AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE RELATIONS IN TURKEY: THE CASE OF KADIKÖY MUNICIPALITY AND POTLAÇ WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE RELATIONS IN TURKEY: THE CASE OF KADIKÖY MUNICIPALITY AND POTLAÇ WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE

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The relationship between civil society and government has been the subject of numerous studies over the years. Many civil society organizations view their interactions with both central and local governments as a vital aspect of their efforts to strengthen their capacity.

The number of women's cooperatives is growing rapidly, and they have become a strong and integral part of civil society. These cooperatives play a significant role in empowering women both economically and socially, which is particularly important in a context like Turkey, where local governments are often politicized. Thus, examining the relationship between local government and women's cooperatives is crucial as it contains valuable elements.

Women's cooperatives play a vital role in empowering women in their local communities. They engage in various activities to empower women economically and socially and also contribute to the economy as medium-sized enterprises. However, the level and nature of support from local municipalities are crucial factors that impact the success of these cooperatives.

In Turkey, a lot of local governments perceive women's cooperatives merely as a means to gain women's votes, failing to fully grasp the significance of this issue. However, in municipalities where the women's cooperatives and other civil society elements are given due importance, it becomes apparent that political interference can have an adverse impact on these crucial processes.

This thesis discusses the impact of political interventions and interruptions on women who try to organize and create their own stories, using the example of Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Women's Cooperative. It highlights how these women transform their area of existence into a field of negotiation and struggle. This example also emphasizes the importance of having a well-structured and written communication system based on equality, which can help strengthen the capacity of local organizations.

Keywords: Local Governments, Women’s Cooperatives, Civil Society Organizations, Women’s Empowerment, Field

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DE YEREL YÖNETİM VE KADIN KOOPERATİFİ İLİŞKİLERİNİN BİR ANALİZİ: KADIKÖY BELEDİYESİ VE POTLAÇ KADIN KOOPERATİFİ ÖRNEĞİ

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Sivil toplum ve iktidar arasındaki ilişkinin dinamikleri çok uzun yıllardır, birçok çalışmada ele alındı. Birbirinden farklı birçok sivil toplum örgütü, merkezi ve yerel yönetimlerle ilişkilerini kapasite güçlendirme süreçlerinin vazgeçilmez bir parçası olarak kabul ediyor.

Sayıları her geçen gün artan kadın kooperatifleri de sivil toplumun, kadınların ekonomik ve sosyal güçlenmesinde katkı sağlayan, toplum temelli ve güçlü bir parçası haline geldi. Özellikle Türkiye gibi yerel yönetimlerin siyasetten beri olamadığı bir bağlamda, yerel yönetim ve kadın kooperatifi ilişkisi de barındırdığı unsurlarla incelenmesi oldukça kıymetli bir ilişki halini alıyor.

Kadın kooperatifleri, bulundukları yereldeki kadınlar için birçok alanda güçlendirme faalitetleri yürütüp, orta ölçekli işletmeler olarak ekonomik anlamda da katma değer üreterek inanılmaz etkiler yaratıyorlar ve dahasını da yaratabilirler. Fakat bu sürecin

önemli bir değişkeni, bulundukları yereldeki belediye desteğinin ne ölçüde ve ne şekilde gerçekleştiğidir.

Türkiye'de yerel yönetimlerin birçoğu, kadın kooperatifi meselesini kadınların oylarını almaya yarayan bir araç olarak görmenin ötesine geçemiyor. Farklılık yaratacak şekilde kadın kooperatifini ve elbette diğer sivil toplum unsurlarını ciddiyetle ele alan belediyelerde de siyasi müdahalelerin bütün bu süreçlere açıkça zarar verdiği gözlemlenebiliyor.

Bu tezde ele alınan Kadıköy Belediyesi ve Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi örneği ile, siyasi müdahaleler ve yine siyasi sebeplerden ötürü meydana gelen kesintilerin örgütlenen ve kendi hikayelerini yaratmaya çalışan kadınları nasıl etkilediği, var oldukları alanı nasıl bir mücadele ve müzakere meydanına dönüştürdükleri ele alınıyor. Bu örnek, iyi yapılandırılmış, yazılı ve eşit paydaş iletişimine dayanan bir ilişkinin yereldeki örgütün kapasitesinin güçlenmesinde ne denli önemli olduğunu da gösterir nitelik taşıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerel Yönetimler, Kadın Kooperatifleri, Sivil Toplum Örgütleri, Kadınların Güçlenmesi, Alan

To the incredible mothers who tirelessly carry the weight of the world on their shoulders, especially my moms, Şenay and Gülsema...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The women's cooperative model is a powerful tool used by community-based organizations led by women to address local challenges, develop business strategies, and enhance the livability and resilience of neighborhoods and cities. Women's cooperatives have become intriguingly widespread in many parts of the world and especially in Turkey since the beginning of the 2000s (Özdemir, 2013). Women's cooperatives are on the rise, yet many questions remain unanswered. Trust issues are common in Turkish cooperatives, including those focused on consumers and building projects (Alan, Uysal & Çetin, 2012). While the Turkish context may not be entirely supportive of these relatively new entities, local governments play a critical role as stakeholders. Due to the unique challenges faced by these cooperatives, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive analysis of their organization, areas of activity, current situation, and difficulties encountered. However, by exploring the relationship between local governments and women's cooperatives, we can gain valuable insights into the general state of these cooperatives in Turkey.

This thesis aims to explore the relationship between local governance and women's cooperatives. This relationship plays a significant role in enhancing or limiting the institutional capacities of women's cooperatives. To provide a comprehensive analysis, the study will take into account the local context and view it as a field, using Bourdieu's concept of the field as a theoretical framework. With this approach, the research aims to identify the dynamics that exist between local governance and women's cooperatives and to determine how these dynamics impact the development and sustainability of women's cooperatives in the local context.

This thesis delves into the complex relationship between local government and women's cooperatives. The study examines the various aspects of this relationship,

including power dynamics, institutional pressures, and social norms that influence the participation of women in cooperatives. The thesis adopts Young's approach to understand the oppression that women face in expressing their needs and the challenges they encounter in accessing resources and opportunities.

The Potlaç Cooperative, which is the case cooperative of the study, is a women's cooperative that operates in the local community. The cooperative is recognized for its contributions to the community and is involved in various distribution and participation activities. Despite its success, the cooperative faces occasional exclusion and oppression from local governance structures and traditional powerholders. By analyzing the experiences of the Potlaç Cooperative, the study sheds light on the challenges that women's cooperatives encounter and the ways in which they navigate institutional and social barriers. Also, the contributions of women's cooperatives at the local level are analyzed through both theoretical frameworks and everyday practices.

1.1. The Aim of the Thesis

In the late twentieth century, the world was facing an increasing number of problems that demanded global solutions. This led to the emergence of globalization as a solution to address these challenges. At the same time, there was a parallel effort to rediscover the importance of local communities and cultures, resulting in an acceleration of localization. This shift towards localization has had a significant impact on the role of local actors in shaping global outcomes (Koçak, 2009). With its increasing importance, the local level has become a crucial battlefield where the struggle against inequalities is redefined (Sert, Karpuz, & Akgün, 2005). The most important actors that have a presence at the local level are the local governments, which promise to strengthen the democratic structure through local participation mechanisms and work with the principle of legitimacy. Along with local governments, one of the critical actors in the locality is local organizations due to their local knowledge and volunteer human resources. The relationship between different actors involved in institutions, organizations, and urban development is a complex and multifaceted one. It is of great importance when it comes to the institutional capacity of these organizations and institutions and their ability to achieve their goals. However, this relationship is not without its limitations. It faces critical issues that need to be

addressed to maximize its potential. One of the most significant actors in the local organizations is the women's cooperatives. These cooperatives play an essential role in promoting sustainable development in their communities. They do so by increasing women's economic empowerment, promoting solidarity, and contributing positively to the local economy. Women's cooperatives have a unique advantage in this regard, as they provide a platform for women to collaborate and work together towards a common goal. The output provided by women's cooperatives is particularly important for local women. These cooperatives offer opportunities for women to engage in income-generating activities, which can be vital for their economic independence. This independence can, in turn, lead to greater social and political empowerment for women, which is crucial for achieving gender equality.

The number of women's cooperatives is on the rise, and they play a crucial role in delivering services to women as part of local government strategic plans. However, there is a risk that these cooperatives may be established by municipal employees, which could compromise their independence. Women's cooperatives work together to tackle the challenges they face, and they develop products and services that align with their interests. Unfortunately, they often struggle to receive the necessary support from municipalities, making it challenging to sustain their activities. Local governments tend to collaborate with women's cooperatives that they establish themselves, essentially treating them as their units instead of supporting existing women's cooperatives operating within their jurisdictions. This often means that local women's cooperatives don't receive the comprehensive and holistic support they need from municipalities.

Another critical point for the relationship between local governments and women's cooperatives is related to the relationship itself. Although women's cooperatives have the most intimate knowledge, communication network, and need-oriented data specific to their locality, they are entirely excluded from decision-making mechanisms. They are seen as organizations that only request help from the municipality and are merely an extension of the municipality. However, women's cooperatives are far beyond this; they are local actors that can seriously affect local government policies. Accordingly, this relationship itself, directly related to the way it is established, can contribute significantly to the increase of the capacity of women's

cooperatives or, on the contrary, can become an obstacle to the development of women's cooperatives and to produce meaningful work. Precisely, because of this context, this study aims to focus on these relationships established between women's cooperatives, the number of which is increasing day by day in Turkey, and local governments, which are mostly unsustainable, far from being an equal stakeholder relationship, and prevent women's cooperatives from using their institutional capacities and potentials. This thesis aims to examine the general relationship between local government and cooperatives, through Jessop's tripartite structure perspective, which is the organizational structure of the actors, their representation, and intervention forms (Jessop, 2016). The primary objective of this thesis is to examine the relationship between women's cooperatives and local government, highlighting the significant impact that these entities can have on critical areas such as decision-making and the creation of public spheres for women at the local level (Alkan, 2006).

The central argument presented in this thesis posits that establishing well-organized connections between civil society organizations and local governments, underpinned by formal protocols and inclusive values, is vital in enhancing the capabilities of community-based groups, such as women's cooperatives. Moreover, these structured relationships are instrumental in fostering a robust local public sphere.

1.2. The Method of the Thesis

This thesis utilizes Bourdieu's conceptualization of "field" to explore the closely connected and invisible relationship between local governments and women's cooperatives. For Bourdieu, fields are "tightly connected" relationship configurations and a change in one location shifts the boundaries between all other locations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). To explore this relationship, the thesis adopts a case study method. This method not only enables the exploration of the field and its relationships but also examines the tripartite structure of institutions and organizations, including their unique and monolithic structures, representation channels and mechanisms, and forms of intervention.

When formulating a case study, the Potlaç Project was initially considered to be an inspiring model as a network and a women's cooperative. Following the management changes that took place during the local government elections, it became even more

crucial to view the Potlaç Women's Cooperative. Through this case study, the thesis aims to analyze how the relations with the Potlaç Women's Cooperative were shaped under two different municipal managements to establish an understanding of the factors that influenced the cooperative's relationship with the municipality in two distinct periods of governance. The research will adopt a comparative approach to identify continuities and ruptures between the two periods of management regarding the cooperative's interactions with the municipality. Moreover, the study will investigate how the cooperative's operations were affected by the municipality's policies and actions in each period.

In the case study, two research methods were used: participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted in four different periods, involving a total of 27 women. All 27 women interviewed are between the ages of 25 and 65, residing in different neighborhoods of Kadıköy, members of the Potlaç network, and partners of the women's cooperative. Participatory observation was also carried out by participating in various cooperative events.

It's important to note that because of my role as the Istanbul Local Coordinator at the EU Project, which aims to strengthen the engagement and influencing capacities of community-based organizations, I had an organic relationship with the Potlaç Women's Cooperative. This relationship influenced the research process, and my standpoint regarding the researched subjects became crucial in interpreting data and constructing knowledge. To better understand the complexities of the studied relationship, I engaged in more explicit reflexivity during the interviews and participant observations. This encouraged me to critically examine and openly acknowledge my role in the research process, which, in turn, aimed to enhance the credibility, transparency, and richness of the research findings while contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the "field."

Finally, the results were analyzed thematically and comparatively. By identifying key themes and contrasting and comparing responses across varying individuals or groups, I was able to uncover patterns, differences, or similarities in the participants' perspectives.

1.3. The Possibilities and Boundaries of the Thesis

This thesis delves into the entire process of the Potlaç project, from its start in 2016 until the end of December 2023, and examines the two distinct management processes implemented by Kadıköy Municipality during this period. By analyzing the relationship between the Cooperative and the municipality, it had the potential to offer a comprehensive understanding of both entities.

However, the timing of the field study, which began just prior to local elections, made it inevitable that political differences would emerge, and the observations and experiences in the field were not immune to political manipulations. While this could be considered a limitation, it also provided an opportunity to experience the variability and sensitivity of relationships. Furthermore, the ongoing relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and the cooperative, as well as the ever-changing nature of the situation, means that new developments could arise at any moment. Therefore, while the field interviews and observations provide the most up-to-date information, they may not fully capture the present moment due to the dynamic nature of the situation.

Although women's cooperatives have gained increasing attention, academic studies on them are still limited. This thesis aims to contribute towards a better understanding of women's cooperatives and their interaction with local governments. The study's self-reflexive quality has helped overcome any resistance and invisible boundaries that could have hindered the research due to its artificial nature.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this thesis will be divided into three parts. The first part will focus on civil society, particularly women's cooperatives. The second part will examine local governments. However, since dealing with local governments as a whole would go beyond the scope of this thesis, it will be based on municipalities' services for women, particularly their strategic services. The third and most crucial part of the theoretical framework will explore the relationship between civil society and local government, highlighting the connections and interactions between these two elements.

2.1. Civil Society

In the 1970s, when the "new social movements" wave was rising in Europe, the concept of civil society started to be heard. Over the years, civil society, described as an opposition field that is not class-based, started to become a phenomenon that includes much larger groups. Numerous meanings have been attributed to the concept of civil society, and it has been interpreted in many different ways by theorists.

Charles Taylor (1990) suggests three different models to describe civil society. According to Taylor's first model, civil society, which does not have government tutelage and can be organized freely, carries out studies aiming at civil rights and freedoms. In this model, civil society is seen as a sphere outside of politics. Civil society, which is evaluated based on the concepts of market and individuality, is not associated with democracy. Contrary to the first model, the second model defines civil society as an area that can indirectly interfere with the political sphere and sees it as a significant part of a good society (Keyman, 2006). The main focus of this model is the idea of a society that can organize itself without the government's intervention. This claim points to an important place in terms of the relationship between power

interventions and civil society, which is the main focus of the thesis. This relationship will be discussed later in the related section of this thesis. In this model, civil society plays an essential role in the transition to democracy. Here, civil society also represents freedoms and public good on the political ground. In this model, civil society is positioned on the side of the society and against the state power. Therefore, one of the aims of civil society is seen as controlling state power. However, this model focuses so much on the relationship of civil society with politics that the other functions of civil society, such as social, political, and economic, are, in a sense, overlooked. According to Keyman (2006, p. 20), "Just as the first model, which only mentions organizational life when describing civil society, is extremely minimalist, the second model, in which civil society is associated with direct democracy, is just as maximalist and morally charged." taking these limitations into account, there was a need for another model of civil society that addresses civil society in a more comprehensive way and dramatically affects the policy-making processes (Taylor, 1990). According to this model, civil society is considered as an active structure in solving its own problems and communicating with different political actors. This model prefers civil society to be a guide for the community rather than used by political actors and claims that civil society is an indispensable sphere for active citizenship. According to this model, civil society also lays the groundwork for the formation of a democratic, egalitarian and organized structure. In Keyman's (2006, p. 21) words, this model sees civil society as "a third area from which public deliberation is launched in search of a better society."

İlhan Tekeli makes a different categorization for civil society organizations, which have become an indicator for societies and state administrations and for the "new actors of the public sphere," as Uğuz and Yılmaz (2020, p. 320) put it. According to this distinction, civil initiatives are the simplest and most egalitarian ones. In these initiatives, there are no hard rules, and they often arise in search of solutions to the problems encountered. With the continuity of these structures and their involvement in financial processes, the structures become institutionalized. Tekeli (2009a) considers these institutionalized structures in two different categories. First is the groups that come together to intervene in the political sphere and aim to voice the interests of their members and the groups they address in a democratic environment.

With the participation of these groups, polyphonic and more democratic structures can be formed. The second category, in addition to participating in political mechanisms, develops solutions for problems and encountered problems, and, as Tekeli (2009) puts it, they become the subject of the public sphere, and this togetherness turns into a partial public sphere. This partial definition of public sphere and the creation of a public sphere for women are quite compatible with the Potlaç Project and Potlaç Women's Cooperative, which are the subjects of this thesis. Again, the critical point for the NGOs in this group is the issue of production and social benefit. The groups come together to produce solutions for their problems and provide social benefits by using their own resources and efforts. In this case, they become an important subject in the public sphere (Uğuz & Yılmaz, 2020). Although civil society is a concept that still has different definitions from those listed, it is basically used to express groups of people who are ready to protect the rights and interests of each other and all people and to compromise around common good values. With its changing and diversifying meaning, it includes organizations with different structures and statuses operating in different fields within civil society. The generosity discussed by Paulo Freire (2000) in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is beneficial in explaining the approaches of community-based organizations. According to Freire, true generosity also includes fighting against wrong approaches to giving alms. According to Freire, who is against the idea of reaching out and helping someone, the main thing is to try to find a solution to the people and situations to be reached. This means more and more people who are working to find solutions to problems and changing the world.

After all these definitions and classifications, the goal of civil society organizations could be summarized as to create a shelter against social problems, to seek solutions by volunteers who come together to solve problems on the agenda, and to involve relevant classes of society in decision-making and implementation mechanisms. With this organizational structure, which mostly occurs locally, various changes are foreseen in the locality. It is expected that the activities will have regional, national, and international effects, with horizontal organization and mobility rising from the bottom. In this sense, it also includes organic and spontaneous relationships. Due to these features, they play an important role in producing favorable policies and the development of pluralism and participatory politics.

2.1.1. Women Cooperative

Cooperatives are human-centered organizations through which human beings come together to actualize their common economic, social, and cultural needs and desires, often governed by the principles of horizontal hierarchy and pluralism. It has an organizational structure that turns everyone into equal partners without any discrimination among the producer, consumer, and laborer. While there are different types of cooperative systems, the cooperative model that works like a civil society organization tries to generate social benefits in the local sphere. Besides empowering its members economically and focusing on gender equality, it is called a women's cooperative. In one sense, women's cooperatives are organized neighbors, household members, and various local networks that come together locally. Women's cooperatives are significant structures that will empower women economically and socially. In the following sections, the participation of women's cooperatives in the public sphere, their local organizations, and their contributions to the evaluation of their labor will be addressed in more detail. Nevertheless, the point that should be emphasized is that women's cooperatives became an important empowerment mechanism for the women who try to support their household economy through piecework in isolation at their homes, who are considered inferior within the household and society. In addition, these women's cooperatives that locally try to meet their own needs in many parts of the world are strengthening more by organizing national and international networks.[1]

When considering the categorical distinctions among civil society organizations, the closest definition of the women's cooperative model is community-based local organizations (Datta, 2003). Like all the organizations that work locally, the women's cooperatives essentially work on three main fields of activities: producing a product, forming local networks, and advocacy. Most of the time, considering the women's cooperatives' works, good and service production and the local networks are emphasized. However, besides that, through the local networks they form, women's cooperatives have remarkable influence at the local level. On the one hand, service

[1] As an example of the international network of women's cooperatives, please see Self Employed Women's Association: https://www.sewa.org/
As an example for the national network of women's cooperatives, please see Simurg Union of Women's Cooperatives: https://simurg.org.tr/

production and local networks are directly related to the studies of participation and advocacy. Therefore, it would be best to consider all these activities as fields that feed each other. Local organizations also have a crucial role in behalf of the services that the central government and the local government are supposed to provide (Marwell, 2004). These cooperatives produce services in different fields and directly provide services for disadvantaged groups, and all local beneficiaries provide solidarity and fulfill the responsibilities within public services by forming local networks. Here, the multifaceted and significant contributions that women's cooperatives have made should be mentioned.

Firstly, participation in local political processes is a significant contribution that is provided by the women's cooperatives. Women's cooperatives are crucial structures in many parts of the world regarding the empowerment of women who are marginalized from social and economic fields in many aspects. Cooperatives have become a way to access formal jobs with their significant contributions, especially in promoting gender equality. In exchange for fair, sustainable jobs that fit the definition of decent work, women find the opportunity to earn the wages they deserve without the interference of different intermediary mechanisms and being exploited. In women's cooperatives, women get an opportunity to learn from themselves through the experiences they share. When women are organized, both their self-confidence and power to influence local actors increase. That also creates an attitude and mindset change in them. Thus, their household and community position change in their own eyes and their surroundings. This situation can clearly be defined as social empowerment (COPAC, 2015). The women's cooperatives are important not only for the women within the women's cooperatives but also for the locality where they live. The women's cooperatives make substantial contributions to local development in their locations, especially in rural areas. They contribute to forming the pluralist–participatory democratic structures through the women's cooperatives that run negotiation processes locally and raise their voices through different channels. Women's cooperatives that know the local can reach people in the community efficiently and quickly through their networks in times of crisis and disaster (Vural, 2013). In addition to all these, the women's cooperatives play an essential role in creating self-sufficient localities and making local spaces more resilient.

Secondly, another important contribution of women's cooperatives is about the evaluation of women's labor and labor organizations. The women's cooperatives make significant contributions to the evaluation of domestic production and handicrafts, which have been invisible and devalued for many years. As Bora and İşat (2006) said, *"Knot knowledge is a part of femininity knowledge; a knowledge we inherited from our grandmothers."* When considering the historical process of handicrafts, it is seen that handicrafts and production are often underestimated and trivialized. To evaluate how much the women's cooperatives contribute to production and handicrafts, women's difficulties experienced in production and piecework processes should be addressed. In many epics, women are sent to textile and wool spinning work to be kept away from the urban administration (Homeros, 1984). From the earliest times of history, handicrafts and weaving have been regarded as natural parts of women. White (2015, p. 19) finds the weaving of girls in a house where she was a guest "coincidental and unconscious like breathing." Handicraft and weaving, which are identified with femininity, have also become a part of small-scale production in certain periods. However, although an income is obtained from this work, women see handicraft as a household leisure time activity and see that income as a contribution to the household budget. Piecework and weaving that can be generally included in home-based work are the most important results of the co-occurrence of capitalism and the patriarchal system. As a part of the informalization of women's labor, it is hidden and thus devalued. Although the history of handicrafts produced by women at home has a long history, its articulation with capitalist mechanisms for Turkey dates back to the late 1990s. Women become the unknown, endmost producer of big companies in production that in some way has taken the form of subcontracting. Women's handwork is now commodified; a value is given at the market, but this value has become far below what it deserves. Since those activities that require years of practice and skill are considered unqualified labor, this traditional labor is undervalued in the capitalist market through common myths (White, 2015). They work in a non-unionized way for a nominal fee without social security and proper education. Often women do not have the market information about what they produce. In jobs brought to women through intermediaries, they mostly communicate with intermediaries. It is not possible to exactly know how much of the payment the intermediaries give to the women. As Topçuoğlu (2009) states, if there is no labor, there is no return for this labour.

Therefore, the labor women put in at home is made invisible; the works they done are hidden by combining it with the work that overlaps with femininity, such as motherhood and housework. Thereby, this is not seen as a work; nor the effort they put in is seen as a labor. The wage they pay in return of this labor is also lowered greatly. By undervaluing the women's labor, men's labor is made more visible; the depiction of man, who is seen as the pillar of the house, becomes stronger. On the other hand, women's labor who is doing piecework with substantially low wages is exploited. Regarding the women doing piecework, Beechey (1977) uses the expression of "fragmented labor market". The main issue that distinguishes handicraft from all other paid jobs is definitely space. The place that is seen as ideal for women is the home and the roles coming with this ideal place make the processes of production even more invisible. Therefore, home is defined as different from the place where there is wage labor. According to Topçuoğlu (2009), because women's labor is made invisible, home-based working does not strengthen the women's position in household. Because the housewife label puts the women's work into the category of hobby and cheapens it. The myth that women are autonomous in home-based work and that they are safer and more comfortable because they work in their own homes also puts women who produce at home in a difficult situation. For evaluation of labour, there need to be more than these myths; concrete criteria such as measuring the time women devote to production and housework. According to Allen and Wolkowitz (1986), women are not independent while producing at home; also, they are exposed to unpaid workloads under strict control of their husbands or other households at home. It is known that most of the time, women hide the income they earn from their husbands if they can succeed. For this reason, women's cooperatives that pave the way for production at home or in a workshop to be taken out of a hobby and turn into professional work make it easier for women to measure their labour and receive the wage they deserve in return. So, this professional business relationship is taken seriously within the community where the women live.

As mentioned above, hand labour and home production are precarious for women as the way capitalism and the patriarchal system impose. There is a need for a significant change in this structure that increases household members' oppression, makes women do two-days labour within a day, hides and undervalues their labour, and intensifies

men's position as breadwinners. For a home-based production structure where the risks the literature emphasizes are eliminated, at least the women should determine the price of the product they produced, sell without intermediaries and produce the product they want in the amount they want. The women's cooperative model has arisen precisely out of these needs; women sell without intermediaries, and there is no indirect intermediary between their production and the buyer. In addition to offering a solidarity economy model, it creates a channel for the women who cannot access the sources and the market. On the other hand, women's cooperatives are economic enterprises that fair, adequate and equal wages can be earned for the women, usually working under unfair conditions precarious jobs for low wages. All these activities and financial processes can be regarded as an empowerment method that develops women's economic literacy, commercial skills, and capacities.

Thirdly, another important contribution of women's is that they constitute a labour organization. As mentioned above, many women who produce at home lack social security and the opportunity to organize. As a result of the lack of organized labour, piecework exportation relies on cheap prices, women get extremely low wages, and they are at any moment facing the threat of being unemployed (Alkan, 2000). Women's labour is seen as cheap and sacrificeable (White, 2015). Organizations such as women's cooperatives that hinge on social networks such as kinship and neighbourhood are found more reliable because they are based on a reciprocal relationship. According to White (2015, p. 39), "this is the reliability of reciprocal gratitude. Gratitude is a mean of exchange; that can be saved, stored, lost or gained depending on the circumstances." Women's cooperatives can be considered as an elementary form of small-scale production. Women's cooperatives, with their unique structure, have the characteristics of primary individual production at home and bring with it an organizational form based on mutual gratitude and articulated with solidarity. Women often produce for their friends, neighbours, relatives, and sometimes for their immediate surroundings in individual production (White, 2015). Social media that has been widely used recently can be added to this. In order to make a sale, women need a platform where they can display their labour. Creating such a platform is obviously more difficult when they are alone., but will be much easier for women who come together through different relationships. According to White

(2015), the question of how personal gain can coexist with collective reciprocity, solidarity, and mutual trust within a group remains unanswered. However, according to Parry and Bloch (1989), monetary relations are not seen as the antithesis of bonds of friendship; even they can be seen as a reward. Cooperatives worldwide have begun to be seen as one of the most effective ways for women to struggle against capitalism and patriarchy. From the perspective of women's empowerment which is a top priority among development goals, cooperatives fall within the functional organizations. In a field study conducted in Istanbul, it has been concluded that women's cooperatives provide the empowerment of women through their inner and joint power (Vural, 2013). Most of the time, women who are most affected by poverty and economic crises found solidarity economies and cooperatives to make their own living and gain economic and social power. These cooperatives not only meet women's economic needs but also meet their psychological, social and practical gender-related needs (Vural, 2013).

2.2. Strategic Services of Local Governments for Women

From the earliest times of history, women have been the ones who did not have a say about the city. Although women are the ones most affected by the decisions taken in cities, they cannot have a say in decision-making processes. In the Greek comedy of *Lysistrata – The Battle of the Sexes*, a male character says that "women cannot have an advice to give to the city (Aristophanes, 2000)." Women were always at home or near the house; they could not concern with anything more. How much the city and the decisions taken in the city affect women has always been ignored. Nowadays, women are, of course, not where they used to be, but they are still ignored at many points in local governments and processes of policy making. With the transition from government to governance, with the involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organizations in the decision-making and policy-making processes of the public sector, it has become relatively more possible for different groups to be involved in the decision-making process. Local governments possessed an independent power of influence with respect to the well-being of local community within such a governance network (Günlük Şenesen, Yakar Önal, Ergüneş, & Yakut Çakar, 2017). Therefore, local governments are critical for disadvantaged segments of the society. These institutions, whose main purpose is closely providing service to the

local community, have great importance regarding the supply of these needs and needs assessments for disadvantaged groups. Needless to say, women are also one of the groups that get direct benefits from local government. Also, as Semra Cerit Mazlum (2008) stated that from urban planning to determination of transportation lines, from charging of services to allocation of budget resources; from how to use the city land to waste collection and street lighting, those who are directly affected by all kinds of decisions and practices are primarily women. Therefore, regarding women-specific services, local governments have a lot of work to do.

As Alkan (2006) stated, defining the municipality services as a "gender-laden" field is crucial at this point. While there is gender-based inequality worldwide, ignoring this is also discrimination. Therefore, while providing services, local governments should consider that, in the current context, women and men are living under unequal conditions. In this sense, it is possible to say that there have been improvements; legislators have started to take specific measures that consider different and unequal positions of social groups, and they developed the practices of positive discrimination, affirmative action, and privileged opportunity (Alkan, 2006). In order to prevent these inequalities, it is crucial for local governments to develop projects for women and collaborate with women's organizations.

Another way of positive discrimination that should be applied until these unequal conditions disappear is women-specific municipal services.

As Alkan (2006, p. 30) mentions,

> In order for women to have easier daily lives, get stronger, and advance upon the position of 'equal citizenship,' some special service arrangements are necessary. We can consider those special (which are mostly not needed by men and not important or primary for men) services within the framework of affirmative action or supportive policies.

Actually, the services that local governments provide based on women's needs indirectly benefit all of society because these are not solely individual needs that only affect women but affect each household member. Of course, this situation does not trivialize women's individual needs; however, it is also necessary to see that women's needs have a social meaning.

While emphasizing the municipal services that address women's needs, another point that should be taken into consideration is the perspective of the local government. Whether the understanding of a municipality for providing services to women is composed of the services that only makes women's current lives easier or developing projects that will transform women's lives is a crucial distinction (Alkan, 2006). Services to facilitate women's current lives usually result from their domestic labour needs. The role assigned to women at home is meeting the needs of household members, and the related unequal and patriarchal division of labour puts heavy responsibilities on women's shoulders. From childcare to cooking, from shopping to elderly care, tangible and repetitive so many tasks have been left to the women's responsibilities. Under these circumstances, facilitating daily work becomes significant for women. However, these services do not develop a practice towards neither transforming and changing women's position in household nor functioning of the patriarchal system. It is crucial to mention the municipal services that aim to transform women and their lives, although they are few in number. Services aiming to transform women's position rather than meeting their needs related to their current position are highly important for preventing inequalities seen in all spheres of society. Expressing women's needs for this transformation as strategic needs, Alkan (2006, p. 34) states that

> The sharing of women's housework burdens and childcare by men and defining it as a social problem, preventing domestic maltreatment, and establishing new organization and participation mechanisms that will include women can be counted among such requirements.

Local governments should form strategic services for women to alter their own positions and develop activism against inequality and social pressure. It is relatively more difficult for local governments to develop services in this field than developing facilitator services because these strategic requirements are only based on women's experiences, and women do not widely speak them. Women's economic and social empowerment is a part of their strategic requirements. Beyond vocational and skill development training, services that will facilitate women in income-generating activities are precious in this sense. At this very point, it is highly important to evaluate the labor of women producing at home. According to Alkan (2006, p. 40), creating

joint production and marketing opportunities by taking into account women producing at home, and providing services of guidance, consultancy, training, financial and bureaucratic support in order for women to establish production and marketing cooperatives within this framework are the strategic services that local governments are supposed to provide to women. Through these services, local governments empower women economically and also create a public sphere for women whose life is just home, can exist. This public sphere also increases women's participation in the social and political processes; at the same time, a channel that enables the organization of women's labor is also opened. Realizing these successive achievements as local public service is vital for local governments.

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss two significant contributions of strategic services that have empowered women. Firstly, it provides public sphere opportunities for women through municipal services. Secondly, it promotes the participation of women in policy-making processes at the local level. These contributions are crucial in developing policies and providing services that address the demands and strategic needs of women. It involves working closely with women themselves and women's organizations to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

2.2.1. Public Sphere Opportunities for Women through Municipal Services

"Some women marry houses. It is another kind of skin (Sexton, 1962)*."*

The distinction between the private and public spheres itself appears as a gender-laden conceptualization from many perspectives. While the private sphere is mostly associated with women, the public sphere is considered the domain of men. As Alkan (1999, p. 76) states, "first ones of these, 'self-sacrifice/ selfishness, sensuality/ rationality and consociationalism/ combativeness' are attributed to the private sphere and women and second ones are attributed to the public sphere and men." As told both in ancient times of history and *Lysistrata*, women do not have a say in agora where public meetings are held (Aristophanes, 2000). As they do not have a say, their interest in the agora is also rejected by men. However, according to men, there is no problem for women to participate in various entertainments; the problem is having a say about the city. Agora is the name given to the market in Greek. This place where is the political, social and commercial focus of the community; a pretty wide field

surrounded with walls where farmers bring their products to make retail selling, business people get together with their friends and customers, the people's assembly is convened (Seidenberg & DeCrow, 1988). Women always had been excluded from the agora; this discrimination which has existed in every period of history appears by changing its periphery when it comes to the present. With the increase in suburbanization in cities, women have become even more isolated in homes far from each other. Agoraphobia, which is a type of disease, is related to the inability of people to leave a certain area that they find safe. Today, almost all agoraphobics are women. Seidenberg and Karen DeCrow (1988) describe agoraphobia as as the paradigm of historical intimidation and oppression of women.

> Agoraphobics are maybe the most uncompromising feminists. They do not content themselves with small donations or limited tolerance; they are not satisfied. They try to protect their pride by not stepping into the land they consider foreign and hostile because they sense that they are not welcomed in the outside world (Seidenberg & DeCrow, 1988, p. 15).

Discrimination that women experience in agora and the public sphere is also the very thing that renders them dependent and ineffective at her home. “If a woman's place is really her home, she will stay at home as much as she can. If the dependency of the woman in life is to live on behalf of someone else, who can be womanlier, who can be more feminine, other than an agoraphobic (Seidenberg & DeCrow, 1988, p. 45)?”

Unless these conditions under which women are subjected to discrimination change, women will continue to fear the agora, even if they are not excluded from the public sphere. Agoraphobic women can be cured not by medicine but by social transformation. When women's domestic labor is evaluated in absolute terms, and when it is easier for them to leave the house to do a job accepted and rewarded in every aspect, women will no longer need to be agoraphobic. Therefore, women need advancements that will pave the way for their presence in the public sphere and make them feel safe. Local governments can provide a basis for processes that facilitate women's leaving their homes through strategic services and develop alternative public spheres through workshops, meetings, and events where women will come together.

2.2.2. Participation of Women in Policy-Making Processes in Local

Locally, women are often excluded from decision-making mechanisms. As mentioned above, the distinction between private, public, and the political is kept distant from women. Most of the time, social patterns and traditional control mechanisms do not approve of women's participation in the political processes. When women overcome all these obstacles and try to participate in political processes, they are seen as inferior due to their lack of political experience. According to Alkan (2000, p. 22), even “the fact that the language used in administrative offices and in some decision or consultation meetings is debatable and authoritarian generally alienates women and causes them to remain silent.” Enabling women to participate in the policymaking processes should be seen as a result of local governments' principles of "co-management" and "multi-level governance". One of the most important phases of this is that women annunciate their own demands themselves. At the point of determining the local community’s demands, Alkan (2000) states that although we do not witness many studies regarding the determination of local necessities done in our country, in those studies, household surveys are generally done with the head of the family. Therefore, women's demands are not directly voiced. However, self-expression from first-hand is indispensable for women, not by word of mouth. According to Bora (2006) who states that different attitudes may be shown regarding the issue of how to meet those demands,

> Let us assume that, we will organize a bazaar and buy winter clothes for poor children with the money obtained. For this, the municipality willingly gives us a place, the governorship supports us, a local textile manufacturer agrees to donate. Now, imagine that we will establish a women's assembly; thus, we are aiming to ensure the participation of women in local political decisions and the representation of women's problems in local politics. How do you think that our stakeholders in the first example, governorship and local capital will react to this?

Bora (2006) claims that the stakeholders will not accept such an attempt that will disrupt power relations.

On this exact point, the actors that will affect and transform these power relations are local women's groups. Local governments are the ones who will develop the ways of

participation mechanisms that will facilitate the presence of women in public spheres and policymaking processes. While women's groups have the most accurate information about the current situation and needs in the areas where they live, by strengthening the physical infrastructure and social relations, they have assumed leadership all over the world to sustain their families and communities. Therefore, as "experts" who create solution methods for current problems and change the circumstances, applying to women at the grassroots have become highly important for local governments (KEDV, 2021).

2.3. The Relationship Between Civil Society and Local Government

The relationship between state institutions and civil society organizations has been the subject of different studies for many years. Civil society is almost never handled alone; its relations and conflicts always have an important place in the analysis of civil society. Even when discussing the definitions and categories of the concept of civil society, it is not possible to discuss it without its positioning vis-a-vis relative to the state, its effects on policies and the ways it is affected by policies. In fact, this also applies to the concept of the state. According to Jessop (2016), the best way to deal with the concept of the state is to examine it as a social relationship. It is very important to examine the relationship between civil society and the state not only to understand the structure of civil society but also to ensure democratization in administrations. According to Keane, the characteristic feature of civil society that makes it a civil society is its independence from the state (1993). According to Gümüş (2014), there cannot be a real civil society in a place where there is no neutral democratic state. According to Keyman (2006), a solid and effective civil society defines democracy with a minimal state, while a strong state creates either authoritarian or totalitarian political regimes depending on its approach to civil society (Konrad, 1989) (Cohen & Arato, 1992). Civil society organizations, by their existence, limit the oppressive interventions and power of states (Cohen, 1989). At the same time, reducing all this pressure makes significant contributions to the strengthening of communication between state and society as well as individuals (Keyman, 2006). According to Cohen (1989), the existence of an ideal civil society could only be possible with the neutrality of the state and the independence of civil society from the state. The issue that gains importance here is the forms of the state's relationship with civil society and local

groups. Jessop deals differently with the way the state relates to different groups. According to Jessop (2016), who considers the state as a structure consisting of different dimensions, the basic three dimensions are; modes of political representation, institutional ensemble and state intervention. He discusses the forms of representation, which he considers as one of the dimensions of the state, in five categories. These are clientelism, corporatism, parliamentarism, pluralism, raison d'état. Within these five types, two categories deemed important to be addressed in the context of the case study presented in this thesis are clientelism and pluralism. This is because explaining the forms of representation encountered in the relationship between the municipality and the women's cooperative seems more feasible through the lenses of clientelism and pluralism. Clientelism relies on political support by allocating resources according to the wishes of interest groups. Pluralism is a form of representation in which civil society-based groups are officially recognized by state apparatuses, and these groups have access to influence state apparatuses in political processes (Jessop, 2016).

One of the factors that significantly affect the civil society-state relationship is the networks developed among civil society organizations. It can be said that organizations that are often excluded from the political sphere cannot find a place in participation mechanisms and have limited relations with public institutions tend to act collectively (Tilly, 1978). Therefore, the expectations of collectively acting organizations from their relations with public institutions decrease, and organizations that are not in any major union or network focus on their relations with policy-making actors (Diani, 2015). When civil society and power relations are well-structured and functioned in harmony with the egalitarian structure, it can make significant contributions to both sides. Non-governmental organizations often become structures where important information is stored on behalf of society. Regular exchange of information with public institutions can provide essential outputs. The range of action of non-governmental organizations that have access to the public and key actors in the public sector expands significantly. In order to ensure long-term effective relations with non-governmental organizations, which often make demands from public institutions, it will be the most critical support to pave the way for civil society organizations at the point of policy production rather than material aid (Diani, 2015).

It seems very important to consider the book *Associations and Democracy* by Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers (1992), which evaluates the relationship between power and civil society from different perspectives, in order to shed light on the evaluation part of this thesis. Since the secondary associations term is used for civil society organizations and local organizations in the book, they will be discussed in that way here as well.

According to Cohen and Rogers (1992), civil society organizations play a central role in the politics of modern democratic societies. They make it easier to set the political agenda, to determine the elections from this agenda, to implement these elections (or to prevent their implementation), and to carry the preferences of individuals and groups into the political arena. These organizations limit the distortions produced by the states by providing egalitarianism within themselves and ensuring democratic politics.

Madison (1787)'s essay in the *10th Federalist Paper* contained a concept that would be debated for years to come. That concept was “Mischiefs of Faction”, which focused on the idea that groups with different wishes and desires prioritizing their own interests could put states in trouble (Madison, 1787). While using this concept, Madison basically refers to the groups in political parties. However, later this discussion was also used in the evaluations of the groups, that are also called secondary associations and which have become the new subjects of the public sphere as emphasized before. (Cohen & Rogers, 1992) (Uğuz & Yılmaz, 2020) Cohen and Roger (1992) offer solutions from three different political perspectives for this problem. First is the strategy of restraint from the perspective of neoliberal Constitutionalists. According to this perspective, while secondary associations contribute to the public interest, they can enjoy freedoms within the boundaries drawn in the constitution, with a minimal government commitment. Another proposal, from the perspective of Civic Republicanists, considers a more comprehensive state intervention than that of neoliberals.

In the perspective addressed as "insulation strategies" by Cohen and Rogers (1992), they often acknowledge that groups and organizations can contribute to public deliberation and the formulation of policies for the public good. However, they see

this as a secondary aspect. They acknowledge the importance of the information provided to the government by the groups and the impact of the proposed policy, but they approach all this with skepticism. Another suggestion is to consider the perspective of egalitarian pluralists as accommodation strategies. According to this perspective, groups are crucial primarily to effectively represent expectations and interests. The existence of these groups gives like-minded individuals the power to bargain with others. The capacity to represent these interests is of particular importance because of the contribution made by ideally egalitarian pluralistic political structures.

In light of all these perspectives, Cohen and Roger point to certain aspects for creating an appropriate environment to prevent the mischief of factions. Cohen and Roger say they agree with neoliberal constitutionalists on the importance of self-regulation and cohesion, and the importance of competent and accountable government by which economic performance can be evaluated. Again, the ideas of egalitarian pluralists about the importance of equality in representation and decision making are also emphasized by Cohen and Roger (1992). However, they also think that it is necessary to pay attention to the opinions of different groups that they may pose a threat to their own ends.

In fact, the most important concept used by Cohen and Roger (1992) is the concept of associated democracy, which will be an output of all these solutions from different perspectives developed for the mischiefs of faction. In fact, this concept is basically based on the ideal of democratic governance. The essence of this ideal is that the members of society should be treated equally while determining the basic conditions for the cooperation between the state and different groups, that is, social cooperation. Moreover, this idea of governance points to a society of equals that includes all actors who govern and are governed. For such a democratic governance, Cohen and Roger argue that various norms must have been accepted. The first of these norms is popular sovereignty. A fundamental feature of a democratic order is that individuals have ultimate authority in determining the terms of partnerships between individuals. Popular sovereignty requires these groups to have the necessary resources to control and influence state interventions within limits set by fundamental freedoms. Another important norm for democratic governance is political equality. When political

equality is truly implemented, it requires the removal of legal or other official barriers preventing or limiting political participation. In addition, it prevents unfair forms of political representation and discrimination. Another norm is civic consciousness. In an egalitarian-democratic order, political decision-making processes should be through negotiations. Of course, the opinions of different groups from different perspectives can be made a part of the decision-making processes in a way that will put the public interest first. In addition to all these, according to Cohen and Roger (1992), an indispensable norm of democratic governance is competent government. According to them, a competent government contributes directly to the general welfare and to the fulfilment of the condition of popular sovereignty.

In an associative democracy guided by all these norms, groups can contribute to state practices and interventions in many ways. One of the most crucial contributions is knowledge. In fact, the most critical thing for all government interventions is to access relevant data and information in order to adjust policies according to changing conditions and behaviors. These groups can provide policymakers with information on their local orientation, the impact of implemented and proposed legislation, or the implementation of existing law. Another important contribution of secondary associations is equalizing representation. In fact, as a result of the fact that the political sphere is mostly represented by certain groups in relation to the economic sphere, and as a result of social inequalities, certain groups often are not represented or under-represented in political processes. In order to prevent this under-representation, individuals and groups who cannot individually represent themselves come together and create representation channels, which can help to eliminate this unequal representation. On the other hand, these groups can use their own institutional capacities to transform into a "schools of democracy" in the words of Roger and Cohen (1992). The competencies and self-confidence of individuals can increase in parallel with the development of in-group participation ways. Above all, secondary associations can constitute and promote distinctive social governance or various alternative forms of governance as an alternative to market or public hierarchies.

As a result, the basic principle underlined by Cohen and Roger (1992) in this proposed idea of associative democracy is to prevent the politics made through different interest groups while making the contributions of such groups visible to egalitarian-democratic

governance. This understanding suggests moving from the point of view that supports these groups by expanding egalitarian-democratic norms instead of dividing different groups in state interventions.

In line with this framework they present, when examining the relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Women's Cooperative, which are discussed within the scope of this thesis, it is very important to what extent Cohen and Roger's concept of associative democracy can be realized, and it is essential to identify which perspectives they offer can be pursued in this specific case.

As a result of the globalization developed in response to the challenges in world trade in the post-1980 era, states activated decision-making mechanisms in collaboration with civil society organizations and the private sector (Akdoğan, 2016). These decision-making mechanisms, called governance, increased the importance of local governments. The concept of governance, especially in the local context, involves the interaction between various stakeholders, including government bodies, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, to manage and address collective issues. Governance approaches gain importance for local governments due to the increasing complexity of local challenges, the demand for citizen engagement, and the need for efficient and accountable management of resources and services. Due to this globalization process and governance regimes/types, states started to delegate their authority and responsibilities to the local governments, especially with the Europeanization process (Akdoğan, 2016). This delegation of authority was considered as a democratization step when the affinity of local governments to the public had been taken into account. Şengül (2009) Şengül considers this democratization process as the transition from local government to governance after the inadequacy of the state-market separation. The distinction between the public sector (state) and the private sector (market), which is generally associated with classical economic theories, is inadequate to explain many situations encountered in today's world.

With the transformation highlighted by Şengül (2009), the tripartite sectoral structure, comprising local government, local capital, and civil society organizations, has gained importance.

While addressing local governments, it should be stated that different paradigms indeed approach local governments in different ways. In Şengül (2009)'s endeavour to theorize local governments, pluralist paradigm, Weberian paradigm and Marxist paradigm comes to the forefront. The impact of individuals and groups is at the pluralist paradigm's focus. According to this paradigm, the state and decentralization are not sole decision-makers; instead in the position of adjudicator within the disputes in urban environments and markets (Şengül, 2009). This approach is accepted as the most common approach when considering its historical development. The state is considered where power is concentrated in the Weberian paradigm in its own right. Within this approach, common two different opinions can be mentioned. The first evaluates the local governments as the local extensions of central administration that shares its responsibilities. The second view, while accepting this division of responsibility, also emphasizes the contradiction between local government and central government. The class-centred Marxist paradigm emerged as a critique of the above two paradigms. Following this criticism, claiming that class contradictions are overlooked, two different views have gained importance. To be more precise, local governments are actually nothing more than an extension of the integrated state structure, and they have no authenticity in themselves, according to the instrumental approach that is the first of these views (Cockburn, 1977). Concerning the structuralist approach, the local state is still a part of the capitalist state apparatus, but this apparatus should not be regarded as an ordinary extension (Şengül, 2009). The urban sphere is where collective consumption is organized, so a relative authenticity is attributed to the local governments (Castells, 1983)(Şengül, 2009).

When examining the local governments considering these paradigms, it is seen that the concepts such as "participatory democracy", "active citizen", "civil initiative" and "civil society organization" gain prominence. The public sphere that Şengül mentions, which consists of the relationship of this tripartite sector, as Uğuz and Yılmaz (2020) put it, is constructed by representative democracy has a conflicting structure arising from the race between the different actors it contains. Evaluating the local public sphere that involves many different actors from the tripartite sector with Bourdieu's concepts of field and game will contribute to understanding the ongoing confrontational structure in the field and the relational process that is the subject of the

thesis. Therefore, the field concept will simplify discovering the invisible relationships that shape all these structures behind the visible structures. According to Swartz (1997, p. 119), "Bourdieu who talks about the field instead of populations, groups, organizations and institutions, wants to draw attention to implicit patterns of interest and conflict that shape these empirical realities."

Bourdieu (1992) defines the field as a network of objective relations between the positions constituting that field and the actors involved in those positions. According to Öztimur (2007), each field has its own organizing principles and is a space where struggle over different forms of capital continues. When it comes how to evaluate the actors in fields, Bourdieu benefits from the struggle between actors in order to reveal the hierarchical structure of the fields and determines the position of every actor based on the situations of other ones within the same field (Kaya, 2016). Each field has its own rules, and beyond that, all fields may actually have common determinant rules. However, Bourdieu uses the game analogy for the rules special to fields. As Calhoun (2007) also expresses, each field has its own game rules and rewards. All these games point out the battles given in the fields. In each field, actors battle in different ways according to the game's rules. According to Calhoun (2007), when this game is politics, the actors seek power. The rewards of different games also shape the ways in which actors delimit the field and preserve its autonomy. The existence of a field is formed through the participation of a sufficient number of actors in a social game. This social game, rather than being a game with established rules, takes shape around a reward that is the outcome of the competition among players (Diken, 1997) (Tatlıcan & Çeğin, 2007). Within the context of this thesis, the struggle for power in the local public sphere is significant. This includes the conflict between the current sovereign power and those who seek to replace it, as well as the conflict between civil society actors who are entering the local public sphere and those who already have policymaking mechanisms in place. According to Kaya (2016), there is a continuous struggle concerning the definition of the capital and distribution monopoly between the newcomers of the field and the dominant class that has hegemony over specific capital of the field. In this struggle, actors use different strategies such as conservation or subversion (Atkinson, 2021). Most of the time, the dominant actors who have power in the field are closed to change; if a change is inevitable, they prefer a change under

their control with avoiding surprises. These struggles in the field occur within the game through the actors' capitals intrinsic to the field. The most important types of capital that Bourdieu basically deals with are economic capital, social capital and cultural capital. Within all these types of capital, social capital that includes networks of institutionalized relations comes to the forefront when the struggle in the local public sphere is considered.

On this exact point, it will be possible to handle many problems, conflicts, struggles and partnerships together with the concept of field. According to Bourdieu, there are as many fields as there are interests (Swartz, 1997). The main fields that will be discussed here are the local public sphere, political sphere, and civil society. According to Tekeli (1997) (2009), although a local political sphere has been defined in Turkey, a public sphere corresponding to this political sphere has not been organized, and for the construction of such a public sphere, this sphere must first be free from the influence of the central government. According to Bourdieu, different fields should be less dependent on the political field and politics to maneuver themselves and build their own symbolic systems (Kaya, 2016). The coexistence of civil society and the political sphere is an endeavour to organize a public sphere together. According to Uğuz and Yılmaz (2020), the field where these different fields come together is a more comprehensive public sphere where two different powers coexist, with a political power that gains its validity from the representation mechanism and two different powers owing to their validity to the consensus between many small public spheres. Expectations and goals of the civil society are not conflicting with the political sphere or encompass the public sphere entirely. Therefore, this conflicting relationship between local actors stems from the fact that local governments regard new actors entering the local public sphere as dangerous. In many times, civil society aims to increase participation; raise the voice of different groups through representation channels and sustain pluralism.

Throughout the thesis, the relationship between local governments and civil society is discussed from a field perspective. However, in order to better understand the tensions experienced by the women's cooperative, Young's concept of oppression is used. This is particularly relevant when examining the strategies employed by the local government. While examining this local "field" where various struggles take place,

games are played, the powerfull and power are talked about, it is very important to examine Young's concept of oppression, which is also mentioned in the introduction part of the thesis. While doing this, although they criticize each other to a certain extent, considering Nancy Fraser's concepts of recognition, distribution and representation will be helpful when examining the relationship between local government and civil society.

It is worth emphasizing that the relationship between local governments and civil society is a serious determinant in terms of strengthening the capacity of civil society or restricting civil society, which points to the main claim of the thesis. Young (1990) defines oppression as the institutional constraint on developing and exercising one's capacities ad the institutional constraint on self- determination.

As Fracer (1995) stated, instead of classifying oppressions in terms of who suffers them, and thus, distinguishing such varieties as sexism, racism, ableism and homophobia, Young classifies different types of capacity-inhibition. In Young (1990)'s definition, oppression consists in systematic institutional processes which prevent some people from learning and using satisfying and expansive skills in socially recognized settings, or institutional processes which inhibit people's ability to play and communicate with others or to express their feelings and perspectives on social life in contexts where others can listen. In this sense, the concept of oppression as a barrier to capacity strengthening constitutes an important conceptual background for this thesis.

Young argues that five different forms of oppression could be observed in a relationship between political actors and cooperatives. According to Young (1990), who believes that people are not always oppressed by only tyrants, in many cases, liberal societies that seem well-intentioned cause system-wide restrictions on groups and limit their freedom. The pressure created by governments could be the result of unquestioned and ignored norms and policies. Moreover, these social rules can eventually turn into a structure that restricts and prevents groups.

According to Young (1990), there are five types of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. The first of these five types, exploitation, is the unfair use of people's labour for profit. Fair wages are

not paid to many of the people who sell their labor for a wage, and even if the wages increase, considering the money earned by the companies, it is revealed how unfair the wages of the employees are. As such, exploitation creates a system that maintains capitalism as a means of oppression exerted by groups that own the means of production on those who do not. Another form of oppression is marginalization. Marginalization is the process of reducing a certain group or groups to a lower social status or excluding them from society. In fact, in a sense, it can be seen as an act of limitation in general. According to Young, this type of oppression can be even worse than exploitation because ultimately these people are excluded in such a way that they cannot even use their labor. People could be marginalized by many different factors such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation. Marginalized people are removed from public spheres and social life, and they cannot participate in political processes at the same time. As a result of marginalization, these groups experience significant deprivation and poverty.

Another critical form of oppression is powerlessness. This is how the powerless people are under the command of the powerful groups and are exposed to injustices due to this unequal power relationship, conceptualized in this way by Young (1990). According to this type of oppression, people who are seen as powerless are often unable to participate in the fundamental democratic processes and decision-making mechanisms, or they think that there is no point in participating. In a sense, this also means that the disempowered groups cannot see their own strength and will. In this form of oppression, the oppressed are completely silenced through disempowerment, and even the injustices became unspeakable. The fourth oppression form is cultural imperialism. This form of oppression is basically based on taking the culture of the ruling class and accepting it as the norm. Powerful actors control the experiences, beliefs, cultural activities of society. They accept their own values as normal and the rest as abnormal. Those oppressed by cultural imperialism are both labelled as others and made to feel like a minority. This causes a large part of the society to be a marginalized group. Finally, violence is the most visible form of oppression. These forms of violence sometimes take place for no apparent reason. With the increasing violence, different groups are kept under pressure by being intimidated and humiliated. Violence can take many forms and is more likely to arise from differences, from the

hostility of different groups and their different traditions. Young's fivefold categorization is treated as a bipartite schema by Fracer (1995):

> Some oppressions (exploitation, maginalization and powerlessness) are rooted in political economy; others (cultural imperialism and violence) are rooted in culture. Again, Young herself does not make this distinction. But for my purposes it will be useful to develop it. Let me therefore introduce the following terminology: those instances of oppression that are rooted in political economy I shall call "economically-rooted oppressions." Those that are rooted in culture, in contrast, I shall call "culturally-rooted oppressions (p. 176)."

Fracer (2005) believes that the dimensions of recognition and distribution are not sufficient to describe gender inequality, and includes representation as a third dimension into this framework. According to Fracer (2005),

> Representation is not only a matter of ensuring equal political voice for women in already constituted political communities. In addition, it requires reframing disputes about justice that cannot be properly contained within established polities. In contesting misframing, therefore, transnational feminism is reconfiguring gender justice as a threedimensional problem, in which redistribution, recognition, and representation must be integrated in a balanced way (p. 305).

While discussing the relationship between local governments and civil society, the importance of forms of representation was explained. For this reason, the dimension of representation emphasized by Fracer, especially when the gender dimension is included, becomes crucial in examining the relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and the Potlaç Cooperative, which is the subject of the thesis. In the following sections, it will be explored how women's cooperatives, particularly the Potlaç Cooperative, respond to the described forms of oppression and various injustices they encounter.

2.3.1. The Relationship Between Women's Cooperatives and Local Government in Turkey

The movement of women's cooperatives in Turkey started in the 2000s with the support of Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW).

FSWW started to study on women's cooperatives for providing a movement area for them in the disaster area under challenging conditions after the 1999 Marmara Earthquake. Today thanks to the cooperative studies that continued in Diyarbakır, Mardin and İstanbul following the establishment of that very first one, there are more than 940 women's cooperatives in Turkey (Şahankaya Adar, Dedeoğlu, & Kurtuluş , 2023). women's cooperatives are considered as an ideal need-based organizational model for women struggling with poverty in Turkey (Vural, 2013). The most crucial factor that affected women's cooperative process and the subsequent studies is the support of local governance (Kazar, 2019). Not surprisingly women's cooperatives make significant contributions to local governments through their local studies in return. Those contributions were mentioned in detail in the previous section.

Women's cooperatives in Turkey, with the way they are defined and the services they produce, are the first examples in Turkey of the "social cooperative" model that has become widespread in the world. In many European countries, central and local governments responsible for childcare and education services support family initiatives and cooperatives to substitute those services; instead of providing them directly. There is no legislation in Turkey framing the relationship between social enterprises such as women's cooperatives and local governments. However, as it happens in practice, municipalities and women's cooperatives collaborate with the protocol authority given to the municipal council due to the relationships they developed. The legal framework regulating these cooperations at the level of ministries draws a protocol based on the strengthening of women's cooperatives, signed by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Trade Municipalities and women's cooperatives have so far signed and implemented joint working protocols in many different areas, from allocating land for the operation of cooperatives to providing care (early childhood and on-site elderly care) services. Another collaboration method that needs to be developed, especially within the framework of these collaborations, is that municipalities' purchases from women's cooperatives according to their own service procurement procedures.

The problem and constraint in the relation between women's cooperatives and local governments can definitely be considered as a consequence of the power conflicts

between the local political sphere and civil society. As seen in practice, based on the interviews I held with women's cooperatives and local governments during my working period at FSWW, the problems between the municipality and women's cooperatives are generally due to this relationship's hierarchical and unequal nature. Municipalities support women's cooperatives at certain times, but this support is often far from sustainable. The attitudes of local governments that intervene from above and do not recognize the autonomous structure of cooperatives cause these relationships to decrease or break completely. Again, in Turkey, local governments consider women's cooperatives as a group of women who just come together for their hobbies or profit, and it is ignored that women's cooperatives are organizational structures. Because the cooperatives are not considered organized structures, they cannot get access to political processes and participation mechanisms or have limited access. These relationships, which cannot be maintained with equal stakeholder relationships, are often established personally and cannot be institutionalized. For the municipalities, including advancements about the women's cooperatives to their strategic plans through the projects about gender equality, the women cooperatives can be perceived as projects of municipal managements instead of self-organized groups locally. Moreover, in this case, these women's cooperatives are most affected by the managerial changes.

Actually, management changes are regarded as a significant handicap, not only for the cooperatives established by the municipalities or will be established by the municipalities but also for many cooperatives. When there is management change, if there is clientelist relation that is far from equal stakeholder relations and institutionalism, the cooperatives are considered as the project of the previous period and they are ignored, or the support given is completely cut off. In one of the interviews conducted with cooperatives within the scope of Kazar (2019)’s doctoral thesis, there are introductory statements regarding how management changes affect cooperatives:

> We are conducting the studies together with local governments. We consult them, they consult us. For this reason, every time the local government changes, my heart is in my mouth. Our cooperative building belongs to the municipality. If they take the building away from us, we cannot rise an objection. We would

> have to close the cooperative because in this sense, we are poor people. We demand the legalization of this situation (p. 135).

Unsurprisingly and unfortunately, sentences identical to this quote were expressed by women from the Potlaç Women's Cooperative and will be included in the findings section.

CHAPTER 3

FIELDWORK: KADIKÖY MUNICIPALITY- POTLAÇ WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE

3.1. Genealogy of Potlaç Project

3.1.1. Emergence and the Purpose of Potlaç Project

American native people had a specific name for their exchange festivals: Potlaç. It basically means feeding and consuming, as Mauss (2018) explains in detail in his work titled *An Essay on Donation* Potlaç as a culture is instituted on the actions of giving, receiving and returning. Again, according to Mauss, the authentic side of the Potlaç becomes meaningful when these actions are aimed at other people rather than their own families or people from their own tribes. Anyone wishing to participate in the exchange, namely Potlaç, in these cultures should be invited. One could easily say that as a project of Kadıköy Municipality, Potlaç has a similar content and objectives.

Potlaç started as a project where the municipality provided women of Kadıköy, who wish to earn a certain amount of income, with a place to sell their handicraft products. The primary aim of the project is expressed as to ensure that the women of Kadıköy come together with strong solidarity. The project, which finds it valuable that the woman asks for help from her friend when she deems it necessary, rather than from someone else, can be seen as an effort to create an economically-based women's network in the local area. From its inception, one of the foremost goals of the project has been to emancipate women by liberating them from dependency on their husbands' income or family care, and by providing economic and social contributions to those endeavoring to exist independently. Potlaç Project was designed to support women with training in commercial activities as well as providing a place to sell their products. Women who can sell well produce more, and women who produce more become stronger with their social and economic dimensions.

3.1.2. Development of the Project

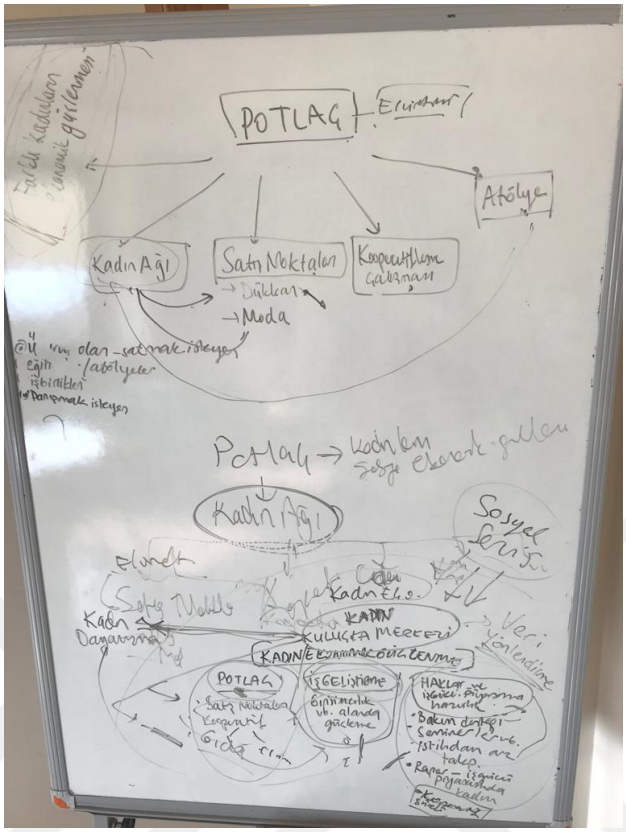


***Figure** 1 A mind mapping visual made by municipality employees at the very beginning of the Potlaç Project, while the project was being designed.*

In 2015, women of Kadıköy and women's organizations came together in a forum to address their problems and demands. The most strongly voiced demand were the valuation/ valuing of their labour, the provision of education services, the provision of places such as a free marketplace for at least one day a week, the creation of spaces where women can increase their economic power, and to participate in the production. According to the results of the forum, women were looking for a place where they could generate income for their homes. In line with all these demands, one of the targets set within the scope of the Local Equality Action Plan was “creating income for women from Kadıköy”. Consequently, the Potlaç unit was launched at the Marketplace application for women on the Moda beach in 2016. With the emergence of Potlaç as a handicraft market project, it turned into a more functional and comprehensive service as a result of the demands and directions of the users. It can be

said that the project basically continued on four areas throughout its duration as a municipality project.



***Figure** 2 A brochure from the beginning of the Potlaç project*



***Figure** 3 A view from the first women's labor market in Moda*

The first of these was the handicraft market, which formed the basis of the project. In the marketplace located on the beach of Moda, women from Kadıköy and women's organizations carry out their sales collectively. With the rotation rule, product diversity is provided on the one hand, and it is aimed not to prevent competition from getting in the way of selling in solidarity on the other hand. Thus, while different products are provided on the counters, more women are given the opportunity to open a stand. At the same time, while determining the women at the stands, experienced Potlaç women and new participant in to the project are paired and tried to develop a natural harmony process.

It can be said that the project has evolved into a more comprehensive organization with the increase in demands for the marketplace. A shop was opened in Caddebostan Cultural Center due to the need for an area where women can display their products both in summer and winter. Women from Kadıköy left five products in circulation and

sold them to this shop. Volunteering women from Potlaç were responsible for opening and closing the shop, controlling the sales, taking and returning the products to the shop along with only one stuff from the municipality. For one or two days a month, women voluntarily worked in the shop to sell and protect the products of other women from Potlaç. The shop was run by volunteer women in a systematic order. Products were sold with a receipt with tax exemption. However, the exemption was later cancelled, and it became one of the points that women felt most uncomfortable in the process of becoming a cooperative. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Potlaç Workshop was established as a result of an important need brought by the process itself. The specialization and training of women, who are trying to produce and sell, is an important detail for the healthy functioning of the process.

In addition to the training sessions, meetings named "2 out of 1" were initiated at Potlaç Workshop, where municipal employees and women from Potlaç would come together. These meetings provided a platform for women to directly convey their suggestions and guidance regarding the project to municipal employees. Since these gatherings constituted a structure where women from different socio-cultural groups and age ranges came together, discussions could also extend to topics beyond Potlaç. Ultimately, it can be said that these meetings served as a representation channel between Potlaç women and the municipality. These "2 out of 1" meetings later expanded to larger venues with increased participation, occasionally featuring the attendance of the mayor or deputy mayor.

With the survey conducted in the field, it was determined in which fields women would like to receive training primarily, and training was started in groups accordingly. In order to accelerate the production processes of women and to guide the newcomers, workshops are held on the production of various products, accompanied by trainers.

Women from different NGOs or different courses also participate in these workshops and tell their groupmates what they have learned in different municipalities or associations. With this feature, Potlaç ceased to be a service provided only to women from Kadıköy but also made its voice heard to women from different districts and different civil society organizations.



***Figure** 4 A work carried out in the Potlaç Workshop*

As one of the training options in the above-mentioned survey, cooperatives became one of the most important issues for the municipality in that process. The municipality supported women's cooperatives in order to ensure the sustainability of this system, which is based on cooperatives and manual labour, and to make women more organized in cooperative forms. Therefore, women who formed cooperatives would be able to earn more economically, and due to their legal title, they would be able to participate in the tenders of the municipality in the fields of production and receive grants. Hence, this option has been added to the options with the initiative of the municipality. In 2017, 140 women in the Potlaç Women's Solidarity Network took part in cooperative activities. As of 17, focus meetings were held with 140 women in groups of five people.98 women participated in focus meetings. An information meeting on the general cooperation process was held under the leadership of FSWW (Foundation for the Support of Women's Work) for women who will take part in the cooperative process, which was determined during the 10-week focus meetings.

After these meetings, women came to a conclusion as to whether they would be in the cooperative process or not. 44 women who wanted to take part in the first stage took their place in the cooperation process. Contributions from various and different perspectives to the working areas of the cooperative were presented by women.

Women recorded all these suggestions and opinions, and they paved the way for the functioning of the process and the formation of an action plan.

Directly, approximately 40 women came together on April 28 and May 2 with the meeting agendas they organized independently of the facilitation of the municipality. However, among the newly retired women who had already worked for years, those who did not want to enter a new working process did not want to attend the meetings. As of 2018, the Potlaç Cooperative initiative started to meet again with some changes and with the same agenda as of February. In pursuit of nearly one-year work, the process of becoming a cooperative was initiated with nine women, who participated mentally and physically from 44 people that had received cooperative education.

With the completion of the cooperative, the provision of all services in the Potlaç project, including the Caddebostan Cultural Center Potlaç Sales Shop, by the cooperative would be supported by a protocol. In February 2019, the establishment of the Potlaç Women's Cooperative was completed. And right after that, a protocol was signed between the municipality and the Potlaç Women's Cooperative. Within the scope of the protocol, the Caddebostan Cultural Center shop and four of the shops in Feneryolu belonging to the municipality were allocated to the cooperative. The opening of the cooperative and the protocol signed with the municipality was announced at the March 8 Women's Day event.

3.1.2.1. New Developments Immediately Following the Change in Municipality Management (2019-2021)

Şerdil Dara Odabaşı, who was the mayor candidate at that time, also attended the March 8 event and the opening ceremony of the cooperative, which was held on the date approaching the local government elections. However, the fact that he was present at the event with the women from the CHP Kadıköy district women's branch worried the members of the Potlaç cooperative because of a possible political tension. In this process, there were concerns about the difficulties of the processes with the coming of the new management, both among the women who were involved in the cooperative work and the other women in the network. However, women who became as cooperatives overcame these concerns by thinking that they could act more

autonomously, independent of the municipality, with the separate legal personality they would acquire.

While waiting for the change of management, Şerdil Dara Odabaşı and women from cooperatives met in a tea garden. However, the meeting was quite tense compared to the women in the cooperative, and Mr Odabaşı stated that he had expectations from the cooperative regarding her own project. The meeting with Mr Odabaşı, who stated that he wanted to provide catering services for the postpartum women and that he would "make the cooperative do it", finished before coming to completion as the plans of the cooperative did not coincide with the plans of the mayoral candidate.

In the elections on March 31, 2019, as anticipated, a change in management occurred, and Şerdil Dara Odabaşı was elected as the new mayor of Kadıköy Municipality. Subsequently, as Odabaşı would later express, Potlaç Women's Cooperative was considered the last act of the previous management. As a result of the interviews performed, it was stated that the Potlaç Women's Cooperative was declared the scapegoat by the new management. Women from the cooperative expressed that they began to feel that they were seen as collaborators of the old management and as a group of women in conflict with the new management.

In the meantime, the cooperative asked the municipality to make a separate protocol for the start of the kiosks at Moda which are opened every year towards the summer months. The opening of the kiosks was postponed due to the failure of the processes. When Potlaç women put pressure on the cooperative regarding Moda kiosks, the cooperative announced an open letter regarding this unclear attitude of the municipality and the opening of Moda kiosks. After a while, the municipality announced that Moda kiosks would be opened by them, although they were transferred to the cooperative by protocol. This situation was expressed as a process that undermines trust in the municipal management. As a result of the protracted processes, the kiosk works, which started in May every year, could only be done towards the end of July. Along with this process, the cooperative predicted that the municipality could make changes in the protocol signed with the former management. During the meeting with the Director of Social Support Services, it was stated that the protocol might not be implemented as signed. Thus, changes in the protocol were requested due to budget

constraints. In one of the repeated meetings, it was brought to the agenda that the municipality would ask for rent after one year, but the cooperative reacted to the situation. In the fourth meeting, the cooperative showed a clear stance by saying, in the words of the women interviewed, "*We cannot make any more concessions(W14)*." At this point, the cooperative had to express that the cooperative could no longer continue with these difficulties. As a matter of fact, an agreement was reached upon taking positive steps at the last meeting. With the new protocol, the number of shops allocated to the cooperative by the municipality was requested to be reduced to two. Cooperative women accepted the new protocol after the difficulties experienced.

According to the members of the cooperative, the process was carried out unilaterally, as there was a patronage relationship between the municipality and the cooperative. Women stated that they saw how important the autonomous women's unit independent from the administration was since other cooperatives also maintain similar dependent relations with municipalities.

During the first "2 out of 1" meeting with the new management, the revision and re-signing of the protocol made with the previous management was the first item on the agenda. In this meeting held on July 10, 2019, women from Potlaç Cooperative introduced themselves and the cooperative, and future plans were conveyed to women from Potlaç. The revised protocol was signed again in a crowded meeting held months after the first protocol was signed between the women's cooperative and the municipality. Women from Potlaç Network, unaware of the cooperative and the process, complained at the meeting about their ignorance about the previous process. At the same time, the fact that there was a separate legal entity brought about by the cooperative process would have ended the tax exemption status. The women also expressed that they were uncomfortable with this fact and that they wanted to continue selling with exemption certificates. However, not implementing this taxation was not an alternative that the Cooperative could choose; it was a consequence of the regulations that had to be adhered to. Yet, due to insufficient articulation of these legal requirements to the women in the Potlaç Network, they were having difficulty understanding the changing conditions. With the growing tension, women who were against this attitude of the cooperative in the Potlaç Women's Network organized, choosing representatives from among themselves and went to meet with Mr Odabaşı.

During the meeting, Mr Odabaşı stated, in the words of the women interviewed, that a meeting would be held: “Everyone can pour the stones on their skirts there(W18)”. Women from the Potlaç Women's Network against cooperative management predicted that Mr Odabaşı thought like them.

In this process, women with cooperatives held five open meetings to explain the cooperative and the developing processes and met with more than 200 women. On the other hand, the cooperative requested the previously mentioned 2 out of 1 meeting organized by the municipality in order to share the process of becoming a cooperative with other women in the Potlaç network. Because the process of becoming a cooperative had just been completed, but the Potlaç Network, which included thousands of women, was not fully in control of the process. The meeting, which was intended to explain both the process and the cooperative, was cancelled five times by the municipality due to the intensity of their agenda. For this reason, the cooperative, which could not hold the meeting, was in a difficult situation and could not adequately explain itself and the process to the women in its networks.

After a few months, the 2 out of 1 meeting held in October 2019 was held in a tense manner for all parties with the participation of Mr Odabaşı. After this tense meeting, cooperative works started on the activities in the protocol, and preparations were made for the opening of one of the shops in Feneryolu as a cafe. The municipality made their various purchases, such as souvenirs produced from the Potlaç Cooperative.

In this process, while the preparations of the cooperative in Feneryolu were just completed, restrictions came suddenly due to the COVID-19 pandemic that started in March 2020, and the cooperative became unable to run both cafes and workshops. With restrictions eased, the cafe became operational but still could not earn enough income to support the cooperative. In the process, communication problems arose with women both inside and outside the cooperative, brought about by the pandemic. In this respect, women from the cooperative stated that they could not adequately explain the cooperative to the women in the Potlaç Network and that sufficient communication could not be established.

The relations that turned into a crisis with the new management have significantly hindered Potlaç Women's Cooperative's internal communication, the activities they

intended to carry out, and their communication with women from the Potlaç Network. This situation will be discussed in detail in the evaluation section and it will be explained how it prevents the cooperative from developing their capacity.

3.1.2.2. Developments at Potlaç Cooperative Alongside the Normalized Relationship with the Municipality (2021-2023)

During the pandemic period, all sectors and activities were profoundly affected, impacting both municipal administrations and local organizations (TÜSEV, 2020). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on civil society organizations is undoubtedly a vast research topic beyond the scope of this thesis. However, considering the period covered in the thesis, it is undeniable that the pandemic influenced both the Potlaç Women's Cooperative and civil society organizations.

According to a survey conducted by the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV) with 141 civil society organizations after the onset of pandemic restrictions, 78% of the participating organizations reported that the pandemic affected their events such as seminars, conferences, and exhibitions. Additionally, 60% mentioned the impact on educational activities. Furthermore, 39% of respondents indicated the effect on fundraising activities, 38% on fieldwork and service center closures, and 16% on advocacy activities. The survey revealed that 16% of NGOs reported a complete cessation of all activities (TÜSEV, 2020).

During this period, Potlaç Women’s Cooperative, which already had a strained relationship with the municipality, had to temporarily halt its activities, cancel workshops, sales stands, and keep the CKM Shop closed.

Many civil society organizations had to cancel or postpone projects and activities due to pandemic restrictions, leading to financial challenges. Nevertheless, civil society organizations adapted to pandemic conditions and continued their services with different alternatives. (European Economic and Social Committee, 2021) According to report of, 73% of participating organizations developed new methods to reach beneficiaries, 45% sought new grants/funding, and 36% established collaborations with different stakeholders (TÜSEV, 2020).

Potlaç Women's Cooperative also tried to continue its activities during this period by starting a take-away service at Potlaç Cafe, which was activated with difficulties. At the same time, they started to use social media more actively to make visible the handmade products produced by women confined to their homes.

With the normalization of pandemic conditions, Potlaç Women's Cooperative continued their work to carry out their activities that they had to suspend. When discussing the normalization of the pandemic, it is not incorrect to mention that the relationship between the municipal management and the Potlaç Women's Cooperative also entered a normalization process, becoming less tense. However, women from the cooperative express that they owe this to their behaviour in accordance with hierarchical relations. Despite the restrictions, the cooperative tries to run the shop and strengthen its organization by recruiting new partners with the workshops they are trying to expand.

In this process, in mid-2021, through the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work, negotiations with the municipality and Potlaç Cooperative regarding On-Site Elderly Care Studies began. Mr Odabaşı stated that he wanted to work with the existing Potlaç Cooperative since there would be new difficulties in establishing a new cooperative for the work that proceeds through the purchase of the home care services provided by the municipality through the women's cooperative. Although this project did not materialize due to Potlaç Women's Cooperative not being involved in the process, the preference for working with Potlaç Women's Cooperative after considering alternatives such as establishing different cooperatives or collaborating with different groups, and the partial recognition of the existence of the cooperative could be considered a turning point from the perspective of the municipality.

Potlaç Women's Cooperative continued its activities in the Potlaç Shop allocated by the municipality in Feneryolu, where women continued to showcase and sell their products. The cooperative started covering the shop's needs that were previously fully covered by the municipality. The capacity was further increased under different projects, and new assets were acquired for the Shop. Expanding its scope with Potlaç Workshop, the cooperative, with the support of the municipality, initiated workshops

and events for individuals with special needs, highlighting earthquake solidarity activities and knitting campaign.

The Moda Handicraft Market, began to be held almost entirely with the organization of the cooperative. In addition to these organizations, which were later started to be held in Feneryolu, the Potlaç Cooperative started to create additional sales areas for women with events such as the Mother's Day Festival, New Year's Festival, and Hıdırellez Festival.

***Table** 1 Some figures regarding the activities of the Potlaç Women's Cooperative since its establishment*

Potlaç Network and Women's Cooperative Works	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Members of Potlaç Network	1326 Women	1359 Women	1414 Women	1610 Women	1745 Women
Women Selling at the Potlaç Shop	750 Women	700 Women	775 Women	605 Women	777 Women
Producing for Bulk Orders	-	45 Women	17 Women	42 Women	50 Women
Moda Women's Handicraft Market	-	-	345 Women	350 Women	203 Women
New Year's Shopping Festival	-	-	269 Women	300 Women	320 Women
Special Festivals	-	-	50 Women	75 Women	115 Women
Women Working in Potlaç Cafes	-	4 Women	17 Women	35 Women	35 Women

Kadıköy Municipality began purchasing certain products through Potlaç Women's Cooperative. Productions were carried out for the municipality's orders on special occasions such as International Women's Day on March 8th, World Down Syndrome Day on March 21st, Republic Day on October 29th, and International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd. Therefore, institutional organizations such as Anadolu Efes and Sabancı University order products from Potlaç Cooperative for special events.Potlaç Cafe became one of the most significant aspects of Potlaç Women's Cooperative. Located in Feneryolu and allocated by Kadıköy Municipality,

Potlaç Cafe has generated substantial economic value through the collaborative efforts of volunteer and paid female workers. After approximately 1.5 years of being run by the volunteers, Potlaç Cafe has evolved into a business with 17 insured female employees. The cafe has become a business that hosts guests from all over Istanbul, appears in programs on national channels such as CNN Turk, and meets the needs of hot food, rest and entertainment in the Feneryolu neighborhood, where the average age is high.

To sustain the financial viability of Potlaç Handicraft Shop and Potlaç Workshop, Potlaç Café has been operated within the Feneryolu Zero Waste Life Market for three years. Numerous women, aged 18 to 75, who couldn't find employment in the traditional job market, have been working in rotating shifts. During the recruitment process at this cafe, the Cooperative tries to contribute to the economic empowerment of women in need by identifying them and receiving their applications. Notably, a young woman with four children from Kadıköy Municipality Shelter and an 18-year-old through the Girls Protecting Children Association found employment opportunities in the café, underscoring the meaningful journey of solidarity and empowerment advocated by Potlaç Women's Cooperative.

3.2. Why Potlaç Women's Cooperative?

"From Market to Shop, Shop to Cooperative: A Journey of Solidarity and Empowerment"

When setting out for this thesis, the Potlaç Project was first thought to be an inspiring model as a network and then as a women's cooperative. After the management changes with the local government elections, it became even more important to consider the Potlaç Women's Cooperative as a model.

Along with the points discussed in the literature section of the thesis, it will be explained in five categories why the Potlaç Women's Cooperative is a model.

 # An Example of Strategic Services of Municipalities

As can be seen, Potlaç Women's Cooperative emerged as a result of a strategic service provided by Kadıköy Municipality for women. Since it is a municipal service, it is an essential tool to consider how this service is provided, what outputs it has, and to see

how critical the municipal management's relationship with women's groups and non-governmental organizations is. The Potlaç Project, facilitated by the old management of Kadıköy Municipality, deserves to be considered as a model because it contains the features that will be the subject of this thesis.

Potlaç Women's Cooperative can be considered as an example of the strategic services provided by local governments for strategic needs. It emerged as a response to the strategic needs of women living in Kadıköy, as it was mentioned in the emergence of the project. The project, which was spontaneously realized after a demand voiced in the forum of Kadıköy Municipality with women, was initiated as a municipal service aimed at transforming women's lives and empowering them economically and socially.

On the other hand, it can be claimed that the Potlaç project is a treatment method against agoraphobia for women who do not go out of their homes much and cannot find a place for themselves in the public sphere. As a matter of fact, although the strategic services of local governments often aim to empower women economically in the beginning, new areas of activity can be opened overtime by defining other needs. This is a phenomenon as Alkan (2006) expresses it: "Women's liberation from isolation through such service areas, in other words, opening a "public" space for them is a motivating factor both in the discovery of needs and therefore in the pluralization of activities." It can be argued that Potlaç aims to empower women by providing them with a trustworthy public sphehere enabling them to have a voice in the agora.

 # An Example of Local Organizations

When looking at Potlaç in particular, another dimension as important as the organization of labour is the organization of women. Women get various opportunities with the organization they create locally. According to Bora and İşat (2006), opportunities such as "the existence of relationships based on trust, awareness of problems, close relations with various power centres, the existence of women with professional and technical knowledge, women's issues and gender inequality are on the agenda" are opportunities arising from the co-existence of women. For sure, women's organizations include competition as well as solidarity and cooperation.

Again, according to Bora, a well-directed and controlled competition can be something that increases speed and motivates (Bora & İşat, 2006).

In the literature section, various ways in which women's cooperatives contribute to women's empowerment have been discussed. Similarly, Potlaç Women's Cooperative is a local organization that, like other women's cooperatives, understands the needs of women at the local level and develops activities accordingly.

As stated in the reports of the Potlaç Women's Cooperative, they can be considered as an example of a local solidarity organization with their structures that go beyond buying and selling and a commercial relationship, adopt a horizontal relationship and aim to lay the groundwork for women to establish a similar relationship among themselves. The cooperative, which continues to organize rapidly at the local level, initially had 140 members in its network when the project started. Currently, their network includes approximately 1,800 women.

 # An Example of Women's Economic Empowerment

However, Potlaç, unlike the skill courses of other municipalities, provides women with the opportunity to exhibit the products they want in the marketplace and shop offered to women. Women have a say in both production and sales. According to Talcott Parsons' functionalism, while men have an instrumental role, women have an expressive role. Just as White (2015) emphasized, in this division of labour, while woman can only produce at home, man is responsible for sales and the market. In Potlaç, it is women who produce and sell the showcase. The Potlaç project, which considers handicraft production as a job, not as a hobby, is a platform, offering for the valuing women’s labour. Unlike other forms of home production, it does not limit women to the home, as it offers them working areas outside the home, such as workshops, markets, and shops. With these aspects, Potlaç Women’s Cooperative offers a specific model of small-scale production.

Potlaç Women's Cooperative creates employment with the shop they run for more than 700 women to sell products and the Potlaç Cafe with 17 insured female employees. In addition to the Moda Handicraft Market at the beginning of the project, they created sales opportunities for many women through festivals, which they developed. Although handmade works are devalued and seen as unimportant, as discussed in the

literature, Potlaç Women's Cooperative is opening new channels to create the economic value of hand-made products.

 # An Example of Women's Participation in Decision-Making Processes

One of the features that makes Potlaç a critical model is the issue of participation. Potlaç cannot be considered as a one-dimensional event like any other charity bazaar. On the contrary, it sets an example for opening different channels for representation and participation. Primarily, the Potlaç project has already been implemented directly in line with the demands of women in a forum with women, so it is already the result of a participatory policymaking process. Beyond that, women make decisions about the project directly at their monthly meetings. These meetings, which are of great importance at the point of meeting with the municipal administrators, have become a functional tool for women from Kadıköy to announce their demands after certain participation. Detailed observations on this subject will be discussed in the findings section.



***Figure** 5 "2 out 1" meeting attended by former Mayor Aykurt Nuhoğlu*

Apart from these meetings, women from the Potlaç Cooperative can make direct suggestions and requests to the municipal administration on issues related to the

project and the women of Kadıköy, and in a sense, they act as a bridge to convey the voices of local women to the municipality.

 # An Example of Struggle for Well-Structured Relations between Municipalities and Women's Cooperatives

In the literature section it is discussed how the relationship between women's cooperatives and local governments in Turkey is often superficial, non-standardized, and characterized by ups and downs. Essentially, for the main thesis claim, well-structured relationships between municipalities and women's cooperatives, focusing on an equal partnership, are crucial for strengthening the capacity of women's cooperatives. Potlaç Women's Cooperative can be considered to have been engaged in a struggle against forming a hierarchical relationship in its dealings with the municipality, especially since the change in municipal management.

The most fundamental element of the relationship between the Municipality and the Potlaç Cooperative is the protocol signed in 2018, which is currently waiting to be updated. Often, relationships between municipalities and cooperatives lack written documentation and proceed based on verbal requests in Turkey. In this context, the protocol signed by the previous municipal administration in 2018 and re-signed by the new administration in 2019 is a key factor that prevented a breakdown in the relationship between the cooperative and the municipality despite the tensions discussed in the findings section.

Potlaç Women's Cooperative and Kadıköy Municipality are separate legal entities collaborating under a protocol. Certainly, the Municipality supports the Potlaç Women's Cooperative's activities through location allocations and bulk orders. However, this collaboration and support do not grant the municipality direct intervention rights in the internal functioning of the cooperative or in the activities planned by the cooperative. Thus, an essential factor that would make the relationship between the municipality and the cooperative more efficient and healthier is establishing a pluralistic perspective with an equal stakeholder dynamic.

In this sense, it is impossible to consider the relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Cooperative as an ideal and well-structured relationship at all times. But we can say that from the beginning to the end of the process, Potlaç

Cooperative showed an example of the struggle to strengthen this relationship and make it desirable.With all these aspects, Potlaç serves as a model that can be taken as an example for women's organizations, the organization of women's labor, empowerment of women, and strategic services provided by municipalities to women, as well as the stability in the relationship between municipalities and women's cooperatives.

3.3. The Methodology of the Fieldwork

During the fieldwork, the participatory observer method was followed. In 2018, I encountered Potlaç Network through a project conducted in collaboration with Kadıköy Municipality during a studio course at METU's Department of Urban Policy Planning and Local Governments. Shortly after this introduction, I initiated discussions with women from Potlaç Network to prepare a report on the network. Subsequently, in 2019, my involvement with FSWW provided an incredible opportunity to conduct research on women's cooperatives and engage in discussions with women.

During my tenure as the Istanbul Local Coordinator at EU Project which is Strengthening Constituency Engagement and Influencing Capacities of Community Based Organizations, I closely interacted with at least 16 women's cooperatives in Istanbul, monitoring their relationships with local public institutions and municipalities, with Potlaç Women's Cooperative being one of them. Since my introduction to Potlaç Network in 2018, I actively participated in the cooperative's activities and maintained periodic meetings with cooperative members until the completion of this thesis. As a result, I had the opportunity to closely monitor developments related to local governments and women's cooperatives, particularly in the Istanbul context, through the participatory observer method.

Within the framework of this thesis, interviews were planned in four different periods so as to evaluate the effect the changing municipal management on the relationship between the institutional structure of the municipality and the women of Potlaç as well as the concrete outputs of these effects. In the first period of the fieldwork, conducted at four different time points, semi-structured interviews were carried out with three municipal staff responsible for the project. Additionally, structured interviews were

conducted with 20 women. In the second period of fieldwork, in-depth semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes were conducted with the deputy mayor Bahar Yalçın, in charge of the project, and 7 women. In the third period of fieldwork, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with two Potlaç women. During the fourth period of fieldwork, the cafe and shop of the cooperative in Feneryol was visited to obtain information about the current situation of the cooperative and to attend the New Year Festival. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two women from the cooperative. In addition to these meetings, large-scale meetings were attended as observer during the new management period. Due to the ongoing fieldwork, unstructured interviews were also conducted with Potlaç women regarding their current situation.

In the interviews with the women from Potlaç, questions were asked about the socio-economic status of women, their living conditions, whether they had participated in a similar project before, the reasons for participating in the project, and the way they were informed about the project. Detailed questions about the operation of the project and the impact of the project on women's lives were also asked. Participants were also asked about their opinions on the cooperative. Questions about how the political circumstances affected them before and after the local election period formed most important part of the interviews.

Within the scope of the thesis's fieldwork, the names of the 27 different women from the Potlaç network who were interviewed are kept anonymous for security purposes and also to provide the women with freedom and flexibility in expressing their opinions; thus, I have used W for interviewee names coding them as W1, W2, W3 ..., and W27 randomly. Furthermore, to encourage candid expressions of their perspectives, the use of coding was implemented, assigning labels such as W1, W2, W3, and so forth, up to W27. This approach provided the women with the freedom and flexibility to share their opinions freely and openly.

In the interviews held with the women from Potlaç, questions were asked to understand the scope of the project, the impact of the municipality in work by focusing on different issues at different times. Furthermore, during the interviews, women were asked questions regarding the relationship between the municipality and the cooperative.

3.4.Fieldwork Discoveries and Assessments

3.4.1. Information on Women from the Potlaç Network

Potlaç Women's Cooperative is comprised of 15 partners, all of whom live in Kadıköy. The cooperative's network also consists of approximately 1800 women who live in various neighborhoods of Kadıköy. According to the Socio-Economic Status scores prepared by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM), the five neighborhoods where most of the Potlaç network women reside are considered to be socio-economically advantageous (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, 2016). However, it is not entirely possible to establish a direct relationship between the socio-economic status of neighborhoods and participation in the Potlaç network.

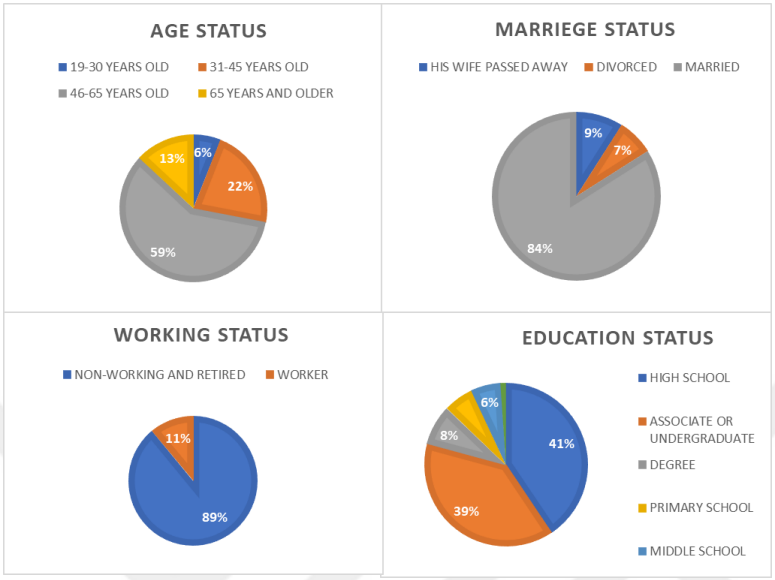
***Table** 2 The distribution of women who are members of the Potlaç network by neighborhoods in the years 2019 and 2023*

Neighbourhood	Number of Members in 2019	Number of Members in 2023
19 Mayıs	38	89
Acıbadem	66	107
Bostancı	58	106
Caddebostan	19	34
Caferağa	69	114
Dumlupınar	11	21
Eğitim	24	51
Erenköy	42	111
Fenerbahçe	21	67
Feneryolu	63	157
Fikirtepe	15	28
Göztepe	77	175
Hasanpaşa	29	57
Koşuyolu	12	27
Kozyatağı	63	146
Merdivenköy	52	107
Osmanağa	35	56
Rasimpaşa	28	56
Sahrayıcedit	48	99
Suadiye	43	65
Zühtüpaşa	23	43

The Potlaç network comprises women aged between 18 and 75, with the largest group falling between 45 and 65. The majority of the women are either not employed full-time or are retired. Most of them have completed high school or hold

associate/bachelor's degrees. While most are married, there are also single women, although in smaller numbers, in the Potlaç network.

***Table** 3 Age, marriage, working and education status of Potlaç members*



3.4.2. Potlaç as A Model- "Self-confidence", "Transformation", "Solidarity"

In the "Why Potlaç" section, an assessment was conducted on how the Potlaç Project has positively impacted the women of Kadıköy, along with the network formed among these women. The analysis was based on relevant literature. Moving forward, an in-depth examination will be made of the contributions of the Potlaç Network and the Potlaç Women's Cooperative, and an explanation will be given as to why they are considered exemplary, based on fieldwork findings.

During the study, it was crucial to determine whether the women participating in the Potlaç Network considered their involvement as work or leisure. Apart from a woman who is well-off in economic terms, everyone said that the Potlaç project had seen a business as trading. Another point that supports this is that almost all women consider their work as production. In different interviews, women stated that they are producing (W3, W8, W11, W16, W23). W3 said that *Potlaç is a responsibility I take on me, to do, to create, all together is a business life for me*[2]. The question of whether it is more

[2] All the direct quotes in the findings section were written in italics.

important for women to do housework or to produce and sell Potlaç was also important to understand the extent to which women attach importance to Potlaç. Except for one woman, all women stated that working for Potlaç had priority over housework. Women spend most of their days production for Potlaç. *"I go to bed at two o'clock and wake up at six in the morning to work*(W8)*."* As for how much income women earn from Potlaç, there are serious differences here. There are women who earn a few thousand liras from sales in a year, while others can earn close to ten thousand lira in just two or three days.

During interviews, an important question was raised about how women utilized their income earned from Potlaç, and whether they shared the income information with their households. The majority of women stated that they used their income for their personal needs, as well as for purchasing products necessary for either production or for their children. With the exception of one woman, all other women revealed that they shared their income information with their spouses. A woman residing in the urban renewal area of Fikirtepe, Potlaç, struggles to provide for her two children with a minimum wage job. She considers her work in Potlaç as an additional income source and keeps it a secret from her husband. She uses this income to support her children's needs. Many women feel the need to elaborate more on this issue compared to other questions, indicating that it makes them anxious (W4, W9, W10). Through this cooperative, women have laid the foundations of an important production and solidarity network. The decisions made during the recruitment of partners are especially crucial for a local women's organization.

> *Since we established the cooperative when choosing our partners, we are going to demand women to undergo various training such as non-violent communication training and women's rights training, as well as training on cooperatives. If she has taken it before, she will be evaluated, but we will ask women who have never received such training to take this basic training. There is a saying in our country that is "The woman is the wolf of the woman" (Homo homini lupus); we attach particular importance to non-violent communication and empathy in order to turn it into the home of women. We support these training so that there is more solidarity, more respect and love and this structure is not destroyed* (W18).

During the fieldwork, it was observed that the women from Potlaç were enthusiastic, cooperative and receptive towards organizing. In the first interview with the project personnel, it was mentioned that these women played a key role in taking the project to a different level than originally intended.

It is obvious that Potlaç greatly affects the daily life of women. How Potlaç affected or transformed women was perhaps the most valuable part of this fieldwork. When asked about what Potlaç has changed in their lives, many women stated that their lives had changed greatly(W2, W7,W15, W23). "*There is a lot of difference between my previous position and my current position. I keep my feet firmly on the ground. I see that my labour is valued, and this makes me very happy. Now I am more satisfied than I was before* (W15)*." "I think we have moved to a different position, and we have become women who produce, not consume* (W7)." Some of the women who said that their position in the family had changed significantly after joining Potlaç stated that they are now more respected by their spouses (W8, W17, W22). In almost all interviews, women mentioned that their self-confidence has increased. "*"Potlaç instilled within me the confidence to believe that women can achieve anything they set their minds to. With this newfound conviction, I'm certain that I too can reach greater heights."* (W17) Then, W5 stated that she opened her own shop and she would sell the products of other women from Potlaç in her shop, and they would be proud of her.

In addition to its economic dimension, there are also women who see Potlaç as psychological support (W9, W16). During the interviews, the topic of psychological support and therapy frequently came up, similar to other fieldwork. A statement made by a woman who lost her child about Potlaç also confirms this observation.

> *I have noticed a significant growth in my business lately, but what's more important is that my social relationships have also improved greatly. This has made me feel much better and valued. Interestingly, if I hadn't experienced that bad event, things might not have turned out as great as they are now. Potlaç has been more like an emotional therapy for me.*

Potlaç has been a game-changer for many retired women who have found themselves feeling demoralized and isolated after leaving the workforce. These women have often felt confined to their homes with limited opportunities for social interaction. However,

Potlaç offers them a new social environment where they can connect with like-minded individuals and engage in meaningful conversations and activities. It has become a source of joy and rejuvenation for many women who were previously feeling lost and alone in their retirement years. *"After retirement, I was stuck at home, Potlaç became a new living space for me (W24)."*

The Potlaç project has been an incredible source of support for both unemployed and retired women. However, it has a more profound impact on women who have had to leave their jobs after giving birth. One such example is a 35-year-old university graduate who saw the Potlaç project as a new job opportunity. She had to resign from her previous job due to motherhood.

> *"I quit my job because of motherhood. With Potlaç, I first found an area to produce at home and sell them, then I got to know the other activities of the project and came to the stage of establishing a cooperative. This meant both organizing with people who meet on the same common ground with me socially, and this project allowed me to see my own potential. Potlaç is a remarkable initiative that helps women to take control of their lives and fulfill their dreams despite the challenges they face. Potlaç is not only a job opportunity but also a platform for women to explore their potential, connect with others, and contribute to their communities (W18)."*

The strategic need and women's need for transformation, which are frequently emphasized in the literature, were also expressed by the interviewed women.

> *It provided qualitative transformation. Before, I didn't have a dream of organizing women or a cooperative goal, but it expanded my vision." "Qualitative transformations are taking place in Potlaç. There is much more to the woman in need than giving what she needs; in this project, she is taught how to earn what she needs(W12).*

3.4.3. The Relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Women's Cooperative - "Anxiety", "Dependency", "Scapegoating"

Women in the Potlaç Project and Potlaç Women's Cooperative, with an institutional structure formed by the women organized, have been in a close relationship with the municipality since the beginning of the process. In the theoretical framework section,

the governance model in which actors from different sectors come together was discussed. As Şengül (2009) states, the local governance model refers to a process rather than a structure. The cooperative-municipality relationship is a crucial factor that affects the institutional capacity of the cooperative. The nature of this relationship determines the level of support and cooperation that the cooperative can receive from the local government and the potential opportunities that can be availed by the cooperative for growth and development. A strong and positive partnership with the municipality can open doors for the cooperative in terms of access to resources, funding, and markets. On the other hand, a weak and negative relationship can hinder the cooperative's ability to achieve its goals and objectives, resulting in a lack of growth and sustainability. Therefore, it is important for cooperatives to establish and maintain a healthy and productive relationship with the municipality to enhance their institutional capacity and ensure their long-term success.

In this section, the relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Women's Cooperative during two different management periods will be discussed based on fieldwork and the literature review.

3.4.3.1. Forms of Organization of Municipality Managements'

When discussing the Potlaç Women's Cooperative and their collaboration with the municipality, it's important to understand the municipality's institutional structure. Throughout the project, the municipality was the primary decision-maker, holding the ultimate power in the local public sphere. This was true during both periods of the project, and it's closely related to the municipality's position as the most powerful actor in the field. It's not surprising that municipalities, which hold a significant amount of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital, are the dominant actors in many relationships. However, this situation needs to change. Municipalities are an example of iron cage bureaucracies as Weber (1994) defined them, where there are slow-moving, multi-step approval mechanisms. In these mechanisms, how the institutional structure is built becomes crucial. If decision-making power is concentrated in one hand, the institutional structure becomes closed to participation, expressing ideas, and taking the initiative. Conversely, organizational forms that give responsibility to relevant units and facilitate decision-making enable quick action and participation.

Regarding the case of Kadıköy Municipality, there is a noticeable difference between the two periods when it comes to the approval mechanism of projects and who is responsible for them, as reported by the women interviewed. During the previous management, there was a project team directly involved in decision-making, as well as a deputy mayor who was in constant communication with them.

During the interviews with both the women from the cooperative and the women from the Potlaç Network, there was a strong emphasis on acknowledging the contributions of the project staff and the deputy mayor who were in charge of the project, which was initiated by the former municipal management. Having a staff team dedicated to handicraft, manual labor, and women's organizations is an excellent opportunity for women, unlike many municipalities with similar projects. The project personnel play a crucial role in fostering effective communication between women and the municipal management. By providing a platform for women to express their views and concerns, the project team serves as a vital link between the two entities. Through this intermediary role, the project personnel assume the responsibility of ensuring that the opinions and aspirations of women are heard and taken into account by the municipal management. This balancing mechanism helps to promote a more equitable and inclusive decision-making process, ultimately leading to better outcomes for all. According to women, the involvement of the municipality in the project is very important (W5, W13, W14). "*In the first Moda kiosks, there was a charity bazaar point of view and competition. A serious effort was made by the municipal employees to transform the competition into solidarity (W13).*" "*It is a chance for us that the municipality has arranged a team for this project. This team also works very well with women (W14).*"

For the new management period, all the reactions and comments about the project are gathered on the mayor. With the new management, the project team seems to have a more passive role in decision-making, and the responsibility is now concentrated at the level of the directorate and mayor.

The concentration of decision-making power is of critical importance for Kadıköy Municipality. However, it is also important to highlight the political affiliations within the institution. Based on observations, it can be said that the political affiliations of

individuals in different positions within the institution, as well as their affiliations with different factions, can lead to internal conflicts and ultimately result in interruptions or problems in public service. During the course of my fieldwork, I observed that municipal employees tend to align themselves with specific political factions, and as a result, communication within the municipality is often influenced by the changing attitudes and tendencies in Turkey's political climate.

3.4.3.2. The Interventions of Municapality Managements'

When evaluating the interventions of municipal governments, how they handle this service becomes important in terms of the concept of strategic services of municipalities discussed in the literature section.

In the former management period, it can be said that the municipality and especially the municipal employees who are responsible for project are trying to present this project as a strategic service to transform women and their lives. The municipality is committed to empowering women and promoting gender equality. This initiative is just one of many that the municipality has taken to support women's economic and social advancement. By creating opportunities for women to establish independent structures, the municipality is helping to build a more inclusive and equitable society.

In an effort to support women's empowerment, a workshop has been established by the municipality to help them come together and organize in shops and markets. The aim of the workshop is to encourage women to establish an independent structure and become self-sufficient. This initiative has been taken in recognition of the fact that women often face difficulties in organizing themselves due to social and cultural barriers. In interviews with the municipality personnel, it was emphasized that every step taken by the municipality is aimed at creating a supportive environment for women. "The workshop offers women a safe space to share their experiences and learn from one another. It also provides them with access to resources and tools that will help them succeed in their businesses."

It can be said that in the new management period, this strategic service perspective has been moved away and expectations from the project have differed. A woman believed that the new management does not care about the many transformative features that

the project has brought to them when Mr. Odabaşı proposed a cooking project with Potlaç (W22).

> *The thing in the mayor's mind is to give what he needs to those who need it. No information is produced from here; no qualitative increase is achieved. Just start from my example, while I could dream of being a university graduate with a certain income level, this project has made me a woman who can be a leader. Now the new management wants to bring me back into the house and have dinner, like a soup kitchen, actually this is no longer a project (W22).*

When this issue was brought up once again during a crowded meeting, a woman responded *"We have different areas of interest, should we cook the stuffed grape leaves?"* the Mayor replied: *"If necessary, you will."*

All the attitudes observed in these findings are important indicators of how the new municipal management handles the Potlaç.

3.4.3.3. Mode of Relationship of Municipal Managements'

In the literature section, the state and its various dimensions were discussed by Jessop references (Jessop, 2016). Representation, which is crucial when analyzing the relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç, was stated to be one of these dimensions. It was noted that the two most visible mode of representation for Potlaç are clientelism and pluralism.

Pluralism is a political system that allows for the coexistence of multiple groups and interests, which are officially recognized by the state/ local governments. These groups are given the right to participate in political processes and have access to channels of influence to ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed. This approach is often seen as a way to ensure that diverse perspectives and opinions are taken into account in decision-making, leading to a more inclusive and equitable political system. In a pluralistic system, civil society groups such as advocacy groups, grassroots organizations, women's cooperatives can play a significant role in shaping policy and governance. The structural difference between the political sphere and the civil society in the public sphere was discussed. While the political sphere has a confrontational

nature most of the time, civil society prefers to be conciliatory. In the relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Women's Cooperative, the attitude of the municipality which has the dominant power in the field, is also a very important point.

It can be said that in these two management periods, two different forms of representation were adopted as a method of association. In the previous management period, municipal officials created an open and inclusive space for women from Potlaç to participate in decision-making processes and receive guidance from their experiences. Moreover, that points to the pluralist form of representation in many respects. On the other hand, with the new management, it is possible to see a more hierarchical relationship that considered the women from Potlaç as voters in the last instance. A critical point here is what the municipality expects from this relationship with the women's cooperative. Of course, to think that local governments in Turkey are free from politics means denying the reality, but it is also unacceptable to every work or municipality project as voter-oriented projects that will bring votes. Therefore, it is crucial to support the works of the women's cooperative, considering their institutional independence by ensuring the participation of larger groups through political mechanisms and seeing them as structures that indirectly share the municipality's responsibility in the public service.

On the contrary, seeing the women's cooperative as a structure that only demands from the municipality and the demands are given in return for political expectations means ignoring the institutional capacity of the women's cooperative and seeing this structure as an extension that is only politically engaged with the municipality. It's possible to consider the relationship seen in the new management period as clientelism.

Clientelism is a form of political patronage where public officials distribute resources, such as jobs, contracts, and social services, based on their political loyalty to interest groups or individuals rather than merit or need. It is a system of exchanging political support for tangible benefits to maintain their power and influence. The practice of clientelism undermines the principles of democracy and equality, as it favors particular groups over the general public and perpetuates social and economic inequalities.

In the new management period, women's cooperatives are often viewed simply as a group of potential voters, rather than as producers of public services.. As suggested by

Cohen and Roger (1992), one of the most critical norms of democratic governance is that decisions are made openly to views from different perspectives through negotiations. In the case of Kadıköy Municipality, the most important factor causing the progress and regression in the Potlaç Project is the municipality's attitude towards the cooperative, whether it is open to negotiation, reconciliation and guidance. A statement used by Mr. Odabaşı in his meeting with cooperative women was expressed by W18 in the interview. "*Mr Odabaşı has statements such as "I don't need the women's organizations from Suadiye, I already get a lot of votes from there I want to do projects in poor neighbourhoods with light polls" (W18)."*

It can be clearly stated that in the previous management period, decisions affecting the cooperative and women were taken following pluralistic principles, the process was open to cooperative guidance and experience in the field. Briefly the previous management had displayed a conciliatory attitude. Avowably, in the new management period, the process was carried out mainly by managers, and the expectations and feedback of the cooperative were also ignored. According to Uğuz and Yılmaz (2020), if a local administrator does not have the illusion that he/she knows everything best and has a democratic perspective that acts by prioritizing the public interest, the local public sphere will not be a threat to him/her, on the contrary, it will constitute his/her most important power. In this direction, it can be said that the different actors in the local public sphere are perceived as a threat by the new management.

In fact, one of the biggest contributions that the Potlaç Cooperative will make to the local people of Kadıköy is equalizing representation, which is one of the contributions of secondary associations in the world of Roger and Cohen (Cohen & Rogers, 1992). To address the issue of under-representation, people and organizations who are unable to represent themselves alone can collaborate and create representation channels. This can help to reduce the unequal representation that exists. Additionally, such groups can leverage their own institutional capabilities to become "schools of democracy," as described by Roger and Cohen.During the project, a crucial issue was determining the level of women's participation in decision-making processes (Cohen & Rogers, 1992). During the interviews with women interested in the cooperative dimension of the project, their experiences and labor were identified as critical indicators for planning and implementation of the project (W5, W7, W9, W13, W14, W22, W24). Women

who were part of the cooperative believed that, with the help of the municipality, they had achieved an important position (W7, W9, W13, W24). However, many women also stated that they played an active role in the project process, at least as much as the municipality did. With this experience and self-confidence, women also believe that they can overcome any obstacles they may encounter (W14, W22).

Initially, most women thought that the municipality played a more active role as a guide in the project at the beginning. However, as the project progressed, women began to take charge and lead the process themselves (W9, W13. W14) "*Currently*, women are more active in the process, the municipality was very active from the beginning, they guided us and helped us (W9)." "*While the municipal management was more active at first, now women wanted to be in the saddle and established the cooperative. Potlac has a mass that gives suggestions and criticizes. From the beginning, women were active(W22)."* Many women interviewed stated that the municipality provided the necessary support, but the project was developed according to women's suggestions and demands. *"*Women are more active; most of the things in the project happened with our demands(W14)."

Basically, there is a widespread opinion that the relationship between the municipality management who launched the project and women is "balanced" and in harmony. "*The balance in the relationship between women and the municipality is perfect. Municipal employees provide great support, but women are also very active. The municipality provides necessary things such as transportation and place (W9)."* "*Women are very active in decision-making process and the municipality is also very active. The two can work in harmony with each other (W24).*

An important factor to consider is the involvement of the municipality in the project's progress. During an interview with the former deputy mayor responsible for the project, it was revealed that the project operates organically and is well-planned to overcome crises in different stages. This means that the project has a flexible structure that allows it to adapt to changing circumstances while still maintaining its overall plan. "*In other words, as much as it is open to women's involvement and participation, the municipality has a continuous contribution to the operation of the project."*

In the meeting with the former Deputy Mayor, the municipality conveyed their attitude towards the project:

> *First of all, the attitude of the municipality towards the women of Potlaç has a priority for this project, as this service provided by the municipality is not offered as a blessing. There is no expectation from women in the face of the opportunities provided to women.*
>
> *Despite the increasing number of members in the course of the project, the number of municipal personnel involved in the project did not change; instead it was expected that women would be more active. In fact, this was, in a sense, a conscious step for women's organization. It is also the product of the same idea that women from Potlaç are assigned to the marketplace in Moda during the summer months rather than the public staff.*

During the new management period, some of the women interviewed were criticized for making decisions without consulting women. One of the women believed that the municipal management had become too restrictive of Potlaç's independence after the change in management (W24).

> *The municipality* management *says that we will develop Potlaç more on March 8, but they should have talked and expressed this with the women of Potlaç. If the Potlaç women wanted to develop the project and transform it, then it would be up to her to implement it. When you say this without meeting with women and especially when it is a man saying it, it becomes a masculine discourse (W24).*

As can be seen in the discourse of W22 on cooking project, discussed above in relavant part on strategic service, the management's wishes and expectations conflicted with Potlaç the expectations and here the participation of women in the decision-making process is interrupted.

3.4.4. Which Faces of Oppresion?

While conducting research on the relationship between the Potlaç Cooperative and the new municipal management, several challenges were discovered that appeared to be hindering the cooperative's ability to reach its full potential. These obstacles, as I observed, were primarily institutional in nature and appeared to be rooted in the power

dynamics between the two entities. The findings reminded the ideas put forth by Iris Marion Young,on ways in which social and institutional barriers can be oppressive and limiting to individuals. Young (1990) argues that such barriers can prevent people from developing their abilities, hamper their ability to exercise their full agency, and limit their self-determination.

In other words, the institutional barriers that were preventing the Potlaç Cooperative from thriving were not just about economic or logistical hurdles, but also about the ways in which power is distributed and exercised within the larger social and political context.

3.4.4.1. Powerlessness

The term "powerlessness" pertains to the condition of helplessness and susceptibility to dominant groups. This imbalanced power dynamic results in unfairness and is defined by Young (1990). Those deemed powerless in this scenario are frequently left out of fundamental democratic procedures and decision-making structures (Young, 1990).

During the interviews, Mr Odabaşı's language and how he spoke to women highlighted a significant issue of powerlessness (W9, W14, W18, W22). The women in the interviews frequently emphasized the expressions that discouraged the women and worried the women in the project about the new management (W9, W14, W22). Some of the women interviewed stated that they were quite disturbed by the statements of Mayor Mr Odabaşı(W14, W18, W22),. *"Mr Odabaşı has a statement towards Women's Cooperative like "do not come to me because we couldn't do this job after six months (18)." The cooperative stated that you have to support women, not discourage them(W22)." "The municipality management compares the cooperative with other civil society organizations. There are statements like "There are 5 CBOs that want Moda selling stands (W24)."*

One of the most important ways in which the new management oppresses the women's cooperative is by limiting the scope of the protocol implemented by the former management. These changes demanded by the municipality contained issues that would significantly affect the relationship between municipality and cooperative. In

the open letter, the women announced these changes to all women in the Potlaç Network.

> *The protocol included the transfer of Moda selling stands and Potlaç Shop at CKM to the Cooperative. However, the new management proposed a set of changes on the protocol which was signed with the previous management. As a result of all the negotiations with the municipality, the number of shops in Feneryolu that women can use has been reduced. It was stated that allocation was made for 3 years at the protocol. Instead, rent would be requested from the Cooperative one year later (it was not stated what the rent would be). Certain conditions were also set for the transfer of Potlaç Shop at CKM to the Cooperative.*

The problems based on this dependency relationship with the municipality continued during the negotiations on the revision of the protocol. *" The protocol revision was accepted to avoid tension, and we had to agree (W22)."*

The women who were interviewed described their situation as one of powerlessness, which they termed as "dependency". As a result, these women perceived the challenging procedures involved in interacting with the municipality, such as delays and restrictions in meetings, as being due to their "dependency relationship" with the municipality(W14, W18). According to the women in the cooperative, there is no equal stakeholder relationship with the cooperative (W14, W18, W22).

> *The calendar of all events is announced unilaterally, plans are made according to the agenda of the Mayor. However, the cooperative should also be considered as an independent legal person, and a decision should be made by mutual consultation. (W18).*

Regarding all these dependency problems, the women's cooperative expressed the reasons for the delay and failure of the planned work to be carried out in their open letter.

> *At the last point, we would like to declare that we, as a Cooperative, are not responsible for the inability to open the cafe and other shops to be operated by*

the Cooperative in Feneryolu, and the failure to open the Moda women's selling stands.

3.4.4.2. Marginalization

According to Young (1990), marginalization is a social process that involves pushing particular groups to a lower social status or excluding them from society. It can take various forms, from economic exclusion to social discrimination and political disenfranchisement. Marginalization often results in a lack of access to resources, opportunities, and power, leading to social and economic disadvantages. The groups that are most vulnerable to marginalization include minorities, immigrants, women, and people with disabilities. This phenomenon has far-reaching consequences, as it can lead to social unrest, political instability, and increased poverty and inequality.

The meeting that I had the opportunity to observe, titled "2 out of 1", provided a vivid display of indicators of marginalization. The meeting proved to be a challenging experience for all parties involved. Prior to the meeting, women who opposed the establishment of the cooperative had met with the municipality management. As a result, this meeting was expected to be a venting session, as Mr. Şendil had put it, where participants could express their grievances(W14). W14 quated Mr. Odabaşı words, *Everyone can shed the stones on its skirt in the meeting.* The women, who were not aware of the cooperative process or were against the cooperative, came to the meeting wearing white clothes to protest. Different groups had varying opinions on whether Şerdil Dara Odabaşı supported the cooperative or was against it.Şerdil Dara Odabaşı stated: *"I saw the result of the project. I confronted with a fait accompli*(2 out of 1 Meeting, 2019)." While some of the women among the meeting participants stated that they were aware of the process of becoming a cooperative, some of them said that *they were unaware of the process of becoming a cooperative* and that *"the cooperative was tricky established behind closed doors*(2 out of 1 Meeting, 2019)*"*. During the meeting, the establishment of the cooperative was discussed in the presence of all the participants, including Mr. Odabaşı. A municipal staff who was in charge of the project from the beginning were invited to speak in order to provide a better understanding of the process. Mr. Odabaşı inquired about the criteria used to select the women who participated in the cooperative process training. "*As Mayor Aykurt initiated that seven people decided to establish the cooperative, so did it happen*(2 out of 1 Meeting,

2019)*?"* In response, the staff stated that the women who participated in the training processes in the project actively established the cooperative, and the former Mayor did not take any initiative.

As the tension continued, Mr Odabaşı asked the women against the cooperative to deal with the rest of the process. He pointed out that the cooperative and the old municipal management were doing secret work and *h*e used expressions like *"if they continue to do business secretively …"* "*…Women established a cooperative and ended up getting themselves into trouble."* "*Before I came, these protocols were in practice, this project was left in my hands*(2 out of 1 Meeting, 2019)*."* During the "2 out of 1" meeting, the Mayor made several accusatory and alienating statements. While a woman from the cooperative continued to speak, Mayor Şerdil Dara Odabaşı abruptly left the meeting. As a result, most of the women also left the meeting.omen also left the meeting.

All these discourses can be seen as a clear example of marginalization. During an interview, W14 stated that the new management had made Potlaç Cooperative a scapegoat.

Women have expressed their belief that the negative attitude of the new municipality management towards their community is due to the fact that the cooperative was established with the support of the previous management (W13, W18, W20). These women have made it clear to the municipal management and employees that they have no political affiliations and have shared this information in every appropriate context. Therefore, in the interviews, W18 had to express that *the cooperative is not the backyard of any political group, and they are uncomfortable with the emergence of such a thought against them.*

3.4.4.3. Violence

It may be surprising to some, but violence can be an observable form of oppression in local government studies. The observations made during the attended meetings and interviews conducted with women align perfectly with the definition of violence as described by Young (1990). Acts of violence or petty harassment are often committed by individuals who are extremists, deviants, or mentally unsound (Young, 1990).

During an interview, W14 recounted an incident where the mayor of the municipality yelled "shut up" at a municipal employee who was simply answering a question. At

the meeting, I attended as an observer, the mayor's aggressive demeanor, as he wielded the microphone and interrogated a pregnant employee in front of everyone. All these behaviors combined with his statements as previously mentioned, could be perceived as violence which is a form of oppression.

Young (1990) argues that the most productive activities occur through organized social cooperation and that excluding individuals from this is unjust. In a way that will lead to exactly this, women form cooperative stated that they even thought of closing the cooperative in the continuation of the process (W14, W16, W18, W19, W22). *"We were under psychological pressure so we were considering shut-down of the cooperative(W19)."*

3.4.5. Kadıköy As A Battlefield

From a Bourdieuian perspective, it is apparent that examining the field that has emerged from the collaboration and relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Women's Cooperative highlights the importance of the variable relationships and the new actors involved in these relationships. Understanding the dynamics and evolution of these relationships is crucial for comprehending the social processes and power dynamics within this field. As stated in the introduction, fields are "tightly connected" relationship configurations; changing one location shifts the boundaries between all other locations (Swartz, 2011). The Kadıköy Municipality's relationship with Potlaç Women's Cooperative was significantly affected by a turning point: the change of management in the March 31 elections. During various struggles in the field, actors may adopt different strategies to achieve their goals. These strategies may include conservation or subversion, among others (Atkinson, 2021). With the new management, the strategies were determined for the game in the field, which focused on subverting the power of different actors. In fact, Bourdieu claims that the new players in the field develop new strategies in this way in order to shake the doxa in the field (Kaya, 2016). The communication and relationship patterns depicted above, which are regarded as forms of oppression, may be considered outcomes of subversive strategies.

The most important findings from the fieldworks through interviews were obtained from questions about management change and political relations. The second

fieldwork inteviews were carried out immediately after the local government changes, and the third fieldwork was carried out approximately ten months after the new management took office. In most of the interviews, women expressed concerns about losing the opportunities created under the former management (W3, W14, W18, W22, W24).These concerns were arising from the interruption of municipal services for political reasons and the possibility of changes in attitude. *"I have concerns about the new management, whether the Moda kiosks will continue or whether the Caddebostan Cultural Center shops will remain (W3).”" "I can't say anything, I hope it will be good, I hope the new municipality will support us. I am afraid, but I hope they keep their word (W22)."* In addition to the women who expressed these concerns, there were also women who thought that the change in the municipality's attitude would not have an impact on them.

> *We have anxieties, we do not have fears. If they took everything away from us, we would go and open a shop. As a cooperative, we still do our best, after all, because every cooperative does not receive support from the municipality. Cooperatives in Urla and Bornova had similar processes. This is such an example of a cooperative supported by the municipality(W14).*

The concerns that have arisen since the new municipal management took over can be explained by the fact that changing one location shifts the boundaries between all other locations in these tightly connected relationships. Additionally, the interdependence between politics and civil society justifies the current situation that Potlaç finds itself in under this new management. As discussed in the literature section, according to Bourdieu, different fields should rely less on politics and instead build their own symbolic systems (Kaya, 2016).

During interviews, the women expressed a similar desire. Some women believe that Potlaç needs the support of the municipality, but overall they prefer it to be independent of politics (W8, W14, W18, W19). As one woman said, *"It would be nicer if it could be free from political influence*(W24)*."*

After the local government elections, which were held in response to these concerns, the new management implemented changes in the protocol. These changes were met with a strong reaction from women. In the field, this reaction can be seen as a

manifestation of women's struggle. In an announcement about the issues and tensions they faced in their relationship with the municipality, women expressed their thoughts on the process.

> *To become stronger socially and economically women who have no capital other than their labour need to be supported financially. We do not see this support as a blessing, we think that women, who make up half of the population, have a natural right. Our opinion is that; for this reason, the former Municipality management made the allocation of the places known as Feneryolu fixed shop to our cooperative with the decision of the City Council. Thereabouts, local elections were held and the municipal management changed. According to the protocol, it was the municipality's responsibility to make all the infrastructure works and interior decoration of the shops and to make the shops ready for use. We had many meetings before and after the election. As a result of the meetings held with the Mayor and the relevant directorates recently, we learned that the requirements of the protocol could not be fulfilled due to budget constraints.*

In another project, the cooperative was negatively impacted by political loyalty to the municipality. During the negotiations for the Elderly Care project in collaboration with KEDV that year, a representative named W14 from the cooperative expressed confusion about the sudden termination of the negotiation process. According to W14, the cooperative was also unfairly blamed for the project not materializing. In 2021, as cooperative activities resumed, the cooperative started reintroducing itself to the public. Due to the many different perceptions about the Cooperative, they continued their struggle by explaining themselves to women.

Actually in summary, new management of Kadıköy Municipality’s view Potlaç Women’s Cooperative in the public sphere as dangerous, leading to conflict with the local actors.

Following a difficult start, the relationship eventually began to improve after it was interrupted by the pandemic and then resumed after the pandemic was over. It's important to understand how this improvement happened and what the current state of the relationship is. When we use the game metaphor to understand this relationship, we can say that the actors are constantly following each other and must react

appropriately at the right time (Calhoun, 2007). As Potlaç gained power in many symbolic, economic, and cultural aspects, it's understandable that their relationship with the municipality has become normalized.

As the preparations for the 2022 handmade market began, the cooperative responsible for the protocol during the event approached the municipality with concerns about the availability of adequate infrastructure in Moda. Cooperative suggested that holding the market in Feneryolu would be a more practical solution. This led to a new phase of negotiations between the cooperative and the municipality.

During these discussions, five deputy mayors visited Potlaç for detailed talks with the cooperative. According to W14, the cooperative made it clear to everyone, including the mayor and deputies, that they were an independent entity with a hierarchical structure. They emphasized that *they were not affiliated with any political faction, such as the CHP Women's Branch or the Kadıköy Women's Unit. They reiterated that they were a non-partisan entity and could not have any relationship with any political group*(W14, W18).

The cooperative's emphasis on its non-partisan stance was critical in the context of the negotiations. Women conveyed their independence and impartiality in the process, which helped to build trust with the municipality. The cooperative's insistence on holding the event in a location with adequate infrastructure further demonstrated their commitment to ensuring the success of the handmade market. Overall, according to W18, *the detailed discussions held between the cooperative and the municipality helped to establish a clear understanding of the needs and expectations of both parties and paved the way for a successful event*.

In this process, the Potlaç Cooperative's interpretation of stabilizing the relationship, which I described as the normalization process, was that the cooperative became economically liberated to a certain extent and proved themselves.

> *We have gained some financial freedom as a cooperative. If the municipality provides 4 umbrellas for the handmade market, we can also obtain 4 more ourselves. As we continue to strive towards financial stability, we are proud of the progress we have made and the independence it has brought us from the municipality (W14).*

> *The management realized they couldn't compete with Potlaç in the field. They understood that this project was significant. We believe that there have been many positive rumors about us. At the same time, since the municipality does not have many projects in the new period, Potlaç seems even more important (W18).*

Although the process may not offer complete autonomy or economic liberation, it is open to interpretation. Women from the cooperative emphasize the importance of a healthy relationship with the municipality, similar to a marital relationship. "Just like an individual becomes economically liberated from their spouse, we also become liberated from the municipality as we become economically empowered (W14)." Based on their statements, it seems that women believe the balance of power in the field is increasingly favoring them.

Women from the cooperative believe their communication with the municipality sets an example for others. They offer advice for developing a healthy relationship between municipalities and women's cooperatives.

> *We held meetings with Balıkesir Municipality, Kartal, and Ataşehir Municipalities, and when they asked us questions about establishing a cooperative, we insistently told them not to establish a cooperative. You need to find women who have set out on this path and support them. It is necessary to find real subjects who will do the cooperative work. Potlaç Women's Cooperative was established with the incentives of Kadıköy Municipality, but what we insistently underline is that the Municipality did not establish our cooperative, and we have never been directly affiliated with the municipality. What we are trying to do is to have a real collaboration (W18).*

The women in the Cooperative are concerned about the upcoming local government election. They worry that their relationship with the municipality, which was established with great difficulty, may deteriorate again. They even articulate this concern as "our stomach pains have started again (W14)." The term of the protocol between the Municipality and the Women's Cooperative, which pertains to the allocation of spaces and certain activities of the cooperative, has reached its conclusion. At present, the protocol stands expired. During this process, the Cooperative frequently reminds municipal authorities to re-sign the protocol quickly.

Before the new management takes office, they are requesting the signing of a protocol. However, as soon as the Şerdil Dara Odabaşı management came into power, protocols signed with the previous management were updated with narrowed scopes. Women in Potlaç feel less anxious about the possibility of a similar situation occurring, as they believe that the Potlaç Women's Cooperative has already "*proven its competence*" (W14, W18). They have also received reassurances from municipal employees that "*the protocol will be signed no matter what"* (W18). In the event that the protocol is not immediately signed, the Cooperative plans to hold meetings in January with Potlaç network member women in neighborhoods to make themselves more visible.

A mayoral candidate has already visited the Potlaç Cafe. The women of the Potlaç Cooperative are awaiting the upcoming local government election with "stomach pains" but with less anxiety through a strong sense of empowerment (W14). Thanks to their hard work and dedication, these women are feeling confident and optimistic about the election results.

If the political sphere maintains its control over the system, the local public sphere will continue to experience various issues and "*stomach pains*". However, women who have been fighting, negotiating, and supporting each other have transformed Kadıköy into a battlefield. Despite the challenges, they seem to be holding their position in the field and remaining in the game for now.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In Turkey, there is an intrinsic relationship between local governments and women cooperatives that highlights a field with various problems and limitations. All efforts made to create a local public sphere have failed due to the negative outcomes of the relationship between the political and social fields. The social and political fields are often in conflict with each other, leading to a struggle between different actors in the local public sphere. This struggle is visible during different periods and is a constant part of the field. The actors in the field make efforts to have a say according to the balance of power and their position, while new actors entering the field implement their own strategies to become a part of this struggle.

The establishment of effective governance models and democratic mechanisms at the local level requires actors from various sectors to come together and establish a good working relationship. However, in Turkey, the public sphere is difficult to organize locally due to the ongoing conflict between the political and social spheres. This conflict has resulted in the formation of social spheres that are heavily influenced by any changes in the political sphere, making it harder to establish a truly independent public sphere. To address this issue, it is important to strengthen the capacity of grassroots organizations and expand their areas of action. By doing so, we can work towards liberating the public sphere from the influence of political mechanisms and

promote a more democratic approach to governance. This involves empowering diverse social groups and improving their ability to participate in decision-making processes, which will ultimately lead to a more stable and inclusive society. Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Cooperative case study presents an imbalanced dynamic where political influence takes center stage. The findings suggest that attempts to cultivate a public sphere with collaborative, cooperative entities instead of combative ones have yet to yield results. As a result, community-based organizations must create their own autonomous systems and engage in policy-making with local governments on equal footing, free from external pressures. Only through a relationship founded on egalitarian principles can these needs be met.

Women's cooperatives are grassroots organizations that empower women and promote gender equality. These cooperatives derive their power from their close collaboration with local actors, which enables them to provide important outputs for gender equality. Women's cooperatives are crucial for the resilience of local communities, and they offer significant benefits that local governments can leverage. Organized women's groups are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of their communities and to produce solutions to the problems that their communities face. By implementing these solutions, these groups become critical stakeholders for local governments, with a direct impact on the resilience of local spaces in terms of gender equality.

The relationship between women's cooperatives and local governments is complex and multifaceted. To promote gender equality, it is essential to position and define this stakeholder relationship in a way that maximizes the benefits of women's cooperatives for local communities. This requires a deep understanding of the needs and priorities

of these communities and a commitment to collaboration and cooperation between women's cooperatives and local actors.

The proliferation of women's cooperatives across various regions in Turkey is facing a significant obstacle in the preservation of their autonomy due to political interference. The primary challenge these cooperatives face is the lack of adequate funding, which makes it difficult for them to sustain their operations without external assistance. In order to address this issue, it is crucial to establish well-defined connections between women's cooperatives and local governments, grounded in written protocols and inclusive principles. Such a move would be a critical initial step towards resolving this issue. Therefore, there is an urgent need for more comprehensive research into this relationship and its practical implications. This would help to identify the specific challenges that women's cooperatives face and enable policymakers to design effective solutions to address them. Ultimately, the success of these cooperatives would depend on their ability to operate independently, free from any political influence.

The relationship between Kadıköy Municipality and Potlaç Women's Cooperative is a great example of how political factors can influence the interaction between women's cooperatives and local governments in Turkey. Despite all interventions and oppressions, women's struggles in the local sphere provide significant gains in terms of empowerment and participation. It shows how important it is for the municipality and the women's cooperative to have a good relationship in order to enhance the capacity of the women's cooperative in two different areas of Kadıköy Municipality. As stated in this thesis, it is essential to establish well-structured relationships between local governments and civil society organizations. These relationships should have

clearly defined boundaries and be based on legal and written procedures, rooted in pluralistic principles. Additionally, it is crucial for local organizations, such as women's cooperatives, to have a strong determination to struggle for recognition, distribution and representation. These elements are essential to strengthen the capacity of local organizations and serve as a starting point to build a strong local public sphere.

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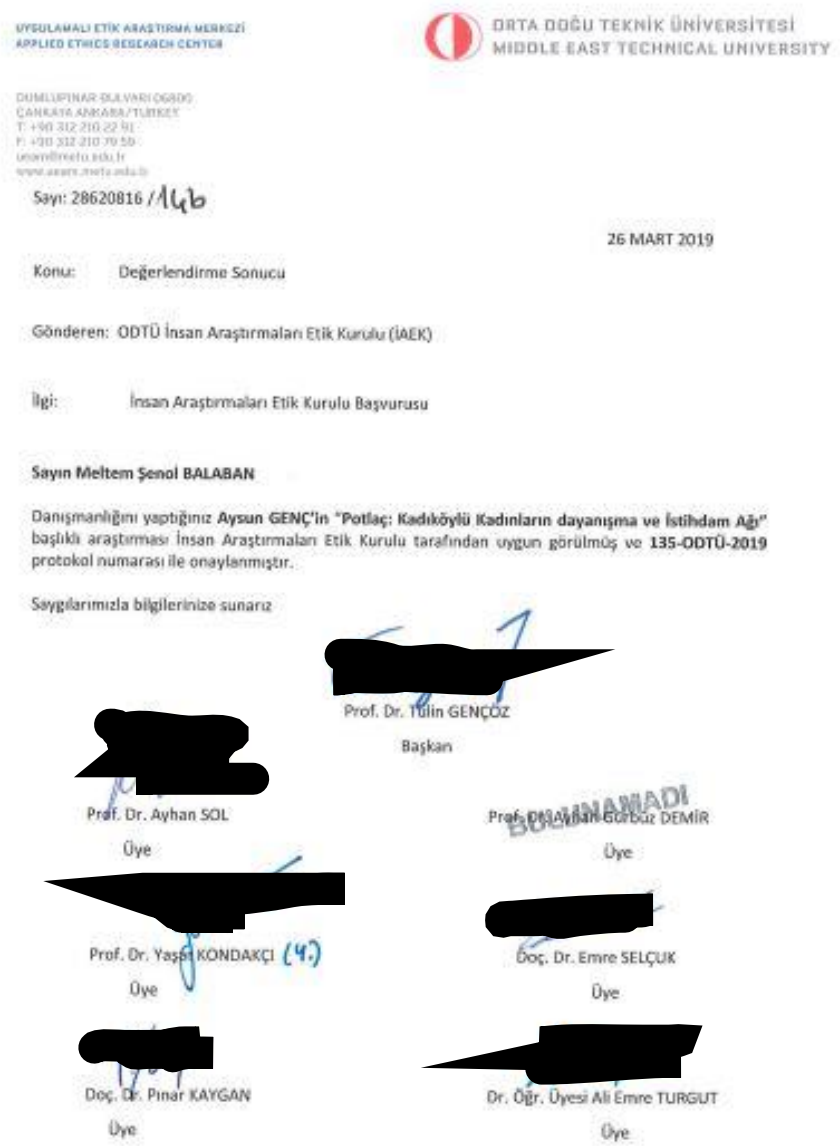
APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE



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26 MART 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Meltem Şenol BALABAN

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız **Aysun GENÇ'in "Potlaç: Kadıköylü Kadınların dayanışma ve İstihdam Ağı"** başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **135-ODTÜ-2019** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız

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B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Yerel yönetimlerle birlikte, yerel mekandaki önemli aktörlerden biri; sahip oldukları yerel bilgi kaynağı ve gönüllü insan kaynağı sebebiyle yerel örgütlerdir. Bu bahsi geçen aktörlerin ilişkisi de hem bu kurum ve örgütlerin kurumsal kapasitesi açısından hem de kentsel gelişim açısından bir hayli önem taşır. Bu ilişkilenme taşıdığı potansiyeller itibari ile oldukça anlamlı bir sürece işaret etse de barındırdığı problemlerle önemli kısıtlılıkları da beraberinde getiriyor.

Sayıları her geçen gün artan kadın kooperatifleri de sivil toplumun, kadınların ekonomik ve sosyal güçlenmesinde katkı sağlayan, toplum temelli ve güçlü bir parçası haline geldi. Özellikle Türkiye gibi yerel yönetimlerin siyasetten beri olamadığı bir bağlamda, yerel yönetim ve kadın kooperatifi ilişkisi de barındırdığı unsurlarla incelenmesi oldukça kıymetli bir ilişki halini alıyor.

Kadın kooperatifleri, bulundukları yereldeki kadınlar için birçok alanda güçlendirme faalitetleri yürütüp, orta ölçekli işletmeler olarak ekonomik anlamda da katma değer üreterek inanılmaz etkiler yaratıyorlar ve dahasını da yaratabilirler. Fakat bu sürecin önemli bir değişkeni, bulundukları yereldeki belediye desteğinin ne ölçüde ve ne şekilde gerçekleştiğidir. Kadın kooperatifleri ve yerel yönetimler arasındaki ilişkideki problem ve kısıtlılıklar elbette, yereldeki siyasi alan, sivil toplum alanı ve aktörler arasındaki güç çatışmalarının bir sonucu olarak değerlendirlebilir. Pratikte görülen haliyle belediye ve kadın kooperatifleri arasında yaşanan sıkıntılar genel itibariyle, bu ilişkinin hiyerarşik ve eşitsiz olmasından kaynaklanıyor.

Güncel duruma baktığımızda kadın kooperatiflerinin birçoğu, yerel yönetimlerin stratejik planlarında kadınlara yönelik hizmetlerde ön sıralarda yer bulduğu için, bir belediye faaliyeti olarak belediye çalışanları tarafından kurulan kooperatifler olma riski ile karşı karşıya. Bir yandan da halihazırda, kendi iradeleri doğrultusunda, bizatihi yaşadıkları sorunları çözmek için bir araya gelen, ürün ve hizmet geliştiren kadın kooperatifleri belediyelerden gerekli desteği göremiyor, çoğu zaman faaliyetlerini sürdürmekte güçlük çekiyorlar. Yerel yönetimler, idaresinden sorumlu

oldukları ilçelerde zaten çalışmalar gerçekleştiren kadın kooperatifleri ile değil, adeta kendi birimleri gibi çalışan, kendi kurdukları, ya da kurdurdukları kadın kooperatifleri ile işbirlikleri gerçekleştiriyor, kapsamlı ve bütüncül bir destek sunmuyorlar.

Yerel yönetimler ve kadın kooperatifleri ilişkisi için bir başka önemli nokta da, ilişkilenmenin kendisi ile ilgili. Kadın kooperatifleri bulundukları yerele özgü, en yakından bilgiye, iletişim ağına, ihtiyaca yönelik verilere sahip olan yapılar olmalarına rağmen, karar alma mekanizmalarından tamamen dışlanıyor, sadece belediyeden yardım talep eden, ya da belediyenin faaliyetlerinde yer alan kuruluşlar olarak görülüyorlar. Hâlbuki kadın kooperatifleri bunun çok ötesinde, yerel yönetim politikalarını ciddi ölçüde etkileyebilecek yerel aktörler.

Dolayısıyla aslında bu ilişkinin kendisi kurulma biçimiyle doğrudan ilişkili olarak, kadın kooperatiflerinin kapasitesinin artmasında önemli ölçüde katkı sağlayabilir ya da tam aksine, kadın kooperatiflerinin gelişiminde ve anlamlı çalışmalar üretmesinde bir engel haline de gelebilir. Tam da bu bağlamdan ötürü, bu çalışma Türkiye'de sayısı her geçen gün artan kadın kooperatifleri ile yerel yönetimler arasında kurulan çoğu sürdürülmesi mümkün olmayan, eşit paydaş ilişkisi olmaktan uzak, kadın kooperatiflerinin kurumsal kapasitelerini ve potansiyellerini kullanmalarını engelleyen bu ilişkilere odaklanmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu tez, odağına aldığı yerel yönetim kooperatif ilişkisini, aktörlerin örgütsel yapısı, temsiliyet ve müdahale biçimleri üzerinden irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Temel derdi yerel yönetim ve kadın kooperatifi arasındaki ilişkiyi irdelemek olan bu tez, aynı zamanda kadın kooperatiflerinin ve belediyelerin "kadınlara yönelik stratejik hizmetlerinin", katılımcılık, yeni kamusal alan inşası gibi kritik alanlara ne gibi katkılar sunduğunu da görünür hale getirmeyi hedefledi. Bu kapsamda, daha detaylı olarak bu çalışma, yerel yönetimler ve kadın kooperatifleri arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmayı, bu iki aktörün organizasyon yapısını, temsillerini ve müdahale biçimlerini incelemeyi, kadın kooperatiflerinin katılıma ve yeni kamusal alanların inşasına nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu görünür kılmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu doğrulta teze yön veren soru "yerel yönetimlerin müdahaleleri ve tutumları sivil toplumun kapasite geliştirme sürecini nasıl etkiler?" sorusuydu. Beraberinde "yerel

yönetimlerin toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğine yönelik tutum ve politikalarının sunulan hizmetlere etkileri nelerdir?", "kadın kooperatiflerinin yerel kamusal alana katkıları nelerdir?" gibi sorular da bu teze yön veren önemli sorulardı.

Bu tezin örneklemi ve araştırma öznesi olarak ele alınan Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi ve Kadıköy Belediyesi ilişkisi, bu soruların cevaplanması açısından önemli bulgular taşıması itibariyle tezin saha çalışmasını oluşturdu. Elbette bu ilişkinin, bu tezde örnek vaka olarak ele alınmasının belli başlı nedenleri var.

Öncelikle Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi, sahip oldukları hikayeyi kendileri "Pazardan Dükkana, Dükkandan Kooperatife: Dayanışma ve Güçlenme Yolculuğu"olarak tanımlıyorlar. Bu tez için yola çıkarken Potlaç Projesi'nin önce bir dayanışma ağı, sonrasında da kadın kooperatifi olarak ilham verici bir model olacağı düşünüldü. 31 Mart 2019 Yerel Yönetim Seçimleriyle birlikte yönetim değişikliğinin ardından Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi'nin örnek alınması daha da önem kazandı. Tamamen siyasi gerekçelerle değişen ilişkilerin Kadıköy yerelinde nasıl bir mücadele ve müzakere sürecine sebebiyet vereceği daha önemli bir çalışma konusu haline geldi.

Bu ilişkinin bu teze konu olmasının temelde beş ana sebebi vardır. Bunlardan ilki Potlaç Projesi'nin Belediyelerin Stratejik Hizmetlerine Bir Örnek teşkil etmesi. Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi Kadıköy Belediyesi'nin kadınlara yönelik sunduğu stratejik bir hizmetin sonucunda ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir belediye hizmeti olması nedeniyle bu hizmetin nasıl verildiğini, çıktılarının neler olduğunu düşünmek, belediye yönetiminin kadın grupları ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarıyla ilişkisinin ne kadar kritik olduğunu görmek için önemli bir araçtır. Aynı zamanda bu proje, yerel yönetimlerin stratejik hizmetleri yoluyla kadınların ekonomik ve sosyal açıdan güçlendirilmesi için ne gibi faaliyetler yürütebileceklerine ilişkin bir örnek teşkil ediyor. İkinci olarak tabandan gelen yerel örgütler için de Potlaç önemli bir örnek taşır. Potlaç özelinde bakıldığında bu proje kapsamında emeğin örgütlenmesi kadar önemli olan bir diğer boyut da kadınların örgütlenmesidir. Potlaç Ağı 140 kadın ile başlayıp yaklaşık 1.800 kadın ile çalışmalarına devam eden önemli bir yerel örgütlenme örneğidir. Üçüncü önemli gerekçe ise Potlaç'ın kadınların ekonomik güçlenmesi için gerçekleştirilen faaliyetlere bir örnek olmasıdır. Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi, 700'ü aşkın kadının ürün satışı yaptığı Potlaç Dükkan ile el yapımı ürünlerin ekonomik değer yaratması için yeni kanallar

açıyor. 17 sigortalı kadın çalışanın bulunduğu Potlaç Kafe ile önemli bir istihdam yaratıyor. Potlaç'ı kritik bir model haline getiren özelliklerden bir diğeri de katılım meselesidir. Potlaç herhangi bir yardım pazarı gibi tek boyutlu bir etkinlik olarak düşünülemez. Tam tersine temsil ve katılım için farklı kanalların açılmasına örnek teşkil ediyor. Potlaç projesi öncelikle kadınların talepleri doğrultusunda doğrudan kadınların yer aldığı bir forumda hayata geçirildi, dolayısıyla zaten katılımcı bir politika oluşturma sürecinin sonucu. Bunun da ötesinde kadınlar projeyle ilgili kararları aylık toplantılarda doğrudan alıyorlar. Belediye yöneticileriyle buluşma noktasında büyük önem taşıyan bu toplantılar, Kadıköylü kadınların belli bir katılımın ardından taleplerini duyurması için işlevsel bir araç haline geldi. Başta da ifade edildiği gibi Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi ve beraberinde Kadıköy Belediyesi'nin bir örnek vaka olarak ele alınmasının en önemli sebebi yerel yönetim değişikliğinden sonra gerçekleşen müzakere ve mücadele süreci. Belediye ile aralarında, eşit paydaş iletişimine dayanan, yazılı ve iyi yapılandırılmış bir ilişkinin oluşturulabilmesi için Kadıköy'de, Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi önemli bir mücadele yürütüyor. Bu mücadele Türkiye'de kadın kooperatifleri açısından işlerin daha da karmaşıklaştığı bir süreçte önemli bir örnek olarak ele alınmayı hak ediyor.

Potlaç Projesi Kadıköylü kadınların talepleri üzerine Kadıköy Belediyesi tarafından başlatılan bir projedir. 2015 yılında Kadıköylü kadınların ve kadın örgütlerinin bir araya gelerek kadınların sorun ve taleplerine yönelik gerçekleştirdikleri forumda kadınlar "emeklerinin değerlendirilmesini, eğitim hizmetlerinin verilmesini, haftada en az bir gün ücretsiz pazar yeri, kadınların ürettiklerini satabilecekleri mekanların sağlanması, kadınların ekonomik güçlerini arttırabilecekleri alanlar yaratılması, kadınların üretime katılması gibi" taleplerde bulundular. Forum sonuçlarına göre kadınlar evlerine gelir sağlayacak, ürettiklerini değerlendirip satış yapabilecekleri mekân arayışındaydılar. Tüm bu talepler doğrultusunda Yerel Eşitlik Eylem Planı kapsamında belirlenen hedeflerden biri "Kadıköylü kadınlar için gelir yaratılması" oldu. 2016 yılı itibariyle hizmet vermeye başlayan Potlaç birimi, Moda sahilde Pazar yeri uygulamasını başlattı.

Potlaç bir el emeği pazarı projesi olarak ortaya çıkmasıyla beraber kullanıcıların talep ve yönlendirmeleri sonucunda daha işlevsel ve kapsamlı bir hizmete dönüştü. Belediye projesi olarak devam ettiği süre boyunca projenin temelde 4 alan üzerinden devam ettiği söylenebilir. Bunlardan ilki projenin temelini oluşturan el emeği pazarıydı. Moda sahilde yer alan pazar yerinde, Kadıköylü kadınlar ve kadın örgütleri kolektif şekilde satışlarını yaparlar. Rotasyon kuralıyla bir yandan ürün çeşitliliği sağlanırken bir yandan da rekabetin, dayanışma içinde satış yapma amacının önüne geçmemesi amaçlanmış. Böylece farklı ürünlerin tezgahlarda bulunması sağlanırken, sayıca daha fazla kadına da stant açma imkânı tanınır. Aynı zamanda stantlardaki kadınlar belirlenirken tecrübeli Potlaçlı kadınlarla yeni Potlaçlı kadınlar eşleştirilerek doğal akışında bir uyum süreci de geliştirmeye çalıştılar.

Pazar yerine olan taleplerin artmasıyla beraber projenin daha kapsamlı bir organizasyona evrildiği söylenebilir. Yaz kış kadınların ürünlerini sergileyebilecekleri bir alana duyulan ihtiyaçla birlikte Caddebostan Kültür Merkezinde bir dükkân açıldı. Bu dükkâna Kadıköylü kadınlar sirkülasyon halinde beşer ürün bırakarak satış yaptılar. Dükkanda sadece bir belediye personeli bulunuyordu, dolayısıyladışında dükkanın açılıp kapanmasından, bütün gün satış yapılmasından, ürünlerin dükkana alınıp iade edilmesinden sorumlu olanlar Potlaçlı gönüllü kadınlardı. Her ay bir ya da iki gün isteğe bağlı olarak kadınlar, Potlaçlı diğer kadınların ürünlerini satmak, korumak için dükkanda çalışıyorlardı. Dükkan gönüllü kadınlar tarafından sistematik bir düzen ile işletiliyordu. Satış yapan kadınlar vergi muafiyeti ile makbuzla ürünlerini satıyorlardı. Sonrasında kooperatifleşme sürecinde kadınların en çok rahatsızlık duydukları noktalardan biri bu vergi muafiyeti durumunun ortadan kalkması oldu.

Sürecin kendisinin getirdiği önemli bir ihtiyacın sonucu olarak da Potlaç Atölye kurulmuş. Halihazırda üretmeye, satış yapmaya çalışan kadınların uzmanlaşması ve bu alanlarda eğitim görmesi sürecin sağlıklı işlemesi için önemli bir detay. Sahada yapılan anket çalışmasıyla beraber kadınların öncelikli olarak hangi alanlarda eğitim almak istedikleri belirlenmiş buna göre gruplar halinde eğitimler başlatılmış. Kadınların üretim süreçlerinin hızlanması ve yeni başlayanlara yol göstermeleri amacıyla, çeşitli ürünlerin üretilmesiyle ilgili de eğitmen eşliğinde atölyeler gerçekleştiriliyor. Bu atölyelere farklı STK'lardan ya da farklı kurslardan kadınlar da katılarak, öğrendiklerini farklı belediye ya da derneklerde kendi grup arkadaşlarına

anlatıyorlar. Bu özelliğiyle Potlaç sadece Kadıköylü kadınlara sağlanan bir hizmet olmaktan çıkıp, farklı ilçelerden farklı sivil örgütlerden kadınlara da sesini duyurmuş oldu.

Yukarıda bahsedilen anketteki eğitim seçeneklerinden biri olarak kooperatifleşme, o süreçte belediyenin en çok önem verdiği konulardan biri haline gelmiş. Belediye, kooperatifleşme ile el emeği üzerine kurulu bu sistemin sürdürülebilir olmasını ve kadınların daha örgütlü bir hale gelmesi için kadınların kooperatifleşmesine destek oldu. Böylece kooperatifleşen kadınlar ekonomik olarak daha fazla gelir elde edebilecek, tüzel kişiliğe sahip olunması sebebiyle üretime dair alanlarda belediyenin ihalelerine katılabilecek, hibe alabileceklerdi. Dolayısıyla bu seçenek belediye inisiyatifiyle seçenekler arasına eklenmiş. 2017 yılında, Potlaç Kadın Dayanışma Ağında yer alan 140 kadın kooperatif çalışmalarında yer aldı. Ocak 2017 yılı itibariyle 140 kadınla 5'er kişilik gruplar halinde odak görüşmeleri gerçekleştirilmiş. Odak görüşmelerine 98 kadın katılmış. 10 hafta süren odak görüşmeler esnasında belirlenen, kooperatifleşme sürecinde yer alacak kadınlara yönelik KEDV (Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı) öncülüğünde genel kooperatifleşme süreciyle ilgili bilgilendirme toplantısı yapıldı.

Bu toplantılardan sonra kadınlar, kooperatifleşme sürecinde olup olmayacaklarına dair bir kanıya vardılar. İlk aşamada yer almak isteyen 44 kadın kooperatif süreci içinde yerlerini aldı.

Kooperatifin çalışma alanlarına yönelik çeşitli ve farklı perspektiflerden katkılar kadınlar tarafından sunuldu. Tüm bu öneri ve görüşler yine kadınlar tarafından kayıt altına alınarak sürecin işleyişi ve eylem planının oluşmasının önünü açtılar. Yaklaşık 1 yıla varan çalışmaların ardından, kooperatifçilik eğitimi almış 44 kişiden fikren ve fiziksel olarak katılım sağlayan 9 kadınla kooperatifleşme süreci başlatılmış. Kooperatifleşmenin tamamlanması ile birlikte Caddebostan Kültür Merkezi Potlaç Satış Dükkanı dahil, Potlaç projesindeki tüm hizmetlerin kooperatif tarafından verilmesi protokolle desteklenecekti. Şubat 2019'da Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi'nin kuruluşu tamamlandı. Ve hemen arkasından belediye ile Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi arasında bir protokol imzalandı. Protokol kapsamında, CKM dükkan ve belediyeye ait Feneryolu'nda bulunan dükkanlardan 4 tanesi kooperatife tahsis edildi. Kooperatifin

açılışı ve belediye ile imzalanan protokol 8 Mart Kadınlar Günü etkinliğinde duyuruldu.

Yerel yönetim seçimlerine yaklaşan tarihte gerçekleştirilen 8 Mart etkinliği ve kooperatifin açılış töreninine o süreçte belediye başkan adayı olan Şerdil Dara Odabaşı dakatılım sağladı fakat etkinlikte CHP Kadıköy ilçe kadın kollarından olan kadınlarla birlikte bulunması, Potlaç kooperatifinden kadınları siyasi bir gerginliğin doğması ihtimalinden ötürü endişelendirdi. Bu süreçte hem kooperatifleşme çalışması içinde bulunan kadınlar hem de ağdaki diğer kadınlarda yeni yönetimin gelmesi ile birlikte süreçlerin zora girmesi ile ilgili kaygılar vardı. Fakat kooperatifleşen kadınlar artık elde edecekleri ayrı tüzel kişilikleri ile belediyeden bağımsız daha özerk hareket edebileceklerini düşünerek bu kaygılarını aştılar.

Yeni yönetim ile gerçekleştirilen görüşmelerin birçoğu, yeni yönetimin beklentisi, söylemsel farklılıklar gibi sebeplerle kadınlar arasında gerginliğe yol açmış. Yapılan görüşmelerde yeni yönetim tarafından Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifinin günah keçisi ilan edildiği ifade edildi. Kooperatiften kadınlar, eski yönetimin işbirlikçileri olarak ve yeni yönetimle çatışan bir grup kadın olarak görüldüklerini hissetmeye başladıklarını ifade ettiler.

Bir önceki yönetimle imzalanan protokolde de önemli değişiklikler gerçekleşti. Yeni protokolle belediyenin kooperatife tahsis ettiği dükkan sayısı 2'ye düşürülmesi isteniyordu. Kooperatifli kadınlar yaşanılan sıkıntılardan sonra daha fazla gerginlik yaşanmaması için yeni protokolü kabul ettiklerini ifade ettiler. Kooperatifli kadınlara göre yeni belediye yönetimi ile kooperatif arasında bir patronaj ilişkisi var, süreç tek taraflı yürütüldü. Kadınlar, başka kooperatiflerin de belediyelerle benzer ilişkiler yürütmelerinden ötürü yönetimden bağımsız özerk kadın biriminin ne kadar önemli olduğunu gördüklerini ifade ettiler.

Bu süreçte Feneryolu'ndaki kooperatifin hazırlıkları henüz tamamlanmışken COVID-19 pandemisinden ötürü kısıtlamalar geldi ve kooperatif hem kafe hem de atölye çalışmalarını yürütemez hale geldi. Kısıtlamaların azalması ile beraber, kafe işler hale geldi ama yine de kooperatifin kendini idame etmesine yetecek geliri kazanamıyordu. Süreçte hem kooperatif içinden hem kooperatif dışından kadınlarla, pandeminin de beraberinde getirdiği iletişim sorunları ortaya çıktı. Bu süreçte kooperatiften kadınlar,

kendilerinin de Potlaç Ağı'ndaki kadınlara kooperatifi yeteri kadar anlatmadıklarını, yeterli iletişimin kurulamadığını ifade ettiler. Devam eden gerginliklerle beraber, COVİD 19 pandemisi ile birlikte kooperatifin faaliyetleri durma noktasına geldi. Covid kısıtlamalarının normalleşmesi ile birlikte belediye ve kooperatif ilişkisinde de belli dinamikler değişti ve stabilleşti.

Kadıköy Belediyesi ve Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifini birer aktör, ve tüm süreçlerin gerçekleştiği alanı da Bourdeiucu bir yaklaşımla ele alırken belli dinamikler irdelenmek üzere önem kazandı. Bunlardan biri belediyede değişen yönetimlerinin organizasyon şekiller. Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi'ni ve belediyeyle olan işbirliklerini tartışırken belediyenin kurumsal yapısını, yönetimlerinin müdahalelerini, temsiliyet biçimlerini değerlendirildi. Belediye ve kooperatif ilişkisi ele alınırken Young'ın baskı kavramında da oldukça faydalanıldı. Kooperatifin tam potansiyeline ulaşmasını engelleyen çeşitli zorluklar bu çerçeve içinde değerlendirildi.

Bu ilişki incelenirken en çok da Kadıköyü bir mücadele alanı "battlefield" olarak ele almak belediyenin müdahalelerini, gerçekleştirilen müdahaleleri ve her iki aktörün de stratejilerini görmeyi sağladı. Kadın Kooperatifi değişken ilişkilerin ve bu ilişkilere dahil olan yeni aktörlerin önemine dikkat çekiyor. Bu ilişkilerin dinamiklerini ve evrimini anlamak, bu alandaki toplumsal süreçleri ve güç dinamiklerini anlamak açısından alanı gözlemlemek ve tanımlamak çok önemliydi. Giriş bölümünde belirtildiği gibi alanlar "sıkıca bağlantılı" ilişki konfigürasyonlarıdır; bir konumu değiştirmek diğer tüm konumlar arasındaki sınırları değiştirir (Swartz, 2011). Kadıköy Belediyesi'nin Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi ile ilişkisi bir dönüm noktasından önemli ölçüde etkilendi: 31 Mart seçimlerindeki yönetim değişikliği. Sahadaki çeşitli mücadeleler sırasında aktörler hedeflerine ulaşmak için farklı stratejiler benimseyebilir. Bu stratejiler diğerlerinin yanı sıra korumayı veya yıkmayı da içerebilir (Atkinson, 2021). Yeni yönetimle birlikte sahadaki oyun için farklı aktörlerin gücünü altüst etmeye odaklanan stratejiler belirlendi. Hatta Bourdieu, sahadaki yeni oyuncuların sahadaki doxa'yı sarsmak için bu şekilde yeni stratejiler geliştirdiklerini iddia etmektedir (Kaya, 2016). Yukarıda tasvir edilen ve baskı biçimleri olarak değerlendirilen iletişim ve ilişki kalıpları, yıkıcı stratejilerin sonuçları olarak değerlendirilebilir. Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi ve Kadıköy Belediyesi arasındaki ilişkiye

de tam da böyle bir alan perspektifinden bakıldığında, aktörlerin sarsıcı stratejileri, konumlanışları ve güç dengeleri daha anlaşılır oluyor.

Tüm bu saha deneyimleri ve faydalınalan kavramlar ışığında genel çerçeveye bakıldığında, Türkiye'de yerel yönetimler ile kadın kooperatifleri arasında, çeşitli sorunları ve sınırlılıkları olan içşel bir ilişki görülmektedir. Yerel kamusal alan yaratmaya yönelik tüm çabalar, siyasal ve toplumsal alan arasındaki ilişkinin olumsuz sonuçları nedeniyle başarısızlıkla sonuçlanmıştır.

Yerel düzeyde etkin yönetişim modellerinin ve demokratik mekanizmaların oluşturulması, çeşitli sektörlerden aktörlerin bir araya gelerek iyi bir çalışma ilişkisi kurmasını gerektirmektedir. Ancak Türkiye'de siyasal ve toplumsal alan arasında süregelen çatışmalar nedeniyle kamusal alanın yerel düzeyde örgütlenmesi zordur. Bu çatışma, siyasal alandaki her türlü değişimden yoğun biçimde etkilenen toplumsal alanların oluşmasına neden olmuş, gerçek anlamda bağımsız bir kamusal alanın kurulmasını zorlaştırmıştır.

Bu sorunun çözümü için taban örgütlerinin kapasitelerinin güçlendirilmesi ve faaliyet alanlarının genişletilmesi önemlidir. Bunu yaparak kamusal alanı siyasi mekanizmaların etkisinden kurtarmaya çalışabilir ve yönetişime daha demokratik bir yaklaşımı teşvik edebiliriz. Bu, çeşitli sosyal grupların güçlendirilmesini ve karar alma süreçlerine katılım kapasitelerinin geliştirilmesini içerir; bu da sonuçta daha istikrarlı ve kapsayıcı bir topluma yol açacaktır. Kadıköy Belediyesi ve Potlaç Kooperatifi örnek çalışması, siyasi etkinin merkezde olduğu dengesiz bir dinamik sunuyor. Bulgular, çatışmacı tutumlar yerine işbirliğine uygun bir kamusal alan geliştirme girişimlerinin henüz sonuç vermediğini gösteriyor. Sonuç olarak, toplum temelli kuruluşlar kendi özerk sistemlerini oluşturmalı ve dış baskılardan uzak, eşit düzeyde yerel yönetimlerle politika oluşturma sürecine katılmalıdır. Bu ihtiyaçlar ancak eşitlikçi ilkelere dayalı bir ilişki yoluyla karşılanabilir.

Kadın kooperatifleri kadınları güçlendiren ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini destekleyen taban örgütleridir. Bu kooperatifler gücünü yerel aktörlerle yakın işbirliklerinden alıyor ve bu da toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği konusunda önemli çıktılar sağlamalarına olanak sağlıyor. Kadın kooperatifleri yerel toplulukların dayanıklılığı açısından hayati önem taşıyor ve yerel yönetimlerin yararlanabileceği önemli faydalar sunuyor. Örgütlü

kadın grupları, topluluklarının ihtiyaçlarını anlayacak ve topluluklarının karşı karşıya olduğu sorunlara çözüm üretebilecek benzersiz bir konuma sahiptir. Bu çözümleri uygulayarak, bu gruplar yerel yönetimler için kritik paydaşlar haline gelir ve yerel mekanların toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği açısından dayanıklılığı üzerinde doğrudan etki yaratır.

Anlaşılacağı üzere kadın kooperatifleri ile yerel yönetimler arasındaki ilişki karmaşık ve çok yönlüdür. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini teşvik etmek için bu paydaş ilişkisini, kadın kooperatiflerinin yerel topluluklara faydalarını en üst düzeye çıkaracak şekilde konumlandırmak ve tanımlamak önemlidir. Bu, bu toplulukların ihtiyaçlarının ve önceliklerinin derinlemesine anlaşılmasını ve kadın kooperatifleri ile yerel aktörler arasında işbirliğine yönelik kararlılığı gerektirir.

Türkiye'nin çeşitli bölgelerinde kadın kooperatifleri çoğalırken, siyasi müdahaleler nedeniyle özerkliklerinin korunmasında önemli bir engelle karşı karşıyalar. Bu kooperatiflerin karşılaştığı temel zorluk, yeterli fon eksikliğidir; bu da onların faaliyetlerini dış yardım olmadan sürdürmelerini zorlaştırmaktadır. Bu konuyu ele almak için kadın kooperatifleri ile yerel yönetimler arasında yazılı protokollere ve kapsayıcı ilkelere dayanan, iyi tanımlanmış bağlantıların kurulması büyük önem taşımaktadır. Böyle bir hamle, bu sorunun çözümüne yönelik kritik bir ilk adım olacaktır. Bu nedenle, bu ilişkiye ve bunun pratik sonuçlarına ilişkin daha kapsamlı araştırmalara acil ihtiyaç vardır. Bu, kadın kooperatiflerinin karşılaştığı spesifik zorlukların belirlenmesine yardımcı olacak ve politika yapıcıların bu sorunlara yönelik etkili çözümler tasarlamasına olanak tanıyacaktır. Sonuçta bu kooperatiflerin başarısı, bağımsız olarak faaliyet gösterme, her türlü siyasi etkiden uzak olma ve faaliyetlerini uzun vadede sürdürebilecek yeterli mali desteğe sahip olma yeteneklerine bağlı olacaktır.

Kadıköy Belediyesi ile Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi arasındaki ilişki, Türkiye'de kadın kooperatifleri ile yerel yönetimler arasındaki etkileşimi siyasi faktörlerin nasıl etkileyebileceğinin güzel bir örneğidir. Potlaç Kadın Kooperatifi ve Kadıköy Belediyesi ilişkisinin iki farklı yönetim dönemindeki işleyişi, kadın kooperatifinin kapasitesinin artırılması için belediye ile kadın kooperatifinin iyi bir ilişkiye sahip olmasının ne kadar önemli olduğunu gösteriyor . Bu tezde de belirtildiği gibi, yerel

yönetimler ile sivil toplum kuruluşları arasında, sınırları açıkça belirlenmiş, yasal ve yazılı prosedürlere dayalı, çoğulcu ilkelere dayalı, iyi yapılandırılmış ilişkiler, kadın kooperatifleri gibi yerel kuruluşların kapasitelerinin güçlendirilmesinde ve güçlü bir yerel kamusal alan oluşturulmasında bir hayli önem taşımaktadır.

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