granting of political rights to women was considered enough by political parties (Tokgöz, 1986: 374). Furthermore, that the membership of women to CHF with the purpose of women's political participation was only possible at the suggestion of two male members of the party was one of the first evidences showing that the legal equality could not overcome the existing patriarchal system.

It can be seen that until the multiparty system was introduced, CHF, which had been the only party of the period, had not made any attempt within its electoral campaigns neither to win the votes of women voters nor enable women to participate more actively in the politics.

The Democratic Party (DP), which had ended the single-party era in 1950, also followed the same way regarding women as CHF, and they mentioned the issues relating to women and problems of women neither in their party program nor in the meeting they organized. The importance of women and their problems first started to be realized and discussed by the parties in the 1960s and 1980s. Between these years, together with the given importance to politics by the society and changes in the roles, the status of women started to be given secondary importance in the party programs and during the campaigns (Köker, 1998: 17). In the 1980s, the women issue was brought to the agenda with great importance. During this period, a new definition of the role of women was made in terms of women's involvement in the society, and women began to win them new identities. Political parties could not remain indifferent to this situation and developed a new stance in their attitudes to women. Accordingly, they tended to develop new discourse to give more space to women in politics. However, this new discourse remained far from questioning the ongoing male-dominated structure of the politics.

With the discourse they developed, political parties both aimed at having more female MPs in the Parliament and realized that they needed to win votes of women voters as well as those of males to come into the power. In this context, political parties especially in the period after the 1980s

⁵ According to the news on Zaman Newspaper on 18 December 1934, 5% of the total number of

MPs would be female, which meant there would be 18 female MPs in the Parliament.

adopted several methods in order to attract women to their parties. One of the most important of these methods was the women's branch of the parties that were banned in 1980 period and then unbanned. In addition to the women's branches that were working to persuade women to become members of their parties, parties started to give importance to women's issues in their political campaigns and tried to get votes of women voters. Political parties, especially starting from the general elections in 1983, started to include some points in their discourse towards women reflecting their ideology. During this period, in their political campaigns, political parties generally identified women as wives and mothers who wanted to alleviate the livelihood of the family in the political advertising regarding women. With the general elections in 1991, within the campaigns organized by the parties, discourse and imageries of women were stated to be given space in advertising in newspapers as well as in advertising on television. In the 2000s, women became visible in almost all parties' promises and political advertising, in addition, with the increase in the number of women in the active politics, they were not just visible in political advertising, but discourses also started to be developed towards their needs and demands.

Woman's Place in the History of Turkish Political Advertising

Since the first multi-party elections in 1950, political communication activities have been one of the communication activities that are given great importance by political parties, especially in the elections periods. Transmission of the messages to the public and revision of these communication activities based on the feedback received from the public have been the sole requirement for the parties to be able to be successful in elections. In this context, starting from the first elections period, both visual and verbal data towards women can be observed in political advertising.



Picture 1: Political advertisement of the Republican People's Party in 1950.

Source: Özkan, 2002: 50.

The first example of women's taking part in

political advertising was used by CHP in the political communication arena during the elections in 1950. The advertising used by CHP in political communication activities in 1950 was prepared in accordance with the content of the social structure of the former period (Ottoman), which reflected that the reforms CHP wanted to achieve in the social sphere had not been fully accepted in the grassroots. Since the society during the Ottoman Period internalized the gaining and succession of political legitimacy, CHP demonstrated an approach in parallel to the way of thinking that could be accepted in the society, and sought votes from the citizens using Atatürk and Inonu Figures with the slogan "Atatürk and Inonu are the heads of Republican People's Party, Let's give our votes to their party." In addition, that in the visuals used in the advertising, half of the citizens who went to the poll to vote were those who symbolized the former social order (a woman wearing a burqa and a peasant not internalizing the reforms) was the biggest indicator of the changed social order with the reforms. In other words, with both the slogan and the visual used in the first political communication study, CHP fell into a position as if it criticized itself.



Picture 2: Justice Party's political advertisement in 1957.

Source: Özkan, 2002: 55

Even in the 1950s when the advertising activities were much behind today's conditions, political parties were making efforts to develop discourse towards women. Regardless of their parties, women used in political ads were usually depicted as peasants.



Picture 3: Political advertisements of Motherland Party and Social Democrat Populist Party in 1987

Source: Özkan, 2002: 66.

In political ads in 1970 and during the elections made immediately after the 1980 coup, women found a place for themselves in political advertising over “mother” case. That women were depicted as individuals trying to protect the order of their home and prevent the involvement of their children in anarchy rather than being citizens and that reference was sometimes made to women without showing them is an indication of the fact that there was not awareness of women’s rights.



Picture 4: Republican People’s Party 1977 political advertisement

Source: Özkan, 2002: 63.

In the 1990s, “secularism” that often found itself a place on the agenda was reflected in the political advertisements as well, and women without scarf who were the symbol of secularism and women with scarf often began to find places in the ads. In other words, women became a means not a purpose.



Picture 5: Republican People’s Party 1999 political advertisement

Source: Özkan, 2002: 100.

In the 2000s, because of the increasing diversity in political communication studies, the active participation of the women’s branches of political parties in the politics as well as the increase in the number of female MPs and mayors who were involved actively in the politics enabled women to gain more visibility in political ads. The increase in the visibility led to the change of the discourse and studies on women’s rights and victimization experienced by women (violence, victimization, issues such as fundamental rights and freedoms) gained momentum.



Picture 6: Political advertising practices of different parties in different elections held in the 2000s.

Source: Web pages of the relevant parties.

CONCLUSION

The diversification of political communication studies in Turkey has been experienced with the transition to multi-party life. Regarding women’s rights, women who had wanted to be in the political arena since the early years of the Republic gained this important right through the right to elect and to be elected which had been given in a top-down manner, however, that these rights were not achieved as a result of struggle brought a number of problems. On the top of the problems was that since those who gave these rights to women were men, they could put the limitations related to these fields, in this context women were not given space in the political parties. In addition

to this, the formats of the involvement of women in political ads, which is the primary objective of this study, led to the display of women not as separate individuals but housewives or mothers who helped men with the housework or took care of children. In the 2000s, as a result of the facts that women were involved more actively in politics as well as business life, additionally, non-governmental organizations gave importance to this issue and legal arrangements, women started to find gradually place in political advertisements as free individuals who had their own problems.

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