

PERSPECTIVES

Political analysis and commentary from Turkey



GEZI PARK

A NEW HISTORY IS BEGINNING

FEATURE ARTICLES:

The unbearable appeal of modernization: The fetish of growth

Bengi Akbulut - Fikret Adaman

Sayfa 14

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Turkey and Iran: A Sunnite Axis against the Shiite crescent?

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CULTURE

Yunus Emre Cultural Centers: The AKP's Neo-Ottomanism and Islamism

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- Democracy**
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Editorial

Before the Gezi Park protests broke out, the cover story of this issue had already been decided as “The Economic Growth Miracle.” Now, an analysis of the Gezi events begs the same question, whether asked from inside or outside Turkey: “What was the reason behind such a strong reaction, even as economic indicators seem so favorable?” This naturally brings to mind some other relevant questions: Which sectors grew the fastest in Turkey in the 2000s? How did relations with foreign economic partners evolve? Which sectors of society benefited from growth, and which did not? What kind of a development model is the Turkish economy based on? Without seeking answers to these questions, it would be impossible to grasp government’s growth fetishism and the increasingly widespread reaction of society against it.

We believe that this “growth fetishism” is the main underlying concern of the protests, which spread across almost the entire country over the last month. Our comprehensive analysis of the “economic growth miracle,” and its “development” and “transformation” projects sheds light on today’s burning political issues. We can also see precursors to the current protests in villagers marching on Ankara last year to protest gigantic dam projects, the long-running legal battle against the construction of the Ilisu Dam, and the years of opposition to the nuclear power plants planned for Akkuyu and Sinop. Besides these, demolition and construction projects –euphemized as “urban transformation”– in almost every city across Turkey and the ensuing social problems also played a key role in laying the groundwork for these protests. As for the struggle against ecological destruction, the fact that Environmental Impact Assessment reports, court decisions, and the will of the local population have been utterly disregarded and provoked the rage of vast rural masses and a sector of greater public opinion. As seen in the Ilisu Dam case, the violation of court decisions demanding an immediate stoppage of construction made the public more and more skeptical about the prevalence of the rule of law. Prime Minister Erdoğan’s attempts to brand the leaders of these local struggles or the initiators of the struggle against the demolition of Gezi Park as “enemies” or “terrorists” also drew the ire of a large part of the population.

Furthermore, the government’s authoritarian, paternalist and patriarchal style caused more concern and anger. In the eyes of many, the government’s claim to “serve society despite its will” had simply become unbearable. The AKP tried to portray itself as purveyors of “the best practice” in almost every field while its credibility in the domestic and international arena eroded. Many social groups felt hemmed in by the government’s imposition of a model family, which consumed ayran (a non-alcoholic drink made of yoghurt) rather than alcohol, had at least three children, enjoyed shopping at big malls, and lived in high-security housing projects.

These population and moral policies, which denied people any real say over their own lives reached an absurd level. These policies that literally tested the limits of reason were key in triggering the explosion of creativity that we witnessed during the Gezi protests. The Gezi Park protesters had the opportunity to experience first-hand that the exact opposite of the lifestyle imposed by the government was possible, and that indeed such an alternative proved to be much more vibrant, creative and fun. The government’s condescending attitude and insults towards the protesters simply did not pay off; on the contrary, the protesters co-opted and transformed such derisive terms. For instance, when the Prime Minister dismissed the protesters as *çapulcu* (looter, marauder), they proudly declared themselves to be *çapulcu*, turning “moral concepts and rules” imposed from the top inside out. The Gezi protests left the government speechless; the moral authority of the Prime Minister and the government was shattered. Most likely, as the government saw vast masses reject the lifestyle that it had been pressing upon them for many years, it calculated that it had no other choice but recourse to police violence and repression.

The Gezi protests must be interpreted as a reaction against the AKP’s economical, social and cultural development model. Youthful masses took to the streets and parks in great numbers, but we know that the protests were supported by a much wider part of society across the country. Society started to discuss what kind of an economic development model it actually wanted for Turkey. The Gezi protests clearly showed that conservative social models (be they from the AKP, the CHP or radical left-wing groups) restricting freedoms and the human would no longer be accepted by society.

It is necessary to take a clear stance against the violence and human rights violations committed by the government and its security forces, and to stand by a society which demands democracy and freedom. The European Commission and the member countries of the European Union have a huge responsibility in preventing human rights violations, and in having a serious and resolute debate with government officials who are responsible for constructing a veritable democracy. They also need to explain to their own societies the extreme importance of continuing EU accession talks with Turkey, especially opening up the chapters on basic rights, and pursuing a resolute line in negotiations with the government of Turkey on these issues. The Gezi Park protesters expect Europe to be capable of this. If you are really concerned about the future of Turkey, it is time not to isolate, but rather to remind Turkey of its responsibilities, and to extend an invitation to the negotiation table.

On behalf of the Perspectives team
Ulrike Dufner

How the Gezi revolt gave birth to park democracy

Today in Turkey, society is going through a process which it hasn't experienced in decades and which it may not experience again for decades to come. The series of events that have been dubbed the 'Gezi Park revolts' have virtually turned into a popular uprising and have taken the entire country by storm. We should start by revisiting the trigger that sparked this massive uprising: On Tuesday, May 28th, activists trying to halt the demolition of central Istanbul's Gezi Park became the victims of police violence; people who set up tents in the park were attacked by police at the break of dawn for two days in a row. As the news of these attacks spread, hundreds of thousands took to the streets on the evening of May 31st to march to Gezi Park and the adjacent Taksim Square.

Police attacked the crowds with clashes continuing into the following day. Finally, security forces had to give up, retreating from Taksim Square and Gezi Park on June 1st. Meanwhile, people in over 70 other cities in Turkey, particularly in Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Mersin and Hatay joined the revolt against police and state violence.

As the protests –which media outlets ridiculed

as a revolt over “a couple of trees”– met with a disproportionately violent response from the police, it turned into an explosion of anger against the AKP government in general and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in particular; this set the tone and character of the entire uprising. The key underlying factor here was that the apolitical youth –the '90s generation– played a prominent role in the revolt: this generation grew up without having seen any form of political power other than Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's repressive and authoritarian style of politics.

The dissident masses who were once again forcefully evicted from Gezi Park by the police on June 15th, now gather daily in over 40 public parks in the Istanbul districts of Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Şişli, Kadıköy and Kartal, among others, in organized forums which sometimes last until early morning hours. In these forums, citizens assess the current trajectory of the resistance movement and discuss various ways to move forward together.

It might be too early to make a satisfactory analysis of the Gezi resistance, which nevertheless is already a truly historic protest movement. However, we can already make a number of preliminary assessments about this uprising that undoubtedly



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PHOTO: TOLGA SEZGINARPHOTOS



will continue to trigger any number of articles and discussions.

Struggles over public space

The first dimension I would like to highlight is the medium in which the uprising started. It is very telling that the revolt broke out in a public park, that is, a public space, normally not held in high esteem – even sniffed at– by the Left and social opposition in general. True, for many years, the left-wing opposition has struggled to be allowed to stage rallies in the Taksim Square on May Day, a fact inscribed in the public memory. However, that specific struggle could be attributed to the Left’s effort to live up to its historical and ideological legacy and was mostly limited to a single day on the calendar. On the other hand, left-wing movements had generally expressed only a rather weak objection against the so-called “Taksim Square pedestrianization project” which was designed by the government in accord with its ideological and economic interests, and which assured that the Square would be closed to public rallies and demonstrations, including May Day, for good. For the past two years, people have led a struggle against the project under the name of Taksim Solidarity, voicing their demands with small rallies of 30-40 people, occupations by 5-10 individuals, and petition campaigns. The Left did not embrace this struggle for Taksim Square, contenting itself with rallies on a single day.

But to the return to the origin of the revolt: The struggle for the city, or more specifically the struggle for public space, is a very recent field of contention in Turkey. In recent years, the most popular example

of such a struggle were the rallies protesting the demolition of Emek Sineması, the historic movie theater located on İstiklal Avenue in the district of Beyoğlu. Although people voiced their opposition to this project through every means available, the state and capital held the final word; the result was immense disappointment among those who protested the demolition. On April 7th, 2013, the police violently

These rallies are proof that people have indeed crossed over the threshold of fear. In the Gezi revolts, we have witnessed how, after suffering ten years of repression and fear under AKP rule, people have finally overcome their fear. They neither lost their rage nor their senses of fun, enthusiasm or humor in the face of extreme police violence. Images of young people dancing on barricades in heavy tear gas will go down in history as the hallmarks of the Gezi revolts.

attacked a massive rally against the demolition, triggering an immense wave of rage. In addition to the disappointment in the struggle over this one public space, the governor of Istanbul banned all public rallies in Taksim Square and on İstiklal Avenue after May Day 2013, and any group attempting to demonstrate in the area suffered excessive violence at the hands of the police. This led to the accumulation of even more rage, which would eventually fuel the Gezi revolt.

On June 1st, hundreds of thousands of citizens managed to overcome police barricade of Taksim Square and turned it into a fair of democratic protest. (up)

The day when the first resistance against bulldozers took place and triggered a massive wave of protests all over the country. (left page)

Today, we must not forget that in addition to this pent-up anger, another factor underlying the Gezi Park uprising is the fact that the struggle over the greater Taksim area alerted a significant part of the population to such issues.

Common riches plundered

As the proponent of unbridled neo-liberalism, the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party) has pursued policies with this worldview, opening the entire country to pillage and plunder. This pillage directed against the common wealth of the entire society - namely, all the riches of the cities and the countryside, urban and rural services, agricultural lands, creeks, valleys, forests, water basins, neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, historical and cultural monuments - has spurred especially those living in rural areas to wage long-running struggles to defend their living spaces. Just the same, such common spaces have been lost, one by one. This entire process, including the ensuing destruction of nature, has been etched in the collective memory. Those who most ambitiously embraced the Gezi

The paralysis of the city's financial and touristic hub for two weeks is naturally bound to have some consequences. In the first place, the sharp fall in the Istanbul stock exchange and the hike in the USD-TL exchange rate in the initial days of the uprising clearly pointed to the fragility of the Turkish economy. This vulnerability, which the government is now trying to dissimulate, could push the government off balance since its entire political legitimacy is based on a discourse of economic stability.

Park revolts and first announced their solidarity were precisely those groups who had long been leading struggles in defense of their living spaces.

As the protesters reclaimed Gezi Park and set up their tents, they burnt the empty police cars and heavy duty vehicles they found left there. This was an expression of their anger against the state and the capitol. Likewise, poor Kurdish children, whose families have been the victims of forced migrations, tried to march from Tarlabası Boulevard to Taksim Square, setting fire to construction scaffolds and huge advertisements of the Tarlabası Renovation Project, yet another response to the violent attacks of the government.

Crossing the threshold of fear

These rallies are proof that people have indeed crossed over the threshold of fear. In the Gezi revolts, we have witnessed how, after suffering ten years of repression and fear under AKP rule, people have finally overcome their fear. Thousands of people stood in resistance to the police's tear gas with gas masks, helmets and goggles. The resistance continued for three weeks as a result of an ever more sophisticated organization against the attacks. People who used

to be afraid of even carrying lemons to defend themselves against tear gas managed to stage a well-equipped resistance against the police. In doing so, they neither lost their rage nor their senses of fun, enthusiasm or humor in the face of extreme police violence. Images of young people dancing on barricades in heavy tear gas will go down in history as the hallmarks of the Gezi revolts.

Self-confidence and acquisitions

These protests gave people of all ages, but especially those of the '90s generations who had never before participated in any political organization, an immense feeling of self-confidence, which subsequently spread throughout society.

This self-confidence did not fail to bear fruit. More and more people joined in the protests, effectively rendering the governor's decision to ban rallies in Taksim Square and İstiklal Avenue after May Day null. Secondly, the project for the construction of Topçu Kışlası (Artillery Barracks) in Gezi Park was de facto cancelled. For the first time, Tayyip Erdoğan was forced to step back. He not only had to cancel the project, but was also obliged to plant more flowers and trees in the park. (Although the government created a PR campaign around the claim that "the protesters destroyed the park, and we are now renovating it," it is evident that the general public does not find this credible). This is yet another achievement of the protest movement. On the other hand, the sense of solidarity and the willingness and capability to organize displayed during police attacks in people's living spaces both in and around the park set in motion a dynamic in which different groups were empowered, supported and motivated each other. Aid, solidarity messages and support visits from across the country and the world established the movement's legitimacy across a much wider area, far beyond the so-called Taksim Commune.

All these factors helped the populace reclaim their right to have a voice and take action for their own living space, a right which they've been deprived of for years. People from all age groups gained self-confidence and enthusiasm. And we can already predict that the experiences of the previously apolitical younger generation will set off immense leaps in the social struggles of the years ahead.

Power of social legitimacy

For two weeks, the people controlled the most important square in the largest city in the country. During this period, no official force could even come close to the square. The protesters did not let the state police into the square; they set police vehicles and offices on fire. All this was owing not to military or militant struggles but rather social legitimacy and vast social support: This is a social and political event which deserves to be analyzed in-depth. The earthquake triggered by the people's will no doubt will inspire other popular struggles for freedom and equality both in Turkey and abroad.

Impact on the government

At least for the time being, despite a large majority of participants chanting slogans urging the prime



minister and the government to resign, the Gezi resistance does not have the power to force a change in government. Even the dismissal of the governor and police chiefs responsible for the police violence and the deaths of several protestors -as demanded by the Taksim Solidarity- does not seem likely to materialize. Tayyip Erdoğan has interpreted the uprising as a conspiracy against him personally and has already embarked upon a counter initiative, praising security forces in his public rallies and reinforcing the establishment.

Nevertheless, the protest movement can still pressure the government to take steps towards democratization. For example, the repeal of the 10% electoral threshold as embraced by almost everyone in the park forums could become one of the main demands of the movement.

As for economics, the paralysis of the city's financial and touristic hub for two weeks is naturally bound to have some consequences. In the first place, the sharp fall in the Istanbul stock exchange and the hike in the USD-TL exchange rate in the initial days of the uprising clearly pointed to the fragility of the Turkish economy. This vulnerability, which the government is now trying to dissimulate, could push the government off balance since its entire political legitimacy is based on a discourse of economic stability. This economic fluctuation could topple the political establishment like a paper tiger, shattering the image of a "strong economy" that the government has been long trying to create.

The fact that the Gezi protest has spilled over from

During the Gezi revolts, people who used to be too afraid to even carry lemons to defend themselves against tear gas staged a well-equipped resistance against the police. They neither lost their rage nor their senses of fun, enthusiasm or humor in the face of extreme police violence. Images of young people dancing on barricades in heavy tear gas will go down in history as the hallmarks of the Gezi revolts.

Gezi Park into public parks and squares across the country, thus fueling the pursuit of direct democracy, is a source of hope for the future organization of the movement. It is also a good sign that the movement has been successful in creating its own instruments, methods and language. At a forum organized in a public park in the Cihangir neighborhood of Beyoğlu, one protestor suggested, "We have set up a new village. There is no place for ancient traditions in a new village." It remains to be seen how the process will evolve. However, it is already evident that the genie is out of the bottle; the Turkish people are wide awake after decades of slumber, and nothing can remain the same.

May Gilles Deleuze's mantra sheds light on our path: "When power targets life itself, life turns into resistance against power."

After the invasion of Gezi Park by the police forces on June 15, people started to gather in other parks around the city and started to organize public forums.

Gezi Park protests: A historical milestone in the democratization of Turkey

Perspectives: How do you define the protests that started as a reaction to police violence against those who were trying to prevent the destruction of Istanbul's Gezi Park in Taksim, and that spread to almost everywhere in Turkey?

Cengiz Çandar: I consider the protests that began with resistance to the destruction of Gezi Park in Taksim as one of the most meaningful developments in the recent history of Turkey. From my point of view, this development reflects the highest level of democratic conscience and sensitivity that we have even encountered in Turkey. The most valuable aspect of this is that it demonstrates that it is no longer easy for an authoritarian regime to be established or for an autocratic diversion to take place. Due to this, the Gezi Park protests are a historical milestone in the democratisation process of Turkey.

It was emphasised that most of those who participated in the protests were very young and "apolitical". How would you describe the general profile of the protestors?

A significant portion of the protestors are those who have participated in a political protest for the first time; they are very young. In any case, two thirds of the overall Turkish population is very young. The protestors are urban and well-educated young people. In other words, in one aspect they are the generation who are the future of Turkey. The adjective of "apolitical" attributed to them must be removed as a result of the Gezi Park protests. It would be more sensible to speak of a new political language and a new political attitude. We can call this a new and unconventional political language and attitude that's distinct to the 21st century and was not known or anticipated by my generation.

What do you think those marching to the squares are reacting to, what are their demands?

The greatest short-cut and the most basic demand should be defined as "freedom". What's at hand here is a special awareness against interference in individual freedoms. Environmental awareness was the starting point of the ordeal. However, in the beginning there weren't large numbers of people protesting at Gezi Park. A violent police attack took place and that's when the social explosion occurred, with the demand for freedom against police oppression coming into the limelight. Then we began to witness the demands of participatory democratic understanding at a level of "germination", as the dimension of the social explosion developed. I can state that one of

the demands is freedom, and another is set forth by participatory democracy as a reaction to the oppressive one-man rule.

Do you think that there is an emphasis on environmental awareness and the discomfort fuelled by the projects that cause ecological harm (e.g. hydroelectric power plants, thermal power plants and dams) in the reactions and demands that are being voiced?

Of course there is. However, this alone is insufficient to explain the dimensions the Gezi Park protests have reached. In any case, the reactions to hydroelectric power plants, thermal power plants, and dams and so forth, have been evident in the massive reaction triggered by Gezi Park because these projects have consolidated the frustrations of a people who are dealing with a government that does not take into account their voice in matters concerning their lives. Thus, environmental awareness has an indirect share in all of these protests.

Ahmet İnsel defined the "Gezi Resistance" as a "revolt for dignity" and this view was shared by many people. Do you agree with this evaluation?

Of course I do. The moment I heard this evaluation from Ahmet İnsel's mouth I wrote a tweet that comprised of the same words. Referencing him, I also repeated the same definition in television interviews the next day.

How would you evaluate the government's and pro-government parties' drawing of parallels between the "Gezi Resistance" and the Republic rallies, and the assertion that the neo-nationalists fuel the protests?

The government –more precisely Prime Minister Erdoğan– and groups who are in favour of the government have not understood the events taking place right from the start; they simply could not understand and they have preferred not to understand. It is true that the flags and slogans of neo-nationalist groups were seen in Taksim Square rather than at Gezi Park. However, the visibility of those groups was very disproportionate to their share in the protests. Those who don't understand and insist on not understanding the root of the events, use these images as the argument for their incomprehension. They want to evaluate what was going on as the basis of justification for harsh and misguided attitudes. What happened had nothing to do with the Republic rallies. For example, I have been one of the harshest critics of the Republic rallies but I have supported the Gezi Park protests



Cengiz Çandar

Upon graduation from Ankara University, Cengiz Çandar taught at METU and later at Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul Kültür University and Özyeğin University. As consultant to Turgut Özal, he helped set up links between Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish leadership. He did research at the Wilson Center and United States Institute of Peace.

Author of 7 books, a contributor to 3 books, his articles appear in academic journals, and his op-eds are in Turkish and foreign newspapers.

Appearing on numerous TV news shows, he has programs on TRT-Haber and A Haber.

Awarded the Abdi İpekçi Peace Award (1987), Örsan Öymen Award for News (1993) and Peace and Tolerance Award of Union of Journalists and Writers (1995). He is working on a book on Iraq, Kurds and Turkey's Middle East strategy.

passionately since the beginning. I whole-heartedly supported the Gezi Park protests because I saw they had no common ground with the Republic rallies. The participation of certain anti-government elements that took place in Republic rallies in this great movement of groups doesn't change the character of the great social explosion. The prime minister and all his supporters have misread the Gezi Park protests.

The attitudes of President Abdullah Gül and Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç, who held meetings with those protesting and released official statements concerning them while the Prime Minister was in North Africa, generally were viewed as being more constructive. Do you think that there are differences of opinion and approach between the President, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister?

It is obvious that the assessments of these three figures differ; Abdullah Gül's is especially different in relation to the events. It was also previously seen that they both had different approaches in many other circumstances. So yes, there are differences. However, this is not really significant in light of today. Tayyip Erdoğan has marginalised those who have different approaches in the government or within his party. He is adding fuel to the fire. Despite all the risks and dangers, he adopted a strategy of creating tensions and polarising the society in order to consolidate his own government. He comprehended the events as defying his government; this is correct. But he went even further, believing that these events were a conspiracy against his government and that is not correct. However, in conclusion, just as he did the former, he also calculated the possibility of downgrading the rivals within his party and other possible rivals around him, including President Gül. He sees that this strategy is producing results in the short term. I really don't think that he will diverge from this strategy until the elections in 2014.

There is also an approach that holds the disposition and psychology of the prime minister responsible rather than government policies for how police aggression against the protestors began and how things escalated from there. Do you think it's possible to explain the situation through the psychology and tone of the prime minister?

Talking about government would be an overstatement, a misplaced compliment. There is no government; only Tayyip Erdoğan. Fundamentally the fact that the events reached such a dimension of social explosion is exactly because of this reason. Tayyip Erdoğan's arbitrariness, insolence, and his powerful suggestion of a one-man government led to a common ground that brought together large numbers of people who could never be imagined as coming together under the same cause. Therefore, it is beyond doubt that Tayyip Erdoğan's disposition and psychology had a distinctive importance in the way events escalated. Also, this situation also provides hints about the intellectual poverty of AK Party staff. Whatever Tayyip Erdoğan's disposition and psychology, the existence of MPs and a structure that cannot alter is transparent. Since the

Prime Minister is able to create such a following, it is essential to identify issues beyond the personality of the Prime Minister. There is a saying in Turkish, "The sheikh doesn't fly, his disciples make him fly." I think that this saying suits well the situation today.

What does the presentation of the expression "waiting for charges" as some sort of "kindness" tell us about the relationship between the government and the law after thousands have been injured and four people have died?

These expressions were in fact a sign that Tayyip

The protestors are urban and well-educated young people. So to say, in one aspect they are the generation who are the future of Turkey. The adjective of "apolitical" attributed to them must be removed together with the Gezi Park protests. It would be more sensible to speak about a new political language and a new political attitude. We can call this a new and unconventional political language and attitude that's distinct to the 21st century and is not known or anticipated by my generation.

Erdoğan had to backpedal in the face of the great social agitation. That's how I evaluated them. I didn't give any other meaning to them beyond this.

Do you think that the Gezi protests will affect the proposed system of presidency or the steps the AKP wishes to take for a new constitution? Do you think it will lead the party into constitutional change?

The language and style the Prime Minister adopted after the Gezi protests as well as the path he insists on taking, makes it seem impossible for the structuring of a constitution through inter-party reconciliation for the foreseeable future. The structuring of a new constitution by Turkey – given that a constitution is a social contract and the expression of a wide-ranging reconciliation – before the 2015 elections is not very realistic. It is also very difficult for the proposed system of presidency to be in the limelight right now. In one aspect the Gezi protests drew boundaries for Tayyip Erdoğan. It is unthinkable that Tayyip Erdoğan's plans for presidency will not be affected by this.

Though I think there is one question that needs to be posed. Did Tayyip Erdoğan really want a new constitution before the 2014 presidency elections? The reason why is because in Turkey the written authorities of the president don't just make him a ceremonial president, he is given the power to lead. If you add the psychological advantage that the president will gain by being elected by public vote for the first time to the legislated authority a president in Turkey can have, the picture becomes clearer. This might be sufficient for Tayyip Erdoğan. He might not feel the need to push through a new constitution. As is seen currently, he started his new

campaign right after the events of Gezi.

So would this process affect the possible president candidacy of Tayyip Erdoğan? In one of your articles you state that Tayyip Erdoğan is losing, what has he lost?

I don't think it affects it. As of now he is the strongest candidate and there seems to be no other candidate for presidency. But his odds of becoming president were much greater before the Gezi Park protests than now; it was almost certain then that he would be the new president. Even though he still seems to be the strongest contender, we are not in a position to say that he will be elected president in 2014. Speaking of what he has lost... I think

Tayyip Erdoğan desired to go down in Turkish history by being elected as president twice before the 2024. This desire has not changed. In fact, it seems that he will try each and every path and method to achieve it, but I personally do not think that Turkey will have the tolerance for him for another 11 years, especially not to a government that will gradually transform into a one-man rule scenario.

he has lost the future that he ambitiously designed for himself. Tayyip Erdoğan desired to go down in Turkish history by being elected as president twice before the 2024. This desire has not changed. In fact, it seems that he will try each and every path and method to achieve it, but I personally do not think that Turkey will have the tolerance for him for another 11 years, especially not for a government that will gradually transform into a one-man rule scenario.

How do you think the Gezi protests have reflected on the AK Party voter base?

To me it seems like AK Party no longer has a poll guarantee of 50 percent or higher. They did prior to the Gezi events. In the forthcoming period I doubt that the voter erosion caused by the Gezi protests can be easily regained. If a reaction other than violence had been adopted towards Gezi it could have been possible. It seems that Tayyip Erdoğan has missed the boat on that front.

In the first days of the Gezi resistance, Cem Boyner, the CEO of Boyner Holding, issued a press releases that none of their firms would be involved in the construction of a shopping mall in place of Gezi Park. Some other companies and brands also issued similar press releases. In the meanwhile, in many of his speeches, Tayyip Erdoğan targeted various investment groups, banks and businessmen - most of the time using their names. How do you evaluate the relationship between AKP and the bourgeoisie within this framework?

It speaks for itself: It's problematic. If what's in question is certain milieu of investment, TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) sees the Prime Minister as targeting

them and have lost trust in him. Once they have a different option they can easily shift their interests.

Tayyip Erdoğan's continuous emphasis on the support he has from the 50 percent at rallies and in various speeches and that his statement of "having difficulty keeping the 50 percent at home" also created concerns for the possibility of civil war. Do you see such an extent of polarisation? How would you describe the parties of polarisation?

I am aware that there is concern about the possibility of civil war, but the Gezi protests also reflected the mature character of Turkish society. Turkey does not have a structure that can easily be swept into civil war. In my opinion it is more realistic to place emphasis on the inclination towards fascism and signals that such a potential exists before the possibility of civil war. The parties of polarisation, in their most crude forms, are the new ruling elite and the rest of society, the old and the new. They can be expressed as a ruling configuration that can be hopeful of oppression in order to continue living and a society that wishes for broadened freedoms. Traditional sect fault lines also showed themselves. It must be because of this that the government proposed a "new Alevi initiative" all of a sudden.

Don't you think that the attitude and the expressions of the government in rallies during the process of the Gezi protests conflicts with the same government that announces "a peace process" in view of solving the Kurdish issue and organising proceedings with the leader of the PKK? In particular, many participants of the Wise-Men Committee of Turkey voiced their concerns that the Gezi protests will affect the "peace process". What are your opinions concerning this? Can't the gathering and demand for democracy in these protests be evaluated as an opportunity for the "period of peace"?

In my opinion, the Gezi protests will have a highly positive effect on the peace process in the mid- and long-term. If there is an inevitable connection between democratisation and the peace process, which there must be, we can see that the Gezi protests are the milestone of Turkey's democratisation will have a definitely positive effect on the peace process. While in the short-term, I am not so certain because I cannot be sure that Tayyip Erdoğan and his staff want to maintain the peace process the way it really should be. I am not saying that they can't maintain it, but I am just not sure. I prefer to leave room for observations and considerations. When it comes to the comments of many of the "wise-men" who said that the protests affect the peace process; I believe that this is an incorrect observation but an understandable one. The "wise-men" were fundamentally functional instruments of the government's PR activities in the area of the peace process. The media covered their views and actions closely, to a great extent. The Gezi protests left them out of the equation instantly. This is why the comments of some who think the peace process is their own activity can be comprehended. In the meanwhile, some others removed themselves from the activities of the "wise-

men” or suspended their work due to the attitude of the government against the Gezi protestors. There isn't a homogenous structure there. If we return to the question once again; yes, the gathering and demand for democracy at the Gezi protests presents a perfect opportunity for the success of the peace process.

How do you evaluate the insistent emphasis of the government and pro-government parties that there are external forces at hand behind the protests?

As I tried to specify before, these assertions are a striking example of the fall of AK Party's leading staff and their representatives in the media into intellectual poverty. Whenever great social dynamics are ascribed as “foreign forces”, “their internal appendages” or “traitors” know that the minds of those with authority have atrophied and they have deduced themselves to a position in which they know nothing other than oppression. All those responsible for autocratic regimes propound the same assertions when they came face to face with great public unrest.

In the events that cropped up shortly after Tayyip Erdoğan's meeting with President Obama in the US, do you think the fact that the government (having adopted such a xenophobic and anti-Western rhetoric) did not find the support it sought for their external politics from the USA had a role?

I cannot make a direct connection between the two. If there is such a connection, it must confirm that “there are external forces at play behind the events; there are global powers.” However, we know how and why the events began. Which element of the above question involves suffocating Gezi Park with pepper gas on May 31st? Would the events have spread so much if it wasn't for the improvidence of the government?

How do you evaluate the minister in charge of EU relations Egemen Bağış's recent statements that create the impression that the government is ready and almost willing to sever its ties with the EU?

I think it's just awful. Every word that has come out of his mouth has shown that if anyone cannot be a minister, it is the minister responsible for EU relations. Egemen Bağış has shown behaviour that appears to make him a minister appointed to destroy relations with the EU.

How will the attitude of the government and the expressions of the prime minister against the Gezi protests affect the reputation of AK Party and Erdoğan in the Arab world?

In the beginning, Tayyip Erdoğan's increasing charisma in the region had raised him up to the role of an important actor in the international political scene. Concerning his attitude he has put forth after these protests, it is obvious that his image has taken a hard blow in the international media and in public opinion. If we are to rewind the scenario, even if the destruction of his image in the international scene

is gradual, we can say that it will lead to him losing face in the Arab world too. This fact will not be changed by being welcomed by enthusiastic crowds in the Gaza Strip. Let's not forget that the real reason why Turkey and thus Erdoğan was powerful in the Arab world was because they expressed an

Gezi protests will have a highly positive effect on the peace process in the mid- and long-term. If there is an inevitable connection between democratisation and the peace process, which there must be, we can see that the Gezi protests we characterise as the milestone of Turkey's democratisation will have a definitely positive effect on the peace process.

example that was unlike the Arab public opinion. If Erdoğan has given reactions normally expected of Arab leaders during the recent events, which he unfortunately did - which face will he be putting on that's more superior and unique compared to other leaders in the eyes of Arabs so that his charisma and image can be sustained without harm?

If we bear in mind that the ex-governor of Istanbul, Muammer Güler, whose name is uttered among the bureaucrats and government officials who were responsible for the murder of Hrant Dink, was invited back into politics by the AK Party and was elected as an MP and that he is currently the Minister of Internal Affairs, is it realistic to think that those who are actually responsible for the heavy-handed police tactics, the traumatising of people, and the deaths during the Gezi protests will be put on trial?

The answer to that is very short and simple. In a single word: No!

Last but not least, the protests have also clearly shown that there are fundamental structural problems in the Turkish media that cannot be ignored. How do you evaluate the relationship between the media and the government looking at the last ten years? Do you expect there will be a change in the broadcasting and publishing policies of the media in the near future?

In the short- and long-term I do not expect any fundamental or significant change. The media patronage in Turkey takes its place within the government configuration and within intricate business and self-interest relations with the state (and thus, the government). Without change in the governmental structure and in the balance of power in Turkey, there cannot be radical change in the mainstream media.

#occupygezi: A revolution goes European

The revolutions around Gezi Park have shaken official Europe. No one could have predicted such an outpouring. But even though the timing and the trigger were unexpected, the underlying frustrations had long been visible to those who scratched below the surface. For years, people in Turkey have been warning about Erdoğan's salami tactics that were slowly but surely undermining personal liberties. Often, Europe shrugged off these warnings as exaggerations. After all, Erdoğan had a strong majority, had started talks with the Kurds and (sometimes more, sometimes less successfully) with the Armenians, had established a Ministry of European Affairs, to name just a few. Each individual change in Turkey seemed small. That women who wear headscarves suffer less discrimination is certainly a positive development, and building more roads and bridges may not be a sign of smart transportation policy, but it is not unusual either. Restrictions on the consumption of alcohol do have some positive aspects in terms of public health, and similar restrictions already exist in other countries.

But many people in Turkey kept looking at the big picture, which was easier as Erdoğan became bolder and his schemes grander: huge infrastructure projects, mega mosques, and an increasingly authoritarian style. Even if there was still a majority of voters who supported Erdoğan, the deep polarization he created was not a sign of a good government but a sign of a government led by a prime minister who whips up his own rallies to counter the protests at Gezi Park. This will not benefit him in any way.

The excessive use of force by the police has already been criticized by individuals and organizations, Europe and even the UN secretary general. High Representative Ashton issued statements and Commissioner Füle has met with protesters in Istanbul. A plenary debate in the European Parliament led to all political groups condemning the violence and resulted in a resolution calling for a thorough investigation into police violence and for dialogue with the protesters. It openly criticizes Erdoğan for taking an unconciliatory stand.

The Greens in the European Parliament have been supporting the protests and organized a conference in the parliament with representatives of the park movement, including the co-spokesperson of the Turkish Green Party, Sevil

Turan. Greens all over Europe have been writing letters, joining demonstrations and sharing news.

Indeed, global support for the #occupygezi movement has been astonishing. In cities all over Europe, people have been sharing news and images and organizing demonstrations. The very existence of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter have facilitated the spread of information and the organization of demonstrations, yet even so the outpouring of solidarity and empathy in Europe has been remarkable. People have not just retweeted calls for help, they have stepped over the threshold into the offline world to organize demonstrations in front of Turkish embassies.

This makes this movement different from the Arab Spring protests. In those, social media tools featured prominently, but at least in Europe, their use never led to a support movement in the way we are witnessing today. Perhaps this is because the rest of Europe feels closer to the Istanbul than they do to the people of Cairo or Damascus. This might stem in part from personal connections to Turkey via holidays, studies or friends. But more than that, young people in Brussels, Berlin or Madrid see the young people of Turkey as their peers. Not different, equal. It could as easily have been them who were teargassed, beaten, and arrested. Turkey is seen by Europe to be a part of Europe, and it is hard to believe that peaceful demonstrators are beaten and injured by police forces in Europe. It feels like it is happening in the next city over; it could have been you. Maybe this feeling was all the stronger because the protests started in Turkey's "most European" city, and also by the issues at stake: a park, a number of trees, commercialization, and gentrification - all things suffered in many European cities. Whatever the spark, the connection is close enough to maintain a constant uproar in social media, bringing more than just exile communities to the demonstrations and facilitating an identification with the protesters.

These protests pushed governments in several European member states to voice their concerns with the government of Turkey, which was also aided by the debate in the European Parliament. In this plenary session, sessions where MEP's usually speak in their native languages and speak directly to their national audience, they spoke in English directly to the Turkish government.

Unfortunately, Erdoğan has ignored all calls for peace and dialogue from abroad. This prime minister of an EU candidate country has declared



Ska Keller

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the Parliament's resolution irrelevant, not a good omen for the accession negotiations that were supposed to be refreshed this summer. There was talk of the opening of new chapters, talk of how this year would be good for bringing Turkey closer to the EU axis. These expectations do not seem likely to come to fruition now despite the potential in this civilian revolt. Besides the Cyprus question - which seemed to be on a hopeful path after the Cypriot presidential elections and because of the wish of the south to exploit gas fields - critics of Turkey's EU accession often cite the state's treatment of the Kurds and other minorities, the fear of Islamization, and the overwhelming power of a big and growing state led by an authoritarian leader.

If the government of Turkey would at least tolerate peaceful protests, embrace pluralism, rethink their strategy and involve the public specifically in city planning but also in general as well as showing respect to different lifestyles, they would win a lot more favor. It would bring Turkey closer to the EU and the people of Turkey closer to itself. Erdoğan does not seem willing to use this opportunity; rather, he is moving Turkey farther from Europe by insulting protesters, using excessive force, and organizing counter-demonstrations that will only heighten tensions. By doing so, he is willingly giving new fodder to his worst enemies in Europe.

Istanbul does have an elected mayor, but it seems that the prime minister himself controls city planning decisions. No wonder people direct all their anger towards him even when the trigger issue was a local one. By insisting on taking everything under his control, Erdoğan will also be the one who is ultimately responsible for the results of events in the park. Erdoğan is acting as if he's cornered and fighting his final battle when his position is actually quite comfortable. His AK Party has been leading in polls and elections for years, he is unchallenged within his party, the main opposition party - the CHP - doesn't seem to be able to gain any ground, and electoral laws prevent new elements from having any real chance. Erdoğan could afford to give others a little tolerance, a little space, some relief.

But with his growing majority, his rule has become more authoritarian and his plans for changing the society of Turkey ever bigger and more outspoken, aggressive even. This is partly explained by a common phenomenon: If you enjoy broad support over an extended period of time, you might start assuming that all your ideas and decisions are right. Unchallenged even within your own party,

there is no one left to criticize you. Added to that, Erdoğan has built up his own style of public opinion making by chasing media outlets with law suits and arresting so many journalists that only a few dare to voice criticism. During the Gezi protests, domestic dailies in Turkey ran very different headlines and showed a very different picture than what was depicted in international media. There are

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stories of provocateurs, attacks on women wearing headscarves, violence against the police, but no reports of what the protests are protesting about, who they are, that their protests were peaceful, nor any mention of the support that they have locally and globally. The media in Turkey all but kept silent for several days at the start of the protests. If Erdoğan really mistakes what frightened media reports for public opinion, it is no wonder that the outpouring of demonstrations came as a surprise to him, and it is no wonder that his image of them is so skewed.

June 15th

Whether #occupygezi can develop into something lasting and forceful remains to be seen. Movements of this immensity have great potential but also face the great challenges of diversity, decision-making and the struggles of everyday life. But for Turkey, gaining pluralism, diversity, as well as a citizenry who get involved in decision-making to control the politicians and administrators, work for the community and think about the future is a great opportunity.

As I write this piece in the night between the 15th and 16th of June, police raid Gezi Park with a violence that people who have been teargassed for two weeks say is worse than ever. The numbers of people injured and arrested is still unknown.

The unbearable appeal of modernization: The fetish of growth

“The more a country consumes electricity the stronger it is, the faster it advances in the path of development. It means that the wheels in the factories are turning, that production in our enterprises is on the rise, that household consumption is increasing, that technology use is spreading in the entire country (...) In the world’s advanced, developed countries large shortages [of energy] have been met and [energy] issues were solved by measured and rational steps. God willing, we will solve this issue as well (...) This is why we are taking a new step; we are replacing the phrase “water flows, the Turk just watches” with “water flows, the Turk acts,” and God willing, we will meet this shortage.”¹

These words are from a speech given by Turkey’s prime minister in 2010 at the opening ceremony of a hydropower plant, highly controversial for its potential environmental impacts. Such pronounced obsession with economic growth, or rather modernization via economic growth, however, is hardly recent. Indeed, the achievement of modernization and economic progress has long been long-standing objective of Turkish policymakers. The idea of “catching up” with the West has been central to politics in Turkey beginning especially with the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century, and then being formally instituted with the foundation of the modern Republic. Since then, the idea of modernization has dominated political life in Turkey like no other issue. Although modernization/development² has come to mean a transformational process surpassing a solely economics, there was, and still is, an inherent central role for growth: rapid economic growth, fueled by the application of modern science and technology to economic processes, is seen as a means of support to the newly-created political and social order. It was, and still is, envisaged as the precondition to and the remedy for all ills in a backward, traditional society. Thus, growth policies have been given priority, based on the assumption that their achievement would automatically resolve social and political issues as well—albeit sometimes with a lag.

It is thus hardly surprising that debates on how to best promote economic growth have always been important in politics in Turkey.³ These debates, however, never shifted away from the politics of “development alternatives” to the politics of “alternatives to development.” Hence,

the political landscape does not contain proto-post-developmental propositions in the vein of Gandhi’s hind swaraj or Nyrere’s ujaama.⁴ A wide range of ideologies within politics in Turkey shares a common faith in economic growth as the precondition to progress. While the very foundations of the modern Republic — secularism and unitary nationalism — have been challenged by various political forces ranging from revolutionary socialism to Islamic fundamentalism, the notion that development through rapid economic growth is a sine qua non for progress has remained uncontested. Even when the modernization project was challenged, especially after the 1980s, these critiques were not of modernization per se, but rather of its top-down implementation and, at times, its strict interpretation as a replica of the Western model.⁵

The roots of the undisputed appeal and the dominance of growth-oriented modernization can be found in the configuration of state-society relationships; in particular, in the way that the state presented itself and legitimized its claim to rule by drawing up a broad consensus for its existence in Turkey. The state of Turkey has historically achieved its power and legitimacy, first and foremost, from the promise of fulfilling the ideal of modernization. The urgency to modernize and realize economic development constituted a collective interest, an outlook for the whole nation envisaged in organic unity without internal divisions, where even questioning its validity was considered unpatriotic. Through a policy of modernization, the Turkish state was able to represent itself as a neutral institution that embodied the collective will of the people, and thus could acquire the consent of society to legitimate its right to rule. That is to say, the idea of modernization/development was integral to the state’s ability to govern not by naked coercion, but built on the foundation of the consent of its constituency. On the other hand, the aspiration to modernize became what united an internally-fragmented society with various dimensions of socio-economic inequality.

Modernization via economic growth came to serve two further, related, purposes by (re)producing the Turkish state’s existence and hegemony. Firstly, the appeal of modernization/development as a goal allowed the Turkish state to preempt opposition that could be mobilized around issues like social justice and (re)distribution. Class-based inequalities, for instance, were brushed



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aside since “classes” were invisible to begin with; there were no classes, but rather a division of labor among the citizenry of Turkey where each and every individual worked hard to elevate the country to the level of Western civilization. Establishing modernization as a collective interest served to unify diverse groups around this “universal goal” and prevented the formulation of demands arising out of intra-society divisions. Secondly, development via economic growth became a requisite to enable the distribution of material concessions to subordinate classes for ensuring their consent. The Turkish state, to a large extent, managed to maintain legitimacy through its generosity as long as the urban petty bourgeoisie and rural small producers could be subsidized, and even the most impoverished groups in society were co-opted by material improvements to their living standards.⁶

Certainly, this obsession with modernization/development, which became a building block of the very existence of the state, has transformed the physical environment in various ways—in this sense, it is possible to read the making of the state of Turkey by looking at the making of the environment. One direct example of such transformations is the building of dams in Turkey and “the king of dams,” Süleyman Demirel, who served as the prime minister multiple times between 1965 and 1980 after his post as the head of the State Hydraulic Works (SHW) is perhaps the epitome of this strategy. During his time in office, Demirel oversaw the construction of several dozen dams and initiated the construction of over 50 more and also launched the massive Southeastern Anatolia Project (SAP). His words regarding the Project are more than telling, and they are a perfect example of the rhetoric that has been continuously invoked to promote the image of the state as the deliverer of modernization, through which it seeks to secure the consent of its people: “The love of [SAP] is the love of Turkey. [SAP] is the cement that unifies Turkey; it is the largest project of the Republic. (...) It is beyond an engineering project (...) It is a struggle to make people happy. It is not only about taking water from rivers and bringing them to the plains. That is just a part of the bigger picture. It includes the education of people; their preparation for a new world, for the conditions of a new world.”⁷

AKP: “Let stability last, let Turkey grow”

The AKP has not only retained the historically-strong commitment to modernization/development, as attested by its most recent election slogan quoted above⁸, but it had also adopted a radically-aggressive agenda in its implementation, the main pillars of which seem to be state-facilitated (if not state-led) construction bubble and destructive energy investments, largely financed through the inflow of hot money. Arguably more effective than ever, modernization/development continues to be constituted as the collective interest through which the consent of the ruled is acquired and the marginalized sections of the society are co-opted into the political system; in a sense it is the implied answer to the structural crises of the political order.⁹

The specific operationalization of the modernization/developmentalist agenda under the AKP administration, on the other hand, seems distinct from previous periods on more than one count. It is widely recognized that the AKP has mobilized a different business group, namely the small- and medium-size capitalists

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previously excluded from the dominant coalition, albeit ultimately around the familiar ideal of modernization. A notable ideological turn that accompanied this was a re-interpretation of the Islamic ethic in a vein similar to what Protestantism meant for Western capitalism.¹⁰ More importantly, the modernist/developmentalist fetish of the AKP has a visibly spatial twist. This period has seen an especially accelerated capitalization of the natural environment including the privatization of lands previously under public ownership, and the expropriation and redistribution of property through “legal” means such as urban transformation.

In that sense, the AKP has successfully mobilized a spatial politics with the idea of modernization/development continues forming an indispensable basis: monumental projects such as the highways, power plants, a third bridge to be built over the Bosphorous and a canal to connect the Marmara and Black Seas do not only reproduce the existence of the state in the most visible way and create the image that it is indeed working hard for its people, but these projects are also the materialization of the very ideal of modernization/development in the most effective way to receive admiration from various groups in the society. On the other hand, this spatialized, construction-led modernization/development model reproduces the consent of large sections in the society, not only through the distribution of rents to large masses and the opening up of new areas of investment, but also by the effective persuasion of middle-lower classes through housing property and consumption opportunities. The parallel silencing and de-legitimization of social struggles against ecological destruction and urban transformation, with construction resonating closely with modernization in the social imagery, has buttressed this strategy. All in all, the notion of modernization/development has been worked and reworked to cement state hegemony in the familiar ways discussed above, albeit with different manifestations and at different layers.

Socio-environmental consequences of growth fetishism

Against this backdrop of modernization via growth fetishism, the ability and willingness with which environmental issues can be addressed are often severely limited. The supremacy of economic growth as a singular goal renders other issues, such as environmental quality and social justice, secondary.

The supremacy of economic growth as a singular goal renders other issues, such as environmental quality and social justice, secondary. Not only have the development strategies undertaken by the state of Turkey, among other things, put immense pressure on the environment, but they have also often impeded the effective enforcement of environmental protection policies, even when the state of Turkey is in a position to implement them.

Not only have the development strategies undertaken by the state of Turkey, among other things, put immense pressure on the environment, but they have also often impeded the effective enforcement of environmental protection policies, even when the state of Turkey is in a position to implement them.

A quick snapshot of the environmental problems in Turkey, ranging from pollution to overuse of natural resources to the extinction of species, is illustrative of the toll taken by growth fetishism on the environment: Pollution of seas and inland water bodies; excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides in agriculture; one of highest rates of increase in CO₂ emissions in the world; problems in the disposal of domestic and industrial waste; ecological destruction of mining activities, to name a few. Although such measures of environmental quality are infamously fraught with measurement and representation problems, Turkey's 109th rank among all countries in the 2012 Environmental Performance Index, a composite of the biodiversity of various natural resources, pollution levels and the negative impacts of environmental conditions on human health, confirms this general picture.¹¹ Especially over the last twenty years, these developments have catalyzed rising social opposition and resistance. Socio-environmental conflicts focused around energy investments, especially heightened with the liberalization of the energy sector and highly visible around hydropower plant constructions, point to the depth of environmental conflicts in general. A few notable examples of such conflicts include the local resistances against a coal power plant in Gerze, gold mining in Bergama, Ida, and Artvin, and nuclear power plants in Sinop and Akkuyu in addition to the numerous opposition movements against the aforementioned small hydropower plants scattered around the country.

The impacts of the primacy of developmentalist goals over environmental issues are manifested in the environmental pressure caused by many spheres of economic activity, from tourism to industry, from

mining to agriculture. The state efforts to promote tourism as the new growth industry in the 1980s, for instance, went hand-in-hand with the disruption and destruction of the ecological balance, the disappearance of flora and fauna, the damage to sensitive geological formations, and intense pollution due to inadequate infrastructures for sewage treatment and disposal.¹² The case of industry is much more alarming; without limits on the polluting activities of industrial firms - despite continuous lip service paid in official documents to the abatement of air and water pollution - severe environmental degradation poses serious threats to human health. The case of Dilovasi, located 60 kilometers east of Istanbul, is especially noteworthy. The home of six Organized Industrial Zones, the percentage of deaths related to various kinds of cancer in Dilovasi is 33%, about triple the national average.¹³

Agricultural growth policies pursued by the state of Turkey arguably provide the most visible evidence of the environmental repercussions of the modernist, growth-oriented fetish. In the 1950s, the agricultural sector underwent rapid commercialization which was paralleled by the promotion of Green Revolution technologies and the use of agrochemicals, with the state often acting as the main supplier of agricultural inputs with the aim to increase productivity. Agricultural intensification was encouraged through various schemes and pricing mechanisms, which, coupled with heightened land fragmentation and a dearth of off-farm employment opportunities in rural areas, led to further intensification of land use. At the same time monumental irrigation works undertaken in many river basins put a strong emphasis on the importance of dam building. The problems caused by large dams, such as human displacement, loss of flora and fauna, salinization, and silting were ignored in favor of highlighting the economic gains of increased irrigation and productivity. The socio-environmental costs of this strategy of agricultural modernization proved to be quite heavy: increased chemical use led to pollution, especially of groundwater resources, as well as to a loss of soil fertility; agricultural intensification and chemical use compromised long-term productivity; and large-scale dam construction has not only disrupted the natural hydrological cycle and led to biodiversity losses, but also provided an incentive to increase irrigated farming at the expense of environmental quality.

These processes of environmental degradation and pollution should not be considered independently of their socio-economic consequences. Given that the social sphere is woven through with inequalities in different dimensions, different types of environmental transformation often implied burdens shouldered disproportionately by the poor and disadvantaged sections of the society. While tourism establishments, mining companies, large land-owners, and industrial capitalists have enjoyed profits from the very activities that put pressure on the environment, the rural and urban poor have lost livelihoods, faced degraded natural resource bases and been subjected to contaminated living spaces.

The possibility of a different kind of development: Limits and prospects

The last twenty years have witnessed the emergence of attempts from academic and policy-making circles alike to redefine the concept of development in a way more compatible with social justice and ecological quality, as attested by the highly popularized concept of “sustainable development.” Now emptied out of any radical element and co-opted into the contemporary neoliberal growth paradigm, considerable debate has revolved around how to define and operationalize sustainable development. An extensive elaboration on these debates is neither our intention nor within the scope of this article. It is, however, noteworthy that the primary tension revealed in these debates was related to the role of economic growth in development, which illuminates the strength with which the notion of growth has become entrenched within any idea of development. In short, while some argue that economic growth is perfectly compatible with ecological quality and conservation through dramatic improvements in resource-use efficiency, others believe that investment in sustainable technologies and decoupling economic activity from ecological impact are doomed to fail.

This latter camp, baptized the “de-growth” movement,¹⁴ argues that any development based on growth in a finite and environmentally-stressed world is bound to be inherently unsustainable. That is, since current consumption levels exceed the planet’s ability to regenerate resources, economic growth will inevitably lead to their exhaustion. Perhaps more importantly, “de-growth is not just a quantitative question of doing less of the same, it is also and, more fundamentally, about a paradigmatic re-ordering of values, in particular the (re)affirmation of social and ecological values and a (re)politicisation of the economy... [D]e-growth is not just a quantitative question of producing and consuming less, but a tool proposed for initiating a more radical break with the dominant economic thinking”.¹⁵

Starting with this observation, we hold that the (im)possibility of a development vision divorced

from growth fetishism is not a technical question, but rather a political one. It requires a radical redefinition of development and human betterment, one that is embedded within both society and the environment. Given that such a redefinition would have to take place within existing political-economic settings marked with power inequalities, it cannot be considered as a sterile, non-politicized process.

De-growth is not just a quantitative question of doing less of the same, it is also and, more fundamentally, about a paradigmatic re-ordering of values, in particular the (re)affirmation of social and ecological values and a (re)politicisation of the economy...

More specifically, such a redefinition and rethinking would imply a fundamental shifting of power relations (with “winners” and “losers”) as well as of relations between the economy, environment and the society.

In the specific context of Turkey, the notion of development qua economic growth is deeply imprinted in the broader practices of the state to establish itself within the social sphere and legitimize its existence. In a parallel vein, the ideal of growth-oriented modernization dominates the social imaginary in a way that cannot easily be dismissed. That is to say, commitment to development via economic growth involves stakes far beyond economic/material ones, and extends to the whole constellation of state-society relationships and the historical, mutual shaping of these two spheres. Against this backdrop, the possibility of not only effectuating, but also imagining and desiring an understanding of development that does not fetishize economic growth calls for a radical reconfiguration and democratization of state-society relationships in Turkey.

Footnotes

1. http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2010/08/11/erdogan_akarsular_satilmiyor
2. Modernization/development is used interchangeably throughout the article to highlight the fact that the two have come to mean the same thing, both in the eyes of the state and in the social imaginary.
3. That the discourses of the two main parties of parliamentary politics, the Republican People’s Party - the traditional party of the military-bureaucratic elite - and the resurgent Democrat Party - the main oppositional party that came to power in the 1950s- were dominated by developmentalism is illustrative in this respect. The clashes between the two parties were not centered on the validity of the developmentalist goals to achieve modernization nor related to distribution and social justice, but on whether the growth strategy should be state-controlled or follow a liberal path.
4. Arsel, Murat (2005): Reflexive Developmentalism? Toward an Environmental Critique of Modernization, in: Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development? (Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, eds).
5. Keyder, Çağlar (1997): Whither the Project of Modernity?, in: Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey (Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, eds).
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7. <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1997/05/30/r11.html>
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11. <http://epi.yale.edu/epi20>
12. Tosun, Cevat and Alan Fyall (2005): Making Tourism Sustainable: Prospects and Pitfalls, in: Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development? (Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, eds).
13. <http://politikekoloji.org/tehlikelikli-dayanikli-endustriyel-atiklar>
14. <http://www.degrowth.eu>
15. Fournier, Valérie (2008): Escaping from the economy: The politics of degrowth, in International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 2008, 28(11/12). Fournier also provides a comprehensive literature survey on the de-growth approach.

Ten years of Turkish capitalism and tendencies

The past ten years of Turkish capitalism, which overlap with the AKP's years in power, follow the spirit of the 22-year economic experiment initiated in the milestone year of 1980, albeit at a different tempo and intensity. In 1980, the Turkish economic paradigm was transformed in line with the world conjuncture, transitioning from the Keynesian accumulation model to a market-oriented, neoliberal accumulation model. A state-controlled and highly protected economy centered on the domestic market was abandoned for the sake of a paradigm which shrunk the state, opened the economy to the outside world, and liberalized the movement of goods and capital.

This new period was not simply limited to the economy, however. Its political result was the military dictatorship of September 12th, and the following Constitution of 1982, which ushered in a more authoritarian parliamentary system, anti-union measures and electoral thresholds to suppress the political and economic opposition.

Nevertheless, various sub-periods of this 32-year "process of transition" was characterized with different tempos, and different domestic struggles. The first sub-period ran from 1980-1990. It would not be wrong to designate a second sub-period from 1991-2002, and finally a third one running from 2003 until today.

The third period, the post-2003 years under AKP rule, follows the same spirit with the two previous ones but differs from them in terms of tempo and intensity - both economically and politically. The last sub-period has witnessed inflows of goods and capital at a much faster tempo as regards to relations with world capitalism, as well as important changes in the domestic social structure owing to this fast pace. This current period differs from the preceding 20 years in terms of critical changes in rural and urban populations, employment and class structures; and on the political level, due to AKP's predilection for an authoritarian state structure and practice -which ended "the military oversight", yet subjected the legislative and judiciary powers to the executive power.

Abundant foreign capital inflows

Nevertheless it must be said that the most important variable that characterizes the performance in the past decade is the volume and employment of foreign capital. The post-2003 foreign capital inflow has had a direct influence on such key indicators as growth, foreign economic relations, and employment. The atmosphere and groundwork of this rapid rise in foreign capital inflows were established by the 57th government -a coalition between the parties DSP, MHP and ANAP- which ruled from 1999 until 2002. In order to overcome the severe economic crisis of late 2000 and early 2001, this government -under

the premiership of Bülent Ecevit- took radical economic measures under IMF supervision, and carried out reforms in public finance and the banking system, which stood out as the key problem areas. These actions opened a vast space for the subsequent AKP government, and most significantly, paved the way for foreign capital inflows. The most important reform to complement these efforts was the eradication of legislative barriers vis-à-vis privatization, which subsequently laid the groundwork for privatization ventures worth 50 billion dollars during AKP's rule.

In summary, Kemal Derviş, the deputy prime minister of the 57th government, partnered up with the IMF to impose "financial discipline" on public finance, reinforced the capital structure of the banking system, and eliminated the weakest banks. This was the most important legacy left to the AKP government. In addition, the excessive liquidity available in the world economy after 2002 was another factor that facilitated capital inflows. The streamlining of the domestic economy, coupled with this availability of ample foreign capital looking for new destinations, created a great opportunity for AKP. From then onwards, foreign capital flowed in abundance to Turkey: to privatized state economic enterprises, for purchasing banks put on sale, into Istanbul stock market, into government bonds, or in the form of loans for the private sector. As a result, the foreign capital inflow totaled approximately 400 billion US dollars from 2003 until 2012.

In order to fully grasp the size of these recent foreign inflows and the opportunities lost in previous periods, let us compare the AKP regime with the preceding years of 1980-2002. In this 22-year period, foreign capital inflows had amounted to 35 billion dollars, less than one tenth of that during AKP rule.

What did foreign money yield?

Well, what did AKP do with these ample foreign funds, ten times greater than those in the preceding 22 years? The average growth rate of the period 2003-2012 is 4.6%. That is, AKP capitalized on these foreign funds to achieve various positive economic growth rates -with the exception of a 5% contraction in 2009- averaging at 4.6%; and, here is another comparison: Of the total national income produced in the period of 1980-2012 (at 1998 prices), the 1980s (1980-1990) accounted for 20%, the 1990s (1991-2002) for 32%, and the AKP years (2003-2012) for 48%.

The fact that the AK led government, which enjoyed 92% of the entire foreign capital inflow of the last 32 years, accounts for only 48% of total national income growth in the same period goes to show that it has indeed failed to successfully translate these foreign funds into growth. In an article that appeared in the Vatan newspa-



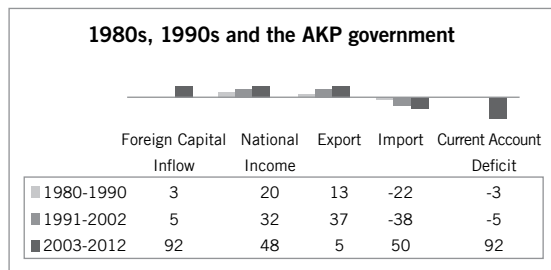
Mustafa Sönmez

Upon graduating from Middle East Technical University in 1978, Mustafa Sönmez worked as an expert and researcher at All Economists' Union (TİB), trade unions affiliated to DISK, and various other agencies. He contributed to numerous newspapers and news magazines as columnist and editor-in-chief, and authored over twenty books on the Turkish economy. Currently he is a columnist at daily Yurt.

per on 25 April 2013, the economist Asaf Savaş Akat of Bilgi University underlined this fact and suggested that capital inflows are channeled into financing “economic policies” as well.

The AKP economic management never rejects any capital inflow – even if, as in 2012, the economic tempo is slow, and even if the inflow is more than what is needed to plug the current account deficit. It builds up foreign reserves, allowing the foreign exchange rate to fall, and designs all of its economic policies according to a weaker Lira. As such, the uninterrupted foreign capital inflow becomes vital for growth, for other economic balances, and particularly for rolling over the debt. In fact, the desire to attract foreign funds might even push the desire for growth to the backseat.

The historically high level of foreign capital inflow during the AKP years did not yield the expected growth rate, and to top it all, the achieved growth was problematic. In the period of 1980-2012, foreign funds were mainly used for growth centered on the domestic market; as a result of which, there appeared a yawning difference between exports and imports. The AKP-led government's share of aggregate imports from 1980 until today is 50%, of total exports 50% and of the total current account deficit 92%, demonstrating that it has failed in channeling these foreign funds towards the creation of an economy which earns foreign currency. Instead, it has built an economy which consumes excessive foreign currency and is increasingly dependent on foreign inflows.



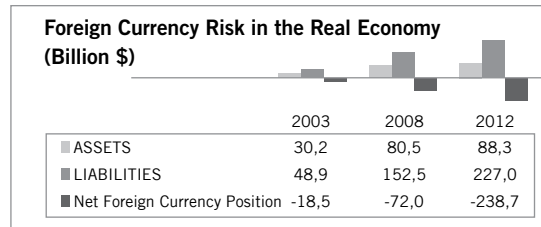
Source: Databases of Turkish Statistical Institute, Central Bank of Turkey, Ministry of Development

It is not at all surprising to see countries with low savings to try to tap into foreign funds. Foreign capital enters a country in such a way so as to obtain the maximum profit and in areas which it can do so; this is understandable, too. The whole concern is whether the country which utilizes foreign capital can draw the maximum benefit from it. It is necessary to make sure that these foreign funds share in the risks, expand investment and employment, transfer technologies and most importantly, help gain foreign currency. Many Asian countries on par with Turkey utilize foreign capital in the form of foreign direct investments. Thus, they not only make use of foreign capital to expand their industrial base, but also to grow in an export-oriented fashion. As a result, they narrowed down current deficit, and even produced current surpluses. How about Turkey? The AKP opened the doors wide for any type of foreign capital under any form. State monopolies such as Telekom, Tekel and Petkim were sold to foreigners to attract capital inflows. The foreign capital invested in the stock exchange and government bonds, yielding more than rivals; it also turned into loans for private companies. As a result, according to balance of payments data issued by the Central

Bank of Turkey, foreign direct investment accounts for just 30% of capital inflows, and “debt generating capital” accounts for the remaining 70%.

Real economy faces foreign currency risk

In the past decade, firms in the real economy took out loans in and/or indexed to foreign currency from both domestic and overseas financial corporations.



Source: CBT database

As of year-end 2003, the foreign currency liabilities of the firms in the real economy were less than 50 billion dollars, and they had overseas assets worth 30 billion dollars in the form of deposits, investments, etc. Their foreign deficit was only 18.5 billion dollars, and their assets met 61% of their total borrowing. In the following years, with the foreign exchange rate relatively stable and creditors rather generous, these firms increased their borrowing. By 2008, their total foreign liabilities jumped to 153 billion dollars, which represented an increase of 212% in five years. The asset to debt ratio fell to 52%. In the period from end-2008 to mid-2009, as the economy contracted and foreign capital exited the country, the foreign exchange rate rose sharply. This, in turn, soured the companies' appetite to borrow, and foreign capital inflow stalled. However, foreign borrowing started to pick up from early 2010 onwards. As of year-end 2012, companies' foreign currency liabilities were near 227 billion dollars and their assets met less than 39% of this amount. This ratio is deemed to be alarming by institutions such as the IMF. Despite all the talk about fiscal and budgetary discipline, and the low levels of public debt, lies the real problem: Companies assume immense foreign debts without any second thought.

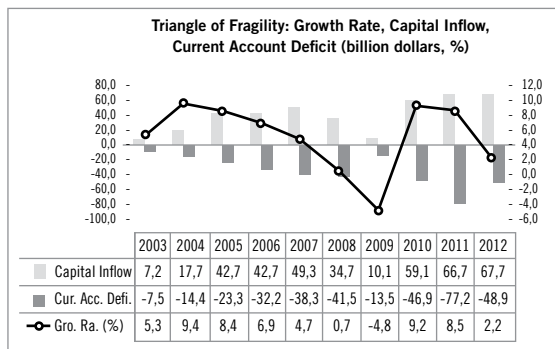
How did companies utilize the borrowed funds? Some used this debt to purchase privatized companies. They also financed new investments and imports. Yet the debt was used to expand not the industry, but rather construction, real estate, communications and retail -industries which do not earn but spend foreign currency, are focused on the domestic market, and fuel the current account deficit.

The foreign exchange rate was kept low in order to attract foreign funds; which in turn, encouraged companies to take out loans in and/or indexed to foreign currency. This has gone so far that at the present, private sector companies are very confident that the government will never allow any exchange rate shocks, and so they continue to borrow recklessly. The Central Bank of Turkey pursues policies in line with the AKP government, keeping the Turkish Lira over-valued by 30% at the present. CBT also strives to utilize capital inflows as a line of defense, as additional reserves against any possible exchange rate shocks.

Osteoporosis

The best metaphor which embodies the current state of Turkish capitalism would be osteoporosis. During AKP rule, economic growth comes in ups and downs. The economy

has become more fragile, and is fraught with weaknesses. The most conspicuous among these is the lack of a competitive edge and a focus on the domestic market rather than exports. Even a rise in exports triggers more dependence on imports. Since growth depends on foreign capital inflow, when the latter exits the result is an exchange rate shock. Such exchange rate shocks can push companies with large foreign debt into deep trouble



Kaynak: TÜİK, TCMB veri tabanı, 2012 büyümesi tahmindir.

Three indicators point to the osteoporosis in economic growth: Foreign capital inflow, growth rate, and current account deficit. It can now be clearly seen that the economy grows only as long as foreign capital flows in. Foreign capital is required for rolling over the debt burden, for manufacturing, and even for consumption. In order to avoid any disruptions to this inflow, the exchange rate has been artificially kept low for many years. This is one key weakness which triggers osteoporosis. That is because, although a low exchange rate provides assurance for foreign capital, it makes imports very appealing and suppresses exports, and/or makes them more dependent on imports. Exporters utilize increasing amounts of imported inputs. Although the total export figure exceeds 150 billion dollars, the import bill reaches a whopping 240 billion dollars. The result is yet another symptom of osteoporosis, namely the current account deficit.

The osteoporosis cannot be halted, even when measures are put in place to slow it down, such as the dropping of the growth rate from 8.8% to 2% as in 2012. Such slowdowns in growth, however, naturally cause bone fractures. The doors are kept open for capital inflows even in years when the economy fails to grow, since the economy is virtually addicted to them. The borrowed money is used to build up foreign reserves.

Physicians indicate that the main underlying factor triggering bone fractures is loss of bone mass. They suggest that correct nutrition and additional calcium intake is necessary to have and preserve the ideal bone mass. Another requirement is physical exercise.

Let us translate that into the language of economics: Economic osteoporosis is the natural result of a sedentary life style -based on imports and consumption-, rather than production -or physical exercise. An economy which spends rather than earns foreign currency fails to provide sufficient nutrition to its bones and renders them weaker. The economic structure becomes increasingly vulnerable against the smallest shock. It strives to resist fractures by bringing the public finance under discipline, on crutches. As a result, unjust indirect taxes are given increased weight and public assets are sold away recklessly through privatizations. Although the economy appears to be healthy

from the outside, internally the bones grow weaker and melt down.

Concrete jungle at home, oil rush abroad

In the last ten years, the AKP government has thus failed to utilize 400 billion dollars of foreign funds to create an economy which earns foreign currency. On the contrary, the economy has lost its competitive edge, and even worse, has become increasingly addicted to foreign capital inflows. The result is an economy suffering from osteoporosis, ready to make any concession, pay any interest rate. In reaction, the government has set out on two daring adventures. The first of these is the construction boom, which is turning the country into a concrete jungle. The other is the plan of tapping into the oil reserves of Iraqi Kurdistan, by peddling the dream of a dubious Turkish-Kurdish federation. The idea is to hit two birds with one stone, that is, getting rid of the PKK (Workers' Party of Kurdistan) and feeding dreams of conquest to the large masses.

Starting from Istanbul, entire large cities are being transformed into open-air construction sites. The result is "accumulation based on construction" through investments in housing, offices, shopping malls and infrastructure. After a 19% contraction in 2009, the construction industry's growth hit an average of 15% in the following two years, before coming to a screeching halt at 1% in 2012. Organized in the form of real estate investment companies and large-scale contractor companies, and under the leadership of TOKİ (Housing Development Administration of Turkey) which reports directly to the Prime Minister, the construction industry has lost steam in 2012, largely due to a weakening of the domestic consumption appetite. The "accumulation regime based on housing construction", which turns housing into a commodity and encourages households to borrow, has run out of breath in no time. The demand from those willing to take part in the ground rent in Istanbul is not sufficient to melt down the building stock. Cities, especially Istanbul, and their citizens are the main victims of this ferocious construction drive for economic survival. The historical heritage and natural riches are destroyed ruthlessly.

The second adventure of the Turkish economy fraught with osteoporosis concerns the oil reserves of Iraqi Kurdistan, much like a man in a hopeless situation indulging in wistful fantasies. For some time, the AKP has tried to fashion itself as a "regional power", and to peddle this image to the USA, the region, and the rest of the world. One aspect of this absurd greed is a plan to tap into the oil reserves of Iraqi Kurdistan. The scenario supposed to help this materialize is a Turkish-Kurdish Federation. According to this, Erbil will break away from Baghdad, and Syrian Kurds from the Assad government; after which, Iraqi Kurds and Syrian Kurds will be co-opted into Turkey under a federative structure. Kurdish politicians in Turkey give their support to this "grand project". The USA objects to the break-up of Iraq's national unity; however, it supports this alliance.

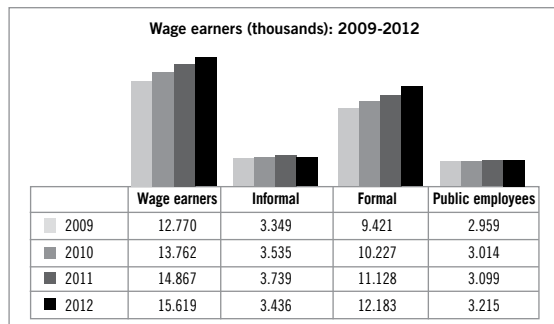
The AKP government and the opportunistic Turkish capitalists behind it seem to be keen on fueling the tension between Iraqi Kurds and Arabs (and even Turkmens) so as to expand their area of influence and share in the pillaging of regional natural resources. The so-called "peace process", portrayed as an attempt to settle the Kurdish problem, seems to be a maneuver to pave the way for a foray towards Iraqi oil fields. Only time will tell what will come

out of it. Nevertheless, even now, it can be clearly seen that this is tantamount to a dangerous adventure which will lead to the escalation of tension between Turkey and Syria, and even Iraq and Iran.

Wage earners in the past ten years

In the past ten years, those who live on a salary, that is, the blue- and white-collar workers in agriculture, manufacturing, construction and services, as well as public workers and civil servants have continued to constitute the largest sector of the Turkish society. The AKP years correspond to a rapid period of proletarianization. The number of wage earners went up from 10 million in 2003 to 16 million as of year-end 2012 (63% of a total of 25.4 million employees are thus wage earners). If we add to these numbers the 2.5 million officially unemployed and the 1.5 million unofficially unemployed -who compose "reserve labor army"- the total figure reaches 20 million.

The mass of young female and male, semi-qualified laborers flooding into big cities due to the collapse of agriculture become wage laborers in the labor-intensive construction, tourism, services, ready-wear, textile and food industries. They are forced to work for low wages and without social security.



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute database

3.2 million wage earners work in the public sector: 2.6 million of them have civil servant status (4/c) and around 620 thousand are public workers. Of the remaining 12.4 million wage earners, around 3.45 million work informally, that is, without social security. This corresponds to one in every three private sector workers. They form an army of workers paid less than the minimum wage of 774 TL.

It is no secret that salaries leave a lot to be desired; besides, the data is frequently obscured. The Ministry of Finance has set the lowest civil servant salary for 2012 at a monthly 1,608 TL and the average civil servant salary at 1,800 TL. However, even these salaries are enough to dwarf the average worker's pay. The minimum wage has been recently increased to 774 TL. The majority of workers earn less than the twice this amount. Especially in construction, tourism, textile, food and other sectors which employ less qualified workers, the salaries remained very low in 2012.

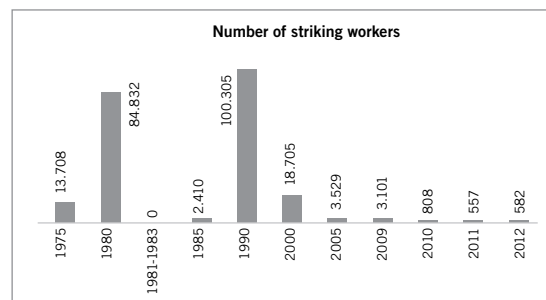
Relatively higher salaries exist only in large enterprises in certain industries with higher profit margins, such as IT, communications, finance, advertisement and real estate marketing. During the AKP rule, individuals in formal, relatively well-paid jobs were encouraged to borrow more and more via credit cards and consumer loans. Their fixed salaries are seen as a guarantee by banks. Wage earners account for two thirds of total consumer debt, which reached 207 billion as of end-2012. As the relatively higher

salaries and the ensuing indebtedness of this "aristocratic" segment of the salaried classes boosted their consumption and expenditure levels, certain "sociologists" proposed the much-discussed category of "the new middle class".

Although wage earners - whether employed or unemployed - have come to account for three fourths of total employment, millions of salaried individuals remained inactive in and alienated to the issues of income distribution and politics, in 2012. The main underlying factor was their lack of organization.

The Turkish population has reached 75 million. Rampant capitalism has powered ahead at full speed in the last 30 years. Three fourths of the population now live in cities and have non-agricultural jobs. The salaried class has doubled in quantity. Today, two thirds of all those employed are salaried and number at 16 million. But what about "quality", that is, organization? According to the Ministry of Labor's statistics for the year 2012, the number of formal workers is 11 million, however, unionized workers number at 1 million - less than 10% of the total. In fact, of these 1 million union members, only 350 thousand could exercise their right of collective agreement in the past two years.

In the past three years, an average of only 422 thousand wage earners were at the same time unionized and exercised their right of collective agreement. This corresponds to just 2.5% of all wage earners! Well, how many individuals exercised their right to strike? According to data issued by the Ministry of Labor, the number of striking workers fell to a meager 550 in both 2011 and 2012.



Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and the employers' union TISK

As of year-end 2012, out of the 12.5 million employed private sector workers, 3.7 million work in informal, precarious jobs without social security. This corresponds to one in every three private sector workers. Informal work is especially widespread in certain areas of manufacturing, as well as hospitals, tourism, retail, transport and warehouses. These workers in precarious employment are paid less than the minimum wage. On top of it all, there are also illegal workers who have migrated from neighboring countries and number in the hundreds of thousands.

When the number of formally employed individuals with social security increases, the revenues of the Social Security Institution and the Ministry of Finance rise, too. However, a "formal but flexible work regime" is preferred, in order to cut costs and gain competitive edge in overseas markets. The new regime is keen on destroying the right to severance pay as well as various retirement benefits. They claim to support work with social security, however they give employers the chance to slash labor costs through the system of "pay your workers not for eight hours, but only for the hours they actually work".

Neoliberal stability policies fail to bring results

Since 2008, the global economic crisis has been evolving into a Great Recession where growth cannot gain momentum and where unemployment remains high. Now, the United States is poised to create austerity policy that is a modified version of the austerity measures that have characterized policy making in Europe since 2010. It is still unclear how big the hit will be, and who will bear the brunt of it. But that the US would adopt austerity policies at all is absurd since once again the European experience has shown us that austerity measures are exactly what a struggling economy should not be considering.¹ And in this case, austerity measures are only needed to counteract the vast public expenditures spent during the crisis to prop up banks and the financial sector. According to one calculation, the West's central banks quantitative easing policies have put as much as 7 trillion US dollars into circulation.²

Austerity - the deliberate deflation of domestic wages and prices through cutting public spending - is considered a tool to reduce state debt and deficits, increase its competitiveness, and restore what is vaguely referred to as "business confidence."

Advocates of austerity believe that slashing public spending spurs private investment because it is a sign that the government will neither be crowding investors out of the market with its own stimulus spending nor adding to its debt burden. Consumers and producers, the argument goes, will have confidence in the future and will spend more, spurring the economy to growth again. Such was the thinking of the European countries following the shock of the recent financial crisis, many of who have consistently adopted austerity measures over the past four years; the result: ballooning public debt. The results of the experience are in, and they are remarkably consistent: austerity doesn't work.³

Partially as a result of increasing protests against the failure of orthodox neoliberal policies to yield favorable results, some countries relaxed their austerity policies. In the autumn of 2011, when the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis intensified, relaxing austerity policies was part of a wider set of policy adjustments by the global business and political elite. The terms of the Greek bailout have been relaxed, and Germany's resistance to the European Central Bank's refinancing of the Eurozone banking sector has been overridden; over the last six to nine months, this easing off of austerity has dramatically improved the ability of the Eurozone states - especially Spain and Italy - to refinance their debts.⁴

Despite the rise of social dissidence in Greece in the aftermath of the crisis, the "indignados" movement in Spain, and the resolute resistance of the labor movement in Portugal, it would be too optimistic to say that the changes in economic policies have been affected by "pressure from below." First, because whenever voters had the chance to carry this opposition into the electoral arena, the results have been disappointing. In Greece, the Netherlands, and France surges in support for radical leftist parties seem to have faded once elections were held. Secondly, the idea that pressure from below might moderate austerity policy is not supported by what was happening in workplaces during the recession: employees have not unreasonably sought to hold on to their jobs. This is hardly surprising, especially in an era that has seen decades of erosion in trade union power and when workers have responded to defeat by offering compromise instead of risking confrontation.

The elite class, whether nationally or between sectors of capitalist economy, is fractious, bickering amongst themselves as they carve out their portions of the spoils. Highly visible organizations like the IMF, the OECD, and the World Economic Forum as well as less visible organizations like the banking sector's Group of 30 give them a platform for their in-fighting and where they can reach compromises amongst themselves, determining the most appropriate course of action not for the good of the working people, but to secure for themselves their own shares of long-term wealth and power.⁵

According to the latest data, the Eurozone economy contracted in the first quarter of 2013 for the sixth quarter in a row. This 0.2% contraction means that the Eurozone is experiencing its longest recession since the launch of the euro in 1999. In addition to that, the Eurozone's official unemployment rate jumped by 1.1 percent over the last year to reach 12.1%.

Associating this economic turmoil with the neoliberal conception on which the European project was built on from the beginning seems meaningful that associating the turmoil with various cyclical developments. After lifting the barriers to the free circulation of goods and services by establishing a single market, the Maastricht Treaty contributed to the project for a united Europe by liberalizing the circulation of the workforce. The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 launched the Growth and Stability Pact with resulted in a government perspective that gave fiscal stability priority and rejected "irresponsible" public



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debt and excessive borrowing. With the launch of a single Euro Zone currency in 1999, the basic structure of the “economic union” was completed. The Lisbon Strategy signed in March 2000 was designed to make Europe the world’s most competitive market by 2010, taking over from the USA and Japan. Unfortunately, in the spring of 2010, the Greek crisis made the “old continent” the most economically problematic region in the world. Analyzing the current Euro Zone turmoil, it would be wiser to question the neoliberal design behind economic policies rather than to get lost in detail. The neoliberal economic design has pushed three key tools of economic policy to the back: exchange rate management, monetary policy, and fiscal policy.

National governments unable to adjust exchange or interest rates found themselves in a straightjacket. Obligated to limit their budget deficits to 3% of GDP, national governments found themselves unable to bandage wounds with the European budget that corresponded to just 1% of regional GDP; they had no choice but to turn to financial markets. As leftist-Keynesian economist Thomas Paley said: “The euro’s architecture makes bond markets masters of national government.” Despite the media bombardment of “irresponsible governments,” the scapegoat governments of Spain and Ireland had been praised as examples of “financial responsibility” until the recession of 2008 when their “responsibility” failed to save them from the crisis. In a sense, it was confirmation that “the crisis is caused not by a violation of the rules, but by the rules themselves.”⁶

Between the EU and bricks

Although the Ankara Treaty of 1963 was supposed to pave the way for Turkey’s accession into Europe, but after the military coup of September 12, 1980, Turkey was obliged to freeze its relations with the EU. Turkey filed its application for full membership in 1987, and then on the first of January 1996, the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU came into effect. Turkey’s candidacy for full membership was accepted at the Helsinki Summit of 1999, with negotiations beginning in 2005. Although the crisis has soured Turkey’s citizenry to the idea of EU membership, the EU remains Turkey’s largest export market.

In 2000, Turkey exported 56% of its exports to the EU, and although the EU was still Turkey’s top export destination in 2010, its percentage of total exports fell to 46%. After Russia and Iraq, Turkey’s next largest export revenues came from EU member states: Germany (9.4 million dollars), the UK (5.8 billion dollars), Italy (4.6 billion dollars), and France (4.5 billion dollars.) Therefore, any economic, political, and social collapse in the EU will have a direct impact on the Turkish economy.

According to the IMF’s World Economic Outlook, the emerging economies of China, India, Brazil, and Russia are expected to grow by 8.0%, 5.7%, 3.0%, and 3.4%, respectively.⁷ According to the government’s Medium Term Program, the economy of Turkey is expected to grow by 4%.

This table compares Turkey’s economic performance with those of what Goldman Sachs’ chief economist Jim O’Neill dubbed the BRICs - Brazil, Russia, India, China.⁸

Table-1

| Country | GDP per capita (\$) | Export/ GDP | GDP (billion \$) | Inflation rate (%) |
|---------|---------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Brazil | 9390 | 10 | 2087 | 7.3 |
| Russia | 9910 | 29 | 1479 | 11.4 |
| India | 1340 | 18 | 1729 | 9.6 |
| China | 4260 | 29 | 5878 | 5.8 |
| Turkey | 9890 | 23 | 735 | 6.5 |

Source: The World Bank

Turkey’s economy is much smaller than those of the BRICs and a per capita income similar to Brazil and Russia. Turkey’s economy is not as open as that of Russia or China, but more open than Brazil and China.

Comparing the growth rates of the BRICs to Turkey shows that while China and India have maintained their tempo despite the crisis, Turkey, like Brazil and Russia, has become more vulnerable to global economic fluctuations. Evidently in China, despite the high rate of economic openness, anti-crisis economic stimulus packages have kept the economy from losing steam.

Table 2 - Growth Rates in the BRIC Nations and Turkey

| Country | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Brazil | 4.0 | 6.1 | 5.2 | -0.6 | 7.5 | 1.3 | 4.0 |
| Russia | 8.2 | 8.5 | 5.2 | -7.8 | 4.0 | 4.3 | 3.7 |
| India | 9.3 | 9.8 | 4.9 | 9.1 | 9.7 | 6.9 | 5.5 |
| China | 12.7 | 14.2 | 9.6 | 9.2 | 10.3 | 9.2 | 7.7 |
| Turkey | 6.9 | 4.7 | 0.7 | -4.8 | 8.9 | 8.5 | 2.2 |

Source: The World Bank, UN DESA

Fatih Özatay compares Turkey to the BRICs and makes the following analyses: “It does not seem possible for Turkey to maintain its rapid economic growth under present conditions. Turkey lags far behind Russia and China in education and in high technology exports. The low level of domestic savings will also limit Turkey’s growth potential in the coming years. Even excluding China’s incredibly high savings rates from the comparison, Turkey’s savings rate is far lower than Brazil and the other BRICs.”⁹

Turkish economic growth slows down

In 2012, Turkey lagged behind all the BRICs growing by only 2.2%, an economic performance that was much smaller than predicted or targeted. The fourth quarter growth rate of 1.4% represents that lowest rate in the last 13 quarters. The steep fall of 6.6% from the 8.8% growth in 2011 indicates that the government failed to orchestrate a “soft landing.”

The weak growth in 2012 is said to have been caused by sluggish domestic consumption, and any growth was due to a rise in net exports, a phenomena which had not occurred in any other year.

Public spending was another factor underlying 2012’s slight positive growth. The living standards of public employees and social services saw no improvement, but rather the growth in public spending was focused on the recruitment of new employees with political leanings towards those of the government. In addition, petroleum imports from Iran were paid in gold, artifi-

cially increasing the growth rate from 0.7% to 2.2% on paper.¹⁰ As weak domestic demand pushed industrialists to overseas markets, exports became the driving force of economic growth. In the private sector, both companies and individuals were obliged to tighten their belts. Due to the bleak outlook, investments fell and inventories were liquidated.

In 2012, growth in major sectors like manufacturing, trade, and construction came close to a screeching halt. The services sector, which plays a decisive role in the economy, grew by a meager 2.4%. Although it had expanded by 18.6% in 2010, the construction sector grew only 0.6% in 2012, fueling worries that Turkey could follow the example of Spain and Ireland whose pre-crisis growth and employment was reliant on the construction and service industries.

When times turn bad, imbalances are thrown into high relief. The sectoral imbalances that developed during the boom were revealed in the concentration of job and output losses in particular industries during the subsequent downturn, as industries that grow beyond sustainability contract the most. During the financial crisis job losses were more concentrated in particular sectors in Ireland and Spain than in Germany or Japan, where there were no homegrown housing and construction booms but where the crisis was "imported" through trade and financial channels. In this Great Recession jobs losses in Ireland and Spain were more concentrated than in any prior economic downturn.¹¹

The agriculture growth rate fell from 6.2% in 2011 to 3.5% in 2012; growth in mining fell from 3.9% to 0.8%.

Table 3 - GDP Growth Rate by Sector (%)

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---------------|------|------|------|
| Agriculture | 2.4 | 6.1 | 3.5 |
| Industry | 12.8 | 9.7 | 2.0 |
| Manufacturing | 13.6 | 10.0 | 1.9 |
| Services | 8.6 | 9.0 | 2.4 |
| Construction | 18.3 | 11.5 | 0.6 |
| Trade | 11.7 | 11.0 | 0.5 |
| Transport | 10.6 | 10.5 | 3.2 |
| GDP | 9.2 | 8.8 | 2.2 |

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK).

In general, the AKP is pursuing a growth model based on domestic demand but also reliant of foreign inflows; therefore, growth is dependent on international capital. In this model, the main dynamic of growth is increasing labor productivity by continuously intensifying exploitation. The recent trade union laws and the National Employment Strategy are the latest initiatives for building an employment model based on neoliberalism. The current growth performance renders income distribution even more uneven and fails to generate jobs or provide equal welfare to all social groups, and as a result, it can't be translated into continuous socio-economic development. Quantitative economic growth does not lay the groundwork for qualitative growth. Data on distribution and change reveals that wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. In previous periods, too, the fetishization of high growth rates has resulted in a deterioration of general wealth and income distribution and has failed to improve the living conditions of the poorest social groups.¹²

Headaches: Deficit and foreign debt

Fiscal discipline is a key concept in the neoliberalism of recent years; indeed, Turkey's budget has fallen in recent years and despite falling interest payments, positive primary surpluses were posted. Nevertheless, there is no benefit to the vast working masses if fiscal discipline is achieved by cutting social spending and denying public employees and pensioners the fruits of economic growth.

The 2013 budget plan calls for a budget deficit of 22% and a primary surplus of 1.2%. The government announces these forecasts with great fanfare as meaningful indicators of budget performances. In reality, such an emphasis on fiscal discipline may do more harm than good when the country is struggling to grow.

A national economy saddled with a yawning current account deficit while the public budget is more or less balanced is an indicator that the private sector is borrowing heavily from the outside world. Indeed, the current account deficit remains one of the largest structural problems of Turkey's economy. The current account fell from 75.1 billion dollars in 2011 to 46.9 billion dollars in 2012, a drop of 28.2 billion dollars. The situation remains critical because such a gigantic deficit coincides with a weak 2.2% growth rate. To maintain its growth, Turkey needs an increasingly larger current deficit. In 2004, the GDP grew by 9.4% and the current deficit reach 3.7% of GDP. The Medium Term Program indicates an estimated 4% growth in 2013 to be accompanied by an estimated current account deficit of 7.1%. On aggregate, Turkey posted 211 billion dollars of trade deficit and 167.4 billion dollars of current account deficit between 2010 and 2012.

Importing inputs are becoming more structurally important to the Turkish economy. According to the latest data, between 2007-2008, imported inputs accounted for 65% of industrial exports overall, with some sectors reaching as high as 85%. According to a research report from the Central Bank of Turkey, the amount of imported inputs used in industry grew from 10% between 2002-2007, dangerously suggesting that certain manufacturers of domestic inputs went bankrupt and that exports are becoming more and more dependent on imports.

Table 4 - Current Account Balance (million dollars)

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| I Foreign Trade Balance | -56.413 | -89.139 | -65.640 |
| II Service | 16.658 | 20.130 | 24.007 |
| III Income Balance | -7.215 | -7.841 | -6.675 |
| IV Current Transfers | 1.523 | 1.758 | 1.373 |
| V Current Account Balance | -45.447 | -75.092 | -46.935 |

Source: Ministry of Development

Recent years' account figures have been distorted by Turkey paying for petroleum imported from Iran in gold. Since Turkey is not a significant manufacturer of gold. In years when Turkey imports gold, the current account appears artificially high and the growth figure falls. On the contrary, in years of net gold exports, the current account appears artificially low and the growth figure rises.

The current world economic situation has made it easier for Turkey to finance the current deficit. The US, Germany, and Japan have depreciated their currencies to create a competitive advantage for their exports, and

capital inflows into countries like Turkey have soared. Nevertheless, this has also increase the risk of massive capital outflows due to a possible reversal in the world economic situation, and thus creating an economic crisis in Turkey.

Table 5 - **Capital Flows (million dollars)**

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Capital Flows (Net) | 50.268 | 53.821 | 67.714 |
| Foreign Direct Investment (Net) | 7.572 | 13.698 | 8.346 |
| Short Term (Net) | 39.081 | 24.873 | 43.275 |
| ISE | 3.468 | -986 | 6.274 |
| Government bonds | 10.715 | 14.805 | 16.835 |
| Other | 24.898 | 11.054 | 20.166 |
| Long Term | 3.659 | 15.647 | 16.556 |
| Eurobond | 4.082 | 2.521 | 4.823 |
| Loans to Banks | 897 | 5.653 | -260 |
| Real Economy | -5.783 | 4.406 | 3.749 |
| Other | 4.463 | 3.067 | 8.244 |

Source: Central Bank of Turkey.

As seen in Table 5, in 2012, when the current account reached 47.5 billion dollars, the net capital inflow was 67.7 billion dollars, resulting in a 20.1 billion dollar increase in official reserves and the appreciation of the TL against foreign currencies.

When capital inflows increase, the quality of the funds deteriorates and short-term debt-generating capital inflows become more important. For example, from 2006-2008, FDI averaged 2.6 billion dollars before falling to 8.3 billion dollars in 2012, 2.6 billion dollars of which was foreign investment in real estate. Foreign investment in the stock exchange, government bonds and short-term loans, also known as hot money, has risen rapidly. As of March 2013, the investment portfolio of foreign residents consisted of 84,372 million dollars in equities, 59,430 million dollars in government bonds, 411 million dollars in Eurobonds and 18,570 million dollars in deposits, totaling 164,561 million dollars.

The economist Erinċ Yeldan describes this cycle as speculation-led growth: "Fluctuations in the Turkish economy are directly related to the direction of international capital flows. Net capital inflow (at all costs) leads to an increase in economic activity; cheaper inputs boost not only domestic demand but also export performance. A slowdown in capital inflows, however, tips the national economy into recession. Particularly from 2010 onwards, the economy of Turkey was dragged into a new speculative growth cycle, owing to the availability of cheap loans in the global economy."¹³

When a country posts current account deficits it also

means that it is savings less than it's investing. Figures of the State Planning Organization show that savings account for 14.3% of GDP, whereas investments account for 22.2%; the difference is financed by the savings of foreigners and the country's foreign debt soars.

Table 6 - **Turkey's Foreign Debt**

| | Public Sector | CBT | Private Sector | Total Foreign Debt |
|------|---------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|
| 2002 | 64.533 | 22.003 | 43.056 | 129.592 |
| 2007 | 73.525 | 15.801 | 161.002 | 250.328 |
| 2011 | 94.306 | 9.871 | 200.030 | 304.207 |
| 2012 | 103.117 | 7.724 | 226.022 | 336.863 |

Source: Undersecretariat of Treasury

Foreign debt figures from 2002, when the AKP came into power, to 2012, another election year, paint a bleak picture. Although public debt has risen relatively slowly, the private sector debt has alarmingly exceeded the 226 billion dollar mark. Latest data reveals that the total debt to be repaid in the fiscal year starting in March 2013 will reach 15 billion dollars, 109.3 billion of which is short-term debt (with a maturity of less than a year) and the remaining 41.6 billion of which is other debts that are maturing during that period. The ratio of short-term foreign debt to total exports of goods rose from 38% in 2007 to the dangerous level of 66% in 2012.

In mid-2013, the Turkish economy is in a very vulnerable position. Its total dependency on foreign capital inflows is a cause for concern for its future performance.

Although the EU's share in Turkey's total exports fell from 56% in 2000 to 46% in 2010, EU nations are still Turkey's largest export destination. Besides Iraq and Russia, Turkey generated its largest export revenues from EU member countries. As such, economic, political and social collapse in EU nations are bound to have a direct impact on the economy in Turkey.

According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook, the emerging economies of China, India, Brazil and Russia are expected to grow by 8.0%, 5.7%, 3.0% and 3.4% respectively. According to the government's Medium Term Program, the economy of Turkey is expected to grow 4%.

The AKP pursues a growth model based on domestic demand but also reliant of foreign inflows, and is therefore dependent on international capital. In this model, the main growth dynamic is increasing labor productivity by continuously intensifying exploitation. The recent trade union laws and the National Employment Strategy are the latest initiatives for building an employment model based on neoliberalism.

Footnotes

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Private sector and politics in Turkey

Last year The Economist issued a report entitled “The Rise of State Capitalism”.¹ The report focused on the state-controlled companies’ role in the rise of countries such as Russia, China, Brazil and India to global prominence. In discussing the issue, the magazine expressed concerns that “The invisible hand of the market is giving way to the visible hand of state capitalism” and that this would bolster authoritarian tendencies. It was important for a prominent and influential magazine such as The Economist to underline that, within the globalizing world economy, state intervention might not diminish, and that, on the contrary, some prominent actors of the global economy indeed displayed a striking growth performance precisely because of state intervention. However, it is also crucial to see that this phenomenon is not limited to state companies or direct state participation in the sphere of production. The interesting Turkish case, which we shall discuss in this article after presenting a brief historical background, demonstrates that in a market economy integrated with the global economy, state intervention could continue to influence the development of the private sector albeit under a changed form.

prospered mainly through their dependence on the state, and their particularistic relations with political authorities. Rather than striving to shape the state’s economic development strategy and economic policies, they tried to adapt themselves to the political environment and make economic gains.²

In time, the growing private sector’s relations with the state started to change. A turning point in this process was the establishment of the voluntary business association TÜSİAD (Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen) by a group of big businessmen in 1971. It is possible to interpret this event as a result of the maturing bourgeoisie’s increasing demands to have a say in the economic and political decision making processes. However, the evolution was far from linear. After the Turkish economy opened up to the world and became integrated with global markets, the private sector’s development started to follow a different itinerary. In this new era, politics continued to affect economic activities through new methods of intervention and there appeared dynamics which lead to the emergence of new actors in the business world.

Changing state intervention and the private sector³

Until the 2000s, we see that important steps were taken towards economic liberalization, however, the reforms necessary for the healthy functioning of the free market economy were not implemented. After this development, which was in tune with the market fundamentalist ideology dominating the international scene in that period, lead to a number of severe economic crises and a very devastating crisis in 2001, the coalition government of the time implemented a number of structural reforms. These so-called “Derviş’ reforms” –after Kemal Derviş, a senior Turkish executive at the World Bank–, were designed to restructure especially the finance and energy sectors via independent regulatory bodies, ensure the transparency of public tenders, and establish an institutional framework for the privatization process. The objective was not to hand over the economy to self-regulating markets, but rather to create a governance system which would keep politicians from making arbitrary interventions to the economy.

The AKP government, which came to power in 2002 strived not to damage investor sentiment, having studied the lessons of the 1990s’ economic



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crises and fully aware of the dependence of the Turkish economy to capital inflows.⁴ As such, they refrained from taking a stance against the Derviş reforms, and tried to preserve at least the financial sector reforms. The independence of the Central Bank and the regulation of the banks were important in avoiding further financial crises in the 2000s. Nevertheless, the economy did not really function without political intervention, although this was the initial objective of the reforms. Naturally, certain benefits provided to the private sector prior to 1980 were discontinued during the new economic order. However, at the end, state intervention did not diminish, but rather continued under a changed form, and there appeared new capital groups nurtured with state support.

One observes that during this process of form change, public tenders, which since long time have been a critical mechanism shaping capital accumulation and corporate profits, have preserved their importance. The Public Tender Law, which had been signed into law in January 2002 with a view to rendering tenders transparent and avoiding arbitrary interventions, was revised more than twenty times during the AKP period and over 150 articles of the law were changed. These changes included taking some tenders out of the scope of the law, or adding exceptional provisions to certain tenders. Maybe an even more significant development was the gradual restriction of the powers of the Public Procurement Authority, which had been set up as an independent audit mechanism. Such changes allowed the government to intervene in the tender process to the benefit of certain capital groups, which was occasionally criticized by the European Commission's Turkey Progress Reports.⁵

In the Turkish economy, it is not possible to talk about state control exercised through gigantic companies, as described in the abovementioned report by The Economist. During AKP rule, important steps were taken in the privatization process. Some of these privatizations contributed to the accumulation of capital in the hands of nascent groups of entrepreneurs or helped the emergence of new entrepreneurs. At the same time, in certain critical sectors, privatization took place in a such a way that the state did not really pull away. In the energy sector for instance, even as natural monopolies were being privatized, certain legislative amendments concerning the licensing process for energy generation and distribution and the operations of licensed companies gave the state the power to grant significant advantages to private entrepreneurs. From time to time, these developments lead to intense debates which were also occasionally covered by the media.

Health was one sector in which privatization pressed ahead without restricting the state's presence in the economy. In line with a model of financing private health services through public funds, the state increased the transfer of funds to private hospitals.⁶ As for social housing, the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ), a public agency set up in 1984, became the most important actor of the real estate market in the 2000s and

started playing a key role in the establishment of public-private partnerships. With a number of legislative amendments carried out during these years, the TOKİ came to report directly to the Prime Minister's Office, its operations were exempted from regular audit mechanisms covering other public investments, and TOKİ was given vast leeway in utilizing public land. Today, TOKİ has a vast range of powers covering land allocation to private construction firms, establishing partnerships with

It might be thought that concepts such as the “rescaling of the state” and “relocation of production” would be meaningful also in analyzing the relations between the state and the business world. However, while evaluating any explanations based on such concepts, it is necessary to question the degree of the transfer of authority towards local governments, and the weight of local production in the overall economy.

such firms, and setting up companies to this end. These powers are not limited to the urban housing sector, but extend to areas such as infrastructure, protection and use of cultural monuments, as well as the improvement of rural architecture -both overseas and in Turkey. As such, TOKİ now appears as a key player of a market economy in which state-supported capital accumulation processes have not lost their importance.⁷

The windows of opportunity that the state opens before entrepreneurs are found in both the national and local levels. For example, not only entrepreneurs in the large cities but also certain local entrepreneurs can benefit from their relations with TOKİ. Compared to earlier periods, we see that today, in addition to large-scale national tenders, local tenders are also crucial for the business world. In the 2000s, the Public Procurement Law, Municipality Law and Metropolitan Municipality Law were revised in order to grant new economic powers to local government. In this new atmosphere, there appeared new relations between local governments and the business world concerning service procurement and various investment contracts. Laws regulating the municipal companies set up in the 1990s were revised so as to relax public regulation and partnerships between these companies and the private sector gained in importance with time.

In the light of these developments, it might be thought that concepts such as the “rescaling of the state” and “relocation of production” would be meaningful also in analyzing the relations between the state and the business world. However, while evaluating any explanations based on such concepts, it is necessary to question the degree of the transfer of authority towards local governments, and the weight of local production in the overall economy.

The development of local industrial hubs and local entrepreneurship under AKP rule stands out as a theme repeatedly taken up in studies on the Turkish economy and is used to explain the changes in the business world and their effects on politics. However, the picture we sketched at the very beginning indicates that this historical change cannot be interpreted as a shift from the state-sanctioned private sector of the large cities towards a local private sector standing on its own competitive legs. Political decision making processes and the nature of the relationship between the private sector and politicians are factors which continue to affect the success of

In order to grasp the polarization characterizing the Turkish business world today, one needs to take into account the differences between various projects of society. In this regard, it could be useful to remember an observation shared by Ümit Boyner during her presidency of TÜSİAD. Boyner had suggested that Turkey had a choice between becoming a larger Finland or a smaller China, and implied that she preferred the first option.

entrepreneurship on the local level, too. Here, one also needs to keep in mind the limits of the transfer of authority from central to local government.

Considering that AKP's leaders hail from the Millî Görüş [National Vision] movement -the cradle of political Islam in Turkey-, and that this movement had its first political successes at local elections, one could think that AKP would be keener than other parties on extending the powers of local governments. On the other hand, however, one could also consider that a majority government that controls central decision making mechanisms would not be pleased to share its powers with officials from other parties at municipal assemblies. At the present, large-scale urban infrastructure investments are carried out under the supervision of the central government.⁸ As for issues of environmental legislation concerning tourism investors, the government retains its control, and changes and relaxes the current legislation whenever it deems necessary. TOKİ's operations also help the central government to reproduce its power at the local level.

Just like the rescaling of the state, the concept of the relocation of production must be handled with caution. Are we really witnessing a drive of local economic development which starts to shadow the developed metropolitan areas? The presence of a certain local economic boom cannot be denied. One manifestation of this boom can be seen in the rising number of local companies in Turkey's Top 500 Industrial Corporations List issued by the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (İSO). According to the İSO

survey, there were no companies based in cities such as Gaziantep, Konya and Kahramanmaraş in the top 500 industrial corporations list back in 1980. By 2011, however, respectively 19, 8 and 6 companies from these cities had made it to the list. The number of Kayseri-based companies in the list went from nine in 1980 to twelve in 2011. Likewise, the number of İSO-500 companies headquartered in Denizli went from 5 in 1980 to 11 in 2011.⁹ This naturally corresponds to a drop in the number of İSO-500 companies located in the large, developed cities. For example, the number of such firms active in Istanbul and Istanbul's hinterland Kocaeli went down from 259 in 1980 to 228 in 2011.¹⁰

All the same, the weight of developed metropolitan areas in the national economy seems to have remained unchanged, at least up until the 2008 crisis. An analysis of the geographic distribution of exports, or that of bank deposits -as an indicator for the level of development of the finance sector- reveals that emerging local industrial cities lag far behind older metropolitan areas. For example, the share of the Istanbul-Kocaeli region in total Turkish exports did not fall after 1980, but instead rose to 62% in 2008. If we add to that figure the shares of Ankara, İzmir and Bursa, we see that developed metropolitan areas realize no less than 80% of the country's total exports. This indicator is still above 75% despite the fact that emerging market bourses tanked in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis.¹¹ Here, there might be a miscalculation arising from the fact that the products of local contractor firms are exported by companies in the large cities. Even if this is indeed the case, the fact that companies in the large cities create the export link -and also probably cater for needs such as technology and finance- gives a clear idea about the geographical profile of the private sector.

The geographical breakdown of bank deposits shows that deposits in the cities of Denizli, Kayseri, Konya, Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş accounted for 4% of total deposits in Turkey in 2011; whereas the share of the Istanbul-Kocaeli region was close to 50%.¹²

Attempts to explain the recent transformation of the private sector by pointing to the development of local entrepreneurship are fraught with yet another problem. One of the most important aspects of the said transformation is the head-spinning rise under AKP rule of a group of big entrepreneurs, who were barely visible in the business world until recently, and their ties with the government. We see that most of these entrepreneurs originate from the countryside; however, their newly acquired wealth is not based on local investments. That is, they are not a group of businessmen who emerged from the local level to the national arena. On the contrary, their investments undertaken in different local cities are in parallel with nationwide achievements. Capital accumulation and the growth of companies take place in close contact with the central government and through the windows of opportunity that we have mentioned above. Privatizations and operation

licenses in the mining and energy industries, public tenders, construction projects undertaken jointly with TOKİ, as well as private hospitals constitute important business lines for this new generation of businessmen nurtured by the state, just like previous generations which had completed their capital accumulation in the past. One of these business lines is the tourism sector, in which relations with the government are very important in terms of relaxing environmental legislation.

The media sector is another key area demonstrating the nature of the relations between the government and business. Investments in the media, which do not seem to be uniquely profit-driven,¹³ help the government to strengthen its increasingly worrying control over the media. In this regard, not only the new entrepreneurs which prosper through their close relations with the AKP government, but also older entrepreneurial groups active in the media industry present interesting cases in point. One example is the astronomical tax penalty given a few years ago to the media tycoon Aydın Doğan, who also has vast interests outside the media: It would not be exaggerated to say that this penalty was closely related to the anti-AKP stance of his newspapers and TV channels.¹⁴ The travails of another TÜSİAD-member older business group in the media also gives an idea about the current nature of the relationship between the state and the private sector. The said group has managed to undertake very ambitious infrastructure investments by winning public tenders during AKP rule. This group also includes the television channel NTV, which for a long time had pursued an independent and critical broadcasting policy. After AKP won the 2011 elections for a third term of government, a number of developments suggested that such a broadcasting policy could contradict the economic interests of a company which participates in public tenders. As a result, certain famous reporters with a large following were laid off and NTV's broadcasting policy was realigned with these economic interests.¹⁵

Voluntary business associations and politics

In this environment where political affinity or animosity can seriously influence entrepreneurial success, the government cannot be said to stand at an equal distance from all voluntary business associations. After 1990, a number of business associations, which emerged in parallel with the rise of political Islam and whose discourses and strategies had Islamic references, -especially MÜSİAD (Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen) and TUSKON (Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists) which is close to the Fethullah Gülen sect- enjoyed warm relations with the AKP government. It is not possible to say the same for TÜSİAD, or the like-minded TÜRKONFED (Turkish Entrepreneurship and Business Confederation). The relations between the government and especially TÜSİAD can become very tense at times. One example of this tension was observed during the 2010 referendum on the amendment of the constitution: When the then-

president of TÜSİAD Ümit Boyner aired criticisms about the referendum process, the prime minister said that “those who do not take sides will be eliminated”. The debate received much media coverage. This reaction by the prime minister obviously made the the business world, which was already skittish after his previous attack on Aydın Doğan, even more fearful.

Media outlets close to the government did not have a difficult time portraying TÜSİAD as a state-nurtured “club of the rich”, which opposes government policies so as not to lose its privileges in the new competitive environment. They also repeatedly emphasized the difference between

The possibility of Turkey becoming a small China is not very high. However, Turkey's economic pivot towards countries other than OECD nations after 2002, especially in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, and the loss of credibility of the EU membership process could include certain clues not only about the possible evolution of the relation between the state and business and the restructuring of the private sector, but also about expectations on future political developments.

the older monopoly capitalists, which oppose the government, and the new competitive, authentic bourgeoisie which had supposedly succeeded in adapting itself to the new policies. Such a perspective invites two criticisms.

First of all, it needs to be indicated that the old “monopoly” capital did not have a hard time adapting itself to the new circumstances. At least, the national and international performance of the roughly 3500 companies affiliated with TÜSİAD's 600 members cannot be said to have weakened.¹⁶ Secondly, TÜRKONFED, which follows TÜSİAD's line, represents a total of 125 associations divided into 16 local and industrial federations, and thus is a strong rival for TUSKON with its local presence.¹⁷ Likewise, MÜSİAD, which claims to represent the small- and medium-scale capitalists of Anatolia, indeed counts numerous members from Istanbul and other developed metropolitan areas. Their members are evidently not only SMEs. On the contrary, it can be said that the diversity of an association's members in terms of sector, geographic location or enterprise size allows the association to provide more benefits to its members in terms of input supply, sharing of technological information or orders, establishment of relations with sub-contracting firms, and access to national and international markets.

One cannot claim that the business world's take on government policies is independent from its economic interests. It is natural that new groups of

entrepreneurs which continue to accumulate capital and grow through warm relations with the AKP government, do not have a high opinion of regulatory mechanisms which would limit the government's arbitrary interventions in the economy or of a governance model including such mechanisms. Nevertheless, it could be expected that companies with considerable capital accumulation and corporate development would be more in favor of a regulated market economy and that such a difference in interests would translate into different viewpoints on international relations. In this regard, the fact that TÜSİAD members, which are capable of competing in developed markets, adopt a strategy prioritizing ties with OECD nations and especially the European Union, might be explained by their belief that rules which govern such ties could function as an insurance against the possibility of a capital transfer to their detriment.

In order to grasp the polarization characterizing the Turkish business world today, one needs to take into account the differences between various projects of society. In this regard, it could be useful to remember an observation shared by Ümit Boyner during her presidency of TÜSİAD. Boyner

had suggested that Turkey had a choice between becoming a larger Finland or a smaller China, and implied that she preferred the first option.¹⁸ It is unclear how important this preference will be for Turkey's economic and political future. TÜSİAD is still a difficult organization to "eliminate", considering its vast economic power; however, some members could possibly be silenced with certain perks or threats. The presence of TÜSİAD members which, like the abovementioned company, benefit from large public tenders, or the fact that TÜSİAD includes groups which emerged during AKP rule suggests that the association could in the future abandon the "pro-European" economic and social model that it currently defends.

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Footnotes

1. The Economist, January 21st-27th, 2012
2. A. Buğra, "Devlet ve İş Adamları", İstanbul: İletişim, 1995.
3. For a more detailed discussion of the issue taken up here, see: A. Buğra and O. Savaşkan, "Politics and Class: Turkish Business Environment in the Neoliberal Age", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 46 (Spring 2012).
4. This dependence is even stronger today, as the current account deficit has reached 6.5% of GDP.
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6. Between 2002 and 2010, the share of these transfers in the total health care expenditures of the Social Security Institution went up from 14% to 31%: Türk Tabipleri Birliği (Turkish Association of Medical Doctors), 2011 Seçimlerine Giderken Türkiye'de Sağlık, p.24, Ankara: Türk Tabipleri Birliği Yayınları, 2011.
7. The administration's website includes detailed information on TOKİ's powers and operations. See www.toki.gov.tr
8. The share of local governments in the total fixed capital investments of the public sector had reached almost 40% in 2010, before falling to 26% as of 2012. The evolution of this share through the years is outlined in the Annual Programs published by the State Planning Organization (DPT). www.dpt.gov.tr. Accessed on May 20th, 2013.
9. These five cities are the most frequently discussed local industrial hubs.
10. <http://www.iso.org.tr/tr/web/besyuzbuyuk/turkiye-nin-500-buyuk-sanayi-kurulusu--iso-500-raporunun-sonuclari.html>
11. Turkish Statistical Institute, Foreign Trade Statistics, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12., accessed on May 20th, 2013.
12. <http://www.tbb.org.tr/tr/banka-ve-sektor-bilgileri/istatistik-raporlar/-2011--illere-ve-bolgelelere-gore-banka,-sube,-nufus,-mevduat-ve-kredilerin-dagilimi/1174.>, accessed on May 20th, 2013.
13. The investor Ethem Sancak overtly expressed in an interview that he stepped into the media sector to support AKP and the prime minister, and that he decided to exit from the sector after the number of pro-government media outlets increased -having thus completed his mission: "Ethem Sancak: 'Erdogan'in Ideallerini Paylastim, Cebime Bir Faydası Olmadı'", *Milliyet*, February 27th, 2012. For an assessment of the economic consequences of the media investments of Çalık, another rising entrepreneur, see *Bloomberg Market Magazine*, September 13th, 2010.
14. This issue received extensive coverage from domestic and international media outlets. For an assessment of the issue, see "Dogan v Erdogan: the Travails of Turkey's Dogan Yayin", *The Economist*, September 12th-19th, 2009.
15. The popular TV host Banu Güven, who was forced to resign during this process, later penned a letter to the prime minister, outlining the worrisome state of the relations between the media and politics: "Banu Güven'den Başbakan'a Mektup", *Milliyet*, July 14th, 2011.
16. According to the association's own data, TÜSİAD members account for roughly 80% of all Turkish exports and close to 50% of formal employment outside the agricultural and public sectors. www.tusiad.org.tr
17. See www.turkonfed.org. TUSKON represents around 190 associations organized under seven regional federations: www.tuskon.org
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19. The share of OECD countries in Turkey's total exports fell from 68% in 2002 to 43% in 2012, whereas that of Middle and Near Eastern countries rose from 9.5% to 28% in the same period: Turkish Statistical Institute, Foreign Trade Statistics, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?alt_id=12., accessed on May 20th, 2013.

Energy or Turkey: Which one will be consumed first?

For an ecologist, Turkey's growth strategy shows some very alarming numbers. Producers looking for markets will be pleased with an economic mobility fed by consumption and Turkey's domestic demand, but those who see the growth in Turkey in a positive light are ignoring the fact that in Turkey, audits and legal processes go unmanaged, sustainable development is given lip service but never acted upon, individuals' ideas and suggestions fall on deaf ears, and social costs go unheeded. There are fresh offerings to the god of growth every day: rivers, forests, clean air, and human beings. Workers are killed at construction sites, rivers are blocked by dams, shorelines and forests are distorted by construction. Ecologists and supporters of market-focus growth might not be of the same mind most of the time, but both groups converge on one crucial point: Are there enough sources of energy to support Turkey's economic growth? Or, as posed by an environmentalist: Will the effects of this growth impact natural assets at an acceptable level or not? In order to answer this question, it is important first to look at Turkey's current energy situation, and then to look at the estimated demands in growth and energy.

Dependence on external energy sources

Turkey imports over 70% of its energy.¹ One of the economic targets of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or AKP) when they came into power was a major increase in growth. But the AKP also wants to lessen Turkey's dependency on external sources for its domestic energy needs. The AKP's desired increase in economic growth has only been partially successful. In 2002 when they came to power, Turkey depended on foreign sources for 69% of domestic energy needs; by 2010, this rate had increased to 73%. Turkey is dependent on foreign sources for 98% of its natural gas and 92% of its petrol. New domestic explorations are underway to make Turkey less dependent on foreign petrol sources, but there hasn't been any noteworthy activity to manage domestic demand. On the contrary, policies supporting the construction of new highways, bridges, and private vehicle ownership only promote petrol consumption. Turkey is decreasing its use of natural gas in generating power and promoting the use of imported coal and nuclear energy over imported natural gas. But the use of natural gas in private households is widespread, and inadequate

insulation in newly constructed housing only serves to fuel the demand. In 2012, Turkey imported a record high of 43 billion m³ of natural gas, up from 17 billion m³ in 2002. Even Deloitte's modest estimate indicated that by 2017 Turkey will import 50 to 60 billion m³ of natural gas per year.²

Reducing dependence on imported resources besides natural gas is essential, especially reducing the state's reliance on imported coal. In Turkey, 44% of domestic lignite pits are already being used to generate power.³ The Ministry is planning to harness the entire potential of domestic coal to power the economy by 2023.⁴ The ironic fact of the matter, however, is that according to the Electricity Energy Market and Supply Security Strategy Paper published in 2009, many natural resources –not just coal– will be entirely consumed by the year 2023. Nevertheless, the Paper outlines the following targets:

- Full use of hydroelectric potential, technically and economically, for generating electricity by 2023.
- Increase of wind power installed capacity to 20,000 megawatts by 2023.
- Maximized use of Turkey's 600-megawatt geothermal electricity generation potential.
- All of which will result in the reduction of the ratio of natural gas used in the total generation of power to 30%. (As of April 2012, natural gas comprised 47.1% of total power generation.⁵)

This strategic paper does not mention any specific targets for solar energy or energy efficiency - both of which would have been important in decreasing dependence on imported energy- and coal, another imported resource, is given the green light. The same government that plans to counteract its dependency on imported energy by constructing a hydroelectric plant on every river in the country also approves of imported coal; this "strategic" paper might not be so strategic after all. The paper is also unable to answer the pressing question of how Turkey will be able to shift to fully imported energy after the year 2023 when all of its domestic resources have been consumed. If over the next decade the increasing demand for energy does not slow, and if Turkey has indeed consumed all its domestic resources by utilizing the full potential of its domestic coal and hydroelectric energy sources by 2023 as planned, then it seems likely that Turkey is headed for an energy gap. As it is, the government is adamant that the demand for energy and growth will not slow.



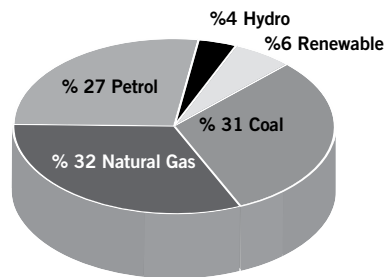
Özgür Gürbüz

Serving as project coordinator for the Turkey Representation of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association since June 2011, Gürbüz is known for his work in ecology. A graduate of the Business Administration Department of Dokuz Eylül University, Gürbüz received a Master's Degree in Computers from Oxford Brookes University and in Production Management and Marketing from Marmara University. Gürbüz worked for various media organizations in Turkey and abroad. He was in charge of the Energy Campaign in the Mediterranean Office of Greenpeace in 2004-2005. After working as an independent consultant in energy and environment, he published a book entitled *Energy and Cows*.

The Target: To consume all domestic resources in the next ten years

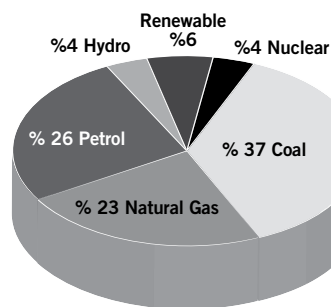
Turkey's primary energy demand is predicted to increase by 90% and reach 218 billion TOE (tons of oil equivalent) by 2023, up from around 115 million TOE in 2011. In 2011, plans had the share of natural gas in primary energy being reduced from 32% to 23%; coal, at a 31% share of primary energy, is set to increase to 37%. According to the Ministry, in 2023 the percentage of nuclear energy will rise to a 4% share of primary energy, up from zero. Interestingly, hydroelectric (currently 4%) and other renewable energy resources (currently 6%) are not set to change at all, as is the case with petrol (2011: 27%; 2023, projected: 26%). Even if this paper's targets are met and all the hydroelectric potential is tapped, it will not effect a proportional change because overall demand will have doubled. Obviously, the "strategic plan" is not interested in any radical moves towards sustainability in Turkey. By 2023, a full 90% of Turkey's primary energy demands will be generated by non-renewable resources: coal, oil, and nuclear. This figure includes the Ministry of Energy's planned use of half of the nation's wind energy potential (48,000 megawatts⁶) and the energy generated by the hydroelectric plants constructed on almost every river in Turkey. The government's own data suggests that Turkey's economic growth cannot be sustained by domestic resources alone; almost all the "domestic resources approved by the government" will be consumed within ten years.

Turkey's primary energy demands according to resources 2011 (%)



Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources 2013 Annual Budget Presentation.

Turkey's targets for primary energy demands in 2023 according to resource (%)



Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources 2013 Annual Budget Presentation.

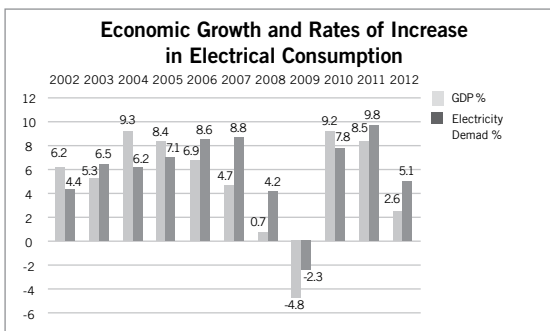
Leaving aside environmental problems that will be caused by the combustion of coal, oil, and nuclear energy for the moment, the strategic plan doesn't even provide any notable progress in making Turkey less dependent on foreign energy sources. Almost all of the nuclear energy, oil, and natural gas that will form 53% of 2023's primary energy generation will have to be imported. It is also important to note that the nuclear fuel providers and operators of the planned nuclear plants will be foreign companies. In addition, not all of the coal used in coal's 37% share of total generation will be domestic. In 2011, 10% of electric energy generated by coal-burning power plants was generated with imported coal. New, planned coal-burning power plants will add to the power generated by existing power plants to generate even more electricity from coal in 2023. Today, power plants running on imported coal with a total capacity of 6,000 megawatts are in the process of review and evaluation from the Energy Market Regulatory Board in anticipation of receiving their licenses. Taking into account the imported coal and natural gas power plants that have applied for licensing, we can calculate that Turkey's foreign energy dependency is currently around 70% and that it will not change much by 2023, despite the fact that the entire potential of domestic coal and hydroelectrics will be generating energy.

The constantly increasing energy demand

We have briefly summarized the energy aspect of the government's strategic targets and have discovered that the results of such a strategy would not create a solid energy future for Turkey. There is a close relationship between energy and growth. In an economy, the measure of growth is defined as the increase in the production of goods and services. The production of more goods and the providing of more services go hand in hand with increased energy consumption. It is important to remember that the consumption of energy itself supports growth. But, at the same time, there are consequences and damage caused by the energy that is considered the fuel for growth. Mines and energy power plants cause irreversible damage to the environment and increase Turkey's contribution to global climate change. Since 1990, greenhouse gases emitted by Turkey have increased 124%; Turkey's emissions rate of 5.7 tons per capita is above global average.⁷ Even ignoring environmental issues, we are still faced with questions: Can Turkey's energy resources support Turkey's anticipated growth? How much, and in what ways does Turkey want to grow? The answer to this question is also the answer to the first; how much Turkey wants to grow determines if Turkey's energy resources will be sufficient or not.

Turkey's 8.8% economic growth in 2011 is used as an example to other nations struggling with economic crises, but it is still a country where the quality and sustainability of growth is in dispute. Here the word sustainability has two meanings. The first includes an evaluation on an environmental basis, which is often neglected in Turkey. The second describes the consciousness of growth.

Let's look at the second definition of sustainability first. Turkey has been growing for 13 successive quarters.⁸ Growth rates year-to-year have varied, but overall there is definite growth. The global economic crisis did not cause a serious financial bottleneck in the economy of Turkey, but it has caused zigzags on growth charts. After the economic crisis of 2001, the economy of Turkey slowed to a growth rate of 5.7%, and only crawled up to 6.2% in 2002. Record growth over this 12-year period was in 2004 with 9.4% growth. In 2008, after a dip, there was hardly any progress with a recorded 0.06% growth, followed by recession at -4.8% in 2009. After that year's recession there were two years of booming growth, which again slowed in 2012 to 2.2% growth. Every 7 or 8 years, the economy of Turkey seems to suffer a financial bottleneck due to internal and external factors. Although its growth is often compared to China's, growth in Turkey is not growing exponentially like it is in China. Turkey's growth is marked by fits and starts, but shows an overall increasing trend.



Source: IMF, Treasury, MMO, TÜİK.

At first glance, it seems that demand for energy grows in parallel with an increase in growth. In 2000-2011, economic growth increased 4.36% overall, and the demand for electrical power increased 5.6%. In 2004, 2005, and 2010, we saw the opposite trend: As growth registered, respectively, 9.3%, 8.4%, and 9.2%, the rise in the consumption of electricity remained 6.2%, 7.1%, and 7.8%, respectively. In 2007, when growth was 4.7%, demand for electric power increased by 8.8%. The following year, Turkey's economic growth was not substantial (0.7%) but the demand for electricity rose by 4.2%. Instead of insisting on a correlation, it seems wiser to talk about a "lack of control." Not only does this observation reject the idea that there is a general increase in the demand for electricity, but it also highlights the fact that it is difficult to use and illusory to expect domestic growth rates to estimate energy or electricity demand. An examination of electrical power demand shows us how these estimates are misleading.

In 2005, the Turkish Electricity Transmission Company (Türkiye Elektrik İletim Anonim Şirketi, abbreviated as TEİAŞ) estimated that energy demand in 2001 would be 262 billion kilowatts per hour. However, in 2011, Turkey's electrical demand remained steady at 230 billion kilowatts per hour. TEİAŞ's 2005 estimate was off the mark by 12%. Some might say that with such a vibrant electric

market, it is difficult to predict even six years into the future, and that 12% is an acceptable rate of error. But there is another example: According to its high-demand scenario, TEİAŞ's October 2010 capacity report estimated that that year's electrical demands would stay just below 220 billion kilowatts per hour, a forecasted annual increase of 5%. However, the actual annual increase was 9%. Obviously, the issue is not only the accurate estimate of electrical demand for the future, but for the present. If demand is not managed in Turkey, then we will be forced to continue attempting to solve the energy problem based on policies of supply. Without access to unlimited energy resources, this will inevitably cause difficulties in the financial and political arenas.

The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources' estimates point to a continuous increase in already high rates of energy demands. Both TEİAŞ scenarios insist on continuing with the same operational scheme despite the miscalculations from the

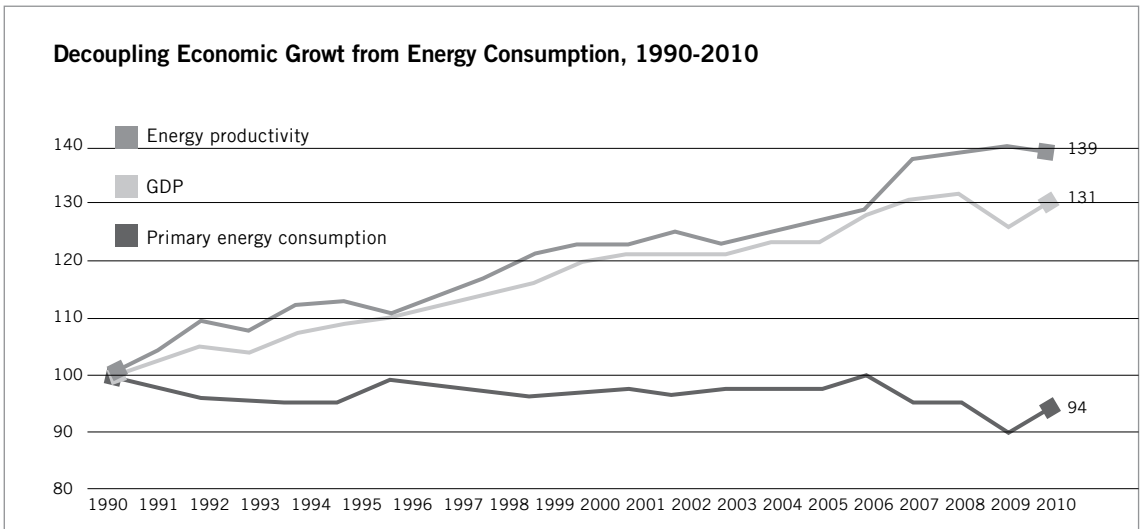
New domestic explorations are underway to make Turkey less dependent on foreign petrol sources, but there hasn't been any noteworthy activity to manage domestic demand. On the contrary, policies supporting the construction of new highways, bridges, and private vehicle ownership only promote petrol consumption.

previous years. In the scenario where the demand for electricity is low, the annual average increase is expected to be 6.5%; in the high-demand scenario, the average expected increase rises to 7.5%. This means that in 2020, the gross demand will be between 400 and 433 billion kilowatts per hour. Considering that consumption in 2012 was around 240 kilowatts per hour, those figures would indicate a significant increase in demand over the next eight years. The Ministry may not give such things as solar energy or energy performance much consideration, but not everyone is of the same mind. Necdet Pamir, Chairman of the Energy Commission of the opposition Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or CHP) believes that Turkey has the potential to generate enough power even for the high-demand scenario:

Last year Turkey consumed 241 billion kilowatts per hour of electricity. The fact is, our resources are at a level capable of meeting an average of 7% growth. We have a potential 100 billion kilowatts per hour from hydroelectric power plants, 12 billion kilowatts per hour from wind energy, 16 billion kilowatts per hour from geothermal energy and 380 billion kilowatts per hour from solar power. There are also 116 billion kilowatts per hour from lignite and 35 billion m³ from biogas. So in total there are resources adding up to over 700 billion kilowatts per hour. This is surely far over our consumption of 241 billion kilowatts per hour.⁹

But the picture Pamir paints doesn't make

Decoupling Economic Growth from Energy Consumption, 1990-2010



environmentalists happy, either. For many environmentalists in Turkey, the use of coal and hydroelectric power plants crosses a red line. The important issue is how to solve the energy problem without depleting all potential energy sources. This can only be achieved through questioning energy performance and demand. The so-called necessity for growth that pushes Turkey to consume more energy itself needs to be discussed. There should be specifications for which energy-intensive industries should be active and which should not be allowed to operate or be capped.

The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources estimates point to an ever-increasing high demand for energy. This is not a position that is particular to the government; often, it misguides those –like investors– who don't know Turkey in great detail. These estimates are the expression of a desire; they do not actually reflect the indication that energy demand will increase. Supporters of classical financial theories for Turkey's sustained growth are dreaming of great increases in the per capita GDP. Executives in the energy sector who believe in the probability of increased demand have prepared their own scenarios based on continuous demand. Perhaps both sides have the wrong idea; neither has considered using energy more efficiently and more sustainably through a low-rate increase or even decreasing energy demand. Neither has considered an economy composed of using less energy to attain the same per capita GDP goals instead of relying solely on the idea of an economy composed of energy-intense sectors manufacturing products with higher added value. Turkey's demand estimates have not –at least no yet– reflected this idea. Germany, for example, produced 100 units of per capita GDP by consuming 100 units of energy in 1990; in 2010, it produced 131 units of per capita GDP by consuming 94 units of energy. The efficient use of energy has a great role in this achievement.¹⁰

Decoupling Economic Growth from Energy Consumption, 1990-2010

Turkey has a lot of work to do in energy efficiency. In order to achieve an increase of €1000 per capita GDP, Turkey must consume an equivalent of 233

kilograms of petrol. The same economic growth is achieved with the equivalent of 147 kilograms in Greece, 80 in Switzerland, 141 in Germany, 123 in Italy, and 92 in Ireland.¹¹ Put in different terms, Turkey consumes 2 to 3 times more energy than many countries in Europe to produce the same product or to provide the same service. Even more disheartening, while the rest of the world is trying to find new ways to use energy more efficiently, Turkey has shown no development in this regard since 1990. In that year, Turkey consumed 242 kilograms of petrol to add €1000 to the per capita GDP. In European countries whose economies are similar to Turkey's, there has been a marked change towards using energy in a more intelligent manner; Turkey has not followed suit.

Comparison of energy intensity amongst countries

| | Turkey | Greece | Italy | Ireland | Germany | Spain |
|------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| 1990 | 242,14 | - | 131,93 | - | - | 157,81 |
| 1995 | 245,62 | 176,92 | 130,92 | 136,54 | 173,77 | 161,41 |
| 2002 | 240,01 | 173,11 | 126,27 | 107,16 | 157,58 | 158,70 |
| 2010 | 233,11 | 147,45 | 123,64 | 92,81 | 141,88 | 137,02 |

Source: Eurostat.

The secret to producing more with less energy lies in the choices made in transportation, production, housing, and industry. When more efficient machinery is used, when buildings are insulated and public transportation is developed, the demand for energy decreases, thus allowing for demand management. If we can manage the demand and use of energy in an efficient way, there may be no need to construct the many power plants that are currently underway, and economic growth could be realized while consuming less energy.

Consumption as the source of growth in Turkey

We know that domestic demand contributes greatly to growth in Turkey, so it is not surprising that the present government would be encouraging a population boom.¹² If individual consumption

decreases, growth comes to a halt. An increase in population contributes to growth through the corresponding increase in demand for consumer goods and services. Despite its current population of 75 million, the government of the Republic of Turkey is preparing a stimulus package for families with multiple children. There is more reason for the government to act now because of the anticipated decrease in population after 2050.

According to 2013 statistics, the average number of children per woman in Turkey is two. If the downward trend continues, Turkey's population is expected to reach 84.24 million in 2023. The population will peak at 93 million in 2050 before it begins to dip. In 2023, the elderly (65 years and older) population is expected to reach 8.3 million, or 10% of the total population. In 2075, the elderly population will constitute an estimated 27% of the total.¹³ Perhaps Prime Minister Erdoğan's assertion that families should have at least three children has as its foundation in the fact that the elderly population will not be able to sustain domestic demand. Erdoğan should not be concerned about the 2075 proportion of the elderly to the total population, whose percentages are comparable to current rates in Europe. On the contrary, he should be worried that the Turkish economy - without any structural change - will be dependent on domestic demand for growth even 60 years from today. In many European countries - Sweden, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Austria, and Finland, for example - the elderly already constitutes 27% of the total population.¹⁴ Turkey's booming construction industry, and its activated commerce and transport sectors might well be the reasons behind the government's support of families with many children, but ecologically it is not sustainable as a comparison between Turkey's biological capacity and its ecological footprint will tell us. In Turkey, the ecological footprint of per person consumption is 2.7 global hectares; that is over 50% of the global biological capacity. In other words, if everyone in the world consumed as much as a citizen of Turkey, we would need 1.5 planets. The most striking data from "Turkey's Ecological Footprint," a report compiled by the WWF and the Global Footprint Network, is as follows:

Despite the stability of the Ecological Footprint per capita in Turkey, the footprint of consumption has increased 150% in total. The main reason for this increase is the great population increase that occurred from 1961 to 2007.¹⁵

Considering that the individual consumption rate hasn't changed over the long term and that consumption increased with the population increase (although those born in the 2000s tend to consume more than those born in the 1960s) it is understandable why families in Turkey –a country where consumption means growth– need to have more children to sustain it. But understanding alone will surely not help Turkey reduce ecological damage.

Other data presented in the report is even more important. In the 1990s, Turkey was able to keep its ecological footprint and its biological capacity in line, but since 2002 its ecological footprint has been growing rapidly and since 2006 its biological capacity has been decreasing.¹⁶ We must evaluate the realization of the AKP's growth policies since their rise to power in 2002 with the subsequent increase in Turkey's ecological footprint as well as the decrease in its biological capacity; Turkey's growth policies aren't only increasing energy consumption; they are laying the foundations for ecological problems.

The very idea that this growth policy and the excessive energy consumption that goes with it can be supported by domestic resources alone must be called into question. Although it is possible to have a balanced economy with only imported energy, like South Korea, it wouldn't be possible without exporting a large quantity of higher added value products. There is another way for Turkey and for other countries. Rather than trying to meet limitless consumption with limited resources, Turkey could limit its consumption and allow the manufacture of primary products or put caps on the arms industry.

One might find this too radical as a suggestion. However, global temperatures could go up 1.5-2.5 degrees Celsius, causing the extinction of various species of plants and animals. Now let's ask ourselves again: Is it really radical to suggest that we control the use of resources expended on the production of luxury automobiles and combat aircrafts?

Footnotes

- In the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Turkey this rate is announced as 73%, p: 22.
- Turkey's Natural Gas Market: Expectations and Developments 2012, Deloitte, p: 18.
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- Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of the Republic of Turkey, An Outlook on Energy in Turkey and in the World Presentation, transparency 19.
- This data was last viewed on May 12, 2013 at <http://www.enerji.gov.tr/index.php?dil=tr&sf=webpages&b=ruzgar&bn=231&hn=&nm=384 &id=40696>. 48,000 mw indicates the installed capacity of units constructed in regions with winds of over 7 m/s.
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AKP goes to Africa: Imperialism by anti-imperialists

What does Turkey want from Africa? And what does it offer Africa in return? Does Turkey really believe that it would get what it wants just by responding to Africa's demands? Who would win and who would lose if Turkey's plans with and for Africa materialize? Since 2002, Turkey has pivoted politically to the global south and especially to Africa: What greater pursuit does this correspond to?

Some of these questions could be soliciting rational political analysis, but others seem to bear the traces of a global conspiracy theory. Because in fact, Turkey has been forthcoming in outlining its rationale behind its rising interest in the African continent: Turkey considers Africa an important destination for political and commercial investment. By increasing in influence across Africa, Turkey is seeking a more prominent role on the global scene. Of course, this will come at a price. Although events on the African continent have taken their heaviest toll on the African people themselves, outsiders who want to do business there had to foot the bill. So more questions follow: How aware is Turkey of that bill, and how willing is it to pay?

In most cases, the inauguration of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) administration in 2002 is seen as a turning point in relations between Turkey and Africa. But this perception is largely the result of the tendency to view the AKP as an organization with a monolithic ideology. It is necessary to go back to the years before the military intervention of February 28, 1997 to grasp how the AKP has come to acquire increasingly stronger ambitions in the national and international arenas.

In the 1990s, the RP (Welfare Party) was the embodiment of political Islam in Turkey. The military intervention on February 28, 1997 was designed to cut off the movement and crush the popular will which had brought it to power; naturally this triggered various reactions. The reaction to the military intervention differed from earlier reactions to other military interventions in an important way: Political Islam accounted for a large enough portion of the popular will that the military could not and would not destroy it in economic or political terms. It was assumed that this popular will would simply disappear on its own accord upon the demise of the so-called "Refahyol" government (a coalition between the Welfare Party and the True Path Party, with held power from June 28, 1996 to June 30, 1997). One reason behind this assumption was the army's misleading self-confidence which was founded upon the successes of its previous interventions.

At the time of the intervention, political Islam had long since become the common project of a segment of society which was becoming more and more visible, and which in turn grasped the importance of having a voice in politics and in the economy. It was apparent that such a movement could not be destroyed by simply banning a few of their leaders from active politics. In order to survive, a number of manufacturers, merchants, and investors large and small –who for a number of years had been branded "Islamic reactionaries" in the eyes of consumers, and who had been banned on every occasion from participating in government tenders– took measures that they had always thought unnecessary, and which they had the courage to take before.

In 2002, I conducted a number of interviews with a group of self-declared pious businessmen to understand how they protected their investments after the February 28 intervention. Their responses can be summarized as follows: "We felt hurt and ostracized in Turkey. But we were not willing to give up and there were other markets willing to welcome us. As it was, Turkey did not have an export policy and its commercial prestige was destroyed after the Turkish banks went bankrupt in 2011. So we pivoted our business to overseas markets." One of these businessmen said, "Markets in Africa and the Middle East pose the least problems because we have sound letters of credit over there. We have good relations; the payments are always on time. Businessmen regularly face a number of problems, the most important being collection. In these two markets, however, collection has not been a problem. In Iraq or Syria, too, one takes certain small risks. Banks can be an issue for example: the country may not have robust banks. Quality could be another concern. Your product may not sell well; there may be problems in the market. Interestingly enough, in Africa and the Middle East, banks are not a concern. Ghana, a very small country in West Africa, has banks which are much more prestigious than their Turkish counterparts. They issue letters of credit more readily. They function in an orderly fashion. Turkish banks have collapsed, and they have yet to regain their prestige in the eyes of the world."

It was during the Özal government that Africa and the Middle East entered the radars of pious businessmen, especially small and medium scale investors, because the domestic market did not offer any policy of competition designed to protect their interests against imports or large capitalists. They set out to look for smaller markets for their products. Özal had encouraged them to focus on Asian countries, but their efforts centered on Turkish identity had failed to



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yield desired results there. The Refahiyol government proposed an Islamic Union as an alternative to the European Union; although some pundits poked fun at the idea, it actually corresponded to the earnest efforts of these small and medium scale enterprises. The then Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's much-discussed visit to Libya and the less-known "African Opening" launched in 1998 were the first concrete steps in this regard. MÜSİAD (Association of Independent Businessmen), which gained significant momentum under the Refahiyol government, paid frequent visits to African nations, participated in fairs and issued collaterals for loans to expand the commercial influence of its member businessmen. As early as 2002, MÜSİAD members had already started to partner with the Algerian state to establish factories and to invest in infrastructural projects. After February 28, however, they were deprived of Turkey's mediation, but their determination to overcome such obstacles increased their operational capabilities. In other words, the genie was out of the bottle.

In 2001, the state of Turkey went completely bankrupt. The same year, the AKP was starting to build itself up on the common ground of various religious sects in Turkey. At the time, the party's leader, Tayyip Erdoğan, was in prison, but no one doubted that he would lead the party and even Turkey after he was released. The party was constructed from bottom to top as a complex and heated platform of negotiations where no one was ashamed of talking about their business interests. Tayyip Erdoğan's "genius" showed itself in his choice to represent various sects in the party's administrative organs. It was a different path than Erbakan's, who had overtly invited sect leaders to the prime minister's residence and drew the ire of military commanders. Instead, Erdoğan, from the very beginning, integrated sects' well-educated members into the party and the state, people who could serve as technocrats or bureaucrats. In doing so, he not only kept his platform of negotiation fresh and sustainable, but he also maintained his position of privilege by not allowing anyone else to rise to prominence in the party or the state.

The AKP and Erdoğan himself pursued similar policies in Turkey's African pivot, which was being built upon Erbakan's modest legacy from 2002 on. From the start the objective was very clear: To open a space for commercial influence for Turkish businessmen, especially the SMEs which had given the greatest support to AKP and who were hungry for profits; to expand their sphere of economic influence via new political relations; and, furthermore, to have a greater say in world politics by reinforcing their influence in Africa. It does not seem politically misguided for a country that was economically destroyed in 2001 and that must rise from its ashes to channel its dynamism and ambitions in such a direction. A summary of Turkish-African relations from the time the AKP came into power until today could help us see that there is a strong parallel between the AKP's self-construction and its shaping of its relations with any region or country, in this case, with Africa.

Strategic partnership with Africa

Turkey had had very limited knowledge about the African

continent until 2002. In that year, when the AKP came to power, Turkey started to participate in African Union meetings as a guest country. In November 2005, the year which was declared the "Year of Africa," the African Union's president Professor Alpha Oumar Konare visited Turkey upon the invitation of Abdullah Gül.

The first stop in Tayyip Erdoğan's voyage across Africa was Addis Ababa, on January 29-30, 2007. In 2008, the African Union declared Turkey a "strategic partner." Istanbul hosted the Turkish-African Partnership

The AKP and Erdoğan pursued a similar policy when it came to Turkey's African pivot, which was being built from 2002 onwards on Erbakan's modest legacy. The objective was clear from the start: To open a space of commercial influence for Turkish businessmen, to expand their sphere of economic influence via new political relations; and, furthermore, to have a greater say in world politics.

Summit on August 18-21, 2008, offering a rich package that covered issues such as intergovernmental cooperation, commerce, investment, agriculture, commerce in agricultural products, rural development, water resources management, small and medium scale business development, health, peace and security, infrastructure, energy, transportation, culture, tourism and education. In addition to those topics, there were the ornamental additions of media, IT and environmental investments. The second summit will be held in Africa in October 2013.

A Turkish-African Business Forum was held simultaneously with the summit. It was organized by DEİK (Foreign Economic Relations Board), and TUSKON (Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists), which was founded by what had been SMEs and which had grown into large-scale companies loyal to the Fethullah Gülen sect.

On March 26, 2010, the Prime Minister's Office issued the African Strategy White Paper, a document which translated the issues taken up in the summit into concrete measures and plans. On December 15, 2010, senior officials from the African Union and Turkey came together once again to create a common road map. On December 16, 2011, there was yet another meeting, this time on the ministerial level.

Turkey has 31 embassies across Africa, 19 of which were established after 2009. Turkey plans to be represented in all African nations on at least the embassy level. In 2011, Turkey's humanitarian aid to Africa reached 1 billion USD; although this sum is not enough for Turkey to fill the large shoes of Muammar Qaddafi, who used to be the continent's largest "humanitarian" benefactor prior to the Arab Spring, Turkey has successfully "bought" itself a position in the higher ranks of the list. The same year, the volume of foreign trade between sub-Saharan Africa and Turkey reached 7.5 billion USD, an increase of 72% over the year 2000. Turkey's foreign trade volume with the entire

African continent stood at 9 billion USD in 2000 before reaching 17.1 billion USD in 2011. In 2011, Turkey's development aid to Africa increased by 38%. On several occasions, Erdoğan expressed his desire to see the trade volume reach 50 billion USD.

The dialogue Turkey orchestrated with Africa seems to be delivering results: Turkey has held official talks with the African Union based on due consideration of the equilibrium between African countries, and has also established itself as a negotiator between the actors of the political instability among individual African nations. The best case in point of this phenomena is Somalia.

Somalia: Inventing a common language

In 2011, Tayyip Erdoğan visited Somalia with a large entourage including celebrities, businessmen and journalists who were all invited to ensure that the trip received ample attention in Turkey and abroad. This

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was a public relations maneuver to promote aid and development aid initiated by the Turkish Red Crescent and TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency). In 2011, the state of Turkey's aid to Somalia reached 49 million USD, and the aid campaign in Turkey raised a further 365 million USD which was later sent to Somalia. In addition, a budget of 70 million USD was earmarked for the education of Somalian students in Turkish universities.

This initiative had yet another positive outcome. The mass delegation from Turkey visiting Somalia drew the attention of the international community to the region and leveraged a considerable increase in aid to Somalia. Nevertheless, Turkey stood out in one important respect: Analyzing Turkey's maneuvering towards Africa on the World Policy Institute web site, Julia Harte describes this difference as such:

"[M]any Somalis have benefited from Turkey's new foreign policy efforts. As other countries' humanitarian missions to Somalia stayed on the sidelines in Nairobi, Turkish Kızılay [Red Crescent] forces showed aid could be administered effectively from Mogadishu. Turkey is now proving that pure human capital can be a better policy instrument than lending programs, aid donations, business deals, and diplomatic summits."¹

Everyone agrees that Turkey enjoys good relations not only with the government, but also with the Somalian opposition. But there are various examples to the limits of these "good relations." For instance, in October 2011, the armed group Al-Shabaab bombed a state agency where students were waiting in line to

apply for a scholarship in Turkey. At least 100 people were killed. Later, Al-Shabaab explained their rationale behind the attack: "Students would be trained as spies or military agents there." Nevertheless, there has not been one attack on an officer of Turkey in areas controlled by the group.

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Abdihakim Aynte is a young manager who studied at a university in Kenya. Currently he works at a private company while also doing volunteer work at the institution Faith Without Borders, which seems to be influential in his native Somalia. In his blog, he describes the "esthetic dimension" of Turkey's presence in his country as follows:

There are, perhaps, three essential factors that can be attributed to Ankara's principled approach to Somalia: Moral authority that defines Ankara's Islamic values; business opportunity that makes Turkey a rising global economic competitor and geo-strategic vision that is part of Ankara's global roundabout ambition.²

He then goes to describe in detail the responsibilities of Western nations in Somalia's long period of turmoil. Later, he explains how the ineptitudes, irresponsibility and conflicts of interest that surfaced during peace negotiations left the Somalian people without a solution. And then he shares his pleasure in seeing Turkey stand out among all other Islamic nations to become an ally and negotiator on the Somalian scene. Although he seems well aware of the AKP's real ambitions in Africa, Aynte seems to tend toward thinking, "Why not, let's try this option, too; at least they are Muslims."

Turkey's presence in Somalia becomes more palpable by the day; now, for instance, Turkey has started to provide security support to the transitional government. Turkey has also mobilized a small fleet to protect Somalia and the rest of the world from Somalian pirates. Turkey is active in every area, from health to agriculture, from housing to infrastructure. Mensur Akgün, an expert in international relations and a columnist for Star newspaper, says that Turkey is rebuilding the Somalian state.³

In Somalia, just like in the West, these initiatives by Turkey are seen as the international manifestation of "moderate Islam." In a review of scores of online forums, almost all Somalians profering their opinions seem to be grateful for the interest in Somalia shown by Turkey, which is "Muslim, but not anti-Western." Although Western observers are more skeptical about Gülen schools, they nevertheless consider that the presence of Turkey as governed by the AKP in Somalia is preferable to that of Iran or Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Turkey is seen as one of the countries which can compete against China with its cheap products in the European markets, and this, too, sounds fine to many pundits.

Not one single problem?

Turkey may not run into many problems while establishing intergovernmental relations with poor Muslim nations in Eastern Africa. It seems, therefore, reasonable to assume that it will endeavor to create strong ties with Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia and then to continue to enrich and deepen those ties. This model can be described as humanitarian aid plus development support in return for vast commercial privileges. In the case of Somalia, oil is another key issue. Turkey imports around 600 thousand barrels of oil from Somalia per day. Furthermore Genel Enerji, of which Mehmet Emin Karahmehmet is the senior partner, is exploring new oil reserves in Somalia in hopes of making them operational. After its succession, Turkey has been trying to maintain favorable relations with South Sudan, again probably in hopes that they will find untapped cheap petroleum reserves there.

It is not easy to predict what kind of problems Turkey - which makes foreign policy on the 'win-win' principle - could run into in Africa as of today. But it is not difficult to see that Turkey's foreign policy model could be seriously tested further south, in Nigeria for example, where conflicts between Pentecostal and Muslim groups are escalating once again. In Somalia and Sudan, where once-warring parties no longer have the power to continue to fight, Turkey is striving to get a larger chunk of the surplus value by becoming a partner in 'rebuilding' efforts initiated by the international community. Additionally, there are various reasons for thinking that African nations could benefit more from doing business with Turkey than with China, Russia or Iran.

Nevertheless, it is not easy to predict how Turkey would react in the case of a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims. Again, it is difficult to forecast how Turkey will behave as it sharpens its competitive edge and is thus exposed to more pressure. To what extent can it compete against Chinese goods, for example? What would Turkey do if competition starts to turn ugly and armed conflicts break out? And could Turkey's presence fuel religious conflicts in certain locations? Does Islam provide Turkey with sufficient force and argument to play a prominent role in African politics? Furthermore, what will happen when Turkey starts to compete with other Muslim nations?

All these questions concerning Turkey's nascent African policy beg for answers, but the answers will probably take a long time coming. It could be possible though to find some clues in the AKP's various maneuvers in domestic politics.

In 2002, the AKP came to power by winning the votes of not only the pious, but also of various social sectors fed up with the economic crisis. In subsequent successful elections, the AKP became stronger and more and more authoritarian. The AKP started to steer away from the liberal groups, whose support it used to solicit, and to strengthen its conservatism. The AKP capitalizes

on its control of the parliament to issue laws that allow it to build a society where it controls the economics, politics and every other field of daily life. The upward trend in the economy veils the problems triggered by this new social order. After intense power struggles, the AKP seems to have ended the military's dominance in Turkish politics, albeit without changing the violent language of the state. The vacuum left behind by the

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military in daily life is being filled by the police, and we witness the rise of another order in daily life where violent language becomes even tougher. The Kurdish question - the most important problem in Turkey - seems to be finally nearing a solution. However, since the conditions of the truce between the state and the Kurdish political movement have not been sufficiently shared with nor discussed by the larger society, there are ongoing concerns about the nature of this truce. Thus, the AKP cannot be said to have been as successful in political discourse and practice as it has been in running the economy.

The AKP was born into, and throughout its years in power has been representing, a certain small- and medium-scale business culture, which requires a constant readiness to take action, a dynamism, the ability to turn crisis into opportunity, and flexibility, which in turn come together to create a competitive edge in the global arena. Nevertheless, the discourse of AKP politicians has become more and more authoritarian throughout their years in power; which in turn suggests that when the scale of things gets bigger and when more complicated crisis arise, the above mentioned qualities could turn into disadvantages. We shall see how successful the AKP government will be in Africa, and what it can give to and take in return from Africa as it tries to overcome hurdles in this highly competitive region. For the moment, suffice it to say that one of the AKP's largest "advantages" in African politics - just as in domestic politics - is its meticulously preserved unpredictability.

Footnotes

1. "Turkey Shocks Africa," <http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/winter2012/turkey-shocks-africa>
2. "Turkey's Role in Somalia: A New Ally?" April 10, 2012, http://cesran.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1418%3Aturkeys-role-in-somalia-a-new-ally&catid=216%3Aanalyses-on-turkey-and-neighbourhood&Itemid=336&lang=en
3. "Turkey's Role in Somalia: A New Ally?" December 22, 2012, <http://haber.stargazete.com/yazar/somalide-yeni-bir-devlet-insa-ediyoruz/yazi-714006>

AKP does not confine women to home, it chains them to the family

Since its foundation in 2011, AKP has defined itself as a conservative democratic party. In ten years of AKP rule, however, it was conservatism's alliance with "economic" liberalism rather than democracy, which shaped social life. In similar examples across the world, we have seen neoliberalism joining forces with conservatism. The parties in this alliance include the world of finance, prominent industrialists, the trade sector, exporters, media tycoons, large landowners, local political leaders, top-level public servants and military officials.¹ This alliance, whose composition differs from country to country, channels its political activity towards the same objective in the entire world. AKP has assumed the role of the political representative of this line in Turkey.

Since it came to power in 2002, AKP has been accused with hiding its secret agenda; however, since the referendum of 2010, the party seems to have eliminated such accusations. That is because; AKP has geared up its efforts towards implementing this so-called secret agenda, and started to shape the public sphere in line with its ideological approach more rapidly. AKP thus began to showcase its "social vision 2023" through measures such as the "education reform" briefly called as 4+4+4, attempts to ban abortion, and bans on alcohol sales. The Prime Minister's calls on women to have three children (later increased to five), his desire to see the rise of a pious generation, and his argument that each abortion is tantamount to an Uludere massacre are all indicators of the role assigned to women in this vision for 2023. This approach, which tries to confine women to maternal roles inside the home, has changed the name of the Ministry for Women as the Ministry for the Family just before the 2011 elections, and thus showed that women could not aspire to any identity outside of family and motherhood.

On the other hand, we continuously come across the government's plans and projects concerning female employment. In the report "Reconciling Business and Family Life" by AKP Women's Branches, the female employment target set for 2015 is a meager 37%. In fact, since the law on employment signed in 2008, AKP constantly talks about raising female employment figures. The provisions of the employment law of 2008 (labor law no. 5763) put forth the same objective:

"With this measure, a) in the first year 100%, b) in the second year 80%, c) in the third year 60%, d) in the fourth year 40%, e) in the fifth year 20% of the employer's share of social insurance premium calculated according to the lower limit of the income bracket will be paid from the Unemployment Insurance Fund, for all female employees older than 18, physically employed in the year after this article comes into effect, on top of the average social insurance premium indicated in the employer's premium and service certificates, unless they have registered to the social insurance system in the previous six months with premium and service certificates."²

However, the same law relieved employers of the obligation to set up kindergartens in places where more than 150 women are employed, and allowed employers to purchase this service from an outside service provider. The law no. 6111, also called "the omnibus bill", features provisions, which encourage employers to provide home-based, flexible and part-time employment opportunities to women. In 2012, after slamming C-section operations and stating that each abortion is equivalent to an Uludere massacre, the Prime Minister said "Repressive and fundamentalist policies, which imprison women in private life and ostracize them from the public sphere are uncivilized, and create gender-based discrimination. Discrimination against women is more evil, dangerous and primitive than even racism" - and these words found their way to the introduction of the workshop report of AKP's women branches.³ The following words by the Prime Minister were also noteworthy: "The state can exist only as long as the family and the nation exist.... We want strong families with at least three children. That is the key to making our families stronger. We shall achieve this, because we want a robust nation. ... We are a conservative democratic party. It is our right to ask for more children. This government has to achieve this objective".⁴

Strengthening the family is among the most emphasized targets of AKP since it came to power. Defining women's role within the framework of "a strong family" defines women primarily (and sometimes solely) as mothers. During the revision of the Turkish Penal Code in 2004, the government strived to criminalize adultery, which had been decriminalized with prior legislation - again, with the goal of reinforcing the family. The Law on Social Insurance and General Health



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Insurance, which came into effect in 2008, raised the retirement age for the entire working class, making it even harder for women to enjoy their right to retirement; because, women, especially those working in the private sector, are burdened by the obligation to work both at work and at home and to occasionally abandon work to give birth, which makes it impossible for them to complete the necessary work time for retirement. This in turn, makes women more dependent on the income and health insurance of their husbands or fathers. Thus, women are condemned to live inside the family, dependent on a father or husband.

Female employment at the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism

It was capitalism that initiated the massive participation of women in employment. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the cheap and unorganized character of female and child labor made them more appealing for capital. Nevertheless, since women continued to be burdened by domestic chores, the inequality between women and men remained intact in working families. Female workers not only worked at unqualified and low-paid jobs just because they were women, but also continued to be responsible for duties such as cleaning or taking care of the children and elderly. The rise of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s put the unpaid female labor and the family back on the agenda. While questioning the repression of women in contexts such as unpaid domestic female labor, male violence towards women, heterosexuality, race, gender relations, the body and sexuality, feminists undoubtedly set out from the current social circumstances, even if they took into consideration the historical evolution of the issue. In this regard, their analysis of the situation of women in the workforce or of unpaid domestic work was limited to male dominance in the context of capital accumulation processes in Western societies. They discussed the relations between capitalism and patriarchy at a time when around one third of the world joined the socialist camp soon after the Second World War, class struggles shook the foundations of the Western societies, and the capital accumulation regime called the Fordist mode of production and welfare state policies were in place. In central countries such as the USA, Canada, Europe and Japan, there were high growth rates, continuous technological development, increases in purchasing power, development of the welfare system especially in health, retirement and education, and low unemployment figures,⁵ as well as a strong trade union movement, a youth movement on the streets, anti-colonial struggles and the rise of the anti-war movement. From 1935 until late 1960s, the role assigned to women was mainly limited to their domestic role as mother. The family wage, the expansion of the man's social insurance rights towards all the members of the nuclear family, the employment of women only at the lowest-paid jobs, and their continuing responsibility for domestic chores were

key characteristics of this period. While starting to question the rhetoric around "the family home", the feminist movement also analyzed the political economy of unpaid female domestic labor from a materialistic viewpoint.

Christine Delphy suggests that patriarchy is a system in which women are repressed by men in modern industrial societies, and that one of its pillars is the domestic mode of production (or the patriarchal mode of production). According to Delphy, there exist two social modes of production and two systems of exploitation. The industrial mode of production is where capitalist exploitation takes place. Patriarchal exploitation, on the other hand, takes place in the domestic mode of production, which organizes the production of domestic services, childcare and the production of certain commodities. In this regard, men exploit women inside home.⁶ While analyzing domestic female labor in the context of patriarchal mode of production, Delphy does not shed light on why

Starting with its first years in government, AKP, too, tried to reinforce the family and took measures to strengthen male dominance. The AKP government emphasizes its willingness to increase female employment through the provisions of the employment law, the omnibus bill, and policies to "harmonize" domestic and professional life.

women were repressed even before the advent of capitalism and the nuclear family, or why they are employed in low-paid, precarious and unqualified jobs when they join the salaried workforce in the context of the patriarchal system.

A second approach analyzing domestic work was the Marxist feminist theory, which followed in the footsteps of the socialist analyses of late 19th and early 20th centuries. Margaret Benston (1969) suggests that the imprisonment of women inside the home serves the interest of the current system in two important ways. First, the unpaid domestic female labor allows the capitalist class, which owns the means of production to lower the cost of reproducing the labor force, and thus increase its profits. Secondly, the employment of women in low-paid jobs creates a redistribution of income to the advantage of capitalists. Benston indicates that the family as an institution functions like a latent instrument of taxation against wage workers. Claiming that the participation of women in the workforce is shaped according to the needs of capital, Benston does associate the low salaries of women working outside the home with the family (and the fact that the intensity of their participation in wage work varies from period to period); however, she strives to explain all these with the internal transformations of capitalism itself. She does not dissect the aspects unrelated to work of the relation of domination between men and women inside the home.⁷

Heidi Hartmann defines patriarchy and capitalism as two separate yet interconnected systems which continuously influence each other. She considers that these systems forge an alliance, even if their interests enter into conflict in certain respects. In this context, she suggests that the main mechanism, which preserves the male domination over women in the capitalist society is the gendered division of labor, which women have to face when they join wage labor. Furthermore, she says that this mechanism also causes women to be employed for lower wages in the labor market. Lower wages make women dependent on men and urge them to get married. And since married women are obliged to take care of their husbands, men benefit from both higher wages outside the home, and the domestic female labor inside the household. That is, the domestic division of labor is reproduced by the labor market, and the sexism in the labor market is reinforced by the gendered division of labor at home. Hartmann suggests that this cohesion between capitalism and patriarchy constitutes a vicious circle for women, and therefore, she defines patriarchy as a social system with a material foundation. In this sense, she underscores her difference from Marxist economists.

About twenty years after the second wave of feminism, Sylvia Walby divided patriarchy as a historical system into two components, due to the historical conjuncture: Public patriarchy and private (sphere) patriarchy. She argues that public patriarchy appears in the context of employment and the state, whereas private patriarchy is shaped by relations of domestic production.⁸

The role of the family

Without doubt, the family is the institution that patriarchy relies on most to keep women under control. That is because, this bastion of male dominance functions as a basis for legitimizing male violence and as a hub of unpaid female labor. The family is an institution continuously reshaped by patriarchal capitalism according to its needs. Whether modern, conservative, nationalist or religious, all family forms aim at rendering women's submission to men legitimate and permanent. All "male" governments rebuild the mechanisms repressing women through the family, with a view to protecting the long-term interests of the patriarchal system. For instance, in the USA, the new Right opposes sexual education in schools and equal rights for women. The opposition against abortion cannot be separated from the attempt to reduce women to their traditional roles as a spouse and mother inside the nuclear family. The anti-abortion stance of the Christian Right is also based on such a foundation, a "pro-family" agenda, which urges them to attack all the gains of the 1960s.⁹ Starting with its first years in government, AKP, too, tried to reinforce the family and took measures to strengthen male dominance. The AKP government emphasizes its willingness to increase female employment through the provisions of the employment law, the omnibus bill, and policies

to "harmonize" domestic and professional life. And the Minister of Family Fatma Şahin's promise to issue a regulation for providing kindergartens for working women was an effort in this vein. However, there is sufficient evidence to think that female employment based on a gendered division of labor cannot erode patriarchy, and that this latest attempt is simply a new tactic by the alliance between patriarchy and capitalism against the acquisitions of the feminist struggle. The real objective underlying the kindergarten support is to ensure the participation of women in the workforce as cheap labor. The same legislation on employment requires women's insurance premiums to be paid not by employers but from the unemployment insurance fund – yet another proof that the ultimate goal is to allocate more resources for capitalists. Furthermore, the methods for financing this kindergarten support are not set out clearly in the latest announcements. It should not come as a shock to anyone if AKP delves into the Severance Pay Fund for this purpose – in another attempt to violate workers' rights to the benefit of capital.

Portraying AKP as another Taliban would be as misleading as the idea that modernization and women's work outside the home will liberate women and protect them against male violence and murder. AKP chains women to the family without necessarily imprisoning them inside the home. In another manifestation of the alliance between capitalism and patriarchy, the cheapening of women's labor condemns women to the family, whether they work or not.

In the last years, various pieces of legislation on employment turned women into cheap labor and the Law on Social Insurance and General Health Insurance inflicted further losses on women. Such legislation increasingly condemns women not to the father who often both loves and beats up his daughter, but to the husband, whether he loves and beats her up or not.

Single or divorced women are condemned to hunger and lack of access to social insurance. The institution of marriage turns into some kind of an employment contract which provides women with more social insurance than ever. Neither does work outside the home offer liberation for women, because the low wages make it impossible to live alone, due to the patriarchal-neoliberal domination. AKP's policies to increase female employment coupled with the Law on Social Insurance and General Health Insurance turn women's cheap labor into an additional resource for capital, and lead to an artificial rise in employment figures to create a positive impression on the (neoliberal) European Union. The limited rise in female employment since 2011 clearly varies between women with different levels of education. The highest rise is seen among university graduates, followed by primary school graduates or less-educated women.¹⁰ In other words, there is a rise in the employment of well-educated women who constitute a window dressing to impress the EU, and less-educated women who meet capital's demand for cheap labor. Just like in

the USA... In the USA, the rising neo-conservatives first initiated a debate on abortion. Although they did not succeed in repealing the right to abortion, they retorted with a social assistance reform. Aid to single mothers was slashed to force them into jobs, which pay even less than the assistance. Furthermore, neither the employers nor the state assumed any responsibility in terms of childcare. This rise in employment was then attributed to the government's success in encouraging women to join in the workforce.¹¹ In the UK, a number of "pro-family" organizations were established, such as the Conservative Family Campaign, Family Forum, Family Sensitivity, Family and Nation Campaign, etc. Anti-abortion organizations such as the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) and LIFE launched a number of attacks against pro-abortion legislation. In the UK, the Thatcher government also served as the defender of the traditional family form and values.¹²

Rise of the modern conservative nuclear family

Undoubtedly, (Islamic) neo-conservatives also feel the need to reinforce their ideological hegemony. The Turkish literature and cinema of the 1970s portrayed women workers with bright faces wearing light scarves that covered part of their hair, employed in large factories, aware of the class struggle, taking a stance against the bigots in their neighborhood, and had husbands with bushy mustaches. Such worker families are less and less rare in real life. Today's poor neighborhoods are home to nuclear families made up of women wearing religious headscarves (or turban), either doing piecemeal work at home or working at a women-only workshop in the environs to make a contribution to the family budget (see. the omnibus bill of 2012), and raising patriotic and nationalistic

generations, as well as men who go to the mosque on Fridays, fast during the Ramadan and have precarious jobs. The children of these conservative families dream of moving up the social ladder and enjoying vacations at Islamic five-star hotels along

AKP chains women to the family without necessarily imprisoning them inside the home. In another manifestation of the alliance between capitalism and patriarchy, the cheapening of women's labor condemns women to the family, whether they work or not.

the Mediterranean. These families do not want their boys and girls climbing up the social ladder to look down on them – as did well-educated youngsters in those old Turkish movies –, and they believe that they can maintain their conservative beliefs while reaching a higher level of consumption. As a result, today's modern conservative nuclear families are keen on raising even more pious generations than yesterday's conservative families did.

This ideological reinforcement of the family protects and reproduces the current relations of production and the process of reproduction to the benefit of those in power, even without having recourse to the liberal ideological illusion which defines the family as a unit of consumption. To protect the family, the government relies on family guidance offices, divorce counselors, and policies to reinforce the family. Patriarchy, which can at times try to defend itself without the help of capitalism, is today on a mission to prop up its own domination and that of neoliberalism, with AKP at the helm.

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Draft Bill for the Protection of Nature and the concept of rights

Over the past ten years, a previously unseen level of natural destruction has been taking place in Anatolia: In addition to those currently in planning stages, there are nearly 4,000 hydroelectric power plants and dam projects underway; approximately 40,000 mining licenses are currently in use; thousands of hectares of forests are being opened to investment projects; legislative amendments are underway that will destroy traditional agriculture and stockbreeding; the construction of thermal and nuclear power plants, just to name a few. The examples of destruction are too numerous to be counted; it seems like every day we face a new, negative development.

Even though the title of this article includes “protection,” it is really a draft bill about the destruction of nature that has been on the national agenda for a long time. For years there has been a framework law for the protection of nature, and a real need to improve nature protection legislation. This need has been voiced by NGOs working to protect nature, academics, ministry officials, and by local communities whose lives are directly affected by current legislation.

This draft bill has changed five times from its conception in 2003 up to 2013, straying in the process from its objectives to the point of becoming unrecognizable. The views of the public, NGOs, and scientists have been disregarded.

This is a bill that will affect the fate of nature and all living things across Turkey, and it was shaped purely to maximize potential financial gain.

Turkey's first national park was founded in 1958. Today, there are 1,624 protected areas of differing status and size including national parks, nature reserves, specially protected environmental areas, protected wildlife reserves, and development grounds. In total, all these areas amount to only four per cent of Turkey's land mass. The World Bio-Diversity Conference held in 2010 agreed on a decision to increase this proportion to at least 15 percent by 2020.

The current draft bill rejects the idea of improving or development the protection status of protected areas in favor of a labor-saving method that threatens to destroy it all. The bill aims to open these areas to investment and management under the guide of providing outstanding public weal. In a sense, it removes the protective shields from the last sanctuaries of wildlife and rural life in Anatolia.

Examining the bill in its entirety, it is clear that this is not a draft for a bill that could direct projects to protect nature, and that it does not resolve existing threats against nature nor address issues such as mining,

urbanization, energy and hydroelectric power plants. Its emphasis on “protection” is insufficient; instead, the draft's agenda seems to have regulations that steer towards “exhausting resources.”

Many determining clauses and critical decisions on implementation have been left to the mercy of regulations that do little besides create anxiety for the future. This situation weakens the main objective and effectiveness of the draft to a great extent.

The designation of “natural protected area” has been discarded. The status had been an obstacle for the construction of tens of hydroelectric power plants and the subsequent realization of tens of thousands of profit-oriented initiatives. The designation of “natural protected areas” is the reason why we still have unspoiled shores and riverbanks in Turkey. In addition to this, many protection committees and court cases have precluded many interventions from taking place in natural protected areas, particularly in the case of hydroelectric power plants, that would have caused harm to nature.

In the draft, Clause 6 titled “Re-evaluation” is truly worrying. It states that the boundaries of previously designated and accepted protected areas can be changed according to the suggestions of real and legal persons, that their designation can be changed, and that the decision to protect these areas can be revoked. The number of protected areas and the total protected areas in Turkey are far behind those of many European countries and fall short of the objectives that were accepted in international agreements to which Turkey is a party. The numbers of protected areas, which currently amount to between four and five per cent of the area of the country, must be increased, while this clause actually allows for currently protected areas to lose their designation as “protected.” Turkey is a party to international agreements, such as the EU International Biological Diversity Agreement, and it needs to increase its protected area to 15 per cent of total land area; meanwhile, this draft actually allows for even currently protected areas to be “re-evaluated” and to lose their protection. We need to protect all areas in a more effective manner.

The expression of “outstanding public weal” stated in Clause 8 of the draft is extremely ambiguous and liable to abuse. Many investments that could harm nature are made possible through this clause. In Section 4 of Clause 6 another extremely ambiguous clause that makes itself available to abuse discusses “environmental benefit.” With this clause, it will be easy for many investments with negative environmental impacts –mining, energy, industry, agriculture, tourism– to use



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“environmental benefit” as a basis for their exploits.

According to the section entitled “Briefing and Participation” in Clause 9 it states that “with regards to any protection and planning works to be undertaken at any given location the community will only be ‘briefed.’” According to the draft, communities are not given any place in the decision-making process. For participation in real terms, it is necessary for stakeholder’s opinions to be heard in addition to any “briefing.” The processes of decision-making and implementation should be shaped with co-operation and active participation.

In Section 2 of Clause 10 it states that “the authority of management in protected areas can be partially assigned or retrieved with the approval of the related minister if petitioned by provincial special administrations, municipalities, foundations and associations that undertake activities in line with the objective of this law.” Irretrievable damage has been caused by the reinstatement of delegated authority by the Provincial Special Administration under the control of Governorships. One latest example of this is the Nature Park of Bolu-Abant. As a responsibility of utmost sensitivity and importance, the management of protected areas by institutions not well versed in the subject area and who do not have sufficient technical knowledge can cause significant and irreparable losses.

The input of the National Commission for the Protection of Nature, Committees for the Protection of Regional Nature, and the Science Board for the Protection of Nature that were previously included in the third draft and accepted by the Environment Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 2011 have been omitted from the current draft. In this draft bill, the Ministry is stipulated as the sole authorized authority in the decision-making. The participation of NGOs, academics, regional governments and even related public institutions in the decision-making process has been ruled out. In Clause 10 of the draft, the establishment of a National Advisory Committee for Biological Diversity was proposed but no decision was made as to the structure or duties of such a committee nor how it would be managed. Instead, the draft bill is ambiguous. The clause states: “Methods and principles in regard to the formation and work of the committee will be determined by the Ministry.” This is not appropriate to a contemporary and democratic working order. In the same vein, the draft bill also rule out the principle of “participation” stated in the agreements to which Turkey is a party.

The statement in Clause 20 – “Areas that cannot be suitably returned to their natural states will be transformed into the closest living areas” – paves the way for the legitimization of any damage in the protected area and debilitates any rehabilitation work that can be undertaken to repair the damage caused. The expression “closest living areas” is void of any scientific basis and its meaning is ambiguous.

In Clause 29 of the draft, it states: “According to the Law for the Encouragement of Tourism No. 2634, the Ministry must be consulted regarding areas that will be designated as areas of development, issues that fall under the protection of culture and tourism, and also centers of tourism.” This clause allows for construction work under the guise of “encouragement of tourism” in protected areas that already only constitute a fraction of the country’s area as a whole.

Clause 57 of the draft states: “The Law for National Parks dated 9/8/1983 and numbered 2873 has been revoked.” The Law for National Parks is one of the most important legal regulations for the protection of nature. The draft maintains the designations of “national parks” as protected areas, even though it does not explain by which methods or principles these areas will be managed and protected. The annulment of the Law for National Parks stated in the draft will have a negative effect on the already threatened national parks. Recently, in court cases against hydroelectric power plant construction, the Law for National Parks allowed for permissions to be denied, but this new draft removes this option and replaces it with new, harmful regulations. Once the Ministry passes the draft bill into law, the public and related NGOs will not be able to find out about the regulations passed beforehand, and thus they will not be able to intervene in the process. The process awaiting the National Parks is a matter of great concern.

This draft poses an injustice far beyond the dangers that can be resolved with simple revisions. If the law passes in the Assembly, it will open much of the wildlife and the ecosystem in Anatolia to destruction. It is one of the world’s most special areas and displays a rich biological diversity. Natural treasures as well as cultural treasures like Hasankeyf made possibly though Anatolia’s diversity, traditions, and social roots will be destroyed, and countless residents will be forced to move away from their lands.

The draft of the Law of Nature is the climax of a process that has been ongoing for the past ten years. This is the last great step of the great legislative operation to pave the way for investments, first and foremost of hydroelectric power plants and dams that wreck irreparable damage on nature and human life. All the nature protection laws and related legislations that have been used in the past as grounds for judicial decisions to protect nature have been amended, and are still being altered more. This is a partial list of protection laws and legislation that have been amended: Electricity Market Law; Electricity Market License Regulation; Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation; Law for Pastures; Law for Land Use and Soil Protection; Code of Protection of Cultural and Natural Properties; Forestry Law; Water Products Law; Law for the Establishment and Legislation of General Directorate for State Hydraulic Works; Law for Renewable Energy Resources.

The party responsible for the legislative operation is the newly renamed Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, formerly the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, a body that was established with a mandate to protect nature. In 2007, this new Ministry incorporated the General Directorate for State Hydraulic Works, one of the largest investment institutions in the country to be able to use the new Ministry’s name and officials to legitimize these intrusive investments rather than protect nature.

In this period, we can’t even believe that legislation will establish even a minimal level of justice. It seems that the international agreements that Turkey is a party to have been deemed meaningless. And democratic protests against these changes in national laws and their implementation, particularly the Law of Nature, have been rejected by the state, and in many cases peaceful protesters face brutal force and violence.

Turkey's Terror Prevention Act: Source of problems in freedom of expression

The Fourth Judicial Reform Package that followed three different "legal reforms" resulted in public disappointment. The reforms led lawyers and journalists to expect the release of those detained in relation to the criminal cases Ergenekon and Balyoz (Sledgehammer), and in relation to the KCK (Union of Communities in Kurdistan) in Diyarbakir and Istanbul. However, the Fourth Judicial Reform Package only changed some laws "within the context of freedom of expression" and did not meet public expectations about reversing long-term "detainment."

The amendment to the Bill on Amending Some Laws Within the Context of Human Rights and Freedom of Expression¹ (Law No: 6459), also known as the Fourth Judicial Reform Package, was made effective April 30, 2013. As of March 2013 when the law was sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, there were 16,900 complaints from Turkey awaiting resolution registered with the European Court of Human Rights. In the overview preamble to the law, the only statistical data provided in the number of complaints.

In 2011, Turkey was first in violation of rights with 159 sentences and a total of 286 violations of rights filed with the European Court of Human Rights. In 2012, Turkey was in second place after Russia. Out of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, Turkey is also first in violating rights with 2,521 cases ruled on in the 25 years since the establishment of the European Court of Human Rights. In 2013, there were 1854 unimplemented violation decisions against Turkey by the European Court of Human Rights which the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe had asked Turkey to implement. It is further presumed that many of the current applications to the European Court of Human Rights will be ruled against Turkey resulting in a violation decision. Passing Law No. 6459 releases Turkey from paying compensation, up to a significant sum, resulting in European Court of Human Rights. Turkey is also trying to minimize the negative perception internationally of its human rights violations.

How much impact in securing freedom of expression have the laws amended in the Third and Fourth Judicial Reform Packages had? How should the freedom of expression be preserved within the anti-terror act?

The definition of terror

In Turkey, the main obstacle in securing freedom of expression is the Anti-Terrorism Act (Law No. 3713), accepted into law in 1991.² According to its preamble, the purpose of the act is to fight terrorism. Articles 141, 142, and 163 of the Old Penal Code were revoked and the new act took their place. However, as laws are made to fight against terrorism, new clauses should be written to assure

the freedom to express ideas that do not use violence as a tool in order to create a contemporary democratic order. Those with non-violent ideas should not be prohibited from taking part in organized meetings.

The definitions of "terror and organization" set out in Clause 1 of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1991 were revised in 2003. In 2006, the Anti-Terrorism Act was amended to make it compliant with enquiries, trials, and the enforcement regime in concert with the passing of the new Turkish Penal Code of 2005.³ The definition of terror in Article 1 of the Anti-Terrorism Act currently in effect is as follows:

"Terrorism is any kind of act constituting a crime done by one or more persons belonging to an organization with the aim of changing the characteristics of the Republic as specified in the Constitution, its political, legal, social, secular or economic system, damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation, endangering the existence of the Turkish State and Republic, weakening or destroying or seizing the authority of the State, eliminating fundamental rights and freedoms, or damaging the internal and external security of the State, public order or general health by means of pressure, force and violence, terror, intimidation, oppression or threat."

Article 6 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, entitled "Disclosure and Publication" and concerning the activities of the press, and Article 7 "Terrorist Organization" are still in effect; Article 8 "Propaganda Against the Indivisible Unity of the State" has been revoked.

The indivisible unity of the state

As passed into law in 1991, the title of Article 8 of the Turkish Civil Code is "Propaganda Against the Indivisible Unity of the State." It states: "Written or oral propaganda, assemblies, meetings, or demonstrations aimed at damaging the indivisible unity of the Republic of Turkey, its territory and nation are forbidden, regardless of methods, intentions, or ideas behind such activities."

This Article has allowed Turkey to descend into being a country which imprisons journalists, intellectuals, writers, and judges because of their expressed opinions. Many writers have received custodial sentences for articles that do not provoke nor instigate terrorist or violent acts. The European Court of Human Rights made many decisions against Turkey due to Article 8; due to this and heavy criticism in Turkey's progress reports, Article 8 was revoked in 2003.

Prohibition on disclosure and publication

Article 6, which regulates the activities of the press, prohibits certain acts of "disclosure and publication." It is an offense to disclose or publish the identity of officials



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on anti-terrorist duties; those who identify such persons, thereby making them targets, shall be punished with a fine between 5 and 10 million Turkish lira.

According to the second Clause of this Article, it is a criminal offense to print or publish a terrorist organization's leaflets or declarations, punishable by a heavy fine of 5 to 10 million Turkish lira. Even news stories that feature court decisions or enforcements, or articles that are not criticism but that analyze, explain or introduce the activities of terrorist offenders to the public can be considered criminal acts. Article 6 was amended in 2006 and the punishment for this crime was set as a custodial sentence of between one and three years.

The amendments also include penal sanctions for owners or broadcast executives who themselves did not participate in committing the offense, defined in the preamble as "improper action in attention and solicitude obligation." Upon an appeal, the Constitutional Court reversed the regulations in Articles 6 and 7 relating to media owners in a decision on September 18, 2009. The punishment of "broadcast executives" when "they have not participated in committing an offense" in the press was found to be contrary to law, because an individual cannot be held responsible for activity in the press unless that activity was done knowingly and willingly by him or herself. The system of responsibility in the Anti-Terrorism Act is contrary to law and to the principles of contemporary penal law.

According to Clause 5 which was added to Article 6, the publication or distribution of periodicals that encourage the committing of an offense within the framework of a terrorist organization, or whose content is characteristic of propaganda of terrorist organizations, or that praises or glorifies criminal offenses and their perpetrators can be forced to cease as a precaution. This restriction is blatantly a "restriction, censorship." A judge can decide to halt a publication for a period of 15 days; this is 15 days of censorship. Authorizing a public prosecutor to stop the publication of a newspaper damages the freedom of the press.

Propaganda of a terrorist organization

The first Clause of Article 7 of the Turkish Civil Code defines "terrorist organizations" while the second Clause describes the offense of providing propaganda for a terrorist organization. Article 7 was amended in both 2002 and in 2006.

The second Clause of Article 7 makes it a crime to aid members of terrorist organizations or to carry out propaganda for organizations that encourage people to commit acts of terrorism. As the law was amended in 2002, "persons who make propaganda for a terrorist organization or for the aims the terrorist organization stands for" is subject to a one to five year custodial sentence. If the crime is committed in the press, the punishment is increased by fifty percent. The punishment in Article 7 was amended to be a custodial sentence of one and half to seven and a half years. With the passing of Law No. 5532, the phrase in Clause 2, Article 7 that read "the propaganda of a terrorist organization or its aims" was amended to read "the propaganda of a terrorist organization." The maximum punishment was increased from three to five years.

Moreover, as we saw in Article 6, if the offense of making propaganda on behalf of a terrorist organization is committed by the press, the criteria for "responsibil-

ity" has changed. Regulations regarding media/broadcast executives in Article 7 also stand against the principles of criminal law. Sub-Clause A of Clause 2 of Article 7 states that "the wearing of emblems or symbols that show a person to be a member or supporter of a terrorist organization, as well as the wearing of clothing that recalls uniforms, or the wearing of masks that fully or partially cover the face to hide one's identity during meetings or marches" are punishable offenses. Sub-Clause B of the same Article states that "carrying out activities directed at recruiting new members for the organization" is also considered an offen-

The definition of "terror" as stated in the Turkish Civil Code must be amended. If it is left as is, exercising freedom of expression through criticism, expression of opinion and voiced declarations will continue to be able to be used as reasons to investigate anyone and everyone as "terrorists committing acts of terrorism" within the context of the Turkish Civil Code.

sive behavior that can be punished within this context.

The Anti-Terrorism Act, Law No. 3713, which regulates and defines terrorism (Article 1), a terrorist offender (Article 2), offenses carried out in the pursuit of terrorism (Article 4), increased punishments (Article 5), disclosure and publications (Article 6), terrorist organizations (Article 7), deferment of the verdict announcement, prison sentences that cannot be committed to alternative sanctions, or be suspended (Article 13) creates obstacles in exercising the freedom of expression.⁴

Amendments to some laws in the Third and Fourth Judicial Reform were positive steps towards a solution, but they did not yet resolve these issues.

The Third Judicial Reform Package and the Anti-Terrorism Act

The Bill on Amending Some Laws in Order to Make Judicial Services More Effective and the Act on the Suspension of Cases and Punishments Regarding Offenses Committed by the Press, known as the Third Judicial Reform Package (Law No. 6352) make amendments to some Articles of the Anti-Terrorism Act.⁵

In these amendments, the phrase in Article 2, Terrorist Offender, states "and they shall be punished as members of a terrorist organization" was omitted. Clause 5 of Article 5 of the Anti-Terrorism Act was revoked. Law No. 5532, from 2006, which added Clause 6 into Article 6 was altered so that the publication of periodicals inciting the public to commit crimes within the framework of a terrorist organization may be suspended from fifteen days to one month as per a judge's decision, or if harm is expected imminently, immediately by the order of the prosecutor. The amendment to Law No. 6352 revoked the "suspension of publication" penalty in Article 6.

According to Article 231 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in cases where the accused is convicted and sentenced to a punishment of imprisonment of two years or less or a judicial fine, the court may decide to delay the pronouncement of the judgment.

Law No. 6352 revoked the regulation in Article 13

that allows the decision to delay the pronouncement of judgment for punishments occurring at the end of adjudications within the framework of the Anti-Terrorism Act. Provisional Article 1 of Law No. 6352 provided for the deferment of judicial fines for crimes involving the expression of ideas via the press, media, or otherwise, and for the execution of court sentences, including those that had become final, calling for investigation and prosecution for crimes punishable by no more than five years of imprison-

The law most breached in the context of private penalty and with the precept of there being no offense without the law is the Anti-Terrorism Act. This is why the law must be revoked in toto. The only other option is to bring the Anti-Terrorism Act in line with the legal norms stated in the European Convention on Human Rights, the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, and especially the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

ment committed prior to December 31, 2011. This caused delays for offenses committed by the press in the context of freedom of expression.

The Fourth Judicial Reform Package and the freedom of expression

Law No. 6459, known as the Fourth Judicial Reform Package, amended some Articles of the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Turkish Criminal Code. The goal of the Package was to reflect the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, which are definitive judgments but which have not yet been executed, the process of which is audited by the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe.

In 1990, Turkey agreed to the compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. Today, Turkey still has yet to offer a reasonable and justifiable reply to the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe as to why Turkey has not implemented the 1,854 decisions ruled against it. Among the unimplemented decisions are the losses in Cyprus and cases regarding property rights. Since 2004, the Committee of the Ministers of the Council of Europe has recommended member states to effectively remedy domestic laws to prevent the violation of rights.

Law No. 6459 was intended to improve Turkey's image in the European Court of Human Rights. The government of Turkey has made repeated claims that there are constant improvements in human rights and judicial reforms. The general preamble to the Law states that it is "establishing respect for human rights by our domestic laws doing what is necessary to find solutions to defects that arise." This Law aims to "provide solutions in domestic law in order to prevent the violation of rights." The idea is to make specific amendments to various laws that the European Convention of Human Rights has deemed in violation of rights, and to eradicate the violation of rights in this way.

Amendments to the Turkish Penal Code

According to Article 215 of the Turkish Penal Code "anyone who openly praises an offense or praises an offender

for their offense shall be sentenced to imprisonment for up to two years." The phrase "who, in the case of clear or proximal danger appears in view of public order" was inserted into the text after "anyone" so that the crime of praising an offense or an offender can be committed. The same sentence is used in Clause 8 of Article 220 of the Turkish Penal Code, which describes the offense of establishing an organization in order to commit a crime. "Anyone who makes propaganda for an organization or its objectives, that praises or shows the use of force, violence, or threats as legitimate methods shall be punished by imprisonment of one to three years." Clause 8 of Article 220 of the Turkish Penal Code should be revoked, as it is redundant to have clauses to the same effect on the same subject in both the Turkish Civil Code and the Turkish Penal Code.

Clause 1 of Article 318 of the Turkish Penal Code was broadened to include those doing their mandatory military service and those who speak or act unfavorably about military service in order to alienate the public from it. Article 318 was amended as follows: "Anyone who instigates, recommends, or spreads propaganda which results in discouraging people from performing military service shall be sentenced to imprisonment of six months to two years." Instead of "encouraging" or "indoctrinating", or even "making propaganda" to alienate people from military service, the Article uses the word "discouraging." Instead of altering their word choice, the Turkish Penal Code should be discouraged from this type of offense. Article 318 of the Turkish Penal Code must be revoked; this is the most effective, pro-freedom solution.

Amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act

Amendments to Clause 2 of Article 6 of the Anti-Terrorism Act state that those who publish or broadcast announcements or disclosures of terrorist organizations that "show methods of force, violence, or threats as legitimate or praise them, or that encourage the adoption of these methods" can be punished with a custodial sentence of one to three years.

Clause 2 of Article 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act was amended to state that those who make propaganda on behalf of a terrorist organization that "legitimizes or praises methods of force, violence, or threats, or which encourages the adoption of these methods" will be punished with imprisonment of one to five years.

This Article also now has the addition of a new regulation regarding "pictures." Even if not carried during meetings or protest marches, this new addition makes it an offense to carry or "hang pictures or symbols" of a terrorist organization which indicate one is a member or supporter of that terrorist organization. This offense is punishable by imprisonment of one to five years.

Fines for broadcasting executives indicated in Articles 6 and 7 have been changed from one thousand to ten thousand days to judicial fines of one thousand to five thousand days.

The formula in "template" sentences like "show methods of force, violence or threats as legitimate or praise them, or that encourage taking on these methods" will be used to search for the elements contained in the laws to create an offense in press and propaganda activities. First, it will be determined whether the announcement or declaration belongs to a terrorist organization, and if the organization is indeed a "terrorist organization". Then, it

will be determined whether the published announcement or declaration harbors force, violence, or threats. Then, whether the published announcement or declaration was published in order to “legitimize” methods to “include force, violence, or threats” in order to “praise,” “encourage” and “suggest” terrorist activity, and then whether or not it was spread as propaganda will be examined. The seeking out of these activities in “publication” during the implementation of jurisdiction will create problems.

Whether an article, a news story, or an expressed view indicates violence and threat as “legitimate methods”, and the existence of praise, encouragement, suggestion, or propaganda in support of an organization will be subject to discussion. The “template sentence” in the amendment of these Articles in the Anti-Terrorism Act will cause problems. Even if the regulations in these Articles express doubt, the law as amended will cause problems in the stages of implementation and jurisdiction, when the definitions as provided in the Turkish Civil Code will be taken into account – “the definition of terror,” “terrorist offender,” “terrorist offense,” and “terrorist organizations” as written in Article 7. But the ambiguity of the definitions leave too much room for debate, the terms are too loosely defined.

The “templates” used to write the amended Articles will also lead to discussions of whether there is force, violence, or threats in the contents and meaning of articles, news stories, and voiced opinions.

The loosely termed “hanging” in Article 7 regarding the offense of bearing or carrying emblems further broadens the discussion. That regulation is extended to cover emblems “even if not carried or hung during meetings or protest marches” limits freedom of expression and broadens the area of prohibition.

The definition of “terror” as stated in the Turkish Civil Code must be amended. If it is left as is, exercising freedom of expression through criticism, expression of opinion and voiced declarations will continue to be able to be used as reasons to investigate anyone and everyone as “terrorists committing acts of terrorism” within the context of the Turkish Civil Code.

Articles 6 and 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act create a barrier to freedom of expression and should be revoked.

If it is not possible to revoke those Articles, then it will be necessary to review the entire Act, starting with Article 1, with the goal of making amendments to protect freedom of expression. Restrictions should be made less stringent. The general preamble written at the acceptance of the Anti-Terrorism Act into law in 1991 states that the freedom to express ideas that do not use violence as a tool was to be protected and that ideas that did not adopt violence as a tactic can be organized and realized.

Every improvement, every reform, every law amendment gradually generates its own problems. A law amendment brought about for the purpose of protecting freedom of expression is a positive step. Endeavors to minimize the boundaries used to limit the freedom of expression are the correct way. The more we loosen oppressive rules and restrictions, the better it is for free expression.

Assessing it from this perspective, the transference of principles from the European Court of Human Rights in the protection of expressing viewpoints that do not condone or encourage violence should be heartily welcomed; in any case, that is what is necessary for a healthy democracy.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee stated in a comment that party states should ensure that their domestic precautions against terrorism comply with Paragraph 3, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Offenses such as “encouraging terrorism” or “extremist activity” as well as “praising,” “glorifying,” or “justifying” terrorism should be clearly defined to ensure that they do not lead to unnecessary or disproportionate interference in the freedom of expression.⁶

The United Nations Human Rights Committee’s pointed determination in regards the implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Act was among its conclusive observations regarding the Initial Report of Turkey, accepted in the 106th session (October 15-November 2, 2012): “The Committee has concerns about the incompliance with the Covenant of some of the Clauses of its Anti-Terrorism Act (Law No. 3713) dated 1991.

The Committee especially has concerns in the following areas: a) The vagueness in the definition of “acts of terrorism.” b) The broad restrictions on the right to due process. c) The prosecution of quite a high number of human rights activists, journalists and even children due to their free expression of thoughts and opinions - especially in regards the Kurdish issue - using a discussion of their harboring violence to put it in the context of the Anti-Terrorism Act.”

Laws must be fair and comprehensible. It should be clear to everyone what counts as an offense, what kinds of press activity can be taken to court, and what penalties they might face.

The law most breached in the context of private penalty and with the precept of there being no offense without the law is the Anti-Terrorism Act. This is why the law must be revoked in toto. The only other option is to bring the Anti-Terrorism Act in line with the legal norms stated in the European Convention on Human Rights, the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, and especially the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

Footnotes

1. The amendment to the Bill on Amending Some Laws within the Context of Human Rights and Freedom of Expression (Law No: 6459), accepted April 11, 2013 was published in the Official Gazette April 30, 2013, number 28633, and thus made law.
2. The Anti-Terrorism Act (Law No: 3713) dated April 12, 1991 was published in the Official Gazette dated April 12, 1991 in the reiterated copy numbered 20843 and thus made law.
3. Bill on the Amendment to the Anti-Terrorism Act (Law No:

5532), accepted June 29, 2006 (Official Gazette, June 18, 2006- No: 26232.)

4. In the subject of freedom of expression in Turkey Chamber 2 of the European Court of Human Rights.... (Translator’s Note: I don’t understand what is being said in Turkish)
5. This Law No. 6352 accepted July 2, 2012 was put into effect after being published in the Official Gazette July 5, 2012, number 28344.
6. Session 102 of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, Geneva, July 11-29, 2011. General Views, No: 34 (For further information see IHOP website).

The making of the Prevention of Financing Terrorism Law

On 31 January 2013 in the southeastern city of Van, a court case was opened against the following civil organizations supporting the rights of Van's citizens: The Mesopotamian Platform and Support Group for those who Lost Relatives (MEYA-DER), the Democratic Law and Support Group for those being Detained and Serving Prison Time (TUYAD-DER), the Van Scientific Research and Cultural Society for Problems Relating to Migration (Van GÖÇ-DER), the Van Yüzüncü Yıl Student Association (YÖDER), Van's Hacibekir Neighborhood Free Citizen Society, the Seyit Fehim Arvasi Neighborhood Open Society, the New Neighborhood Free Popular Society, the Van branch of the Kurdish Language Research and progress society (KURDİ-DER), the Akköprü Neighborhood Democratic Popular Society, and the Van's Women's Society (VAKAD).

These Van-based organizations were charged under the law preventing the financing of terrorism.

Law no. 6415, the Law on the Prevention of Financing Terrorism, is based on the United Nations' historic 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. According to the convention, the aim of terror is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act. Further, it highlights that terrorists and terrorist organizations must have financial means to fund their activities.

Turkey signed onto the convention in 2002; however, due to political complications it was not immediately passed into an according law. It was not until 7 February 2013 that it was finally officially introduced into law books as Law no. 6415, the Financing Terror Law.

Aims of the law

The law aims to prevent financial sources from reaching "terror" organizations. However, as the law only recognized a "terrorist organization" in the abstract, it remains undefined which institutions and organizations are considered to be "terrorists." This leaves the government free to seize the assets of companies, associations, and individuals at its discretion.

According to the law, the Assessments Commission, which includes the Office of the Research of Financial Crimes (itself an amalgam of different public institutions), has the right to freeze the assets of any person, private or corporate

institution on the basis of Law no. 5271 of the Penal Code, article 128, which give the state the right to "seize property, equity, and debts."

In other words, even without a judicial decision, a person or institution's assets can be seized based on a bureaucratic decision alone. It is obvious that in Turkey, where certain opposition groups - such as those who want to celebrate an alternative Republic Day - are being accused of terrorism, and where thousands of people are held in prisons accused of affiliation with the KCK, this law will make things much worse.

Furthermore, this law opens the way for people accused of "funding terror" to be tried for "membership in a terrorist organization," a crime which holds a prison sentence of 5-10 years. On the other hand, in accordance to the law 3/B, part of the Anti-Terrorism Law 3713, being implicated in any act of terror using defined funds will be considered financing terrorism, which stands in contradiction to the current law.

This allows the government, without any judicial decision, to accuse NGOs, political parties, municipalities, associations, companies, and individuals of supporting a "terrorist organization." Further, it can investigate an organization without any judicial order, freeze their finances and ability to gain profit, and prosecute their administrators as members of a terrorist organization.

The current party in power promoted civil government and non-interference by the military, yet through its legislation it seeks to intervene indirectly in political and daily life. This law aims to be able to be used to intervene in the social and economic sources of some part of society, as witnessed in the Ergenekon and KCK trials. This, of course, can lead to claims of "guilty by association." VAKAD is a prime example of this.

Why shut down Van's Women's Society?

On 31 January 2013, a public prosecutor opened a case against ten civil societies in the city of Van. Eventually, the court cases would make use of charges based on the Financing Terrorism Law (passed just a week later), the annulment of the organizations was originally based on Law no. 4721, Article no. 89 of the Civil Law, which allowed the government to claim that the organization's activities were "promoting propaganda for the PKK."

Even if these organizations were accused of using their funds to promote PKK propaganda,



Müjde Tozbey Erden

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such a charge is also covered by this law. However, the problem stems from the fact that the new law was passed after the opening of this case, and thus cannot be applied. Therefore, in this case's last hearing, the court ruled against the state's case preventing the organization from being closed.

VAKAD, a society that has supported thousands of women who have suffered violence and rape was founded in 2004 and serves Van and the surrounding districts. VAKAD's started by representing women subjected to violence, or who were in need of material or psychological support as government offices offered them neither. For example, if a woman who has been raped becomes pregnant and a prosecutor disallows her from having an abortion, VAKAD applies public pressure. It was obvious in forcing a victim of rape to have the child that the mindset of official institutions was not one that could protect women.

VAKAD is an example of how an organization can be shut down even without a prosecutor's mandate; in fact, VAKAD was not even on the list of organizations that Van's public prosecutor was asked to initiate proceeding against. Van's public prosecutor first sent the list to the state's local security headquarters requesting that it collect information about the groups. However, the state's security office, acting on their own initiative, removed one organization (MAZLUM-DER) from the list and added VAKAD in its place. This led to the legal proceedings against VAKAD.

Without any evidence or investigation into VAKAD's work, the case focussed on the civil organizations' relations with the PKK/KCK, replacing VAKAD's struggle against violence against women with claims that it was promoting propaganda on behalf of the PKK/KCK as well as financing those groups' activities. There was no hard evidence presented on the claimed relationship between VAKAD and the PKK/KCK, no information about what type of propaganda they supposedly spread, nor any information related to where and when it spread the propaganda. There was not even one photograph or witness statement in the case dossier.

This was a trial based only on allegations.

What was included as evidence in the case file was information from a notebook seized without a search warrant from a storage container in the middle of the night just months after Van's earthquake. The notebook contained information such as the names and telephone numbers of women and children who had received assistance from VAKAD as well as what they received as support, such as money,

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clothes, or sanitary pads. Personal information from the notebook was used as a tool to sow fear amongst the people involved, scaring them away from the organization. VAKAD only learned about their storage containers being searched in the process of the trial.

This trial is one exhibit of many in a long tradition in Turkey where officials show contempt towards civil organizations. Such is the saying: "In Communism comes to this country, we will be the ones to bring it." But in this case, the saying should be "If violence against women is to be prevented, we will do it. What's it to you?"

This trial is not aimed at protecting the public; in the fact, the opposite seems truer. It aims to cover up government institutions' inabilities while the Financing Terror Law tries to muzzle organizations that oppose the government. The Gezi Park protests show that those who think differently will not be silenced so easily, and will continue to struggle.

Turkey and Iran: A Sunnite Axis against the Shiite crescent?

In Turkish primary schools, one hackneyed trope is used again and again to teach Turkey-Iran relations: “Turkey’s oldest unchanging border is its border with Iran, established by the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin in 1639.” The date is taken to be a milestone marking the end of a century-long conflict following the Battle of Chaldiran, ushering in a period of relative peace between the two nations which has lasted to this day.

But in reality, several wars broke out along the borderline and the border itself was altered more than ten times after the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin. In 1723, for example, the Ottoman Empire, claiming to be the patron of Sunni Islam, tried to invade Shiite Iran. In 1724 the Istanbul Treaty divided the northern Caucasus between the Ottomans and the Russians, following which the Safavid Dynasty came to an end and Nader Shah Afshar took control. Compared to the Safavids, Nader Shah was not as strict and inflexible about his Shia faith; he even attempted to reconcile it with the Sunni faith as its fifth school of belief. Due to the intransigence of Istanbul, he was not successful in doing so.

Sectarian politics from Ankara or Tehran only resulted in more tension and conflict in bilateral relations. With the creation of the Republic of Turkey and the secular reforms of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran, sectarian tensions decreased. And just like Nader Shah had before, the Pahlavis contacted the Al-Azhar clergy –the main seat of fatwa in Sunni Islam– to get the Shia faith accepted as the fifth school. These efforts deescalated tensions even more. In addition, both nations were on the same side in the Cold War and did not have any conflicting regional interests during that time.

The regime change in Iran 1979 affected Iran-Turkey relations even though Turkey’s foreign policy circles, driven by pragmatism, did not allow their relations with Iran to deteriorate as much as other members of the Western alliance did. For example, Ankara did not participate in economic sanctions against Iran. During the Iran-Iraq War which broke out in the aftermath of the Islamic revolution, Turkey sold products to both sides thus refusing to take part in the regional conflict, and making economic gains.

The end of the Iran-Iraq War overlapped with the end of the Cold War, and the rise of religious radicalism in the region caused renewed tension in Iran-Turkey relations. As a country which

emphasized its secular identity, Turkey pursued a harder line against Iran in the 1990s. But the rise of the Refah (Welfare) Party, a political Islamic movement in Turkey that won both local then national elections, secular social groups changed their perspective about Iran-Turkey relations. Significantly, the main slogan on the secular social movement during this period was “Turkey shall not become another Iran.” The emerging political Islam in Turkey was not supported by Iran, but secular social groups saw the surge as a syndrome of “Iranification.” The fact that armed Kurdish groups were sometimes given shelter on the Iranian side of the border further fueled these tensions.

After the military intervention on February 28, 1997, political Islamists were forced from power and various minority and coalition governments were formed. However, only five years after the intervention, political Islam came to power with an even stronger political formation, namely the AKP – the Justice and Development Party. Iranian political circles hailed this development as the weakening of the secular camp in Turkey and a victory of Islamism. In the AKP’s first two terms, the mutual perceptions between Turkey and Iran took a more positive turn. With Brazil, Turkey tried to soften the harsh Western sanctions imposed on Iran due to its nuclear program.

But the positive trend in bilateral relations was disrupted in the AKP’s third term. Turkey and Iran found their positions on the Syrian question to be irreconcilable. Once again, sectarian tensions were brought to the fore: the Syrian government is close to the Ismaili branch of Shia Islam and is the closest regional ally of Iran, but the Syrian opposition is formed mainly of Sunnis and is supported militarily by a coalition between Qatar, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.

As an Islamic republic, Iran is clearly both Islamist and sectarian. What is new, however, is Turkey’s attempt to become the leader of the Sunnite camp. Traditional Turkish foreign policy –based on pro-Western and secular principles– refrained from meddling in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern countries, has ceded its place to a new perspective.

New approaches in Turkey’s foreign policy

The AKP’s initial approach to foreign policy was in line with traditional parameters. After 2005,



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however, the government shifted towards a loose pro-European line, followed by Euro-Asianism.¹ The AKP approached Hamas at a time when tensions were high between Mahmoud Abbas's government and Hamas in Palestine, and they took a hard line against Israel, one of Turkey's traditional partners.

In the aftermath of the Lausanne Treaty, Turkey's relations with neighboring countries were mainly based on the acceptance and continuation of the status quo.² Faruk Sönmezoğlu, an expert on Turkish foreign relations, emphasizes compliance with the Lausanne Treaty as the most consistent element of Turkish foreign politics.³ Another expert on foreign relations, Baskın Oran, states that this pro-status-quo approach also upheld regional equilibrium. According to him, Turkey's foreign policy as a "strategic medium-size country" maintained a close watch on any developments that could jeopardize regional equilibrium; according to him, Turkey did "not want any country to become a hegemonic force monopolizing power in the region."⁴

According to these foreign relations experts, Turkey also traditionally follows a "pro-Western" line in foreign policy.⁵ Baskın Oran considers the medium and long-term dominance of this pro-Western approach in foreign policy a natural result of the Westernization of the Turkish ruling elite.⁶

Any attempt to portray Turkish foreign policy with any such clear-cut line will run into several difficulties. Whenever the international conjuncture was favorable enough, Turkey often took initiative to push the status quo; some of the best cases in point are Turkey's annexation of the Hatay province, the Montreux Convention of the Straits, and the 1974 invasion of Cyprus, all of which can be considered atypical in this regard. In fact, it is no coincidence that the concept of "Neo-Ottomanism" first emerged in the aftermath of the Cyprus operation.⁷

Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey's current foreign minister, portrays a rather precise picture of the country's foreign policy climate in the 1990s:

"Currents such as Ottomanism, Islamism, Westernism and Turkism which had surfaced in the last century of the Ottoman Empire are once again on the agenda. The main political currents of recent Turkish political history were in the Neo-Ottomanist line upheld by the late president Turgut Özal, the Islamic discourse introduced to the political scene by the Refah Party, Westernism, which transformed into a radical program with the intervention of February 28, and Turkism, which gained momentum on reactions against PKK terrorism and which enjoyed success in the elections of April 18, 1999."⁸

A number of foreign policy issues came to the fore towards the end of the AKP's second term and especially in the beginning of their third term in power: the debate of the shift of axis, the "zero problems with neighbors" policy, and discussions over sectarian politics in the context of Syria. These trends paved the way for important changes in Iran-Turkey relations, too, and ultimately ushered in a new, tense period with the Syrian civil war.

Debates on Neo-Ottomanism

From 2009 on, many commentators believed that

Turkey was distancing itself from the Transatlantic alliance and adopting a foreign policy with Islamic tendencies focusing on Turkey's south and east. Headlines read: "How Did the West Lose Turkey;" "Turks Picot to the East;" "Is Turkey Iran's Friend?" To summarize Cengiz Çandar's analysis, these headlines are based on the assumption that certain fundamental principles of Republican Turkey have been replaced by Neo-Ottomanism.⁹ But is it really possible to brand the foreign policy of the AKP or Davutoğlu as "Neo-Ottomanism?" And if it is, why and how does Neo-Ottomanism constitute a shift of axis?

In his book, *Strategic Depth*—which was

As an Islamic republic, Iran is clearly both Islamist and sectarian. What is new, however, is Turkey's attempt to become the leader of the Sunnite camp. Traditional Turkish foreign policy—based on pro-Western and secular principles—refrained from meddling in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern countries, has ceded its place to a new perspective.

translated into a number of languages and drew much attention overseas—Davutoğlu associated Neo-Ottomanism with Özal's discourses and describes it as a domestic and foreign policy reaction of the Ottoman Empire in its final years in the age of nationalisms. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's comparative description of Ottomanism elucidates the Neo-Ottomanist character of the political line he defends today.

According to Davutoğlu, the following characteristics are shared between the Tanzimat Era and today's era of Neo-Ottomanism:

1) Both restructure the state according to international conjuncture; **2)** Both periods held the objective of constructing a new identity and politics in the face of rising nationalist movements; **3)** Both strive to reach an eclectic harmony between Western and traditional values; **4)** In the Tanzimat Era, the goal was to take part in the post-1825 Vienna Congress system; today, the aim is to take part in the post-Cold War EU process; **5)** Just like Ottomanism strived to reach a harmony with the United Kingdom, which rose to prominence after the Vienna Congress, Özal's Neo-Ottomanism aimed at reaching a harmony with the US, the hegemonic power of the post-Cold War era.¹⁰

Considering Davutoğlu's criteria, it would only be fitting to say that the AKP today is pursuing a Neo-Ottomanist political line. The same perspective can settle the debate on the shift of axis; Neo-Ottomanism has "strategic pursuits" in harmony with those of the US.

We should also consider what distinguishes the AKP's Neo-Ottomanism from that of Özal with an outline of the differences between his conceptualization of foreign policy with Islamic

references and its current manifestations.

Ömer Taşpınar, an expert close to both US and AKP circles, suggests that Davutoğlu's Neo-Ottomanist vision is very different from that of Necmettin Erbakan. According to Taşpınar, Erbakan wanted to establish alliances with various Muslim nations in lieu of strengthening Turkey's ties with the West. The AKP's foreign policy, however, complements bonds with East with relations with the West.¹¹ Although accurate, this observation does not sufficiently underline the difference between Özal's mostly discursive, "on paper" Neo-Ottomanism with that of the AKP.

The AKP's Eastern pivot coupled with its pro-Western stance adds a second level of regional rivalry to the Iran-Turkey relationship in Iran's traditional areas of influence: A rivalry between the West and Iran. The result is a clash between an anti-Western and anti-Israeli Shiite axis and a pro-Western axis composed of Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. This tension makes for a very different situation than the regional tug-of-war between Iran and Turkey in the 1970s. Today, this rivalry is both more intensified and more internationalized.

Another factor differentiating the AKP's Neo-Ottomanism from that of Özal's is –just as Davutoğlu indicated– "Özal's Neo-Ottomanism remained on the discursive level" whereas the AKP's Neo-Ottomanism has now become a full-fledged foreign policy agenda. Turkey's conciliatory rapprochement with the USSR after Johnson's 1964 letter, the increased importance of relations with Russia in the second half of the 1990s, and special ties developed with Iran in the 2000s can all be interpreted as evidence of Turkey's efforts to gain more relative autonomy inside the Western alliance, and to strike a better balance in economics and foreign policy. The AKP also developed a more balanced and special relationship with Iran to increase its influence inside the Western alliance. Now in its third term, the AKP is shifting away from a relationship without conflict with Iran to form closer ties with the West and in order to increase its influence in the Middle East.

This is not to say that Turkey is steering away from the Transatlantic axis which it has been a part of since 1945; rather, they are changing their emphasis and principles from within that axis, entering the third millennium not with a shift of axis, but as an influential sub-axis country. Under the AKP, Turkey's position as a sub-axis country was bolstered by economic growth in an attempt to become a hegemonic regional power with more relative autonomy, a sub-axis country being a "medium-size state" that is big enough to play a role in regional stability and regional power games, a categorization that is distinct from a global hegemonic power.¹²

The next step is to try to understand what foreign policy priorities and instruments are being used to establish this new sub-axis. As the first decade of the 2000s drew to a close, domestic and foreign analysts focusing on Turkey's foreign policy's axis shift concerned themselves with the "zero problems with neighbors" policy that Foreign Minister Davutoğlu announced with such fanfare.¹³

In the second half of 2011 when Turkey's possible military activity in Syria was discussed, it seemed to many like the "zero problem" policy was coming to an end. The Guardian's Helen Pidd's article "Ahmet Davutoğlu: Regional Power Broker or Dictator's Go-Between?"¹⁴ was one article underlining the contradictory character of the "zero problem" line; many pundits in Turkey, for example the economist and columnist Mehmet Altan, also discussed the issue. He summarized the debate: "Previously, Turkey pursued a "zero problem with neighbors" policy, but as soon as it collapsed, Turkey swiftly returned to its "zero problem with the center" policy..."¹⁵

Turkey has furthermore gone beyond its position as the foremost role model of moderate Islam to start pursuing sectarian policies for regional problems.

Debates on sectarian antagonism

In general, pre-AKP foreign policy in Turkey paid little attention to the Middle East. In the period following Johnson's letter, Turkey questioned its relations with the US and took one step closer to the Arab world to strike a better balance in foreign relations while sticking to their principle of keeping out of inter-Arab conflicts.¹⁶ Likewise, until the current period, no journalist or author highlighted Turkey's religious or sectarian antagonism.

In the beginning of the 2010s, Turkey increasingly started to be seen as not only a model of moderate Islamist politics moving towards Neo-Ottomanism, but also as the proponent of sectarian politics joining a Sunnite axis. This was a groundbreaking shift in the history of the Republic of Turkey. Turkey's sectarian politics came to the fore first in the contexts of Iraq's domestic developments, later in those of Syria before expanding to other parts of the Middle East.

The historic Sunnite-Shiite antagonism once again appeared as a key parameter, first in Iraq after the US invasion and then across the region when the Arab Spring created new areas of Sunni-Shia tension –Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria. As a result, the restructuring of the region became a more complicated equation between Middle Eastern powers; this especially meant trouble for Iran-Turkey relations.

Turkey supported the Iraqqiya Block in the elections in Iraq, participated in NATO's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System, and from May 2011 started to actively support Sunnite opposition groups in Syria; all of which was cause enough for the Shiite community to criticize Turkey directly for the first time.¹⁷ Maliki claimed that "Turkey wanted to wreck havoc in the region," and Lebanese Shiite leaders made similar declarations. A report by ORSAM (Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies) stated that "Although Turkey has increased its regional influence following popular movements in North Africa starting in 2011, it is rapidly losing influence among neighboring countries." This implicitly suggests that the underlying factor is Turkey's sectarian political lines in Iraq and Syria.¹⁸

After the events of the Arab Spring, regional experts indicate that the Turkey-Qatar alliance has begun intervening into various hotspots from Libya

to Syria and that this “Sunnite Alliance” played a decisive role in Hamas’s decision to abandon its headquarters in Syria.¹⁹ Journalist Nuh Yılmaz of Star newspaper correctly interpreted this transformation of the “resistance line” into a sectarian line. Yılmaz stated that “the Alawite Assad, Shiite Nasrallah and Sunnite Meshal, together with Turkey and Iran, no longer join forces as members of a line of resistance against Israel.”²⁰ Indeed, Hamas has already shifted its headquarters from Syria to Qatar and has begun to redefine its relations from Iran.²¹

Barry Rubin, an expert on the Middle East and terrorism, suggests that this amounts to a normalization for Hamas. He suggests that, although Hamas in a Sunni organization, it had formed an alliance with Iran since it was the only Islamist option available; Turkey’s new role as Sunni patron allowed Hamas to pull away from its relationship with Iran.²²

Undoubtedly, the toughest challenge for this anti-Iranian, anti-Syrian and thus partially anti-Russian front - also dubbed the Sunnite axis - is the war against the Assad regime. If this polarization does not push Ankara and Teheran into a harsher conflict soon, it is only because of the mutual dependence between Turkey and a crisis-stricken Iran. Suffering from a severe economic crisis, Iran sees Turkey as its only lifeline to get around the Western embargo, while gold from Iran is a crucial input for the Turkish government as it uses its economic performance to justify its increasing authoritarianism and Islamism.

All the same, as long as the regime in Iran and the AKP embrace sectarian identities as the basic parameter of their foreign policies, the tension between Tehran and Ankara may well escalate even beyond and after the Syrian conflict. As mentioned before, if one or especially if both sides lean towards sectarian politics, the result is more tension and conflict in Iran-Turkey relations.

An Iran less in conflict with the West will not necessarily have better relations with a new, sectarian Turkey. As long as Turkey endeavors to

become to leader of the new Sunnite axis, Iran - even if it has less conflict in its relations with the West, or at least succeeds in getting the Western economic embargo lifted - will continue to have regional rivalry with Turkey on a more open and intense level.

The election of Rouhani as the new President

All the same, as long as the regime in Iran and the AKP embrace sectarian identities as the basic parameter of their foreign policies, the tension between Tehran and Ankara may well escalate even beyond and after the Syrian conflict.

of Iran at the June 2013 elections could lead to certain changes in the parameters of the Turko-Iranian relations outlined above. Hassan Rouhani will likely try to strike a balance between the demand for freedom of the women and youth who voted for him, and the traditional mullah oligarchy, from whose ranks he hails.

What differentiated Rouhani from other candidates during the elections is the fact that, aside from his career as a mullah, Rouhani was also the top negotiator with the West on Iran’s nuclear programme. The Iranian establishment will most likely take steps to alleviate the now almost insupportable Western embargo, without giving up the nuclear program. The new President Rouhani is the perfect match for such a role. Although Rouhani is not the person to end Iran’s foreign policy tensions for good, he will probably try to take steps leading to a relaxation of the embargo and maybe even its de facto withdrawal.

This, in turn, could urge Iran and Turkey to continue their regional rivalry through softer instruments, and decrease Tehran’s economic dependence on Ankara.

Footnotes

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Yunus Emre Cultural Centers: The AKP's Neo-Ottomanism and Islamism

Recently, Turkey has begun instrumentalizing its language, arts and culture to promote Turkey abroad through the worldwide Yunus Emre Cultural Centers (YECC) in a way that employs a neo-Ottoman and Islamist discourse. In terms of mission and objectives, the YECCs are similar to the Goethe Institutes, British Cultural Centers, or Cervantes Institutes: They work to promote a country's culture, arts and language. YECCs are newly established institutions and there is not yet substantial scientific literature analyzing these Centers. However, YECCs have been discussed in daily newspapers and the Yunus Emre Foundation publishes official bulletins that provide speeches, statements and opinions of political figures as well as providing an overview of the activities of the Yunus Emre Institute. Accordingly, the findings of this paper rely mainly on newspaper articles and official bulletins of the Yunus Emre Institute. (<http://www.yunusemreenstitusu.org>).

The Origins of the Yunus Emre Foundation and Cultural Centers

There have been several state initiatives in Turkey aimed at promoting culture and cultural cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established Turkish Cultural Centers which function in accordance with the Regulations on Turkish Cultural Centers (1986) and under the Law on the Establishment and Functioning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey. According to the Ministry, these centers have been established "with a view of promoting Turkish culture, language and art and in order to contribute to bilateral relations between Turkey and other countries, as well as to help Turkish citizens in their adaptation to the country in which they live." Turkish Cultural Centers are located in several foreign cities such as Berlin, Hannover, Köln, Frankfurt, Almaty, Ashkhabad, Sarajevo, Tehran, Amman, Baghdad, Jerusalem and Damascus. These centers mainly function as access points for Turkish citizens abroad, while also being a platform for the "promotion" of Turkish identity abroad.

The Yunus Emre Foundation was established in 2007 to act in addition to these centers with the aim of introducing Turkish culture, society and language to the outside world. It was established as a state foundation under Law 5653, dated May 5, 2007, with its headquarters in Ankara. Article 1 of the Law identifies the purpose of the Act as the

following: "The purpose of this Act is to introduce Turkey, its cultural heritage, the Turkish language, culture and art, and enhance Turkey's friendship with other countries, increase cultural exchange, and in that regard to present domestic and foreign information and documents on Turkey to the benefit of the world, to serve those who wish to receive an education in the fields of Turkish language, culture and arts, to establish a Yunus Emre Research Institution in Turkey and a YECC abroad." (Law No. 5653, Article 1)

Table 1. Yunus Emre Cultural Centers Abroad

| Country | City | Region |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Albania | Tirana | Balkans |
| | Skodra | Middle East |
| Belgium | Brussels | Europe |
| Bosnia-Herzegovina | Sarajevo | Balkans |
| | Foynitsa | Balkans |
| Cyprus | Nikosia | Europe |
| Egypt | Cairo | Middle East |
| | Alexandria | Middle East |
| England | London | Europe |
| Georgia | Tiblisi | Caucasus |
| Hungary | Budapest | Europe |
| Iran | Tehran | Middle East |
| Japan | Tokyo | Asia |
| Jordan | Amman | Middle East |
| Kazakhstan | Astana | Central Asia |
| Kosovo | Pristina | Balkans |
| | Prizren | Balkans |
| | Ipek | Balkans |
| Lebanon | Beirut | Middle East |
| Macedonia | Skopje | Balkans |
| Poland | Warsaw | Europe |
| Romania | Bucharest | Balkans |
| | Constanza | Balkans |
| Syria | Damascus | Middle East |

Source: Official website of the Yunus Emre Institute (<http://www.yunusemreenstitusu.org/turkiye/>)

The current political elite is inclined to position Turkey as a hegemonic power among its regional neighbors (the Middle East, the Balkans, North Africa and the Caucasus as well as in the Central Asian Turkic republics) using a neo-Ottoman and Turco-Islamist discourse, while tending to instrumentalize migrants of Turkish



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origin and their descendants to promote Turkey in European countries. Evidently, of late the AKP government has been cooperating with the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD, Avrupa Türk Demokratlar Birliği, http://www.uetd.org/cms/front_content.php), a conservative union with Islamic inclinations operational in Köln, Berlin, Bremen, Wien, Amsterdam, Brussels and Paris, among other European cities. There have already been complaints voiced from the other segments of society in Turkey and transnational communities such as the secular, social democratic, Alevi and similar groups about the AKP's biased relationship with the UETD.

The rapid proliferation of YECCs in various European, Balkan, Middle Eastern and Central Asian cities (Table 1) represents a unique case study in understanding the various aspects of the priorities of contemporary Turkish cultural diplomacy. It is also important to note that the Yunus Emre Institute and its cultural centers have been given an important role in Turkish foreign policy. For instance, former Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertuğrul Günay calls these centers the "civil pillar of foreign policy," (Yunus Emre Bulletin, No: 7, 2010, p.10) and the chairman of the Yunus Emre Foundation Board of Trustees and Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, notes: "Foreign policy is not carried out solely with diplomacy but also with cultural, economic and trade networks. He further argues that the mission of the Yunus Emre Institute is related to Turkish foreign policy's strategic dimension and popularization of Turkish language, protection of Turkish cultural heritage, and the dissemination of Turkish culture to the outside world. This will enable us to place our historical-cultural richness in our current strategy." (Yunus Emre Bulletin, No: 7, 2010, p. 8).

Similarly, in his opening speech in Tirana, Albania, President Abdullah Gül, honorary president of the Institute, emphasized: "These centers are Turkey's invisible power. I mean that preserving the vitality of her cultural heritage is Turkey's biggest power. Not many countries have this power. We should appreciate its worth." (Turkish Presidency, 11.12.2009)

Moreover, the symbolism in the name of the Institute and the locations of the centers are reflective of the changing foreign policy priorities of the Turkish state, and thereby the importance of common cultural heritage in Turkish cultural diplomacy. In that sense, the emphasis on certain regions –primarily the Balkans and the Middle East– is complementary to the common cultural heritage approach that has been a fundamental element of Turkish cultural diplomacy in the last decade. This approach is further supplemented by an emphasis on the Turkish language, cultural and historical legacy as well as Turkology.

A Symbolic Name and an Emphasis on the Turkish Language

The Institute is significantly named after that Yunus Emre, a Turkish-language poet and Sufi mystic of the late 1300s and early 1400s who is considered to be one of the pioneering poets of Turkish culture.

His name was chosen for the Institute to convey the importance of the Turkish language. To that effect, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated:

"For thousands of years, we have been the carriers of a unique civilization, history and heritage in which we have molded and collated different cultures, different civilizations, along with our own culture. Turkish is not only the communicative language of the people living in these lands. Turkish is also a language of science and at the same time a language of arts and a language of literature. Turkish is the language of Yunus Emre, Pir Sultan Abdal,

There is a discrepancy between the ways in which the ruling political party, the AKP, and the pro-European circles perceive the sources of Turkey's becoming a soft power in the region. The AKP is likely to lean on the idea of Pax-Ottomana and Turkey's religious affinity with neighboring countries to become a hegemonic power in her region. Pro-European circles in Turkey, however, are likely to believe that Turkey's growing regional influence derives from its European perspective

Karacaoğlan, Fuzuli, Baki, Nazım Hikmet, Necip Fazıl." (Yunus Emre Bulletin, No: 1, 2010, p. 4)

As these quotes indicate, there is a growing emphasis on the Turkish language and Turkology.¹ The Foundation has also established the Yunus Emre Turkish Education Center (YETEC) in anticipation of teaching Turkish within the framework of the Yunus Emre Institution. The emphasis on the Turkish language is an important step in the introduction of and recognition of Turkish as a common language in Turkic countries, but it also provides for a proficiency-testing component, the Turkish Proficiency Examination System (Türkçe Yeterlilik Sınav Sistemi). This system anticipates the establishment of an examination which will contribute to the recognition of the Turkish language through an international standard while promoting the use of the language.² On this issue, the director of the Yunus Emre Institute, Ali Fuat Bilkan, stated: "In addition to the success of Turkey's foreign policy, the investments of Turkish businessmen have increased attention to the Turkish language. Turkey has gained visibility. As Turkey gained economic and political visibility, the popularity of our language has increased. Particularly in the Balkans and Middle East there is an interest in Turkey."³

As Bilkan notes, owing to the increasing visibility of Turkish economy, the Turkish language has become an important asset in economic ventures and political communications. Musa Kulaklıkaya, president of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı, TİKA) further indicates that Turkish businessmen and their economic investments

- and therefore the economic ties that they forge-require Turkish language education.⁴ TİKA is a state institution that was established under Law 4668, published in Official Gazette No. 24400 on May 12, 2001, and which operates under Turkey's Prime Ministry.⁵ TİKA is considered a foreign policy instrument whereby cooperative efforts are carried out in Central Asia, Caucasus, the Middle East, the Balkans and in Africa, in other words, in regions where there is a shared affiliation for Turkish language and culture. Kulaklıkaya explains the aims

The symbolism in the name of the Institute and the locations of the centers are reflective of the changing foreign policy priorities of the Turkish state, and thereby the importance of common cultural heritage in Turkish cultural diplomacy. In that sense, the emphasis on certain regions –primarily the Balkans and the Middle East– is complementary to the common cultural heritage approach that has been a fundamental element of Turkish cultural diplomacy in the last decade.

of TİKA as follows: “Initially we are providing aid to countries with mutual historical, political and cultural backgrounds. These common backgrounds let us answer the needs of these countries much more expeditiously, and this created a nice synergy. As a result of our aid and efforts, we possess a tangible presence in the regions where we operate.” (UNDP, 2009)

While Bilkan and Kulaklıkaya focus on economic and developmental motivations for the dissemination of Turkish language, there is also an aspect of YECCs that tend to act as a supplement to the existing cultural centers of European countries, which goes beyond these motivations. To that effect, Ertuğrul Günay, Minister of Culture and Tourism, noted that “our people have been in Germany for the past 50 years. There is no Turkish Cultural Institute there, but there is Goethe Institute in Turkey, there is a Cervantes Institute in Turkey, there are French and English cultural centers. Now, as of 2008, there is a Yunus Emre [Institute] in all Balkan and Middle-Eastern countries. We are opening YECCs in Germany, England, Russia and France. We will teach Turkish and its dialects.”⁶ As Günay notes, the dissemination of Turkish language in foreign countries constitutes an important element of the rising trend to put Turkey in the international political arena as a strong actor vis-a-vis the revitalization of local cultural elements.

Neo-Ottomanism and Islam: A Soft Power in the Cradle of Civilizations?

While the promotion of Turkish language constitutes an important element of the Institute's goals, a close analysis of the Yunus Emre Bulletins reveals that

there are repeated references to the cultural heritage of Turkey, with particular emphasis on the “cradle of civilizations” approach. To that effect, during his speech on the occasion of the opening of the Yunus Emre Foundation in Ankara, Ahmet Davutoğlu stated:

“This foundation has two important standing goals. First, to enable the meeting of our national culture and universal culture, and to increase its influence in universal culture... In history, very few nations that have directly encountered different cultures and civilizations have become the subject of those civilizations, sometimes generated cultural blends from these civilizations, sometimes participated in intense and active communication as our nation has.” (Yunus Emre Bulletin 1, No: 1, 2010, p. 6)

Corresponding to the cultural heritage approach, the locations of the Institutes reflect the common cultural heritage approach with a neo-Ottoman undertone. The locations of the first wave of Cultural Centers were in fact purposely chosen to strengthen the common heritage discourse, which would serve as a strong foundation for contemporary Turkish cultural diplomacy. For instance, during his speech at the inauguration of the YECC in Sarajevo, Davutoğlu stated: “This is the first cultural center we have opened. It is not a coincidence that the first Center is in Sarajevo. This is an informed decision that we made after much thought because, if we thought about where Turkish culture was reflected best, this place would be the city of Sarajevo. As Istanbul is the fundamental city of Turkish culture, Sarajevo is the city of our common culture. Similarly, in as much as Sarajevo is a city of the Bosnians, so too is Istanbul. Başçarşı and Kapalı Çarşı, Gazi Hüseyin Bey Mosque and Sultunahmet (Blue Mosque) have the same spirit. Istanbul and Sarajevo are two soul brothers.” (Yunus Emre Bulletin No: 2, 2010, p. 3, italics author's own.)

Similarly, in his opening speech in Skopje, Macedonia, Davutoğlu noted that the common culture has been engraved into the streets of Skopje (Yunus Emre Bulletin, No: 5, 2010, p. 6). Most importantly, it has become clear from the locations of these centers that the Balkan region is important in the revival of cultural relations and cultural ties. Furthermore, these centers also reflect the motivations of the state to influence the culture of these regions. To that effect, Davutoğlu noted in Skopje: “We would like to make a novel contribution to cultural exchange in the Balkans. Cultural relations between Turkey and Macedonia will lead the way to a new Enlightenment in the Balkans.” (Yunus Emre Bulletin, No: 5, 2010, p. 7)

Similar to Davutoğlu's ambitious and pretentious statement, President Abdullah Gül stated at the opening of the cultural center in Astana: “We should not keep our language, culture and traditions to ourselves. Rather, we should keep them alive and spread them. After learning our culture and language well, we should not hesitate to learn other cultures. While we have great history in the Balkans and in this region and our works remain standing, training will be given at the YECC here to those who wish to learn Turkish. There is a great demand for the

centers. There are cultural centers in great countries. We will introduce the Turkish culture with the YECCs.”⁷

The Kemalist elite often defined ‘modernization’ as a transformation process along the lines of Western civilization, which inevitably meant the strengthening of Turkey’s ties with the West and a weakening of those with Eastern countries. Particularly in the Kemalist era, the introduction of Latin alphabet and the establishment of the secular state restricting the role of Islam in the public sphere changed the dynamics of the Turkey’s relations with the Middle-Eastern countries, and served to endorse the assumed superiority of Western civilizations.⁸ However, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has emphasized the predicament of Turkey’s role between Western and Eastern spheres, explaining that being a modern country does not necessarily require Turkey to distance itself from the East and its Eastern cultural elements. To that effect, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan noted that Turkey has responsibilities towards the Middle Eastern region stemming from historical ties: “Turkey is facing the West, but Turkey never turns her back on the East. We cannot be indifferent to countries with whom we have lived for thousands of years. We cannot abandon our brothers to their fate.”⁹

The revival of these discourses, emphasizing the common history and heritage of the Middle East, is complemented by a more assertive foreign policy and by the institution of cultural initiatives in the Middle Eastern countries. Ahmet Davutoğlu spoke to that effect in his speech at the opening of the YECC in Cairo: “It is not a coincidence that Cairo is selected for the third center. The Cairo YECC is also the first institute we have opened in the Middle Eastern region and the Arab world because we consider Cairo the heart of the Arab world and believe that a culture active in Cairo will be active in the Arab world.” (Yunus Emre Bulletin, No: 4, 2010, p.5)

All these political discourses indicate that Turkey is tempted to increase its authority as a pivotal power in the region, which is being achieved partially through increasing and strengthening cultural diplomacy instruments as a part of Turkish foreign diplomacy. Turkey’s changing role in the region – specifically in the Arab world– is mainly shaped by the various kinds of drives it embraces: A) Its political drive, made obvious by Erdoğan’s discourse on the Palestinian issue and the AKP’s gradual distancing from Israel; B) Its cultural-religious drive,

visible in the AKP’s cultural religious affinity with the Arab world rather than the Kemalist laicists; C) Its economic drive, springing from the willingness of the AKP’s electorate and the newly-growing Anatolian bourgeoisie to open up to emerging markets in the Middle East, Africa, the Caucasus, and Central Asia at a time of Euroscepticism, which has been growing since 2005; and D) Its transformative drive, or EU anchor, making it appear as a stable, democratic, liberal, peaceful and efficient country. (Kirişçi, 2011)

Conclusion

In this paper, the promotional activities of the state of Turkey in European countries and in its regional neighbors in reference to the discourses of the ruling political party elite and of members of various institutions, primarily the YECCs, has been discussed. It was revealed that the AKP government has recently generated a cultural/religious/ civilizational discourse in parallel with the rhetoric of Alliance of Civilizations to promote Turkey in the EU and other parts of the world using a neo-Ottoman and Islamist discourse. In promotional activities in the EU countries, Turkey has been emphasizing its differences, while emphasizing its cultural and religious affinities with neighbors in the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, the Caucasus and in Central Asia. In doing so, it seems that the ruling party is more concerned with revitalizing its hegemony in the region rather than advocating Turkey’s entry into the EU.

Turkey is willing to become a soft power and a smart power and recently has been trying to impose its hegemony in the region. However, it seems that there is a discrepancy between the ways in which the ruling political party, the AKP, and the pro-European circles perceive the sources of Turkey’s becoming a soft power in the region. That is to say, the AKP is likely to lean on the idea of Pax-Ottomana and Turkey’s religious affinity with neighboring countries to become a hegemonic power in her region. Pro-European circles in Turkey, however, are likely to believe that Turkey’s growing regional influence derives from its European perspective, which, since 1999, has been perceived positively by neighboring countries, in a way that has improved Turkey’s reputation in terms of democracy, human rights, economy and universal values. It seems that this will be the dilemma of the next decade, which the Turkish political elite will have to resolve.

Footnotes

1. It is also important to note that there are various efforts that emphasize the importance of the Turkish language in forging and/or strengthening cultural ties. One such effort is the Agreement Concerning the Joint Administration of Turkish Culture and Arts (TÜRKSÖY) signed on 12 July 1993 in Almaty by Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The Agreement established “TÜRKSÖY,” which foresees cooperation among Turkic-language-speaking countries. As such, TÜRKSÖY’s aims and activities revolve around identifying and promoting the common values of those countries, which is in line with the state’s growing emphasis on Turkish language and literature, <http://www.turksoy.org>.
2. Anadolu Ajansı, 21.12.2010, <http://www.aa.com.tr>, entry date 10 May 2011.
3. Daily Zaman, 19.01.2011, <http://www.zaman.com.tr>, entry date 13 May 2011.
4. Daily Zaman, 07.02.2011, <http://www.zaman.com.tr>, entry date 12 June 2011.
5. For further information on TİKA, visit: <http://www.tika.gov.tr>
6. Anadolu Ajansı, 20.12.2010, <http://www.aa.com.tr>, entry date 15 June 2011.
7. Anadolu Ajansı, 26.05.2010, <http://www.aa.com.tr>, entry date 13 June 2011.
8. Bozdağlıoğlu, Yücel (2008): Modernity, Identity and Turkey’s Foreign Policy, in *Insight Turkey*, Vol 10, No. 1: 55-75.
9. Daily Sabah, 08.04.2010, <http://www.sabah.com.tr>, entry date 13 June 2011.

HUMAN LANDSCAPE

Burn witch, burn

I have lived in Van since the 1990s. Before that, because of our political identity, my family was forced to travel from province to province. When I was in elementary school in Diyarbakır where I was taught that I should speak a different language than the one I spoke at home. In my childlike naiveté, I called the language we spoke at school the “school language.” It was a torment to be Kurdish when we lived in other towns in Turkey, and at first I was not even allowed to take ownership of my own name. I was not issued an identity card for six months, not until my family opened a successful lawsuit. It probably helped that my name didn’t contain the letters X, Q or W. At the time, I was living in western Turkey where high school and university were years of struggles for my identity. After finishing my undergraduate studies, I returned to Van to find that although I didn’t face discrimination because I am Kurdish, I was discriminated against for being a woman. This led me to question how society perceived my identity: I am Kurdish, and I am a woman. That made me the victim twice over. Other Kurdish women told me that I had many advantages compared to them; my parents valued me “despite being a daughter” and not a son, I was literate, and I didn’t have serious obstacles to participating in social life.

I was writing articles for a local newspaper, *Prestij*, and I was told that the more I wrote about women, the more the newspaper attracted women readers. I remember being excited to hear Halime Güler from “Uçan Süpürge” voice opinions like mine on a local TV show. In those days, the Women’s Human Rights New Resolutions Association gave Women’s Human Rights Education Programs, and after participating in their program I felt that I was a feminist. I questioned every single practice, every single life that touched mine. After attending this program I was able to resolve questions that had been buzzing around my head for so long. I started to reach out to other women who thought like me. One person who is very important to me is my sister, Zelal, who lives in Sweden as a refugee. We used to talk a lot about the things that happened both at home and out in the world. Each time we talked, we asked each other, “If we had been boys, would we have had to have gone through this?” And each time, the answer was no; what we had experienced we had experienced because we were women. My mother, the daughters of our neighbors, we were all disadvantaged because we were women. We rejected the traditional female roles that had been imposed upon us and therefore we were subjected to violence.

As seven women, we established the Van Women’s

Association (VAKAD). A neighborhood Women’s Solidarity Center and a women’s shelter followed. We have organized campaigns, educational sessions, seminars, forums, film festivals and vocational training for women. We have always held that we are a politically independent feminist and antimilitarist association. In our terms of reference, we wrote that a woman seeking membership must “recognize herself as antimilitarist, antifascist, and feminist, and must have established a language and a life accordingly.” We did so to oppose all holders of power. The more we became conscience

The more we became conscience of countering every hierarchical structure and ideology, the more power holders have criticized us, some calling up “witches who will burn in a vessel.” Lately, we have been in court, fighting a lawsuit against us about our activities following the Van earthquake. Our adversaries assert that our activities aimed to establish sympathy with and trust in the PKK and the KCK.

of countering every hierarchical structure and ideology (including religion, an invention of the nation-state, militarism, family, and nationalism), the more power holders have criticized us, some calling up “witches who will burn in a vessel.” Lately, we have been in court, fighting a lawsuit against us about our activities following the Van earthquake. Our adversaries assert that our activities aimed to establish sympathy with and trust in the PKK and the KCK. VAKAD approaches women who are alone, women whose husbands died in the earthquake or who are imprisoned, women who live in shelters or those who have run away from their family’s death threats; we endeavor to provide basic needs to those women and their children, including providing funds to them. We have organized petition campaigns and in two neighborhoods, we have established tents to use as spaces to help women and children overcome trauma. VAKAD traveled from village to village staying five days in each place to give educational seminars, to learn the villager’s problems and bring them to the agenda, and to report on what we saw. If that is a crime, then so is being human, and being a feminist on top of that is the worst crime of them all. Power looks down on us because we, as women, assert our rights and take action to protect them.



Zozan Özgökçe

She is an antimilitarist feminist activist. Since 2003, she has been volunteering for various women’s organizations. She is one of the founding members of VAKAD. She also took part in Van Democracy Platform, Van Initiative for the Peace Assembly of Turkey and Van City Council. From 2004 to 2009 she was a member of the Van Municipal Assembly. She is also a columnist in various magazines and news websites.

Social media and freedom of expression

The increased speed of Social media usage has radically changed modern society's sharing of information. If we speak about the number of amazing increased usage of sites such as Instagram (100 million), Twitter (500 million) and Facebook (with more than 1 billion), we need to point out that video sharing sites receive 4 billion hits a day; it is impossible to deny that there is new type of communication paradigm.

On the one hand, Social media offers information for everyone's use; yet, on the other hand, written, visual, and audio contents' that spread to societies without a controlled mechanism can cause unpredictable consequences.

The Internet, which makes borders between states less important, in a way actually removes them, causing the need to rethink globalization, law, and debates concerning democracy. Before the "Arab Spring," whose influence is still felt within our borders, societies had already begun organizing in social media; and had started to quickly change the role of politics.

There is no doubt that intellectual conversations that are shaping our century should be reassessed as a result of digital media technology. It was the need to address this that led the Department of Law at Istanbul Bilgi University and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association's Turkey Office to organize a conference on social media, specifically focusing on freedom of expression within this new realm,

examining it from different angles.

During the first panel, it was discussed how social media is a dynamic sphere that forces a new legal framework of freedom of expression, the legal regulations concerning national and international arenas. Yaman Akdeniz, a faculty member at Bilgi University Law Faculty, highlighted the legal source of limitations in the internet are found under the framework of the Turkish law that was amended in 2007, no. 5651, entitled the Regulation of Publishing in the Internet Space, and within the Law that deals with combating crimes committed within the sphere of publishing. The forbidding of sites is based in social and political justifications, relating to such cases as defaming Atatürk, abuse, obscenity, or in the name of protecting children; the most well known cases in Turkey were when Youtube was blocked for having videos that defamed Atatürk, sites encouraging drug use among children, and ones that are alleged to have pornographic material. Akdeniz explained that as of June 2013, 24,914 sites are blocked; a number that explains best the state of the internet and freedom of expression in Turkey. According to Akdeniz, this topic is not left solely to the internet sites, but also to users. The most well known case is the prison sentence handed down to the musician Fazıl Say for what he wrote on Twitter.

Kerem Altıparmak a faculty member at Ankara University's Political Science department explained that limitations aimed at the freedoms



of expression were related to issues concerning sacred values (religions, Atatürk, state imagery, and the flag), obscenity, violence and terrorism; and that sometimes words were taken out of context by focusing merely on the violent aspect of the meaning, without focusing on the difference between words and acts. Altıparmak also addressed the “low-value expression” concept, which was emphasized by the European Human Rights Court. This concept pays attention to the relation between a word’s intention and the “damage” it causes. In his discussion, he focused on spheres related to violence, terror, sanctity, obscenity, with racism and use of discriminatory language. He stressed that violent and hate speech are often confused, and because of this many journalists, lawyers, and students are in prison. Another panel member, Fikret İlkiz, who is a lawyer, talked more about the personal information is being leaked and its consequences of causing fear among the society. İlkiz stressed that social media lifted the national borders on freedom of expression. Nevertheless, the speaker also drew attention to social class issues, focusing on the capital structure of social media.

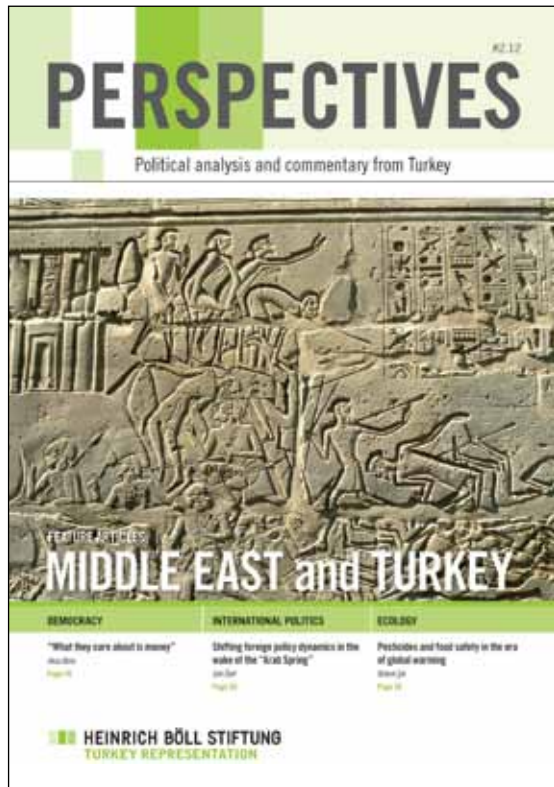
On this panel, while the role of political communication in social media was discussed, more attention was given to the fact that political parties in power should use social media more effectively. Banu Akdenizli, a member of the Public Relations Department at Yeditepe University provided examples of research of which methods are used by political parties in social media and internet. The German Green party member, Lars Kreisler claimed that with the new habits elections are not played out only in the streets, but rather in the cyberspace. He also mentioned different weak points of social media; according to Kreisler, social media is fast but also superficial. Lastly, AKP MP Öznur Çalık, presented the relation between political parties and social media usage. The AKP, especially during the

election campaign, highlighted that the need to find a solution using the internet and social media as a place to listen to the citizen’s concerns.


In another panel, “Digital Activism and Social Media,” the examples of “Ötekilerin Postası”(Alternative Mail) and “change.org were shared. Recently, “hacktivism” has become more political and turned into a method of struggle. In this panel, Aslı Tuğ, from the Faculty of Communications at Bilgi University, talked about the history of digital activism and examples of hacktivism in Turkey. Serdar Paktin, representing “change.org” stressed how the signing of petitions online has changed the daily political agenda. One of the most influential presentations in this panel, was Emrah Uçar’s, one of the founders of “Ötekilerin Postası,” on Facebook, who talked about the group’s past and its major impact on last year’s hunger strike. On the last panel, “Publications politics in Social Media” focused on how social media changed the publishing culture and internet journalism. Yiğit Kalafatoğlu, from the Utopic Farm Media Agency, he presented about social media and freedom of expression, from the perspective of the individual, consumers, and publishers. Further, he stressed about of the importance of freedom of expression in a period when communications has become easier, while organizing is becoming more difficult.

Volkan Çağsal, of Public Social Media Agency, explained that the independent internet newspaper, T24, worked only through social media, and no longer has financial problems with its internet publishing. While Nurcan Akad, the found of Zete, Turkey’s first tablet newspaper, assessed the relations of technology and press, and explained that that tablet press has multitude of possibilities that the traditional press could not offer.

Semahat Sevim



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