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URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS

And the cement is tempered

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Editorial

The year 2013 was problematic for the AKP government. It started with the surprising but promising opening of talks between the National Intelligence Service and the PKK leader Öcalan. These officially sponsored talks created some cautious hope for the beginning of a sustainable peace process. Furthermore, a letter from Öcalan was read out to the public at Newroz in Diyarbakir and the groups of "Wise Persons Councils" that were formed with the intention of discussing the issues with the general public can be understood as another element of hope.

However, not much seems to be left over from the optimism and support for the government in this issue. After a stalemate in the talks for some months and with the well known quarrels between the government and pro-Kurdish party about who had fulfilled its promises or who hadn't, the energy and dynamism of the initial phase seemed to be exhausted quickly. The proclaimed democratic reform package of fall 2013 included also too little change to reignite any hope. At the end of 2013 we can conclude that the official beginning of talks is at least something. Finally Prime Minister Erdoğan even dared to use the word "Kurdistan" at his meeting with Barzani in Diyarbakir in November.

2013 is also defined by the protests that arose at Gezi Park and soon spread all over Turkey. While these protests inspired the population and gave hope and the idea of power to the people, the image of the government was significantly damaged. Erdoğan appeared as a despot who lost connection to the public. In addition to the use of brutal police force and prosecution, the government attempted to use the new method of challenging the opposition by trying to gather masses at alternative squares and in doing so claimed to represent the majority. This attempt clearly demonstrates the dismissal of a policy of pluralism, compromise and negotiation. The nakedness of the repressive character of the regime, assisted by the media, did not result in the desired effect of the government. It even strengthened the ties among those who were threatened and increased the solidarity among the protesters from all segments of society.

The government not only lost its reformist image inside and outside of Turkey, but became increasingly identified with Putin and a dictatorship. The AKP even lost its image as being better than the existing alternatives. In other words, the fact that there is a lack of a real opposition representing democratic reforms became an untenable argument.

The fact that the AKP government and Erdoğan repeatedly proclaimed advancing the equal rights of women by initiating conservative policies increased unrest not only among feminists but also among women who define themselves as devout Muslims. If we consider that nearly one third of the female population is between the ages of 25-44, we can estimate that the paternalistic rhetoric directed at young women by the AKP government might be challenged by the young female population in Turkey. Due to the absence of fierce protests from the Kemalist circles, even the right to wear the headscarf in public institutions could no more be used as a success story by the AKP.

Finally, the conflict between the AKP and the Gülen movement might have a spillover effect to other religious circles in Turkey. It certainly further damaged the image of the government as it publicly acknowledged the privileges it had given to the Gülen movement. When the Gülen movement threatened the AKP government with publishing compromising material about government members, the government itself did not hesitate to counter by threatening the Gülen movement with publishing compromising information about the movement. The public is watching this ping pong between the "moral authorities" of the country with a mixture of fascination and disgust.

When reading these words, the December 17 operation and the following litigation process for corruption allegations are still going on. Alleged amount of money transferred to Turkey, under the mediation and protection of top political authorities and several other civilians add up to 87 billion dollars. The amount of bribery involved in this transfer scheme is claimed to be around 24 billion dollars, in ten months 6,2 billion Euro is laundered in other countries. Compare this amount to Turkey's trade deficit, 5,358 billion Euros as of October 2013! The government sees these allegations as a conspiracy against it, plotted by an interconnected foreign and domestic interest group. Could this group be composed of the very extortionists themselves?

At the end of 2013, with the loss of two main sources of the strength of the government, credibility and moral authority, there seems to be only a few cards left to be played: pure force and economic power. It is this climate that will shape the upcoming three elections in Turkey: the local elections in March, the presidential elections in summer 2014 and the parliamentary elections in 2015.

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URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS
Gezi, elections and a political alternative

Stefo Benlisoy

A period of consecutive and possibly concurrent elections is upon us. The local elections on March 30th, 2014 will be followed by presidential elections in summer and then general elections. Undoubtedly, this process will lead to new political alignments in the country. Despite the ubiquitous claim that they have totally different dynamics than general elections, local elections have in the past virtually turned into general elections and paved the way to new political and social equations.

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Naturally, the first examples that spring to mind include the 1989 local elections, which corresponded to the first social mobilization and left turn in the aftermath of the military coup of September 12th, 1980; and the 1994 local elections, which signaled the rise of political Islam in Turkey. The former election was a reflection of the social opposition against the new order established by the coup d'état and later reinforced by ANAP governments. Organized at a time when this dissident wave had largely dissipated, the latter election laid the groundwork for the rise of a new political force on the margins of mainstream politics. Whether pro-government or "dissident", everyone wonders whether the upcoming elections will play a similar role. This is no surprise. As for those who accuse him of being a dictator, the Prime Minister himself has declared that the elections of March 30th will be tantamount to a referendum. Opposition groups, big or small, view these elections as the first step for rolling back AKP's hegemony, and are devising their entire strategies accordingly. For instance the CHP leadership has declared that their main strategy for candidate selection (if you can call that a strategy) is choosing those individuals "who will win as little as one more vote."

AKP's success

The primary reason why the local elections have led to high expectations is that for the first time in its eleven-year rule, the government's political apparatus and alliances seem to have lost their inner coherence. Naturally ,there is a background to this process. The main point which distinguishes the AKP government from the others that came to power in the post-coup era was its success in bringing almost all the mechanisms of "oversight" under its control. The AKP has largely succeeded in subsuming those institutions established by the military to perpetuate its control over the political system after the coup (e.g. the president's powers reminiscent of a semi-presidential system, the 10% electoral threshold, the anti-democratic law on political parties, the Higher Education Council and the position of higher judicial bodies). In this regard, AKP has provided a "solution" to the crisis of leadership and representation of the establishment (and the center right), which had appeared from early 1990s onwards. Furthermore, it later managed to eradicate the political clout of the army and other traditional forces of "oversight" which had the ability to challenge its authority. Additionally, while resolving the abovementioned crisis to its benefit, it also managed to portray its conservative and neoliberal authoritarianism as a "democratic revolution" by coupling a number of distorted popular-democratic demands with the majoritarian "democratic" claim of being the authentic representative of the nation – construed by nationalist conservatism as a coherent whole without classes or privileges. As such, the AKP government on the one hand managed to politically disenfranchise the lower classes through "market reforms", and on the other, was able claim to have achieved the age-old conservative mission of integrating the state and the nation.

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Thus, it was able to claim to manage a process of "democratization" and demilitarization for a long period despite significant opposition, and thereby create a substantial intellectual appeal.

These qualities allowed AKP to enjoy an expanding capacity to govern, especially after the presidential elections of 2007. Following the referendum of September 12th, 2010 and the general elections of June 12th, 2011, the concentration of power in the executive reached its peak. At that point, the Prime Minister announced the beginning of a new term of office (one of "mastery", he called it) and initiated a debate on the transition to the presidential system. Even though opinion leaders in the mainstream media suggested that the country had moved toward further democratization, the political regime was increasingly less convincing. It seemed to be evolving towards a system of chiefdom, which founded its legitimacy on the claim to be the authentic representative of the Turkish-Sunni Muslim identity and on periodical plebiscites.

Furthermore, this concentration of power in the hands of the government took place in a period in which the Mediterranean basin witnessed popular uprisings against pro-market and authoritarian Arab regimes as well as a new wave of resistance and radicalization in the European periphery, which challenged the current institutional framework by standing against the counter-reforms of capital. Although right at the heart of this global wave of rebellion, Turkey seemed to be immune to this "new world situation and period", in an apparent confirmation of the monolithic character of the national intellectual climate. AKP's conservative, authoritarian and neoliberal hegemony appeared almost impenetrable and invulnerable amidst this huge wave of

struggle and upheaval. Although new forces of resistance appeared in the cracks of the unbridled capitalist accumulation regime symbolized by AKP, these seemed to be mere details, or in other words, rearguard attacks in the general scheme of things.

The first major blow to AKP

Against this background, the Gezi resistance constituted a radical rupture. The resistance was the biggest ever blow to the hegemonic discourse of Erdoğan and his AKP. The accumulating fury against the Prime Minister and his party was suddenly vented with a mass uprising centered around Gezi Park. Gezi flied in the face of the government's power bloc and pulled the rug

Abbasağa forumo one of many emerged after the Gezi protests, as an example of politicization from below.

> The accumulating fury against the Prime Minister and his party was suddenly vented with a mass uprising centered around Gezi Park. Gezi flied in the face of the government's power bloc and pulled the rug from under its feet. As such, even though the government has ruthlessly suppressed the mobilization in the street, it is unable to overcome the political, social and psychological trauma created by it.

from under its feet. As such, even though the government ruthlessly suppressed the mobilization in the street, it is unable to overcome the political, social and psychological trauma created by it. Accordingly, in the discourse of Erdoğan and the government, Gezi has now become the cul-

mination of all evil in Turkey. Although it is hard to forecast how the Gezi resistance will affect Turkish politics in the long run, two things seem certain: It seems futile to expect that this wave will instantly upend the general panorama of the country, or to think that such a mass movement will disappear without a trace, to be followed by the return to a suffocating normalcy. The long term social and political repercussions of Gezi are to be found beyond such extreme assessments. As a first step to this end, one must start by acknowledging the damage inflicted by Gezi on the government.

After the AKP government managed to pull itself back together following the uprising, it put in place a tried and true strategy that is well-known to us. The government started to peddle conspiracy theories meant to denigrate the resistance as an attempted coup against "democracy" – read, the government. As a first step, the government tried to consolidate its core constituency with arguments reminiscent of Cold War anti-communism and plenty of anti-Semitic references. In a fervent return to its essence, the government swiftly put into circulation the

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The government has reached the limits of its hegemony over the society and its capacity to generate consent. Although seemingly infatuated with his own image and voice, Erdoğan can no longer claim to be simultaneously nationalist and pacifist, democratic and conservative, eco-friendly and defender of the construction industry, pro-social welfare and pro-capitalist, proponent of both the EU and the Shanghai Five, liberal and paternalist, critical of the military coup and defender of the Higher Education Council -in short both the victim and the hegemon.

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age-old central argument of the Turkish right, that all dissidence is alien to the imagined national entity. However, we must not be fooled by the fact that this campaign of skullduggery is so unconvincing that it triggers a wry smile in outsiders to this intellectual universe. For those who control the means to produce and disseminate dominant ideas, what is important is not how rational and convincing an idea is, but rather how efficiently and intensely it can be disseminated. Erdoğan is fully aware that his anti-military-oversight populism had been very successful as a discourse in mobilizing wide masses in the past. As such, he does not hesitate to position himself and AKP as the authentic representative of the nation and portraying the opposition movement as an attempted coup against democracy, as a conspiracy by a denationalized elite and minori-

ties supported by foreign powers. The huge propaganda machine operated by the government does not miss a single opportunity to drive this message home.

Taken aback by massive protests in the first days of Gezi, various elements of the ruling party later rallied behind Erdoğan – not because of the convincingness of the conspiracy theories produced by the leader and his close entourage, but rather as a reaction to the threat of losing the privileges amassed during AKP rule. Erdoğan heavily invested in this fear of his lieutenants and constituency and seems to have managed to reinforce his undisputed leadership position. However, it can be suggested that his power has started to come apart at the seams, and that another shock could well threaten his leadership. The very public spat between Erdoğan and Bülent Arınç seem to be appeased for the moment, but we will probably witness more resignations by previous government members or once prominent names of the party -in the footsteps of İdris Bal. Undoubtedly these are the concerns which have prompted Erdoğan to make a call to postpone all stand-offs inside the ruling party until after the elections on March 30th.

True to the spirit of a regime of "chiefdom", Erdoğan identifies himself with "the will of the nation", and accordingly declares every criticism to his person as an anti-national reaction, as treason. Trying to imagine the lengths he might go to for this purpose is an eerie exercise. In his last term of office, Erdoğan's discourse ostracizes, others and criminalizes almost all sectors of the society – except those who wholly embrace the ruling party, and eventually brands them as agents of "foreign powers." It is not easy to foresee what tensions such a discourse could trigger, especially as the government's power erodes inevitably. On the other hand, AKP's insistence on this position until the elections may well help it consolidate its constituency and thus yield beneficial results. Nevertheless, it must be granted that AKP's task is no piece of cake. AKP is seeing its charisma wane particularly in the international arena, where it is losing prestige due to its Syrian policy and other reasons. This reinforces its tendency to self-enclosure and isolation. Add to these a possible unraveling of its economic "success" story, and even AKP's core constituency might chose to abandon the party.

In this respect, AKP will be facing strong headwinds in the period ahead. The government has reached the limits of its hegemony over the society and its capacity to generate consent. Although seemingly infatuated with his own image and voice, Erdoğan can no longer claim to be simultaneously nationalist and pacifist, democratic and conservative, eco-friendly and defender

of the construction industry, pro-social welfare and pro-capitalist, proponent of both the EU and the Shanghai Five, liberal and paternalist, critical of the military coup and defender of the Higher Education Council – in short both the victim and the hegemon. Since the area that he tries to bring under his hegemony is composed of such a vast array of contradicting elements, inevitably, this grand amalgamation starts to come apart at the seams, revealing the contradiction between its constitutive elements. A case in point is the latest spat between various elements of the power bloc.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the so-called "peace process" does not signal a radical repositioning of the government vis-a-vis the Kurdish question, but rather a temporary opening, almost a maneuver designed to survive the challenging electoral process unscathed. Even Massoud Barzani's supposedly historical recent trip to Diyarbakır was but a simple PR exercise for the elections. On the other hand, the AKP still seems content with its attempt to "resolve" the Kurdish question despite (if possible without) the Kurds – that is, by oppressing the Kurdish political movement, and destroying their grassroots politicization. As such, AKP lacks the social and intellectual support of forces which it could have mobilized otherwise.

Despite all the setbacks, AKP and Erdoğan still enjoy a vast capacity to maneuver. There appears no alternative inside the system which could challenge and possibly replace the government in the ballot box. The CHP leadership is far from resolving for good the overt tension between its nationalist and reformist wings, which cripples the party in critical moments. In fact the elections might make it even harder to bring a final solution to this problem. As for the MHP, the party has positioned its forces along the last trench of defense of the Turkish national identity. Its hope is that in the western provinces the "peace process" will trigger a nationalist reaction towards the government, and thus strengthen the MHP camp. Nevertheless, it is far from clear whether the party's increasingly irrelevant leadership can actually capitalize on the current social situation. Under given conditions, it seems more probable for an "alternative" to the government to be born inside the AKP itself. This is the reason for the credit given to the scenario that Abdullah Gül, after the end of his presidency, might become prime minister and create a new political hub around himself, and steer the ruling party to a more moderate political line.

Although the actual impact of Gezi on local elections is very controversial at the moment, one must refrain from simplistic formulas about the electoral expression of the radical energy created by the resistance. One cannot expect the masses who expressed themselves on the streets to directly head towards a radical alternative in some evolutionary progress. Since the elections are a reflection –albeit distorted – of social reality, we cannot jump to the conclusion that the society will deviate from its main tendency of the past twenty years in the coming local elections or the following stages of the electoral marathon by stopping its electoral shift towards the right, which would rapidly bring an end to the nationalist and conservative political atmosphere. It is correct that Gezi has partially stopped the Turkish society's right turn of recent decades. In particular, Gezi managed to temporarily roll back the nationalist and right-wing drift of large sections of the CHP constituency which had become evident from 1990s onwards. However, this grassroots politicization of wide masses is not yet reflected in the electoral box or institutional politics. For the moment, the increased legitimacy of social opposition has not yet translated into a strong and clear-cut political alternative.

Even though AKP lost its moral advantage, its intellectual legitimacy was irreparably damaged,

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and serious cracks appeared inside the power bloc after Gezi. Therefore, we might possibly witness a paradoxical consolidation of the political camps during the elections. It does not seem very plausible for the current mainstream polarization to suddenly disappear at the ballot box. It appears almost certain that a significant part of the democratic and social reaction to AKP will translate into votes for an intra-system alternative such as CHP. Plus, while selecting its electoral candidates, CHP is flirting with forces to its right. The HDP might possibly create a certain optimism; however, it does not seem capable (at least for the moment) of stopping this general trend. In fact, rumors about CHP-HDP negotiations for the Istanbul elections suggest that HDP itself is significantly affected by this pressure. The political shifts triggered by Gezi have destabilized the current political architecture; however, they have yet to translate into a radical alternative to mainstream politics. As such, just months after the biggest social and political uprising in recent Turkish history, political debate is turning

around issues such as the spat between AKP and the Gülen sect, or whether Mustafa Sarıgül might do damage to AKP in the Istanbul elections. It is quite possible for the collective radicalization created by Gezi to be absorbed into channels inside the establishment, and thus be dissipated. It is also probable that the mainstream political polarization will be aggravated in the coming period, and for the masses who took to the streets against government brutality to become mired in mainstream political alternatives. Fully aware of this fact, the main opposition party CHP is not

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even making an effort to appeal to the Gezi protesters, whose anti-AKP votes it takes for granted, but rather is investing in candidates hailing from the center right who it thinks might win over voters from the right.

Towards a political alternative

The Gezi resistance revealed that defending the city and nature against the government's and capital's maneuvers of entrenchment and accumulation by expropriation is a key axis of struggle. It must not be forgotten that even before Gezi, such ecological and urban struggles had already created cracks in AKP's hegemony due to their widespread and diverse nature, mass appeal, and capacity. As such, we must never forget that the recent struggles against nuclear, hydroelectric and coal-powered plants, and the fight against urban transformation have laid the background of the Gezi resistance. Therefore, simplistic analyses suggesting that the wave of resistance was but an identity-based reaction of the middle class against threats to its modern lifestyle do not tell the whole story.

If a social and political movement keen on

following in the footsteps of Gezi resistance sticks to the discourse of 50% against 50% – which Erdoğan and AKP will take up more and more frequently towards the elections – it will limit social opposition to the axes of secularism vs Islam, monarchy vs republic and it will simply play into the hands of AKP. This is precisely what AKP and Erdoğan want: to reduce the resistance to that hackneyed dichotomy between modern/Western "middle classes" vs. the "Anatolian" periphery, and thus depoliticizing the movement by turning political and social issues to cultural matters. As such, opposing AKP-Erdoğan without a specific social agenda might easily turn from a seeming advantage into a handicap. It must be granted that through creative and spontaneous initiatives, the social movement created by Gezi has mostly avoided such traps, and fended off Erdoğan's discourses with its practices and rhetoric.

As such, the answer to the question "What is to be done" is pretty evident: First, one must focus on social struggle and solidarity practices to ensure that the grassroots politicization triggered by Gezi and continued by the park forums gain local footholds, expand, and reach out to wide masses. The basic foundation of a strategy against neoliberal capitalism must be widespread, massive social movements. Since Gezi, we have much stronger means to build such movements than we did before. Undoubtedly, these social struggles will not automatically translate into political forms. Establishing such a direct relation between the social and the political is still a huge challenge for various sectors of the social opposition.

In this new period, the AKP government will on the one hand flex all muscles to protect its social and electoral support/consent at the ballot box, and on the other do its utmost to sap and cull Gezi's social energy, self-confidence and creativity by imprisoning it inside dichotomies that it knows how to manage. The key question that awaits a response is whether the millions who unexpectedly took to the streets to have a say in their lives and if the new generation which took its first step into the political arena will manage to perpetuate this social and political energy under new forms. The answer to this question will determine what kind of a country we will be living in, at least in the near future.

URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS
HDP: Possibilities and obstacles

Ayhan Bilgen

Elections are tantamount to a litmus test for both the government and the opposition. Although elections cannot be the sole channel of social participation in politics, we should never belittle the importance of the electoral process in mass politics.

While the fact that a political party can stay in power for three consecutive terms is closely connected to its own performance, it may be even more connected to the capacities of the political opposition. In order to find out what the population at large thinks about the increasingly authoritarian character of the government, there needs to be veritable and strong, democratic political alternatives.

During the first decade of the new millennium, in terms of public perception management, it was very important that Turkish politics were based, on the formula "a government in favor of change, and an opposition in favor of the status quo." When we consider that the parties of the center are not homogenous but have a changing internal equilibrium, it becomes obvious that the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party) - maybe even more than CHP (Republican People's Party) - has diverse internal dynamics. Both parties include certain conservative actors which uphold the status quo, alongside others with more liberal or social democratic tendencies. Although the ruling party is well-known to have a rigid, leader-centered structure, in the coming period, the internal differences could become more apparent, especially during presidential elections.

We are heading towards an electoral process which will reveal the concrete political consequences of the Gezi protests which marked the year 2013 in Turkey. As such, the local elections in 2014 will reveal whether Turkish politics can meet different demands. In order for the reactions of active citizens to translate into a strong message in the ballot box, there needs to be political alternatives which can respond to their expectations.

In this respect, one could discuss four closely related scenarios. The first is a possible rupture or increased flexibility within the ruling party. The second is a change and expansion drive by the main opposition party CHP. The third scenario concerns attempts by the Kurdish political movement and socialist groups to create a stronger base. The fourth is an electoral boycott or another alternative course of action which might continue after the election. Let us leave the last alternative aside and concentrate on what could happen within the opposition parties during an electoral process, already set to be tense and polarized.

The problem of trust towards politics and politicians

In Turkish politics, the political role of parties has been subject to strong skepticism due to both the policies of the state, and the quality of politicians. Wide segments of the society believe that politicians of the center place their own interests above everything else, and that they do not feel any responsibility towards the society. Although not very strong in countries which have largely superseded structural barriers to democracy, this perception becomes a source of crisis in countries like Turkey, where much is expected from politics. This crisis of trust must be overcome

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if political activism is to manage change and reinforce social participation.

From the Prime Minister's latest comments with regard to female and male students sharing the same flat, to the peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question, many different issues can be analyzed from the perspective of trust.

It is not possible to become a political force without inspiring trust in the society. Political parties are a key instrument for translating this trust into veritable mechanisms of communication, organization and accountability. A political movement becomes irrelevant if it ignores the society and loses its trust. While some efforts motivated by purely ethical or philosophical concerns did play crucial roles in certain epochs, and subsequently evolved into a rupture that gravely marked politics. Thus, parties do not have the luxury of voicing demands without any regard for social convictions. If they are keen on intervening in the daily political life and if a political line centered on democracy and freedom is to create a center of attraction in the society, two things need to be achieved: First, CHP must start to defend the peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question, and take action to help its party base internalize this approach. Secondly, the Kurdish political movement needs to build a po-

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Organized groups need to overcome their internal trust problem if they are willing to reach out to the society and gain the trust of wide constituencies. If they cannot communicate with the society at large, the party mechanism gets blocked by an internal brake system, and eventually loses its capacity to act. This is the greatest challenge faced by umbrella organizations such as HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party), which brings together a wide array of political groups.

If you can communicate only with a small section of the society and cannot reach out to the society at large, you will also lose the chance to reshape your discourse accordingly. A poli-

tical organization which does not ask itself why it fails to gain the trust of the society can never lead the political opposition. To demonstrate this point we could compare the progress made by the Kurdish political movement in this respect (at least in its geographical region) with the contraction of the Turkish left. Since Kurds living in the Western provinces of Turkey are not only Kurds but also variably Alevi, religious, workers, etc. a discourse addressed to these individuals must be based on their specific characteristics. HDP's difficulty in communicating with non-Kurdish masses, comprised of Alevis, religious adherents, workers, or those victimized in other ways by the system, is not related to the importance it attaches to the Kurdish question, but rather to its distance from these other issues. The road to constructing a new social and political force centered on a set of specific values hinges on the settlement of this trust problem. Only then can HDP play a crucial role in the resolution of the Kurdish question through peaceful dialogue. Whether the party can become an active party in social and political negotiations partially depends on its achievements in the abovementioned issues. For example, the society at large has appreciated how CHP and other opposition parties have defeated AKP's political maneuver of allowing veiled women MPs into the parliament. Thus, we can say that change in politics is a precondition for expansion and is nothing to be feared.

Youth and participation

In political action, the method of organization is at least as important as the program and discourse. To build an effective discourse which can be effectively conveyed to the society, the method of organization should also be conducive to expansion. Political program, discourse and the organization method are closely connected parts which impact each other.

Expansion is not simply a matter of organization, but also one of program and discourse. The relation between the wider constituencies and the organization must be evaluated in light of prevalent social conditions. The increasing diversity of the means of communication presents new opportunities for sharing information horizontally. The information flow is what motivates the organizational drive. In this regard, if we liken an organization to an organism's veins, then information would correspond to the blood circulating inside those veins. If the leadership of the organization strives to become a hierarchical and dominant center instead of

© HDP

a coordination hub for collecting and disseminating information, the result will be fragmentation and contraction.

In this respect, the most important lesson to be drawn from the Gezi protests is that it is possible to establish horizontal organizations based on direct participation. It is much more effective to devise results-oriented mechanisms for gathering people than creating bureaucratic structures. The first step to be taken by those organizations which claim to have restructured themselves according to the Gezi spirit should be to revise their organizational models according to this concept. Naturally, some individuals will not appreciate this method and refuse to give up their old habits. This is a critical choice, an important crossroads. A party cannot carry on with the old methods and yet hope to expand its base.

HDP must be a springboard for social opposition to enter politics

When assessing the HDK (Peoples' Democratic Congress) and HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party), one must also take into account the relation between the social and political spheres. The key problem in Turkish politics is a series of structural contradictions which beset the relation between these two spheres. Instead of a system whereby the social determines the political—i.e. where social realities shape political decision-making processes, we live in a country where social expectations are controlled by the government. Indeed, the global crisis of representative democracy stems precisely from this deformity. Those who hold

political power also control the technologies of war, energy sources and of course economic riches, which force the social sphere into an increasingly submissive position.

In countries where those at the bottom, the downtrodden and the oppressed form the majority, one can talk about a dictatorship of the minority. However, if the majority of the society does not necessarily complain about the system and takes no heed of the suffering of various social groups, the primary objective of an opposition group should be to create a discourse which will change the people's mindset. (As such, it is crucial to avoid reinforcing such a psychology of expectations while voicing dissent and opposition towards those in power.) Discourses which could be considered normal in civil society activism could well serve to strengthen the government's hand if used by the political opposition.

Would an ambitious electoral campaign by HDP, especially in Istanbul, steal votes from CHP as some claim? Naturally CHP and HDP, both keen on expansion, may be said to appeal to a similar electorate. HDP will focus on Kurds in the provinces where they form a majority; in the remaining 60 provinces, in the absence of HDP, Kurds are more likely to vote for the ruling AKP rather than CHP. Given this, CHP supporters' warning that HDP could "divide the votes of the opposition" does not sound very realistic.

The first step to be taken by those organizations which claim to have restructured themselves according to the Gezi spirit should be to revise their organizational models according to this concept. This is a critical choice, an important crossroads. A party cannot continue to strive with the old methods and hope to expand its base.

It is crucial to appeal to the society at large and remind it of its rights and responsibilities. Such a political line would require one to not seek gains from the internal struggles of those in power, but rather to mobilize one's own forces and of course follow a rational course

of action to avoid getting burnt by the ruling elite's inner strife.

If you cannot develop a discourse which can appeal to the society and gain its trust, then you might as well say what Napoleon's generals said after they lost a battle: "We ran out of gunpowder!" If there is no more gunpowder, then there is no reason to discuss further. If you cannot devise a political communication strategy which will gain the trust of the society, then the discussion of other problems of participation is inevitably postponed to a second phase.

If you can organize spontaneous dissent and recruit new members to your organization, you can very well find the opportunity to expand your base from the bottom up. If this is not the case, then politics turns into a conventional tool of rent-seeking and breaks

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In the 1960s and 1970s, the Turkish leftist movements played a pioneering role in channeling the ire of the downtrodden against the system. However, it is no more an option to communicate with the society utilizing the memories of the pre-1980 era, considering that a conservative ruling elite has risen to power in the 1980s and the generation of the 1990s was raised with a completely different paradigm.

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away from social control, which in turn leads to contraction, self-enclosure and corruption.

Those who claim to engage in politics in the name of ideological and social concerns are not immune to this. Even when your discourse is focused on social concerns, if your inner workings are based on protecting the personal status of your leaders, then you cannot expect the society to embrace you and make sacrifices.

Despite all its handicaps, the Kurdish political movement enjoys the support of its community because it has waged a fierce struggle and paid a heavy price.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Turkish leftist movements played a pioneering role in channeling the ire of the downtrodden against the system. However, it is not possible to capitalize on this past legacy for a very long time. It is no more an option to appeal to the society utilizing the memories of the pre-1980 era, considering that conservative ruling elite has risen to power in the 1980s and the generation of the 1990s was raised with a completely different paradigm.

In order to go beyond sharing its past expe-

rience and giving recommendations, the opposition needs to not only grasp the psychology of the young generations, but more importantly adjust its organizational structure to allow for the participation of the youth.

It is possible to blend social dissent and local grievances to put forth an oppositional discourse which goes beyond the national to become global. This is a matter of interaction. Naturally, it requires one to not only act like a maestro, but also inspire hope among the locals and inject resolve and ambition into the society.

Unless an analytic synthesis which will eradicate the deep-seated polarization of politics in Turkey becomes predominant in the minds and discourses of activists, it will not be possible to make headway against the powers that be.

Localization for democratization

Although the government claims that Turkey is an advanced democracy, the problems highlighted by the latest EU progress report suggest that Turkey is a hybrid democracy. In fact, the standards of "high quality democracy" are very concrete and measurable. One of its distinctive features is participation. In formal democracy, participation, too, remains as formal participation. Veritable and efficient participation can only be found in a high quality democracy.

An effort to settle Turkey's main problems via high quality democracy must start with party organizations. A party which cannot implement the participative organization model itself cannot be expected to inspire trust in the society, or build a participative political alternative.

If political peace is to be established in key tension areas via social participation, a political agent needs to appear which can lead such a process. It is not realistic to expect that the ruling party will further the peace process singlehandedly. The duty of convincing the Turkish society to uphold peace is a tough challenge for the government, which is itself a party in the conflict.

To summarize, there is a need for a constitutive political line, which can play the role of a third party in Turkish politics. In history, such constitutive parties came from different backgrounds; however they all gained legitimacy as they spread out across the society.

If HDK and HDP have set out to respond to such a need, their capacity of activism and organization must be planned accordingly. Such is the challenge that awaits this nascent party in the upcoming local elections. The party will be still-born if it insists on organizing politics

from top to bottom as conventional parties do. If it manages to become a mass party based on direct democracy and horizontal organization, it can inspire hope for the near future.

A party administration consisting of the representatives of various political groups and intellectuals, and a list of electoral candidates imposed top-down, will inevitably stymie this project in the very beginning. In order to create party organs shaped by the street and the local community, the party needs to launch a fresh member recruitment campaign. The election process can in fact be turned into an opportunity for building a bottom-up structure where everyone can participate equally in decision-making mechanisms. In particular, unless the party allows the new youth dynamic born out of the Gezi protests to bring a new vision to politics, it cannot live up to its constitutive mission.

HDK has a great advantage in terms of harboring the activist heritage and theoretical richness of the past; however, this could well turn into a disadvantage and lead to contraction and self-enclosure, unless the party is placed on a healthy and correct path. Experience can at times become a huge barrier to brave, radical initiatives. If HDP cannot take a decisive step in its upcoming congress to reshape its organization model, and limits itself to simple window-dressing and political declarations, a serious electoral defeat is around the corner.

It is not fathomable why one would try to utilize in a political party the same political alliance methods which have led to serious blocks and stagnation in the trade union movement. The presence of political advocacy groups and intellectuals in HDP becomes meaningful only so far as they facilitate the socialization of HDP's political line.

If Turkish intellectuals and political advocacy groups actually had a finger on the pulse of the society, and produced a discourse which could motivate the society, we would be living in an altogether different country. If we do not question the reasons for our past failures, we will be doomed to fail in the future. If we do not open the door to the direct and active organization of citizens, it means that we have failed to draw lessons from Gezi.

Can HDP transform electoral behavior and restructure politics?

The current polarizing political discourse in Turkey might lead to a further ossification of the different electorates, but could also urge some citizens to look for new alternatives. Although the country is already in an electoral process, only half of the electorate identifies with a political party, and undecided voters are thought to constitute one fourth to one third of the total.

On the one hand, citizens are vociferously and massively criticizing the government for different reasons; on the other, the opposition is trying to reach beyond its traditional constituency: two factors which could play a decisive role in the local elections.

Would an ambitious electoral campaign by HDP, especially in Istanbul, steal votes from CHP as some claim? Naturally CHP and HDP, both keen on expansion, may be said to appeal to a similar electorate. HDP will focus on Kurds in the provinces where they form a majority; in the remaining 60 provinces, in the absence of HDP, Kurds are more likely to vote for the ruling AKP rather than CHP. Given this, CHP supporters' warning that HDP could "divide the votes of the opposition" does not sound

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very realistic. Furthermore, if one talks about a possibility for local election alliances, Kurdish constituency is the most organized, political and mobilized, therefore the most inclined voter base towards electoral cooperation. The local elections will be an important hurdle for HDP, if it wants to gain more votes in the West than BDP did, and to prove that it is a force to be reckoned with. The electoral strategy will be crucial in both encouraging the traditional BDP electorate to embrace the HDP project, and in gaining new voters. To be successful, one must take into account the fact that the electoral decisions of Kurds living in the Western provinces are shaped as much by their Kurdish identity as by their beliefs and economic expectations.

In the presidential elections which will follow soon after the local elections, HDP can complete its integration with BDP and become a key political party. If there is to be a leadership change in the ruling party, one option is a transitory reconciliation and the other is bringing forth the general elections.

In any case, we are entering a period in which Turkish politics will reach a new equilibrium and we will witness the rise of new formations.

URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS
Autonomy in local government

Hacı Kurt

Although there have been local governments in Turkey for 150 years, the autonomy of local governments and the relationship between the central and local governments are still critical problems.

Hacı Kurt
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A community's right to self-government on the local scale first appeared as city-states. Founded on the principle of direct government, city-states were long associated with democracy and were the symbols of democracy for a long time.[1] The city-state is defined as a democracy because its citizens had the right to participate extensively in political activities.[2] Even today, local government can be seen as a school of democracy.

When locals have the initiative to settle some of their local problems, they nurture and develop a culture of self-governing, strengthening local democratization and autonomization.[3] Without a viable local government, the full exercise of human rights is impossible because local government is the main pillar of the defense and reinforcement of human rights. As the unit of government closest to the citizen or the individual, local government makes significant contributions to making the systems designed to protect and enhance human rights efficient.[4]

The European Council has signed crucial international agreements to ensure the establishment and functioning of true democracy and hereby to secure human rights. The European Convention on Human Rights, European Charter of Local Self-Government, European Social Charter, and other similar documents are serving this purpose. The European Convention on Human Rights was largely designed to implement the first generation of human rights, while the European Charter of Local Self-Government fills in the gaps and adds the

dimensions of locality and community to political rights such as the rights to vote, stand for election, and to participate in government.[5]

Today, as representative democracy remains relevant, democratic methods such as referenda, popular vetoes, and people's legislative initiatives are increasingly articulated within democracy.[6] The European Charter of Local Self-Government can also be seen in this context. Turkey cosigned this Charter with Law number 3723, dated 08.05.1991, and it came into effect after being issued in the Official Gazette dated 3.10.1992, numbered 2364.

To a certain extent, local governments in Turkey met the criteria set forth in the Charter even before it cosigned the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The Charter provides further guarantees for local governments' administrative and fiscal autonomy of local; these provisions were accepted without reservation as Turkey made them part of domestic legislation.

Turkey's reservations

Since 2004, Turkey passed certain legal reforms regarding local government making many of Turkey's reservations lose significance or even become irrelevant.

Turkey made reservations on the following principles and articles in the Charter: Consulting with local governments as much as possible on issues which concern them directly; supporting local governments to freely shape their own organization in accordance with applicable legislation to better meet their needs; identifying which activities and actions are incompatible with the duties of local elected officials, as per law and basic legal principles; striking a balance between the powers of

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auditors carrying out an administrative audit on local governments and public interests.

Turkey made further reservations of the following articles: Fiscal resources provided to local governments must be diverse and flexible enough to meet any real rise in expenses; local governments must be consulted before the allocation of such resources; grants to local governments must not be subject to project finance conditions, and local governments must be able to utilize such grants freely in activities falling under their jurisdiction.

Turkey similarly made reservations on articles regulating local governments' right to join in national and international associations and unions of local governments, their right to cooperate with local governments overseas within the framework of applicable legislation, and their right to file lawsuits to ensure compliance with principles of local autonomy.

Turkey made reservations on many of the European Charter of Local Self-Government's important principles and articles, but most of their reservations have become irrelevant today. Law no. 5216 on Metropolitan Municipalities, Law no. 5302 on Special Provincial Administrations, and Law no. 5393 on Municipalities, all issued from 2004 on; include stipulations bringing Turkey into compliance with the Charter.

Just the same, the European Council investigated the situation of local government in Turkey in 1997, 2001, then again in 2005, 2007, 2009, and in 2010. All but two of these investigations were after the local government reforms starting in 2004. The reports from the investigations were critical of forced migration in Southeastern Anatolia, imprisonment of local

government officials, the central government's attitude toward multi-lingual municipalities, and delays in legislations on the payment of local governments' budgetary allocations. Yet another criticism concerns the neglect of villages as a unit of local government.[7]

The 1985 European Charter of Local Self-Government, an important step towards the development of local democracy, was further enhanced by the Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government, opened for signature on November 16, 2009. This Additional Protocol provides for the monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government's principles concerning administrative and fiscal autonomy, participation, localization of services, and supports local governments' efforts to-

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wards in order to establish a more participative local government.[8] Therefore, the European Charter of Local Self-Government's criteria should not be viewed as the ultimate goal, but rather as minimal or average conditions.

In Turkey's case, the administration of special provincial entities, municipalities, and

metropolitan municipalities have their share of problems, but it is the villages that are the farthest from these criteria. Economic, cultural, and social conditions that would make a local government autonomous and democratic are particularly lacking in rural settlements. But even a modern revision of the 1924 Law on Villages, Law no. 442 could yield significant improvements. A new draft Law on Villages could meet most of the European Charter of Local Self-Government's criteria to make villages more democratic, efficient, and responsive to local needs.

Even if Turkey approves the European Charter of Local Self-Government without any reservations one day, it would fail to satisfy all the demands voiced across Turkey. Specifically, the demands and the expectations of the Kurdish movement go far beyond the criteria in the Charter.

On both national and international levels, the rights of citizens and local communities in Turkey are regulated by various laws: the Law on Municipalities, the Turkish Criminal Code, the Law on Misdemeanors, the Law on the Environment, the Law on Development, the Law on the Protection of Culture and Environment, the Law on Public Health, to name a few. A number of international conventions also set standards for the protection of these rights and the creation of well-planned and healthy urbanization: the European Charter of Local Self-Government, European Urban Charter, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, to name a few.

Legal gaps, political headwinds

Are these regulations enough to protect local democracy and civil rights? And if not, what are the political, legal, and social causes that render these regulations inadequate?

There are certain legal gaps in Turkey's laws, and not one single municipality in Turkey has cosigned the European Urban Charter. Domestic law reform, a new framework code on local democracy, urban law and the rights of urban residents, as well as ironing out certain legal discrepancies would be a start. But the real

problem goes deeper than legislative issues, and even these reforms would not be enough to protect local democracy and urban residents' rights.

One underlying reason is the central government's attitude; for a long time, the national government has endeavored to keep local governments and local officials under control through legal and administrative mechanisms. This could serve as a hint, too, about how opposition parties might act if they came to power. One very widespread practice is intervening in the electoral process. In general and across the board, political parties do not reply on democratic mechanisms to determine their candidates for local positions like mayor or even members of a municipal assembly. Political parties themselves determine who is eligible to govern a given city, seriously infringing on the citizens' political will.

The central government tries to control local government after elections, too. One case in point is municipal borrowing and projects. If a municipality is run by an opposition party, it is unlikely to receive central government approval for even a very sound public transportation project or public service project, whereas a municipality run by the party in power at the national level finds no such obstacles even if its finances are not in order. This not makes it difficult to monitor the actual performance of municipalities, but it also allows certain failed municipalities to chalk their failures up to their oppositional stance. It is the basic right of citizens to decide who will run their city, but this requires that they be fully informed about the basic performance of elected officials. An assessment of elected officials must be based on equal conditions; the central government needs to protect rather than disrupt the equality of these conditions.

The central government also uses intimidation and investigation to keep local governments under control. Naturally, the central government is entitled to monitor the functioning of local governments; however, this power is not exercised equally in all municipalities. Municipalities controlled by opposition parties are investigated through arbitrary raids - far beyond simple audits - that include intimidating and harassing local officials. The attitude of the central government towards local governments prevents these municipalities and mayors from devising original projects and creative municipal solutions.

Certain legal regulations issued by the central government also hamper the development of local democracy and violate civil law and the right to self-government. A case in

point is the Law on the Establishment of Metropolitan Municipalities in Thirteen Provinces and the Establishment of Twenty-Six Districts. Including Ordu with these thirteen, a total of fourteen cities have been declared metropolitan areas, bringing Turkey's total number of metropolitan municipalities - including their greater rural area and urban space - to thirty. This decision puts an end to the legal entity statue of some seventeen thousand villages and turns 1,600 county municipalities into neighborhoods. This is neither democratic, nor is it in compliance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government to change the legal entity of a local government unit without consulting the local population first. As a result of this reorganization, many district municipalities will be obliged to move some of their service units to metropolitan centers, becoming dependent of services from these administrations situated hundreds of kilometers away. These administrative changes might bring about savings in certain services, but they will certainly diminish local initiative in the offering of urban services. There is also no guarantee that the reforms will yield the anticipated savings. A similar problem besets citizens residing in the central districts of these provinces, or inside the former borders of the metropolitan municipalities. Local residents must approve before new areas and populations are included in their residential area. The current residents will have to transfer some of their taxes to the newcomers, and there will be qualitative and quantitative changes in the urban services they receive. Implementing such comprehensive change without discussing it with and seeking the approval of the existent citizens does nothing to foster local democracy and citizens' rights.

Even if legal regulations temporarily suffice to protect the rights of municipal residents, these rights will also be under threat from the central government. One example is the Law on the Transformation of Areas Under Risk of Catastrophe of May 2012. This Law states that its zoning plans will be exempt from the limitations set out in the Law on Zoning No. 3194, the most crucial piece of legislation regulating urban development. In addition, the Law on the Transformation of Areas Under Risk of Catastrophe also states that the various limitations imposed by the Laws on Forestry, Tourism, Coastal Areas, the Bosporus, Meadows, Protection of Cultural and Natural Riches, Protection of the Soil and Lane Use can be annulled whenever deemed necessary. The very same Law also introduces serious limitations to any lawsuits that could that could have been filed against the government's actions. The Law on Administrative Jurisdiction Procedures, Law No. 2577 from 1982, limits the timeframe to file lawsuits against administrative action to sixty days, a period which is open to revision by other laws. The Law on the Transformation of Areas Under Risk of Catastrophe, for example, reduces this period to only thirty days, a reduction that, although technically legal, essentially makes it almost impossible to file sure lawsuits. But the Law doesn't stop there: It also states that the courts cannot impose a "suspension of execution" order. This is a clear intervention into the courts' jurisdiction, reducing the protection of city dwellers' rights to the payment of compensation ex post facto. In other words, the government's party controls a majority of the parliament and can therefore easily pass regulations that bypass the legal guarantees is scores of prior laws. Under such conditions, there can be no such thing as urban law, urban citizens' rights, or local democracy.

In Turkey, local government autonomy is not a simple legislative issue; legislative amendments have been introduced, but it is harder to change convictions.

Local government against local democracy

Certain practices that are damaging to local democracy come from the local governments themselves. One major problem is that politicians see municipalities as a platform for their employment. After their election, candidates tend to give municipal jobs to people who were active in their electoral campaign without considering their merit to hold those positions. Such practices run against local democracy and citizens' rights by establishing a local system of rent-seeking, preventing citizens from being represented equally in their local government, and compromising the quality of urban services and raising costs to the citizen. Elected officials must remember that their position as mayor or member of a local assembly means that they must serve the entire community, not just their own constituency.

One of the key criteria of local democracy, and a basic right of a municipal citizen, is to ensure that residents have access to information about the future of their city not after but well before the decision-making processes are completed. This is the only way to stop rumors and doubts circling in many cities

about mayors from various political parties, especially speculation about rent-seeking and prior purchasing of lands set to be opened to development. Otherwise, people from certain professions or social groups will inevitably fill municipal assemblies to have access to such exclusive information. Since citizens as a whole cannot gain access to these data, the few that can gain the wealth and resources of the citizenry do so through capitalistic exchange mechanisms.

Demands and expectations of the Kurdish movement

Even if Turkey approves the European Charter of Local Self-Government without any reservations one day, it would fail to satisfy all the demands voiced across Turkey. Specifically, the demands and the expectations of the Kurdish movement go far beyond the criteria in the Charter. For one, the Charter introduces important principles but does not put forth a model. Representatives of the Kurdish movement have at times expressed certain demands that go far beyond the level of autonomy proposed by the Charter.

Decisions adopted at the Democratic Society Congress and the Movement for Free Local Government established by the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) suggest that the Kurdish movement does not embrace a concept of autonomy centered on ethnicity or soil, instead demanding a model of local administration which allows for the free expression of cultural diversity. They suggest that Turkey should be divided into 20 to 25 regions. According to their model, foreign affairs and defense would be assigned to the central government, whereas areas such as education, health, culture, agriculture, industry, environment, tourism, youth and sports and social security would be controlled by the local government. The model also stipulates a division of labor between central and regional administrations in police and judicial services, and has local regions setting up their own assemblies.

These demands are not unlike federalism. The framework set out by the European Charter of Local Self-Government does not serve such a purpose, nor does it oblige any nation to replace the sole state model with a federal one. As it is, even if the European Charter of Local Self-Government is implemented across Turkey, it will fall short of satisfying Kurdish demands.

Although local government reform in Turkey after 2004 has brought about certain improvements in compliance with the European Charter of Local Self-Government, it has failed to respond to all concerns in this area. In Turkey, local government autonomy is not a simple legislative issue; legislative amendments have been introduced, but it is harder to change convictions. The state, and in particular the ruling party that made these amendments, continues to try to control local governments. The opposition on the other hand brands all local government reform as deviation from the sole state model, and does not allow for the creation of a social atmosphere that would be conducive to autonomous and efficient local government.

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URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS

Crazy urban transformation, rational capital accumulation

Gökhan Bilgihan

To discuss urban transformation projects and other grandiose projects and schemes, we must first remind ourselves of the importance of urban space for capital accumulation.

As a result of the violent crisis of capitalism in the 1970s, neoliberal policies replaced welfare policies across the globe. In Turkey, the economic program of January 24, 1980 and the military coup of September 12, 1980 – which paved the way for the implementation of the former – were milestones in this respect. During this period, import substitution policies were abandoned in favor of export-oriented development. Moreover, the first cycle of capital accumulation processes was relegated to a back seat behind the second cycle; that is, production-based accumulation was increasingly replaced with accumulation via rent-seeking.

Urban development projects generally focus on two types of settlements. The first is shanty towns, and the second is old urban settlements which are in a decrepit state. Due to their importance in urban space, it is worth presenting here a brief and historical analysis of shanty towns: the population they host, the specific characteristics of this population, and these areas' role in capital accumulation.

According to a widely used definition, a shanty is an illegal structure built on public land. Although such an expression can define a shanty as a physical entity, it does not allow us to analyze it as a social and economic phenomenon.

Shanty towns began to mushroom in the 1940s in Turkey, due to the worsening problem of rural unemployment and the ensuing waves of migration to the cities, which presented better prospects of employment. As such, shanty towns are explained by some as simply a means employed by rural migrants to solve their hous-

ing problem on public or private lands of the urban periphery, in the absence of proper urban infrastructure (Ataöv and Osmay, 2007).

Among the state's various attempts to resolve the shanty town problem, those with the biggest impact on urban space were the Law No.: 775 on Shanty Areas (1966), the Law No.: 2981 on Building Permit Amnesty (1983) and various urban transformation and renewal projects based on various legal amendments from 2003 onwards.

The Law No.: 775 was not a response to the lack of urban homes or the housing problem of new migrants to the cities, but rather a strategy of land possession. However, this law differs from the latter ones in that it introduces retro-active measures to resolve past problems and defines preventive mechanisms to avoid future problems.

The Law No.: 2981 on Building Permit Amnesty, on the other hand, granted amnesty to all shanty buildings and other illegal structures, legalized them, and made it easier for the inhabitants to possess shanty buildings. If we analyze the Law No.: 2981 in light of the conditions of the period, which is in line with the state's attempts to boost the construction sector from 1980s onwards, we can conclude that shanty towns and illegal buildings were included in the housing market and became commodities to be sold in the market. Besides, as indicated by Şenyapılı (1998), the post-1980 economic and political transformation in Turkey brought down real wages, suppressed trade union rights, and slashed employment in the public sector. In return, the state gave up some

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public land and issued building permit amnesties as a populist move.

Another key decision in this period was the establishment of the Public Housing Administration (TOKİ). Initially designed to "resolve the housing problem of citizens of modest income with the state's lands and financial resources," TOKİ has clearly shifted its target audience, as suggested by its more recent operations.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the construction sector started to expand rapidly. However, the contractor firms of the earlier period were not large enough to make construction one of the major industries in the country. In the 1980s, the state's focus was on promoting exports, so much so that numerous "fictitious export" scandals emerged, and the capital accumulation process became centered on the production of commodities. The 1990s saw an increase in the number of privatizations, recurrent economic crises, and consecutive coalition governments, all of which hampered efforts towards political stabilization. The result was rampant inflation which reinforced the export's position as the most profitable strategy of capital accumulation.

Two dates were key for the construction industry. The first was the Marmara Earthquake of August 17, 1999, which inflicted huge damage. The second was the 2001 economic crisis which sent shock waves through many different social sectors. The first, having revealed the extent of Turkey's urban crisis, was to be used as a pretext to legitimize a large scale physical and economic transformation of urban space; whereas the second prompted the rise of new strategies of capital accumulation.

After these events, TOKİ's powers were increased in a different way. After coming to power in 2002, the AKP introduced legislative change to make TOKİ the country's top urbanization authority vested with vast powers and exempted from certain restrictions. Let us briefly summarize the main legal regulations which expanded TOKİ's authorities. The land parcels obtained by the state in the framework of the "housing mobilization campaign" were entrusted to TOKİ, as well as the duties and authorities of the General Directorate of Land Parcels, which together brought TOKİ's land stock up from 16.5 million to 194 million square meters in just two years. TOKİ was granted the right to "set up or buy shares in housing companies, carry out housing projects in Turkey and overseas either directly or via subsidiaries, and develop profit-oriented projects to raise funds." The company's areas of interest were expanded to include tourism, small-scale industry, education and health. In other words, we now

have before us a gigantic enterprise which can mobilize public funds to invest in every area. Furthermore, a number of legal amendments allowed the administration to become exempt from public financial audit. (İMECE, 2008)

The Law No.: 5162 granted TOKİ the right to "seize land and make zoning plans in order to transform shanty town areas." The Law No.: 5366 – also known as the "Renewal Law" – gave TOKİ authority over historical settlements located in city centers.

We should also briefly explain how urban transformation projects proceed. Article 73 of the Law on Municipalities constitutes the legal basis of these projects. The law mandates that a trilateral protocol needs to be signed between the district municipality, metropolitan municipality and TOKİ. According to this protocol, the metropolitan municipality is authorized to make the necessary changes in upper scale plans and can receive a portion of the houses to be built. The district municipality, on the other hand, is in charge of reaching agreements with the residents, evacuating and destroying the old houses, and cleaning the area. In other words, it is under the obligation of delivering the transformation area to TOKİ as an empty plot ready for construction work. Then TOKİ must prepare the project and organize a public tender.

The ownership rights of the locals constitute another key dimension. In certain projects, an agreement is reached via negotiation, whereas in others, price appraisal commissions are set up. Accordingly, the prices set by the appraisal commission are considered as down payment for the houses to be delivered to right holders. Those with title deeds are paid the entire amount; whereas those who hold title deed allocation certificates (tapu tahsis belgesi) are paid the salvage price calculated from this initial amount. These values, however, correspond only to a small percentage of the price of new houses. As a result, right holders are entitled to a new home but are also obliged to accept huge debts in order to own it. Most people who move to new TOKİ blocks are soon obliged to sell their houses since they cannot repay their loans, and have to become tenants. In such projects, shanty dwellers without any title deeds constitute the most vulnerable group. Tenants, by the way, only have the right to directly purchase TOKİ project houses if they pay the full down payment without a reduction.

Prompt confiscation (acele kamulaştırma) is another controversial issue in urban transformation projects. Certain regulations state that private houses can be promptly confiscated in projects located in historical residential areas.

Yet such legislation is in clear violation of the constitution. In the examples we have witnessed firsthand, if the administration cannot reach an agreement with the property owner, it can simply open up a bank account on behalf of the latter, wire the confiscation price to this account and then send an official notification to the owner. Home owners can then file a lawsuit, but only to negotiate the confiscation price set by the administration.

Residential areas created by transformation projects replace impoverished neighborhoods with TOKİ houses on the one side, and luxury residences constructed by the private sector on the other. In some such projects, house prices can vary between TL 400 to 700 thousand (USD 200 to 350 thousand).

We must also discuss the struggle against forced eviction and demolition processes. In some of the neighborhoods which rejected the transformation projects, the police attacked locals with tear gas to bring construction machinery to the neighborhood. In others, there appeared a strong opposition against the project early on, and with correct legal maneuvers and organization tactics the community managed to cancel or suspend the project. A decisive factor in this process is whether the locals can together act in solidarity or not.

As part of this process which started in the 2000s, 50 neighborhoods just in Istanbul are under threat of demolition or eviction due to urban transformation projects. In the city, 80,000 people were affected by urban transformation processes and 13,000 saw their houses demolished. It seems that the process is set to become even more destructive. Just as the real estate and construction sectors remain mired in crisis across the world, the Turkish construction industry is losing steam. The government, on the other hand, clings more strongly than ever to the old prescription used to overcome the 2001 crisis.

The year 2011 was another important milestone in terms of urbanization policy. A number of decrees with the force of law issued that year transferred certain powers of TOKİ and other administrations to the newly established Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. The ministry came to enjoy a number of powers such as issuing building plans and granting licenses for new buildings.

Violence against those opposing transformation

In order to fully grasp what has changed in terms of urban transformation, let us look at more recent events. Just like the Marmara Earthquake of 1999, the Van Earthquake of 2011 proved to be a turning point for urban policies. In the wake of this catastrophe, the Law on the Transformation of Areas Under Catastrophe Risk came into effect in May 2012 despite huge public debate and criticism.

Although the law is claimed to be a protective measure against catastrophe, the text does not include any provisions on disaster relief. It neither defines what a catastrophe is, nor does it provide detailed explanations on measures against various disasters. It does not even mention the recently much discussed concept of catastrophe and risk-sensitive urban planning. However, measures against catastrophe are not limited to the renewal of the housing stock, and require a redesign of the urban space in due consideration of catastrophe and urban risks. As a result, the real estate market is the sole platform through which prevention of and protection against catastrophe can be carried out. The law attempts to round up all previous legislation on urban transformation and have it in one place.

Furthermore, this law has precedence over all pre-existing legislative texts, making them redundant. Plans made according to this law are not subject to the limitations and deadlines outlined in the Law No.: 3194 on Zoning and other such special laws. As such, the law opens the way for arbitrary development to be carried out, which could destroy natural treasures such as shores, agricultural fields, olive groves, meadows, forests and reserve areas.

The law vests the ministry with the power to destroy all buildings – including those resistant to earthquakes – in areas declared to be risky. In such areas, only a salvage price is to be paid to the homeowners, who will have to cover the costs of evacuation and demolition, and see their title deeds placed under mortgage if they fail to pay. Besides, the ministry also holds the right to disrupt the water, electricity and natural gas supply to these homes in order to accelerate eviction.

Another important change introduced by the law concerns legal action. Most notably, the court cannot decide on a suspension of execution in such projects. The suspension of execution decision is an important part of the Turkish judiciary process, which allows for the temporary stoppage of actions which cannot be compensated for. With the new law, however, even if the homeowners eventually win the lawsuit, they will probably see their houses demolished and become indebted to the state in the meantime.

Another provision in defiance of the rule of law is prison sentences for those who oppose the project. Even before we discuss the legitimacy

of such an article, it is obvious that it violates applicable law since no such crime is defined in the Turkish Criminal Code. Such a provision allows the state to repress by force any opposition against urban transformation projects.

Underestimated costs, exaggerated expectations

Large scale projects and events trigger vast physical and social change in urban space, and have certain common characteristics. Disregard for the impact on the environment and humans is one such basic trait. For example, the dam projects in India's Narmada Valley flooded the lands of one million people and triggered a huge wave of migration. Displacement is another crucial issue. According to Center on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), 4,000,000 people were evicted by force in Beijing due to the Olympic Games from 1998 through 2008. The Olympics were used as a pretext to demolish certain neighborhoods in Beijing and evict 1,250,000 individuals. Shopping malls, luxurious residences and sports facilities mushroomed in the entire area. Rio is set to host the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, and its favelas are subject to a similar urban cleansing. The Associated Press has reported 170,000 cases of forced eviction in Rio in 2010 alone.

Another key feature is the underestimation of costs. There is usually a huge gap between the initial cost forecast and the final expenditure. For instance, there was a 275% difference between estimated and actual cost in the construction of the Boston tunnel. Another problem in cost accounting is the overestimation of eventual proceeds. For example, the Eurotunnel completed in 1994 to connect the UK and France has yet to pay for itself.

The exaggeration of economic development is another trait observed in all such grandiose schemes and events. For example, the costs of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens exceeded an initial estimate of USD 1.6 billion to reach USD 16 billion. When London won in 2005 its bid to host the event, the cost was estimated at USD 2.37 billion, but eventually reached a whopping USD 24 billion before the start of the games. In the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, the budget likewise skyrocketed from USD 660 million to 5 billion, and it took 20 years to reimburse the debt.

At the end of this whole process, the large-scale projects and events cause other more important projects in public interest to be shelved, and reallocate public funds and assets to private corporations. Recently, most such projects are implemented via a relatively new system called public-private partnership. In this scheme, the private sector is granted three basic incentives: public lands, in need of protection and complete with coasts, forests and water resources, are allocated to private companies; the state provides a purchase guarantee for the service to be delivered by the project; and the state acts as a guarantor when the private corporation asks for loans from foreign banks (Sönmez, 2013).

Abnormal projects

To elaborate the links between grandiose projects and urban transformation projects, let us take a more detailed look at Istanbul. In recent times, an abnormal spatial transformation is taking place in the city. Ongoing projects are set to be complemented by other ambitious schemes.

The Black Sea Coastal Highway, designed to be linked to the Northern Marmara Highway, shifts Bosphorus crossings to the northernmost part of Istanbul and requires the construction of a third bridge. The Northern Marmara Highway project is making progress at full speed, and the construction of the third bridge and link roads has already begun. Questions as to the function of such a bridge so far away from residential areas are answered with the claim that the bridge will attract transit traffic and thus alleviate traffic congestion inside the city. Since the exact same pretext was presented for the second Bosphorus Bridge, it can be seen as circumlocution. Our claims are also validated by scientific data. The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's own data show that the share of transit traffic in overall Istanbul traffic is a minor 2 - 3%. Let us also remember that the Istanbul Environmental Plan issued in 2009 did not feature this bridge or its link roads.

If we follow the link roads of the bridge, we reach the third airport planned for the Black Sea coast of Istanbul. Set to become the world's largest airport, this project is supposedly legitimized by the claim that the current Atatürk Airport is under threat as it is located on bird migration routes. However, research shows that the location of the third airport is also on the same migration routes, and furthermore constitutes a significant reserve area for birds. Moreover, a second runway is being constructed in the Sabiha Gökçen Airport located on the Asian side of the city, making a third airport absolutely redundant. The Istanbul Environmental Plan from 2009 does not mention the third airport, either.

The Council of Minister's decision outlining the boundaries of the third airport reveals the existence of a gigantic project which extends as far south as the shores of Marmara Sea. This space had previously been delineated as a reserve area by the abovementioned Law on Catastrophes. That is, it was designated to host the housing projects for those right holders whose homes are demolished. However, even before the Law on Catastrophe was on the agenda, the government was talking about building the New Istanbul here, which would be home to one million inhabitants. As one can guess at this point, this project which covers most of Istanbul's last remaining agricultural areas, is not even mentioned in the Istanbul Environmental Plan. Plus, the Bio-Istanbul project, which was to be located here and planned to be part of a global network, was announced in 2009, the same year when the environmental plan was issued.

The boundaries of this area, which contains many buildings that will be confiscated by the state, span from the ecologically rich Küçükçekmece lagoon on the shores of Marmara and nearby archaeological sites in the south, to Sazlıdere dam in the north, eventually reaching the Terkos Lake near the Black Sea. The "crazy" project called Kanal Istanbul, announced by the Prime Minister himself before the 2011 elections, will probably either connect these three lakes, or disrupt all the aboveground and underground water resources which feed these lakes. Considering that at the present, Istanbul's water comes from the flooded longoz forests near the Istranca Mountains and from the Bolu mountains, such an upheaval of water resources is a threat to both the ecosystem and the city's water supply. Furthermore, sea biologists add that such a project could jeopardize marine life by artificially linking the radically different ecosystems of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Even though Istanbul did not win the bid for the 2020 Olympic Games, the application file included many such projects which could wreak havoc across the forests of the north and various historical sites.

It is evident that such projects are meant to keep the economy vibrant by attracting foreign investment, and postpone a looming economic crisis already visible in various indicators. Otherwise, there is no need for any of these projects, and Istanbulites do not want them. As mentioned above, the cost projections of these projects are almost never realistic. Moreover, it takes a very long time for the project to pay for itself, not to mention the fact that most of these projects will only generate profit for a handful of private companies. The remaining ones will re-

main in the hands of private companies which enjoy revenue guarantees. The public will have to foot a huge bill, and watch their homes get demolished and household debt skyrocket.

All powers to the center

The centralization of all authority over urban transformation areas in the hands of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, and the execution of all the grandiose schemes by the central government form another key aspect of the matter. It must be stressed that district municipalities and metropolitan municipalities have no say on the issue, other than executing the orders of the center. The central government reserves the right to execute such planning and urbanization tasks itself in case the local authorities fail to do so. Local participation mechanisms, which already remain on paper only, are utterly eradicated by this centralized management. These projects are exempt even from the Environmental Impact Assessment process which allows for a limited participation of the locals.

During the Gezi uprising, government officials frequently suggested that democracy ought to be limited to the ballot box. The Prime Minister even upped the ante by stating, "Those who voted for me can be said to have voted for my projects, too." However, in the face of a resistance which forced the state to retreat from Turkey's symbolically most important public square for fifteen days, the government had to take a step back and propose a referendum. The local elections are ahead of us. However, they are becoming increasingly pointless in a system where all decisions are taken by the center and even AKP-controlled local governments have limited say.

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URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS
Weakening the local, reinforcing the center

Prof. Dr. Nadir Suğur

The new Law on Metropolitan Municipalities (LMM) came into effect on December 6, 2012 when it was published in the Official Gazette. The law establishes thirteen new metropolitan municipalities and twenty six district municipalities. LMM introduces very important changes in the functioning of public administration and local government. Let us take a look at the main provisions of the law.

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- All provinces with a joint urban and rural population of over 750 thousand people were turned into metropolitan municipalities. As such, thirteen new metropolitan municipalities were established.
- 34 new district municipalities were established.
- The metropolitan area boundaries were equated with province boundaries.
- In provinces that were turned into metropolitan municipalities, villages in rural areas were given the status of "neighborhood".
- The previous minimum population requirement for establishing a municipality was increased from 2 to 5 thousand people. A total of 1591 county municipalities were shut down for not meeting this requirement and were downgraded to the status of neighborhood.
- All villages turned into neighborhoods will be exempt from the various taxes imposed by the Law on Municipalities for a period of five years.
- All the counties and villages whose legal status annulled saw their personnel, mobile and immobile assets, receivables and liabilities, construction equipment and other vehicles transferred to provincial and district municipalities.
- Special provincial administrations were shut down.

- In provinces with metropolitan municipalities, Investment Monitoring and Coordination Centers were set up to coordinate various investment, incentive, maintenance, repair, emergency aid, disaster relief, consultancy, audit and other services provided by the central government. These centers are chaired by the governor or deputy governor.

What do the changes mean?

In Turkey, the most basic level of local government is the mukhtar's office. The new law turns a number of village mukhtars into neighborhood mukhtars. Because there are numerous differences between the respective authority and responsibilities of these two administrative positions, this is a crucial change. In villages, the mukhtar's office has the legal status to accept donations, file lawsuits, purchase mobile assets or real estate, and obtain official permits to allow locals to make use of public land (forests, meadows, wetlands etc.). Village mukhtars can set up a "village house" to host debates on concerns regarding the village as well as provide a venue for various social and cultural activities. However, the mukhtar's offices in neighborhoods do not enjoy these rights. The new LMM obliges the village mukhtar's office to transfer all their real estate, receivables and liabilities to the district municipality. All villages except forest villages will lose their legal status. Furthermore, county municipalities shut down for lack of sufficient inhabitants will also be stripped of their legal status, turned into neighborhood mukhtar's offices, and forced to transfer all their mobile and immobile assets, real estate, liabilities and receivables to the district or metropolitan municipality.

Here the most critical issue is the value of real

© NarPhotos

A view from
Gülsuyu / Gülensu,
a neigborhood which is
under a serious pressure of
gentrification

estate previously held by villages and counties that have now lost their status. Especially in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions where the tourism industry is expanding rapidly, certain counties and villages control very valuable real estate that now falls under the purview of large cities. At a time when TOKİ projects and urban transformation schemes have almost exhausted the public land stock, such valuable parcels might be transferred to private capitalists who adhere to a construction-centered growth model.

The new law transfers all the infrastructure activities in rural areas (roads, sewage, green space, parking services) to metropolitan municipalities. On the other hand, zoning plans by junior municipalities are subject to the approval of the metropolitan municipal assembly. All urban transformation projects initiated by district and metropolitan municipalities can only be implemented with the approval of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and the Council of Ministers. This provision totally submits district and metropolitan municipalities, whose powers are already rather limited, to the central government. Furthermore, the zoning authority of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization supersedes that of the metropolitan municipalities such that the ministry can now by-pass the metropolitan municipal assembly and directly carry out changes in zoning plans. This poses a significant problem in terms of local administration and democratization. These reforms grant the central government im-

mense powers over local government.

Another key issue is the establishment of Investment Monitoring and Coordination Centers (YİKM). In terms of powers and responsibilities, YİKM is the representative of the central state on the local level. Accordingly, 0.25% of general budget revenue will be allocated to YİKMs, which are authorized to reallocate areas located inside the boundaries of a province with a metropolitan municipality including all aboveground and underground resources, public real estate, and green areas that have lost their forest status. Chaired by the governor (or the deputy

Here the most critical issue is the value of real estate previously held by villages and counties who have now lost their status. At a time when TOKİ projects and urban transformation schemes have almost exhausted the public land stock, such valuable parcels might be transferred to private capitalists who adhere to a construction-centered growth model.

governor), YİKM is meant to carry out the functions of the central government in the countryside. The law defines the YİKM as a powerful extension of the central government in the countryside. Soon to be established in all metropolitan areas, YİKM is an organization that consists of experts who report to the ministry. YİKM will function as a center with immense authority in

areas such as investment, incentives, disaster relief, consultancy and auditing. For instance, in provinces with metropolitan municipalities, YİKM is the sole authority to decide on the establishment of coal-powered plants in rural areas, as well as the utilization of underground riches, dams and lakes by such plants. The metropolitan municipality does not have any say on such issues. YİKMs control such investments on behalf of the central government and have the right to authorize the construction of the -very controversial- nuclear plants, give a green light to hydroelectric plants, grant licenses to gold, silver etc. mines, and sell or rent to investors licenses to exploit iron ore, brown coal, boron, and other above and underground resources. Furthermore, YİKMs also hold the authority to give investors and developers access to areas such as olive groves, riversides, lakesides, areas that have lost their forest status, water basins, and meadows. The decision-making processes of a YİKM is totally centralized, and there is no regulation allowing for the participation of municipalities or NGOs. In brief, in the countryside, all costly investments such as infrastruc-

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ture and roads are assigned to the metropolitan municipality, whereas the strategic right to grant project plans, licenses and public lands for economically valuable investments is held by the YİKM. The authorities granted to the YİKM can transform the governor of a metropolitan area into a super governor of sorts. The local governments, city councils and NGOs are further weakened vis-a-vis this super governor. Legislation such as this, which excludes local organizations, naturally also lacks provisions for individual citizens to participate in decision-making processes.

The LMM gives villagers a five-year tax amnesty; however, at the end of this period, villagers, already in deep economic hardship, will have a very difficult time paying these taxes. After five years, villagers who make use of underground water for drinking or irrigation purposes will have to pay a fee to the municipality. In addition, villagers will be obliged to obtain a zoning permit for even the smallest animal

shelter, thus further burdening them with a variety expenses. Moreover, the "contribution fees" demanded by municipalities for sewage and road construction will likely overwhelm impoverished peasants.

The LMM has set up 34 new districts, and made changes to district boundaries in certain metropolitan areas. These decisions were made without any prior consultation with the local population, professional chambers, or NGOs. Boundaries were also changed in İstanbul's Şişli and Sarıyer districts and Ankara's Yenimahalle and Çankaya districts. This was done not to provide more efficient local services, but to shift the electoral balance in local elections. The Çayyolu neighborhood of the Yenimahalle district of Ankara is now a part of the Çankaya district. Çayyolu includes a large number of voters who vote for the opposition rather than the ruling party. This maneuver has made it much easier for the ruling party to win the Yenimahalle district in the coming local elections. Similarly, the Ayazağa, Maslak and Huzur neighborhoods were taken from the Şişli district and given to the Sarıyer district. As such, a key commercial, financial and residential hub of the city has been included in the relatively distant Sarıyer. Belgrad Forest, also known as the lungs of Istanbul, located in the same region, are where prominent construction firms carry out large scale development projects without any regard for environmental risks. This aggressive development drive in the northern districts of the city threaten forest areas, natural life and water basins.

LMM thus expands the powers of the central government considerably, while erecting barriers to the participation of local administrations, NGOs and individual citizens in decision-making processes. LMM is also problematic in terms of the principles of transparency and accountability. Neither city councils nor NGOs have been allowed a role in assuring transparency and accountability at the local level.

In 1985, the European Council issued the European Charter of Local Self-Government meant to reinforce the local government's autonomy from central government. Turkey signed this charter in 1988 but placed reservations on a number of articles. The remaining articles came into effect in April 1993 after being published in the Official Gazette. The 7 articles and 10 paragraphs on which Turkey has placed reservations concern issues that strengthen local government and grant them administrative and fiscal autonomy. The real reason why Turkey has made these reservations is the fear that these provisions would give autonomy to the Kurds.

Article 5 of The European Charter of Local Self-Government, entitled "Protection of lo-

cal authority boundaries" reads "Changes in local authority boundaries shall not be made without prior consultation of the local communities concerned, if possible by means of a referendum where this is permitted by statute." No such referendum was held in the county municipalities recently shut down. The European Charter of Local Self-Government states its main objectives as local government, democracy and participation. Although Turkey has technically approved these articles, this newly issued law includes provisions that strengthen central government vis-a-vis local authorities. Once again, the state has opted to define itself as the sole authority and decision-maker, at the cost of local democratic participation.

A pioneer of urban studies, Henri Lefebvre defines the "right to the city" as every urbanite's right to know what her/his urban rights are and to participate in decision-making mechanisms concerning the city. The right to the city protects disadvantaged social groups' (women, the elderly, children, those excluded for their sexual orientation, the disabled etc.) rights to a better life and home, better health and education services, a healthier environment and participation in urban administration. The new LMM, however, includes no provisions to protect these rights of those living in urban or rural areas.

David Harvey further elaborates the right to the city concept, suggesting that this right is not personal but collective in nature. For Harvey, it is crucial for city-dwellers to have access to urban resources through the correct means. However, what is really important for Harvey is that citizens can utilize these resources in a democratic way and thus have the opportunity to change the city. In Turkey, those living in the countryside can be said to enjoy such rights on paper. Yet, since the new law abrogates the legal status of certain village mukhtar's offices and county municipalities, the locals have lost their right to participate in decision-making processes. In the new law, it is unclear how those living in the countryside, far away from the metropolitan center, will participate in decisions concerning their future. There is no mechanism to protect the rights of these individuals, except through a special municipal assembly member who is supposed to represent the districts. It is unclear whether these special members can effectively ensure democratic participation.

The most significant deficiency of LMM is the fact that it was not open to public debate before being signed into law. Furthermore, NGOs, professional chambers and universities were entirely barred from accessing the draft law before it was signed by the parliament. Another problem is that the most basic rule of local government, that is, "a service should be provided from the nearest location", has been flagrantly disregarded. Since rural villages and counties

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YİKMs control such investments on behalf of the central government and have the right to authorize the construction of the -very controversial- nuclear plants, give a green light to hydroelectric plants, grant licenses to gold, silver etc. mines, and sell or rent to investors licenses to exploit iron ore, brown coal, boron, and other above and underground resources.

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have lost their legal status, there is now an even greater distance between individuals and the organizations that are supposed to respond to their needs.

To conclude, LMM has made local governments much weaker vis-a-vis the central authority. LMM includes provisions that strengthen the center at the expense of the countryside, limit the participation of organizations and individuals in decision-making processes, and vest the central government with crucial powers in key rural and urban projects. LMM thus brings about a restructuring of state institutions in the countryside and a re-centralization of local government.

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ECOLOGY
Slow philosophy

Rıdvan Yurtseven

In the process of globalization, we witness how thoughts about time and space are transformed, and social and economic functions evaluated in the context of a speed culture.[1]

Rıdvan Yurtseven
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We can observe globalization taking place primarily on three axes: Economic, political and cultural.[2] Economic globalization concerns the global market and involves the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Furthermore, it brings to the fore the diminishing function of the state and the rising importance of the free market economy. Political globalization results in the weakening of national social classes, making them irrelevant. Cultural globalization, on the other hand, concerns the processes by which local cultures and identities are eroding and losing their value. The dominant interplay between global economic, political and cultural globalization leads to a global standardization, which blurs distinctions between societies, and transforms them into structures consisting of homogenous, regimented individuals who then seek to differentiate themselves via consumption.[3]

Prior to globalization, space was an area where individuals socialized, acquired their identity, and experienced and expressed the said identity. However, in today's world, the homogenizing effect of globalization has standardized different spaces, turning them into areas without an identity or a past. While this process of de-territorialization does not necessarily reject local life or values, it superimposes global values onto local spaces, and makes it harder for people to distinguish and share local values, knowledge and practices.

Nowadays, individuals are trapped in a phenomenon of speed, in tandem with increasing responsibility and flexibility in professional and daily life. Speed is associated with productivity and professionalism. Against this phenomenon of speed, slowness can pave the way for alternative individual values. Opposing the globalizing world's notion of speedy living, Slow Life promises individuals change in the direction of a more ethical and higher quality life.[4,5] The idea of Slow Life can be dated back to 1986, when Carlo Petrini launched the concept of Slow Food in Rome, attempting to combat the rampant globalization of fast food. The main objective of the non-profit Slow Food volunteer organization is to respond to the needs of those individuals who are aware of the dangers of the homogenization of eating habits and loss of cultural identity.[6] The movement strives to protect and enhance the traditional culinary culture of national and local communities in the face of globalization. In a similar vein, Slow Life offers individuals not a relaxed lifestyle free of worries, but rather the chance to develop a lifestyle centered around the local community.[7]

The "Slow Movement" allows us to integrate creativity and slow spaces into our daily routine. Thanks to slowness, people get the chance to lead a life different from others. The concept of slowness can diversify time and space in the face of the globalized flow of life. It is especially noteworthy that the slow movement strives to protect the authenticity of each local space, preventing it from getting lost in the generic. Thus, the slow movement does not reject globalization, but rather, it suggests that intense communication and interaction is inevitable among individuals the world over, on social, cultural and political issues. Nevertheless, it also highlights the unfavorable aspects of globalization.

Slow food

About half of the world population lives in rural areas. If we add those working in cities in food

production and processing, we could claim that the majority of the world population is working in the food industry. Most of the techniques used in this industry are unsustainable. The produced food is bland, standardized, not eco-friendly, and frequently hazardous to public health. Our future can only be secured by food production techniques which are in harmony with the rhythm of the planet, deploy traditional methods, emphasize biodiversity and strongly respect gastronomic traditions in tune with the culture and economy of different corners of the world.[8]

Established in the Italian city of Bra in 1986, Slow Food was a response to the food consumers' concerns about the ethical and socio-cultural dimensions of culinary habits. Subsequently it was institutionalized as a non-profit international organization. Claiming that access to food is a human right, Slow Food focuses on the objectives of protecting local agriculture, food independence and biodiversity. Since its inception, its activities have been of a two-pronged nature: On the one hand, the organization strives to protect culinary and agricultural heritage via scientific research, and support for small-scale authentic production; on the other, it educates individuals by enhancing their know-how about native and traditional food.

Slow Food suggests that the industrialization and globalization of the world agriculture and food sector threatens the future of humanity and nature.[9] Successful local agricultural practices have managed to feed the world for centuries, also succeeding in protecting ecological equilibrium and integrity. Now, they are rapidly being replaced by mono-cultural global controls and practices. Slow Food suggests that these systems have an adverse effect on traditional means of subsistence, and authentic local cultures. This transformation has also eroded the support structures of ecological living, rapidly severing people from the bonds of nature, history and culture.

Global enterprises and technological advances, which were expected to supersede small-scale production to provide solutions to all global problems, instead aggravated the adverse impact on local economies and cultures. Technology encroaches upon the historical and natural processes of local production, and inflicts damage on ecosystems. These technologies create genetic pollution which modifies the air, soil and living organisms, accelerates global warming and aggravates climate change.[10] These adverse effects threaten ecological agriculture and the natural integrity of food. Global enterprises and technologies which destroy the authentic and traditional structures of local agriculture cannot provide an efficient solution. The transition from local food production to large-scale and export-oriented food production has wreaked havoc on the traditions, culture and well-being of local communities. Local communities saw their agriculture-related ceremonies and social practices dwindle over time. According to Slow Food, the solution of social, economic and ecological problems lies in transitioning to traditional agricultural communities which practice more local, democratic and participative small-scale organic agriculture, and refuse to give into companies, and insist on protecting their ecological and authentic values. These communities should maintain sustainable practices based on the principles of diversity, synergy and transformation.

Good, clean and fair

The Slow Food movement proposes a concept of quality centered on shared experiences. This concept has three dimensions: good, clean and fair...[11] "Good" suggests that the food has real taste, aroma and appearance. We become aware of this qualitative characteristic of the food when our senses are stimulated, as we compare different products and choose the more pleasing one.

The idea of Slow Life can be dated back to 1986, when Carlo Petrini launched the concept of Slow Food in Rome, attempting to combat the rampant globalization of fast food.

"Clean" refers to sustainability. It means that production methods are not hazardous to the ecological system and respectful of biodiversity, and yield food safe for human health. "Fair" concerns the economic and socio-cultural sustainability aspects of the product. This requires that the food be sustainable and ethically produced using methods that do not exploit workers or exclude good products. It also necessitates fair prices for both consumers and producers.

Slow city

The Slow City (Cittaslow) movement is an international network which aims to translate the Slow Food philosophy into the design and planning of cities. This network is spreading across Europe and other continents. There are 177 slow cities in 27 countries. Half of these cities are in Italy, while there is an increasing number in Germany, the USA, Australia, the UK, Norway, Poland, Turkey and New Zealand. The Slow City is designed to enable the locals and visitors to

improve their quality of life by sharing original ideas, experiences and know-how via international slow city networks. One of the objectives of the Slow City is to create a frontier before the global expansion and penetration of fast living.

The Slow City movement was born in 1999, when the founder of the slow food movement Carlo Petrini and the mayors of four founding cities (Chianti, Orvieto, Bra and Positano) signed the Slow City Agreement.[12] The Slow City Network aims to create bonds between elected officials, citizens and Slow Food activists so as to offer people services for a better quality lifestyle, raise environmental awareness, enable people to enjoy life, and share member cities' experiences on sustainable development.

Slow Life means that citizens have access to practical solutions and services which allow them to live a hassle-free, simple, and pleasant

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Slow City emphasizes local production by supporting local enterprises, local commerce, farmers' markets, fair trade and local exchanges.

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life in their cities. Slow Life, or "festina lente" in Latin, suggests a slow but efficient lifestyle. Slow Life requires one to explore new solutions in communications, transportation, operations, production and sales by studying the technologies of today and tomorrow, and by reviewing the best know-how of the past. Contrary to the trends of the current day, the functioning of the Slow City is based on a continuation of simple living. Naturally, this is a slower, calmer, productive efficiency but surely resulting in a more humane, eco-friendly city considerate of both current and future generations: a more respectable city amidst a globalizing world.

Aiming to improve the life quality of locals and visitors, the Slow City movement is well-known for the improvements achieved by member cities. A city must fulfill certain criteria to join this international network. The Slow City movement strives to improve environmental and urban texture by encouraging the use of technology. Slow Cities strive to promote communication and dialogue between local producers and consumers. They also support food production with eco-friendly, natural techniques for the purposes of protecting the environment, supporting sustainable development, and ameliorating the drawbacks of city life. Being part of Slow City is an indicator of quality for small cities. Only cities with a population of less than 50 thousand can become a member of the network. Slow Cities choose to improve the life quality of their

citizens, and accordingly, for a city to qualify as a Slow City it must meet the following criteria.[13,14]

Environmental policies

- Ensuring compliance with legal parameters on air, water and soil quality.
- Supporting and expanding efforts for the classification and collection of urban and private waste.
- Supporting and extending efforts to recycle household and industrial waste.
- Establishing sewage filters to treat urban waste water.
- Emphasizing the use of alternative energy sources (renewable sources, green hydrogen, mini hydroelectric power sources, biofuel, etc.) and devising local government plans to save energy.
- Passing legislation to prevent the use of genetically modified products.
- Regulating the displays of billboards and shop windows.
- Establishing systems to control electromagnetic pollution.
- Devising plans to control and decrease noise pollution.
- Developing systems and programs to control urban lighting (preventing light pollution).
- Complying with environmental management systems (EMAS and ECOLABEL or ISO 9001, ISO 14000 or SA 8000 and Local Agenda 21).

Infrastructure policies

- Preparing preservation plans for historical sites, registered buildings and other objects with high cultural significance.
- Ensuring vehicle safety and traffic flow.
- Creating bicycle lanes for facilitating transportation to schools and access to public buildings.
- Supporting alternative methods in private transport, creating pedestrian areas and developing public transportation (parking lots outside of the city center, escalators, establishing bicycle lanes near business areas or schools).
- Making public space accessible for disabled individuals, eradicating architectural obstacles, and passing regulations to ensure their access to technology.
- Devising programs to support family life and general activities (recreation, sports, home services for the elderly and the chronically ill,

social centers, public restrooms etc.).
- Establishing medical assistance centers.
- Creating green space and offering service infrastructure (interconnected play areas and green areas).
- Establishing commercial space for natural/organic products and devising plans to support this trade.
- Protecting local, authentic and historical shops.
- Making agreements with local shopkeepers to ensure that locals have a hassle-free shopping experience, and creating consumer-friendly shops in case such problems arise.
- Developing plans to rehabilitate rundown urban areas.
- Devising programs to redesign and improve urban space.

Improving city quality with new technologies

- Establishing bio-architectural areas, and making plans to develop and promote bio-architecture.
- Installing wireless communication systems across the city.
- Installing systems to monitor electromagnetic areas.
- Making plans to beautify waste containers and to establish waste water collection systems.
- Devising plans to promote the use of local and endemic plants to create public and private green space in harmony with local architecture.
- Devising more accessible services for the urban population (offering municipal services via the Internet and providing Internet education to the locals).
- Controlling noise pollution.
- Creating the city's color plan.
- Promoting and supporting a tele-work-force.

Protection of local products

- Devising plans to develop and promote organic agriculture.
- Creating quality guarantee certificates for products by local shopkeepers and artisans.
- Implementing programs to protect vanishing handicrafts.
- Protecting traditional professions under threat of extinction.
- Using organic, local and authentic pro-

ducts in school catering services, in cooperation with Slow Food.
- Implementing programs which offer nutrition and education in schools, in cooperation with Slow Food.
- Using and supporting gastronomic products with special recipes that are dying out.
- Cataloguing products specific to the city and supporting their commerce (activating farmers and the local marketplace).
- Cataloguing the trees in town and protecting monumental trees.
- Protecting and supporting local cultural activities.
- Supporting urban and school gardens to help develop local horticulture.

Hospitality

- Providing information to tourists and training the local population in hospitality services.
- Using international touristic signs and touristic guides in historical sites.
- Adhering to plans and policies to facilitate tourists' access to the city and certain activities (parking lots, flexible opening hours in public areas etc.).
- Preparing the Slow City Travel Guide (leaflets, web sites and the like).
- Ensuring that prices are transparent, and posted in front of the shops.

Awareness

- Informing the urban population regarding the methodology and consequences of Slow City to motivate them to join the Slow City movement.
- Creating programs to help the locals grasp the Slow Life philosophy.
- Developing programs to extend Slow Food and Slow City activities.

Specific requirements

- Taking measures to launch the Slow City action and identity campaign.
- Supporting and forming the Slow Food Presidia.
- Encouraging member cities to use the Slow City logo in official correspondence and open a section on Slow City philosophy on their web site.

Supporting Slow Food activities and projects

- Establishing the Slow Food union.
- Creating food and flavor education programs in schools in cooperation with Slow Food.
- Establishing vegetable gardens in schools in cooperation with Slow Food.
- Implementing Slow Food projects to protect products and species under threat.
- Using local products protected by Slow Food and ensuring the continuation of culinary traditions in school canteens (in conjunction with the programs related to catering services, conservation sites, and culinary education).
- Supporting local products in the context of Slow Food and Terra Madre programs.
- Supporting culinary associations and the Terra Madre project.

The Slow Food movement started in Rome in 1986, with protests against the opening of a McDonald's restaurant near the Spanish Steps. The movement set out to protect ethnic and regional cuisine, and to promote natural and traditional food production; however, it soon evolved into the Slow Movement, reaching far beyond the realms of food and nutrition.[15] The Slow Movement has responded to the concerns of millions of people fearful of being exploited by global companies in the market economy, and has started to question national and global agricultural and industrial corporations.[16,17] In addition to questioning the global business management perspective, Slow Movement has also advocated for protecting the cultural heritage, improving quality of life and ensuring sustainable development. Slow cities are an important part of the process, and constitute a significant step towards a city and world where people can truly enjoy life.

The relation between economic, political and socio-cultural localization and culture is frequently ignored. However, Slow City offers a way for local cultures to be supported and protected economically. The main focus of Slow City is local culture, slow production and consumption of food and wine, local and organic produce, and the protection of ecological equilibrium.

Aiming to help people enjoy life by supporting food quality, sustainable economy and healthy environment and traditions, the Slow City movement finds its main cultural capital in food, which is an inherent part of our cultural identity and heritage. As such, Slow City has turned into a popular movement which strives to protect local culture against global culture.[18, 19, 20] On the other hand, one of the most important components of the Slow City movement is the local economy. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, technological developments, which were expected to provide a solution to all global problems, instead aggravated threats against local economic and cultural values. As mentioned above, technology has also led to genetic pollution, which affects the natural life cycle of local products and modifies the genetic structure of air, water, soil and living organisms.[21, 22] In response, Slow City emphasizes local production by supporting local enterprises, local commerce, farmers' markets, fair trade and local exchanges. The protection of cultural identity, creation of sustainable local economies, and preservation of ecological equilibrium and bio-diversity are the main values which help the Slow City to maximize the interaction between the human and the city.

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ECOLOGY
Çıralı: Paradise lost

Yusuf Yavuz

"I was petting the neighbor's cow today. It recently gave birth to a calf they named Nazlı. A month ago, my neighbor's goat grew seriously ill. They couldn't bring themselves to butcher the animal. 'Why not?' I asked. She answered, 'I raised it myself. I don't have the heart'. I grew up in Germany, in a city.

Village life, which I had read about in novels, became a safe haven where I could rest my tired body and soul during retirement. I cannot understand why they destroy these living spaces that embrace us and provide us a remedy for the scars of consumption and exhaustion. I resent it bitterly…"

These are the words of Emine Aslan, an inhabitant of Çıralı. Aslan was a sociologist who worked on numerous projects on women's issues in Germany. After she retired, she had a small home built in Çıralı, a natural haven she discovered through friends, a place she has called home for years now. But Aslan's retirement dream is slowly turning into nightmare. The authorities somehow never finish Çıralı's zoning plan to make it a reserve area. The increasing pressure of mass tourism and the "2B" regulation, which opens certain forest areas to development, are wreaking havoc on the area. The Çıralı story is one striking example of how natural areas are ravaged by chaotic development for the purposes of rent- and profit-seeking.

The flames of Mount Chimera

Çıralı is a neighborhood in the Antalya province's Kemer district, Ulupınar village, a place world renowned for its natural beauty and a popular area for vacationers. Lately, however, Çıralı has not been making headlines for these characteristics, but for issues such as "land allocation," "land rental" and "protest rallies." An ancient lakebed also known as Kum Bükü (Sandy Beach), Çıralı ("Ablaze") is named after the famous legend of the Chimera. Today's Çıralı is scene to a drama which, although unrelated to the tragedies of the legendary heroes in the Chimera myth, certainly gives us reason to muse on Çıralı's past and place. The fires of nearby Mount Chimera haven't abated for millennia, and now they seem to mirror the impending disaster of Çıralı's inhabitants.

Endless drama

In 1946 the cadastral surveys on "lands governed and administered by the state" finally extend to Çıralı, then inhabited by only a handful of peasant families. Most of the area was covered by dunes, and some of the maize fields were defined as non-forest area in the cadastral report. Another cadastral survey in 1972 reached similar conclusions. However, the 1976 land survey defined land parcel no. 397 -the main focus of today's controversies- as forest area. In addition to that survey, in the "cadastral surveys on utilization" undertaken in the 1980s, most parcels were included as forest area, triggering endless lawsuits pitting the state against the peasants. Even as the lawsuits continued, another cadastral survey in 1989 excluded some parcels from the forest area.

Yusuf Yavuz
Born in Sütçüler, Isparta, Yusuf Yavuz has worked as a baker since 1984. Since 1996, he has also published numerous essays, articles, interviews and news items in magazines and newspapers including Cumhuriyet Akdeniz, Odatv, Yeni Harman, Edebiyat ve Eleştiri, Yolculuk, Evrensel, Atlas, Aydınlık, Birgün, Gerçek Hayat and Açık Gazete. He continues to produce content for print and visual media on issues such as archaeology, the environment, coastal areas, energy policies, agriculture, and rural life.

Five decares for an ox

This is how Çıralı's brief cadastral history unraveled, with its ups and downs. I knocked on the door of one of the local villagers, Sami Demir, to ask him what the people of Çıralı did during these land surveys. Sami Demir told me: "My grandparents bought this place in the 1320's [1900's in the Gregorian calendar]. Our land titles date back to that era... My dad was a yörük, a nomad. They bred their animals around here. Back then, you could get five decares of land in return for one ox or cow. Since it was so hot, not many people lived here, there were just three or four houses in Çıralı. When March came, they left for the 1400-1700 meter high plateaus of Korkuteli and Elmalı, they put up their woven wool tents over three stakes. Then they would come back in September…" Sami Demir also told me how they planted maize and sesame in the plains of Çıralı, now trampled over by tourists from

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all over the world: "We used oxen to plow the fields. After the harvest, we would go to the highlands. Since we planted millet, there were lots of mosquitoes, and of course malaria. After we harvested the millet in the field, mosquitoes would sting the horses, and the stings would swell and swell. We would bring the horses to the sea to wash them. One day I was lying sick inside the tent and I wanted some eggs. My grandma refused, but I insisted. She was mad at me: 'You fool, go on and eat those eggs and see what happens!' and slapped me on the head. Turns out, eggs are bad for you when you have malaria. Those were the days."

Sami Demir reminisces happily on his tough childhood in Çıralı. He swells with joy when he talks about how they went to Kumluca to harvest cotton for 10 lira a day, about how they herded goats, and set up a rudimentary greenhouse by covering the grain with pine branches overlaid with thick cloth. He remembers how an old nomad refused when they proposed him five decares of land for his five skinny goats, as well as many stories about Yorgo the Greek. But then he adds: "and then, gradually the tourists started to arrive…"

80 thousand beds

Before Sami Demir's memories about the development of tourism, let's set the stage for how the state opened Çıralı to development and rent-seeking. In the 1970s when Turkey needed foreign currency desperately, text books read: "Water leaves behind a mere trace; tourists leave behind foreign money." The state planned to develop tourist resorts in two districts in Antalya, with plans for the areas to the west of the city laid out by the Danish firm Ole Helveg. The firm's sole focus was the business aspect of the enterprise, planning hotels with a total of 80 thousand beds. The plan was heavily criticized for ignoring the natural characteristics and the residential nature of the region.

Nevertheless, despite the criticism, the Southern Antalya Tourism Development Project was given the green light in 1974. Launched with USD 26 million in infrastructure loans from the World Bank the final plans tried to strike a balance between the Ole Helveg plan and the Nature Reserve plan that emphasized conservation. Kızıltepe, Tekerlektepe, Kemer, Çamyuva and Tekirova were designated as development hubs, with remaining areas set aside as protection areas. Kemer was designed to be the center of this regional development with a total capacity of 25 - 30 thousand beds.

After the initiation of the plan in 1976, the region was legally declared a "tourism area" in 1982, making the allocation of public lands to private owners possible. After the allocation of lands was allowed, investment demand skyrocketed and the plan was revised in 1988 to bring the total capacity up to 52 thousand beds, then once more in 1990 raising it to 60 thousand beds. Initially designed to blend development with protection, the Southern Antalya Tourism Development Project gradually deviated from this objective, abandoning the protection of nature in the face of a construction boom. Tourist resorts were built right next to natural beaches in Beldibi, Göynük, Kemer, Çamyuva and Tekirova, areas which were within the nature reserve and therefore belong to the entire public. The boundaries of the nature reserve shrunk as private property continued its encroachment on public land.

Agro-tourism arrives in Çıralı

The overall trend soon started to engulf Çıralı, too. As tourism resorts reached the saturation point on the Beldibi-Tekirova line and investment opportunities there began to dwindle, investors started in on Çıralı and beyond. The people of Çıralı were not immune to the explosion of tourism in the 1980s, with some locals getting in on the tourism

trade, too. This did not go unnoticed in official circles and the state passed legislation to declare Çıralı legally out of the nature reserve area. Following that decision, Çıralı and its environs were designated a "tourism area." At the same time, there were some positive developments in Çıralı as some locals and NGOs worked together to develop agro-tourism, making Çıralı an attraction for its organic agriculture, as well as its historic and natural heritage. But inevitably, this attracted investors keen on cashing in on mass tourism and confiscating public lands to turn it into rent-generating property. The result was an unplanned, haphazard touristic development with building starting to encroach on the natural dunes, seriously threatening the environmental integrity of the area and pushing the dunes inland. Many of the monumental pinyon trees have died off and the arbitrary use of agricultural pesticide is contaminating underground water resources.

Unending legal lawsuits

In the early 2000s as Çıralı was invaded by haphazard development, it was suggested that a zoning plan was needed to protect the area. A NGO authorized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2000 to create a zoning plan waited until 2007 for approval. The majority of the inhabitants of Çıralı objected to the plan as interim developments were not included, and they filed a lawsuit. The Court of Appeal overruled the plan.

In the same period, as the result of a lawsuit, the wooded area next to the beach, which had been excluded from the forest zone in the previous cadastral report, was integrated back into the forest in 2002. Lawsuits about the boundaries of the forest remained on the agenda in Çıralı for long years. Meanwhile, the reserve area zoning plan was delayed for seven years due to red tape, drawing increasing criticism, while there are significant changes in what is considered forestlands. In 2013, although numerous villagers filed applications within the framework of the "2B" regulation, they have been unable to purchase ex-forestlands that have been "invaded" as land prices have skyrocketed.

What next?

The sociologist Emine Aslan says that Çıralı inhabitants are left uncertain about their future, saying they are subjected to a system of what she calls "bread, sugar, whip." According to Aslan, intimidated by rent-seeking groups, villagers are unable to join forces: "Villagers try to find legal solutions to protect their habitat. They want to

preserve the natural beauty of Çıralı, as well as village culture and ecological agriculture. Tourists don't come here for belly dancing and kebabs, but to enjoy alternative tourism in wooden bungalows. In Spain and Portugal, culture tourism has been destroyed. We must draw the necessary conclusion from such bad examples. The Ministry of Forestry says that Turkey is competing against China. They look at our natural heritage, and think 'How much money would that bring in?' They want to sacrifice our nature to rival China. If we can no longer drink the milk of our cows and eat the eggs of chickens we raise, how will we be able to share our nature and culture with tourists?"

According to Emine Aslan, those who have fled large cities to take refuge in places like Çıralı feel very bitter. Aslan says she welcomed the first rain of the year together with her daughters, who came to visit her from Germany: "Last night, the year's first rain fell on Çıralı. Before going to sleep, we watched the raindrops fall. In the morning, Mother Nature was purified in lush greens. My neighbor's chickens huddled in my garden. My daughters breathed in the sublime morning air. I said to them, 'You take refuge in this heavenly spot for three weeks a year, but it might well end up like the big cities you come from.' We talked about the crisis of humanity. I am deeply saddened by what I see and what I fear will happen."

Emine Aslan's sadness is shared by many other inhabitants of Çıralı, even as numerous others are keen to fill their pockets in the coming plunder. According to experts, it would be impossible to pass a special law for Çıralı. As such, villagers must unite, set up a cooperative and take collective action to settle land problems. For example, villagers recently won a lawsuit against the rental of woodland next to the beach to a private company. Meanwhile, in the chaos created by legal regulations and unplanned development, many beauties of Çıralı are lost one after the other. Nevertheless, as the yörük nomads of the Taurus Mountains know all too well, the oak tree will eventually take its revenge from the goat that devours its leaves.

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DEMOCRACY
Democratization package evaluated with the independent criteria prevalent in democracies

Ayşen Candaş

In this article, I will propose two independent criteria in order to objectively evaluate the government of Turkey's latest democratization package in terms of progress toward democratization. These two independent criteria – which ought to be institutionalized in any constitutional democracy worthy of the name – are agreed upon by thinkers and jurists such as Jürgen Habermas, John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin who study the concepts of democratic legitimacy, basic rights, justice and democracy.

Ayşen Candaş
Having received her PhD from University of Columbia, Department of Political Sciences (2005), Associate Professor Ayşen Candaş is currently a faculty member at Boğaziçi University, Department of Political Sciences and International Relations. Her main research interests are political theory and comparative politics. Candaş's studies and publications mainly focus on the deep-seated inequalities in Turkey, basic rights, constitution-making processes and democratization.

Whilst analyzing the package which has turned out to be a bland chapter in Turkey's democratization process – which seems as though it will last quite a while – I also think that we need to place this package in the more general context of universal standards. When we thus concentrate on the general scheme of things, there appears the need to discuss two sine qua non criteria of the regime type called "constitutional democracy".

Constitutional democracy is the regime type that has been institutionalized in the world's established democracies today. Not all constitutional democracies are alike and they do show significant differences; however, the two criteria I shall outline below are institutionalized in all of them. The concept of "constitutionalism" suggests that political authorities and the scope of political power that they wield should be limited according to specific criteria, and that, whoever comes to government, political power should be systematically limited in respect of these criteria and in favor of people's liberties so as to avoid arbitrary rule. Since the regime of constitutional democracy views constitutionalism in this fashion, democracy has a specific meaning in this system and that meaning cannot be expanded to include other meanings. As such, a regime is not viewed as a democracy if the party that receives the highest vote places limits on liberties, and establishes an absolutely arbitrary rule that is free of checks and balances. The popular election of the MPs who will fulfill the functions of legislation and execution is a necessary but not a sufficient criterion to call a regime democratic. In this regard, a democratic regime type must meet both of the following criteria fully.

The individual's right to discover and define her/his understanding of freedom alone or with others, and to experience these liberties under equal conditions with others – or, equal liberties. This criterion points to a political environment where equal liberties for all are recognized and put into practice. Individuals themselves must be able to define what they view as liberties. Unless they inflict direct and physical harm on others, these liberties cannot be limited and no other power can decide on what is to be considered a liberty. In brief, an indispensable criterion of democracy is equal liberties for all whereby individuals themselves define their own concept of liberty and left alone to pursue it, and not a single type of liberty for all imposed on all.

The second criterion, which completes or constitutes an integral part of the former, is that every individual should be an equal member or equal partner of the polity. This principle cannot be revised even if the electoral majority and the parliamentary arithmetic shift. All citizens of a democratic country must be viewed as equal members who enjoy equal political say and status. Even if individuals or groups form a small minority, they cannot be deprived of their membership, equal say and status by any parliament. Equal partnership means that decisions which affect everyone's lives, living space and their children's future are to be taken together, through reconciliation. No one can take or implement decisions despite the fierce opposition of others, which

crush the liberties of minority groups, affect shared living spaces, eradicate or limit the equal membership rights of certain groups. Such decisions might be taken and implemented in Reelpolitik; however, they would be neither legitimate nor democratic. Furthermore, this would constitute a breach of international law. As such, other countries or supranational political bodies would then have the right to oppose such decisions.

Turkey has never fulfilled these two criteria. In the future, Turkey will become democratic if and only if it puts these two principles into practice. Change which flies in the face of these two principles or disregards them cannot be called democratization, but at best, "new regulation". Changes which bring the country even further away from these principles would have an outright authoritarian character. In any case, there are only three possibilities: the country is either at a standstill, becoming more authoritarian, or becoming more democratic. It is possible to evaluate objectively which of these possibilities are observed in specific areas without falling into speculation. Steering away from the institutionalization of the two criteria would correspond to deterioration, leaving them as they are would mean no change, and implementing them in a more inclusive and egalitarian way would signify a political will towards further democratization.

Preparatory phase of the package

The very preparation of the package violates the principle of equal membership and equal say, one of the two indispensable criteria of democracy. The package was prepared in great secrecy and as far as we know, without direct consultation with anyone, and without any reference to the comprehensive reports prepared by various groups in other contexts, such as the committee of "wise people" (akil insanlar heyeti). There were leaks about its contents, but most of these turned out to be false. More importantly, the government held no discussions with the ethnic, religious and other minorities who suffer the most from social inequality and urgently need to reap the benefits of democratization be it women, men, working classes, organized social groups, or political parties. Not even the parliament was consulted. This was a clear breach of the criterion of equal membership and equal say.A broad consultation could have allowed the emergence of fair decisions concerning everyone's common life and living space, and minority groups' enjoyment of equal rights with the majority would have been guaranteed. Since this criterion was violated in the preparatory phase, right from the beginning it

was very hard to come up with a legal text which would uphold equal say and equal political status. The needs of social groups such as women, Alevis, Kurds, Roma, LGBTT individuals and the working poor, who suffer most from social inequality, were utterly disregarded, their NGOs were not consulted, and their demands were ignored during the preparation of the said package.

Content of the Package

Looking at the content, we see that its antidemocratic preparatory phase has directly impacted the it. The abovementioned groups are either not at all mentioned in the text (for example Alevis and LGBTQ individuals), or when they are implied or mentioned, there is no attempt to respond to their urgent needs (Kurds are implied, whereas the Roma are mentioned overtly but only as a subject of cultural study.) Conspicuous with its absence is any contribution to the peace process, despite the fact that all political parties have agreed to lift Turkey's reservations on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, and both the BDP and the CHP have presented parliamentary proposals to this effect.

As the package was launched, it was announced that some of the proposed regulations would be passed by the parliament, whereas the rest would be signed into law by the executive without any debate in the parliament. Since the majority party controls both the legislative and the executive, in both cases it will be a single authority to decide over the fate of the package and will act as it wishes. This is bad news. Discourses to the effect "Turkey or the nation is not yet ready for this" reveal that the government thinks that the society is under its tutelage. That is because securing the universal democratic standards and equal rights and freedoms of all groups and citizens without any exception is the single political will which can be most easily defended by the government, and would be supported by millions. However, the government chose not to do that and revealed a package well below universal standards. As such, it is a serious problem for the package to be passed without any parliamentary discussion. As they say, the devil is in the detail. The package includes certain elements whose implementation is not clearly outlined, and could well serve to reinforce authoritarian rule. The package is not criticized for not offering the elixir of life, but rather for lacking concrete and urgent democratization measures which would extend the regime's inclusiveness. In fact, some of the proposed regulations could well work in the exact opposite direction when combined with other current laws and procedures.

First, let us talk about the relatively more positive aspects of the package. The package claims to open a debate around the 10% electoral threshold and the electoral system, and characterizes this as a problem of democratization; however, the options that it proposes oblige one to ask whether it actually nips the debate in the bud. State assistance to political parties is expanded as smaller parties that gain more than 3% of the votes now become eligible for aid. This is a favorable development. However, the law on political parties is a heritage of the military regime of September 12th; and trying to reform the state assistance procedure without amending that law does not place any checks and balances on the government, but on the contrary, emphasizes its role as the ultimate authority to decide who gets what. A series of political reforms which should have been passed into law long ago and in a much more comprehensive fashion is thus presented by the government as some sort of a favor, and is reduced to money matters.

It is encouraging that the package frees political parties' of the obligation to establish county branches before district branches. Additionally, the practice of co-presidency is given legal approval. However, if this practice was illegal

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No one can take or implement decisions despite the fierce opposition of others, which crush the liberties of minority groups, affect shared living spaces, eradicate or limit the equal membership rights of certain groups.

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before, how did BDP manage to implement it for long years? Moreover, the BDP implements this principle to guarantee the equal representation of women and men, and on all levels of political organization. The model included in the government's package, however, quite obviously points to the co-presidency of two men. Furthermore, is it possible that the government might have proposed this model to prevent the rise of a strong prime minister who might rival a strong president, after the coming presidential elections? The package makes it easier to become a political party member; and the importance of this is strongly emphasized. However, this change ought to have been part of a much more extensive reform package which would abolish the limits on freedom of expression and association imposed by the September 12th regime. This change could turn out to be very positive, but might also serve to train cadres for an autocratic regime in the absence of freedom of expression and intra-party democracy. Electoral political propaganda in languages and dialects other than Turkish is made

possible. In actual fact, this was already being practiced. The package heralds the establishment of an Institution for Equality and Fight Against Discrimination. This article could turn out to be a very favorable development, but could also lead to serious problems, depending on how it is actually implemented.

Freedom to typewriters (?)

The new package introduces the freedom to use the Kurdish letters X, W and Q (non-existent in the Turkish alphabet), and this is described by some as "freedom to typewriters." Yet this is very ironic, almost like a step towards unmanned democracy, since the government does not even consider lifting the limits on the freedoms of expression and association. Right after the democratization package, the government revised the Law on the Entitlements of Police Force to allow for even more arbitrary use of force by the police. In a context where all citizens are thus declared to be potential criminals without any rights, "freedom to typewriters" sounds like a bad joke.

The package introduces the right to education in one's mother tongue, but only to those who can afford to send their children to private school. Some still consider this to be a positive first step in the direction of institutionalizing this right, albeit softened not to draw the ire of nationalist groups. Further below, I will try to show why in its current state this article creates another threat against the first criterion of basic rights and democratization – namely, equal rights and freedoms.

The package will also allow villages whose names were changed after 1980 to reassume their original name. This is good. But why is the pre-1980 period not included? There is no justification. The package also claims to guarantee the protection of personal data; however, in a regime of "unlimited interventions" where any expression can be prosecuted as a terrorist offense, what does the protection of personal data mean and whom will it benefit? Can this protection be effective even as incredibly elastic laws such as the Law on the Fight Against Terror (TMK) allow anyone to be monitored, and be arrested even before a crime is committed?

The package allows women with headscarves to become civil servants and provide public services. This step was expected from the government for eleven years; besides, it is not clear why certain professions are excluded from this scheme. As such, it is half positive. Only time can tell what this change amounts to in an environment where the concepts of gender equality and the equal representation of women are not even mentioned any more, and where female civil serv-

ant dress codes are severely limited with bans on short skirts and short sleeves.

Citizens no longer have to donate the skins of sacrificed animals to the army. This change was hailed by various social groups, yet this should not have been such a big issue, considering that we now have a new Turkish Armed Forces before us. Nevertheless, this still can be interpreted as a step towards economic liberalization. Undoubtedly, everyone must have the freedom to make a donation as they wish.

The University of Nevşehir will be named after the Muslim mystic Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, in a step to please the Alevi community. School children will no longer take the famous oath which praises the superiority of the Turkish race. This is positive. Mor Gabriel Monastery will gain back its lands which were subject to legal dispute. It is also claimed that real estate worth TL 2,5 billion will be returned to their rightful owners who are members of Christian minorities. This is very positive. An institute will be established to carry out studies on the Roma population.

When listed in this fashion, most of these articles seem favorable. However, the picture changes when we consider their context, conditions and limitations, and precisely what they will bring to whom in practice. Some articles are positive without doubt; for instance, the return of various real estate to religious minorities. Other such cases are the expansion of state assistance to political parties, and facilitation of party membership and party organization. These steps are necessary parts of any reform package which is supposed to contribute to democratization.

However, when we revisit these articles, we see that the 10% electoral threshold is left intact. It is as if the government is saying, "Either the 10% threshold, or one of the other two alternatives, which will help the ruling party control 3/5 of the parliament with 50% of the votes: You decide!" If these two alternatives are implemented with some gerrymandering, they will end up even worse than the current threshold. A rational actor might favor the status quo and this may have been already foreseen by the government's carefully engineered proposal. A similar problem besets the article on Institution for Equality and Fight Against Discrimination. The prosecution of hate crimes can never jeopardize the exercise of the freedom of expression, and is mainly meant to protect minority groups. However, the article only talks about citizens with a religious belief; such that it almost reproduces the old Article 301 which punished "slanders against Turkishness;" this time it is with a Sunnite twist. As such, anyone who expresses an opinion about the hegemonic religion might now risk a prison sentence. Far from reinforcing the much needed freedom of expression in Turkey,

such a measure gives the government the chance to mete out arbitrary prison sentences to all those who defy its increasingly sectarian ideology. Across the world, the debate on discrimination has included the issues of sexual orientation and gender from the very beginning, and "hate crimes" are usually implemented with the intent to protect minority groups. However, it is doubtful whether the current Turkish law on hate crime will protect the freedom of expression of religious minorities, let alone LGBTQ individuals. In its current state, this piece of legislation is tantamount to a new Article 301, further aggravated with harsher prison sentences to protect Sunnite Islam. As such, it is not a reform, but clearly a regression and Turkey would be better off without it.

> The very preparation of the package violates the principle of equal membership and equal say, one of the two indispensable criteria of democracy. The package was prepared in great secrecy and as far as we know, without direct consultation with anyone, and without any reference to the comprehensive reports prepared by various groups in other contexts, such as the committee of "wise people" (akil insanlar heyeti).

The article on the freedom of assembly is one of the most limiting articles. Some sort of a regulatory body is to be established. All assemblies and rallies will either be strictly controlled by the state or not organized at all. This article was little discussed by the public; however, it signals a serious regression as it is even worse than the current legislation. The new law will make government's intervention in rallies and marches even more systematic and even more arbitrary.

The package does not speak of education in the mother tongue, but "education in different languages and dialects in private schools." Education in mother tongue is a universal human right, protected by international law. Refusing to recognize this right and instead granting a privilege to those rich enough to send their children to private school is not an expansion of rights but discrimination against the poor citizens. The state is obliged to provide free education, and many international agreements signed by Turkey recognize the right to education in the mother tongue. Granting this right to students of private schools will create inequality between the rich and poor in basic rights, and thus create a regime of not democracy but privileges – that is, an oligarchy. Furthermore, since the Council of Ministers is authorized to decide on who can open up a private school, this is set to make Kurdish educational in-

stitutions dependent on the government in terms of ideology and capital. There are no transparent criteria which shall guide the Council of Ministers in approving the applications of such private schools. For instance, it is not clear whether a private school funded by the Diyarbakır/Amed Municipality would receive approval from the Council of Ministers.

Since most villages were renamed prior to 1980, the reform in this area cannot achieve much. Furthermore, it is not clear why the name changes before 1980 cannot be reversed. The article as it stands is very arbitrary or at least nontransparent since it does not reveal its legal justification. Such an attempt at justification would spark a discussion; but the government has once again chosen to block democratic debate.

One of the strangest articles concerns the re-naming of University of Nevşehir after a prominent Alevi mystic. This is strange, because in Turkey, the Alevi houses of prayer called "cemevi" still do not enjoy the status of place of worship, Alevis do not have freedom of religion and conscience, the perpetrators of the Madımak Hotel massacre[1] were promoted in the state bureaucracy, and the state refuses to turn this hotel where people were burnt alive into a museum of shame. Since Alevis suffer from such serious rights violations and discrimination in terms of the two main criteria of democracy, they cannot simply be satisfied with such a symbolic measure and say "We now have freedom of religion and conscience and have become equal citizens." Even stranger is the fact that the government can actually rename a university without any prior consultation of its commissions and organs, universities are supposed to be autonomous organizations.

The abrogation of the school children's oath is clearly positive. The oath is a heritage of the racist spirit of the 1930s, and is totally out of tune in a multicultural society. Even if everyone in Turkey were really Turks, such a practice would point towards an illiberal and far from universal education on civic rights. Obligatory religion lessons should also be abrogated in the same vein; however, they actually increase in number. We cannot bid farewell to racism, as long as schools continue to have compulsory religion lessons. These lessons are unthinkable in a multicultural society; even if everyone in Turkey were Sunnite Muslims, such a practice would likewise point to an illiberal civic rights education.

There is no talk of the Greek Theological School in the package. The Hagia Sophia Church of Trabzon has been turned into a mosque; and Hagia Sophia of Istanbul seems set to follow suit. As such, the state's long overdue decision to give back Mor Gabriel Monastery its own lands seems to be of a cosmetic measure. Far from being a sign

of magnanimity, such measures ought to have been implemented a long time ago, accompanied with the most sincere apologies. It is incomprehensible how a government which attaches such importance to religion can employ such double standards in affirming religious freedoms.

Due to ethnic discrimination, Roma have been condemned to a certain class position and specific role in the economic dividon of labor within the society throughout history. They direly need social rights which would set them free of this imprisonment, rather than a cultural institute which would probably highlight not their equality but irreducible difference. The Roma were obliged to work as musicians and dancers and sell flowers and baskets simply because they had no other option. As such, can these practices really be called cultural? We can hold a meaningful debate on Roma culture only once they are free to choose other professions, can continue their studies and not drop out of elementary school to earn a living, and are not ostracized from public services and other professions.

Women and LGBTQ individuals together constitute a significant majority in the society; however, not even their right to live is under protection. The package does not include a single word on gender equality or the equal representation of women. Freedoms must include not only women who wear headscarves, but also those who don't. Plus, there must be measures to encourage women find employment and become candidates in elections. Without securing the equal representation and participation of women in all walks of life, such a package would most certainly have no positive effect on female employment and political participation; this should not surprise anyone when it happens.

It is to the working people that we owe those much praised achievements in the Turkish economy; however, they are largely deprived of social and trade union rights. The package does not have a single word to say about them.

Judging by the two independent criteria of democracy, the government's democratization package seems very weak and in fact rather ambiguous, since some articles might steer Turkey further away from democracy in practice. However, had the government introduced universally accepted democratic reforms to institutionalize these two criteria of democracy, such an attempt would undoubtedly be supported by everyone – especially those in urgent need of equal citizenship and equal rights and freedoms, and all democrats.

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1 Hotel Madımak is the site in Sivas province of Turkey, where 35 Alevi intellectuals were burned by arson to death by a mob after traditional Friday prayer in 1993. (Editor's note)

DEMOCRACY
Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM) that can't (won't) prevent male violence

Deniz Bayram

In the last few years with the restructuring of the Ministry of Women and new legal entities, a new era in Turkey has begun in the area of domestic violence against women. This new era began with the establishment of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies which replaced the Ministry of State for Women. Additionally, Law No. 6284 was enacted and the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM) were introduced.

It is indisputable that there is great need for shelters in the struggle against domestic violence against women all over the world. Shelters are established with the goals of temporarily distancing women from environments of violence, helping them regain strength, and preventing and inhibiting male violence which is a barrier to women's basic rights and freedoms. In addition to shelters, solidarity, empowerment and enjoying a life without violence are the political goals that the women's movement has adopted in their struggle against male violence. The March against Physical Violence, organised in 1987 in Kadıköy's Yoğurtçu Park, coincided with the establishment of the Mor Çatı shelter that works within a feminist framework and creates solidarity among women. Many legal changes have been won regarding shelters through the policies and power of the women's movement. Today the political work of the women's movement regarding shelters and violence continues its struggle against a structure that is based on solidifying the family rather than empowering women. With the actualisation of altered foundations such as Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers and renaming shelters "guest houses", the lid is effectively kept on the suffering caused by male violence.

Turkey's first publically funded shelter for women was opened in 1990 by the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK). Until 2011, when the Ministry of Family and Social Policies was founded, the most wide-spread shelter services were provided by SHÇEK. With the closure of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, its activities were taken over by the Ministry of Family. In addition to publically managed agencies, municipalities and NGOs such as Mor Çatı provide shelters. With the implementation of the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers, the legal and structural positions of non-governmental shelters and their activities have become uncertain.

The new "Holy Family"

Until 2011, the Ministry for Women was subordinate to the Ministry of State. The fact that this ministry was referred to as the "Ministry for Women" was a result of the political demands and struggles of women. The addition or elimination of a word was not the matter, but rather the installation of a political program regarding women. The fact that the name of the ministry is the Ministry of Family instead of the Ministry for Women is a discursive device that reflects the political goals of the government. Since 2011, women's organizations have demanded that the ministry be renamed the "Ministry for Women and Equality" in every meeting and with every opportunity.

The goals of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy are not only reflected in the name change of the ministry. It is also obvious in the sidelining of institutions for women and the increased focus on

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family. The change caused by this new order can be seen in an extensive organizational structure including family guidance bureaus, family consultancies, family lawyers and family health centers. Thus, the family is (re)produced as a state institution through laws, legislative decrees and regulations. The Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers established during this process are not for the protection of women from violence; they are merely added to the long list of family institutions that serve to preserve the concept of the family.

One of the first items on the Ministry of Family's agenda was the amendment of Law No. 4320. The ministry informed women's rights organizations and let it be known that it wanted to undertake the preparations for the new law in cooperation with them. Law No. 6284[1] became effective in 2012 and was the first law to be enacted with counsel from the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers. Those working in women's rights naturally participated in the preliminary stages of the law drafting and fought for the inclusion of many beneficial regulations. The law was enacted after being cropped and altered by commissions and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey; new regulations that served to preserve the family were also included. The problems caused by the Law No. 6284 stem from the fact that with the new amendments it was transformed into a gender-blind law that men stand to benefit from. It covers how the authority given to police officers is exercised, rather than upholding its stance towards the struggle against male violence. There is so much to say on this matter that it would require a separate article.

Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM)

ŞÖNİM are regulated in Law No. 6284 under the article regarding of "The Establishment of Centers, Support Services and Inter-Institutional Coordination". In the article they are described as centers "that provide support and monitoring services for the effective implementation of preventative and protective measures and the prevention of violence, and which carry out their work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week." In the following articles of the law, the duty of ŞÖNİM is defined as the monitoring of the effective implementation of preventative and protective measures and providing support services within the context of the law.

In debates during the period in which the law was prepared, the most important reason for the existence of coordination units which would be active 24/7 was presented as preventing the secondary unjust treatment of women with the coordination of the consultation of women suffering from domestic violence to more than one institution

such as police stations, court houses and hospitals. Alongside coordination, activities such as the collection of data related to violence and the gathering of statistics were voiced among the responsibilities of these centers within the body of the principles of confidentiality. With the enactment of Law No. 6284 on March 8, 2012 ŞÖNİM were actualised on a trial basis.

This structure can be seen as an important development due to the necessity of data collection in the subject area of violence towards women and the requirement for coordination between the involved institutions. However, significant problems were brought about by the fact that the establishment of the ŞÖNİM coincided with the dissolution of SHÇEK, which had an established infrastructure and had been responsible for providing economic and social services in the area of violence against women since the 1990s.

Centralised institution of family

With the dissolution of SHÇEK, ŞÖNİM (the structure of which had yet not been established) took the place of an institution that had decades of experience under its belt. The first reason activists objected to this process was that the void left from dissolving a large institution like SHÇEK could not be filled by any replacement body working on a trial basis. In fact, the practical effect of this gap is the deprivation of the rights and freedoms of women who are exposed to violence.

In addition to the deprivation of rights, the centralist state understanding of these new establishments hoping to strengthen the family through its new administrative milieus within the structure of the state also becomes fixed. The administrative structure of state institutions as well as their organisation within the state apparatus is the most important determinant of how those institutions will work in practice. Just as the state has institutions that are subordinate to the organised central structure as well as to the hierarchy of that structure, there are also autonomous formations within administrative tutelage that are in a position to determine their own policies and which are public entities yet not part of the centralised hierarchy.

The subordination of a state institution to the hierarchy of a central body, or not having its own public entity and independence causes breakdowns and immobility due to bureaucracy. It also builds a state institution that reproduces the political ideology of the centers in bureaucratic processes.

While SHÇEK, prior to the Ministry of Family, institutionalised their own public entity as autonomous – exempt from the hierarchy of the state and as an authority able to make decisions within the

bounds of their own independence – the ŞÖNİM are directly subordinate to the hierarchy of the Ministry of Family and were established as being dependent on the Ministry of Family and Social Policy's Provincial Directorates.[2] The most pressing issue that needs to be debated is the dysfunctional nature of the administrative structure. In the historical process women's organisations have criticised the implementations and the arbitrary initiatives in SHÇEK's which caused women subject to violence to return to environments of violence, producing political rhetoric against it. No matter how much the independence of an institution occasionally brings about arbitrary implementations, the rhetoric of the current government, so to say the center, is the most crushing danger that will be posed by ŞÖNİM in view of the preservation and appraisal of the family and the reproduction of the ideology of the family through the hierarchy of the center in the face of the political pressure appears As of now, an officer working at ŞÖNİM is obliged to carry out the instructions of the center and cannot create a radius of action other than their instructions. This issue will increase the cumbersomeness of the bureaucracy and in turn the deprivation of rights alongside the dissemination of the family ideology from the center to the provinces. Thus, women who are

exposed to violence and who seek shelter through ŞÖNİM will encounter the same political rhetoric and its day-to-day application in accordance with the instructions of the Prime Minister and Ministers regarding the strengthening of the family.

This new administrative structure isn't only inclusive of ŞÖNİM but also of all the shelters that the women's movement has been struggling to keep open. As a matter of fact, in accordance with the new regulation[3] the shelters have been made legally subordinate to ŞÖNİM. With this legal regulation the shelters subordinate to the state, the municipality shelters, and independent women's organisations such as Mor Çatı are being legally obliged to accept the authority of ŞÖNİM, in which the rhetoric of the state is produced and a part of the hierarchical structure that abides by the instructions of the state.

For 16 years, the Women's Council, formed by NGOs involved providing shelters for victims of domestic violence, has emphasized the importance of solidarity centers that give the support personally required by every woman who has been exposed to violence. However, with the new legal regulation the subordination of shelters to ŞÖNİM does not serve any beneficial purpose but rather removes the function of solidarity (consultancy) from the cent-

ŞÖNİM: Women solidarity centers have become dysfunctional

The new Centers for the Prevention and Monitoring of Violence (abbreviated as ŞÖNİM in Turkish) have become a key issue at the top the agenda of women's solidarity centers and shelters. Until recently, there were two separate laws concerning shelters for women, entitled the "Regulation on Women's Guesthouses Established by Private Legal Entities and Public Agencies" and "Regulation on Women's Guesthouses Managed by the Institution for Social Services and Child Protection." On January 5, 2013, however, the "Regulation on the Establishment and Operation of Women's Guesthouses" was issued in the Official Gazette and came into effect. Consequently, all women's shelters organized by municipalities, NGOs, and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies are now regulated by this single piece of legislation.

The ministry claims that this regulation was issued in order "to standardize the establishment, operation, procedures, principles, personnel and audit procedures of Women's Guesthouses." Additionally it is apparent that the ministry is keen on giving a central structure to the mechanisms of struggle against violence towards women. The resulting centers are named ŞÖNİM. The ŞÖNİM were first defined by the Law No. 6284 entitled "Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women" and are "centers which deliver round-the-clock support and monitoring services to prevent violence and effectively implement protective measures."

The stated objective was to turn the ŞÖNİM into "one-stop" centers. That is, a woman who arrives at a ŞÖNİM would theoretically be able to complete the entire process of giving a statement, receiving health report, obtaining a temporary injunction, receiving legal, psychological and employment support as well as consultancy in that same center, to spare her repeated traumas due to visiting different agencies for each step. However, actual practice reveals that the system does not operate as claimed. That is because, the legal measures required to operationalize the ŞÖNİM have not been implemented. For instance, police officers claim that the law bans them from taking statements outside the police station. As such, this process is not carried out in the ŞÖNİM and women are obliged to visit the police station. The same is true for obtaining health reports. As a result, women continue to go from one agency to the next, and relate and experience the traumatic event again and again.

This brings us to another problematic practice. Before accepting victimized women, the ŞÖNİM oblige them to file a complaint with the police station – although there is no such legal requirement. Women are not informed that they are under no such obligation. Even when women directly apply to a ŞÖNİM and ask for shelter, they are obliged to go to the police station first – irrespective of whether the women actually want to file a judiciary application or not. This is a clear

ers because all the policies and authority, including the structure and work of shelters as well as the criteria that determine whether an individual may settle in sheltered accommodation, will be up to the discretion of the ŞÖNİM director.

Through the administrative subordination of shelters and solidarity (consultancy) centers to ŞÖNİM, it is apparent that the hierarchical stance of the centralist structure will also be implemented widely in shelters and solidarity (consultancy) centers. Just as this situation will bring about problems such as depriving women exposed to violence from being evaluated for the support they need according to their respective cases and instead being evaluated according to the instructions of the center – thus by its own bureaucratic system – it also means that the ŞÖNİM will hinder the shelter and solidarity (consultancy) activities of independent women's organisations and will allow it to intervene in their policies.

The political rhetoric of women's movements

With the realization of ŞÖNİM through trial implementations, the women's movement rallied against it at the Workshop on ŞÖNİM and the Struggle Against Domestic Violence, Social Policy and Laws organised by Mor Çatı in order to draw attention to de facto problems with reference to the new legal structure and women's experiences in provinces where the trial implementations took place. In the workshop, about 120 women from independent women's organizations and municipalities from all across Turkey shared information about and their experiences with ŞÖNİM. At the end of the two-day workshop the participants voiced their objections to ŞÖNİM in a number of areas. In their final declaration, they stated that the administrative and legal structure of ŞÖNİM constitute intervention in the activities of independent and autonomous solidarity (consultancy) centers; its structure leaves not one iota of discretion for women's organisations and municipalities in the work they undertake; they are set up in hard to reach locations and have no developed structure or standardization; and last but not least, that these centers serve both men and women.

The participants also sent the final declaration to the ministry and on March 8 they joined the feminist night march with banners that read: "ŞÖNİMs that serve men cannot prevent male violence."

Finally, in the 16th Women's Shelters and Solidarity (Consultancy) Centers' Women's Council de facto problems regarding ŞÖNİM were discussed.

breach of women's right to self-determination. We know from experience that, unfortunately, many women renounce their shelter application due to this obligation.

Women are also obliged to file an application with the police station during transfers between shelters in the same province. When a woman is to be transferred to another shelter for some reason, she is once again required to make her application to the new ŞÖNİM via the police station or is directly sent to the police station when she arrives at the new ŞÖNİM. The pretext for this is the claim that a woman might have suffered from violence in the previous shelter and that necessary measures need to be taken.

As per "Regulation on the Establishment and Operation of Women's Guesthouses", prior to being accepted to a shelter, women and children need to stay up to two weeks at a First Reception Unit to undergo the initial observation process, medical control and therapy, and an analysis of their psycho-social and economic status. However, this is not observed in actual practice; we see many women being sent directly to a shelter without the said initial analysis and consultation.

The Law No. 6284 defines the ŞÖNİM as units which deliver services to both "the victims and perpetrators of violence." Although the law states that these services need to be delivered in separate places with the exception of certain cases, it is well known that these services are delivered inside the same physical unit. Another key question is whether the same personnel serve the "the victims and perpetrators of violence"; and it is very probable that this unfortunately is the case, due to lack of personnel at ŞÖNİM.

The regulation on guesthouses states that only the ŞÖNİM are authorized to accept individuals to shelters. At the moment, the ŞÖNİM system is applied in a pilot test in fourteen provinces. The first such designated province was Bursa, and the Nilüfer Municipality Women's Solidarity Center is the only women's solidarity center in town. Here, we accept women's applications for the Nilüfer Municipality Women's Shelter. However, in almost all the other pilot provinces, in practice, women solidarity centers no longer accept applications for shelters. Designating ŞÖNİM as the only unit authorized to send women to shelters makes it hard for women to access shelters. As such, national and international resolutions to increase the number of women's solidarity and consultation centers has become null and void, and the centers have become dysfunctional. In the fight against violence towards women, it is crucial to increase the number of women's solidarity centers so as to show women that they can say no to violence and take refuge in nearby shelters. Besides, directing an applicant to another ŞÖNİM causes her to live through an unpleasant experience with red tape. Due to the trauma suffered by women subjected to violence, it takes a very long time for them to reestablish a relation of trust with the new center. Every time a woman is sent to

In the debates many women's organisations, in addition to Mor Çatı, referred to the experiences of women who consulted them following after they became victims of violence. Several mutual views were shared: ŞÖNİMs are not within easy reach of women; there haven't been sufficient briefings about their operations and structure despite the fact that they have been in operation for over a year; there aren't a sufficient number of personnel employed; and that the support service provided only refers women to other institutions instead of producing options.[4]

The policy of the current government is not only to refuse to see women as individuals and keep the woman in her traditional role in the family. Controling and monitoring women, their bodies, endeavours and lives and imprisoning women in family life is the essential aim of patriarchy and all sexist states. The idiosyncratic policy of the current government is that it instils this understanding in institutions of the state and in their organisational structure. By establishing structures such as ŞÖNİM, the government pretends to struggle against domestic violence. Thus, with this façade of support, the woman is erased from public space and pushed into the domination of the family in private.

Preventing male violence towards women and protecting women from violence is the responsibility of the state. Within the context of this responsibility, they have obligations through agreements signed in the international arena. The women's movement will continue its struggle against intermediary institutions such as ŞÖNİM that reproduce ideologies of male hegemony.

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1   The title of the revoked Law No. 4320 was originally the "Law Regarding the Preservation of the Family," which was the first law in the area of domestic violence in Turkey. This law was based on the goal of preserving the family. Consequently, the women's movement refers to this law by its number, "4320." From the beginning, women activists have objected to the title of the law. Despite women's objections, the new law has been enacted once again under the title "Law No. 6284 for the Preservation of the Family and the Prevention of Domestic Violence towards Women." Activists refer to this law by its number rather than its title to show their displeasure with this.
2   Law No. 662 Regulation on the Opening and Management of Women's Guest Houses under the Public Services Commission in view of Amendments Regarding Some Laws and Legislative Decrees through the Public Services Commission about the Organisation and Duties of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies.
3   Regulation about the Opening and Management of Women's Guest Houses.
4   The Press Release of 25 Women, The Final Declaration of the 16th Women's Shelters and Solidarity (Consultancy) Centers' Council (25 November 2013).

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a new agency, she is obliged to repeat what she has gone through to a new "stranger", and is thus traumatized again. Accordingly, to ensure that women can escape from violence, easily access shelters and exercise their public rights, every shelter must also be required to act as consultancy/solidarity centers where their first application is received and this must be observed in actual practice.

The existence of a single ŞÖNİM in a town, and especially in a large city, makes it very hard to reach them. The ŞÖNİM need to be located at the city center and be easily accessible. Nevertheless, in certain pilot provinces the ŞÖNİM are located very far from downtown, in districts where women cannot travel with ease. This situation makes it even harder for a woman to take a step out of her house, toward a life free of violence. We believe that shelters and solidarity centers should indeed be subject to a single regulation and standardized procedures. However, the tasks assigned to ŞÖNİM by the Regulation on Women's Guesthouses and our two-year experience suggest that, the centralized system created around ŞÖNİM leads to setbacks in the struggle against violence towards women.

The Regulation on Women's Guesthouses grants ŞÖNİM the authority to intervene in all the internal functioning of shelters. These include deciding on the times at which women are obliged to enter and exit the shelters, prolonging or ending their stay at the shelter, as well as transfers between shelters – issues whose details are known only to the concerned women, social workers and other shelter personnel. In Bursa, when the ŞÖNİM was established first, we ran into problems while accepting women to shelters via the solidarity centers. Now, however, we act in cooperation with the ŞÖNİM. Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that the law grants ŞÖNİM the right to intervene with the internal affairs of a shelter. The autonomy of shelters should not be subjected to the oversight of ŞÖNİM directors, and need to be protected with legal regulations.

Nilüfer Women's Solidarity Center

Active since 2004, the Nilüfer Women's Solidarity Center shows solidarity with women who suffer from or are at the risk of suffering from violence. The center defines its activities not as assistance to women, but rather as creating solidarity among women against violence, and waging a joint struggle. It is communicated to women that they are not responsible for violence, and that violence is never legitimate. The appropriate course of action is decided upon together with women. Women receive shelter support and psychological support; they are informed about their legal rights and how to exercise these, and are directed to the relevant agencies.   Nilüfer Belediyesi Kadın Dayanışma Merkezi. Tel: 0224 452 82 13 – 14 Address: Konak Mahallesi Konak Meydanı Meydan Apartmanı No:1 Apt: 3 Nilüfer/BURSA

DEMOCRACY
The German political associations:
Demon and enemy of Turkey?

Ulrike Dufner

Recent articles in newspapers and journals such as Habervaktim, Analitik Bakış, Hilal Haber, and Kanalhaber about the German political associations in Turkey are good examples of incredible conspiracy theories that lack any facts.[1] Moreover, it is worth analyzing the xenophobe, racist, and anti-democratic content of these articles which vociferously target German associations in Turkey.

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By spinning and inventing new conspiracy theories full of hatred, the real targets of these articles are not only the German political associations but also diverse groups and activists in Turkey taking a stand on (racial and gender) democratization.

By analyzing the content of these online articles, we easily see racist content, which according to Article 216 of the Penal Code in Turkey should lead to the opening of a legal case by the state itself, as these articles incite hatred, hostility and humiliation in the population of Turkey.

But what is the content of the conspiracies and who is being targeted? At the end of an article in Habervaktim, the German political associations are characterized as follows: "So-called German but in fact Zionist political foundations ("Sözde Alman, özde Siyonist") find the courage to be involved in activities that destroy the peace and stability of Turkey". The article continues and characterizes the German political associations as "the Trojan horse of international Zionism". If we use a content analysis method we can summarize these accusations as follows: German foundations = Zionist foundations = involvement in activities against Turkey. A further deduction from the content leads to the result that Zionism = against Turkey.

In another part of the article, the Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul is described as being under the control of the freemasons who were involved with anarchists during the bloody clashes of the 70s. We can thus conclude that: Mimar Sinan University = freemasons = anarchy = bloody clashes or: anarchy = bloody clashes; or freemasons = anarchy; or Mimar Sinan University = anarchy…

In the same paragraph, the organizing of a conference on local authorities and local participation was linked to the Gezi protests. We can take the following sentence as an example: a conference, which was organized by these "Zionist so-called German enemies of Turkey at a place which is under the control of Freemasons and which supported anarchy and bloodshed in the 1970s, prepared a master plan for the Gezi protests." The logic of this ideological framing is this: the Gezi protests = anarchy = bloodshed = freemasons = Zionist = work of the enemies of Turkey = Mimar Sinan University.

Concerning the Heinrich Böll Stiftung association (hbs), hbs is not only described as Zionist (see above) but also characterized as "being known for their support of the separatist terror organization" and shouting "Everywhere is Gezi" in its Perspectives magazine. To be brief: hbs = Zionist = supporter of separatist terror = enemy of Turkey = supporter of Gezi.

To sum up: In these articles, Zionism is frequently used as a synonym for "hostility to Turkey." If we search in Habervaktim about articles concerning Zionism, we find a self-defense of not being racist or anti-Semitic with an explanation that underlines the racist character of the article even more: Zionism is defined by Deniz Şar (honorary director of the Platform on cultural genetic thoughts and regular author in habervaktim) as follows:

The Jewish race (soy) has an eye on the existence and property of the Muslim-Turkish nation

(millet). This race has infiltrated almost every rank of our country. This is a national security issue. We call this in political terms Zionism. Turkey is occupied by Zionism. The identities of these people are camouflaged by Turkish and Muslim names. (http://www.habervaktim.com/haber/259372/turkiyede-siyonizm-tehlikesi.html).

Once more, Deniz Şar is insulting the Gezi protests as the work of the international Zionist enemies and their local supporters: the Freemasons, Shabbetay, and Jews. The equation of Zionism with a "race" leaves no doubt at all that we are faced with a racist ideology. While spreading these racist ideas, the "other" is accused of being the enemy of Turkey and state authorities are asked to stop tolerating the "work of the enemy."

We also do not need to ask ourselves where the limits of legitimate criticism against the policy of the government of Israel are to be drawn. The above mentioned articles clearly demonstrate that in these cases we do not have to dispute at all the argument that any criticism against the policy of the government of Israel is immediately equated with anti-Semitism. Circles like the above mentioned online news portals use such arguments to confuse those who are critical towards the government of Israel but who do not want to serve racist arguments. What is more, they try to give their adherents a tool to confront critics against charges of anti-Semitism. In particular, whenever a German expresses criticism of anti-Semitism, these groups use this circular argument and underline it with the faulty logic that Germans are not able to criticize the policy of the government of Israel due to their history. Therefore, whenever a German institution or organization criticizes these articles as being anti-Semitic, the authors dismiss these arguments as not being serious and as being a typical German reflex. This argument always confronts Germans when they criticize anti-Semitism. In fact, it is a completely unoriginal argument which is very often used to silence our criticisms and ourselves when it comes to debates about anti-Semitism.

Moreover, the structure of the above mentioned arguments is constructed in a way that targets everyone who is considered an enemy by these news portals. These articles are full of prejudices, lack any kind of objectivity, construct false realities with baseless facts, and thereby violate the ethics of journalism, democracy and laws in Turkey. Zionism is used as a synonym for bad/evil and is put into public discourse without any logical definition. The ideological structure of the discourse is based on equations culminating in the "sole enemy."

When searching in online publications on Zionism, I encountered a similar argumentation in the articles of Alper Birdal (http://haber.sol.org.tr/yazarlar/alper-birdal/akp-siyonizmi-25984) when he states that AKP is serving Zionism. This argumentation is similar, by the way, to the arguments of Necmettin Erbakan (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrIxqRIVIxE). Birdal equates Zionism with demagogy and fascism that rely on imperialism. He then equates this with the AKP. If you wonder and want to know how this logic works, here is the answer of Mr. Birdal: "The equivalent of the aggressive and demagogic discourse is reflected in Turkey in the AKP's attempt 'I represent the national will' and hereby 'imposing the hegemony of the renewed capital."

When having a look back at the reactions to the Gezi protests in Turkey, I do not wonder any more about the argument of Prime Minister Erdogan and many others declaring the protests as a work of the international interest lobby.[2] You can find overlapping arguments directly or indirectly referring to anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. May be this is also one explanation why racist articles based on anti-Semitic and xenophobic arguments that incite hatred in the population are tolerated and not prosecuted by the public authorities in Turkey.

I would like to close with the words of Ayse Hür from her interesting article on anti-Semitism: "As could be seen, hate speech grew in 2000 - worldwide and in Turkey. The linking of the old hostility toward Jews with capitalism and globalization, the camouflage of antipathy toward some politics of the USA and the state of Israel, the loss of nuances in the common language of a broad group from the neo-Nazis to the leftist Jewish intellectuals, and finally the mystification and aestheticization by the media of the "demonization of the Jews." The transmission of these ideas to the very far corners of the world by means of modern communication leads to a much graver situation than in former times." (http://www.birikimdergisi.com/birikim/makale.aspx?mid=62)

In Turkey, as German political associations we are increasingly confronted with such anti-Semitic arguments that not only try to demonize us and our work but also that of the people we are in contact with. The reason for such a demonization can only be explained by our efforts to support the democratization of Turkey.

1   http://www.analitikbakis.com/NewsDetail.
    aspx?id=69431&name=Almanlar-Neyin-Pesinde?
    http://www.kanalahaber.com/haber/gundem/gezi-senaryosunu-
    alman-vakiflari-mi-yazdi-146173/
    http://www.haberhilal.com/haber-Bu-Da-Alman-Oyunu-33412/
    http://www.habervaktim.com/haber/347612/bu-da-alman-oyunu.
    html
2   http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/24575971.asp

DEMOCRACY
In praise of Turkishness – an end in sight?

Özgür Sevgi Göral

The word "Turk" appears 54 times in Turkey's 17-times-revised 1982 Constitution. In the Constitution's Preamble, very important for both its introductory character and its content, the same word is used 10 times.

Özgür Sevgi Göral
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Apparently, junta generals wanted to drive the message home from the very start, making frequent use of the word 'Turk' to make sure that everybody understood just to whom the text was addressed. Even in the Preamble, it is evident that the word "Turk" does not refer to all citizens of Turkey, despite claims otherwise. Phrases in the Preamble use the word "Turk" or "Turkish" empathically: "Turkish motherland and nation," "the supreme Turkish state," "Turkish nation," "Turkish national interests," "Turkish entity," "the Turkish historical and spiritual values," "Turkish citizen" and "Turks dedicated to democracy."

Let us say that a preamble holds only a symbolic value in a constitution, we should look at key articles, too. In Article 5 of the 1982 Constitution, the main goal and function of the state is defined as "the protection of Turkish independence and unity." The famous Article 6 (also known as the article on sovereignty) first states that sovereignty belongs unconditionally to the nation, and later adds that "the Turkish nation will practice this sovereignty via the intermediation of authorized organs, in line with the principles laid out by the Constitution." The emphasis here is that the sovereign nation is the "Turkish nation" so there is no confusion over that fact in the second paragraph of the article. The Constitution also states that legislative and judiciary powers are to be exercised in the name of the "Turkish nation." The article on the protection of the family and children sta-

tes that the family is "the mainstay of Turkish society," thereby not only embracing a strong patriarchal stance, but also clearly stating what is meant by "society." The well-known article on "Turkish citizenship" defines all citizens as "Turks" and goes so far as to declare the state as "Turkish." The same article also states "the offspring of a Turkish father or mother is Turkish," defining who can be defined as a "Turk." In Article 76 on the election of MPs, it states that "all Turks aged 25 and above can be elected an MP," an example of how the word "Turk" is used to replace "citizen of Turkey." The list goes on, but this much is sufficient for the scope of this article. The very frequent and varied use of the word Turk in the Constitution suggests that the problem is much more complicated than it might appear, pitting the concepts of the "Turkish citizen" and "citizen of the Republic of Turkey" against each other.

Beyond constitutional citizenship

In the wake of the military coup of September 12, 1980, "the 1982 Constitution was approved by the Advisory Council on September 23, 1982 and by the National Security Council on October 18, 1982. It was then issued in the Official Gazette dated October 20, 1982, numbered 17844, and presented for a popular referendum. At the referendum on November 7, 1982, it was approved with 91.17% of the votes, and was then reissued as Law No. 2709 in the Official Gazette dated November 9, 1982 and numbered 17863bis." Certain admittedly 'highly controversial' sections of the Constitution, parts of which we are fighting to revise today, were added not by the Advisory Council, but written in by the National Security Council that

was established by the five junta generals. Not even the Advisory Council established under military rule dared to say that the first three articles of the Constitution should be made unalterable. Instead, in accordance with the traditions of Turkish constitution making, the only unalterable article was the one forming the Republic. However, the National Security Council revised this clause to ensure that the first three articles on the character of the state and the republic, the unity of the state, and the official language[1] would be "unalterable, and that any revision of these articles cannot be proposed." The preliminary text written by the Advisory Council does not include Article 42, "The right and responsibility to education and training," which introduces the ban on education in a non-Turkish mother tongue: "No language other than Turkish can be taught to Turkish citizens as their mother tongue in institutions of education and training." The National Security Council top brass added this phrase later on - as its odd wording in the original Turkish suggests - preventing Kurds and other groups not defined as minorities in the Lausanne Treaty from demanding the right to education in their mother tongue.

The issue clearly runs deeper than a matter of constitutional citizenship. We could even go so far as to say that, as suggested by the additions of the National Security Council top brass, the 1982 Constitution is essentially a text based on the supremacy of the Turkish ethnicity. Although throughout Republican history the notion of Turkish ethnicity has swung like a pendulum between the concepts of those considering themselves to be Turkish and those racially belonging to the Turkish ethnicity, assimilation campaigns have succeeded in making diverse Muslim communities view themselves as part of the Turkish ethnicity. Although the diverse uses of the word "Turk" in the Constitution suggests certain underlying political ambiguities, the main intention is to assimilate all citizens of the Republic of Turkey under the overarching umbrella of "Turkishness", and then to state that the only true Turks are ethnic Turks by underlining the distinction between a "Turk in essence" and a "Turk according to the Constitution."[2] As such, we can read the 1982 Constitution as legalized praise to 'Turkishness' that uses the supreme code in the legislative hierarchy of texts.

Today, the issue of equal constitutional citizenship is only the beginning. As a new and truly democratic constitution is written, we must eradicate this regime of double legal standards privileging the Turk, Sunnite and male citizen. Here there are many issues, such

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as the recognition of cultural identity rights, constitutional guarantee for the right to education in one's mother tongue, affirmative action to protect religious minorities, and special measures to ensure equal female participation in all elected or appointed bodies. The new constitution must introduce measures to ensure that all citizens can fully exercise their rights without violations. This would not only guarantee equal citizenship rights for those oppressed by mechanisms of exploitation and domination - for example, LGBT individuals, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Alevis - but also eradicate the privileges associated with being Turkish, Sunnite and male. As long as the privileges of Turkishness - which have been little discussed by academic or intellectual circles[3] - remain intact, it will be impossible to establish veritable political equality.

As suggested by the additions of the National Security Council top brass, the 1982 Constitution is essentially a text based on the supremacy of the Turkish ethnicity.

Commission for the New Constitution

The Constitutional Commission was established at the Turkish Grand National Assembly to scrap the widely criticized 1982 Constitution and replace it with a new constitution. The commission sought the opinions and suggestions of NGOs until May 2012, when it initiated the process of writing the constitution. The Commission was established with the participation of members of all the parties represented in Parliament: The Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's Party (CHP), National Action Party (MHP) and Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Three MPs and two consultants from each of these four parties are taking part in the process of writing the

new constitution. I would like to draw attention to an important point: Only the Peace and Democracy Party assigned a female MP to the Commission, making the 12-member Commission composed of 11 male MPs and only one female MP. Only three of the eight consultants are women; two of them are from the BDP, and the remaining one from the CHP. Even this fact alone gives us a clear idea about how the Commission will address women's issues and their struggle for equality.

The Commission held discussions and negotiations on the key issues of politics in Turkey: The Kurdish question, women's liberation, the Armenian genocide, the violation of the basic rights of Alevis, the recognition of LGBT individuals and their protection from discrimination, the right to housing, forced evictions during urban transformation projects, the eradication of military oversight, the right to education in one's mother tongue, democratic autonomy, and the creation of free-minded secularism. All four parties need to reach a consensus on every article. As would be obvi-

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As a new and truly democratic constitution is written, we must eradicate this regime of double legal standards privileging the Turk, Sunnite and male citizen.

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ous to anyone who has a rudimentary understanding of politics in Turkey, it is very difficult, if not outright impossible, for all four sides to reach consensus on many issues. But these are the matters that concern the violation of basic rights, the very issue that necessitated the new constitution in the first place. For instance, according to the BDP, education in one's mother tongue should be one of the main pillars of the new constitution, but this is absolutely inconceivable and unacceptable to the MHP. The MHP's role in the negotiations is important to understand; they not only put forth their own propositions, but they also draw political and discursive red lines against the proposals of other parties. The MHP's presence narrows the content and scope of the political issues discussed, and bends the language of the debate towards Turkish nationalism. The MHP is probably aware that its "importance" lies not in its propositions but rather the limitations it imposes; their main focus is not the elaboration of their own ideas, but rather inflicting discursive terror on propositions by other parties, in particular the BDP, and highlighting that for them, some suggestions amount to separatism.

Although all parties seem to agree that the

1982 Constitution is unacceptable, controversy is rife as to how "new" the new constitution should be. The current constitution will be replaced, but will the new constitution eradicate the privileges associated with Turkishness? How will the new text define the issues of decentralization and autonomy? Will the constitution secure the right to receive education and public services in one's mother tongue, or to use and develop a mother tongue freely in all walks of life? Will those who suffer from discrimination, harassment and damage to their person and honor - from LGBT individuals to Alevis - finally enjoy the equal rights of citizenship? In a society where war is waged against women - female homicides, imprisonment in domestic life, much lower salaries than men's, exclusion from politics, etc. - will women be defined as equal citizens and empowered through affirmative action clauses?

At the Constitutional Commission, the most critical debates turned around the BDP's proposals concerning the equal representation of women in decision-making mechanisms, as well as legislative, executive and judiciary bodies. The majority male Parliament is far from grasping the radical debates in the struggle for women's liberation, the hopes for a different world and the will to eradicate gender roles. As a feminist, it was interesting for me to hear certain arguments made in the Constitutional Commission that I had not heard for a very long time. After saying that "women are our mothers, sisters," MPs used archaic arguments to explain to us why it was not possible to have equal numbers of female and male governors. These men became angry at our arguments that female homicides are politically driven, and that equal representation is crucial for democracy. Once again, we witnessed firsthand how those in power are reluctant to relinquish their power. We saw how, unless the women's liberation movement in Turkey wages a struggle against the exploitation and domination imposed systematically upon women, this patriarchal world could easily continue with the same arguments for yet another millennium. For those who see women as equal to men only if they stay inside the home, the main concern is the continuity of the family. This permanently reinforced hegemony is the toughest barrier standing before the liberation of women.

Resistance against equality

It is frustrating to see political parties firmly resist change and democratization, even as

they claim that writing a new constitution is an urgent social need. There is a fierce resistance against transforming the constitution from a praise of Turkishness to a text that truly secures the political equality of all citizens. For example, the CHP wants the first three articles of the constitution to remain unalterable in defense of the original constitutional text of the five fascist generals whose viewpoint was even worse than that of the Advisory Council that wrote the 1982 Constitution in the first place. In another example, though the AKP rightfully suggests that the new constitution must stand against all discrimination arising from the public use of the headscarf, it claims that education in one's mother tongue is not a constitutional issue and should be resolved in the future with individual codes – a deplorable double standard. Again, the AKP does not refrain from all-out homophobia in discussions on equal civic rights for LGBT individuals. As such, mainstream parties reject even the most basic demands for formal democratization, preferring to keep business as usual with just a few small tweaks. The BDP's suggestions on this issue are branded "extreme" or "radical" and shelved as unrealistic fantasies that cannot be put into practice. The four parties can only reach consensus of less significant issues; there is as of yet no progress on the key matters of democratization. This is where the commission stands today.

A constitution of rupture

It is obvious that the new constitution will not resolve all political issues; in the end, legal texts are shaped by the day's power relationships and are bound to be revised over time. Accordingly, the new constitution cannot by itself install democratic autonomy, establish gender equality or eradicate exploitation. However, it can create an atmosphere that will allow the struggle for such demands to be waged under more favorable conditions, and it can certainly establish equality among citizens. This would both disrupt the mechanism making Turks "the dominant nation" and secure democratic progress. All of this can be made possible only by a constitution of rupture. Only a constitution that ruptures from past precedent can allow for the transition from a text regulating the privileges of the Turkish ethnicity to one regulating the rights of equal citizens. For the first time in Turkey, a civilian constitutional commission has been set up with the participation of all parties represented in the parliament. As such, all forces fighting for democracy

must create a wider alliance to strongly voice their demand for democracy, justice, freedom and equality at this negotiation table, a forum that can facilitate the democratic and peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question. The constitution of rupture can only be produced as a result of a collective effort. The degree to which democracy is institutionalized in a country and the oppressed masses gain their political

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and social demands depends not only on the character of the state, but also on the political and organizational capacities of those who struggle for a more egalitarian and just social structure. The new constitutional commission is founded on the struggles waged by tens of thousands of Kurds killed during all-out civil war, by Hrant Dink killed in broad daylight for discussing the Armenian genocide, by transsexuals beaten up on the street or tortured to death, by women killed for filling for divorce or finding employment, by all those arrested in recent years during the KCK lawsuit, and by everyone who fought against the network of exploitation. To ensure that more democratic articles are brought to life by this Commission, we need to continue our struggle, devise new strategies and methods to increase support for our constitutional demands and keep alive the democratic public pressure.

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1   A strange ambiguity must be noted here. Article 3 of the 1982 Constitution is entitled "The state's unity, official language, flag, national anthem and capital city," but the body text reads "The Turkish state forms an indivisible whole with its country and nation. Its language is Turkish." As such, the "state's official language" in the title is just the "state's language" in the text.

2   Yeğen, Mesut: Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa, Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2009.

3   The limited number of studies on this issue are as follows: Barış Ünlü, "'Türklük Sözleşmesi' ve Türk solu", http://www.tr.boell.org/web/103-1534.html, Kaya Akyıldız "Türklük halleri: 'yalnız ve güzel ülke'nin ruhu – 1" and "Türklük halleri: 'yalnız ve güzel ülke'nin ruhu – 2", Birikim, no. 274 and 289-290. Tanıl Bora's certain articles focus on similar themes, in the context of Turkish nationalism: Tanıl Bora, "Turkey'nin Linç Rejimi", Birikim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2008.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
The hedging strategy in foreign policy

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> Kemalist and liberal conservative discourses ideologically reproduce the political system they are a part of and in doing so they inactivate alternative approaches.

This ideological impact feeds a caricaturised historiography and a schematic theoretical approach, and is the cause of intellectual shallowness in political debates.[1]

The critique in relation to this ideological mangle should not be interpreted as a call abstracted from the value judgments propounded by positivism and an objective "scientific" approach. The issue is not about the debating of foreign policy by fake specialists who are not sufficiently competent and who do not implement scholarly approaches and methods, but on the contrary, it is about the restriction and marginalisation of the debates and the alienation of certain political values and attitudes. If we were to explain it through Jürgen Habermas's theories, it is the narrowing of public space by the colonisation of our life-world through the duality of Kemalism and liberal conservatism. However, the democratisation of the field of foreign policy is only possible through the inclusion of social groups in debates because the policy is being implemented in their names. In order for this to be realised, we first have to begin with a critique of the existing ideological framework.[2]

World politics post-cold war

Two fundamental factors that determined Turkey's current foreign policy emerged during the period stretching from the mid-1970s to the 1980s: 1) The neo-liberal transformation in the world economy and 2) The fall of the Soviet Union. These two developments were an indicator that the world order established after the Second World War was no longer valid. Contemporary Turkish foreign policy was shaped with the pursuits of an era when bipolar world politics ended. In the aftermath of the war, Turkey defined its security and national interests as being a part of the transatlantic alliance led by the USA. In this alliance Turkey was highlighting its geopolitical importance against the Soviet Union. The end of the Cold War questioned the function of the transatlantic alliance and brought forth the obligation of its redefinition.[3]

The approaches of mainstream international relations define world politics post-Cold War as "unipolar". According to this definition, the USA, with the capacity to use its military forces in all corners of the world whether it is on land, in the air, in the seas or in space, has become unipolar in international politics.[4] The balance-of-power theory, a leading mainstream theory within the discipline of international relations, hypothesised that other states attained balance through allying against a hegemonic state and that in this way the anarchic structure of international relations progressed. The fact that there hasn't been a military alliance against the USA, the sole hegemonic power of the system since the 1990s, obliges a theoretical and political evaluation of the discipline. Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth who state that the "states tend to balance against threats of hegemony over the system" as asserted in the balance-of-power theory, affirm that the USA is well past the hegemonic threshold and that it is very difficult to form an alliance against a hegemonic country. In view of economic, technological and military aspects, the USA has a capacity that is much greater than that of other states and all other potential alliances between other states.[5]

If the power of the USA is superior in the distribution of immediate capacity, it also has mobilised important dynamics that would in particular change neo-liberal transformation, the

world economy and its socio-economic structure. During the Cold War there was a division of labour between the USA, Western Europe and Japan. Accordingly, the USA was going to provide security and keep its market open to products produced by its allies to enable their growth. In return, its allies were to keep the dollar in their reserves and would give the USA the opportunity to grow and spend. However, this strategy, possible in a bipolar world, is face to face with great problems in the unipolar world. First of all, in the absence of the Soviet threat the allies do not need any significant support of the USA for security. Secondly, being the prevailing monetary unit, the American dollar is no longer the only reserve and tool of barter. Thirdly, the growth of Europe and Asia is now much less dependent on the American market. Growth strategies based on exports are being replaced with economic strategies that target domestic and regional markets.[6] In this context, it has to be emphasised that with globalisation the tendency towards regionalisation is on the up and regional economies are gaining importance.[7] The control of regions and regional powers becomes a main priority in terms of the USA's international superiority.[8] It has to be kept in mind that the ascendant economies, gradually gaining importance in view of world economy, are included in groups such as the G20 and that they form the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). However, based upon the aforementioned economic dynamics, to assert that multi-polarity is emerging would be tantamount to hasty and incautious reasoning.

Studies on unipolarity in international relations draw attention to the idea that the hegemonic state has significant consequences in view of its allies. A power that has attained unipolarity has decreased need for alliances. Therefore, second and third class powers become sceptical about receiving security from the unipolar power.[9] It is possible to understand the policies these states follow through the "hedging" strategy followed in risky finance and insurance markets. In this strategy, powerless states take precautions against the possibility of the deterioration of relationships with the unipolar state that could perhaps induce a military crisis or the unipolar power withdrawing the security and economic aids it previously provided.[10] The tangible policies with which this strategy is actualised should also be dealt with in each singular circumstance. However, in debates on unipolarity it is emphasised that powerless states would act in a way that would limit, affect or take advantage of the hegemony instead of pursuing a balance policy directly against the hegemonic state.[11] Turkish foreign policy has been implementing a hedging strategy based on this since the 1990s. It is beneficial to define this

context from which this strategy emerged when trying to understand the foreign policy of the AKP.

Turkish Foreign Policy in the neo-liberal context

Turkey's position in the world hierarchy directly affects the policies it can pursue. Baskın Oran characterises Turkey as a "medium-size state" (MSS) and qualifies and describes the concept as follows: "A medium-size state is a country that can take advantage of a favourable international conjuncture, adopt a state protectionist model and detach itself temporarily from the international division of labour, secure a certain level of development and then open up to the world on the basis of export-led growth."[12] Even

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According to Davutoğlu, regional powers such as Turkey can create space to manoeuvre in the conflict areas of great powers and super powers, and attain the status of ''great state''.

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though Oran asserts that a MSS is a regional power it has to be pointed out that there is not any theoretical or conceptual clarity on this subject.[13] It is assumed that regional powers have the largest share within the power capacity in their respective regions and that they can influence the entire region. Regional powers pursue imperial, hegemonic or leadership strategies.[14] In the Middle East, a stage for the intervention of great powers throughout modern history, the emergence of such a regional power was blocked and in this respect, a distinctive region was shaped.[15] As a matter of fact, serious criticisms about Turkey's assertion of being a regional power are being voiced.[16] In this aspect, comparing Turkey's relative size in the Middle East with the relative size of the BRICS countries in their own regions can constitute as a simple test. In this regard, we can define Turkey as a MMS positioned in a geography where regional rivalry prevails. The most significant problem of such a state in a unipolar world is to render itself indispensable for the hegemon and to use the effect it brings in competing with other regional states. I define this strategy that the Turkish foreign policy has been following since the 1990s as power brokerage in the sense that it is the regional mediator of power that does not belong to it.

In the 1990s, the administrations of Bush senior and Clinton were a period in which the NATO was redefined according to the post-Cold War conditions.[17] The principle question of that time in Turkey's foreign policy was: "What will be the place of Turkey in the new order?" As emphasised by Gencer Özcan, during that period "Turkey lost its strategic importance in view of Western security arrangements in Ankara's foreign policy circles and thus a concern

that its defence structure and ally relationships would be negatively affected by the developments became predominant."[18] In this context the foreign policy of AKP and its conceptual expression should be evaluated hand in hand with the Davutoğlu doctrine, Turgut Özal's neo-Ottomanism, Süleyman Demirel's vision of "the Turkish realm from the Great Wall of China to the Adriatic" and İsmail Cem's concept of "cross-regional, inter-regional and multi-regional power". Despite the periodic political and ideological differences between them, the aim of all these foreign policy pursuits was to on one hand to emphasise the geo-economic importance of Turkey in view of its accumulated global capital and on the other to indicate its geo-political and geo-cultural significance in regard of the regional governance of the global order. In this respect, the Davutoğlu doctrine presents continuity with rather than disengagement from other Turkish foreign policies in the post-Cold War period. We should take a look at factors that bring about continuity in further detail.

The start of the neo-liberal transformation in view of Turkey's addition to global politics is historically prior to the end of the Cold War and it is a process that determines the structural bounds of contemporary strategies. The neo-liberal transformation in Turkey was put into motion with the ingenuity of the 1980 coup d'état that brought the decisions of January 24 into being. This transformation can be summarised as a transition from the economic inward-oriented model to the strategy of export-led development, privatisation, international expansion and the deregulation of business markets. As with all regimes of accumulation, far from merely having economic effects, this transformation had long-term and significant political, social and cultural reverberations. In other words, the decisions of January 24, 1980 are the precursor of a social transformation beyond economic reforms.

The first effect of the neo-liberal transformation in view of Turkey's foreign policy was the development of its economic and political relationships with Middle Eastern and Islamic countries. Until 1986-87, the first Özal administration made use of Middle Eastern and Islamic countries as a market for its low-quality export products and construction services and also tried to reinforce the capital stock that Turkey required with Arab capital. However, when it became apparent that this strategy would not be feasible in the long term, attention was directed at the strategy of uniting with the European Economic Community (EEC). Prior to the 1980s, there had been a cautious approach to Europe due to the inferiority of Turkish business's lack of capacity to be competitive. Just as the Middle Eastern markets were insufficient in creating the export market Turkey's growth strategy required, the economic relationships with Middle Eastern countries could not be an alternative to establishing relationships with European countries in the area of technological transfers.[19]

In 1991, the First Gulf War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union changed Turkey's strategic scenario from top to bottom. In the bipolar world politics, the geo-strategic position Turkey had had against Soviet threats was the most important value that was able be marketed to her transatlantic alliance. The dangers of losing the unique geo-political status required Turkey, as it was said at the time, to emphasise its strategic importance in the New World Order. Özal undertook notable ventures in this context: the approach of neo-Ottomanism developed regarding South Kurdistan and the approach as a protectorate in view of Central Asian republics and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, which ended up being more permanent and successful despite the other ventures. Özal, who believed that new opportunities were forming for Turkey in global and regional post-Cold War politics, expressed this idea when he said, "Gates of prayer have been opened for Turkey."[20]According to Hasan Celal Güzel, Özal "had a plan to connect Turkey with the Kurdish-Turkmen federation, which was to be established after the events that might take place in Northern Iraq. This politics was a plan that could be evaluated within the framework of 'Neo-Ottomanism.'"[21] In Iraq, in spite of his prior assertions, Özal couldn't get the results he wanted with what he was willing to bargain with. However, this strategic concept called "neo-Ottomanism" that stipulated the expansion of the Turkish influence (if necessary within the bounds of a federate constitutional framework) into the Kurdish regions bordering with Syria and Iraq, also inspired the foreign policy of the AKP after Özal's administration.

In the 1990s, the National Security Policy Document was altered twice. In 1992 Syria, Iraq and Iran were confirmed as the principle sources of threat instead of Greece, the Soviet Union and its continuation, the Russian Federation. In 1997, the number one threat was specified as "reaction".[22] According to Şule Kut, "The innovation in this foreign policy wasn't that it reformed Turkish foreign policy or that it changed policies, but was rather based on the innovation of the international arena in which foreign policy took place and that the new era had given birth to new types of problems and opportunities. In the post-Cold War era, there weren't any radical changes in the core principles, approaches or even in the priorities of Turkey's foreign policy. In other words, Turkey's new foreign policy is in essence not much different than her old foreign policy.[23]

The Davutoğlu doctrine

It has been voiced by both supporters of and opposition to AKP that since it came to power in 2002 it has caused a significant fracture in Turkish foreign policy. It has been emphasised that the AKP, particularly regarding the direction specified by Ahmet Davutoğlu, has shown a more dynamic and active foreign policy approach in comparison to the traditional Kemalist foreign policy. According to this viewpoint, Kemalist foreign policy, acting from the perspective of Westernisation, was inward-oriented and defensive. In return, the approach expressed as neo-Ottomanism is outward-looking, active and bases itself on the self-confidence bestowed by imperial tradition.[24]

The Davutoğlu doctrine that took this difference as its basis is founded upon the adaptation of the dichotomy of the public and bureaucratic elite, which lies at the centre of AKP's populist expression, into foreign policy.[25] According to Davutoğlu, the reason why the great American, English, German and Russian strategic schools do not exist in Turkey is the identity crisis that has been experienced since the political reforms made in the Ottoman state in 1839, known as Tanzimat. What lies at the heart of this crisis is that elites of the state, who emulate the West and are strangers to their own people, have an inferiority complex and do not have the self-confidence to come up with an active strategic mode of thought. In Davutoğlu's viewpoint, the factors that implement the power capacities of a state through a multiplier effect are strategic thinking, planning and political will.[26] Davutoğlu defines Turkey's modernisation through the "divided self" concept of psychologist R.D. Laing: republican elites who have not been able to rid themselves of ontological insecurity are condemned to a passive and introverted turn of mind.[27] Thus Ahmet Davutoğlu's fundamental criticism in view of Turkish foreign policy repeats the historical narrative that forms the basis of AKP's political expression and the liberal conservative temper. The principle point of this narrative, called "theories of populist constitutional development" by Bülent Tanör, is that it explains our "political and constitutional developments with a formation they call 'bureaucracy' which embodies the 'contradiction' between the groups they call 'classes' and 'the public'. In this schemata 'bureaucracy' is the one which plays the role of the 'hegemon' and 'oppressor'".[28] According to Tanör, these theories of the Turkish right voiced by Ahmet Hamdi Başar and Celal Bayar also formed the basis of thought for Kemal Tahir, Mehmet Ali Aybar, Sencer Divitçioğlu, İdris Küçükömer, Murat Sarıca, İsmail Cem, Ahmet Yücekök and Bülent Ecevit, which led to these right-wing theories being in fact conceptualised by left-wing intellectuals.[29] Academic studies that explain the political development of Turkey

through the tradition of ancient state also contributed theoretical depth to this liberal-conservative narrative by the distorted interpretation of Max Weber.[30]

The political function of the populist narrative based on the dichotomy of the bureaucracy and the public was the unification of the rising middle-class and financiers with the urban poor, which emerged through the neo-liberal transformation in the 1980s and are on the losing side of Turkey's addition into global capitalism, in a coalition by the AKP.[31]

A concept frequently visited by Davutoğlu also became the cornerstone of AKP's internal politics: the initiative. According to Davutoğlu, only "societies with a strong sense of identity and belonging based on an understanding of mutual time-space can activate psychological, sociological, political and economic factors and with an established cultural structure can have the opportunity to realize strategic initiatives that can be continually renewed."[32] "A state that is not secure in its human factor cannot open up to new strategic horizons."[33] The metaphor of "initiative" taken in stride in Davutoğlu's book significantly permeated the daily political narrative and became an indicator describing initiatives developed by the government in relation to the problems in both regional and internal politics such as the Middle Eastern initiative, the African initiative, the Kurdish initiative, the Alawi initiative and the Romany initiative. In respect to grand strategies, Davutoğlu also mentions the requirement of a philosophical initiative as a precondition of a new initiative in the world order. For example, he suggests that the order of the United Nations, which he criticises because it is Euro-centric, should be questioned and made more inclusive regarding the presumptions it is based on.[34]

According to Davutoğlu, the post-Cold War world is formed of super states, great states, regional powers and small states. While super powers only consider super powers in their strategic planning, states in the lower ranks of the hierarchy are required to consider the strategies and tactics of each other as well as those states that are superior to them. Regional powers such as Turkey can create space to manoeuvre in the conflict areas of great powers and super powers, and attain the status of "great state".[35] Davutoğlu asserts that in the period post-Cold War, a development from bipolar geo-politics to balance-of-power model took place.[36] After the end of the Cold War, a short-term "monopolistic structuring centring on America" formed, but with the gradual emergence of the mechanism of balance-of-power, regional powers directed their attentions at suitable, flexible and alternative policies.[37] With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, geo-political vacuums formed in the region of Eurasia; Turkey is situated right in the middle of these vacuums that included the Balkans, Caucasia, Central Asia and the Middle East. The old republican strategy that used the geo-political position of Turkey to preserve the status quo is insuf-

ficient for preserving Turkey's security. Instead, Davutoğlu suggests that Turkey's global status can be raised by extending its regional spheres of influence and defines this as a "strategy of gradual initiation into the international framework."[38]

In this context, the concept of avoiding trouble with neighbouring states was a strategic approach put forth for creating manoeuvring room for Turkey. Turkey should have established a network of multi-dimensional and multi-track relationships that complete each other instead of establishing alternative alliances.[39] Turkey obtained an important opportunity in this path with the prestige it gained from the Middle East and from the anti-war American and European public when the memorandum of March 1, 2003, requesting the use of Turkish soil by the USA for their operation in Iraq, was rejected at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. In hindsight, even if this decision had an important place in evaluations regarding Turkish foreign policy, it is not possible to assert that the rejection of the memorandum was the result of an AKP strategy. Abdullah Gül, the president at the time, urged members of parliament to vote with their consciences. Bülent Arınç and Davutoğlu (the head consultant of the time) openly opposed the memorandum while Erdoğan (the chairman of AKP) wanted the memorandum to be accepted.[40] Therefore, in this respect it is not correct to evaluate this show of hands as a strategic breaking point in Turkish foreign policy. As a matter of fact, on March, 20, two days after Erdoğan became the prime minister and received a vote of confidence, the forces of the USA and Great Britain began their Iraq operation and the Erdoğan administration passed a bill that would allow the American planes to use Turkish air space through the assembly.[41] However, the distrust the memorandum of March 1 created in American-Turkish relationships and the exclusion of Turkey from Iraq after Saddam was captured affected Turkey's behaviour in the Arab revolts.

Following the memorandum of March 1, the event that was considered to be an indicator of Turkey's new foreign policy was experienced in the relationships with Israel. However, Prime Minister Erdoğan's "one minute" storm off at the Davos Summit in 2009, was a reaction to Israel's rejection of Turkey trying to be regional protector and mediator rather than an emotional and ideological reaction. As Gürkan Zengin (one of the journalists in support of the politics of Davutoğlu) points out, the two countries in the region were in opposition to Turkey's "mission of establishing order" and her initiative of founding regional peace: Israel and Iran.[42] Both the memorandum of March 1, and Turkey's relationship with Israel resulted in the idea of "axis shift", that Turkish foreign policy was distancing itself from Western alliances.[43] However, the assertion that a radical change was taking place in Turkish foreign policy was an exaggeration.[44]

Turkey's policies on Syria were also shaped by expectations of intervention. The government, calculating that the USA and NATO would sooner or later intervene in Syria, gradually cornered itself into a foreign policy with great emphasis on religion. Turkey, aiming to increase its own strategic value within the transatlantic alliance through its zero-trouble policy and striving to raise its global status with its regional influence, gradually found itself in a more isolated situation. The more Turkey became a party to the civil war in Syria alongside Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the more it became stuck in sectarian politics. In this respect, Turkey began to pursue politics in a way that clashed with the policies of the USA. The memorandum of March 1 should have shown the government that it couldn't force the USA into an action that it didn't desire. In 2003, Turkey had not been able to stop the USA from declaring war on Iraq and in 2013 she was not able to persuade the USA to intervene in Syria. However, in 2003 Turkey had pursued peaceful politics and didn't take any risks with regard to its own security. Thus, in this regard the interventionist politics Turkey implemented in Syria had great cost. The strategy Davutoğlu formulated was based on establishing an area of influence around Turkey and to meet the ethnic and religious conflicts outside the boundaries of the county by using that area of influence as a buffer belt. The bombing that resulted in the death of 52 citizens in Reyhanlı in May 11, 2013 meant the end of this strategy. Just as Turkey was getting out of a 30-year old conflict and entering a peace process, accompanied by a broad-based popular demand for peace and consensus for peace was achieved, the regional policies of the government carried the conflict in Syria to inside the borders of Turkey and the most tragic terrorist attack of recent times was to take place in Reyhanlı. The political narrative that emphasised Sunnism referred to by the government alongside the attack on Reyhanlı increased the worries of Alevi citizens for their security and also created a threat of denominational polarisation in the country.

In this context, the reasons behind the miscalculations of AKP administrations, beginning with an interrogation of similar aims and strategies of post-Cold War governments, should be questioned. The answer to this question lies in internal politics rather than in foreign policy. In a populist narrative, the Davutoğlu doctrine asserted that it is different from that of alienated republican elites because it is rooted in historical traditions and represents the people. The doctrine suggested that self-esteem would be enough to become a regional power. The historical reality this ideological approach overlooked was that republican groups had to retreat from the Middle East because they lost the war, not because they were Western. As Cox debates in the example of Japan, for an MMS to be able to act independently from the global hegemonic system it has to be based on a social order outside the dominant socio-economic model. The AKP, a

product and conveyer of the neo-liberal transformation in Turkey, does not have the will or the capacity to realise a change of this sort.[45]

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CULTURE
Gezi's universe of possibilities

Ezgi Bakçay

First of all, we have to emphasize that the experience we call ''Gezi'' is not solely about Gezi Park, Taksim Square or Istanbul, nor is it a finished or completed process. In the same vein, ''Gezi'' cannot be examined separately from its historical and social contexts — to understand it, we must understand what came before and what has happened since. It is not an oasis or a ''miracle'' in the middle of a desert. This emphasis is necessary because many, especially supporters of Gezi, want it to be seen as some sort of a miracle. They endeavour to carve ''Gezi'' into peoples' minds as an extraordinary disengagement and breaking point. That being said, this endeavour to represent Gezi is no less important than the material reality of the Gezi events.

Ezgi Bakçay
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Gezi's imaginary reproduction, which began while the Gezi protests were still active, had a determining effect on the reality of the events and still continues to do so. And, if Walter Benjamin is right, if "history breaks down into images and not stories," then it becomes apparent that it is an effective strategy to intensify and hide the totality of experiences lived in many areas of the country in May-June 2013 through the imagery of a park. With "Gezi" narratives, the public opposition in Turkey principally created a past triumph for itself. The issue here is a process of building, in which materials are images and where desires and truths intertwine. According to Benjamin, historiography is a kind of dream interpretation. The events experienced in those days continue to change as they are reinterpreted as dreams or nightmares with every passing day. As long as this reinterpretation does not turn into nostalgia, the endeavour cannot be underestimated. On the contrary, it is a highly

meaningful and politically effective method. No matter how little it represents the totality of the material realities, "Gezi" creates tangible effects on material reality as an image of solidarity and revolt.

The Gezi period taught us much about the political function of images. There has been a great deal of discussion about Gezi's "artistic streak" because the language and images used in Gezi protests had a strong effect on the "imaginary political area." But surely, what likeness can there be between a public revolt and "art"? What was the political function of the imaginary space produced by Gezi? In what ways was the trauma experienced in the political arena felt in the field of art? What does Gezi tell us about the deep connection that stretches between these two subject matters?

From representation to creativity

The social movement that began in order to stop the destruction of Gezi Park and spread to the entire country in May 2013 effectively broke the routines of the cultural sphere and the political arena. Gezi was one of those extraordinary social moments in which the social consensus we perforce accept and reproduce every day was shaken. And perhaps, fundamentally, it was the expression of a restlessness that emerged from the transformation of the state-citizen construct and led to the surrender of existing relationships of representation. Could the regime referred to as democracy allow the rights we possess over our bodies, environs and lives be handed down to the state or even to a single leader? The reply "No" in response to this simple question created an alliance that was previously impossible to imagine. It brought together people, who were previously impossible to unite ideologically and

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politically, against a single symbol of authority. Or, as it was expressed in Gezi: "Oh Tayyip, you weren't supposed to prohibit that last beer!" "Tayyip would you like Three Children like us?" "Tayyip, we're snogging night and day".

Especially after the withdrawal of the police from Taksim Square, the life that was imagined possible in the Park rendered all who questioned the competency of those able to do politics as political subjects. Gezi transformed into a self-organisation that deferred relationships of representation and surpassed existing political structures. There were many things that had to be done in a short space of time and a multitude of decisions that had to be made. And perhaps for the first time, some of us observed the tangible social effects of personal decisions and actions upon the people around us as well as the physical environment. Each and every individual who had taken his/her responsibility in view of their relationship with life, the city, other people and nature had taken a step into the realm of politics. This situation made political protests transform into a pleasurable event that was desired. Its pleasurableness was the result of a collective political experience in which everyone felt important. The pleasure could be attained by saying what they wished to say, representing what they thought with images, and becoming a part of it with a bin bag to collect trash or smelling vinegar to null the effects of pepper gas, or protesting by playing pots and pans, or even whistling. And, it was that desire

that ignited creativity: A desire to re-shape life, its possibilities and pleasures. Perhaps, it was a sense of pleasure named freedom.

Political protest was liberalised from the hegemony of representation mechanisms by Gezi and poured out onto the streets as creativity. Creativity strayed from the discipline of art, in which it had gained autonomy, and spread to the streets as both an individual and a social faculty. It is not enough to speak only of the bulldozer painted pink, the standing man, the whirling dervish wearing a gas mask, and the photography exhibitions and concerts. The desire to express oneself by producing practical solutions – the wish tree, radio, television, forums, newspapers; the virtuosity exhibited during the conflicts such as the performances of the body, its mutations and hairpieces; a new language: stubborn and shameless irony; spatial solutions that were quickly put together such as an infirmary, a kitchen, a library; rituals of solidarity and communion: collecting trash and cleaning. In the heart of the political protest there was something reminiscent of a gem hidden by artistic execution whether it was in the way images were montaged, the mixing of sounds, word play or revolt.

The images, performances, rituals, graphic expressions and manipulations of space produced during the course of Gezi made many people involved in the events feel something in relation to art. We had managed to tie together "creativity" and art with sleight of hand. How-

In the evening of May 31st, the mainstream media aired a documentary on penguins rather than the Gezi Protests. Penguins turned into a symbol of Gezi protestors.

ever, art in this meaning had to be pointing to something other than the creative activity of the subject called the artist, to something other than an autonomous realm of theories, history and institutions classified as modern, avant-garde and contemporary. The "aesthetic experiences" that were produced of their own accord, anonymously and collectively and that spread like an epidemic during the Gezi protests were not art. Yet, there was the sudden emergence of the mysterious relationship between art and political protest. I will be referring to this mysterious relationship as the "aesthetic experience" in the context of body perception.

"What rendered Gezi so staggering was that it saved daily life – numbed with mediocrity, gloom and tedium – from the paralysis it was in. This is exactly what revealed a secret passage between the artistic and political protest: aesthetic in the context of being saved from paralysis, awakening from anaesthesia, stimulating the senses of the body."

Aesthetic experience and political protest

What rendered Gezi so staggering was that it saved daily life – numbed with mediocrity, gloom and tedium – from the paralysis it was in. This is exactly what revealed a secret passage between the artistic and political protest: aesthetic in the context of being saved from paralysis, awakening from anaesthesia, stimulating the senses of the body. The Gezi protests were, above all, the aesthetic experience of the bodies that came together in a physical environment. Perhaps this was why each and every one of us had begun talking about how we had all changed irreversibly. As it was frequently said amongst those who participated in Gezi protests: "Our stance and outlook has changed. The relationship we have with ourselves and others has changed. We stand up straight and look people in the eyes. Our relationship with the streets and squares has changed. We now feel at home in the city."

Within this scope, the intersection of art and politics suddenly comes into focus. The meeting point for the artistic and political protest is in the truths they reveal; in how they render the hegemonic world we bow to untrustworthy by changing our ways of perceiving it. The pairing of the artistic and political protest eradicates the ever-rising wall between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the communicable and the incommunicable. In social life, this wall determines who sees and who is

seen, who is a creator and who is a consumer, and who is barbarian and who is urban. This wall is woven of images. When the wall is demolished once, it will inevitably seem like anything is possible.

Hannah Arendt says that political protest "is a varietal human experience in the form of starting something over". Art is political when it is a beginning and when it opens reality up to different possibilities. That is why Plato dismissed artists from the government. The effect of political protest is only artistic when it demolishes the so-called consensus that creates a society by determining the way bodies perceive. Hence, that is why, in all great social revolts, there is a sensory feeling of awakening which makes the participants think about the artistic, just as there is the same feeling in works of art. Walter Benjamin asserts: "In every true work of art there is a place where, for one who removes there, it blows cool like the wind of a coming dawn. From this it follows that art, which has often been considered refractory to every relation with progress, can provide its true definition. Progress has its seat not in the continuity of elapsed time but in its interferences-where the truly new makes itself felt for the first time, with the sobriety of dawn" (Benjamin, W., The Arcades Project). And as such, Gezi is also a moment, and in fact, it never tried to be anything other than a "beginning".

"Taksim is transformed into a work of modern art"

With the cool wind of the dawn on their faces, Gezi protestors turned anything they could lay their hands on into tools of expression. While the police were short of gas, the protestors were running low on spray paint. Paper, cardboard, cloth and paint were amongst items of basic necessity. On the first fifteen days of June there was a performance in every corner of Istiklal Avenue, a poem on every wall, installations and collages on every side street. The strategies of post-1960's Western art were aptly used during the Gezi protests despite the fact that there was no artist in sight: Irony, performing arts, collages, inversion, improvisation, mapping. The protestors were directly writing and sketching on the streets, not on empty leaves of paper. Expressions were chosen in accordance with the characteristics and memory of the chosen space. Graffiti did not point to a completed, finished and closed meaning; they gained meaning within their contexts. One example was the graffiti atop the Garanti Bank sign proclaiming, "Nothing is guaranteed". Or, in another example, the graffiti at the entrance to the French Consulate that remained there for

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months and in French read, "Poetry is on the streets". As slogans were transformed into poems, the line started by one person was completed by another. Henceforth, the conventional language and concepts of the opposition were derailed; it tripped up those passing by and expanded in a way that seeped through every hole. "We are the lines of 'Turgut Uyar'". And sometimes, the walls fell silent in order to give space to the imagination: "I couldn't think of a slogan!"

The city and space

The aesthetic dimension of Gezi protests primarily found nourishment in the direct and tangible relationship established between the city space and the strategy of occupation. The existence of a space in which people lived, defended and produced together heightened the sensory and imaginary power of the entire process. What rendered Gezi powerful was the desire to "experience" what was "here and now" rather than defending a different lifestyle that would be established sometime in the future. The effect on Gezi of the urban opposition movement, which has been active for over ten years, and focused on the effects of urban development in Istanbul in particular, cannot be denied. However, this movement conducted politics by expressing what was lost and defining future threats. The Gezi protests took back the city and,

even if just for a short while, created a play area out of it. Moreover, they domesticated bulldozers, helicopters, busses, police vehicles and the monsters of the city and made them their toys. Young people played football in Taksim Square as if they were playing in their own neighbourhoods; the matches all ended in draws.

During the protests, the city was regained through a "mapping" exercise. The co-ordinates of the physical space were re-arranged. Signs were removed from their places and moved. The signs in Izmir and Ankara began pointing at Taksim and the ones in Taksim indicated Revolution. The street known as "Tunalı Hilmi" was turned into "Tomalı Hilmi".[1] The new psycho-geography of cities marked with meeting and resistance points provided a feeling of belonging among protestors. While under thick clouds of gas one could not see beyond the end of one's nose, the city had touched bodies for the first time. The protestors, hungry, thirsty, sleepless and breathless, perhaps felt the tacit violence of the socio-economic system on their bodies for the first time. The bodies numbed by middle-class lifestyles began to wake. Bodies' captive to the anxieties of health and beauty revolted with irony: "Pepper gas makes the skin beautiful". Irony was the most powerful weapon that left the masculine, narcissistic and arrogant government irredeemable: "Mate, this pepper gas is awesome!"

In particular the woman in red and the image

The imagination of young people from the 90s generation in particular intertwined American films, comics, football culture and computer games and the political memory of the space.

of the burning tent we never really got to see, as well as images of immoderate police violence, broke the imaginary system that gave legitimacy to the existing government. Later, Gezi created a brand-new realm of imagery. Montaged images were ceaselessly produced, fed by contrasts and contradictions in which the local blended with the global, and older generations gathered together with the young. The protestors were merely surfing between the layers of collective memory. The imagination of young people from the 90s generation in particular intertwined American films, comics, football culture and computer games and the political memory of the space: "V for Auntie Vildan", [2] "Six stars now, the tanks will come GTA" and "Policeticons vs. Dirensformers".[3] Young people who saw the sand under the cobblestones during the conflicts at Dolmabahçe saluted the generation of 1968: "Public Beach". The aspirations of protestors in the 1960's were crystal clear. Now, a new genera-

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tion was trying to give new meanings to these hopes, linking the political symbols of years past to completely different contexts.

We must read all these images and image montages as intransigent and deceitful. The images produced in Gezi were not the representation of a unified and complete political idea or the imagination of a single future. They mostly expressed a desire for the destruction of existing mechanisms of representation. The fact that they were antonymous, contradictory and at times meaningless hinted at the plurality from where they emerged. We saw one thing very clearly; political struggle is at the same time a struggle to examine images. Governments want to define the meaning of images seamlessly, in a way that does away with elusiveness and polysemy. While governments endeavour to establish clear-cut relationships between images and meanings, the aesthetic-political protest opens meaning relationships to other possibilities. To attain this, it sometimes leaves the image empty as in the example of "Damn with Some Things". Instead of thinking of such examples as indicating something, it's better to consider them as an action

of concealment; concealing the clearly visible borderlines of identities, values, concepts and ideologies and, by doing so, allowing unexpected encounters to become possible. We see this in the function of two grounding images that come to the forefront in the imagery of Gezi: Clouds of gas and masks. Moreover, the Park itself, concealing those in it, can be considered to create a half-open space between the visible and the invisible.

The resistance

It is possible to assert that the given boundaries of that which was political in Gezi were surpassed when the political intersected with the cultural (the body, time, language, symbol and art) in a particular space. This was only possible through a transformation that affected everyday life in connection with the materiality of the space. Taksim Square was the nest of this transformation: The Square, built on networks that connect places of work with private life and entertainment venues, is physically easy to access, and has memories of a lot of political struggle; it turned doing politics into a desired praxis. Besides the explicit response "No", the Square and the Park provided opportunities necessary for collectively producing the foundations of urban political protest. During the Gezi protests, "common grounds" comprised of the social practices, relationships, the language, the memories, and mutual feeling, were created in the city. The tents, the kitchen, the library, the museum, workshops, forums, infirmaries, television, newspapers and radio were common places framed upon principles outside the bounds of the logic of their market values. This is why Gezi was not just a "resistance"; during a resistance, the axis of conflict is determined by the structure and strategies of the government. In some ways, the ones who resist play the role bestowed upon them. Gezi, on the other hand, takes its power from the fact that it is a playmaker, that it can imagine "beginnings". Hence, while doing this and because it has been able to do this, Gezi produced "artistic" political protests through its sobering effect. Both political protests and artistic production have had to look in the mirror of the struggle for freedom embodied in Gezi. Perhaps, the most beautiful expression of the collective life created was the ritual of trash collection which spread from the park to the entire city: "It was bedlam, they were gassed, they were beaten by civilians with sticks in their hands, the police left, and they cleaned Akaretler Avenue." In order to create a clean, just and humane city and life, people collected each other's trash. They took on this responsibility

with joy and high spirits; being proud of being a part of collective life. This "performance" is not the representation of a relationship that is possible to establish between the individual and society, but a direct embodiment of it. In Gezi's language, this form of anti-capitalist relationship is "solidarity".

We have so far mentioned Gezi as aesthetic and political in view of the bodily experience that changed our way of sensing the city and each other; as an act that produced relationships between labor and people outside the extent of the values of the capitalist system. By transgressing conventions, Gezi opened the life that extends between us and "the public space" to new political possibilities and produced "common grounds". This idea of common grounds does not only apply to tangible and physical spaces, but rather to an integrity that is comprised of social practices, relationships, language, memory and mutual senses in the city, and social media. Perhaps the concept behind "the spirit of Gezi" is the name given to this abstract integrity.

Gezi in art

During the Gezi period, artists first reacted by going to the Park without their artist identities. This shy reaction meant leaving the privileges of the artist identity behind. The collective existence of the artists in the Park did not go beyond providing logistical and strategic support to the protests except a few performances. The proposals of some sculptors to erect stately statues in the park were kindly rejected. Generally, artists saw the Gezi period more as an improvised performance and less as a platform.

From the moment the Park was hedged in by the police, the relationship between art and politics was debated through organisation, protests, space and publicity. As demonstrated in the example of The Orange Tent, the artists entered a heated period of debate about how they should organise themselves within their respective occupations. Artists' support was provided throughout various events during the resistance of Kazova workers, the Gazi neighbourhood and Küçük Armutlu. The will to produce practical works emerged together with social movements and political organisations. All these experiences were and are still accompanied by discussions focusing on the methods by which art becomes public and its relationship with politics. The general opinion post-Gezi was one that determined that it would, at least in the short run, be unsuitable for the representations of Gezi to be exhibited in galleries and art

fairs. In spite of this, we have come to view many paintings of masked protestors in a short space of time. Just like the books on Gezi that were written in a week, Gezi paintings also found their places on the market. Within the scope of the art fair organised in TÜYAP, the exhibition titled "Is There Intervention?" focused directly on the Gezi period. The most heated discussions took place at the Istanbul Biennial, the timing of which coincided with the post-Gezi period. The discussions situated themselves around an axis of adversity between Gezi and the Biennial.

In an interesting twist of fate, the 13th Istanbul Biennial also examined the subject of "public space" and by focusing on the urban transformation process in Istanbul, it posed the question of "Mother, am I a Barbarian?" The news that there would be hard political intervention in public spaces was disseminated from person to person. However, from the moment of its announcement, the contradiction between the theme of the Biennial and its organisational structure brought about heated debate from within. The most prominent criticism was founded on the idea that the kind of opposition brought about by the institutions like the Biennial, which popularise neo-liberal mechanisms of culture, veiled the grass root opposition involving social issues and class.

Despite all the criticism, the 13th Istanbul Biennial continued to define itself as "an autonomous space built on an independent infrastructure and a public, social and political forum". In the meanwhile, its art spaces were separated around the question of "Can social opposition be achieved through the Biennial?" It had to be party to asserting that cultural industries were one of the tools that legitimised neo-liberal urban re-structuring and participated in social movements that professed support of the idea of urban growth that focused on culture and creativity. Moreover, the Biennial invited the actors of the social opposition into its structure with the mediation of "public programmes". Just as this invitation was not welcomed, Biennial Curator Fulya Erdemci became a target of harsh criticism because she kept silent regarding the removal of a group who protested against the Biennial from the meeting by security.

Meanwhile, Gezi protests took place. After some time, discussions went on to assess whether the Biennial was still necessary. There were even those who suggested that "Gezi was the greatest Biennial". However, in the end, Fulya Erdemci expressed that she disapproved the exhibiting of works and performances in open spaces "without the permission of the authorities". The 13th Istanbul Biennial, which was initially planned to include many projects

that interfered with urban public spaces, was organised indoors. Free of charge, the Biennial exhibitions took place in Antrepo No. 3 in Tophane, the Galata Rum Private Primary School in Karaköy, ARTER and SALT in Beyoğlu and in 5533 in İMÇ Block 5 from September 15 to October 20, 2013.

This change of heart after the Gezi period crystallised the characteristics of public spaces as defined by the Biennial: A communicative, free public space for the bourgeoisie that is institutionalised between the state and society, but one that is independent from the enforcements of the state and the economy. It was especially meaningful that the Biennial was free of charge. In fact, the Biennial exhibited the magnanimity of capital that rendered all citizens equal beyond social, economic and cultural differences. However, what became crystal clear to many people were the state- and capital-drawn boundaries of the Biennial's public space promises. Nothing had really changed. If it wasn't for Gezi, the Biennial, by way of consenting with public authorities, would have presented the private space of the capital as a public space devoid of social contradictions. As the city spaces had become public through the conflicts, the Biennial had to withdraw into the same space of consensus; indoors. The Biennial presented the viewers with an experience of art filled with liberal democracy's promise of freedom within the private space of the elite that would protect them from the "violence of the state". Despite the violent behaviour of the state in Turkey, struggles to claim public spaces from authorities continued in the post-Gezi era on the streets as before the Gezi period.

As the Istanbul Biennial and other large-budget corporate events import the values of the global art environment, relationships and forms of production to Turkey. Since Gezi the voices of artists who refuse to play the game according to the rules of the elite have been louder than ever. New art groups and spaces are emerging in all corners of the city. The current period heralds the good news that new ideas in the politics of art and new events within the fields of music, performing arts and fine art are emerging as well as the creation of independent spaces and models of the relationship between art and production. It is early yet to speak about the future of such endeavours. However, there is one apparent situation. Gezi's "common grounds" spirit has found embodiment particularly in the Anatolian side of the city. The first occupation house of Turkey emerged out of the dynamic of the Windmill Forum initiated in July. A four story building which had been under construction for 15 years in the Yeldeğirmeni (Windmill)

neighbourhood of Kadıköy was occupied by a group of people from the neighbourhood solidarity organization and transformed into a centre of culture. The house can be assessed as an aesthetic and political protest because it was brought to life by imagining a world beyond capitalist social relationships and not because artists will be active in the building.

A new imagination

The public riot which began on May 31 and spread to the four corners of the country like an epidemic was above all "creative" for people of all walks of life. The Gezi protests created some historical moments in which we could imagine a world beyond capitalist social relationships and outside corporate public spaces. In this manner, the political protests had a power that made all involved think of art. We experienced a time in which a public artistic understanding excited many people much more than the art represented by the Biennial. The aesthetic experience encountered in the streets and in squares smashed the alchemy of bourgeoisie institutionalism into smithereens.

The aesthetic experience of Gezi cannot be directly related to "art" as a microcosm institutionalised by being liberated from other social practices at certain times and in certain places. Neither can it be found in routine forms of political protest produced in the waters of bourgeoisie institutionalism or in the consensus climate of parliamentary democracy. Thus, it opens up a universe of possibilities for both areas. No doubt, when Gezi is considered solely, it loses the ability to fully transform the field of art or the political arena. However, there are events in history that create room for new possibilities in the future through social memory alone. And it seems that, in this context, the image of Gezi will possibly ignite "creativity" in both art and politics for generations to come.

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1 Translator's Note: In Turkish the word for armoured water cannon vehicles is abbreviated as "toma" ("Toplumsal Olaylara Müdahale Aracı" is literally translated as, "Intervention Vehicle for Social Events"). These vehicles are designed for riot control by the Turkish company, Nurol Makina. They are used by the Turkish National Police and the Turkish Gendarmerie, and are also exported to countries such as Azerbaijan, Libya, Zimbabwe, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

2 T.N: "V for Auntie Vildan" is a slogan inspired by the Hollywood block-buster "V for Vendetta". Referred to as "Auntie Vildan" to convey endearment and sympathy, Vildan was a protestor who participated in the Gezi Resistance wearing a Guy Fawkes mask.

3 Diren is Turkish for "Resist" (editor's note).

HUMAN LANDSCAPE
Wooden-sworded knight of the last Roman castle, or the cry of a human rights defender

Muherrem Erbey

My childhood passed in the neighbourhood of Suriçi, where the beautiful and ancient Diyarbakır Castle is located. Life there was built upon solidarity and sharing.

Behind those huge walls, we were a large family. In winter and summer, I did all I could to aid people – whether that was carrying firewood to the elderly or running food platters to the neighbours. I drew great satisfaction and pleasure from helping others. There wasn't a drop of selfishness in our community. I grew up with the mind-set that "helping others is the most fundamental human characteristic." In the fortitude of those five thousand year old city walls and in the resilience of streets traversed by 34 civilisations, I found the love and strength to aid those in sorrow, those in grief. We children stood at the main gate of the castle with wooden swords in our hands. We didn't have money but we were very content. Growing up with the spirit of the last knight protecting the Amed Castle, the last castle of the Roman Empire in the east, I learned to share and provide support to others.

Later we moved to the Bağlar neighbourhood, where immense vineyards stretched from one end to the other. I went to school in that neighbourhood. I was scared walking over rail tracks to get to that school and back home. I graduated from high school in 1985. I grew up in a house with a single room along with my eight siblings. Over time, I felt that Diyarbakır was too small for me. In 1990, I left for Istanbul Faculty of Law, my choice university. When I saw the sea for the first time, I was mesmerised. The intense political arena of Istanbul, the hustle and bustle of the city, the relationships between urbanites, sent me reeling as well. For three years, distracted and disoriented, I couldn't

study. I realised later that I was trying to find myself. It turns out I wasn't on those streets – and neither were my aspirations.

The call of the East

Scientists have found that the first humans spread out into the world from the Great Rift Valley in Kenya and that the first civilisation emerged in the east, in Mesopotamia. It must be that humankind

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"I truly believe that the pleasure and honour of being a member of the HRA family, one of the most honourable and respectable institutions in the world, will have a lasting effect on myself, my children, and future generations. The HRA was like a school to me, one in which I found myself and my humanity."

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never forgot about the east – perhaps it is even that we could never find peace anywhere else. The answers to the secrets and mysteries of humanity are in the east. If one wants to see, to know oneself, one has to return to the east, in other words, return to oneself. The east calls humans with purity of intention. Some ears hear the call, they feel it, and so they answer it, while others do not. Macedonian Alexander heard that call one morning when he was 21 – and answered it. Looking for the source of that voice, he travelled to the east and conquered all of Asia before finally dying there in the east at the age of 34, still in pursuit.

From the moment I arrived in Istanbul, the east kept calling me back. So, I answered the voice manifest in me and decided to return to my Diyarbakır, that ancient city that woke the desire to conquer in many kings, emperors, sultans, sheikhs, and emirs, and where I was born and spent my childhood. I returned to find myself. I

Muharrem Erbey
Muharrem Erbey, Aged 40, is a human rights lawyer and a writer. He represented the cases of several individuals at the European Court of Justice. He became the vice president of Human Rights Association (IHD) in 2008. In December 2009, he was arrested during the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) operation. He is still imprisoned in Diyarbakır High-Security Type-D Correctional Facility, Section L-3, Cell No: 1.

transferred to the Dicle Faculty of Law and gradu-ated in 1996. In 1997 I began working as a lawyer. And as I worked, I kept thinking about how I could help people.

The Italian journalist and the future prime minister

In 1998, the Italian journalist Dino Frisullo had come to observe the Diyarbakır Newroz Festival and was arrested at the end of the celebrations because he wouldn't allow the police to beat a young boy who made a victory sign with his hand. Coincidentally, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who at that time was the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) Mayor, was on trial in Diyarbakir's State Security Court No. 3 because of a poem he had read to a crowd in Siirt. Erdoğan was fined. During that time I travelled to Rome. I was at the heart of the fallen empire whose last castle I had protected with a wooden sword as a child. Speaking at the Italian parliament and in the Municipality of Rome with many journalists, I told them that the trial would begin soon but that, just a week before, Istanbul's Mayor was fined for a poem he read.

"During my time at the HRA, I never asked anyone whether they were conservative or secular, Kurdish or Turkish, rich or poor, leftist or rightist. I helped them by taking the "victim identity" as my basis; I opened our doors and our hearts to them. I never slipped into lethargy at the HRA; I stood up firmly for my principles. I never conducted any business hesitantly."

In my many statements, I asserted that reading poetry should be considered within the context of the freedom of thought and expression and thus it was wrong to be fined for such an act. These statements can be found in the archives of Italian newspapers.

A School of humanity named "Human Rights Association"

Osman Baydemir, a friend I knew from school, called to meet with me in 2000 and told me that the Human Rights Association (HRA), which had been closed for a long time, was going to re-open. Then he placed the membership form in front of me so I could enter as part of the management of its Diyarbakır branch. I completed and signed the form without any hesitation. Osman Baydemir became the vice-president of HRA. Selahattin

Demirtaş, Reyhan Yalçındağ, Ayla Akat, Meral Danış Beştaş myself, and few other friends were on the board of the Association. I have returned to the days when I stood in defense of the castle with my wooden sword. I was in pursuit of the voice calling me from the east. I was still grappling with the dilemma of how to help people and where I should live. I learned a lot from my time at the HRA. I truly believe that the pleasure and honour of being a member of the HRA family, one of the most honourable and respectable institutions in the world, will have a lasting effect on myself, my children and future generations. The HRA was like a school to me, one in which I found myself and my humanity.

In 2001, I married dear Burçin whom I love very much. A year later our sweet boy Robin was born. In the meantime I wrote. The act of doing so felt like a process of purification. All I desired was to sit and write for hours at a time. In 2004, my first short-story book was published. In 2005, I acted as a department of social services consultant to Osman Baydemir, who was the IMM Mayor at the time. In 2006, the second edition of my short-story book came out. As humans, we are in pursuit without fully knowing what we expect from life. We run about in a panic trying to make life mean-ingful. In this panic, we slip and take wrong turns. We should calm down, simplify our priorities and put our expectations out in the open. Life is too short for great ambitions. One cannot understand the world without distancing oneself from its blessings. Now I understand why ancient philoso-phers and dervishes withdrew into their caves of suffering. Once you distance yourself from eve-rything, your view of the world may close, but the heart opens. Then you realise how wrong you've been in the way you've lived your life. After prison, I took a hard look at my life and began again by asking "Who am I, where should I be, and what should my stance be?" In the meantime, Rober was born in 2007 and we were very happy that he joined us.

"Victim identity" basis

While I was actualising the model of cooperation taught to me during my childhood, on May 8, 2008 I became the branch chairperson for HRA Diyarbakır and that November I was appointed as the Vice Chairman of the HRA. I spent the most beautiful, energetic and productive years of my life at the HRA. However, though I didn't realise it at the time, I was neglecting my wife, children, occupation, writing, and my friends and family. I helped everyone who came to the association without exception. I aided them without paying heed to their political views, preferences, or ethnic

identity. I never asked whether they were conservative or secular, Kurdish or Turkish, rich or poor, leftist or rightist. I helped them by taking the "victim identity" as my basis; I opened our doors and our hearts to them. I never slipped into lethargy at the HRA; I stood up firmly for my principles. I never conducted any business hesitantly.

In all our statements, we asserted that the Kurdish issue is also an issue of democracy and human rights and that for 200 years this issue has only been consolidated and never resolved. We also affirmed that in the last thirty years resolution on the issue has been attempted from the view point of public order and security – by using pressure and spreading fear through unsolved murders, by taking people into custody and making them disappear, burning and demolishing their settlements and forcing them into emigration. We emphasised that the solution to the issue is rather through empathy and developing the culture of living together through respecting one another. I also asserted that there has been significant change and transformation since 2002 and that brave steps have been taken, but that these were not sufficient. I criticised some deleterious implementations of the authorities. I expressed that torture in custody units was on the decrease. I criticised the disproportionate use of force by security forces during social protests.

I was invited to the parliaments of England, Sweden and Belgium and at the UN in Geneva. I expressed my views on human rights and the Kurdish issue, and gave my suggestions for a resolution. All my statements and explanations, both at home and abroad, were recorded by innumerable police cameras. Because of the almost three hundred press conferences I gave as well as my radio and TV appearances, in 2008-2009 not a single investigation or case was opened against me. In 2009, I first met with Beşir Atalay and later with Bülent Arınç in Diyarbakır about the democratic initiative process. I informed them both that I, as the vice-president of HRA responsible for the region, was in support of the Democratic Solution Initiative started by the AK Party government in 2007 as well as the peace and brotherhood process. I also asserted that we were ready to present them with the data and documents from the HRA branches in 16 provinces to contribute to the peace process. As I waited for the government to call me to contribute to the process, on December 24, 2009 at 05:00 the police came to my door. While I am someone who considers it humiliating to even shout at people, I was arrested under the allegation that I was a member of an armed organisation. Ethnic issues require long-term solutions; they cannot be solved in the space of a few days. Such issues cannot be resolved with primitive Cold-War methods such as the imprisonment

of those in support of peace and in opposition to a regime.

Since my childhood I spent days along those ancient city walls, I have made it a principle to help people willingly. I have always stood up for justice, peace and equality. I have always stood against injustice no matter where it is found. I've done so in the wrongful fining of Erdoğan because of a poem he read. I defended Erdoğan in my numerous meetings in Rome in 1998. I expressed the positive developments in Turkey as well as the negative human rights instances and emphasised that problems can never be solved by way of violence. All these statements – made in Germany, England, Belgium, and Switzerland as well as at the UN – were based on real information and tangible documents. From 2009 to 2012, 19,000 people in Turkey were fined by the Turkish Penal Code 314/2 on the accusation that they were

> From 2009 to 2012, 19,000 people in Turkey were fined by the Turkish Penal Code 314/2 on the accusation that they were members of armed organisations. Legislation such as the Anti-Terror Law (ATL) can be made to mean many things. It can define anyone as a terrorist and anyone, at any point, as a member of an illegal organisation. In the blink of an eye, five thousand people (politicians who were members of the Democracy and Peace Party, mayors and journalists) were arrested purely because they were in politics and they have since been in prison for four to five years. Declared an anonymous witness, I have been in prison for five winters due to the Turkish Penal Code 314/2."

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Spiritual detox

For the first time in Turkey, a human rights defender has been detained for four years for defending his rights. Prison, a place of seclusion, teaches patience, tolerance and leads us to aspire

to be a perfect human being. For the last four years I have literally been on a spiritual detox. I decided to turn the disadvantage into an advantage and read. I've kept myself deep in thought. I've written articles, a historical novel on alienation, and I've studied English. The conditions of a prison force us to contemplate great social issues and their resolution. While in prison, I saw that outside we live life oblivious to the fact that we bustle about turning the wheel of capitalism and tyranny. We make it grow and distance ourselves from ourselves, our essence, from our life, our wives, children, family, and our deep-rooted rituals and values.

The Prophet Muhammad says, "When living people are asleep, they awaken when they die." It was here in prison that I came to the realisation that the capitalist system lulls humans to sleep. It turns humans into objects who consume everything, causing them to become alienated from themselves and their closest relations. I saw how the capitalist system distances us from nature, natural living, truth and sincerity. In prison, I realised that in my life before prison I was removed from the essence of everything and that the life I lived in those epic lands of ancient times was a gift presented to us all.

I felt how meaningful and fully I had lived when in 2012 the 17th Ludovic-Trarieux International Human Rights Prize was given to me and when in 2013 the Saturday Mothers, those honourable women, dedicated the 5th International Hrant Dink Award they themselves had received to me. When I heard this news in prison I saw the smiles of the elderly people who I helped within the city walls. I could see and smell the stench of burnt clothes stuck on human bones unearthed from hundreds of graves that I dug with my bare hands in the middle of nowhere. I saw the helpless gazes of crying mothers sending their benedictions, heard the broken voices of poor people who had nowhere to go and I saw their shaking hands falling into ours. I felt their sorrows that filled our hearts, and remembered the times when the pasta we shared with them at lunch transformed into a feast; the fear we carried in our hearts as we walked through landmine scattered mountains and the people in razed villages near the border.

It was then that I understood that I was on the right path by being a member of the HRA and a defender of rights. I understood that no aid provided in the name of humanity is ignored. I went to the prison yard to hide my eyes, which swelled with tears. I no longer cared about the seven or eight metre walls, the cold, the iron gates, the whistles sounding from the guard towers, the compass-rose rustle of the plastic bags stuck on the wire fencing, the cesspools, the roll-call, the body searches conducted when I was visited by my wife and children once a month, the friends who forgot about me and never called, the world which fell silent. I released my tears into the wind.

Photograph of "Great Turkey"

The Kurdish issue is the principal problem in the Republic of Turkey. The solution to the problem is embracing the Kurdish public, the population of which is approximately 40 million. There are three great examples of Turkish-Kurdish unity in history; the first one in 1071, the second in 1514, and the third in 1919. Now is the time to form and glorify the fourth and greatest unity. It is very pleasing that the government and Kurdish politics are decisive about a solution but there is need for palpable steps towards establishing mutual trust. This can be achieved by first releasing the sick, the old, and those who have been in prison for ten to fifteen years, and then releasing politicians who have been in prison for the last four or five years. The goal of taking a photograph of "Great Turkey" is not far-fetched. However, this photograph can only be taken when Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, Assyrians, the Laz, the Yezidi, the Alevi and the Romani people as well as those people with different sexual orientations and all "others" are approved and accepted, and when they have a voice in the decision-making of the government of the country. When different identities are granted constitutional assurance, when everyone can be educated, when people can practice politics in their own languages and can occupy in the public space in their own tongue and with their own cultural practices… when everyone can have a say in how they conduct themselves. As someone who has been in prison for four years, I still look forward to supporting and contributing to the Peace Process. I am waiting to aid the mixing of the mortar that is the Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood. My son Robin asked my wife Burçin, "Why is dad in prison?" My wife replied, "Because he helped people." In response, Robin asked, "Where are the people dad helped?" Now I call out to the people whom I protected with a wooden sword in my hand at the castle gate. There is a father, a husband and a human rights defender here who has been imprisoned for four years, five winters because he defended peace and human rights as he had the last castle of the Roman Empire in the east. Don't forget that when the last castle falls, it will surely be your turn.

NEWS FROM hbs
Is another family concept possible?

On November 9-10, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation held a six-panel conference entitled "Is Another Family Concept Possible?" in order to discuss how the patriarchal family concept and the social roles ascribed to sexes are reflected in family policies and the developments and different models in the subject area over the last ten years.

In the panel entitled "How Is the Ideal Family Perception Formed?" several subjects were debated: the concept of privacy and the privacy of the family; the place of the woman from the perspective of Islam and equality between men and women; and the effects of political powers on the family and women using Hungary as an example. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu from the University of Istanbul explained that in the Ottoman-Turkish modernisation processes the concept of family and the historical and contemporary understandings of the ideal family have been turned into concrete policies, thereby becoming institutionalised. Kerestecioğlu also noted the ways in which the family has lost its characteristic of being in the private sphere in modern society. She stated that it is ironic how a conservative mentality that values privacy has attempted to violate privacy by brazenly attacking the private sphere. Fatma Bostan Ünsal from the Muş Alparslan University pointed out that a proportion of the divorces and problems in marriages were related to child marriages and emphasised that it is a prerequisite for a woman to get to a certain age and achieve a minimum economic status in order for her to establish a healthy marriage. Ünsal reiterated that the article on the equality of men and women became a part of

the constitution in 2002. She said that in contrast to the past, women are urged to actively participate in politics by means of quotas, but that the statements of some conservatives such as "men and women are not equals" have damaged such efforts. Andrea Petö from the Central European University began her talk by establishing that the subject of the ideal family shows similar developments in Hungary and Turkey. She also explained that an anti-modernist approach focusing on geopolitical power has come to the fore in politics within the framework of the developments in Hungary.

In the panel entitled "The Family, Labour and Law," labour laws and flexible labour were evaluated from the perspective of women. With her presentation on "Which Labour Law? Family-Friendly or Woman-Friendly?", Kadriye Bakırcı from Hacettepe University analysed the rights of women in familial structures within the contexts of civil, labour and business law and outlined the discrimination and inequality women experience due to the unenforceability of certain laws. Çağla Ünlütürk Ulaş from the University of Pamukkale asserted that the government's concept of "flexible work," as part of their policy on "work and family life alignment" in the Women's Employment Package, will condemn women to lifelong discrimination.

In the panel entitled "Social Policies for the Family" with her presentation entitled "Political Power, the Woman and the Family in the Demographic Transformation Process," Ferhunde Özbay from Boğaziçi University stated that one dimension of the struggle between political power, women and the family in the demographic transformation process is about the distribution of care services. She also stated that another dimension of this struggle emerged with the intervention of the government regarding fertility. Deniz Ulusoy, a member of the Socialist Feminist Collective, focused on the subject of "The Narrowing Pincers of Paid and Unpaid Labour: The Family Policies of the AKP and New Conservatism."

She summarised that according to the family polici-es of the AKP and new conservatism the fundamen-tal duty of the woman is to take responsibility for housework and to provide care for the children, the old and the sick in the family. Furthermore, it is tho-ught that a woman can only contribute to the family budget in insecure and flexible working conditions provided that she does not neglect her housework and care duties. Ulusoy also provided a summary of the demands of the feminists: shorter working hours, working in secure employment under equal conditions and pay, parenting leave instead of maternity leave, and free, easy to access nurseries available 24 hours a day in the mother tongue of the child. Mehmet Tarhan, conscientious objector and an activist for LGBT Rights, gave a presentation entitled, "Social Policies Based on the Family and the LGBTs." Tarhan emphasised due to homopho-bia, biphobia and transphobia, LGBTs have to leave the family at early ages and do not receive sufficient support for their education. Additionally, they are not employed in family businesses and thus strugg-le to find an occupation. Tarhan also underlined that forming social policies independently of the family and focusing on the individual is not only important for LGBTs and women but also for those who develop living practices independent of their families and those who prefer to live alone.
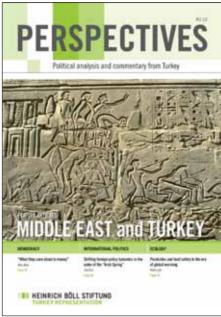
In the panel centred on "Alternative Family Models," Sema Merve İş from Sabancı University gave a presentation entitled "The Family and the Queer Approach to Parenting: The Experiences of Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans-gender and Queer Parents." In her presentation she touched upon the experi-ences of parents alienated by the heteronormative family system and the dreams of parents-to-be by summarising her thesis in which she focused on the experiences of lesbian, bisexual, trans-gender and gay parents. Sevgi Adak, a member of the Socialist Feminist Collective, shared her experiences regar-ding the "There is Life outside the Family" campaign and posed the question of "What Can Feminists Do Outside the Family?" She explained that the campaign was first and foremost developed against conservative policies. Sasha Roseneil from Birkbeck, University of London, provided a presentation entitled "Living outside the Traditional family in Eu-rope: Politics, Policy and Everyday Life Experiences." Roseneil questioned the areas focusing on policy and everyday life and deliberated on living out with the boundaries of the conventional family.

In the panel entitled "Violence and the Family," Nejla Sulu Gülten from the Women's Solidarity Center of Bursa Nilüfer Municipality spoke about the implementations of Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (ŞÖNİM), the trial implementa-tions of which commenced in November 2012 and are currently being carried out in 14 provinces. She

also explained the difficulties and mistakes encoun-tered due to the lack of infrastructure she witnessed during her experiences at ŞÖNİM, Bursa. In her pre-sentation on "The Institutionalisation of the Family through Governmental Policies and Intervention in Women's Right to Live," Selime Büyükgöze from the Mor Çatı Shelter Foundation noted that there are two layers in the struggle against domestic vio-lence against women: struggling with the difficulties encountered by women in the process of sepa-ration from the family and policies on solidifying the family. Gökçeçiçek Ayata, lecturer at Istanbul Bilgi University, gave a presentation entitled "Law and Social Sexuality" that focused on how political powers create, abuse, ignore or destroy laws. Ayata asserted that judges in Turkey are not versed in the amendments, precedent cases and international agreements concerning violence against women. She exemplified that the identity of the woman is erased in governmental institutions and laws and replaced by the family as well as drawing attention to the fact that the State Ministry for Women and Family was renamed as the Ministry of the Family and Social Services.

Speakers in the "The Others of the Family and Other Families" panel focused on both ethnic and religious identity and compulsory immigration and examined different family forms, household models and the changes in the roles of family members. Ayşe Gül Altınay from Sabancı University referred to the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and the experi-ences of Armenian women who converted to Islam during the process of relocation. She focused on the understanding of family, ancestry and origin in households. Altınay emphasised that sexist practi-ces used in the operation of the surname and origin registers are the root of many problems and should be abolished. Hakem Al-Rustom from the American University in Cairo delivered a presentation entitled "Between the Private and the Public: The Armenian Visibility and Invisibility in France" and spoke of the Armenian population in France. He pointed out that they are treated as guests who have nowhere else to go. Ayşe Parla from Sabancı University gave examp-les of the difficulties immigrant women experience upon entering the country through the flexible visa regime in her presentation entitled, "Where Do Immigrant Women Stand in the Family and in Fa-mily Policies?" Hande Birkalan Gedik from Yeditepe University delivered her paper entitled "Fatherhood as a Political Subject: The Experiences of Fathers from Turkey in Germany." Gedik's talk concentrated on the concept of fatherhood, both a new and rarely discussed subject in academic circles in Turkey, and touched upon the fact that nation-states that tradi-tionally apply policies on identity and attachment through mothers are now also including fathers in their policies.
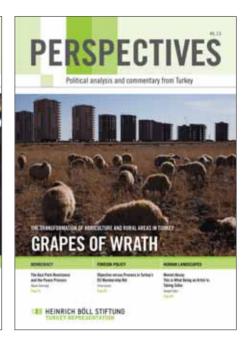
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