

# **THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: THE CASE OF MALATYA/TURKEY**

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## **Introduction**

The term civil society has been historically associated with various definitions depending on their social, economic, philosophical backgrounds. Nowadays, the term civil society generally refers to activities conducted by individuals, groups and organizations to achieve a common goal, independently of entities such as the family, the market and the state. The functions of civil society can be listed as follows (International Civil Society Index Project): To act as an effective means for the resolution of social issues; to cooperate with various political, social and economic actors, and in particular the state, when developing solutions, and to thereby ensure that individuals are active and effective in social issues, as required by the definition of responsible citizenship; to ensure, as active and effective citizens, that the activities of the state are rendered legitimate and transparent, and that the actual necessity and effectiveness of these activities are monitored; and to create a democratically fair and participatory environment for the various economic, social and political actors within society.

In our day, the notion of civil society can be used as a means for analyzing societies (Ochoa: 2007). This is because civil society plays an important role in the transition to democracy of societies previously ruled by dictatorships, and also in ensuring that democratic processes become firmly established in already democratic societies. Thus, civil society constitutes a key element in the transition to pluralistic and participatory democracy. Furthermore, the definition of civil society has been expanded in recent years to include social factions that have generally been less vocal and less organized about social issues in the past.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are generally collective initiatives that are autonomous and independent from the influence of the state, and which can exert an influence on public life (Tekeli 2004: 28). A general review of NGOs reveals the following common and basic characteristics: As these organizations have not been founded to achieve a particular goal, they are able to acquire considerable expertise in their subject area, and have the advantage of possessing greater knowledge on a given subject than public institutions (which are generally burdened with the responsibility of managing many tasks and subjects simultaneously). Owing to their organization being based on voluntary participation and consensus, NGOs work dynamically with a high-level of motivation, functioning as political pressure groups and carrying out lobbying activities. They assume a supportive role in many areas where the activities of the public sector may not be sufficient, such as education, health, culture, science and social aid. They demonstrate considerable diversity with regards to their types of activities and organizational resources. Their range of activities includes humanitarian aid, supporting local development and participating in social movements (Hasgüler 2007:447-449). The majority has a small number of members whose participation is voluntary, and may also have historical and traditional origins; most, however, lack an established

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organizational structure. There are also NGOs with national and international level goals, large numbers of members, and paid employees. These organizations contribute to nearly 5% of the country economy. The most important and defining feature of these organizations is their independence from the state and market. With regards to financial resources, they are mostly dependent on other sectors (for example through sponsorship, governmental support, donations, etc.) (Onyx 2007).

### **Non-Governmental Organizations in Turkey**

According to the United Nations 2011 Human Development Report, Turkey ranks 92<sup>nd</sup> among 187 countries. According to the 2012 Freedom House World Freedom Report, Turkey ranks as a partially free country. According to reports on internet freedom and freedom of the press, Turkey again ranks as a partially free country. According to the 2012 data of Transparency International, Turkey ranks 54<sup>th</sup> among 76 countries on the corruption perception index. According to the CAF-2012 World Giving Index, the rate of donations is 10% in Turkey, while the rate of volunteerism is 4%, the rate of helping a stranger is 31%; as such, Turkey ranks 137<sup>th</sup> among 146 countries. According to data from the CIVICUS Civil Society Index, the citizen participation score and the organization level scores for Turkey are 31.4 and 54.6 respectively, with Turkey ranking 29<sup>th</sup> among 33 countries. For Turkey, the rate of interpersonal confidence is 4.8%, the rate of NGO membership is 41.1%, and the rate of political activity is 50.4%. NGOs in Turkey include foundations, associations, trade unions, cooperatives and professional organizations. According to data dated 27 February 2013, the number of affiliated foundations in Turkey is 277, while the number of community foundations is 165, and the number of newly founded foundations is 4689. Among newly founded foundations, 973 are social aid and solidarity foundations, 38 are environmental associations, and 3678 are multi-purpose associations. The total number of foundations in Turkey is 5131. With regards to the numbers of trade unions in Turkey, there 66 employee trade unions and 49 employer trade unions. The number of public employee unions, on the other hand, is 119. With regards to the number of associations, there are currently 242,708 associations in Turkey, 96,330 of which are active. The number of professional organizations is 4749, while the number of cooperatives is 58,090. The total number of foundations in Turkey is 164,474. The number of NGOs in Turkey with respect to the population is relatively low, with one NGO being active in Turkey per 780 individuals. An evaluation of the geographical distribution of NGOs in Turkey reveals that the majority are concentrated in urban areas and to the west of the country. With regards to their areas of activity, most NGOs in Turkey focus on social solidarity and service-related areas. However, there is a gradual increase in the number of NGOs advocating women's rights and issues, environmentalism, consumer rights, and subjects related to students and the young. There are also NGOs that are active on topics related to the Kurdish issue, and on subjects and areas related to Secularism/Islamism. In sum, despite the improvements observed in recent years in the approach towards Civil Society in Turkey, participation in NGOs remains low, and various social groups have a relatively small representation among these organizations. However, citizens who do participate actually take part in civil society activities frequently and persistently. For example, 11.5% of citizens who are members in a socially active NGO and 30% of citizens who are voluntary participants in NGOs are members in at least two NGOs. Nearly 57% of NGOs do not have paid employees. Approximately 41% have between just 6 to 20 voluntary workers. The financial resources of NGOs in Turkey are also very limited: 44.6% have an annual income of less than 10,000 Turkish Liras, and 15.7% have an annual income of less than 2000 Turkish Liras. On the other hand, 8.8% have an annual income above 200,000 Turkish Liras. The most significant criterion indicative of an NGO's level of development and organization is its level of communication and cooperation with other NGOs. Nearly 45% actively shares information and documents with at least five other NGOs. On the other, 58% do not engage in any communication or association at an international level. With regards to confidence, tolerance and public solidarity (which are the three

indicators of social capital), NGOs have not engendered a significant difference between its participants and non-participants. However, a 14% difference in favor of participants was observed with regards to tolerance. It was also determined that the sense of anonymity decreased among voluntary participants in NGOs, and that participation increased the sense of confidence and empathy among individuals while also contributing to a more positive self-image (TÜSEV International Civil Society Index, Turkey Report II).

In 1946, the total number of associations in Turkey was 820. Most of these associations were sports (343), cultural (105) and shopkeeper (103) associations. On the other hand, employee (-), religious (11), worker (14) and other (13) associations constituted the least common types of associations. There were also associations regarding social welfare (72), minorities (35), agriculture (20), self-employment, public employee unions (42), and beautification (34). By 1968, the total number of associations had reached 37,806. At that time, religious (10,730), cultural (6327), sports (5,334) and beautification (4644) associations were the most common types of associations. On other hand, employee (190) and self-employment (259) associations constituted the least common types of associations. There were also associations regarding social welfare (1,520), minorities (290), agriculture (683), workers (995), public employee unions (2,355) and shopkeepers (3,670). Compared to 1946, a considerable increase took place in the number of associations by 1968, with religious associations increasing and becoming the most common type. According to the 15 February 2013 data of the Department of Associations, the number of associations that were founded in Turkey up to 15 June 2013 is 242,857. The number of active associations is 96,330, while the number of associations that were closed is 146,527. The distribution of the number of associations according to the years can be listed as follows: 60,931 in 2000, 64,379 in 2001, 68,155 in 2002, 71,832 in 2003, 69,439 in 2004, 71,287 in 2005, 73,378 in 2006, 77,849 in 2007, 80,200 in 2008, 83,954 in 2009, 86,324 in 2010, 89,495 in 2011, 93,592 in 2012, and 94,124 in 2013. It can be seen that the number of active associations in Turkey began to gradually increase after 2000. A small decrease was only observed in 2004 due to Law Number 5072 on the Relations of Public Institutions with Associations and Foundations, enacted the same year, which led to the dissolution of many association and foundations. An examination of the number of association members in Turkey reveals that, while the total population of the country is 74,724,269, the number of individuals who are members of an association is 8,852,907. The distribution of the number of members with respect to gender reveals that the number of male members is 7,246,168, while the number of female members is 1,606,739. It can thus be seen that the number of individuals who are members to an association is relatively low in comparison to the overall population, and that the number of female members represents approximately a quarter of the number of male members. An evaluation of the distribution of active associations in Turkey reveals that the most common types of associations are those related to sports (16,384), religion (16,121) and social cooperation (15,353). On the other hand, the least common types of association are those related to international activities (76), students (335) and other activities (475). There are also associations on social welfare (664), the young (810), civil rights (863), society (1519), the environment (1718), public works (1380), health (2129), culture (4196), friendship (4351), social life (6944), professional solidarity (9508) and development (11,063). Among active associations, those founded in order to provide services pertaining to religious practices (founding and maintenance of mosques, Koran courses, churches, synagogues, etc.) are the most common type of association. However, among associations founded in recent years, a relative decrease is observed in the number of religious associations. An evaluation of the distribution of associations in Turkey on a regional basis reveals that 34.9% are located in the Marmara Region, 18.6% are located in the Central Anatolia Region, 14.0% are located in the Aegean Region, 11.7% are located in the Black Sea Region, 10.3% are located in the Mediterranean Region, 5.5% are located in the Eastern Anatolia Region, and 5.1% are located in the Southeastern Anatolia Region. It can be seen that most associations are found in regions of Turkey that have a high level of economical development and urbanization. The ten provinces in Turkey with the

highest number of associations, and the ratio of the associations in these provinces to the total number of associations within the country can be listed as follows: Istanbul (19,347 - 20.8%), Ankara (9226 - 9.58%), Izmir (5302 - 5.5%), Bursa (3852 - 4%), Kocaeli (2830 - 2.94%), Antalya (2527 - 2.62%), Konya (2385 - 2.48%), Adana (2005 - 2.08%), Mersin (1780-1.85%), Samsun (1773 - 1.84%). The provinces with the lowest number of associations are: Tunceli (111 - 0.12%), Ardahan (149 - 0.15%), Kilis (159 - 0.17%), Bayburt (179 - 0.19%), Hakkâri (203 - 0.21%), Şırnak (220 - 0.23%), Gümüşhane (236 - 0.24%), Bingöl (244 - 0.25%), Iğdır (256 - 0.27%), Bartın (250 - 0.26%). An examination of target groups and factions for associations in Turkey reveals that 52.7% target all groups/individuals, 16.8% target fellow townsmen, 0.3% target the elderly, 0.4% target individuals with certain diseases, and 0.9% target the impoverished. There are also associations that target individuals working in specific institutions/organization (1.0%), women (1.1%), natural life (1.1%), individuals who have graduated from a particular school (1.3%), disabled individuals (1.4%), children (4.9%), individuals working in certain occupations (5.7%), the young (7.4%), and various other groups (5.0%). The number of associations that can provide aid in Turkey on an authorization basis is 442, while the number of associations providing public welfare is 442, the number of associations that can provide aid without any prior authorization is 19, the number of foreign association branches is 75, and the number of associations subsidiary to another organization is 5. The distribution of the number of association members in Turkey according to years is as follows: 4,738,414 in 2004, 6,935,419 in 2005, 7,674,066 in 2006, 7,181,499 in 2007, 7,559,754 in 2008, 7,385,853 in 2009, 8,228,319 in 2010, and 8,852,907 in 2011. It can be seen that the number of members increased in parallel to the number of associations; however, this trend is not continuous and uninterrupted, occasionally fluctuating between increases and decreases. The distribution on a regional basis of associations in Turkey with computers is as follows: 39.81% for the Marmara Region, 19.25% for the Central Anatolia Region, 13.72% for the Aegean Region, 10.39% for the Black Sea Region, 9.49% for the Mediterranean Region, 4.2% for the Southeastern Anatolia Region, and 3.07% for the Eastern Anatolia Region. The share of associations with computers is fairly limited within the total number of associations. In parallel to the general distribution of associations, the Marmara, Central Anatolia and Aegean Regions are the regions with the highest numbers of associations with computers. However, unlike the general distribution of associations within the country, it was observed that the Southeastern Anatolia Region had more associations with computers than the Eastern Anatolia Region. In Turkey, the Information System for Associations (DERBIS) of the Department of Associations provides information and support to associations regarding foundation/establishment, internal auditing and project preparation. According to the data for 2011, the number of associations registered in this system is 56,456, which indicates that more than half of the total number of associations in Turkey is registered on this e-association system. In Turkey, fellow townsmen associations represent nearly 10% of all associations. More than half of these associations are located in the Marmara Region, especially within the Provinces of Istanbul, Bursa and Kocaeli. The distribution on a regional basis of associations in Turkey with lounges/meeting places is as follows: 3290 for the Marmara Region, 610 for the Central Anatolia Region, 595 for the Black Sea Region, 547 for the Aegean Region, 366 for the Mediterranean Region, 87 for the Eastern Anatolia Region, and 73 for the Southeastern Anatolia Region. In parallel to the general distribution of associations across the country, the number of lounges/meeting places was higher in the Marmara, Central Anatolia and Black Sea Regions.

### **Association in Malatya**

Malatya is located within the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey, and has a population of 757,930 according to the 2011 data of the Turkish Statistical Institute. Its area is 12,102 km<sup>2</sup>, covering 1.5% of the total area of Turkey. The population within the Provincial and County centers represents 66% of the entire province's population: Of Malatya's population, 498,588 live within the Provincial and County centers, while 259,342

live in towns and villages. The population of the Provincial center is 419,959. A total of 44% of the population is less than 25 years of age, while 48% of the population is between 25-64 years of age, and 8% is 65 years of age or older. The population growth rate is 23.1%, and literacy above six years of age is 92.28%. It has a population density of 64 per km<sup>2</sup>, which is lower than the general average for Turkey (97 per km<sup>2</sup>). As of 2010-2011, Malatya has an influx of immigrants, with a net immigration rate of 4.51%. Malatya's economy is based on agriculture, agricultural industry and animal husbandry; however, economic activities are also observed in all other sectors of the economy. Malatya has two Organized Industrial Zones. According to data from 2010, its unemployment rate is 9.5%, its labor force participation rate is 47.8%, and its employment rate is 43.3%. Counties with the largest population are the Provincial Center, Doğanşehir, Yeşilyurt, Darende and Akçadağ, while the county with the smallest population is Doğanyol. Malatya has a wealth of archeological sites.

In 1946 (Yücekök, 1972), the total number of associations in Malatya was seven. More than half of these associations were related to sports. As such, there were four sports associations, one cultural association, one public employee union, and one beautification association. There were no employee or foreign minority associations. In Malatya, the first social welfare association was founded in 1946, the first religious association (for the building of mosques) in 1950, the first agricultural association in 1951, the first worker's association in 1949, the first other type of association in 1962, the first self-employment association in 1962, and the first shopkeepers association in 1949. By 1968, the total number of associations had reached 413. In parallel to the general distribution of association in Turkey, the most common types of associations in Malatya are religious (144), cultural (59) and sports (49) associations. There were also associations regarding social welfare (8), employees (-), minorities (-), agriculture (8), workers (16), other types (3), self-employment (3), public employee unions (37), shopkeepers (41), and beautification (45). Similar to the general development across Turkey within the same period, Malatya saw an increase in the number of associations between 1946 and 1968, with religious associations becoming the most common type. As shown within the relevant table on the distribution of associations within the Province of Malatya according to county, the Provincial center has a total of 664 associations. The next counties with the highest number of associations are Yeşilyurt and Doğanşehir, each with 36 associations. The county with the least number of associations is Arguvan, with only one association. In terms of the lowest number of associations, Arguvan is followed by Doğanyol, which has two associations. The total distribution of the types of associations within the counties of Malatya can be listed as follows: 2 associations for martyrs, veterans and war-disabled individuals, 10 disabled sports associations, 11 hunting associations, 17 environmental associations, 31 solidarity associations, 146 religious associations, 74 educational associations, 17 disabled associations, 29 fellow townsmen associations, 20 development associations, 91 cultural associations, 104 professional solidarity associations, 10 health associations, 28 social services associations, 166 sports associations and 101 cooperation associations (Malatya Provincial Directorate of Associations).

In Malatya, there is a ratio of one association per 890 individuals. The most common types of associations are sports (166), religious (146) and professional solidarity (104) associations. This is similar to the general distribution of association types observed across Turkey. In the general distribution of associations within Turkey, the three most common types are sports, religious and development associations. The first and second most common association types in Malatya also include sports and religious associations; however, the third most common association type is professional solidarity associations. The number of development associations (20) is fairly small. The least common association types within the Province of Malatya are martyrs, veterans and war-disabled individuals' associations along with disabled sports and health associations. Health-related associations rank 9<sup>th</sup> in Turkey in terms of frequency, while in Malatya there are only a few associations of this type; this represents a difference between Malatya and the general distribution across Turkey. The number of disabled sports associations (17) was also very small, but this

number was in parallel with the distribution of this type of association across Turkey. According to the 2013 data of the Department of Associations, the age distribution of association members in Malatya is as follows: 24 members between the ages of 0-18, 590 members between the ages of 18-25, 3720 members between the ages of 25-35, 6808 members between the ages of 35-45, 8179 members between the ages of 45-55, and 16217 members who are 55 years of age and older. According to this data, membership to associations increases in parallel with age. The largest number of members is in the 55 years and older age group. In Malatya, the distribution of members according to gender is as follows: 32,955 association members are male, while 2578 association members are female. The total number of association members is 35,533. Similar to the general average in Turkey, the ratio of the number of association members to the local population is relatively low. Women membership to associations, on the other hand, was very low and below the average observed across Turkey. The distribution of the number of associations in Malatya according to years is as follows: 675 in 2010, 729 in 2011, 825 in 2012, and 859 in 2013 (as of 15 June 2013). An increase is observed in the number of associations. The number of new associations that were founded/established in Malatya was 48 in 2010, 92 in 2011, 137 in 2012 and 51 in 2013. The Directorate of Associations imposed pecuniary fines on 71 associations in 2010, 49 associations in 2011, 80 association in 2012, and 20 associations in 2013. In accordance with the law on associations, these fines were imposed on associations that failed to provide the necessary statements/notices, did not organize their administrative board in a timely manner, opened lounges/meeting places without the necessary permission, and collected aid without the required authorizations. The number of associations in Malatya that were granted the authorization to collect aid was 16 in 2010, 18 in 2011, 28 in 2012, and 14 in 2013. The number of federations was 3. The number of lounges/meeting places was 20 in 2010, 20 in 2011, 27 in 2012, and 28 in 2013. There is a slight increase in the number of lounges/meeting places in recent years. The number of associations dissolved by the decision of the administrative board in Malatya was 18 in 2010, 31 in 2011, 25 in 2012, and 14 in 2013. The number of associations dissolved by the decision of the Directorate was one in 2010, three in 2011 and one in 2012. The number of associations dissolved by court decision was two in 2010, four in 2011, 15 in 2012, and three in 2013. In parallel to most other associations across Turkey, the main problem of associations in Malatya is their lack of adequate financial resources and their limited number of members.

### **Conclusions**

Non-governmental organizations are an inseparable and indispensable part of civil society, which grants individuals a more active and effective role in accordance with the definition of citizenship. It can be observed that, as part of a historical process, the approach towards civil society in Turkey experienced first a period of expansion/development followed by a period of contraction/deterioration, which then lead once again to a new period of expansion/development. Due to international agreement to which Turkey is a signatory, concrete developments and improvements have been observed with regards to NGOs, especially after 2004, and despite certain limiting factors that still persist. Most NGOs are found in the economically developed, largely urbanized and coastal regions of Turkey. The number of associations has gradually increased over the years; however, their member numbers are still very low compared to the overall population. With regards to gender, the number of female members is very low in comparison to the number of male members. However, the extent of participation and the performance of the members is high; such members are, for example, members to more than one association. The most common types of associations are humane, religious and solidarity associations; on the other hand, there are few active associations for the elderly, the young and women. The most significant problems encountered by association are small member numbers and limited financial resources. The associations within the Province of Malatya in the Eastern Anatolia Region have many features that are in common with the associations found across Turkey. Their

numbers have gradually increased over the years, but their member numbers, and in particular female members, are limited. Most of their members are 55 years of age and older. Most of the associations in Malatya are located within counties that are economically more developed and are more urbanized. The most common types of associations are sports and religious associations. Considering that NGOs are an indicator of a country's level of democratic development, it is possible to state that the process of democratization is ongoing across Turkey, and also in the Province of Malatya.

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