

# **Social Transformation in Modern Turkey**

## **An Analysis of the Role of Public Intellectuals in the Post-1980s**

A Dissertation Presented

by

Ahmet Görgen

Submitted to

the Faculty of Social Sciences & Cultural Studies of

the University of Giessen in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Dr. rer. Soc.

**July 10, 2019**

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Examined by

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**July 10, 2019**

Dedication

To my wife and son

## Abstract

This dissertation aims to analyze the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformations in Turkey by examining their historical, economic, and cultural interaction with civil and political society after the 1980s. Overall, this dissertation examines the contribution of these intellectuals to the cultural reforms, political processes and changing collective consciousness in Turkish society between 1983 and June, 2015, through an analysis of their original discourses and their engagement with social groups and the media. First, this project analyzes the emergence of pluralist public intellectuals in the post-1980s, including journalists Hasan Cemal and Fehmi Koru, as well as academics Nilüfer Göle and Mehmet Altan. The analysis describes these intellectuals' engagement in the pro-transformation liberal-right counter-hegemonic sphere against the hegemonic position of the military. This engagement includes the intellectuals' activity within a newly emerged private media, with their influential discourses on widening anti-militarism and the emergence of a second republic (with a more democratic and pluralist stance), as well as their paving the way for Islamic modernism toward the inclusion of the pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere. Second, this dissertation examines the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc that emerged from the reformist Islamic political movement AKP of the 2000s. The analysis here is based on the function of pluralist public intellectuals as an intellectual bloc in legitimizing, e.g., reforms for civilian control of the military, the Islamization of the Turkish society, as well as Kurdish involvement in the public sphere. Third, this project delivers analyses of post-2010 developments by representing the dissolution of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc through the dissolution of the intellectual bloc overall. The analysis presents the emergence and development in this period of the pro-transformation left counter-hegemonic sphere that has been visible since the Gezi Park Protests in 2013, as well as the development of a new pro-transformation left historical bloc thereafter. In presenting a new intellectual bloc from this period, the case study includes three intellectuals—authors Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy and film producer and politician Sırrı Süreyya Önder—analyzing their contribution to the renovation of the left. In this way, the analysis covers various subordinated social groups—such as the emergence of the Gezi community through the involvement of Kurds, Alevis, LGBT people, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and women's movements—within the scope of Islam's involvement in the new left, as well as the pluralization of the public sphere.

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## Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
ANAP	Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi)
BÇG	West Working Group (Batı Çalışma Grubu)
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi)
CHP	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
ÇYDD	Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği)
DDKO	Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearts (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları)
DEP	Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi)
DİSK	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)
DP	Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti)
DSP	Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti)
DTP	Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi)
DYP	True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi)
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FDA	Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
FP	Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi)
HADEP	People's Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi)
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi)
HEP	People's Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi)
HSYK	Constitutional Court and High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu)
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KADEM	Association of Women and Democracy (Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği)

KA.DER	Association for Support of Women Candidates (Kadın Adayları Destekleme Derneđi)
KAMER	Women's Center (Kadın Merkezi)
KCK	Group of Communities in Kurdistan (Koma Civakên Kurdistan)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MAZLUMDER	Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (Insan Hakları ve Mazlumlar İin Dayanıřma Derneđi)
MGH	National Vision Movement (Milli Grüş Hareketi)
MGK	National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu)
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyeti Hareket Partisi)
MİT	National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teřkilatı)
MNP	National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi)
MP	Member of Parliament
MÜSİAD	Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneđi)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê)
PYD	Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat)
RP	Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)
RTÜK	Radio Television Supreme Council (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu)
SAMER	Political and Social Research Center (Siyasal ve Sosyal Arařtırmalar Merkezi)
SHP	Social Democrat People's Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkı Parti)
SP	Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi)
TBMM	Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi)
TİP	Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşi Partisi)

TÜSİAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association (Türk Sanayicileri ve İşinsanları Derneği)
TSK	Turkish Armed Forces (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri)
US	United States
WWI	World War I
YAŞ	Supreme Military Council (Yüksek Askeri Şura)
YDH	New Democracy Movement (Yeni Demokrasi Hareketi)
YÖK	Higher Education Council (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu)

# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

*“If the end is still to be made, if it is a choice and a risk for man, then it can be corrupted by the means, for it is what we make it and it is transformed at the same time as man transforms himself by the use he makes of the means. But if the end is to be reached, if in a sense it has a sufficiency of being, then it is independent of the means. In that case one can choose any means to achieve it.”*

Sartre, quoted in Birchall, 2004: 78

Research into the role of intellectuals in society has become prevalent in the social sciences in the last decade. Such studies have discussed the thought of public intellectuals in many areas of research; in the last decade, the concept of ‘public intellectuals’ has come to the agenda, with the question of how they function in the society.<sup>1</sup> As regards the role of public intellectuals in Turkey, Ahmet Çiğdem (2009: 124) explains that after the 1980s, intellectuals discovered the market and the market discovered the intellectuals, too. He suggests that the growing economic and social power of the media has also provided new resources for intellectuals (Ibid). In particular, due to the growing power of the media—caused by new market conditions, increased literacy rates, and growing print media followership in Anatolia—intellectuals began to observe the ‘mass media’. In line with Çiğdem’s arguments, other scholars have brought to the debate and analyzed the role, if any, that intellectuals play in democratic capitalist societies. This discussion continued with the political positions of the intellectuals. Tanıl Bora and Levent Cantek (2009: 893–94) have observed that the major actors of this period were primarily leftists of the older generations and that the engagement of these highly educated, open-minded and socially experienced intellectuals with the media led to the media’s dissemination of a wider range of information about developments in the world. In these analyses and many others, public intellectuals are generally assumed to appear regularly in the media, but few scholars have looked closely at how they function in the media, and how, through the media, they have contributed to Turkish society and culture.

As a result of this situation, the role of public intellectuals—not only in terms of their presence in the media, but also in social and political processes—has been largely overlooked. Some notable examples have attempted to reveal the function of intellectuals in social and political processes: Anıl Al-Rebholz’s *The Struggle over Civil Society in Turkey: Intellectual*

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<sup>1</sup> Recently, a number of analyses emerged mainly on the public intellectuals and their roles in the society. For some important examples of these analyses see: Posner, 2001; Etzioni and Bowditch, 2006.

*Discourses, Oppositional Groups and Social Movements since 1980 (Das Ringen um die Zivilgesellschaft in der Türkei: Intellektuelle Diskurse, oppositionelle Gruppen und Soziale bewegungen seit 1980)* (2012); Duygu Ersoy's *The Relationship between Liberal Intellectuals and Power in Search for a New Hegemony During AKP Period in Turkey* (2012); Yüksel Taşkın's *The Nationalist-Conservative Intelligentsia: from Anti-communism to Anti-Globalization (Anti-Komünizm'den Küreselleşme Karşıtlığına Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijansiya)* (2007); Ömer Çaha's *Civil Society, Intellectuals and Democracy (Sivil Toplum, Aydınlar ve Demokrasi)* (1999). Of the aforementioned works, only the first two studies specifically focus on the influential function of public intellectuals in social and political processes. These studies will be presented in the next section in the explanation of the present study's importance. Despite the interest in 'public intellectuals' in Turkey, few studies have specifically examined in any real depth their role in social and political processes, including the social transformation of Turkey.

To cover this generally overlooked area, this project analyzes the role of public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey, covering the period between 1983 and June, 2015—a period of intellectuals' intensive functioning in the public sphere.<sup>2</sup> As I will discuss in detail in chapter 3, after the 1980s, Turkey's social and political agenda started to change, due to its high economic growth and industrial development. During this time, major transformations occurred in social groups and in the political sphere. Economic development also brought changes to social structures, and a corresponding rise in education in Anatolia allowed the mass media to interact with a new type of public intellectuals. Coming from different political ideologies, these intellectuals brought with them the idea of transforming Turkish society into a more pluralist structure. This is in contrast to historically Kemalist intellectuals,<sup>3</sup> whose function had been to widen the hegemonic position of the military.<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>2</sup> Concerning the scope of public sphere, this dissertation considers Gramsci's approach of public sphere where trade unions and political parties are interacting and the ideas and beliefs are shaped (Heywood 1994: 100–101). Thus, in Gramscian conception, civil society is considered also as the public sphere and the media, youth movements, trade unions and education sector such as universities and the religious institutions are presented in this category as public sphere (Ibid). Within the analysis of this dissertation, social groups' or other actors' involvement in the public sphere refers to their being visible with their own cultural products in the public sphere and interacting with other groups and political parties. In this regard, their visibility in the media and in the political parties as well as other organizations puts them in the public sphere. More information about Gramsci's concept of public sphere can be found in the Chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> In this dissertation, 'Kemalist intellectuals' refers to pro-military, laicist elites, who had come to be the organic intellectuals of the Kemalist republic. Thus, *Kemalist* refers to one who accepts Atatürk's ideas as a doctrine called 'Kemalism'. Atatürk did not form a doctrine as Kemalism. However, after his death, his ideas and principles were mentioned as Kemalism and became Turkey's main ideology, which was protected by the republican institutions (Uyar, cited in Görgen, 2010: 8). The last section of chapter 3 (3.4.) includes more

this project, the intellectuals that emerged during this time are referred to as ‘pluralist public intellectuals’ because they come from different political ideologies and have varying perspectives on solving the social and political problems of Turkey. They, furthermore, have contributed to the involvement of historically excluded social groups—such as the pro-Islamic movements,<sup>5</sup> Kurds, Alevi,<sup>6</sup> women, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)<sup>7</sup> people—in Turkey’s overall public sphere. Through a historical analysis, this project studies the sample of pluralist public intellectuals with the aim of discovering their role in the social transformation of Turkey in the post-1980s.

To achieve this end, this dissertation project refers to pluralism as it is explicated by Diana L. Eck (2006), director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University: “First, pluralism is not diversity alone, but the energetic engagement with diversity. Second, pluralism is not just about the tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. Third, pluralism is not relativism, but the encounter of commitments. Fourth, pluralism is based on dialogue.” With these criteria for evaluating public intellectuals as pluralist intellectuals, the selection of public intellectuals for analysis in this dissertation project has taken into account their influential discourses, actions, and positions during the social transformation process. In Turkey, the concept of pluralism is mainly linked to ethnic and religious differences, and

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information about these Kemalist intellectuals’ emergence from the establishment of Turkey, as well as their position during the social transformation process in the post-1980s.

<sup>4</sup> In the post-Atatürk period from 1938, the military made itself responsible for the protection of the founding principles of Turkey, such as laicism, westernism, nationalism. This hegemonic position of the military increased with the military coup in 1960, and the military, with a bureaucratic chain in the state departments including also the judiciary, was given a major role in the governance of the country. Elected governments had a limited function in changing major security as well as international dynamics of the country and were under the strong control mechanism of the military, which provided them only an arena for dealing with internal affairs. This led the state and the government to be considered separately in the literature. This is clarified by former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit as “there is a deep state issue in Turkey” (Quoted in Hürriyet, 2005a). In this regard, the deep state refers to anti-democratic coalitions within the political system of Turkey that manipulate the issues in favor of the military. As will be explained comprehensively in chapter 3, this situation has changed under the reform process of Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP) period from the 2000s, when the supremacy of the civilian government over the military was restored.

<sup>5</sup> Here, pro-Islamic refers to aiming to bring Islamic cultural products into the public sphere by using Islamic symbols and the Islamic way of life (See Ismail, 2004: 614–631). Overall, this has a tendency to Islamize everyday life. In Turkey, pro-Islamic movements have been visible since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey as a nation-state, but they were excluded from the state’s major directives as a result of the laic ethnocracy. These movements are specified in chapter 3.

<sup>6</sup> Like all sects in Islam, Alevism is based on the Quran and the Islamic prophet Muhammad’s sayings. However, Alevism is differentiated by the belief that the first Caliph after Muhammad would be Ali, who was Muhammad’s cousin. So, Alevism rejects the legitimacy of first four Caliphs (Rashidun Caliphs). Also, Alevi are one of the many branches in Shia Islam.

<sup>7</sup> Many variations of abbreviations are used for this group, such as LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning), LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) and LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer/Questioning). In this study, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) is used as a common version.

since the establishment of the republic it has been a major element of critical opposition to the mono-ethnic and cultural structure of the country. While pluralist ideas were suppressed under the brutal control of military elites after the Republic's establishment, economic liberalization in the post-1980s has led a sociopolitical transformation. This has resulted in opportunities for citizens to express these pluralist ideas in the public sphere. This period has also witnessed a transition from the Kemalist intellectual framework to a liberal conception based on a pluralist perspective.

### **1.1. Research Objectives and the Study's Importance**

This project aims to clarify the contribution of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey, including changes in Turkish society's characteristics, changes in the existing parameters of the social system, and the political and cultural restructuring that occurred between 1983 and the June 2015 general elections. This time period has been found to be important for the analysis of the role of the intellectuals in Turkey. The liberalization of the polity in Turkey started in 1983, during the Özal period, and, with the development of the social groups as well as the private media, provided a relatively free arena for intellectuals to contribute to debates, but in the post-June 2015 unstable political environment, the government took control of the media. As a result, the intellectuals under study broke connections with the society as the role of intellectuals in the social and political processes as active participants in critical social discourses has been restricted. Within this time period there are some developments that make this analysis significant. These include the emergence of an anti-militarist sentiment, critical perspectives on the Kemalist political system, the Solution Process<sup>8</sup> to address the Kurdish problem, and the transformation of the political and

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<sup>8</sup> The Solution Process or Peace Process of Turkey was launched by the Government of Turkey in 2009. The aim of this process was to improve the standards of Turkey on respect for human rights, democracy, and freedom (Çakır, 2009). Based on the Solution Process, in 2013 the Government of Turkey invited 63 intellectuals, journalists, artists, academicians, columnists, researchers and trade unionists from different ideological perspectives, but all supportive of the Solution Process, to join the Wise People Commission as a voice to explain and convince the people of the solution of the Kurdish problem. After the announcement of the Wise People Commission, the people in the commission drove 122 000 km within Turkey and talked with 60000 people in 83 days in 37 cities and 22 villages in 7 regions of Turkey, as well as organizing 28 university meetings and 3 prison visits. At the end, they prepared the report, including their observations from the people and advice to the government to give the Prime Minister of Turkey. During the Solution Process in 2011, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê – PKK) declared a ceasefire with Turkey and during the March 21, 2013 Newroz celebrations PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan sent a call for the withdrawal of the PKK militants from Turkey to Northern Iraq to secure the Solution Process and further civilian reforms. However, although the PKK made some symbolic withdrawal, it did not last, as the PKK accused the government of not meeting further expectations. Later on, due to PKK's not following the withdrawal policy, Turkey's President Erdoğan declared the Solution Process to be in the 'freezer' in 2015, and after the general elections in June 2015,

the public spheres. This last has been achieved through cultural pluralization with the inclusion of formerly excluded groups (e.g., Kurds, pro-Islamic movements, Alevis, women and the LGBT community). Civil protests have also seen a resurgence during this period (e.g., the Gezi Protests in 2013<sup>9</sup>). The contributions of the sample of intellectuals discussed in this dissertation formed the basis of these transformations. This process of transformation and its effects can be identified as the pluralization of the public sphere during the period under review.

As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, while this transformation process has been analyzed from various perspectives, including economic, social and political, this dissertation focuses on the contribution of public intellectuals through their influential discourses, practical activities and active engagement in the media discussion on TV and in social media. The development of public communication tools, especially the increased popularity of social media, has led to a reconsideration of the power of discourse in social processes, given that it opens new channels to reach the public relatively easily. The power of intellectual discourse is presented in this project by illustrating this social transformation, showing the contribution of these discourses to the process. These discourses are particularly important in light of the increased potential for interaction since the 1980s, as a result of the fragmentation of communication tools, which has extended the reach of these discourses to a wider social sphere. The major idea of this project is that by organically engaging with actors in social processes (including counter-hegemonic spheres as well as historical blocs) from the 1980s onwards, pluralist public intellectuals contributed to the social transformation process while benefiting from the continued expansion of public communication tools.

### ***Importance of the Study***

The major importance of the study includes its difference from previous studies. To find these differences, I first conducted a keyword search using the keywords ‘social transformation in

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in which pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi – HDP) doubled their votes and became the third biggest party of Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi – TBMM), the war between the PKK and Turkish Armed Forces (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri – TSK) began again (Kasapoğlu, 2015). In this context, the main desire of PKK to not disarm but to stay as an armed group during the last years of the Solution Process seems to be related to increasing support from the West for the PKK through its branch in Syria Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat - PYD) to fight against the growing Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and to PKK’s strategic aim to form an autonomous state over the captured areas of PYD in northern Syria.

<sup>9</sup> Gezi Protests in 2013 refer anti-government protests against the increasing authoritarianization of the political sphere and neoliberal policies. While the major component of the protests came from youth, it provided an arena for the historically subordinated social groups to involve in the public sphere. The scope of the protests is specified in chapter 5 with the functions of the sample intellectuals.



Turkey’, ‘intellectuals’, ‘public intellectuals’, ‘civil society’<sup>10</sup> and the names of the intellectuals in the study, ‘Hasan Cemal’, ‘Fehmi Kuru’, ‘Mehmet Altan’, ‘Nilüfer Göle’, ‘Sırrı Süreyya Önder’, ‘İhsan Eliaçık’, and ‘Fotî Benlisoy’ in Turkish, English, and German sources. This was initially done to find similar research. University libraries in both Turkey and Germany proved to be major sources of previous research, particularly the Library of Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul; Boğaziçi University Library, Istanbul; the Library of Justus Liebig University, Giessen; and Goethe University Library in Frankfurt. In addition to these libraries, an internet search with the same keywords on various web pages, as well as the official web page of the Higher Education Council (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu – YÖK) for submitted theses<sup>11</sup> in Turkey provided important sources. This research found no dissertation directly related to the contribution of intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey. However, previous studies did focus on social transformation, as well as on the function of intellectuals in the social and political arena, albeit in different ways. This doctoral dissertation project aims to fill this gap in the research on Turkey.

Even though there has not been a single study directly addressing the function of intellectuals in the social transformation process, it is important to present similar projects’ contribution to the debate so as to explain the original contribution of this dissertation. With respect to previous research related to the social transformation of Turkey, two books are particularly worth mentioning. Coşkun Can Aktan’s (1999a) *Social Transformation and Turkey (Toplumsal Dönüşüm ve Türkiye)* focuses on the transformation in the world—including economics, politics, and state governance—and its major effects on Turkey and offers possible strategies for marginalizing the reactions that emerged against this transformation. Also, Kemal Karpat’s (2016) *Social Transformation in Turkey (Türkiye’de Toplumsal Dönüşüm)* focuses on the effect of domestic migration on the transformation of social, political, economic, and cultural structures. How these transformations happened and changed in the structure of urban spheres were other important aspects of the book. These books provide analyses, especially with regard to the transformation of the urban sphere, which have helped me understand the reasons for the emergence of urban social movements in later

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<sup>10</sup> In this dissertation, as in the Gramscian conception, a civil society is one where hegemony, as well as counter-hegemony, is produced and private and state institutions are in interaction. In particular, it has a function of providing a forum for various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), movements, institutions that constitute religious institutions, media and education sectors, etc. (Gramsci, 1971: 261). A deeper explanation of Gramsci’s conception of civil society can be found in Chapter 2.

<sup>11</sup> For the official web page of YÖK Thesis Center, see: online available at: <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/giris.jsp> (Last accessed 12.04.2018).

processes. Another important contribution of these books is related to presenting Turkey's transformation with that of the rest of the world, revealing international effects during the transformation process as well. Even though these studies have provided important contributions to the social transformation debate, the lack of analysis of the function of intellectuals in the social transformation makes this dissertation an original contribution to the debate.

Concerning the research related to intellectuals in Turkey, scholars have largely tended to focus on the function of the intellectuals in the civil society, as well as in the political sphere as legitimizing actors of political processes. In this regard, Anıl Al-Rebholz's *The Struggle over Civil Society in Turkey: Intellectual Discourses, Oppositional Groups and Social Movements since 1980* (2012) provides a major analysis of the function of intellectuals within the process of civil society development, dealing with their function within the Turkish women's movement, the Kurdish women's movement, the liberal movement and the human rights movement. While the book (based on Al-Rebholz's doctoral dissertation) discusses certain influential debates in Turkey of the post-1980 era, such as 'second republic', the 'critique of state ideology' and the 'identity crisis' of the society, it is far from a comprehensive analysis of the role of public intellectuals in social transformation processes. Thus, the book does not cover the emergence, during the 2000s, of the intellectual bloc that contributed to bringing various subordinated groups into the public sphere by engaging pro-transformation blocs. Instead, it analyzes intellectuals' ideological and practical contributions to the development of specific social groups. Moreover, the scope of the book, which was limited to a period ending in the mid-2000s, also proved to be a major shortcoming, since perceptions changed in light of major social developments toward the end of the 2000s, as well as with the Gezi protests in 2013; these disproved previously developed hypotheses about processes in Turkey. One of the most important examples in this case, discussed in the concluding chapter of Al-Rebholz's book (2012: 354), is 'apolitization', which refers to the effects of individualization in the society that emerged, especially the importance of the private sphere, and which the author states is an important obstacle to the development of civil society. However, the Gezi Protests in 2013 revealed a vein of increased social and political involvement by civil society, not only as a group phenomenon but also as individual participation. This, in a way, put into process the formation of a new pluralist public sphere. My doctoral study attempts to correct this oversight and to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of the public intellectuals in these processes by including these important periods.

As for intellectuals' function in the political sphere, Duygu Ersoy's aforementioned doctoral dissertation, *The Relationship between Liberal Intellectuals and Power in Search for a New Hegemony During AKP Period in Turkey* (2012), provides an important analysis of the role that liberal intellectuals played in strengthening the hegemonic position of the AKP. Importantly, by analyzing the case of a specific group of the intellectuals, Ersoy's dissertation revealed that the AKP cooperated with the liberal intellectuals in forming its hegemonic position. While her dissertation covered some important topics, such as Mehmet Altan's 'second republic' discourse on how it carried the liberal political ideals of the Özal period in the post-1980s era, intellectuals' support of AKP governments against the military hegemony in the 2000s, and the Constitutional Amendment Referendum in 2010, it only dealt with political transformation. This is a major limitation if we wish to understand the contribution of intellectuals to the social transformation process as well. Thus, it is important to mention that the AKP is a product of an ongoing social transformation process, basing its hegemonic power on civil society itself. To fill this gap, this dissertation provides an analysis of the role of public intellectuals in the social transformation process: not only the contributions of the liberal intellectuals, but also of those from other political ideologies, such as pro-Islamic, leftist and revolutionist. With this, the study aims to present the social transformation process in Turkey from different social sides.

As the leading examples close to this area of research show, the contribution of intellectuals to the social transformation process has not been deeply researched and analyzed; there has been a lack of academic engagement with the process of bringing Turkey's subordinated social groups into the public sphere through an ongoing struggle. As such, this doctoral dissertation makes an original contribution to the literature on Turkey. Moreover, and in contrast to other studies as presented in a general sense, this study questions the social transformation process from the 1980s that included the civilianization of the political sphere through demilitarization; the engagement of the pro-Islamic movements, Kurds, Alevis, women's movements, LGBT movements and others in the public sphere; and the emergence of the New Left through social protests, and focuses on the contribution of public intellectuals to this process. These intellectuals' occupations offer a suggestion of their capacity to influence, and thus, the analysis of their contributions is made in light of their intellectual identity.

## 1.2. Questions and Hypotheses

The major focus of this dissertation relates to the fact that the 1980s was a turning point for the emergence of transformation attempts in both social and political arenas. The change started with a new set of governing regulations of the Military Coup from 1980–1983, as well as with the changed economic policy, which opened the doors for the further neoliberal reforms under Turgut Özal from 1983. In this regard, based on the liberalization of the economic arena, empowering civil society and the struggling subordinated groups to be a part of Turkey’s overall public sphere was the first important step for the ongoing social transformation in Turkey. So, the main assumption of this dissertation has been that selected public intellectuals have contributed to this transformation process from the 1980s with their influential discourses as well as their practical engagement. Based on this research problematic, this dissertation aims to find the answer to the main research question: *what is the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the process of social transformation in Turkey from the 1980s onwards?*

To find an answer for this question, this study has four additional sub-questions connected to the main hypotheses. The first research question is: *How did Turkey experience a social transformation process in the post-1980s?* The research shows that decisions made on January 24, 1980 changed the economic policy from an import-substitution growth strategy to an export-oriented growth strategy. The application of this policy happened under Turgut Özal in the post-1983 era and opened the way for economic liberalization based on privatization and deregulation of industries, putting Turkey on the neoliberal economic path. This economic liberalization, in turn, opened the way for social and political liberalization through increasing economic development in the less developed regions of Anatolia. This caused an empowerment of pro-transformation opposition movements against Turkey’s laic<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The research found confusion in many previous analyses with regard to the distinction between laic and secular, so it is important to clarify them in Turkey’s context. The difference between laicism and secularism is a long debated topic. Briefly, while laicism refers to the separation of religion from governmental affairs, secularism refers the absence of religion in any affairs. So, in laicism there can be a separate religious institution in the state belonging to a certain religious perspective, especially to control it, whereas in secularism the state stays neutral toward all religions and, therefore, more tolerant of their public practices. Since the formation of the Republic in 1923, laicism was set in Turkey as having an important function for the separation of the governmental affairs from religion. In particular, French-style laicism was an important example for Turkey that included a strict division between private and public spheres. Thus, the new republic followed this style by downgrading religion to be a matter for the private sphere. A Presidency of Religious Affairs existed in Turkey for regulating religious affairs of the public, the Turkish state aimed to expand this laicist mentality to all citizens to create ‘modern’ and ‘enlightened individuals’ (See Tarhan, 2011: 1–32). For this, a secular lifestyle has been advised and popularized in the historical process since 1923. In this dissertation, while laic/laicist is used to refer

ethnocracy. My research reveals that major developments in the social and political spheres followed with the engagement of historically excluded social groups (e.g. pro-Islamic movements, Kurds, Alevis, women's movements, LGBTs) in Turkey's overall public sphere. In particular, with the AKP's pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc in the 2000s, the involvement in the public sphere of both pro-Islamic movements and the Kurds was made possible by the post-1980 reforms. Later, with a new left positioning themselves as pro-transformation after the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the inclusion of secular Kurds, as well as Alevis, women's movements, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and LGBTs in the overall public sphere has been realized.

Therefore, this brings the first hypothesis: *Turkey experienced a social transformation process that brought civilian hegemony over the military and allowed historically excluded social groups, including pro-Islamic movements, Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs and women's movements, to enter the public sphere in the post-1980s.* This first hypothesis will be tested in chapter 3 through a comprehensive historical analysis of the social transformation of Turkey, dealing with the economic, political, social and international effects of the process. Correspondingly, chapter 3 is devoted to presenting the social transformation process without dealing with the role of the public intellectuals within it.

After revealing the scope of the social transformation in Turkey, we come to the role of public intellectuals with the second research question: *Why did pluralist public intellectuals start to engage in a pro-transformation liberal-right bloc in the post-1980s?* Although Turkey lived under a military dictatorship between 1980 and 1983, the general elections held on November 6, 1983 led to the formation of a new civilian government under the leadership of Turgut Özal. Özal followed a policy of economic liberalism and facilitated democracy, civil rights, and civil freedoms in stark contrast to the previous military government. A civilian transition policy to eliminate the power of military opened the way for the empowerment of civilian opposition movements. These included most notably the pro-Islamic movements that openly used religious idioms to express their agendas (e.g., Necmettin Erbakan's National Vision Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi - MGH), Gülen Organization<sup>13</sup>, Sulaymanites

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to the system of Turkey and its followers, secular is used to refer to nonreligious individuals, groups and governmental or non-governmental institutions.

<sup>13</sup> Gülen Organization (FETÖ) was founded by the retired Imam, preacher and author *Fethullah Gülen* and his followers in Izmir in the 1960s. By opening student houses, originally called light houses (Işıkevleri), and dormitories around Turkey, the organization became the most widely spread Islamic community in Turkey in the post-1980s. The organization was also supported by Western governments because of its 'moderate' Islamic stance as alternative to Salafism that was emerging in the West. The organization was not only active in Turkey,

(Süleymanlılar)<sup>14</sup>) and the Kurdish movement, as well as later the Alevis, women's movements and LGBTs. This opening of the way for transition to democratic governance and a pluralist public sphere through the inclusion of the historically excluded social groups motivated major pro-transformation groups and individuals to position themselves under this liberal-right bloc.

This brings us to the second hypothesis: *The motivation for the pluralist public intellectuals to engage with the liberal-right bloc was that they saw it as a newly emerged safe haven from the military's oppressive policies.* The second hypothesis will be tested in the first section of chapter 5. This section will provide a historical analysis of the emergence of the pluralist public intellectuals and their engagement with the pro-transformation liberal-right bloc through their discourses as being actively involved in the debates not only in the media, but also in social and political spheres and academia. In particular, the research includes an analysis of Hasan Cemal and his contribution with discourses based on widening anti-militarist perspective, Fehmi Kuru with his Islamic transformism discourse, Nilüfer Göle and her forbidden modern discourse presenting the coexistence of Islam and modernism, and Mehmet Altan with his second republic discourse about the desire to transform Turkey's Kemalist republic into a democratic and pluralist one. In short, the first section of chapter 5 presents intellectuals' contribution to the social transformation process—bringing their original discourses into the public discussion so as to influence the public about their desired transformation processes.

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but opened private schools, universities and enterprises in over 180 countries. The organization had many media organs in Turkey, including Samanyolu TV, Mehtap TV and Ebru TV (English); the newspapers *Zaman* and *Today's Zaman* (English); the magazines *Aksiyon*, *Sızıntı*, *Yeni Ümit*, the *Fountain* (English) and *Hira* (Arabic); and the radio station Burç FM and the Cihan News Agency, which operated internationally. Fethullah Gülen had an initiative called Interfaith Dialogue and met with Pope John Paul II, Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I and Israeli Sephardic Head Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron in the 1990s. He moved to USA in 1999 for 'health' reasons and now lives in Pennsylvania. Shortly after Gülen emigrated, in 2000, Nuh Mete Yüksel, the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office of Court of State Security, launched an investigation accusing Gülen of founding an Islamic State in Turkey. Gülen Organization was a strong ally of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's AKP in the 2000s and when a corruption probe that included an investigation of the ministers, bureaucrats and mayors was launched in 2013, Gülen was regarded as the organizer of this operation with his follower bureaucrats in state institutions such as at the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Since the corruption probe, an operation for cleansing state institutions of Gülen supporters, called "Parallel Structure" has been underway (Williams, 2013). Fethullah Gülen is also sought with red notice by the Ministry of Justice in 2015, and the Turkish government planned to reclaim him from the USA in 2016 (TRThaber, 2016). Subsequently, the organization was declared responsible for the July 15, 2016 Military Coup attempt in Turkey. After the unsuccessful coup attempt, the followers of the organization have been subject to the cleansing process of the state institutions that count them as members of the Fethullahist Terror Organization

<sup>14</sup> Sulaymanites is an Islamic community in Turkey, named after Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan (1888–1959). It is estimated that the Sulaymanites community had two million members in the 1990s. The major aim of the Sulaymanites has been to teach Arabic, Quran reading, and religious courses in community houses and dormitories. Since the Law on the Unification of Education in 1924 abolished separate religious education, Sulaymanites have organized these courses through their own means (Saraç, 1992).

Moreover, the intellectuals' positioning under the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of the AKP has been visible in the 2000s by having an organic intellectual<sup>15</sup> function. This leads to the third research question: *How and why did the pluralist public intellectuals engage the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of AKP in the 2000s?* The analysis in this doctoral dissertation rests on the fact that the emergence of a pro-transformation liberal-right perspective in post-1980s in Turkey arose from an intention to reform in order to join the European Union (EU). This perspective was later based on Turkey's acquiring candidacy status for EU membership in December 1999 and brought the socially constructed reformist way in the 2000s under the historical bloc of AKP. Thus, with the major motivation of putting the military under the civilian-elected government to meet the standard of the EU countries, as well as increasing the rights of minorities, empowering civil society, and encouraging individual and group freedoms, the reform process continued with the consent of civil society. Research reveals that within this reformist environment, the supportive positioning of the media and the intellectuals' role as legitimizing actors of these reform processes—especially in media discussions, but also with their practical involvement in reformist activities—have been important contributors to social consent for the reforms.

So, this brings the third hypothesis: *Pluralist public intellectuals, as the organic intellectuals of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of AKP in the 2000s, brought the country's social problems onto the agenda with the aims of creating social consent for the EU-backed social and political transformation processes and motivating the government to undertake further reforms.* The third hypothesis will be tested in the second section of chapter 5. It will be tested first through the debates over the hegemonic competition between the military and AKP governments and the intellectuals' discourses positioning them as pro-government; the examples presented are Fehmi Koru, Hasan Cemal and Mehmet Altan. Secondly, the analysis will present intellectuals' attempts to legitimize the reforms allowing the engagement of pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere by supporting the headscarf debate as well as the urban religiosity debate, with the cases of Fehmi Koru, Nilüfer Göle and Mehmet Altan. Thirdly, the analysis will present the engagement of pluralist public

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<sup>15</sup> Organic intellectual, a term derived from Gramsci's conception, is used in this dissertation to refer to certain positions and the function of pluralist public intellectuals. According to Gramsci (1971: 5), every social group creates with it organic intellectuals and their function is to widen this group's hegemonic position through legitimizing the group ideology as well as the actions. This function of the organic intellectuals is also applied to their engagement with other cultural groups, counter hegemonic spheres, historical blocs and hegemonic projects. More information about the Gramsci's concept of organic intellectual can be found in chapter 2.

intellectuals in the reform process to make the Kurds part of Turkey's overall public sphere with reference to Fehmi Kuru, Hasan Cemal, Mehmet Altan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder. In the fourth sub-section, the analysis will be of intellectuals' positioning as supportive during the Constitutional Change Referendum process in 2010, with 'Yes, but not Enough' discourse, stating their acceptance of the changes in the Constitutional Amendment Package as an important step for putting the military and judiciary under the civilian authority and demanding more; the cases of Fehmi Kuru, Hasan Cemal and Mehmet Altan are presented. In summary, these present the function of the intellectuals over the structural change of Turkey, starting from the social sphere.

Given the position of the pluralist public intellectuals in the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc in the 2000s as contributing actors in the social transformation process, the fourth research question, concerning the post-2010 period of the research, is: *If the social transformation process over the pluralization of the public sphere under the AKP's pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc continued after the 2000s, why did a new pluralist left bloc emerge from the Gezi protests, consisting of historically subordinated social groups with organic positioning of the pluralist public intellectuals within?* Even though structural changes in the position of the military have happened for the control of civilian government over the state institutions, the public discussions as well as the debates in the intellectual sphere have been over increasing authoritarianism of the AKP politics in the post-2010 referendum process. Basically, the EU-backed and socially constructed reform processes followed by the AKP government were key to introduction of the pro-Islamic movements as well as the religious Kurds to the overall public sphere. This provided motivation for the other subordinated social groups, including Kurds, Alevis, women's movements, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and LGBTs, to form a pro-transformation left historical bloc based on resisting the proposed cultural codes of conservative AKP.

In a similar vein, as the intellectual bloc of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of AKP was starting to dissolve due to this authoritarianism debate, the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 marked the formation of a new pluralist intellectual bloc with a new ideological base. This bloc existed not only in the literary arena but also in the practical environment, based on the pro-transformation left attitude in the time leading up to the 2015 general elections that later absorbed the organic intellectuals of the previous historical bloc. Since this new pro-transformation left bloc held the same pluralist ideas as the previous pluralist intellectuals in the 2000s, it is necessary to assess the function of the pluralist public intellectuals in this new



pro-transformation left bloc. Their function in this process is to contribute to bringing the historically subordinated social groups into the public sphere by legitimizing their ideas that emerged during the protests and continued actions in process.

So, this brings us to the fourth hypothesis: *With the decrease in the influence of the military and increase in the civilian authoritarianism of AKP government after the 2010 Constitutional Amendment Referendum, a power vacuum emerged in the social sphere, allowing still-subordinated social groups to come together as a new pro-transformation pluralist left bloc, reflected in the Gezi Park Protests in 2013, for which pluralist public intellectuals constructed the conceptual base and involved themselves practically, functioning to shape the direction of the further resistance that contributed to these subordinated groups' involvement in the overall public sphere toward the June 2015 general elections.* The fourth hypothesis will be tested in the third section of chapter 5, in which the research serves to reveal the function of pluralist public intellectuals in the emergence of the new left mentality, as well as their contribution to the inclusion of these historically excluded social groups in the public sphere by empowering this new left process.

Accordingly, the third section of chapter 5 will first analyze the emergence of the renovation of the left discourse with the influential position of Foti Benlisoy for the youth involvement in the new left process. In the second sub-section, the analysis will cover the contributions of Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy to the debates from the start of the Gezi protests to involve subordinated social groups in the public sphere as members of the Gezi Community, as well as these sample intellectuals' practical involvement in shaping the direction of the protests. In the third sub-section, Ihsan Eliaçık's and Sırrı Süreyya Önder's contributions to the involvement of Islam in this new left mentality that emerged with the Gezi Protests will be analyzed based on the anti-capitalist Islam discourse. In the fourth sub-section, the analysis will be of the evolution of Gezi Movement into a socially constructed HDP project with the inclusion of this wider historical bloc. This bloc consists of members from historically subordinated social groups, with the secular Kurds in the center, including the Kurds (secular, Islamic), Alevis (Turkish, Kurdish and Arab), leftists, religious minorities (Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Ezidi, Assyrian), ethnic groups (Albanian, Laz, Pomak, Turkmen, Georgian), Anti-Capitalist Muslims, women, feminists, ecologists and LGBT individuals. The analysis will present all the sample pluralist public intellectuals' contributions to this process as organic intellectuals, either through discourses or practical engagement in the HDP project's June 2015 general elections campaign. The format of testing each hypothesis in the

mentioned sections will provide comprehensive answers to the major research question of this project.

### **1.3. Theoretical Framework**

Ideas about the roles of the intellectuals in the social and political sphere have been presented in different ways, following different conceptual approaches. In this doctoral dissertation, the research into the conceptual approaches to the role of the intellectuals entailed looking into the ideas of various philosophers, including Julien Benda, Karl Marx, Jean Paul Sartre, Karl Mannheim, Immanuel Kant, Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, Raymond Aron, Max Weber, Louis Althusser, Edward Said, Louis Bodin, Sabri Ülgener, Raymond Williams, Noam Chomsky, Jürgen Habermas, Erol Güngör and Cemil Meriç. All these thinkers see the intellectual as doing many different things, with their views of the intellectuals falling into four different categories: in the first category, as actors producing the culture and values of a society; in the second, as functioning within many social groups and classes; in the third, as an independent class; and in the fourth, as historically functioning individuals. Since this doctoral dissertation deals with the role of the intellectuals in the social transformation process in Turkey from the 1980s onwards, the analyses of intellectuals' connection in the social classes and groups and of their functioning in the public sphere have been important. In particular, the approaches of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams and Jürgen Habermas were found to be relevant for the scope of the dissertation.

The major focuses of this study are the empowerment of the civil society, democratic participation and the pluralization of the public sphere in the social transformation of Turkey from 1983 to 2015. The selected unit of analysis in this dissertation is the public intellectual, a part of this process of social transformation who has specific knowledge and wisdom and a specific oppositional or supportive positioning reflected in the public sphere through both discourses and practical involvement—engaging the social movements, classes and groups. Since public opinion is basic to democratic participation as well as to the pluralization of the public sphere, the process of molding public opinion requires public engagement through social movements, classes, groups and especially the media that provide an area of influence for the ideas of the intellectuals.

Taking the functions of the intellectuals to be constructing discourses and actively involving themselves in practical issues, I first analyze the theoretical foundations of the approaches of

Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams and Jürgen Habermas with regard to the positions and the roles of the intellectuals. The purpose of this doctoral dissertation is to analyze the social transformation process that evolved through the intellectuals' contribution of powerful discourses to the debates; the approaches of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser and Raymond Williams were found to be insufficient for this analysis. Marx does acknowledge the value of intellectuals' engagement with the proletariat, but all three writers focus excessively on the intellectuals' engagement with hegemonic classes, regarding them as an element of the established hegemony; this understanding makes their work unsuitable for my analysis. Furthermore, although Jürgen Habermas assigns major power to the intellectuals as contributors to the debates in the public sphere, his explanation of them as free floating intellectuals is also found insufficient for this analysis. It is difficult to prove the influence of the intellectuals if they are not seen as connected to a social class or group. The preferred alternative here is Antonio Gramsci's approach, which gives intellectuals organic positioning for engaging social groups and classes. This engagement has taken place not only in the dominant political sphere, but also in the civil society and in the counter-hegemonic spheres; this best represents the role of the public intellectuals in the social transformation process in post-1980s Turkey. Thus, this dissertation adds to the Gramscian analysis by considering this engagement of the intellectuals with not only the economic classes, but also other ethnic, cultural and social affiliations, such as the pro-Islamic movements, Kurds, Alevis, women's movements, LGBTs, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, and their historical blocs.

This study analyzes the role of the intellectuals in the social and political sphere considering their function in the media, as well as their engaging in the historical blocs during the social transformation in Turkey from the 1980s onwards. The first important point for analysis is the pluralist public intellectuals' presence in the private media from the 1980s, working for the counter-hegemonic struggle to bring the subordinated social groups into the public sphere. The second important point for analysis is their being in the organic intellectuals' position in the media and working toward a hegemony of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc of the AKP during the 2000s. Thus, in the Gramscian conception, the media is one of the cultural arenas where the hegemony was produced (Heywood 1994: 100–101). Media, as a part of the civil society, provides an important arena for intellectuals to share their discourses and thereby influence the public opinion. As an important contribution to Gramscian analysis, this dissertation deals with the function of the media not only for its hegemonic dynamics, but also as a place for the counter-hegemonic struggle. The third point for analysis in the

Gramscian conception is pluralist public intellectuals' engagement with the liberal-right bloc and development of academic, artistic and scholarly works within this bloc, and the journalistic discourses for empowering this bloc against the hegemonic position of the military, from the 1980s till the end of 2000s. Moreover, the involvement during this period of historically subordinated groups including pro-Islamic movements and Kurds in Turkey's overall public sphere will be analyzed through a Gramscian conception of the role of intellectuals in the formation of a pro-transformation historical bloc and legitimizing the reform process. So, in this dissertation, not only the hegemonic function of the historical bloc, but also the subordinated social groups' strategy against the hegemonic power are considered. The fourth point for analysis is pluralist public intellectuals' left positioning in the Gezi Park Protests. This new position arose from their role within a counter-hegemonic sphere during the Gezi Protests in 2013 and from their contributing to the emergence of a new historical bloc consisting of Kurds, Alevis, women's movements, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and LGBTs, under the HDP project that helped to carry these groups to the public sphere in the post-Gezi process.

Overall, in this dissertation, the intellectuals considered were selected based on the Gramscian conception of an organic intellectual. They come from different political backgrounds, but engaged in the pro-transformation blocs and represented a pluralist perspective, dealing with issues such as democratization, pluralization, and recognition of individual rights and freedoms during the social transformation process from 1983 till June 2015. As mentioned, the selected group of intellectuals are called 'pluralist public intellectuals' in this project. The pluralist public intellectuals were selected on the basis of the functions of their original discourses in creating public discussions, their use of the media to propagate their proposed ideas and their stance on supporting pluralism within the social and political arena. In particular, the focus group includes intellectuals from Islamic, liberal and leftist political positions and also Kurdish, non-Muslim and women's movements backgrounds, and excludes nationalist, militarist and nationalist leftist groups because of their positioning against the transformation. Thus, the sample pluralist public intellectuals were selected by their functioning in the media, social groups and pro-transformation blocs in the period under review. The selected intellectuals are people whose ideas were discussed, shared in the media and commented on by major social groups.

#### **1.4. Research Methodology and Field Research**

The methodology of this thesis is the collection of qualitative data from the existing literature and the interviews conducted. Preliminary historical research revealed the basic parameters of the social transformation in Turkey, not only from the 1980s, but also in the previous historical period, and allowed the major discourses and important developments in the social transformation to be categorized. Then, since the actual emphasis of this dissertation is the role of the intellectuals in the social transformation process, research into the theoretical approaches to the literature on the topic was needed. This entailed first of all a literature review of the role of intellectuals, following various philosophical approaches. The aim was to find the approaches that best presented how intellectuals engage in the social groups, classes, movements, the hegemonic power and the state, in order to analyze the positioning of the intellectuals during the social transformation in Turkey. As will be explained comprehensively in chapter 2, one category of theoretical approaches analyzed the intellectuals based on how they function to engage the existing hegemony or counter-hegemony as well as the different social classes, groups. This category included the approaches of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams and Jürgen Habermas. Finally, Antonio Gramsci's organic intellectuals approach was selected as the unit of analysis of the functioning of the intellectuals because of the nature of social transformation in Turkey.

After the theoretical research was finalized, previous studies on the role of intellectuals in Turkey were researched. Existing studies were analyzed for their suitability to the scope of this dissertation as well as their contribution to the debate on the role of the intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey. Determining the role of the intellectuals in the social transformation process creates some difficulties, given the changing nature of discourses and their representation in a society fragmented due to technological developments. Thus, the selection of the intellectuals took into account the changing nature of the social transformation process in Turkey. This brings us to the third phase of research, the field research that was conducted in Turkey. This practical research included interviews with the sample pluralist public intellectuals as well as some representatives from influential NGOs. The aim of the interviews conducted with the intellectuals was to reveal the major implications of their influential discourses. The interviews conducted with other NGO activists were to acquire comprehensive information about their views on the development of the social transformation in Turkey after the 1980s. It is important to note that the June 2015 general election is

identified as the end point for the analysis in this study because after the election, the government control of the media and of other intellectual practices increased, reducing the intellectuals' influence in the social and political processes.

### ***Field Research in Turkey***

Because of quickly changing conditions in Turkey, I had three research stays in Turkey between 2012 and 2016. I carried out the literary research in the important libraries of Turkey including the Library of Boğaziçi University and the Library of Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul and during the same period conducted the interviews with the selected pluralist public intellectuals in Turkey. The field research for this dissertation included conducting interviews with seven public intellectuals about their influential discourses with which they contributed to the social transformation in Turkey. These were, first, *Hasan Cemal*, chosen because he had turned from his revolutionist background to the liberal-right by engaging Özalism in the 1980s with his influential discourses describing the military as the most problematic actor in the country and his aim to overthrow the militarist order. Second, *Fehmi Koru* was selected because of his engagement with the liberal-right bloc, his affiliation with the Gülen Organization's newspaper, *Zaman*, in 1985 and his TV hosting on Kanal 7 of MGH in the 1990s and 2000s with his liberal pluralist discourses directing the pro-Islamic movements toward transformism and promoting EU membership. Thirdly, *Mehmet Altan* was selected because, writing for the liberal newspaper *Sabah*, he brought the 'second republic' concept to the public agenda in 1991 by propagating his discourses in favor of a democratic and pluralist republic embracing citizens of different ethnicities. Fourth, *Nilüfer Göle* was selected for constructing the 'forbidden modern' discourse in the 1990s, in which she contributed to the pro-Islamic movements' engagement with the public sphere in this social transformation process by showing the possibility of conservative Muslim women's engagement with the public sphere through their religious symbols (i.e. headscarf). These four intellectuals were selected because of their engagement as organic intellectuals to the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc, in which they contributed to the social transformation process with their original discourses before the Gezi Protests in 2013. Their situation of being absorbed into the pro-transformation left historical bloc because of the ideas emerged during the Gezi Protests and later showing support for this bloc also makes them important for the analysis.

In addition to the previously mentioned intellectuals, members of the pro-transformation liberal left counter-hegemonic sphere that started with the Gezi Park protests in 2013 against the increased neoliberal authoritarianism in Turkey were selected for interviews. The fifth, *Sırrı Süreyya Önder*, was selected because of his contribution to the Kurdish movement's inclusion in the public sphere as a member of parliament (MP) in both the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi – BDP) and HDP. Önder's mediator role during the Solution Process of the Kurdish problem, which started in 2009, and his participation in conservative TV programs, his column writing, film production (e.g. *Beynelmilel* [International], *O. Çocukları* [Son of the Bitches] and *İtirazım Var* [I have an Objection]) and being the leading figure of the Gezi Park Protests are other important reasons for his inclusion. Sixth, *Ihsan Eliaçık* was selected because of his contribution to the involvement of Islam into the new left. His books and TV discussions promoting 'anti-capitalist Islam' aimed to change the religious perspective of the society. Importantly, as a leading figure of the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group and also the Imam of the Gezi Park protests, he contributed to changing the perception of Gezi protests in the minds of the conservative people. Seventh, *Fotî Benlisoy* was selected because his books and articles brought the renovation of the left idea, which aimed to carry various historically subordinated social groups into Turkey's public sphere. He was a leading young actor of the Gezi protests, writing banners and propagating against gerontocracy in the Turkish left and for bringing the youth into the scene. He was also a leading figure of the *After 10 Initiative* (10'dan Sonra İnsiyatifi), working to bring the pro-Kurdish HDP's share in the June 2015 elections above the 10% threshold.

More research for this dissertation was conducted at some of the important NGOs in Turkey: both reading their publications and conducting interviews with some influential activists about the historical process of their organizations and gathering their views about social transformation in Turkey. An important factor in the selection of activists was that they belong to different political ideologies and come from various social groups, so different opinions would be considered. In Istanbul, one of the interviews was conducted with Head of the Civil Solidarity Platform (Sivil Dayanışma Platformu) *Ayhan Oğan*. As head of the one of the most influential conservative NGOs in Turkey as well as an activist in the historical process, Oğan had an important view of the position of the pro-Islamic movements during the social transformation process in Turkey. *Cüneyt Sarıyaşar*, activist and head of the Istanbul branch of Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (İnsan Hakları ve

Mazlumlar İçin Dayanışma Derneği – MAZLUMDER) was important to present not only the evolution of the pro-Islamic movements but also their dealing with the Kurdish problem and the problems of other subordinated social groups as well as their participation to the Gezi Protests. *Cafer Solgun*, Head of the Confrontation Association (Yüzleşme Derneği) and an ethnic Alevi, was selected because of the influential positioning of the association as an independent NGO founded by a group of journalists, writers, academics and activists who believe that a healthy and functioning democracy can only be possible through confronting the past. His interview revealed his ideas about Alevis' as well as other subordinated social groups' confrontation with the Kemalist system and their recent integration into the public sphere. Also, activist and former President of the Association for Social Change (Sosyal Değişim Derneği), *Cengiz Alğan* was selected because he was one of the founding members of the Look at the Peace Campaign<sup>16</sup> during the Solution Process. The interview was to reveal his view of the progress of the Solution Process for the Kurdish integration in the public sphere during the covered time period, and his ideas on the integration of other subordinated social groups in Turkey's overall public sphere.

### ***Analysis of the Interviews***

Before the field research, the methodology for analyzing the data had to be decided. Thematic analysis, content analysis, grounded theory, narrative analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) were studied; FDA was selected for the analysis of the interviews with the sample intellectuals since it was found to be compatible with the research question of this dissertation. Michel Foucault did not develop any method for analyzing discourses; instead he suggested various ways of understanding how to gather meanings from discourses (Cheek, 2008: 356). However, a number of discourse analysis methods have been based on his theoretical work. The importance of FDA for this dissertation is that, unlike other methods of analysis, FDA considers the texts for analysis to be not value-free, but historically, socially and culturally situated. They are the product of reality, but present the partial aspect of reality (Ibid). Unlike an analysis of the meanings of the discourses in the text, the discourse analysis reveals the positioning of the interviewee and of the target groups of their discourses in the historical and cultural practices. This suggests a starting point for the analysis of the contribution of the intellectuals to the social

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<sup>16</sup> The Look at the Peace Campaign began with 69 signatures of famous journalists, academics and activists in Turkey. The campaign aimed at ensuring support from the civil society for the Solution Process. During the campaign, activists have visited 42 cities in Turkey with the Peace Train and organized symposiums to discuss the Solution Process with the people. For more information about the Campaign, see the official web page at: <http://www.barisabak.net/> (Last accessed 18.04.2018).



transformation process: their discourses in the interviews. The analysis of practical examples in chapter 5 shows how these discourses are applied in the real world.

Both the interviewees and the method of recording and transcribing the interviews were selected before the start of the field research. Semi-structured interviews are suitable for hearing particular life and experiences and so were chosen as a good way to identify the intellectuals' positions in the historical context. The semi-structured interviews comprised a set of questions including public issues as well as specific questions for each intellectual that would reveal the major implications of their specific discourses and their specific knowledge and experiences. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with all sample intellectuals except Sırrı Süreyya Önder, who only accepted questions through e-mail. However, by devising the questions to suit his particular life experiences, I obtained the result expected from a semi-structured interview. Also, Fehmi Koru kept his personal interview very short, and was not free for a second interview during my research periods; thus, I did not gather the proper answers to reveal his conceptions of the Islamic transformism. So, I found and used Fehmi Koru's personal interview published in the conservative magazine *Altınoluk* in 1992 for the interview analysis. This interview was semi-structured and revealed both his conception of Islamic transformism and his positioning in this social transformation process. As recommended by many qualitative research scholars, I used a voice recorder for the personal interviews, since my taking notes would distract the interviewee who might therefore give less comprehensive answers to the questions (See Willig, 2013: 112–113). After the interviews, the voice records were transcribed verbatim. Since it was the content of the interview that was important for the analysis of the discourses, non-linguistic features were not transcribed.

The extracts of the interviews were analyzed using Carla Willig's version of FDA, which includes 6 steps of analysis (Ibid: 383–389). The advantage of this version is that it clearly shows in which of the possible ways the discourse is constructed and perceived. The first step, *discursive constructions*, relates to how discursive objects are constructed. The analysis is made by asking the questions: What is the situation of the object formed through the language? And what type of object is being constructed? The second step, *discourses*, defines all parts that contribute to the construction of the discursive object. The analysis is made by asking the questions: Which discourses are used? And what is the relationship of these discourses with one another? The third step, *action orientation*, is a close analysis of different discursive contexts. The analysis is made by asking the questions: What are the constructions that were

acquired? And what are their functions? The fourth step, *positionings*, defines the variety of constructions about the discursive objects in the text. The analysis is made by asking the question: What are the subject positions that can be found with these constructions? The fifth step, *practice*, relates to the relationship between discourse and practice. The analysis is made by asking the question: What kind of action possibilities are found within these constructions? The sixth step, *subjectivity*, examines the relationship between the last step of the discourse in analysis and subjectivity. The analysis is made by asking the question: What can be felt, thought and experienced with these subject positions at first hand?

The interview analyses are also incorporated into chapter 5, the chapter describing the application of the research, in which FDA is used also for further interpretations. Moreover, it is important to mention that Carla Willig's six stages do not provide a full analysis in a Foucauldian sense, especially as they do not deal with the historicity and the evolution of the discursive constructions over time (Ibid: 401–402). However, important for this dissertation, this version provides a framework for identifying discursive resources, given the subject's positioning within the analyzed text and how the discourses reflect practice and subjectivity. This version is important in this regard, especially for revealing the major implications of certain discourses of the intellectuals and their and their followers' positionings. However, there are no strict guidelines in the FDA; the best method of analysis depends on the research focus (Morgan, 2010: 4). For this reason and to make a comprehensive analysis, the analyses incorporated the works of other FDA theorists as well. Ian Parker's (2014) analytic stance is infused within the analysis of these steps, providing criteria to follow during the six stages of analysis, including rules and strategies, and context and variations.

Following rules and strategies during the analysis refers to analyzing how the person is displaying both certain meanings and their own positioning by using the socially shared rules for constructing discourses that reflect social interaction, formation of the words and interaction channels. People use different strategies to reflect their ideas in their communicative environment, not only in the way of general public understanding but also in the opposite direction; how they shape their meaning is the point for analysis. This is an important criterion for determining whether the discourses of the intellectuals followed or violated publicly accepted rules. Moreover, the discourses are analyzed by considering the historical, cultural and social context. Since the discourses emerged over time, not statically, analyzing them based on these contexts reveals the different meanings of the discourses of the intellectuals and their positioning over time. Thus, Willig (2013: 364) argues that the context

provides information about the nature of the organization of the discourses and their functions that is important in the step of action orientation. Considering the power relations during the social transformation of Turkey, this criterion is important for analyzing the intellectual discourses that provides important information about the process by which the powerful discourses became dominant in the group over time.

The development of different variations of the discourses is analyzed with respect to the variations criterion as these could also contradict the overall accepted meanings as well as present other multiple meanings in the analysis. Thus, the variability of the meanings and explanations of certain objects or aspects, reveals different discursive positions of the speakers and possible effects on the audiences (Ibid: 364–365). It is important to mention that the meanings revealed in the discourses not only refer to the discourses, but also reflect the nature of the practical arena. Thus, the purpose of the analysts' questions have been to reveal the constructions of the language and their consequences (Potter and Wetherell, cited in Ibid). This criterion, variability, is thus important as it presents the contradictory meanings and other overlapping meanings that emerged from the discourses of the intellectuals.

### ***Validity and Reliability of the Research***

Despite the clear methodological perspective of this study, it relies on multiple data gathering methods: literature research, observation, interviews with the sample intellectuals, and activists. The use of different data gathering methods enhances the reliability and validity of the research findings (Talja, 1999: 473). These multiple data gathering methods were followed while conceptualizing the study, collecting the data, analyzing the research interviews and interpreting the overall collected data. Since this doctoral dissertation focused on the role of the intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey, the intellectuals and the events selected for the analysis relate to the historical observation of the events. This historical observation included the major debates over the areas of social transformation and the function of intellectuals through their popular discourses within this process.

As the FDA method of analysis forms the basis for analysis of interviews and their application, I looked for the discourses and their function within the actions of intellectuals in the process of social transformation. To aid analysis of interviews, the interview extracts present the discourses alongside the practical evidence that also reveal the position of each interviewee. In addition, the extracts present the scope of the overall research, including the main findings

of the analysis. The extracts were selected based on the focus of the study: those that best represented the discourses of the intellectuals were selected for the analysis. A comparison was made within the overall text of the interview to determine if a better extract could be found that presented the overall idea in the interview in detail. As mentioned, since there are various versions of the FDA (Morgan, 2010: 4), the analysis followed Foucault's principles using Willig's version and also incorporating the works of other FDA theorists.

Carla Willig (2013: 504) mentions that the quality of the accounts that was produced with the analysis of the discourses is important for assessing the research. So, this requires verifiability of the researcher's interpretation based on the research data. Moreover, Michel Foucault (cited in Talja, 1999: 473) mentions that the discourse comes to exist by being used in the variety of contexts and applying the variety of themes. Given this, the analysis focuses on revealing the various implications of the discourse with their practical subject positioning. This was done, first, by analyzing extracts from the interviews. In the following phase, in chapter 5, practical issues and the context of discussions extend the analysis of the interviews to reveal the validity of research results from discourse to practice. Coherence is important for the validity of the research data in the discourse analytic work since how discourse and observation fit together is based on the research on literature and practical issues.

Overall, a true picture of the social transformation process as well as the contribution of the intellectuals is presented by employing a comprehensive literature research, including a comprehensive historical and theoretical research, as well as practical field research and observation. The sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork allows the reader to compare it with the other cases and also justifies its application to other similar cases in future research. Indeed, the results of studies using discourse analysis are not considered generalizable (Cheek, 2008: 357). However, they provide important information in similar cases for further research. Hence, the research results that emerge from the data are based on comprehensive research and confirm the reliability of the study.

Concerning research ethics, as mentioned, the research comprised a literature review, personal interviews and practical observation of the role of intellectuals during the social transformation process in Turkey. So as not to cause any ethical violations, I first informed the selected interviewees by either e-mail or telephone about the topic and the scope of the dissertation and the interview and asked their permission to conduct it. Other data were gathered from materials published for the public (books, journals, newspapers, web pages), so

no permission was required. This work therefore meets the conditions of research ethics and it is solely the product of the author's comprehensive research process.

### **1.5. The Study's Limitations**

The major problem concerning the research related to the social transformation has been that the research is being conducted in an unstable environment, with quickly changing debates and practices. These changes in the nature of the debates as well as in practical social developments have been evident during the last 30 years in Turkey. Even though these difficulties existed, as the methodology part above outlines, the period for the analysis as well as the intellectuals focused on were selected based on a research methodology that would best present these debates and practical aspects. In this case, the study covers a sample of pluralist public intellectuals with their influential positioning, analyzing their contribution to the social transformation process in the given specific time period: from 1983 to June, 2015.

In this doctoral dissertation, the major limitations are visible in three ways. First, I am an academic and dealing intensively with the readings as well as research itself, which has both positive and negative effects. There is a risk that major ideas that catch the attention of the researcher while researching and reading the intellectuals' literary products might not be those that attract society as a whole. However, in that this dissertation project follows the major debates of the society within the aforementioned period, creating a map of the influential discourses of the times, it can be characterized as society-based research on these discourses; this helps to demonstrate a more objective perspective. This academic perspective to the debate provides a major contribution to analyzing how ideas and conceptions are perceived by the public, based on particular circumstances of the time.

The second limitation has been the unstable position of the social transformation space in Turkey. Major events that occurred during the period of social transformation under review here revealed the extremely fragmented nature of the space in which the transformation process existed. Different interpretations of the transformation as well as different positionings within it must arise. As a result, it became more important to consider intellectuals from different ideological positions to create a single 'objective' analysis. Thus, in the process of the social and political transformation of Turkey, pro-transformation positioning has occurred not only within the right (as it has since the 1980s), but also within the left, especially from the Gezi Park protest in 2013 onwards. In this research, because of

the complex situation in the country as well as the different positionings of the contributing intellectuals, it was necessary to analyze the social transformation by integrating them into the analysis itself, which in turn also makes the analysis more objective.

The third limitation is related to the ambiguous situation of the public's reaching for shared ideas through the media, as one of the most important places for intellectuals to share their ideas. All public intellectuals included in this study have been active in the media and also had social media accounts, which have been an important channel for sharing their opinions with the public. The ways pluralist public intellectuals share ideas through media outlets as well as through social media, their books, and their engagement in major practical issues have created debate in the media; these are also contributions to the social transformation process. Thus, it is not the claim of the dissertation that intellectuals directed the entire transformation process, but that they contributed as actors to the social transformation process with their discourses and actions.

These three important limitations, of course, do not represent all the other problematic areas of the dissertation. However, since they fundamentally relate to this dissertation as an original contribution, it is important to explain them clearly at the outset. Furthermore, it is important to mention that even though this dissertation puts intellectuals at the center of the analysis, it does not deal with identifying different types of intellectuals. So, in this dissertation, the analysis covers the contribution of a specific type of intellectuals, during a specific period of time, to the specific phenomenon of the social transformation process, but who nevertheless have come from different ideological backgrounds with an idea of transforming Turkish society into a more pluralist structure.

## **1.6. Dissertation Overview**

In analyzing the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey, this dissertation project is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the dissertation. In the second chapter, the theoretical base of the dissertation will be explained. I will present the main theoretical perspectives in the historical process that deal with the function of the intellectuals in the social classes, groups and movements, including the concepts of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams and Jürgen Habermas, then I will mention the limitations of these existing theoretical perspectives and defend the research's focus on an exclusively Gramscian conception. Within the scope of the function of the

pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey in the post-1980s, a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical debate on the Gramscian conception will be presented. I will redefine the function of the public intellectuals within the social transformation of Turkey in relation to the social groups, counter-hegemonic spheres, historical blocs and their use of the media, internet technology and social media. So, without dismissing the historically accepted definitions of intellectuals, my contribution will be based on the new developments in the functions of the intellectuals in the social, political and cultural arenas. I will highlight major questions and problematic areas concerning the application of the research that emerged from my theoretical reading. At the end of the chapter, based on this overall discussion of the major theoretical perspective, I will present the contribution of the dissertation to the existing research.

In the third chapter, I will describe the social transformation in Turkey that has happened during the covered time period and present the major dynamics that have been influencing it. In doing so, I will provide information about the economic, political, international, social and cultural issues that have affected the social transformation. These include civil–military relations, the social effects of economic development, the development of civil society and civil movements, the engagement of Islam and pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere, the Kurdish question, the development of the women’s movement, and the struggle of the Alevis and LGBTs to be part of the public sphere in the historical context of the post-1980s Turkey. This chapter will also describe the historical transformation of the intellectual sphere in Turkey. So, the major aims of this chapter are to present and evaluate the social transformation process.

The fourth chapter will present a theoretically-informed empirical investigation. Its first section will describe the emergence of the pluralist public intellectuals in post-1980s Turkey and their positioning in the historical process as an alternative to pro-military Kemalist approaches in the intellectual sphere. This section includes also a comprehensive analysis of the pro-military position of the mainstream media and the emergence of new alternative private media tools such as TV and radio in the post-1980s era, intellectuals’ functioning in the political discussion programs, and later how the internet and the online media have widened their discourses. In the second section, I will present the discourse analyses of the interview extracts and their critique of the seven chosen pluralist public intellectuals during the transformation period.

Drawing on the historical perspective, which describes the social transformation in Turkey from the liberal and pluralist perspectives during the period under review, in the fifth chapter, I will address the key questions related to the role of pluralist public intellectuals. To do so, I will analyze their engagement to the historical blocs, their organic position relative to some social groups and their contribution to the social transformation through their discourses and their practices. In this chapter, I will first present pluralist public intellectuals' positioning in the liberal-right bloc from the 1980s to 2000s—with their influential pro-transformation discourses against the hegemonic position of the military and their support for the involvement of Islam and pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere. In the second section, I will analyze the pluralist public intellectuals' organic intellectual position in the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of the AKP in the 2000s. The analysis will cover their support for the EU-backed reform processes to eliminate the role of the military in the social and political arena, the involvement of the pro-Islamic movements and Islam in the public sphere and the socially constructed Solution Process for Kurdish involvement in the public sphere.

Furthermore, in the third section of chapter 5, the analysis will cover the dissolution of the intellectual bloc of the liberal-right caused by AKP's ideological shift and the reshaping of pluralist public intellectual conceptions in the newly emerged pro-transformation left counter-hegemonic sphere arising from the Gezi Protests in 2013. The analysis in this process has been of the contribution of sample pluralist public intellectuals to the involvement of Islam in the left, the *Turkeyification (Türkiyelileşme)*<sup>17</sup> of the Kurdish movement and the Alevis', women's movements' and LGBTs' being part of the public sphere through their involvement in the Gezi community during the protests. In addition, the analysis will cover these intellectuals' role in the pro-transformation left historical bloc of the HDP during the electoral period of the June 2015 general elections, which carried these subordinated social groups into the overall public sphere. In the fourth section, the analysis will be finalized with a general evaluation. In the concluding chapter, I will present a summary of the main analytic findings of this dissertation, thereby answering the research questions. I will then provide some further suggestions as to the direction of the ongoing transformation based on the findings of the analysis presented here.

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<sup>17</sup> A newly invented term, 'Turkeyification' refers to transforming into a movement that represents the whole of Turkey.



## CHAPTER II

### Conceptual Framework

Historically, the emergence of intellectuals has been related to the development of thinking skills during the formative phases of societies. Major developments in societal practices from economy to culture have led to developments in the intellectual realm. At the end of the Middle Ages, the emergence of universities provided an important arena for the intellectual development of society, and the development of modern cities brought these intellectuals to the public sphere, which has historically been an arena for interaction among different social groups. Thus, intellectual practices from the early public sphere shows that intellectuals have been the knowledge actors in the social arena. The emergence of a literary space gave the intellectuals and, therefore, new thoughts and reasoning, a place to develop. This new arena for interaction with the public gave the intellectuals the opportunity to involve themselves in the social and political issues of their times (See Habermas, 1991). Moreover, in the political transformation processes, such as transformations from absolutist regimes to nation states, the visibility of intellectuals and their connection to the political arena increased. Hence, intellectuals were needed to provide legitimacy to the system. Furthermore, the philosophical thoughts of the Age of Enlightenment formed the basis for other intellectual ideas after this time. Rather than being free floating in their stance, intellectuals sought interactions and affiliations with certain groups. Over the course of the development of the public sphere in the early modernization process, intellectuals went from engagement with bourgeois society to connection to the counter-hegemonic movements, the proletariat and others. So, the stance of intellectuals must be clarified with respect to their political positioning and the ideas they have.

Contemporary research and analyses on the role of intellectuals in society have resulted in a broad academic debate. Moreover, the analyses in the field of public intellectuals in Turkey date back to the Ottoman Empire. Since the focus of this dissertation is the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey that began in the 1980s, this chapter mainly focuses on research and analyses on the role of the public intellectuals in contemporary society. The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the existing literature and to explain the main conceptual framework of the dissertation, which deals with the intellectuals' engagement with classes, groups and hegemony/counter-hegemony and

provides a basis for analyzing the role of the intellectuals in social movements and their struggle for social transformation. The first section of this chapter will offer a brief analysis of different conceptual approaches to the role of public intellectuals, with their importance and limitations for this project. The second section will include a construction of Gramsci's overall concept as well as his concept of the organic intellectual as the preferred approach for this dissertation. The third section will describe the theoretical contribution, based on the Gramscian conception, of this dissertation to the overall analysis on the role of public intellectuals in the post-1980s. The last part is a conclusion.

## **2.1. Intellectuals, Hegemony and Public Sphere in the Context of Different Conceptual Approaches**

The topic of this dissertation requires dealing with the notions of class, social groups, hegemony, counter-hegemony and public sphere: the most important notions when explaining the intellectuals' struggle for social transformation. The research for the conceptual framework has dealt with the conceptions related to the intellectuals' engagement to class/social groups, hegemonic/counter-hegemonic movement and the public sphere. The conceptions of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams, Jürgen Habermas and Antonio Gramsci were found important for this analysis. However, the preferred approach for the analysis in this dissertation is Gramsci's concept, since it best represents the intellectuals' engagement to hegemonic/counter-hegemonic spheres and their organic positions during the societal transformation processes. In this section, I will briefly explain the conceptions of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams and Jürgen Habermas in connection with the dissertation topic, including their limitations. Gramsci's approach will be detailed in the next section.

### **2.1.1. Karl Marx: Intellectuals and Ideological Domination**

In Marx's conception, intellectuals are not analyzed separately, so their role is not clearly conceptualized. However, the conceptual analyses that grew from Marx's works give the intellectuals a major role. In his book *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (*Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*), Marx mentions that the economic structure of the society is constituted from the relations of production and that a political and legal superstructure rises over the economic structure of the society to create a particular form of the social consciousness. So, "the mode of production of material life conditions the general

process of social, political and intellectual life” (Marx, 1971: 20–22). Thus, it is possible to argue that in Marx’s conception intellectual activity is limited to class consciousness, which is based on the social existence shaped by the mode of production in material life.

Marx sees the ideas of the ruling class as the dominant ideas in the society, in every period of history (Marx *et al.*, 2001: 92). For him, the class with the most material power also exercises dominance over the intellectual sphere, shaping the intellectual products according to the interests of the ruling class (Ibid). This dominant position is seen not only in the arena of material production, but also in the intellectual sphere. However, for Marx, class interests are an important part of how a hegemonic position over material and intellectual forces emerges. Additionally, the ideology of the class is based on this hegemonic positioning, and intellectuals occupy a central position by virtue of their producing and legitimizing these ideologies. So, in Marx’s conception, intellectuals are located at the center of such class-based hegemonic relationships since they function as the legitimizing actors for the interests of these classes. However, while Marx sees the bourgeois as the hegemonic class, he regards the proletariat as the truly universal class. He thus gives a special meaning to the struggle of the proletariat since the ideological positioning of this class is regarded as the most valuable for changing the hegemonic structure (Avineri, 2003: 59). He expects intellectuals to engage the proletariat in acting to change the status quo; his position on the function of intellectuals is clarified with his statement that “the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, but the problem is to change it” (Marx *et al.*, 2001: 170). Marx gives special importance to the intellectuals who engage with the proletariat because this engagement positions their construction of the ideology of the proletarian struggle as a contribution to the revolution. Marx portrays these intellectuals as the true intellectuals, those that work for a progressive cause. So, intellectuals in Marx’s conception have a special position of creating ideologies and contributing to the class struggle in the process.

The division of labor is also important in the Marxist conception of the function of intellectuals. In particular, it is the division between mental and physical production in a class (Ibid: 93). Certain people in a given class are regarded as thinkers, others as group members who passively accept the mental production given to them (Ibid). The people who do the mental production—who effectively engage in the intellectual enterprise—have the active position within the class. Thus, the category of intellectuals was not considered alone, but linked to the class itself. In sum, in Marx’s conception intellectuals are regarded as working for the interest of the ruling class by legitimizing that class’s actions. Marx would regard

these intellectuals as true intellectuals only if they were to engage in the work of the proletariat and contribute to the struggle of the proletariat by giving them an ideological position. These true intellectuals are preferred because their position supports changing the existing hegemony rather than engaging in it.

### ***Limitations of Marx's Approach***

The major deficiency of Marx's approach is its excessive concern with only two classes: the ruling class and the proletariat. Marx regards intellectuals as a part of the hegemonic power. However, his approach gives value to intellectuals if they engage with the proletariat. The proletariat is the most important class—the truly universal class—in Marx's approach, because of their struggle against the hegemonic power (Avineri, 2003: 59). For Marx, it is the ideas that emerge from the proletariat and serve its interest that are true and objective. However, this excessive emphasis on the struggle between the ruling class and proletariat limits the understanding of the roles of other actors, including other political, social and economic classes as well as ethnic and religious groups. Thus, this approach is not suitable for this dissertation, as historically, Turkey did not pass through the development of classes based on the mode of production as the West did, and because an analysis of social transformation in Turkey must deal with these other social, cultural and religious groups. Also, analysis of the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey shows that the intellectuals have engaged with different social groups from various ethnic, cultural and religious groups (i.e. Kurdish movement, pro-Islamic movements, etc.). Dealing with the different classes' and social groups' conceptions is important when analyzing the role of the intellectuals; Marx's economic class-based interpretation does not deal with them.

#### **2.1.2. Louis Althusser: Intellectuals as the Actors of the Ideology**

Althusser's conception of intellectuals occupies a major place in Marxist theory. However, in his conception intellectuals do not have an autonomous place and therefore must be analyzed in the context of their roles in the ideologies. The intellectuals' role in maintaining an ideological position and in transforming an ideology is important. Althusser explains this as intellectuals' function within the ideological state apparatuses for producing the hegemonic ideology as well as sharing it (See Althusser, 2012). An important part of the analysis of the intellectuals is their role in producing ideology, especially as agents and actors for

legitimizing. Ideological state apparatuses have an important position in Althusser's conception:

“The number of ideological state apparatuses is smaller and their individual types are different. For example, we observe that during the Middle Ages, the Church (the religious ideological state apparatus) accumulated a number of functions which have today devolved on to several distinct ideological state apparatuses, new ones in relation to the past I am invoking, in particular educational and cultural functions. Alongside the Church there was the family ideological state apparatus, which played a considerable part, incommensurable with its role in capitalist social formations. Despite appearances, the Church and the Family were not the only ideological state apparatuses. There was also a political ideological state apparatus (the Estates General, the *Parlement*, the different political factions and Leagues, the ancestors of the modern political parties, and the whole political system of the free communes and then of the *Villes*). There was also a powerful ‘proto-trade union’ ideological state apparatus, if I may venture such an anachronistic term (the powerful merchants’ and bankers’ guilds and the journeymen’s associations, etc.). Publishing and Communications, even, saw an indisputable development, as did the theatre; initially both were integral parts of the Church, then they became more and more independent of it” (Ibid: 115).

Thus, in Althusser's conception, intellectuals do not constitute a separate class and are engaged in different areas of work. They function within the ideological state apparatuses as legitimizing actors of the hegemony through their engagement with the hegemonic powers. In Althusser's conception, intellectuals' engagement with the hegemonic class and their work in the interest of the hegemony is consensual. Intellectuals have been under the hierarchy of the ideological state apparatuses as professional actors. In this context, the position of the intellectuals in this hierarchy is described as:

“A last portion reaches the summit, either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide, as well as the ‘intellectuals of the collective labourer’, the agents of exploitation (capitalists, managers), the agents of repression (soldiers, policemen, politicians, administrators, etc.) and the professional ideologists (priests of all sorts, most of whom are convinced ‘laymen’)” (Ibid: 118).

As has been seen, intellectuals are regarded as bound to the idea of the continuation of hegemony, and they work to increase the sphere of influence of this hegemony by being in the ideologist position. Consequently, in Althusser's conception, intellectuals do not have an independent position but are considered based on their class identity. A dominant social formation produces a general ideology and this ideology is reproduced by the intellectuals. So, intellectuals assume the position of producers and carriers of this ideology.

### ***Limitations of Althusser's Approach***

First, as seen in Althusser's conception, intellectuals do not constitute a separate class, but lie within the ideological state apparatuses as agents, namely as professional actors of the hegemonic ideology (Ibid: 115). However, Althusser's assumption that intellectuals engage with ideology only as part of the ideological state apparatuses is not valid, especially when the case of pluralist public intellectuals in Turkey is considered. For instance, intellectuals can collaborate with power without being under the ideological hierarchy, as seen mainly with the AKP governments in the 2000s. Therefore, it is also important to consider the intellectuals' relative autonomy over their discourses and their activities.

The second limitation is in regarding intellectuals only as agents of hegemony, and not having a place within the counter-hegemonic movements, especially in the social movements that emerged as challenges to the existing hegemonic structures. Hence, in Althusser's conception, intellectuals have a petty bourgeois class connection, which makes them unable to engage within the social movements challenging the existing hegemony (Althusser, 1971: 12–13). So, a dominant social formation produces a general ideology and this ideology is reproduced by the intellectuals. Thus, intellectuals assume a position as producers and carriers of this ideology. However, in this conception Althusser gives intellectuals only the position of an agent working only for the interests of the dominant class or hegemony; he does not give them a place in the counter-hegemonic movements. Althusser's conception is not applicable to the position of the pluralist public intellectuals in the post-1980s Turkey, who engaged the counter-social movements with their discourses to support the transformation.

### **2.1.3. Raymond Williams: Intellectuals, the Class and Hegemony**

In class-based analyses, the question of whether intellectuals are culture producers is highly relevant. This is also visible in Raymond Williams' conception. Although he emphasizes the historical development of intellectuals, to some extent he differentiates his position from the idea of intellectuals being the sole producers of culture. Thus, he also assigns other actors a role as influential culture producers. Because in Williams' conception, cultural production is a process of specific historical developments and does not require any specialization. That is why, as mentioned, cultural production should not be considered always under the influence of the intellectuals; other actors can also be influential in the social sphere (Williams, 1989: 216).

In his analysis, while intellectuals are analyzed mainly through their engagement with dominant classes as legitimizing actors for expanding the existing hegemony, locating them as being against the existing hegemony is also possible (See Williams, 1989). According to Williams, the development process of intellectuals, including writers, philosophers and social thinkers, has a specific historical formation (Ibid: 214). Specific activities and relationships of the intellectuals are regarded as important, but putting the modern intellectual within this category requires a clear analysis.

However, in Williams' conception, concrete communal loyalties are constructed under the dominant elements (Ibid: 217). So, the culture producers are under this dominance and their production shows their loyalty to the dominant structure. This happens as domination and subordination in some kinds of cultural work are "deliberately produced in and more or less consciously attached to a subordinated group" (Ibid: 218). Thus, dominant groups control the groups that are under the yoke of their domination, but they cannot always control the individual members of those groups from super structures. This means that subordinated groups are controlled by their internal structure. Cultural production in Williams' conception is related to the struggle of domination and subordination. So, intellectuals, as one type among many culture producers, function as the actors in Williams' conception for constructing dependency and acquiescence to the established system in the society. Their specialization is important to empower this functioning. Thus, legitimizing the existing structure and expanding the hegemonic position of this structure are regarded as the function of the intellectuals. However, because of the relative autonomy of the intellectuals in their practices, not all of their social practices have such hegemonic functions.

Additionally, Williams considers the intellectuals' relative autonomy a feature of their location in the society. This position of the intellectuals in Williams' conception is explained by the term *relative distance*. While intellectuals are regarded as relatively autonomous, their engagement in practice with the existing hegemony is accepted. This relative autonomy is explained by Williams as a "relative distance in the position of the instituted artists" because of their "recognition as artists with a prescribed place in the social order" (Ibid: 219). It is not this distance that creates a positioning to have a distance to the hegemony. Instead, Williams believes that the intellectuals' relative autonomy has given them a position in the existing social order. This could be categorized as a rule within the established order of the hegemonic system. Therefore, through their positioning in this relative autonomy, intellectuals function as a part of the hegemonic system in the institutionalized structure.

Thus, Williams' conception assumes an intellectual figure that is engaged in the hegemonic structure, since a free-floating type of intellectual figure has no practical value. In consequence, cultural production and many types of cultural producers belong in a narrow category (Ibid: 222). The meaning of intellectuals' ideas comes from their practical engagement in the social spheres. Consequently, Williams' conception of intellectuals needs to be regarded within the class-based conceptions. He stresses positioning intellectuals in the social order, which is engaged to the major hegemonic structure. He also evaluates the formation of the basic social classes and the positioning of intellectuals in relation to the existing hegemony of their times.

### ***Limitations of Williams' Approach***

Like Marx and Althusser, Williams regards intellectuals as being engaged with the hegemony. Thus, in Williams' conception the intellectuals are located as actors specialized to struggle to construct the dependency of the established social system. They are regarded not only as culture producers, but also a typical category belonging to the hegemonizing dynamics of historical modernization processes. So, intellectuals are categorized as groups under a hegemonic social system within the category of culture producers. This conception of Williams' has the limitation of analyzing one of the most important problematemes, which occur with the empowerment of the counter-hegemonic groups. Hence, even though Williams mentions intellectuals' engagement to different classes, he does not develop a clear conception of these classes and mostly stresses the dominant classes. Although he does mention a "relative autonomy" of the intellectuals at the institutional level, this relative autonomy includes the intellectual position which has already integrated itself in the system (Ibid: 218–19). The conception of their engagement only to the existing hegemony limits the explanation of the roles of the pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation in Turkey, which happened through counter-hegemonic movements and the actions of the social groups that were in conflict with the hegemonic structures at that time.

### **2.1.4. Jürgen Habermas: Intellectuals and the Public Sphere**

Analyzing the emergence of intellectuals and their operation in the public sphere either by engaging certain social groups or as free-floating intellectuals entails considering their roles in the public sphere as well. Jürgen Habermas' book *Structural Transformation of the Public*



*Sphere* gives important insights about this. Habermas' analysis of the bourgeois public sphere reveals the historical interaction between the intellectuals and the bourgeoisie (Habermas, 1991: 32–33).<sup>18</sup> However, for Habermas this interaction includes collaboration within a certain historical category. Hence, this bourgeois public sphere belongs to a certain historical period, the early and classical modern period in Europe. So, intellectuals' visibility in the historical context relates to their positioning, which arises through the construction of critical discourses and debating them within the bourgeois public sphere, in which the intellectuals met the nobility (Ibid: 33).

According to Habermas, the public sphere is historically rooted in private families and peoples' private spheres, which later became more politicized with the emergence of common areas in societies. The public sphere evolved into a literary arena since the people in seventeenth-century France involved within the public (*le public*) were the consumers and critics of art and literature (Ibid: 31). Especially during that period, the bourgeois intellectuals started to interact with the aristocratic society, with the coffee houses in England and the salons in France providing an arena for this interaction (Ibid: 32–33). The critical discourses about the social and political issues of that time have continued within these bourgeois public spheres. Thus, in the eighteenth-century environment, the critical style of the literary public brought a transformative character to the intellectual sphere. The journals have carried this critical stance by incorporating the philosophy, literature and art of their times.

Subsequently, the literary public sphere evolved to become the base of the newly emerged political public. One effect of the French Revolution of 1789 was that literary products became politicized. The political functions of the public sphere became visible in the slogans all over Europe in the post-French Revolution (Ibid: 70). Habermas mentions that this also happened in Germany with the emergence of new terminologies. As this literary public was turning into the political public, intellectuals became the producers of political thought, with the bourgeois public spheres interacting as well as collaborating to some extent. Later their ideas expanded in the cities through literary networks. So, the development of the public sphere and the intellectual spheres have been parallel within this historical transformation process.

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<sup>18</sup> Habermas mentions this interaction of the intellectuals with the bourgeois during the historical development of the intellectuals, since for Habermas the bourgeois public sphere has emerged parallel to intellectuals' engagement to the public sphere (See Habermas, 1991).

Furthermore, Habermas does not consider intellectuals' engagement with only the bourgeois public sphere, but mentions that many intellectuals started to separate themselves from the bourgeois in the middle of the nineteenth century. After this process, especially a century later, many intellectuals started to engage with the proletariat, which is an indication of the social integration of these intellectuals. There are multiple factors for this dissolution of the intellectuals' collaboration with the bourgeois, but the most important issue is the limiting of the intellectuals' arena of functioning within the bourgeois public sphere. When the bourgeois acquired the hegemonic position, it closed itself off from criticism, which had been the major function of the intellectuals. Many intellectuals who stopped collaborating with the bourgeois took on the function of working for the interests of the proletariat. However, while these intellectuals' engagement with the proletariat has been parallel to the increasing industrialization and the proletariat's increasing power in society, the changed conditions in the society put them in a 'free-floating position'. Habermas explains this process as:

“Interrelations of this sort may also explain how a stratum of ‘intellectuals’ split off from the highly educated bourgeois strata; their ideologically conserved self-interpretation notwithstanding, the latter have fully maintained their (now, of course, less glorious) leadership role even among the new public of culture consumers... From this point on modern art lived under a shroud of propaganda. The recognition in print of an artist and work was only fortuitously related to their recognition by the public at large. Only then did there arise a stratum of ‘intellectuals’ that explains to itself its progressive isolation from, at first, the public of the educated bourgeois as an-illusory-emancipation from social locations altogether and interprets itself as ‘free-floating intellectuals’” (Ibid: 174).

In this free-floating situation, intellectuals' function is measured by their role of constructing powerful discourses. According to Habermas, sovereignty is realized by the power of public discourses that “interpret the values, contribute to the resolution of the problems, generate good reasons and debunk bad ones” (Habermas, 1992a: 452). Discourses have a function of influencing the administration rather than governing (Ibid). So, the influence of the discourses is “limited to procurement and withdrawal of legitimation” (Ibid). This legitimization effect is seen through the function of intellectuals: their discourses can legitimize an informal power to put it in a higher position or illegitimize a formal power, abolishing its hegemonic position in the society. The function of these discourses is bound to the open communication environment in which intellectuals construct their discourses freely and reach their audiences.

Thus, in Habermas' conception the existence of public intellectuals is related to certain historical and cultural conditions. Also, it is the public usage of the mind that makes intellectuals

influential through their books and ideas, and that gives important insights about their roles. Thus, this process of public use of mind allows one to be regarded as an intellectual. However, this can happen only in a free environment, where people construct and share their ideas freely in the public arena. Enlightening the people in this process is what makes the intellectual influential.

### ***Limitations of Habermas' Approach***

In Habermas' conception, the emergence of the "bourgeois public sphere" reveals the interaction and collaboration between the intellectuals and the bourgeois in that historical context (Habermas, 1991: 32–33). This conception seems to be useful for analyzing the emergence of the Islamic bourgeois in the post-1980s in economically developing Anatolia and intellectuals' engagement with them. However, in Habermas' conception this collaboration between the intellectuals and the bourgeois through intellectuals' engagement to the bourgeois public sphere is connected to a certain historical context. Thus, this bourgeois public sphere also belongs to a certain historical period. Specifically, Habermas' analysis belongs to the early and classical modern period of Europe in which intellectuals engaged with the bourgeois public sphere to create literary debates. Since Habermas' conception belongs to a particular historical context and, as Habermas (1991: XVII) argues, it cannot be exemplified with an ideal-standardizing generalization to similar conditions, therefore it does not apply to the post-1980s development of the Islamic bourgeoisie in Turkey and pluralist public intellectuals' collaboration with them.

The second limitation concerns the positioning of the intellectuals. Habermas argues that in the nineteenth century, many intellectuals left the bourgeois public sphere and started engaging with the proletariat. Especially during the industrial revolution, many intellectuals started to theorize the interests and the convictions of the proletariat. However, later on, when the conditions changed again, they became free-floating intellectuals, moving into the category of culture producers (Ibid: 174). In the contemporary situation, Habermas considers the intellectuals free-floating and sees them as functioning by constructing influential discourses. So, they function through their books, ideas and arguments by "creating legitimacy" for the illegitimate governing power, which could be a counter-hegemonic group or a resistance movement, and perhaps also through "withdrawal of legitimation" from the existing governing power (Habermas, 1992a: 452). However, measuring the realization in practice of these functions of intellectuals' books and ideas is very difficult. So, not

describing the connection between the ideas and practice is a limitation in Habermas' conception. How can free-floating intellectuals legitimate or illegitimate a power only through discourses, without any practical contribution? As regards the practical application of ideas, Habermas gives explanations from the bourgeois public sphere where the authority of the debate was based on the better arguments within the society (Habermas, 1991: 36). So, for him public opinion is based on the authority of the better argument. This is true in a publicly engaged environment. However, there should be an engagement to the activities and the policies of some groups to influence these better arguments. Hence, the positioning of the media in post-1980s Turkey in its interaction with certain social groups and with the political powers shows an organic relationship based on a certain perspective. Therefore, considering intellectuals as free floating makes it impossible to analyze the role of public intellectuals in the social transformation and their influence on the social issues in post-1980s Turkey.

In this section, I have presented the theoretical foundations of Karl Marx, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams and Jürgen Habermas with their approaches to the role of intellectuals. Moreover, I criticized their approaches based on their limitations in explaining the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey in the post-1980s. Even though Marx expressed that intellectuals are true intellectuals when they are engaged in the cause of the proletariat, his, as well as Althusser's and Williams', excessive focus on the intellectuals' engagement with hegemonic classes and their seeing them as an element of the established hegemony makes all these approaches unfit for the scope of this analysis. The same goes for Habermas' explanation of intellectuals as free floating, since that does not assign any engagement to the intellectuals. These approaches are found not to offer a plausible explanation for the role of intellectuals in the social transformation, since this requires dealing with intellectuals' engagement with the counter-hegemonic social movements and socially constructed political groups. If the intellectuals are regarded, as they are in Marx's conception, as being engaged only with either the ruling class or the proletariat how can their engagement with different ethnic, cultural and social groups be explained? How could intellectuals' engagement with different ethnic, cultural and social groups become influential in the process of social transformation, if intellectuals only deal with the ruling class and the proletariat? If, as in Althusser's conception, intellectuals work only for the dominant class or hegemony under an ideological hierarchy, why have the pluralist public intellectuals engaged with the lower classes, and oppressed ethnic, cultural and social groups and with their discourses influenced the struggle in the process of social transformation in

Turkey? If intellectuals, as Williams suggests, have been located within the hegemonizing dynamics of historical modernization processes, how can the role of intellectuals who engaged themselves to the counter-hegemonic movements during the process of social transformation in Turkey be explained? Moreover, if, as in Habermas' view, intellectuals are free-floating and function only by creating authority with better arguments, how can whether these arguments effected certain changes in the transformation process be measured? In the following section, insights from Antonio Gramsci's conception of intellectuals will be applied to provide plausible answers to these questions.

## **2.2. Intellectuals and Hegemony in Gramsci's Conception**

In the previous section we reviewed the literature on the role of the intellectuals. This section explains Antonio Gramsci's conception of the role of public intellectuals and of hegemony, counter-hegemony, civil society, historical bloc, and war of positions. As explained in the previous section, Marx's, Althusser's, Williams' and Habermas' approaches fail to take into account the role of intellectuals in the significant social changes that have taken place in Turkey since 1980s. The main feature of the transformation in Turkey has been the rise of counter-hegemonic social movements and the formation of historical blocs, in time giving rise to a culture of resistance against the ruling class that carried many different social groups, such as the Kurds, pro-Islamic movements, women, Alevis and LGBTs, into the public sphere. This transformation process, of course, has been effectuated through other dynamics from the economic, political, social and international spheres. However, intellectuals have been in the forefront of the discussions of important subjects of the society during the transformation period and have shaped the consciousness of the social classes and the public within this transformation process.

Therefore, this section presents the highlights of Gramsci's conception, focusing on his organic intellectual approach. It also establishes the suitability of Gramsci's theoretical framework for analyzing the role of the pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey. So, I first will explain Gramsci's concepts and ideas about hegemony, civil society, historical bloc, counter-hegemony, the war of position and passive revolution and then show how his conceptions are important for analyzing the positions of the intellectuals. Finally, I will explain the concepts of organic and traditional intellectuals in more detail.

### 2.2.1. The Hegemony, Civil Society and Historical Bloc

In Gramsci's early writings, such as the *Southern Question*, his concept of hegemony was concerned mainly with the North–South divide; he analyzed the issue as ethnic exploitation (See Gramsci, 1995). Later, his conception transformed into a class-based analysis, with his idea of the emergence of a historical bloc consisting of the proletariat and the peasants. In Gramsci's conception, the proletariat and the peasants needed to establish an alliance and become an independent and autonomous formation and construct a historical bloc against the existing hegemonic bloc (Gramsci, 1978: 462). The major argument for changing the hegemony in favor of the proletariat requires collaborating with the other oppressed groups and convincing them that their rights would be protected by this collaboration. Thus, in the Gramscian conception, hegemony starts at the social level, from the cultural and moral bases, and does not require an existing political domination. It is essential, however, to distinguish between 'domination' and 'hegemony'. Gramsci mentions that:

“A class is dominant in two ways, i.e., ‘leading’ and ‘dominant’. It leads the classes which are allies, and dominates those which are its enemies [...] One should not count solely on the power and material force which such position gives in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony” (Gramsci, 1971: 57).

Gramsci mentions three stages in the formation of hegemony. In the first, the economic corporative stage in which a solidarity within one labor force emerges, driven by economic interests, in the context of relations of production. This solidarity sometimes retains its narrow sense, only dealing with the basic production spheres. However, in the second stage the formation of class consciousness become visible. Thus, people from the same social group form a unity based on their interests. Then, a political and judicial level competition with the dominant class starts, for the opportunity to participate in the legislative and executive processes. In the third stage, a hegemony is formed, and the interests of the social class “must become also the interest of other subordinate groups” (Gramsci, 1971: 181). So, the third stage is a political stage; a hegemonic consciousness is visible. Thus, all subordinated groups find their interests within this hegemonic position of the dominant class. Through propaganda, the spread of their perception of the world through the society, the bourgeois creates the idea of a common interest and thus expands the hegemony from the economic to the ideological level.

These three stages comprise the production and the reproduction of the hegemonic relationships of the classes. A class that wants to direct the society needs to construct the hegemony first. Hegemony reveals itself in different positionings between the ruler and the ruled that bring them closer in constructing the historical bloc. Thus, this process provides a ground for hegemony through the emerging historical bloc. So, forming a hegemonic position requires developing one's own movement that differs from others' and then strengthening it. Hence, Gramsci argues that the formation of the hegemony occurs in the arena of civil society (Ibid).

The notion of hegemony in the Gramscian conception also entails political and civil society issues. Gramsci sees the civil society as based on consensus and the political society as based on coercion. However, the civil and political societies are not as different as they seem, since hegemony conceals the coercion by reorganizing economic relations. This applies in the situation in which the hegemony is formed through consensus. However, in the situation in which consent has already failed, for Gramsci, the function of the state's coercive power comes into force for directing the society (Gramsci, 1971: 12). In the moment of crisis, the hegemonic powers use the apparatus of the state, especially the judiciary and the military, to control groups that challenge the existing hegemony.

In Gramsci's conception, ethical and moral factors are important for the hegemony (Ives, 2004: 19). The formation of hegemony requires social consent. In the case of Turkey, this is evident in the developments of the pro-Islamic movements from the 1980s. Economic development in Anatolia mainly in the 1980s and 1990s allowed an Islamic bourgeois class to emerge in the major Anatolian cities. It would constitute a political domination starting from the success of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi – RP) in the 1994 elections and later with the AKP's victory in the 2002 general elections. However, this success first arose from the creation of a historical bloc by constructing a hegemony with the collaboration of the people in the slum areas of the major cities, including peasants, Turkish and Kurdish religious groups, that later with liberals that brought a new social texture.

Moreover, in these processes of the emergence of a hegemonic position, a manufactured consent of the civil society is visible. In the Gramscian conception, this consent is manufactured by the dominant classes through their presence in the various institutions, cultural activities and other forms of social interaction (Buttigieg, 2005:44). So, hegemony is carried out by the major social institutions including the press, churches and other educational

institutions as well as by intellectuals. In Turkey, the importance of the mosque, the press and the educational institutions for the operation of the hegemony is evident. The mosques had been designed by the founders of Turkey to bind the people to the state directives through the Presidency of Religious Affairs (hereafter Diyanet). Diyanet had the function of carrying the state's hegemony over the religious population by designating the Imams as state officials and thereby controlling the Friday prayer sermons and the speeches of Imams. However, mosques also functioned as the place of interaction for the people of the various religious communities (e.g., Nur Movement (Nurcular)<sup>19</sup>, Gülen Organization, Sulaymanites etc.), allowing the emergence of counter-hegemonic spheres. Mehmet Altan argues that historically the people who were "excluded, ignored, shoved around by the regime, those whom the Ottomans treated as vassals and later the state treated as a nation, found a way to take refuge in Mosques and religion" (M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015). Thus, the mosque has been an important institution for continuing the hegemony over the common people that continues since the establishment of the republic. Moreover, in the 2000s, the press, especially the private press, as well as the intellectuals, also functioned to spread the hegemony of the liberal right historical bloc by manufacturing the consent of the people. This can be seen with the increasing role of Islamic bourgeois and the Islamic political movements, the conservative TV channels *Kanal 7*, belonging to Erbakan's MGH, and *Samanyolu TV*, belonging to Gülen Organization, and other private TV channels that worked to spread these hegemonic perspectives of the emerging Islamic bourgeois' power. This private media has been also a sphere of counter-hegemony against the military-dominated politics in the post-1980s. The media is seen not only as an apparatus of hegemonic power but also as a tool of resistance groups for their own counter-hegemonic purposes. Moreover, all around Turkey, private preparatory schools (Dershane) of the major religious communities, especially the Gülen Organization, also served to spread the hegemony of the liberal right historical bloc of the AKP over the younger generation.

As regards the position of state within these hegemonic relations, Gramsci views the state as integral to the political and civil societies. In Gramsci's conception each of these spheres overlap in the state. Because the civil society is also a part of the public sphere, in which trade

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<sup>19</sup> The Nur Movement is a pro-Islamic movement that was born in the early 20th century based on the ideas of the Said Nursi (1877–1960) in his books *Epistles of Light (Risale-i Nur)*. Said Nursi called his students Light Student (Nur Talebesi). Like many other pro-Islamic movements in Turkey, the Nur Movement is a Sunni Islamic movement. Their aim is to read, understand, interpret, reproduce and share the Risale-i Nurs with the people. Gülen Organization was also based on and later separated from the Nur Movement, like many other groups (Aköz& Atal, 2004; Habervitrini, 2006).



unions and political parties interact and ideas and beliefs are shaped. Hence, within the public sphere the bourgeois hegemony was reproduced in the cultural arena through the media, youth movements, trade unions, educational establishments and religious institutions that provide the legitimacy for the state (Heywood 1994: 100–101). Thus, the organic relationship between the civil and political societies is important for the continuation of the state and the historical bloc. The civil society of the time gives important insights about the political society of that time; a strong civil society means a developed hegemony in the society. Hence, the hegemony continues with the public consent without the state's repression tools. Consequently, in Gramsci's conception the state is not only the apparatus of government, operating within the public sphere, but also a private tool of the hegemony or the civil society, which is functioning in the private spheres of the society (including church, media, education) (Gramsci, 1971: 261).

In sum, in the Gramscian conception, the civil society is in a position to influence historical developments. This influence begins when new material conditions emerge. This is followed by the society's demands for the development of advanced relations of production: the subordinated classes seek new alliances and eventually create a historical bloc. In the end a political hegemony is restored, now the hegemony of one class, with its ethical, moral and cultural features, over the others within the historical bloc. Thus, intellectuals, with their thoughts and actions, become agents for the creation of consent in the society for this hegemony.

### **2.2.2. Counter-Hegemony and War of Position**

Alongside the concept of hegemony, Gramsci suggested ways for questioning and struggling against hegemony. Considering the civil society's harmonious position with the state in the Western societies, Gramsci developed an alternative strategy for the struggle as 'war of position'. In the Western societies, the civil society was integrated into the hegemonic structure; that is why Gramsci did not see any possibility of a revolution like the Bolshevik revolution in Russia that resulted in the proletariat's hegemony. In Russia, the civil society was underdeveloped, whereas in the West, it was under the domination of the bourgeois and therefore a part of the hegemony. It is because of the existence of the proletariat with a lesser will to overthrow capitalism in the West that Gramsci developed his strategy of 'war of

positions' against the bourgeois hegemony. Hence, this strategy was better suited to the social conditions of the West under the capitalist hegemony in the post-World War I (WWI) era.

In Gramsci's conception, this war of position has four important elements (Carnoy, 2001: 268). The first element is that each country needs to have an original context of 'specific exploration' (Ibid). This is mostly an argument against the 'permanent revolution' concept, which was developed by Marx and Engels and given an internationalist character by Trotsky, and is based on the idea of an armed revolution of the world labor against the bourgeois hegemony (Ibid). Gramsci believed that instead of such an internationalist character, a different strategy should be in place in different countries (Gramsci, 1971:238). Moreover, parallel to his explanation, the hegemony of the dominant class gave the socialist movements a national character within the early development process. So, the notion of permanent revolution did not fit the conditions emerging after WWI (Carnoy, 2001: 269).

Secondly, the existence of the counter-hegemony provides a base for the war of positions. This counter-hegemony is created through the mobilization of the proletariat and the establishment of institutions and their revolutionary culture (Ibid). This is the first step toward the formation of the hegemony of the proletariat. Thus, the hegemony of a social class/group is formed in the civil society. Establishing labor organizations for the proletariat and other organizations that mobilize social groups is important in the war of positions strategy. Having a hegemonic position in the civil society within the historical bloc with other oppressed groups that would confront the bourgeois hegemony, the proletariat could establish a hegemony in an ideological war of positions. The historical bloc used for the hegemonic projects according to many Gramscian analyses is also an element of strategy for the counter-hegemonic bloc (Gramsci, 1978: 462). This strategy is for empowerment of the counter-hegemonic bloc in the struggle against hegemonic positions. Thus, by forming the hegemony within the civil society, the proletariat would have the power to reorganize the social and political features. The success of this strategy depends on the working class having an ideological position through a new worldview to continue the war against the bourgeois hegemony.

Furthermore, Gramsci saw the proletariat hegemony as not only a tool to block the bourgeois hegemony, but also a base for the formation of a new state based on the proletariat's ideology (Ibid: 270). The new state would develop from the war of position. During the development of this new proletariat state, interaction between the civil and political societies would continue.

So, Gramsci was dealing not only with taking control of the state, but also with further development of the society. Furthermore, the ‘war of maneuver’ strategy, which has roots in Marxist and military theories, was strategically wrong as it created gaps in the development of the society after taking control of the state (Ibid). The war of maneuver, based on taking control of the state through power, was only possible in countries where the civil society was not developed, for example Russia. Gramsci’s proposal was hegemony as an anti-passive revolution having civil society roots that would be regarded as the precondition of pluralism (Ibid).

Thirdly, Gramsci focuses also on the consciousness in the socially constructed transformation process. Specifically, the war of position in Gramscian conception arises from the development of the consciousness of the proletariat/social groups, in that power relations of the society rely on different consciousnesses. This development of consciousness leads to the emergence of the counter-hegemony. In the fourth stage ideological positions become visible in practice. Gramsci regarded the political party as a venue for the practice of the ideology and thus for the creation of the hegemony of the proletariat. Therefore, both the functioning of political party, and increasing the consciousness and the education of the proletariat are important. Gramsci mentions that this process would be continued by organic intellectuals. For Gramsci, organic intellectuals would emerge from the side of the proletariat as they previously emerged from bourgeois, and their responsibility would be to connect the proletariat with the traditional intelligentsia (Cited in Carnoy, 2001: 271). This connection is increased when the traditional intellectuals are absorbed on the side of the proletariat. Their actions would be shaped by the political party of the proletariat. Although Gramsci focuses excessively on the proletariat as the group struggling against the ruling class, his conception allows the inclusion of other subordinated classes and groups in the modern capitalist societies in the scope of this struggle. Thus, other ethnic, cultural and social affiliations should be considered, in addition to the classes emerging from relations of production. As a contribution to Gramscian analysis, this dissertation also refers to other cultural, ethnic, social and religious bases as a unit of analysis as well as the social class and group. Consequently, concerning the formation of hegemonic position of the subordinated groups in Turkey, including pro-Islamic movements, Kurds, Alevi, LGBTs and women’s movements, as well as bringing their conceptions into the public sphere, intellectuals’ functioning within this war of position is important for the research. Thus, this dissertation argues that in the process of social transformation in Turkey from 1983 to 2015, pluralist public intellectuals have used

their influential discourses to struggle within the counter hegemonic spheres as well as within the historical blocs to construct a new hegemonic position that gradually moved the historically subordinated groups into the public sphere.

### **2.2.3. Passive Revolution**

Gramsci's concept of passive revolution is also important when dealing with the social struggles and hegemony. Passive revolution involves changing the aim of the revolutionary forces to possibilities like 'reform' and 'change' as well as acquiring the consent of different social groups by giving the impression of satisfying their demands. Through this process, the revolutionary power becomes pacified and incorporates itself into the existing/emerging hegemony. So, in the Gramscian conception, when the dominant class sees that a revolutionary wave that would shake its hegemony is coming from the civil society, it takes measures like passive revolution to secure its hegemony. Passive revolution then reorganizes the civil society in favor of the ruling class, with the elimination of the activities of subordinated groups. This process happens, according to Gramsci (1971: 210) so that "the traditional ruling class, which has numerous trained cadres, changes men and programmes and, with greater speed than is achieved by the subordinate classes, reabsorbs the control that was slipping from its grasp." Such reform waves come from above as a control mechanism without the involvement of the subordinated groups in the direction of the process. Thus, the subordinated groups find themselves in a social transformation wave in which they see to their own and act in cohesion with this transformation process. But what is happening in this process is a restoration, namely a reorganization of the system.

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci seems to have derived the term passive revolution from the Italian historian Vincenzo Cuoco, who used it to refer to the first years of Italian Unification (Risorgimento), especially the Napoli Revolution in 1799, but Gramsci developed it further. In the Italian Risorgimento, the emerging situation, the unification of the Italy and creation of the common state, was not coming about through changing the social base of the hegemony nor with a new formation based on different social groups (See Cox, 2007: 519). Thus, for Gramsci the passive revolution "must be rigorously derived from the two fundamental principles of political science: 1. that no social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement; 2. that a

society does not set itself tasks for whose solution the necessary conditions have not already been incubated, etc.” (Gramsci, 1971: 106).

Moreover, the passive revolution is a kind of bourgeois democratic revolution in which a restoration happens in the hegemonic system by absorbing different segments of the society. This change happens on a passive level, eliminating the power of radical revolutionary forces and absorbing them into the system in the process. In *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci’s concept of the passive revolution is portrayed as being linked to the war of position. Gramsci explained it with reference to a historical instance in the Italian Risorgimento. The two tendencies are presented as a reform process, represented by the Prime Minister of Piedmont, Camillo di Cavour, and a radical movement for challenging the old order, represented by Giuseppe Mazzini, who spearheaded the Italian Revolutionary Movement and Head of Action Party. The process of passive revolution in their struggle is explained by Gramsci as:

“in the struggle Cavour–Mazzini, in which Cavour is the exponent of the passive revolution/war of position and Mazzini of popular initiative/war of maneuver, are not both of them indispensable to precisely the same extent? Yet it has to be taken into account that, whereas Cavour was aware of his role (at least up to a certain point) in as much as he understood the role of Mazzini, the latter does not seem to have been aware either of his own or of Cavour’s. If, on the contrary, Mazzini had possessed such awareness—in other words, if he had been a realistic politician and not a visionary apostle (i.e. if he had not been Mazzini)—then the equilibrium which resulted from the convergence of the two men’s activities would have been different, would have been more favorable to Mazzinianism. In other words, the Italian State would have been constituted on a less retrograde and more modern basis.[...] Thus, in the Italian Risorgimento, it has been seen how the composition of the moderate forces was progressively modified by the passing over to Cavourism (after 1848) of ever new elements of the Action Party, so that on the one hand neo-Guelphism was liquidated, and on the other the Mazzinian movement was impoverished (Garibaldi’s oscillations, etc. also belong to this process). This element is therefore the initial phase of the phenomenon which is later called ‘transformism’, and whose importance as a form of historical development has not as yet, it seems, been adequately emphasized” (Gramsci, 1971: 108–9).

In sum, as seen in the example of Italian Risorgimento, passive revolution involves absorbing different demands and directions of the social groups. Through this, a re-regulation of the system happens. The passive revolution has a function of deepening the relationship between the civil and political society. Thus, this dynamic relationship opens an arena for the demands of the civil movements in the system. Furthermore, the ideas come into active circulation and the political society actively follows the developments that arise from the civil society era.

This affects not only the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, but also within the ruling class. Consequently, Gramsci's passive revolution concept helps to explain the reform processes in Turkey starting from the AKP period in the 2000s with the Solution Process for the Kurdish problem, Alevi approachment and Islamization. While these reform processes opened a way for pluralism in the country, they represented a passive revolution insofar as they aimed to downgrade the radical revolutionary vision of various historically subordinated social groups. The aim of propagating the change was to absorb the dynamic power bases of this revolutionary vision in the hegemonic system. However, this does not mean all elements of the hegemonic system stay the same. Even without a complete transformation, the special characteristics of society change within this process. In Turkey, this process has secured the existing hegemony of the dominant class even as some characteristics of the social structure have changed. Hence, while the bourgeois secured their hegemonic situation, in comparison with the mono-ethnic and cultural practices of Turkey's Kemalist past, the freedom of Kurdish cultural activities (e.g., Kurdish TV channels, multilingual municipalities), Islam's involvement in all elements in the public sphere proves that the passive revolution has been realized, mainly during the reform process of AKP in the 2000s. Importantly, this brings the public intellectuals with their influential discourses to the forefront as the legitimizing actors in this reform process.

#### **2.2.4. Organic and Traditional Intellectuals**

Applying Gramsci's conception to the intellectuals in the post-industrialization period provides an important ground for the analysis of their positions and their role. Gramsci's differs from other conceptions of the intellectuals in that he analyzes them in the class-based functions by referring to them as organic intellectuals and also presenting their social roles in the historical context. Hence, there are intellectuals who have been influential in the development of the ideas within the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic spheres by being organic to certain classes/social groups. Gramsci identifies the intellectuals with their functions by being in group consciousness and the praxis they are within. Gramsci points out that:

“Every social group [i.e. class] coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals, which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields” (Gramsci, 1971: 5).

In other words, intellectuals are influenced by the conditions around them and their perception has evolved from their analyzing the world. Gramsci says that “all men are intellectuals... but not all men in society have the function of intellectuals” (Ibid: 9). In his perception of intellectuals Gramsci considers only the organic intellectuals, who are not only produce ideas but are also engaged in such activities as organizing, directing and training. Thus he is emphasizing that not only the ideas, but also the praxis are important in identifying someone as an intellectual. An organic intellectual is not only a thinker, but also a doer. Considering their functions, Gramsci mentions:

“Thus, there are historically formed specialized categories for the exercise of the intellectual function. They are formed in connection with all social groups, but especially in connection with the more important, and they undergo more extensive and complex elaboration in connection with the dominant social group” (Ibid: 10).

In the Gramscian conception, every human being has special expertise, including creative thinking. This expertise evolved in the past; human beings bring knowledge from the past and act according to it in the present situation, as a synthesis of the past and present. So, the praxis gives the social groups true consciousness to act by being aware of “their own social being, their own strength, their own tasks and their own becoming” (Gramsci, 2000: 196). Intellectuals have to collaborate with others to change the order in favor of their ideas. Organic intellectuals do this by engaging with the social classes, by interacting with them, by influencing them with their ideas, by sharing their experiences and by directing them in their desired way. This is also true for their engagement with other social and cultural groups, counter hegemonic spheres, historical blocs and hegemonic projects, since a certain ideology exists within these formations based on their own interests. This engagement is what makes them organic intellectuals. This engagement in the social class/group gives them the opportunity to increase interaction among the people. So, even if fluctuations, such as breaks and reorganizations, occur during this process, it is through this interaction and the emerging common sense in the class/group solidarity that intellectuals direct the formation of hegemony.

The role of organic intellectuals in the historical bloc has essential importance in the Gramscian conception. Intellectuals become organic elements of the historical bloc by becoming a part of the superstructure. Gramsci refers to the mode of production as structure and the superstructure as politics, law and ideology (Gramsci, 1971: 366). In the Gramscian conception, intellectuals constitute a social layer that is connected to the social classes, and they help to create the superstructure by giving direction to the historical bloc of these social

classes (Portelli, 1982: 99). Organic intellectuals have an organic link to a social class, meaning that they emerge with the development of a social class and deal with the creation of the consciousness within the class. As intellectual activity is based on mental production related to specialization on certain aspects of the class activity (Gramsci, 1971: 6), organic intellectuals function by forming hegemonic consciousness in the social, cultural and political areas.

In addition to the function of the organic intellectuals within the historical bloc, Gramsci also emphasizes the possibility of the collapse of an existing historical bloc, which will dissolve the intellectual bloc organic with it (Portelli, 1982: 123). By collapse, he means an ideology becoming obsolete. Thus, the collapse of a bloc brings with it the collapse of an ideology. This means that the intellectuals constitute the major element of the historical bloc by being organic to the major classes. Thus, the continuation or dissolution of the hegemony depends on the roles of the intellectuals. However, intellectuals' being organic to a social class does not mean they are structurally bound to class development and have no independent function. Intellectuals have autonomy regarding the socioeconomic structure, and this autonomy affects the cultural functioning of the intellectuals, which are already operating in the superstructure (Ibid: 104–105). This means that organic intellectuals do not represent all the features of the hegemony that they are engaged with and can differ in their position on some aspects. As such, organic intellectuals are an important element of the formation and the continuation of the hegemony of historical blocs, not passive actors of the classes. Gramsci also classifies the organic intellectuals according to their level of functioning. He puts at the highest level “the creators of the various sciences, philosophy, art, etc.,” and at the lowest level “the most humble ‘administrators’ and divulgators of preexisting, traditional, accumulated intellectual wealth” (Gramsci, 1971: 13). This is a kind of division of labor for intellectual function within the hegemony regarding the creation of the ideology and its expansion in the social and political arena.

Apart from the organic intellectuals, ‘traditional intellectuals’ also exist in the Gramscian conception; they could be categorized as the free floating type of intellectuals (Ibid: 7–8). So, traditional intellectuals exist before organic intellectuals, which are connected to social groups/classes, emerge. Traditional intellectuals do not contribute to the mental production in the class/group but stand aloof from the class conception (Ibid). These traditional intellectuals may be the priests, philosophers or university professors, for example. Most of



the intellectuals who engaged with the churches in the previous historical period, are regarded as traditional intellectuals. These traditional intellectuals historically continued in their own layer, which made it difficult for them to be absorbed by the hegemony. The difference between the two is that traditional intellectuals represent the historical continuation from the pre-industrialization period, while the organic intellectuals belong with the social classes and interest groups that developed as a result of industrialization and modernization.

This difference is also explained as ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ types of intellectuals. The urban type were visible as organic intellectuals in the industrialization period and have a function in the capitalist system of developing social relations within the system (Gramsci, 1971: 14). Thus, the relations of production, such as those between the proletariat and business owners, are important in this social relations. The rural type of intellectuals fall within the traditional intellectual category; since these traditional intellectuals are associated with the peasants, their function is to create relationships between the peasants and the local/national authorities (Ibid). Even though this rural type of traditional intellectuals emerges from the peasants and they have as a function to create relationships between peasants and the authorities, in the Gramscian conception they are not the organic intellectuals of the peasants. So, no intellectuals are organic intellectuals of the peasants (Ibid: 6). In this competitive relationship between the organic and traditional intellectuals, within this process of formation of hegemony, organic intellectuals of the new historical bloc should also absorb the intellectuals of the old historical bloc (traditional intellectuals) (Portelli, 1982: 106). Gramsci refers to the traditional intellectuals as intellectuals of the old historical bloc; they could be also regarded as the organic intellectuals of the previous historical bloc. This happened during the social transformation processes in Turkey when a new pro-transformation intellectual bloc emerged with the Gezi protests in 2013 and, through their influential discourses during the protests, absorbed the pro-transformation intellectuals of AKP’s liberal-right historical bloc of the 2000s.

In sum, based on comprehensive research and analysis, I selected Gramsci’s organic intellectuals approach for the theoretical analysis of this dissertation. Thus, according to the theoretical and methodological approach of this dissertation, the sample pluralist public intellectuals’ positioning from 1983 to June 2015 was their organic intellectual function and contribution to the social transformation process in a free democratic environment of Turkey.

Gramsci's conception of organic intellectuals was found to be important for this dissertation in two important aspects. The first relates to their roles in the historical bloc: intellectuals become organic to the social classes/groups and also to the historical blocs, and so they work in favor of hegemonic or counter-hegemonic spheres. Thus, the hegemony of a class/social group is formed and expanded through its organic intellectuals. This is important because this dissertation relates to the intellectuals' organic positioning during the social transformation process within the pro-transformation groups and their historical blocs both in the 2000s, for the AKP period, and during the Gezi Park protests in 2013, for the pro-transformation left. The second important aspect is the intellectuals' position in the media for legitimizing the ideology which is either hegemonic or counter-hegemonic. Thus, in the Gramscian conception, the media corresponds to the civil society in providing a place for interaction with the public so as to expand the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic ideology. Importantly, during the social transformation in Turkey pluralist public intellectuals brought their conceptions in the media in favor of subordinated social groups as contributions to their involvement in the public sphere: the media provided a ground to expand the intellectuals' area of influence in the society. This relates also to the level of autonomy in the intellectual sphere in the development and expansion of hegemony. Importantly, the sample intellectuals of this dissertation are regarded as being at the highest level in the creation of ideology—not only as organic but also in a position of autonomy. When the pluralist public intellectuals are analyzed as author, columnist, academic, politician or scenarist, they are seen as having a certain autonomy while as organic intellectuals they connect the pro-transformation groups through their discourses in the media. These two and other aspects will be explained under the topics of intellectuals' function in the historical bloc and in the media in the next section, with regard to the contribution of this dissertation to the debate over the role of the public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey from 1983 till 2015.

### **2.3. Contribution of the Dissertation to Debate: Public Intellectuals and Social Transformation**

To analyze the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation, it is most useful to take up Gramsci's concept of intellectuals. Indeed, the pluralist public intellectuals' presence in the media and their work for the formation of the hegemony/counter-hegemony provides the first important point for the analysis of this dissertation. According to Gramsci, media is one of the cultural arenas where hegemony is reproduced. As a part of civil society,

the media provides an important arena for intellectuals to participate in discourses with their original ideas and engage in political praxis by influencing the public opinion. Secondly, beginning in the 1980s, pluralist public intellectuals engaged with the liberal-right bloc to produce academic, artistic and scholarly works and journalistic discourses for empowering this bloc. This engagement must be analyzed in the Gramscian conception of the roles of intellectuals in the formation of historical blocs: not only the liberal-right position of pluralist public intellectuals until the end of the 2000s, but also their leftist position within the Gezi Park process in 2013 and within a new historical bloc under the HDP project until the June 2015 general elections. Below, these roles will be analyzed in the two sub-sections that present Gramsci's approach to understanding the case and how the discussion of this case contributes to a further reflection of his theoretical approach.

### **2.3.1. Media and Intellectuals in the Context of Hegemony/Counter-Hegemony**

After the establishment of Turkey in 1923, the media, including the newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and, later, the state TV, were under the control of the state. The tutelary regime of Turkey forced the mainstream media to work with the military, and the press positioned itself as the carrier of the official state ideology. When the mainstream media was a voice of the center, which was defined by the state, it represented the nature of the center as well. Under the military hegemony over the civilian social and political arena since the establishment of Turkey, the media operated, in Althusser's term, as "ideological state apparatuses" (Althusser, 2012: 115). It promoted the official ideology including the state's preferred identity and culture (Western, secular and Turkish) to the subordinated groups. In relation to this position of the media, the Kemalist hegemony had created its own organic intellectuals, as in the Gramscian conception that every social group creates its own organic intellectuals with their formation, which is true not only in the economic, but also in social and political life (Gramsci, 1971: 5). So, these organic intellectuals of the Kemalist hegemony found a place in mainstream media when they promoted the hegemony of Kemalist state and constructed ideas aimed at creating consent in the public sphere in favor of the official discourse. The media covered the issues in a way that othered peripheries and defended laicism and Turkish ethnicity before the 1980s. The military coup of September 12, 1980 contributed to this debate in the media as well. Restrictions on freedom of thought as well as

extreme punishment were imposed on the press, and media associations had to obey military directives.

However, with the *Özal* period in the post-military rule, Turkish politics and the Turkish economy underwent a transformation process that opened a new counter-hegemonic sphere opposed to the military rule. Economic liberalism and free market reforms of the *Özal* period allowed large companies to enter the media sector (Elmas and Kurban, 2010: 11). The post-1980s process has been a struggle by the media to be the fourth power and for further liberalization. Liberalization and privatization policies in all sectors of Turkey had a major effect on the media. The establishment of *STAR TV* in 1989, as the first private TV channel, opened a way to expedite the process of establishing new private TV channels, such as *Meltem TV* in 1991, *Show TV* and *Kon TV* in 1992 and *Samanyolu TV*, *TGRT* and *ATV* in 1993 and Kanal 7 in 1994. Most of the new private TV channels in Turkey were regional and community based. The counter-hegemonic sphere with the intellectual discourses against military hegemony found its space mainly within these newly emerging media houses. Hence, as in the Gramscian conception, civil society became the public sphere in which trade unions and political parties interacted and ideas and beliefs were shaped (Heywood 1994: 100). With the economic liberalization, private media, as a part of the growing civil society, has been one of the places for counter-hegemonic movements brought about by the intellectual discourses within it, to start. As its first important contribution to the Gramscian analysis, this dissertation concerns itself not only with the hegemonic function of the media, but also with their being an apparatus of the counter-hegemonic sphere in the struggle against the ruling class. In Turkey, especially the TV channels that had a base in pro-Islamic movements, such as Meltem TV, which belonged to Haydar Baş Movement, Samanyolu TV, which belonged to Gülen Organization, and Kanal 7, which belonged to Erbakan's MGH, were in this counter-hegemonic category in the 1990s. This shows the increased power of the counter-hegemonic social groups, especially in the pro-Islamic movements that created their own hegemonic spheres with the new Islamic bourgeois that arose from the economic development in Anatolia. It is important to mention that the second contribution of this dissertation to the Gramscian conception relates to my attempt to employ other ethnic, cultural and social affiliations in the analysis. Gramsci discussed classes as defined by their role in the production process. However, other ethnic, religious and cultural affiliations are equally important to consider in the conditions of world pertaining to the struggle of subordinated groups. Therefore, in this dissertation, social classes and groups refer to people in relation not

only to their economic/production base but also to their other cultural, ethnic, social and religious bases.

In the development of private broadcasting in Turkey toward the end of the 1980s, program types and contents depended on the conception of the group for which they were intended as well as the desired material benefit to the producers. This was to set the agenda since private broadcasting companies were struggling to create more bridges to the audiences and shape public opinion. The importance of newscasts and political discussion programs in the private media as the place of the intellectuals increased. However, the ideological bases of private media became the main determinants of the content of the political discussions in these programs. With its different elements, including TV and radio, private media became an important tool for spreading information to all segments of the society. As the information society approach reveals, this is related to the changes in the economic, cultural and political areas in the society (Timisi, 2003: 89). But, with the emergence of a counter-hegemonic sphere for the subordinated groups of the society under the liberal-right climate during the Özal government of the 1980s, the private media, as part of the civil society, became a place for this war of position. Hence, in the Gramscian conception, “the revolutionary forces have to take civil society before they take the state; they therefore have to build a coalition of opposition groups united by a hegemony which usurps the dominant and prevailing one” (Strinati, 2004:158).

In the 1980s, the establishment of many private channels forced the government to create a new law. So, the Private Broadcasting Law (no. 3489) was passed, establishing the Radio Television Supreme Council (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu – RTÜK) that regulated and supervised radio and television channels.<sup>20</sup> RTÜK became the main control mechanism of private broadcasting. This shows the struggle for the hegemony in the state actions, influenced by the military. As seen in the RTÜK example, media is an apparatus for the construction and the continuation of the hegemony. Moreover, in many ways the militarist, nationalist and conservative values of Turkey’s legal and constitutional framework also affected the legal regulations in the media field in the post-1980s. Thus, in the Gramscian conception, the bourgeois hegemony was reproduced in the cultural arena by means of the media, education

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<sup>20</sup> Law on Radio and Television Enterprises and Their Broadcasts, No. 3984, 13.04.1994, published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey (Resmi Gazete), No. 21911, 20.04.1994. This law became obsolete when a new law was accepted on 15.02.2011. For the law on Radio and Television organization and agencies, see: Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, article 133, Online available at: <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/1982ay.htm> (Last accessed 21.03.2017).

sector organizations such as universities and the religious institutions (Heywood 1994: 100–101). Using the tools of mass media, the state aimed to undertake sociopolitical engineering to design the society according to its ideology. But, because TV audiences in Turkey were growing as compared to consumers of other media, the TV sector started getting more attraction of this control mechanism.

With regard to the sample intellectuals' function in this process, the first example is from the pluralist public intellectuals' engagement with the opposition groups as well as the counter-hegemonic sphere through their discourses and actions starting from the 1980s, and later their being organic intellectuals of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc of the AKP in the 2000s. Hasan Cemal was selected as the first case since he turned from a military revolutionist background to the liberal-right bloc by engaging Özalism and also being a columnist for mainstream liberal newspapers including *Sabah* (1992–1998) and *Milliyet* (1998–2013), with the aim of overthrowing the militarist order. Second, Fehmi Koru engaged in the pro-Islamic movements by writing in the newspaper *Zaman* of the Gülen Organization from 1985 and by appearing on the TV programs of Kanal 7 of MGH with his discourses promoting a liberal pluralist perspective, specifically EU membership. Third, Mehmet Altan proposed the 'second republic' concept in 1991 parallel to the liberal-right development. He has written in the newspaper *Sabah* (1987–2006) and *Star* (2006–2012), both within the liberal sphere and has participated the political discussion programs of the private TV channels with an aim of achieving a democratic and pluralist republic that covers different ethnic bases of the citizens. Fourth, Nilüfer Göle constructed the 'forbidden modern' concept showing the possibility of Muslim women's engagement to the public sphere with the religious symbols (e.g. headscarf). This has been widely used by the newly emerged private media of the pro-Islamic movements, such as newspaper *Zaman* and *STV* of the Gülen Organization and MGH's newspapers including *Milli Gazete* and *Akit* as well as TV channel *Kanal 7*. All four of these examples present the scope of the historical bloc consisting of different subordinated groups from the 1980s to the Gezi Park Protests and intellectuals' functioning in this historical bloc by being visible in the media. Thus, this dissertation not only deals with the hegemonic dynamic of the historical bloc in the Gramscian conception, but also as part of a strategic action for the subordinated groups. Although Gramsci mostly uses the term 'historical bloc' for the hegemonic projects, he approaches it also as a strategic matter for the counter-hegemonic bloc with the idea that they need to have similar processes

(Gramsci, 1978: 462). Besides, a counter-hegemony has the potential to become a hegemonic project in the transformation process, as happened in Turkey with the AKP in the 2000s.

Concerning the function of the intellectuals, the second example is with the Gezi Park protests in 2013, which represent a break from the AKP's hegemony and the emergence of a new historical bloc consisting of subordinated groups under the hegemonic position of the right ideology. The first representative of the pluralist public intellectuals' function in this historical bloc was Sırrı Süreyya Önder. He had been involved with the Kurdish Movement as an MP in the pro-Kurdish BDP after the 2011 general election and then the pro-Kurdish HDP after the June/November 2015 general elections. He constantly participated in TV programs, mainly on the conservative channels (Kanal 7 and Ülke TV) from the end of the 2000s, wrote columns and produced films, such as *International (Beynelmilel)* (2006), *Son of the Bitches (O. Çocukları)* (2008) and *I have an Objection (İtirazım Var)* (2014). He became the leading figure of the Gezi Park Protests by creating hindrances to the operation of the heavy machinery in the first days of the protests and inviting the people to the protest arena through his shares in the social media. Secondly, Ihsan Eliaçık contributed to this bloc by writing books based on his conception 'anti-capitalist Islam' and organizing TV discussion programs such as *Tell me about the Religion (Bana Dinden Bahset)* on KRT Kültür TV. He was also the leading figure of the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group and the Imam of the Gezi Park protests and attracted the attention of the religious people to the Gezi Protests with his shares in the social media. Thirdly, Foti Benlisoy contributed by writing books and articles that brought the revolution idea to public attention before the Gezi protests. He became a leading young actor of the Gezi Protests by writing banners, using his social media accounts to direct the protests and propagating against gerontocracy in the Turkish left and for bringing the youth into the scene. He was also a leading figure of the After 10 Initiative (10'dan Sonra İnsiyatifi) working for the pro-Kurdish HDP's passing the 10% threshold in the June 2015 elections.

Along with these three intellectuals, the pluralist public intellectuals of the previous historical bloc of the AKP were absorbed into this new left historical bloc. This relates to the third contribution of this dissertation to the Gramscian conception. Gramsci argues that organic intellectuals' strategy is to absorb the intellectuals of the old historical bloc into the new hegemonic bloc. With this, Gramsci refers to the traditional intellectuals as the intellectuals of old historical bloc (Portelli, 1982: 106). However, the case of pluralist public intellectuals in Turkey shows that absorbing the organic intellectuals of the old historical bloc can also be a

strategy. However, this absorption is not only within the historical bloc, but into a counter-hegemonic sphere. The case of absorbing organic intellectuals of the previous historical bloc into the post-Gezi Park Protest pro-transformation left bloc also shows the importance of the media, especially social media, for attracting the attention of public with the influential discourses of organic intellectuals of the pro-transformation left bloc. This process will be explained more broadly in chapter 5. All in all, through the interaction with the help of media and the emergent common sense of solidarity in both cases, the pluralist public intellectuals being discussed shaped the struggle of the pro-transformation groups in the Gramscian sense.

As seen in the examples of the intellectuals, media has been the apparatus of the hegemony as well as the counter hegemony in which the intellectuals operate. It is worth analyzing how this process worked. As mentioned previously, Turkey saw the development of private media, especially in the TV sector, in the post-1980s. In this environment of liberalization based on technological development, the improvements in internet and TV technologies together changed the structure and content of the TV programs, especially in the 1990s. More importantly, during the transformation process in Turkey, TV channels and audiences changed the way they communicated due to increasing viewership and popular participation in media programs, including through the internet which gave the viewers the power to intervene in the programs. In particular, the political discussion programs had a format based on the popular public debates of the week. These political discussion programs were influential in creating an interaction between the people and the intellectuals to empower the historical blocs mainly from the 1990s. These programs increased subordinated groups' knowledge of social issues; they also created an arena of interaction for the public intellectuals that had the effect of spreading their ideology. In addition to this, public participation in the political discussion programs such as Political Arena (Siyaset Meydanı)<sup>21</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Day (32. Gün)<sup>22</sup> of Turkey has included individual participation in the TV studio as well as questions and comments sent by e-mail or using social media tools (Twitter and Facebook). Thus, not only program producers and commentators, but also audiences had an active role in the format of political discussion programs. Research reveals that the followers of the political discussion programs mainly belonged to educated strata in Turkey (See Misci

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<sup>21</sup> Political Arena began its broadcasting on the private TV channel ATV (1994–2001, 2002–2007) and continued with Star TV (2001), for one year broadcast at state TV channel TRT 1 (2001–2002), and later at the private TVs such as NTV (2002), Show TV (2008–2013) and Sky Turk 360 (2012–2013).

<sup>22</sup> 32<sup>nd</sup> Day was broadcast on the first state TV channel TRT 1 (1985–1992) and later continued with the private TV channels Show TV (1992–1998), ATV (1995), Kanal D (1999, 2005–2014), CNN Turk (1999–2005), Channel 360 (2014–2016) and 24 TV (2016–present).



Kip, 2013: 165–166). However, their indirect influence over the less educated groups by virtue of increasing public interaction with the use of internet technology should also be considered a factor in the emergence of the public debates that included different segments of society.

This function of the political discussion programs leads us to consider that in this information age, by including the opinion leaders in a social practice the media have been a major determinant of public opinion. But the fact that intellectuals are considered opinion leaders mainly through their being visible in the media shows the “specializations of partial aspects of the primitive activity” of the intellectuals in Gramscian conception (Gramsci, 1971: 6). This specialization gives the leading power to the intellectuals to be invited to the TV programs, giving comments and providing influential discourses to influence public opinion. Their activity is regarded as being of interest to the social groups as well as to the historical bloc that the intellectuals became organic parts of. Their role has been to create consciousness within a class/group in economic, social and cultural areas, such as Nilüfer Göle’s *Forbidden Modern* for the religious women of Turkey.

As mentioned above, by the end of the 1990s in Turkey, the convergence of broadcasting and internet technology facilitated an increasing influence of the media and the intellectuals. The development of new technologies by continuing this convergence provided new facilities (Tuncel, 2003: 85). Within the scope of media, internet broadcasting became important as a result of technological development in Turkey. This provided major ground for being relatively free from state hegemony to empower the counter-hegemonic movements. With internet broadcasting, the current content of major media groups was transported to web pages (Çevikel, 2004: 150). Additionally, the number of news and entertainment portals increased. Furthermore, since the web pages of the media groups also included content from the other organs of these media groups, such as printed newspapers as well as TV and radio broadcasts, the content of internet journalism facilitated the expansion of the same perspective to the audiences. Nonetheless, the subordinated groups’ right to freely comment on the content and their creation of their own opinion blogs brought an arena for people’s expression of their ideas. This allowed freedom in agenda setting: it no longer had to be based on one source but was multiplied in many ways. Opinion columns in online newspapers, as well as blogs, must be considered private broadcasting even if they come out of the commercial activity. According to research by the Interactive Advertising Bureau of Turkey, in 2011 69% of the

21 million internet users in Turkey followed the news via the internet (Haberler, 2011a). It is especially the younger generation's involvement in the social issues as well as anti-government and the counter-hegemonic spheres that was influenced by this internet usage. The Gezi Park protest is an important example, since online news pages and social media had the greatest effect on sharing the ideas of the pluralist public intellectuals with the public and empowered the protest movements at the time, as well as spreading the counter-hegemonic perspective.

After highlighting the function of the media in spreading the ideas of intellectuals, it is also important to present these intellectuals' role in the formation of cultural hegemony, facilitated by the media, as seen in their engagement with pro-transformation historical blocs in Turkey. The intellectuals' function in setting the agenda and molding public opinion an important part of the formation of cultural hegemony. Media and the intellectuals have a major role in agenda setting, in relation to the sociopolitical situation of the public. Setting the agenda creates public awareness, which is the first step of the impact of the media on the cognitive level. According to Bernard C. Cohen (1963: 13), "the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about." As for molding public opinion, the key is to have a common conviction of the people about some beliefs and ideas (Vural, 1999: 46). This whole process affects the behavior of the people. Hence, in the process of molding public opinion, the effect of the media can be seen as changes at the emotional and behavioral levels. Consequently, as opinion makers, intellectuals should be considered a source of the knowledge that media use. The media needs intellectuals, who stay at the highest level of the hierarchy as in the Gramscian conception, where they are "the creators of the various sciences, philosophy, art, etc." (Gramsci, 1971: 13). Thus, with their proven specialty in the public perception through their discourses, they mutually interact with the public and influence public opinion. Since media creates a forum for debate, intellectuals and the public use this place for interaction that, in turn, shapes public opinion by sharing information.

Intellectuals' function of molding public opinion can be explained with an example from the social transformation process in Turkey that also shows the function of the intellectuals and the media under the hegemonic power. This example relates to the role of organic intellectuals in the media in making a conception popular. When they have done so, other columnists and

intellectuals or people are expected to support the popular conception or take this conception as a given. This occurred in the 2000s while the pro-transformation historical bloc of the liberal-right under AKP was being empowered. In this process, organic intellectuals and the pro-transformation media intended to absorb the other intellectuals, columnists and society as a whole into the pro-transformation historical bloc by influencing the agenda. For instance, the Solution Process on the solution of the Kurdish Problem, which was started in 2008, has been a comprehensive process to solve the most important problem in Turkey. Since this process had major support from the public as a result of the strong propaganda for it, opinion leaders or intellectuals outside of the historical bloc were expected to support this process if they wanted the public's attention. In addition, the intellectuals who did support this process got more positive attention. The dominant conception, namely hegemony in both cases, tried to absorb other perspectives into the main hegemonic sphere by using organic intellectuals with their propaganda techniques in the media, where these intellectuals are actors involved in the formation of the cultural hegemony.

In sum, pluralist public intellectuals' engagement in the media by being in the pro-transformation blocs and being active in the processes of molding public opinion as well as contributing to setting the agenda has been an important element in the process of the social transformation in Turkey. This has continued in the historical process because of the empowerment of the private media with the liberalization attempts in the post-1980s. The intellectuals who were critical of the hegemonic position of the military found a new place to expand their sphere of influence. Within the dynamic interaction of the intellectuals with the society, important agenda items such as the Kurdish problem, women students' right to wear the headscarf, minority problems, LGBT rights and press freedom were brought to the political and social arena through engagement with the private media. This development had its roots also in the empowerment of the civil society based on the further economic development in the post-1980s. These mentioned processes are found in the Gramscian conception as the function of organic intellectuals. So, these intellectuals have functioned by influencing the public opinion to create a desired change in the society in favor of the hegemony of the engaged social group/class. In this process, the tools of mass communication are regarded as suitable for intellectuals' propaganda techniques and the most appropriate ones have been the TV and the internet, as their use has been the most widespread. This propaganda function shows the importance of intellectuals' engagement with certain social groups to be in interaction with the public to mold public opinion. In total, expanding the

discourses of intellectuals in the public sphere clearly shows the effect of the media on directing the debates as well as the influence of intellectuals, who generated the ideas that were used by the media to a certain extent. Thus, media and the intellectuals had a major effect on further expansion of the pro-transformation blocs by starting within the civil society and shaping the way of the debates. This will be explained also in the following sub-section.

### **2.3.2. Civil Society and the Development of the Historical Blocs in the post-1980s of Turkey**

It was argued in the previous section that the media, as a part of civil society, has received special attention from the state since the end of the Ottoman Empire. This was also evident in the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The establishment of the Republic was a modernization from above by the military elites and bureaucratic forces of the late Ottoman Empire. Therefore, civil society was in an underdeveloped position. Subsequently, military interventions in politics starting in the 1960s played a key role in suppressing the development of civil society and aimed at reorganizing the civilian, social, and political arena with the goal of restoring the hegemony of the Kemalist elites. The 1980 Military Coup built on this mentality of state intervention into social affairs by reproducing the bourgeois hegemony in the civilian arena. However, in the post-1980s, civil society became a strategic matter for the public to focus on for expanding their area of freedom and escaping from state hegemony. The people who had been troubled under the military hegemony found civil society to be an arena of opening the gates for the further development of democracy and pluralism in the country. This period is important since the early examples of civil society emerged based on the pro-Islamic movements as well as the Kurds (Sarıbay, 2001: 131). As such, civil society in the practical social arena emerged much later in Turkey than in the West. In this emerging liberal pluralist discursive environment of the 1980s, many civilian associations, foundations and trade unions started to be formed in Turkey. It was the religious communities who used this opening most effectively by bringing Islamic discourses into the public arena, which now provided a relatively free space for the historically constructed pro-Islamic movements in Turkey.

This led to a strengthening of the new right, and conservatism became the main tendency in post-1980s emerging civil society. The main idea in this tendency was that the major determinant in Turkey's social arena was Islam. However, this rise of conservatism was not in just one simple orientation. Many different organizations relied on different interpretations of

Islam and its role in public life; these included movements with a liberal Islamic understanding, such as the Gülen Organization and Enver Ören Group, traditional Sunni Islamism<sup>23</sup> such as MGH and Sulaymanites, and conservative liberals including the supporters of Özalism and other liberal-right movements. However, before this struggle in the civil society, the military rulers (1980–1983) preferred the Turkish Islamic Synthesis approach for opening a new arena for Islam; its intended effect was a passive revolution for the growing pro-Islamic movement. Nevertheless, in the post-military rule era, Özal's liberal reforms provided the right with the positioning needed to expand its role in the society. Thus, the new right, adorned with Islamic discourse increased its activity in the civil society against military rule. This can be explained with the Gramscian conception of the emergence of the hegemony from the civil society as the new liberal right bloc started to expand its cultural hegemony on the social life in Turkey.

As was argued, the main reason that the civil society gained more attention in the 1980s was that it was seen as an important arena to escape from, or struggle against, the military's hegemony. The military's anti-democratic practices and the bans on the political parties, newspapers and many other civilian arenas led people to gravitate to the civil society. Civil society was regarded as a democratization project, since the left, which took a major blow in the 1980 coup, regarded the civil society arena as their chance to bring about a revolution. The civil society arena became a counter-hegemonic sphere against the military dictatorship in Turkey. Like the liberals and Islamists, the left also saw the civil society in Turkey at that time as a lifesaver (Balçı, 2006: 213). Thus, it became a unique arena secure from state hegemony and having its own dynamics and autonomy.

Thus, the development of civil society in post-1980s Turkey cannot only be seen as a unique project for the production of the hegemony of the Islamic bourgeoisie. This is because civil society organizations were not set up only by the conservatives, but also by the left, Kemalists,

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<sup>23</sup> Explaining the major features of Sunni Islam requires explaining the differences between Sunni and Shia Islam. Historical analyses show that this separation emerged after the death of Islamic Prophet Muhammad based on the conflicts over governance of Muslim society. The word Sunni comes from *People of Sunnah (Ehli Sünnet)*, which means that the people observe, follow and apply Muhammad's actions. Traditional Islamic understanding is practiced in the Sunni Islamic spheres. Sunni Muslims constitute 85% of the Muslim population around the world and also the majority population in Turkey. Shia Islam, which originated from a conflict of governance comes from the word *Şiat-ı Ali (Ali's Followers)*. Many Shia Muslims believe that after Muhammad's death, his daughter Fatimah's (605–632) husband, the fourth Islamic Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Talib (601–661) would be the head of the Islamic State. While the competition between Sunni and Shia Islam started in political level, it led to the emergence of differences in the beliefs and practices. As an important example, in Shia Islam there are 12 Imams including the Ali Ibn Abi Talib and continue with other 11 Imams following the Ali's way. However, there is not a certain belief in Sunni Islam, which instead connects the belief and practices of Islamic Prophet Muhammad. For more information about the Sunni and Shia Islam and their key differences see: Sarıkaya, 2011.

and other subordinated groups. An example is the Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği – ÇYDD) based on a modernist, westernized understanding of the Kemalist doctrine of Turkey that was established in 1989. The association's aim is to "protect Atatürk's principles and revolutions and carry Turkey to a contemporary civilizational level".<sup>24</sup> The emergence of different civil society organizations based on different ideological positions in the post-1980s indicate that a competition emerged among their hegemonic areas. Hence, while the pro-Islamic movements (MGH, Gülen Organization, Sulaymanites, etc.), Kurdish movement and Alevi movements, among others, were aiming to form their own counter-hegemonic spheres through this civil society project, the ÇYDD and other system-oriented groups aimed a continuation of the existing hegemony of the Kemalist ideology. This proves Gramsci's idea that hegemony occurs in the arena of civil society. Therefore, the function of dominant groups is important in this process.

Furthermore, as in many other areas, the development of civil society cannot be regarded as free from the influence of the economic system, which had started to change in Turkey on January 24, 1980 right before the September 12, 1980 Military Coup. The liberalization of the economy resulted in privatization, and decreased unemployment and poverty in the society and, at the same time, provided for the development of a bourgeois in Anatolia where the majority of population were still conservative Muslims. This emerging bourgeois, which was relatively free from state direction, as well as the new middle class increased public support and thus widened the sphere of civil society's action (Tosun, 2001: 298). Thus, the increasing economic capabilities of the NGOs and social groups resulted in an increase in interaction among people, which in turn came to them as material and social benefits by increasing their sphere of influence. As in the Gramscian conception, the consensus that was achieved within the civil society through public interaction and other actions affected the emergence of the new bourgeois hegemony on the basis of shared values. However, the position of civil society around the 1990s brought a complex relationship concerning the social basis of the organizations in Turkey.

On the one hand, while the civil society in the post-1980s had a role of bringing subordinated groups' ideas and positions into the public sphere, on the other hand, these groups were excluded from having any influential position. Thus, the subordinated groups created their

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<sup>24</sup> The Association was formed by a group of female academics in 1989 and had projects mainly to increase the literacy of women. Moreover, the association provided the scholarships to mostly female students all around Turkey. More information can be found on the official web page of the association, online available at: <http://www.cydd.org.tr/> (Last accessed 19.12.2017).

own bourgeois over them. The further development of civil society and the political society was influenced by this new bourgeois. As an example, the new Islamic bourgeois in 1980s was related to the further economic development in Anatolia. This improvement in the economic condition of this new bourgeois led them to compete with the traditional bourgeois of the republic such as with the Turkish Industry and Business Association (Türk Sanayicileri ve İşinsanları Derneği – TÜSİAD) and Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği – MÜSİAD).<sup>25</sup> This new Islamic bourgeois brought the same Islamic understanding into the public sphere through these civil society connections. This change in their social status and their assumption of influential positions allowed these groups to establish a new Islamic bourgeois hegemony in the civil society.

As mentioned previously, Islam became the major issue to be discussed in the public sphere from the 1980s. The high economic development in Anatolia and the dominant position of the pro-Islamic movements within this development gave the Islamic bourgeois a bigger role in the civil society than other oppressed groups (i.e. Kurds, Alevis, etc.) had. This increasing influence in the economic arena (MUSIAD) and the political arena (MGH) also influenced the republican institutions of Turkey to fight against these pro-Islamic movements on the discourse of political Islam in the 1990s. This proved Islam to be a new counter-hegemonic sphere (Tuğal, 2002: 85). The Islamic political movement's sympathy to the Kurdish problem under the Islamic brotherhood umbrella and also their plans for a structural change through the civil society gave them a lot of attention from the subordinated groups of Anatolia and other groups in Turkey. For instance, Erbakan's pro-Islamist RP won the local elections in 1994 in many municipalities of southeastern Turkey in which the majority of the population is Kurdish. In the Diyarbakır, the center of the Kurdish political movement, for example, the RP won the local elections, receiving more than 30% of the votes in 1994 (Çakır, 1994).

Moreover, this increased influence of Islam in the 1990s and its effects on other oppressed groups involved the republican forces into the debate based on the Kemalist doctrine. Thus, this period brought further successes of the Islamic political movement, as Erbakan became the first party in the general elections of 1995 and formed a coalition government with Tansu Çiller's True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi – DYP). However, a 'post-modern coup' was attempted on February 28, 1997 against the Erbakan government. This was, in Althusser's

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<sup>25</sup> While the TÜSİAD represented the laicist entrepreneurs of the republic, MÜSAD represents the religious entrepreneurs which emerged in the post-1980s in Anatolia.

terms, a step by the repressive state apparatus against the revolutionary forces of the oppressed groups. However, this repression triggered the intensification of the counter-hegemonic sphere based on the Islam discourse in the civil society with the support of other oppressed groups.

So, in the 1990s, a crisis of representation within the political sphere affected the increasing the popularity of civil society. Increasing oppression on the revolutionary movements (i.e. pro-Islamic movements and Kurdish movements) activated their positions in the civil society, which provided an alternative sphere as the war of position in Gramscian conception. These counter-hegemonic movements aimed to use the media to expand their sphere of influence, both by forming their own media institutions and by the their organic intellectuals' participation in the mainstream media's political discussion programs. All these developments made for an active civil society demanding solutions for the major social problems. It is important to mention that the civil society's relationship with and support grants from the EU institutions also started in the 1990s. So, through this relationship, civil society's movement toward the liberal democratic pluralist ideal of the EU was achieved by the 2000s (See İçduygu, 2011: 381–394). The EU policies contributed to form a historical bloc for the opposition forces based on the liberal pluralist conception in the first half of the 2000s. Furthermore, with the influence of the EU and the development of the civil society in the 1990s, the sociocultural characteristics of the civil society started to transform. Ethnic, religious and cultural civil society organizations started to emerge in Turkey. Various associations based on identity and ideological standpoints, such as Kurdish, Circassian, Islamist, Alevi, nationalist, militarist and laicist were formed. This indicates that civil society grew out of the hegemonic position of the political society, but in cohesion with the tendency toward democratization and pluralization of the political sphere.

Thus, in the early 2000s, AKP emerged from the civil society as a historical bloc of the pro-transformation groups. The support of leftists and liberal intellectuals as well as the pro-transformation groups for AKP indicate that its roots lay within the civil society (Tuğal, 2007: 19). So, through this pro-transformation bloc, AKP had a function to bring the cultural, social and economic matters of these subordinated groups into the public sphere. The result, especially during AKP's first term until 2007, was that the public sphere became a place for critical discourses for the comprehensive transformation of public life by solving major problems of the country (i.e. Kurdish problem, headscarf debate, etc.).



The support of pluralist public intellectuals as organic to this process came through engagement with this bloc from its historical development and the creation of solidarity and group consciousness. As in the Gramscian conception, they shared their experiences, including changes in their world views, with the public in the social class/group and aimed to direct them on their desired path. In the case of Fehmi Kuru, he involved with the Gülen Organization's newspaper *Zaman* as an important columnist in 1985 and was also a part of MGH's activities. He aimed to carry the pro-Islamic movements into the center and make them a part of the EU process, as a part of the modernism with a religious consciousness. Hasan Cemal, by engaging in the Özal's policies from the 1980s on, located himself in this liberal-right bloc to share his ideas of anti-militarism and democratization. Although he had been suspicious about the AKP project until 2002, after that time he became organic to AKP when he 'realized' the liberal stance of AKP. With his books and newspaper columns, he became the voice for the AKP's anti-militarist practices and with his books such as *Be One with Peace* (2011), *Kurdistan diaries during the Solution Process* (2014) and *Delila: A Young Woman Guerilla's Mountain Diaries* (2014), he became a leading supporter of the solution process of the Kurdish Problem. Mehmet Altan was a columnist at the *Sabah*, which is a mainstream liberal newspaper, but he also engaged the liberal-right bloc under Özal's policies from the 1980s. Through coming from this liberal right ideology, Altan proposed his 'second republic' concept in 1991 with an aim of sharing his idea of adorning the republic with democracy (See M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015) that included pluralization of the public sphere through the involvement of the excluded social groups. Continuing in this way, Altan's first attempt on the political level was to support the New Democracy Movement (Yeni Demokrasi Hareketi – YDH) in the 1990s—the party's ideology was based on Altan's second republic concept, including open society and pluralism. However, the party couldn't even get 1% of the vote in the 1995 general elections. This lack of success can be explained with the Gramscian conception of the lack of a social base of the party. When the intellectual idea is not developed in the civil society through interaction with the social groups, it does not have a transforming effect. Thus, in the Gramscian conception, intellectuals direct the formation of hegemony, which requires interaction with the civil society that affects emerging common sense in the class/group solidarity. Later, Mehmet Altan joined the activities of pro-Islamic movements as a director of Abant Platform, organized by Gülen Organization, in which intellectuals discussed the social and political issues in Turkey. Since the platform was a venue for discussing AKP's reform process in the 2000s and Altan's personal support of this reform process, he became a part of the historical bloc under AKP project and became one of

the organic intellectuals supporting Turkey's EU membership, anti-militarism and social and cultural rights for the conservative Muslims and Kurds.

Nilüfer Göle, who was also a part of this liberal-right bloc in the Özal period, saw the increased tendency of the conservative Muslims to go into the public sphere, as well as their efforts to modernize, and proposed her 'forbidden modern' concept in 1991. This concept was aimed at increasing consciousness among conservative women and also suggested to the laicist elites the possibility of Islamic involvement within modernity. Nilüfer Göle emerged as a product of the popular liberal-right bloc in which Islam was also involved, with a role of creating consciousness within the Islamic social groups in the social and cultural arenas through her 'specialization', as was clarified in Gramscian conception as a feature of organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971: 6). The pro-Islamic movements considered Göle's conception important for their involvement in the public sphere and most often used it. Thus, religious women's headscarf struggle was the main strategy for the pro-Islamic movements to go into the public sphere. At the same time, Göle also dealt with the activities of the pro-Islamic movements as she became a part of Abant Platform, organized by Gülen Organization, and legitimized this platform (Çınar, 2016). In this way, Göle also became a part of AKP's historical bloc and supported the democratization and pluralization environment in the 2000s. Hence, as an example of her functioning within this historical bloc, at the time of the headscarf debate in 2007, Göle organized the 'Forbidden Modern Exhibit' in Istanbul, including the images and art of different ways of visualizing forbidden with modernity, which is another of Göle's contributions to the involvement of conservative Muslim women in the public sphere. Göle has been not only a thinker, but also a doer, a defining feature of the function of intellectuals in the Gramscian philosophy of praxis. Nilüfer Göle functioned for the involvement of Islam in the public sphere as she argues "the forbidden modern is at the top of the state" (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015) when referring to the way of life of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his family.

Furthermore, during this transformation process, mainly in the 2000s, civil society, by being in the war of position, had many different organizations with similar postures that were based on different ideological blocs. For example, while the Women's Rights Organization Against Discrimination (Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Hakları Derneği), Free Thought and Education Rights Association (Özgür Düşünce ve Eğitim Hakları Derneği), MAZLUM-DER, Association for the Social Change and others positioned themselves in the pro-transformation bloc, republicanist organizations such as Atatürkist Thought Association (Atatürkçü Düşünce

Derneği), Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu – Türk-İş), The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu – DİSK), Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen (Türkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkarları Konfederasyonu) and also the Republican Rallies that the Kemalist groups organized in 2007 took positions to continue the existing republican hegemony. Each side tried to absorb the other within their hegemonic spheres during the 2000s, as can be also explained in the Gramscian conception of the formation of hegemony.

Furthermore, with the civil society support, the hegemony of the pro-transformation forces under the AKP was restored at the institutional level, first with the Ergenekon Trials,<sup>26</sup> which started in 2008 and undermined the power of the military. Second was with the Constitutional Change Referendum in 2010, which allowed the government to make structural changes in the political arena. For the 2010 referendum, the *Yes Bloc* included the political activists and the intellectuals, who were against the September 12, 1980 coup mentality and the system that was constructed by the military hegemony, from the left, liberal left, the various civil society organizations and Islamic communities. It was due to the pluralist public intellectuals' interaction with the civil and political societies that the bloc was formed to popularize the yes votes, arguing that the 'No votes means supporting the status quo' and the 'Yes vote for the transformation and democratization'. It was also loudly mentioned by Prime Minister Erdoğan during the public meeting for the referendum rally in 2010 that the Yes bloc included the "Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi – SP), Grand Unity Party (Büyük Birlik Partisi), various NGOs, Independent Idealists (Bağımsız Ülkücüler), independent Kurdish intellectuals, Hak-İş Trade Union Confederation, Confederation of Public Servants Trade Unions (Memur Sendikaları Konfederasyonu), women's organizations, disabled people's organizations and various other labor organizations, etc." (Devran and Seçkin, 2011: 179). Although it was overly emphasized by Erdoğan who aimed for a successful referendum, the *Yes bloc* showed that the civil and political society in Turkey organically connected at that time as an important feature of the historical bloc. Thus, the importance of the civil society for the operation of the hegemony in the Gramscian conception must be considered. Concerning the pluralist public intellectuals' function, by making propaganda with the famous 'Yes, but not enough' discourse during the campaigns about the importance of the Yes vote for democracy and

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<sup>26</sup> As will be explained in chapter 5, Ergenekon is allegedly a secret armed organization, which operated in Turkey in the 2000s and as a "deep state" organization, which has been claimed to be responsible for the unidentified murders. The organization is accused of the murder of Armenian Journalist Hrant Dink in Istanbul in 2007 (Tosun, 2012).

pluralism, they contributed to expanding the hegemonic sphere of the AKP. Even this propaganda influenced the intellectuals who can be categorized as traditional intellectuals in Gramsci's conception, such as philosophers and academics. This was clarified in Gramscian conception as a strategy for the formation of the hegemony by absorbing other intellectuals into the new historical bloc (Portelli, 1982: 106). Organic intellectuals of the historical bloc under the AKP hegemony with their propaganda functions aimed to absorb the intellectuals of old historical bloc (i.e., Kemalist intellectuals), as well as traditional intellectuals in favor of the new historical bloc. Through this, the hegemony with continued interaction between the civil and political societies was produced.

Moreover, in the post-2010 referendum process, the restoration of the party hegemony of AKP caused its departure from the ideology behind the historical bloc, which was 'liberal pluralism'. The critiques started right after the referendum, followed by the Gezi Protests in late May–June 2013 and the corruption probes against AKP ministries on December 17–25, 2013. These reveal the dissolution of the intellectual bloc, which was organic to the socially constructed bourgeois hegemony of the AKP. It is important to analyze this with the Gramscian conception as in a historical bloc intellectuals engage with the social groups and classes by being in the superstructure. So, the collapse of an existing historical bloc first requires the dissolution of the intellectual bloc that has been organic with it (Portelli, 1982: 123). This shows that the intellectuals constitute the major element of the historical bloc by being organic to the major classes, so the continuation or dissolution of the hegemony depends on the roles of the intellectuals. This dissolution of the intellectual bloc aided the development of a new counter-hegemonic sphere, which is explained well in Gramscian conception as a break from existing hegemony, that was seen during the Gezi Park Protests in 2013. Importantly, as explained in the Gramscian conception, this also shows the autonomy of the organic intellectuals who are already operating in the superstructure (Ibid: 104–105). Intellectuals' being organic to a social class/group does not mean they have no independent function. They can always form a new historical bloc in the civil society. Thus, the civil and the political societies do not always have the same ideological base.

With this lack of cohesion between civil society and the political society, a new war of position emerges in the civil society for the formation of counter-hegemonic sphere as the activities of the superstructure are not satisfying the needs of the society. This is the nature of the emergence of a new historical bloc in the Gramscian conception. In Turkey, this happened during the Gezi Park Protests in 2013. The pro-transformation camp that was formed within

the civil society, based on liberal pluralism under the AKP hegemony dissolved because of the party's departure from being a center of the ideology of pro-transformation camp. Hence, discourses emerged from the resisting social sphere during the Gezi Protests were related to the increasing "pressure" and government's attempt to "intervene in their life styles" (Uras, 2013). This new counter-hegemonic sphere produced its own organic intellectuals, Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy, and was based on a tendency to resistance. Through their discourses these pluralist intellectuals have had the function of forming a new historical bloc and spreading its ideology, which was based on their pluralist perspective. As mentioned in the previous sub-section, social media played an important role in the spread of these ideas.

According to Nilüfer Göle, the community that emerged within the Gezi Protests indicated "a trial of the citizenship in a sense, a new citizenship" (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). This provided a new mentality toward accepting others, as Göle mentions, to "create a common identity" (Ibid). In the Gramscian conception, the civil society is a place where ideas and beliefs are shaped. Thus, a change of the structure at the individual and social level shapes the superstructure, which is politics, law and ideology. So, both structure and superstructure form a historical bloc (Gramsci, 1971: 366). This counter-hegemonic sphere that emerged at the social level with the Gezi Park Protests started to evolve into a political movement with the formation of an ideological position through the emergence of an intellectual bloc. In this process, contributions to this ideological position from Sırrı Süreyya Önder with his 'resistance' discourse, Ihsan Eliaçık with his 'anti-capitalist Islam' discourse and Foti Benlisoy with his 'renovation of the left' discourse had a major impact on the interaction between these civil and political societies. Concerning this struggle, as in Gramsci's conception, the organic intellectuals of the new historical bloc wanted to absorb the intellectuals of old historical bloc in favor of the new historical bloc (Portelli, 1982: 106). This was done by empowering the new historical bloc to form a new hegemony. This ideological stance of the new historical bloc in the post-Gezi Park Protests, based on pluralism, also attracted the pluralist public intellectuals of the previously dissolved historical bloc of the AKP. So, toward the 2015 general elections, step by step, Mehmet Altan, Hasan Cemal, Nilüfer Göle and Fehmi Kuru found a place in supporting this new historical bloc.

Subsequently, this historical bloc reflected itself in the political sphere first with the candidacy of pro-Kurdish HDP leader Selahattin Demirtaş in the Presidential Election on 10 August 2014 that brought him 9.76% of the votes. This historical bloc continued within the

HDP project, which started as a Turkeyification project of the Kurdish movement. This bloc consisted of Kurds (secular, Islamic), Alevis (Turkish, Kurdish and Arab), leftists, religious minorities (Armenian, Greek, Jews, Ezidi, Assyrian), ethnic groups (Albanian, Laz, Pomak, Turkmen, Georgian), Anti-Capitalist Muslims, women, feminists, ecologists and LGBT individuals. In this historical bloc, the function of the pluralist public intellectuals was to construct a consciousness for the members of this bloc by moving their cultural and social features into the public sphere, and to widen this emerging counter-hegemonic perspective. This function can be explained with three examples from the sample intellectuals. First, Sırrı Süreyya Önder engaged with the HDP and was a candidate from Ankara for the June 7, 2015 general elections to attract the votes of the left in western Turkey. Second, Ihsan Eliaçık was active within the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group and regularly appeared on TV to attract the attention of the religious people to the HDP. Third, Foti Benlisoy engaged in the After 10 Initiative to attract the civil society's support for HDP to pass the 10% threshold in the elections. These and other sample intellectuals' activities and supporting articles reveal this function. These activities for the empowerment of this historical bloc resulted in HDP getting 13.12% votes in the 2015 general elections. As it was explained by Gramsci that the hegemony starts from the civil society, the interaction between the civil and political spheres affected the formation of dominant position of the HDP over the engaged subordinated groups. HDP's success affected not only the AKP, who lost their hegemonic position by losing their single party position in the parliament, but also the PKK, who lost their hegemonic position as the sole representatives of the Kurds in Turkey. However, PKK's declaration of war against the Turkish security forces after the elections led the voters to question their support of HDP for a peaceful solution of the Kurdish problem. In view of this, HDP leader Demirtaş constantly issued calls for the disarmament of the PKK, and to ensure the parliament was the only place for a solution. Consequently, by bringing various cultural and social groups into the public sphere within the pro-transformation left historical bloc also in the post-Gezi Park Protests, the social transformation has continued by transforming the groups' features internally, as well as being a part of overall public sphere, such as the Turkeyification process of the civilian Kurdish movement.

All the case examples and theoretical explanations indicate that the social transformation in Turkey and the function of sample pluralist public intellectuals within the civil and political societies, as well as the formation of historical blocs during this social transformation process, make the Gramscian conception of organic intellectuals best for the purposes of this

dissertation. Overall, theoretically informed empirical investigation indicates that democratization and pluralism have been the leading discourses speeding the process of empowerment of the civil society in post-1980s Turkey. They have also been the major mechanism to take the consent of the subordinated groups into the new historical blocs and also to form an intellectual bloc based on this transformation process. In this process, pluralist public intellectuals shared their discourses based on the pro-transformation ideas by engaging the civil society and being leading figures of the historical blocs, which emerged through the involvement of the pro-transformation groups. They contributed on the social transformation process by being major supporters and public legitimating authorities of cultural reforms. These included the involvement of Islam as well as pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere and involvement of the Kurds in the public sphere through the Solution Process in the post-2000s. The same function of these intellectuals applied also to the political processes in the same period, such as increasing the civilian politicians' power over the military, as well as creating collective consciousness during the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 that provided the ground for the pluralization of the public sphere with the involvement of many subordinated groups of the society.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have dealt with the conception of intellectuals concerning their roles in the society, not as traditional intellectuals located at a distance from the society, but as having roles as important subjects of the society. Such an analysis is required in order to understand the emergence of public ideas and knowledge within the transformation process. As mentioned in the critique of the various theoretical positions, the approaches considered based the role of the intellectuals on their being engaged to classes or social groups as well as their operating in the public sphere. I started by considering Marx's approach. He saw the intellectual as being engaged to the ruling class but wanted to see them engaged to the cause of the proletariat. In Marx's approach the proletariat is the most important concern, since Marx regards the proletariat as a true universal class because of their struggle against the hegemonic power (Avineri, 2003: 59). Because Marx deals with the issue only in the economic realm and does not consider other social groups, in his conception the true intellectuals are those who engage themselves to the proletariat and contribute to the cause of revolution. However, in Marx's conception, intellectuals are seen as part of the hegemonic dynamics of the ruling class. This is also how Williams used this category of intellectuals. He

looked at how intellectuals are the actors specialized to struggle to create a dependency on the established social system. Intellectuals are identified only by their hegemonizing dynamics under the dominant power; their role in the emergence of the counter-hegemonic movements and their connection with the subordinate classes is dismissed.

Althusser, too, saw intellectuals as agents of the ideological state apparatus, namely professional actors of the hegemonic ideology (Althusser, 2012: 115). By viewing them only as extensions of the dominant power and not as parts of counter-hegemonic spheres, and by arguing that their position is under the hierarchy without considering the autonomy in their actions, Althusser makes his conception invalid for analyzing the role of the intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey from the 1980s onwards. Nevertheless, Althusser's conception of ideological state apparatuses gives important insights for analyzing the media's position during the transformation period. This conception is especially applicable to the government's struggle to control the society by acquiring their consent, as was seen in the mainstream media's position during the Gezi protests in 2013. However, that is not the focus of this dissertation. A study on the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the post-1980s requires a comprehensive analysis that also includes the civil society dimensions of their role.

Concerning this civil society dimension, Habermas mentions the "bourgeois public sphere" that emerged in the historical context and how intellectuals became a part of this bourgeois public sphere in the process (Habermas, 1991: 32–33). This conception gives important insights for analyzing the emergence of the Islamic bourgeois and intellectuals' engagement with them in post-1980s Turkey. However, the fact that Habermas sees this as being only applicable in a certain historical period (the early and classical modern period of Europe) and not suited for future analysis makes this concept invalid. Moreover, it is also not enough to consider intellectuals as being only engaged to the bourgeois in the post-1980s Turkey. The groups subordinated by the system are also important for analyzing the intellectuals' engagement. Even so, Habermas regards contemporary intellectuals as free-floating intellectuals, who construct powerful discourses and become authorities with their arguments. However, the power of discourse alone is not the only way to analyze the influence of these discourses. Intellectuals' engagement in practical issues also matters in the process of influencing social transformation. Therefore, the main objective of this chapter has been to provide a framework for a comprehensive analysis of the roles of the pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey in the post-1980s—that of Antonio Gramsci.



As was argued in the foregoing, an analysis of the role of intellectuals in the post-1980s Turkey must deal with their function within the media and in the civil society for the purposes of the formation of the historical bloc, the hegemonic projects and the development of counter-hegemonic spheres. As regards the position of media and intellectuals' function within the media in the Gramscian conception, it is important that the media is regarded as one of the apparatuses within the public sphere to produce/reproduce the bourgeois hegemony in the cultural arena. It has been seen as a place for spreading the ideology of the historical blocs through the intellectuals' discourses within. In addition to this, it is also regarded as a strategic location for counter-hegemonic spheres for opposing the ruling class. In Turkey's context, starting in the 1980s with the establishment of the private TV channels and new media institutions (i.e., Meltem TV belonging to Haydar Bař Movement, Samanyolu TV to Gülen Organization, Kanal 7 to Erbakan's MGH), the media became the place for the construction of counter-hegemony through intellectual discourses. Thus, it is important to analyze the intellectuals' position within these new media apparatuses and their discourses in favor of the emerging counter-hegemonic sphere in the post-1980s in the Gramscian conception. It is also important to analyze the organic intellectual position of these pluralist public intellectuals within the AKP's pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc in the 2000s as leading intellectuals with a function of legitimizing the reform process, which includes making the military subservient to civilian authority, the Islamization of the society and Kurdish involvement in the public sphere through the Solution Process. A similar process was seen during the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and the period following, until the 2015 general elections. This function has happened with the intellectuals' increasing activity in the social media by sharing their discourses to create consent for the counter-hegemonic sphere that emerged with the Gezi Park Protests, and which also evolved into a historical bloc with the HDP's position as the major power in this counter-hegemonic sphere. This function of our sample pluralist public intellectuals has been evident with their contribution to social transformation for the involvement of the major subordinated social groups (Kurds, Alevi, LGBTs, women's movements, Anti-Capitalist Muslims) into the public sphere from the Gezi Park Protests onwards.

As regards the civil society dimension, for the scope of this dissertation, any counter-hegemonic movement emerging from the civil society as well as civil society's position as the base for the construction of the hegemony are seen to be important in Gramsci's conception. In the Gramscian conception, the revolutionary forces take the civil society before they take

the state (Strinati, 2004:158). So, they construct their counter-hegemonic sphere within the civil society. Intellectuals' attachment to different classes or their being organic to the social groups is important in this counter-hegemonic process. Hence, in the Gramscian conception, by constructing discourses, intellectuals function to create group consciousness, which is important for empowering the group and expanding its hegemony by creating consent in other individuals and groups. Thus, the formation of hegemony is also related to this position of the intellectual. This Gramscian concept of an organic intellectual is important for the scope of this dissertation as it gives a key role to intellectuals within the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic position of any social group. In the case of Turkey, these are mainly applicable, as argued in the last sub-section, to the intellectuals' engagement with the pro-transformation liberal-right bloc until the end of the 2000s and with the Gezi Protests of the pro-transformation left bloc from 2013. Thus, the sample pluralist public intellectuals have functioned by creating consciousness for the members of the engaged social groups and also by creating consent in the society for these pro-transformation groups and their historical blocs that have widened these groups' ideological positions in the process of making them a part of the public sphere. Overall, Gramsci's conception of organic intellectuals is important for analyzing the sample pluralist public intellectuals' function during the social transformation process from 1983 to 2015.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Major Dynamics of Social Transformation in Turkey**

As was argued in the previous chapter, developments in Turkish society show that official state ideology had been the determinant of domestic issues in Turkey not only before the 1980s, but also in some period in the post-1980s. It was argued that structural change in the 1980s proved to be a strong tool for the sustainable promotion of economic development, democratization and civil participation. At the same time, mainly during this period, demands for transformation from different social groups increased. So, the transformation has been described in different ways, and there was no social consensus on the direction of the transformation in the first place. While oppressed individuals and groups sought a transformation that would involve them in the public sphere through their identity and culture, there was strong resistance in some parts of the society to changing their social positions. During this process, the philosophical content and highest priority target of the transformation was ‘economic liberalism’; political liberalism was also important. In Turkey’s context, it is evident that achieving this economic liberalism, especially in the 1980s, led the way toward social and political liberalism, parallel with the transformation of the society.

In light of these facts, the first section of this chapter will describe the civil–military relations during the transformation process. This section will also show the military’s changing position in the social and political arenas. The second section will shed light on the structural transformation in the Turkish economy and its social implications, including its effecting the emergence of the Anatolian bourgeois as well as the other religious- and cultural-based social movements. The third section will clarify sociocultural change and the civil dimension of this transformation process, with sub-sections discussing the civil society and civil movements dimension of the transformation process. Also, in the scope of transformation, the development and evolution of the pro-Islamic movements and the conservative Muslims, the Kurdish movement, women in the private–public sphere context, Alevis and LGBTs in the social arena will be covered. The fourth section will present the evolution of the intellectual sphere in Turkey from the Ottoman Empire. The last section is the conclusion. Thus, this chapter looks at aspects of the social transformation of Turkey other than the roles of the intellectuals.

### **3.1. The Civil–Military Relations in the Process of Social Transformation in Turkey**

Within the scope of this dissertation, understanding civil–military relations as well as the struggle for civilianization in the post-1980s is a key to understanding important sociopolitical developments in Turkey. To begin with, it is important to note that the military’s visibility, especially with the 1980 Military Coup, was not only the product of the conditions of that time, but also a continuation of the military’s influential positioning within the Kemalist republic, which gave the military an active role from its establishment. The military’s staged 1960 Coup at the end of Turkey’s first multiparty attempt<sup>27</sup> and the 1971 Memorandum for balancing the political arena were earlier examples of this positioning. Thus, the military’s positioning was one of the main contributors to an environment for staging a coup in September 1980.

The military coup that was staged by TSK on September 12, 1980 under the leadership of chief of staff Kenan Evren is an important case for civil–military relations in the post-1980s. Evren became the new ruler of Turkey and within three years, the political and social conditions for the hegemonic position of the military were set, under the governance of the newly established National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu – MGK) whose governors included general staff and four force commanders. In this period, a campaign against ‘terror’ organizations as well as separatist actions was declared. People were affected by the pressures coming from military rule; thousands were put into prison, and people’s freedom was eroded. Critical voices against the system of Turkey faced military pressure: 1.6 million people were blacklisted, 650 000 were detained, 230 000 were put on trial, and 300 died in detention (Daily Sabah, 2016). In this period, the new system wanted to silence all critical voices, and many of the public intellectuals who were against the official ideology and military rule were detained. The political parties and their leaders were also affected by the decisions of the MGK: political parties were outlawed and their leaders were banned from politics for ten years.

Beyond the social and political arena, the military coup of Turkey also brought a new economic dimension to Turkey through its pro-capital stance. Evren’s radio and television

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<sup>27</sup> After Atatürk, Turkey passed to a multiparty period in 1946 as an effect of increasing relationships with the West after World War II. This brought the newly formed Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti - DP)’s victory under Adnan Menderes against pro-Kemalist Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - CHP) in 1950, 1954 and 1957 elections. This first democratization period resulted in the first Military Coup in May 27, 1960, which also brought the execution of Adnan Menderes in 1961.

speech declaring the start of the coup regime on September 12, 1980 reflected his pro-capital stance by referring to the “development of efforts on export by increasing the production” (Aslaner, 2016: 85). Thus, under the military rule Turgut Özal was appointed Deputy Prime Minister in Charge of Economic Affairs. Özal’s appointment was due to his being architect of the ‘January 24 Decisions’ in 1980 as the undersecretary of the prime ministry. Thus, with the January 24 Decisions, Turkey shifted to a free market economy by liberalizing foreign trade and opening an arena for privatization. As recommended by Özal, it was tending toward liberal economy policies, and this was a sign of neo-liberal policies of the military rule. The first effect of these neo-liberal policies was revealed with the outlawing of workers’ strikes and the suspension of the major labor organizations such as DİSK (Koç, 2010: 58–59). With the intent to centralize power in the hand of the state, the MGK launched a process for a new constitution including a referendum on November 7, 1982; the new constitution was accepted with a 91.37% ‘yes’ vote (Ete et al, 2011: 6). The ‘yes’ vote also approved Kenan Evren as the next president of the Republic of Turkey until 1989. So, the ratification of the 1982 constitution, made the MGK a supreme authority on overall institutions of Turkey (Coşkun, 2011: 8–9). These all developments shows the roots of expansion of military bureaucratization into all institutions of Turkey starting with the 1980 military coup.

During the coup government period (1980–1983), the major aim of the generals was to restore the militarist system in Turkey, in which the civilian arena was controlled through a chain of state bureaucracy. As Robert Bianchi (1984: 355) mentions, the coup government period was the “revival or partial restoration of the state corporatism” in Turkey. So, the restoration of corporatism in state and social affairs by the coup government provided an arena for pluralist and corporatist structures to compete with each other. Hence, the coup government’s state corporatism mainly targeted the elimination of the ‘anarchic elements’ at ideological and cultural levels (i.e. various communist, left movements and Kurdish cultural movements).

In this respect, the 1982 Constitution, by putting freedom on the back burner and taking authority, namely the state power, to the forefront, showed the characteristics of preferring the state to the people (Soysal, 1987: 191–192). Whereas the 1961 Constitution referred to the state’s responsibility to protect basic rights and freedoms, in the 1982 Constitution, the fundamental aims and duties of the state were declared in the article 5 as “to safeguard the independence and integrity of the Turkish Nation, the indivisibility of the country, the Republic and democracy, to ensure the welfare, peace, and happiness of the individual and society;...” (Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (1982), p. 3). The corporatist stance of

the 1982 Constitution is seen in this article. The other articles present the same basic idea, requiring some duties and responsibilities of the citizens as they exercise their rights. This shows that the corporatist mentality of the coup government also applies on the social level. At the same time, the reasons for restricting the fundamental rights and freedoms were specified in the constitution by descriptive provisions. The aim was to expand the hegemony of the military through the bureaucratic chain of the state by imposing general limitations on rights and freedoms.

In place of the laicism of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the coup government had an Islamic perspective, revealed in its speeches and the acts. Favoring Islam in society related mainly to the military's conception of being against leftist ideologies that constituted a 'threat' to the official ideology. However, as previously mentioned, favoring an Islamic perspective against the leftist ideologies also aimed to suppress the Islamic trend within the society. This passive revolution strategy, in the Gramscian conception, continued by engaging the coup government with 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis', which originated with the pro-nationalist Intellectuals Club (Aydınlar Ocağı) and the founder of the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – MHP), former staff colonel Alparslan Türkeş. The major aim of this process was to Islamize Kemalism, and hence Turkism was the major vessel of this ideology (Öğün, 1995: 177–178). Bringing the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis into the public agenda was also intended to legitimize the actions of the September 12 Coup in the eyes of the right. Considering that the right was the majority population in the country and tended toward Islam in the social and political discourses, legitimizing the coup regime for the right would make the coup regime stronger.

The effect of this stance on Turkish-Islamic Synthesis has continued in the post-coup governments as well. Thus, Özal got the majority votes during the 1983 general elections with his established Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi – ANAP) and became the ruling party until 1991. Despite the liberal development in the sociopolitical arena in the Özal period, the military's influence within the social and political arena put pressure on the people to continue this policy. Hence, the military's influence under the MGK umbrella intended to design the society, which could be manipulated and mobilized for the interest of the military. Moreover, the critical voices with pluralist leftist and liberal perspectives were targeted for embargo. This was the turning point of Turkish society; the conflict between left and right was replaced with one between authoritarian military rule and critical liberal pluralist perspectives. Thus, military rule had a side effect of forming counter-hegemonic groups

within the civil society and this feeling of pressure greatly strengthened the radical reformist political groups, such as pro-Islamic and Kurdish Movements, which emerged from the civil society and started to be visible in the 1990s.

### *Toward Authoritarian Laicism*

As mentioned, Özal had already been involved in the political arena with the Military Coup government as deputy prime minister, but his policies in the ANAP governments after 1983 went against the military's actions. In contrast with the military's involvement in politics and social life, with its constructed hegemony coming from the 1980 military coup, Özal's liberal policies toward pro-Islamic movements and the emerging Kurdish problem ushered in an era that empowered the resistance movements. After the Özal period, when faced with the rise of the political Islam and the Kurdish insurgent movements in the 1990s, military elites changed their stance from Turkish-Islamic synthesis to laic-ethnocracy, as in the period of Atatürk in the first quarter of the republic. So, the rise of the socially constructed pro-Islamic movements led the military elites and the civilians to turn to laicism once again. Within this environment, in the March 27, 1994 Local Elections, the pro-Islamic RP, running as a third party, received 19% of votes, coming after the liberal-right True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi – DYP) and ANAP. RP had further success in the 1995 general elections, which caused great disappointment in the laic segments of the society (Kurtoğlu, 2005: 214).

The sociopolitical problems of the 1990s, such as instability in the political arena and increasing terror due to the emergence of the Kurdish separatist movement PKK—made up of Kurdish citizens imprisoned and tortured during the Military Coup governance—also impacted the rise of RP. These terrorist actions and this instability in the political sphere also affected the economy, and so, RP came into power in both the local and the general elections due to their economic program and their strong link to residents in the slum areas of the major cities—primarily subordinated groups with a conservative Anatolian background who migrated to Istanbul. The 'Islamic brotherhood' and 'just order' discourses during the election campaigns received great attention from the public (Bulaç, 2009: 549), mainly because RP embraced the religious Kurds of the country, recommending the Islamic brotherhood perspective to the Kurdish citizens. Thus, the political Islamic movement under the RP emerged as one of the major counter-hegemonic spheres in the 1990s.

As mentioned, after the local elections, RP received the most votes, 21.3%, in the general elections of 1995 and became the leading party. Due to the military's pressure in the political

arena, even though RP was the most popular party in the 1995 general elections, no other parties in the TBMM planned to form a coalition government with RP. Also, although RP had received the most votes, President Süleyman Demirel did not give RP the task of forming the coalition government. Thus, RP did come to power with a coalition government with the DYP in 1996, but only after other parties had unsuccessfully attempted to form a coalition in the TBMM. RP's coming to power caused unrest within the military, as became evident in the generals' discourses in the media. The fight against 'reactionary' activities in the military increased, including the dismissal of 69 military staff members at the Supreme Military Council (Yüksek Askeri Şura – YAŞ) meeting of 1996, after 58 of them were accused of participating in reactionary activities (Değer, 1996). At the time of these decisions, pro-Islamic movements reflected a major reaction against the decisions of YAŞ through the newly emerged TV channels, radios and press organs. This shows the increasing power of the private media as a venue for the war of positions in the counter-hegemonic sphere during the 1990s, since the interaction for the empowerment of the movements resisting the hegemonic position of the military took place in the civil society through the media and the discourses of the intellectuals.

On the other side, the generals' targeting RP, calling it the center of the reactionary activities, continued with their discourses in the pro-military media as well. These culminated with the military's February 28, 1997 intervention in social and political life with a soft coup. After the MGK meeting of February 28, a report was issued by MGK Secretary General that scrutinized the anti-regime activities of the reactionary groups against the laic, democratic and social law state characteristics of the republic (Sabah, 2013). Thus, RP - DYP coalition government was considered to be damaging the laic nature of the regime. Prior to this, a number of events brought the country to the February 28 Process: RP leader and Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's trip to Muslim countries including Libya, Egypt and Nigeria in October 1996; a fast-breaking (Iftar) dinner with cult leaders during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in the Prime Minister's office in January 11, 1997; the Sincan municipality of Ankara's organization of 'Jerusalem night' to protest Israel's occupation of Palestine on January 30, with the participation of Iranian Ambassador Ali Rıza Bukheri, and the military's response of driving tanks on the streets in Sincan on February 4 (TRT Haber, 2012). In addition to these events, the Iranian President *Haşimi Rafsancani*'s visit to Turkey in 1996 and the *D-8 Initiative*—formed under Erbakan's direction for economic cooperation among eight developing Muslim countries: Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Nigeria—



could also be listed, since these attempts were related to Turkey's moving away from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) umbrella and toward the East. In addition to aiming to stop the transformation of the sociocultural features of Turkey by protecting the hegemonic position of the military, the February 28 Process functioned to continue the hegemonic position of the Western alliance over Turkey.

Concerning the military's aim to design the social and political spheres of Turkey, before the MGK meeting in February 28, 1997 the military had prepared an 18-point plan for the government to apply, which was not mentioned in the MGK report. The list included many important points: protecting laicism as the basic characteristic of the republic; arranging the education policies based on the Law on Unification of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu), which had been accepted during the early years of the republic, and which aimed to restrict religious education; seizing the private schools and dormitories of the pro-Islamic movements; controlling the activities of the private media groups that made propaganda against the TSK; not employing the expellees from the TSK in the municipalities due to their reactionary activities and uncompromising position on dress code at the state institutions (continuation of the ban over headscarf) (See MGK Resolution No: 406, February 28, 1997).

The military aimed with the February 28 post-modern coup to create a new order and the West Working Group (Batı Çalışma Grubu – BÇG), which was formed at the Naval Office, controlled how the MGK's decisions would be applied. The major task of BÇG was to expand the hegemonic position of the military, using the informational meetings to explain the resolutions declared during the February 28 process and thereby creating consent. These meetings were held for different segments of the society mainly for the state bureaucrats could make them aware of the 'reactionary activities' of the pro-Islamic movements. The pro-Islamic movements were being controlled, with an aim to cleanse them from the state institutions. A major step of this cleansing process was the removal of the RP from the political arena. Hence, Supreme Court of Appeals Chief Prosecutor Vural Savaş started a case on May 21, 1997 to close the RP, which did happen on January 16, 1998. In the meantime, the RP - DYP coalition had already ended, under the influence of the generals, and a new coalition government was formed under the leadership of Mesut Yılmaz's ANAP with Bülent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti – DSP) and Hüsametdin Cindoruk's Democrat Turkey Party. In December 1998, the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi – FP) was established as a new political party for the pro-Islamic MGH, replacing the RP; it, however,

was closed by the Constitutional Court in June 22, 2001 for being a center of anti-laicism activities (BBC, 2001).

### ***The EU Process and Civil–Military Relations***

In the 2000s, the struggle between pro-Islamic social and political movements and the pro-military laic segment of the society continued. In the Islamic political movement, FP became an arena for the struggle between the traditionalists and reformists. As a side effect of the February 28 process, the ban on the religious symbols as well as the cleansing of people with ties to pro-Islamic movements from the state institutions empowered the religious communities parallel to the development of civil society. The empowerment of Islamic civil society and the reformist wing in the pro-Islamic movements increased pro-transformation liberal, leftist and Kurdish groups' interaction with them within the civil society, especially in the academic discussion programs and radio and TV discussion programs. The fight for the freedom to wear the headscarf in the public sphere became the leading discussion topic, and also provided a ground for the emergence of the pro-transformation historical bloc by including the ideological positions of the other resisting social and political groups. The number-two discussion topic after the headscarf debate within this emerging historical bloc was the state's recognizing the identity and the cultural rights of the Kurds.

Subsequently, the increasing headscarf debates in the civil society and the political discussions on the headscarf problem in the FP were the major reasons for the Constitutional Court's closure of the party. So, after the closure of the FP, while traditionalists were setting up the SP, reformists established the AKP under the leadership of politically banned former Istanbul Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In 2001, the year that AKP was formed, Turkey was facing the harsh conditions of the economic crisis as well as a political crisis between the President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and Bülent Ecevit. Due to this political crisis, interest rates increased by 7500% in one night, February 21, 2001, the stock market lost 15% of its value and inflation rate rose to 70% (NTV, 2011a). This shows that the military control affected not only the social and political life of Turkey, but also the economic conditions.

In these dire economic and political conditions, AKP came to power by gaining 34.3% of the votes in the November 3, 2002 elections, reflecting people's feelings of being victimized and the civil society's reaction against the hegemony of the military and mistrust of existing political parties. According to Parlak and Uz (2015: 69), the post-February 28 victimization discourses constituted the major vein of the political sphere in Turkey. On this point, AKP

differed from other MGH parties by having at its center liberal pluralist discourses, reflecting the victimization of the civil society and functioning as the political society of the historical bloc of the pro-transformation social and political groups. The generals did not welcome the AKP's coming to power. Since 2002, the relationship between AKP and the military has been dependent on the AKP's gradual takeover of power. In this period, the conflicts between AKP and the military included both domestic and foreign policy issues. Because of the pro-Western stance of the military as well as the conviction of the civil society in Turkey that the EU was the center of democracy and freedom, AKP continued the reform process through EU membership negotiations. However, this reform process was criticized by the military, which blamed AKP for weakening the laic state and downgrading the constitutional position of the military.

Importantly, one of the main issues regarded by the military as weakening the laicism was the headscarf issue. Tension between the state elites and AKP governments concerning the wearing of a headscarf in the public sphere continued into many areas. The famous examples were the exclusion of the veiled wives of AKP deputies invited to state receptions. For instance, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer invited the President of the TBMM Bülent Arınç, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and other AKP deputies, but not their wives, to the October 29, 2003, reception at the Çankaya Palace celebrating the 80<sup>th</sup> year of the Republic of Turkey (Pirim, 2003). This tension was not limited the top of the state; the public also faced this tension during many national celebrations. For instance, when the AKP Deputy from Kocaeli, Muzaffer Baştopçu, participated in the Republic Day celebrations on October 29, 2007 at the Körfez district of Kocaeli Province with his veiled wife, Deputy of Garrison Commander Vedat Göger and other military personnel in the protocol left the celebration arena (Hürriyet, 2007a). As seen in these examples four years apart, the pro-Islamic movements' struggle for involvement in the public sphere and confrontation of the military hegemony included the struggle for the freedom to wear the headscarf.

The arrangements concerning public education set by the military especially after the February 28 process was another area of stress during the 2000s. The AKP government concerned with improving the situation of the Imam Hatip Schools<sup>28</sup>, most of whose

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<sup>28</sup> Imam Hatip Schools were founded for 'interested' pupils after their primary school education (5<sup>th</sup> grade) to train Imams and preachers for employment in the government funded mosques and other offices under the Presidency of the Religious Affairs in Turkey. According to Hakan Yavuz (2009: 164), in the 1990s, the Imam Hatip Schools were defended by Necmettin Erbakan as the "backyard" of the Islamization of the society. So, the

graduates were banned by the February 28 regime from studying in departments other than Theology at the universities. Another goal of the AKP government was changing the higher education system in Turkey, which was widely criticized by the generals as well as the laic rectors at the universities. As an example, in the first years of the AKP in 2003, a new law was drafted by the government to change the structure of YÖK. The Land Forces Commander Gen. Aytay Yalman and the university rectors met to discuss their strategy to fight the new draft law. Yalman's 'suggestions' to the rectors to fight against the AKP's education policies were to "make the opening ceremonies of the universities count, send a message to the public concerning laicism" (Quoted in Köylü, 2003). Despite the pressure from laic elites, the law passed in the parliament due to the AKP majority there. However, due to the increasing tension in the political sphere, the law was not put in force. This shows the military's position in controlling the bureaucracy at that time, using the system set by the generals with the September 12 Coup as well as the February 28 post-modern coup.

Another important source of increased tension between the AKP government and the generals was the Kurdish problem. While the AKP government preferred to use the discourses 'Kurdish problem' and 'sub versus supra-identity', referring to the Kurdish identity as a sub-identity under the constitutional citizenship of Turkey, the military regarded the problem as 'terrorism' and 'separatist movements'. As an example, in November 2005, when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Şemdinli, a district in southeastern Turkey with a majority Kurdish population, he mentioned everybody's right to be proud of their nationality as located under the supra-identity of the citizenship of the Republic of Turkey (Haber 10, 2005). An analysis of the government's concern with the Kurdish problem and with the tensions with the military shows that government was using a check and balance strategy with regard to the military, as well as preparing the legal infrastructure for the actions they would take.

This legal infrastructure for taking the military out of the political arena had already started with parliament's implementing the 'Seventh Harmonization Package' in July 2003 as part of the process for Turkey's EU membership. This package regulated the function and the authority of the MGK and of the secretary general of the MGK. The package authorized the deputy prime minister to carry out the decisions of the board that transferred the power for the decisions of the MGK from the military to civilian authority (Hürriyet Daily News, 2003).

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schools were a place for pro-Islamic movements to resist the Kemalist statuesque in the post-1980s. Thus, the schools had a central place in the political discussions during this period.

Afterwards, the process of taking the military personnel out of the other institutions started—such from the YÖK. Thus, banning the TSK from the YÖK, new restrictions on military jurisdiction, and the civilian government’s taking over responsibility for military expenditures were among the further developments for downgrading the power of the military in the social and political arena. Importantly, these reforms were linked to the EU membership negotiations processes, which hastened the increase of the power of the civilian authority.

The clashes between the TSK and AKP were most visible in 2007. The main reason for this was the presidential elections in the parliament, in which military elites were arguing against the election as president of any political leader (e.g. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül) whose wife was veiled. Having a veiled first lady was regarded as violating the principle of laicism in Turkey. After the first round of the presidential election in the parliament, Chief of Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt prepared and posted on the TSK’s web page, an E-Memorandum stating that TSK is “a ‘part’ of the debate and absolute defender of laicism” and “will take up a position in a clear and unambiguous manner when necessary” (Bianet, 2007). Reaction to this E-Memorandum was to a large extent in support of the elected civilian government, not only from the social and political arena in Turkey, but also from the EU Commission as well as the United States (US). The public reaction against this E-Memorandum was strong, and with this wave AKP increased its votes in the 2007 elections, which brought in the widening hegemonic position of the AKP in the civilian social and political arena.

Moreover, as a result of increasing public support, as well as international support mostly due to the EU membership process, the ‘Ergenekon Trials’ started in 2008 with the arrest of retired soldiers following investigations. The investigations were not limited to retired soldiers: In 2010, a reflection in the newspaper *Taraf* claimed that the ‘Sledgehammer Coup Plan (Balyoz Darbe Planı)’ was held at the seminar in the first Army Command in 2003. This article launched an investigation leading to the arrest of retired and active duty generals and many military officers. Later that year, with the greater social consensus and again the support of the EU, a Constitutional Amendment Referendum passed to change some articles related to ending the hegemonic position of the military in the state. For instance, the Supreme Council was given the authority to judge the chief of General Staff, military force commanders and the parliamentary speaker in the event of abuses of power (Hürriyet Daily News, 2010a). Also, the article 125 in the 1982 Constitution, which states that “the decisions of the Supreme Military Council are outside the scope of judicial review” was revised in the proposal as “nonetheless, recourse to judicial review shall be available against all decisions taken by the

Supreme Military Council regarding expulsion from the Armed Forces” (T.C. Başbakanlık AB Genel Sekreterliği, 2010: 16). Thus, the aim of these and other amendments to the constitution was to end the hegemonic position of the military by making structural changes.

Another effect of these structural changes was the arrest in 2012 of former Chief of General Staff İlker Başbuğ, who had retired in 2010, on charges of establishing and leading a terrorist organization and attempting to destroy the Turkish Government. He was counted as part of the Internet Memorandum Case (Internet Andıcı Davası), in which some members of the TSK were accused of creating internet propaganda against the AKP, Gülen Organization and Kurdish Problem (Arsu, 2012). Başbuğ was released in 2014 after the Constitutional Court ruled his arrest unlawful. In the post-Gezi Park Protests period after 2013, there were few regulations concerning the functioning of the military in ‘New Turkey’ due to the balance policy of the government against the newly emerged opposition. However, the July 15, 2016 Coup attempt, which was backed by the followers of the Gülen Organization in the military, was the new start for cleansing the military influence from the civilian social and political arenas. After this unsuccessful coup attempt, a new executive order shut down the military academies and put the armed forces under the command of the ministry of defense (The Guardian, 2016). In a sense, with these new regulations, the military was completely under the civilian authority. However, this process increased the civilian authoritarianism in the political sphere by creating a single governing power. In short, in the post-2010s, with the amendment of the constitution as well as cases such as Ergenekon, the Sledgehammer Coup Plan and the Internet Memorandum Case, the military’s hegemonic position was overthrown and its political voice has been silenced. After all, the regulations that came after the July 15, 2016 coup attempt ended the military’s self-directed functioning in the social and political arena. Since then, the civilian government has been the major authority over the military.

To sum up, in the post-1980s, the major concerns of civil society were de-politicizing the military and bringing it under the control of the civilian government. Thus, toward the 2000s the civil society positioned itself with the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc. This happened in a process in which a pro-transformation Islamic counter-hegemonic movement from Erbakan’s MGH turned into a political party by taking a reformist position. Namely, AKP’s historical bloc was formed in the 2000s and provided a ground for civilian social and political participation in the process. During the AKP period, the reform process to end the role of the military in the social and political arena continued with structural changes supported by the civil society as well as the EU. The first major step toward ending the

military's single hegemonic position in the social and political arena was the Ergenekon Trials in 2008; it was followed by the investigations into the Sledgehammer Coup Plan in 2010, Constitutional Change in 2010, Internet Memorandum Case in 2012 and the post-July 15, 2016 Coup Attempt. This process was the end of the era of the military's self-proclaimed mission to protect Atatürk's ideals of the republic and most importantly laicism. The result of this social transformation process has been a power shift from military to civilian government in Turkey.

### **3.2. Structural Transformation of the Turkish Economy and Its Social Effect**

*"I would like to tell you three important issues for change. We have to focus precisely on three important issues. These are the three fundamental rights. One is the freedom of thought. The second important right is essentially the freedom of religion. The third right is the freedom of enterprise."*

President Turgut Özal, Quoted in Aktan, 1996: 22

It was argued in the previous section that, with the military rule in the first quarter of the 1980s, as well as later in the Özal period, the change in the economic policy toward free market capitalism effected changes in the social and political arenas as well. Before coming to this policy change, Turkey had experienced different models in the previous periods, which were also related to the political situation of the time. After World War II, the majority of developing countries had, for various reasons, adopted their economic policies to an import substitution strategy. While Turkey's trade policies in the 1950s were mainly liberal, from 1960 to 1980 it adopted the import substitution industrialization strategy. The aim of this strategy was to increase domestic production by reducing imports, thereby triggering industrialization. In the 1970s, however, the oil crisis affected many countries in the world, including Turkey, and the huge financial bottleneck as well as soaring inflation at that time created doubts about the sustainability of this policy. The '24<sup>th</sup> January 1980 Decisions' opening Turkey's way toward a neoliberal economic model were adopted, under the influence of Turgut Özal, then the Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry (Saygın and Çimen, 2013: 2).

These decisions to follow an export-oriented industrialization strategy brought important structural changes to the Turkish economy. The foreign trade of Turkey was liberalized. Moreover, the post-1980s has seen the end of the state's control of the economy and the expansion of neoliberal policies. This policy change meant increasing integration with the world economy and exposing the Turkish economy to the effects of globalization. Thus, free-

market-led privatization policies, within the new organization of the state-economy relations, empowered the civil society and became determinant of the new social relations. New developments arose: social calls for individual rights, women's rights, neo-conservatism, environmentalism, religious rights and the civil society (Akçeşme, 2013: 214).

The peak point of these developments came after the coup government, during Özal's governance. During his premiership (1983–1989), Özal developed this neoliberal economic agenda within the economic system established after 24<sup>th</sup> January decisions and further aimed to develop the Turkish economy to a globally competitive level. Thus, Özal came to power with the idea of a liberal economic policy, free market economy, freedom of enterprises, less state bureaucracy and more rights for local governments. Özal brought the idea, different from the previous position of the state, that the “nation does not exist for the state, but the state exists for the nation” (Cemal, 1989: 320). Thus, his period was the first attempt against the state statuesque. The notion that the market economy and democracy were inseparable found visibility in the Özal's time (Ülsever, 1999: 200–201). Thus, the function of the market economy was not limited to the financial arena, but also belonged to the social and political spheres, where democracy and pluralism were valued. In Özal's mentality, as in the classical liberal mentality exemplified by Western democracies, economic development functioned as a bridge to the development of democracy. Hence, unlike the military governments, Özal believed that individuals have fundamental rights, including the freedom of thought, and that these individual rights must be guaranteed under the constitutional framework (Aktan, 1999b: 622). Özal's approach opened the door to other liberties in the social sphere, such as social, cultural and individual rights of the people, which was reflected in the headscarf debates as well as the debates over Kurdish cultural rights in the 1990s. The private media newly emerged under this new economic model and the political discussion programs on these media groups' TV channels were the venues for these critical discourses.

Under this neoliberal economic umbrella, later, having joined the EU's Custom Union in 1996, Turkey adapted to the common trade policies of the EU. The economic integration led to Turkey's involvement in European politics. In that period, Turkey also approved the World Trade Organization's liberalization of the trade practices. Thus, developments in the post-1980s enhanced the Turkish economy's integration with the world. In short, changes in the financial arena have created serious social consequences in Turkey. The transformation of economic policy through these liberalization and privatization processes had an effect on the social level: a liberal pluralist perspective toward the rights and freedoms emerged that



triggered the changes in civil society. Besides, increasing economic development in the less developed central Anatolia changed the social structures by allowing a new bourgeois sphere to emerge, as will be explained in the next sub-section.

### **3.2.1. Economic Development and the New Anatolian Bourgeoisie**

As mentioned, the economic policy of Özal had the greatest effect in the economically less developed Anatolia, where majority of the people were religious and socially conservative. A new bourgeois class emerged there because of further investments and economic development. Importantly, the increasing power of the new bourgeois strengthened the pro-Islamic movements, not only in the social arena but also in politics. So, in the 1990s the pro-Islamic movements' political involvement in the public sphere by being politically active was a step in the empowerment of Erbakan's MGH. However, the success of Erbakan's Islamic political movement led to reactions against it, mainly from the military and Kemalist elites. Thus, within the chain of Islamic capital groups, civil society and the political party, the pro-Islamic movements passed over further bans and became a part of the public sphere after this struggle.

Understanding the social effects of the economic development in Turkey from the 1980s onwards requires first understanding how the new policy differed from Turkey's economic policy stance since establishment, which, like the political, cultural and social policies, had a laic character. Thus, the Kemalist reforms, rather than increasing the economic relations with the Muslim-populated Middle Eastern countries, preferred to increase economic relations with the West. Some examples concerning the emergence of the Islamic capital groups in Turkey were seen in the 1950s during DP rule under leadership of Adnan Menderes, who was executed after the Military Coup in 1960. However, major developments were seen in the 1980s with the formation of parallel spheres around the effect of economic liberalization.

In the post-1980 coup political environment, Islamic capital groups got the opportunity to grow (Bulut, 1999: 261–262). Most of the Islamic entrepreneurs were not in the center— Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir—but in the peripheries, especially in the less developed Anatolian cities. One major example is Kombassan Group, founded in Konya in 1988 based on the ideological stance of Erbakan's MGH with a collective work of Erbakan's supporters in Turkey as well as remittances from migrant communities belonging to Islamic Community Milli Görüş (Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş) in Germany. Also, other major companies

under the framework of Islamic capital groups were found mainly in Konya and Kayseri and belonged to other pro-Islamic movements such as Gülen Organization.

As has been seen, this emergence of Islamic capital groups and of the developing bourgeoisie arose from an Islamic political ideology coming from Erbakan's MGH, which had first appeared in the political arena as the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi – MNP)<sup>29</sup> that was founded in 1970 under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. Before the 1980s, the state controlled economy affected to eliminate the development of Islamic entrepreneurs, but the post-1980s liberal economic environment influenced the Islamic entrepreneurs to form their own establishments. The aim of these newly emerged Islamic capital groups was to practice the main lines of Erbakan's conception of Islamic economy. In Erbakan's (2011: 18) conception, the economic system of Islam is respectful of capital; and everyone's property belongs to that person and is regarded as innocent. In Erbakan's approach, Islam allowed profits to be earned. However, for Erbakan, what differentiates Islamic economy from Western capitalism is that "Muslims do not throw away the capital...and take the responsibility of spending the earnings on the right foot" (Ibid). Erbakan's conception gave a new meaning to capitalism as adapted to his conception, though he criticized it harshly. Similarly, earning more and more money, according to Weber (2001: 18–19) a feature of Protestant ethics, was also seen in Erbakan's conception. As in the Protestant ethics, Erbakan's conception was in harmony with the principles of capitalist economy, which recommends rather than spending the earned money, reinvesting it in another economic sector or "spending the earnings on the right foot" in Erbakan's words.

As noted, Turkey was under a great transformation starting at the economic level in the 1980s, in which the integration to the world economy was the major cause. The Özal governments also supported the new Islamic entrepreneurs contributing to this strategy by increasing the competition between their major trade partners. In this liberalized economic area, Islamic entrepreneurs expanded their businesses through the chain of the pro-Islamic movements. A growing number of these entrepreneurs had a collective work, and, as a competitor to laic TÜSİAD, pro-Islamic MÜSİAD was founded in 1990 by small and medium-sized enterprises. In the first phase, they were deprived of state protection and open to exploitation by big businesses through subcontracting relationships. The central theme of the rhetoric of the association was shaped by the pro-Islamic discourse of Erbakan's MGH. The ideological and

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<sup>29</sup> MNP was a short lived party, established in 1970 and then closed in 1971 by the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, accused of violating the constitution with respect to laicism (See Tank, 2005)

social formation is based on the conservatism that was fed by the Sunni Islamic piety (Vorhoff, 2000: 159–160). The pro-Islamic capital groups, by forming their own organization with a social base in the pro-Islamic movements, had their own capital accumulation model, free from state aid, through contributing to economic development in the less developed central Anatolia. These fast growing companies in Anatolia were called, in the 1990s, the “Anatolian Tigers” (Kristianasen, 1997).

MÜSİAD, namely the union of Islamic capital groups under the swift integration process to the neoliberal order, was one of the major actors that shaped the reform process in Erbakan’s MGH and brought AKP’s success in the 2002 elections. This reformist position allowed the AKP to locate itself in the center, having the support of liberals and of other oppressed groups within the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc. With its Islamic perspective melted into the capitalist economic stance, this Islamic capital group became a part of the neoliberal order parallel to AKP’s increasing power and its developing hegemonic position during the 2000s. While this integration did not include the restoration of an Islamic economy, Muslim entrepreneurs were integrated into the capitalist economy in which market conditions were the main determinant. Thus, MÜSİAD has become the major proponent of the neoliberal economic policies in Turkey. This process also opened the way for the emergence of an Islamic proletariat that revealed itself in the public sphere as the Anti-Capitalist Muslims group during the 2010s in contrast to an Islamic bourgeoisie.

In sum, in the 1980s, Özal’s export-oriented growth strategy provided opportunities for Islamic capital groups, namely the ‘Anatolian Tigers’, which comprised small and medium-sized enterprises and was fed by the contributions of the pro-Islamic movements, to grow significantly. The most important characteristic of MÜSİAD’s helping Islamic entrepreneurs grow is that they develop independent of the state’s protective umbrella because their social base is mainly located in the central Anatolian cities. This point made MÜSİAD the union of Islamic capital groups in the new bourgeois sphere of the pro-Islamic movements and made it a target of the laic elites, mainly during the second half of the 1990s. In contrast, TÜSİAD was favored by the Kemalist state elites to suppress MÜSİAD under the competitive structure. Consequently, the Islamic capital groups have become a part of the neoliberal economic order, both through the reform process in the Islamic political movement and by the AKP’s emerging hegemony as the political society of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc during this transformation process in the 2000s.

### **3.3. Sociocultural Change and the Civil Participation**

It was argued in the previous section that in the post-1980s, Turgut Özal's liberal policies opened a new phase in the discussions about Turkey's basic problems such as the Kurdish problem and the state-society relations. In this post-coup period, the pro-transformation movements mainly from pro-Islamic, left and Kurdish groups, which had large social bases and had been negatively affected by the 1980 coup, started to be visible in civil society as a result of these policies. Hence, a major effect of these policies was the mobilization of these groups to form their counter-hegemonic spheres against the effects of the 1980 coup. The Kurdish insurgent movement had grown within the Turkish left in the pre-1980 coup period, creating its own armed fighting groups based on Kurdish ethnicity. At the same time, the state's restrictive policies against the Kurdish identity and culture in the public sphere as well as further pressures, including the torture of Kurdish activists in the prisons during the coup government in the first quarter of the 1980s, empowered the PKK to become an armed counter-hegemonic group formed around the Kurdish social groups in southeastern Turkey. In the same period, as mentioned in the previous section, the economic development during the Özal governments created a social effect, mainly in conservative central Anatolia, that helped Erbakan's political Islamist perspective reach the new wealthy conservatives, which in turn created growing support for Erbakan for regrouping under his RP. The end of 1980s and 1990s were the era for the Islamic and Kurdish-leftist activists to compete with the Kemalist bureaucracy.

Moreover, the 2000s were a time when the world was witnessing a gradual transformation in the economic, political and social arenas. Because of globalization, the changes in the Western societies affected other societies in different regions. The roles of social actors came up again in relation to all of these changes. Turkey was also affected by this global trend because of its increasing interaction with other countries through the developing communication channels. In this process, the opposition movements also underwent major transformations, with concepts of identity, culture and gender occupying major places in their agendas. Consequently, throughout the 1980s, major transformations have happened alongside the civil society's empowerment by the increased activities of the opposition groups in Turkey.

In this section, the transformation process of the pro-Islamic movements along with the involvement of Islam in the public sphere, as well as the transformation process of the

Kurdish movement, women's movements, Alevis and LGBT groups, as the major opposition groups in the post-1980s, will be analyzed in the historical context of the development of civil society. In the first sub-section, the emergence of civil society and the development of the civil movements will be explained. In the second sub-section, the emergence and evolution of pro-Islamic movements as well as the process of their integration into the public sphere by engaging with modernism will be analyzed. In the third sub-section, the evolution of the Kurdish movement as well as the socially constructed reform processes, largely in the 2000s, that brought the Kurdish language and culture into the public sphere will be explained. In the fourth sub-section, the development of Turkey's women's movements and their situation, after the integration of conservative veiled women into the public sphere will be explained. In the fifth sub-section, Turkey's Alevi awakening in the context of the transforming public sphere will be analyzed. Finally, in the sixth sub-section, the LGBT movements' and individuals' involvement in the public sphere within this transformation process will be explained. So, in the historical context, this section will cover the social and cultural dynamics of the social transformation process in Turkey.

### **3.3.1. The Rapid Development of Civil Society and Civil Movements**

It was argued previously that the civil society underwent a major developmental process in the post-1980s liberal environment. However, this influential position of the civil society was already evident in the 1980s and understanding its historical development is important for clarifying this major positioning in the last three decades. Civil society at the organizational level is defined as an organized social arena that is autonomous from state affairs and has a voluntary, self-generating organization. The roots of civil society in Turkey date back to Ottoman times, when the nation system, guilds, foundations, religious orders and civil Dervish Lodges (Tekke) were the bases on which the society's structures were formed.. Under the administrative regulations, however, the civil society had operated within the autonomous governing structure of the empire. Moreover, with the emergence of the nation-state as well as the increasing centralization, the functions of these organizations were bound to the central state. Thus, westernization beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has brought with it the hegemonic oppressive position of the state over these civil society organizations. Civil society lost power due to the establishment of Turkey with the emergence of laicism, as well as the state's tendency to form a new, secular public sphere. The aim in the Republic of Turkey period was

to abolish society's religious, cultural and ethnic differences and replace them with the single overall secular Turkish identity, which stayed in effect for the most part until the 1980s.

As mentioned, with the multifactoral further liberalization process as well as the emergence of the pluralist perspective toward the solution of Turkey's major problems, civil society has become a place for major discussions in the post-1980s. These included discourses about Islam and about the solution to the problem of Kurds in the public sphere. Confrontation with the laic-ethnocratic system of Turkey started on the civil society level. In this process, various NGOs were formed, both based in the civilian groups and, in the 1990s, as civil society branches of the state that brought a competitive structure to the civil society arena. Unlike the trend in society, many NGOs maintained their existence even while benefiting from the government resources. This created a gap between NGOs in the extent to which they implemented the democratic values in everyday life, since this implementation is primarily dependent on the NGOs' having absorbed the civil culture and democracy. This process of the state's investing in the civil society could be aimed at eliminating the emergence of this unwanted behavior from the civil society.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that, since the 1980s, the state with its founding principles has had a serious crisis of legitimacy and representation (Keyder, 1997: 47). One major reason for the emergence of this crisis environment is the development of civil society. Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in the social demand for the democratization of the state-society relations and qualitative development of the civil society organizations. NGOs were very important in this process, in creating a language of freedom and expanding the idea of participatory democracy and individual rights in the society. Moreover, NGOs have challenged the idea of the state's directives shaping the organization of life. Hence, many civil society organizations, by making social life independent from the state, criticized strong state traditions as well as the top-down approach of the state and attempted to change the concept of Turkish citizenship to one based on the philosophical principles of freedom and rights. These critiques included demands for pluralism and democracy as well as individual and collective rights. Thus, the 1980s and 1990s were the important period for civil society's acquisition of organizational independence from the state and creating areas of discussion for democratization.

However, during this period, it is not possible to talk about the civil society as having the same capacity for influence. This capacity was related to the NGOs' organizational and

financial situation. In this period, the NGOs gained more influential structures by being based on greater social spheres (i.e., pro-Islamic movements). Moreover, the dominant position of the state over the civil society during this period was another factor in hindering the development of civil society. So, in the 1990s, with demands to change the state-society relations in Turkey having emerged, strong state tradition and identity/diversity politics struggled to destroy each other and determine the future of Turkey. On one side of the struggle was solving the Kurdish problem by recognizing the Kurdish identity and culture as well as recognizing religious rights and freedoms so as to involve the pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere. On the other side were discourses on the identity issue based on protecting territorial integrity and secular identity.

Subsequently, in the 2000s, throughout the development of the civil society, the importance of the civil society for the democratization of the country was perceived in a greater sense. Both international and local developments were sources of inspiration for this process. Moreover, during this process the importance of civil society for achieving the political and economic stability increased, in the minds of the state elites as well as the economic and political actors. The main factor that affected the involvement of economic stability discourse in the civil society arena was the collapse of the Turkish economy with the *February 2001 Economic Crisis* that resulted in increased unemployment, poverty, inequality, dissatisfaction and resentment against the state centrist policies. This collapse was also a result of the state's gradual degeneration into populism (Alper and Öniş, 2002: 16–17).

Moreover, as was argued, in this period, the connection in public discussions of democratization and economic development brought the civil society to the agenda as the important actor in reaching the democratic governance in the republic. Civil society was not only an actor in democratization, but also gave important examples of good and effective governance of the society in terms of the transparency and accountability of the state activities. At the same time, the NGOs' involvement in the socially constructed political processes contributed significantly to the acceptance of the strong economy and the political programs in the political and social arena. Thus, the involvement of the civil society in the political processes led to the significant change in the public perception of democratization.

Turkey experienced the reflection of civil demands on the political level with the 2002 general elections. After the failed coalition governments in the 1990s, the civil society mobilized to the newly emerged reformist party, the AKP, due to its stance on the important

problems of the society, and made it the majority government in the general election. In the Gramscian conception, the hegemony of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc was formed in the civil society with the AKP majority government as the political society of this historical bloc. So, unlike previous governments, the AKP majority government provided an important platform for the civil society as part of the major reform processes. Thus, the Election Declaration of AKP (2002: 21), mentioned the development of participatory democracy through the involvement of the civil society in the governing processes: the function of civil society was linked to the democratization process of the country.

As argued in the previous section, Turkey-EU relations made important progress in the 2000s. This process started with the Helsinki Summit in 1999 and intensified with the Copenhagen Summit in 2002. Turkey's following the EU membership reform process was another factor that strengthened the civil society in Turkey. Following the Copenhagen political criteria in the democratization process meant that state-society relations were reorganized since the civilian power increased the visibility in many areas of the country, not only in the political sphere, but also in the society. Turkey's reform process, in this direction, opened the way for further discussions about the important problems of Turkey, such as the Kurdish problem as well as rights and freedoms of the religious practices (i.e., headscarf) in the public sphere. Giving priority to democracy and human rights was in the EU's enlargement policy (Aydın and Keyman, 2004: 14). These issues were on the agenda of the civil society as well as of the AKP government on the way to the EU membership process, after by starting the negotiations in 2005.

As has been seen, concerning civil society's further development in Turkey, the major effect came from the EU's observation of the reform process. For instance, in the EU Progress Report, published on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the civil society was considered a necessary social actor for Turkey's integration to Europe, creating social and cultural connection by implementing European values (See Commission of the European Communities, 2004). Thus, the civil society made the possibility of establishing a link between modernity and democracy in Turkey a reachable reality. With the further developments in civil society within the 2000s, the way was opened for the creation of multicultural and pluralistic social formation in Turkey. The most visible example of the increasing function of the civil society in the 2000s was seen during the *2010 Constitutional Amendment Referendum* period. Many pro-transformation NGOs supported the government with the 'Yes, but not enough' discourse on



the proposed changes in the 1982 Constitution of Turkey; the changes passed with 57.88% YES votes in the referendum on September 12, 2010. The support of civil society as well as other groups in the referendum shows their support of the government's reforms and their further expectations toward advanced democracy (Kardas, 2010). This kind of socially constructed political processes became an effective organizational life of the civil society in Turkey.

### ***Toward the Individualistic Social Movements: Gezi Park Protests and Beyond***

Turkey's period of transition from the military hegemony toward democratically elected governments gave the civil society an arena for intervening in the scope of this democratization process by involving the development of a 'new Turkey'. In addition to the organizational involvement, individual level involvement within the democratic process was seen mainly in the process of changing state–society relations. This change was related to the development of communication technologies such as social media and mobile technologies. In this line of increasing civil participation, in the post-2010 process, for the first time in history, Turkey was faced with civil intervention determining the direction of its democracy. Namely, the *Gezi Park Protests* in 2013 were an attempt by the pro-transformation civil society to balance the democracy based on their expectations to empower democracy and pluralism, which were the popular discourses in the 2000s.

The first trigger for the Gezi Park protests was environmental sensitivity, as protesters wanted to stop a construction project. However, the government of the time did not accept these demands and attempted to end the protests by suppression, which widened the protests to the whole country. In these protests, various NGOs, individuals, political parties and some 'illegal' organizations created an event of massive reaction against the government. According to Kemal Kirisci (2013), the major dynamic that served to spread the Gezi Park protests was the public perception of the ruling party AKP's authoritarianism; by getting more votes each time in the three elections since 2002, and with the victory in Constitutional Amendment Referendum in 2010, AKP had become a 'hegemonic power'.

Moreover, the protests showed a break in the hegemony of the ruling AKP, since the the historical bloc of the 2000s, including also the civil society, dissolved due to the dissolution of the major ideology, which was based on the principles of pluralism and democratic governance. As for the situation of the civil society, according to Sırrı Süreyya Önder, the Gezi Park protests were a refusal of all organized hierarchical structures (Emek Dünyası,

2013). The protesters were not themselves linked to a political party, and the protests were not related to the politics itself, but against the representatives, the practitioners of politics (Ibid). Individual participation was a new arena for the civil society's involvement in social and political issues, exceeding the limits of organized structures. The newly emerged internet technology and social media were important for providing the ground for social mobilization through individual participation.

Even though the majority of participants had no link to a political party, the existence of left wing political ideologies among the protesters was the reality. The left civil society constituted an important element of the emerging new left counter-hegemonic sphere. According to the survey of 498 people conducted by GENAR Research Association during the protests in June 2013 in Taksim Square: in the previous election, 74.2% of protesters voted for CHP, 15.8% for the pro-Kurdish BDP, 2.4% for the Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Komünist Partisi), 2.1% for the Workers Party (İşçi Partisi) and 1.8% for DSP. In the same research, 18.9% of protesters declared that the most important problem in Turkey is the lack of freedom (T24, 2013). GENAR's research in Turkey showed that the left civil society was the core of the protests, which indicated that left felt excluded from the process of the new Turkey.

Moreover, the support of Islamic civil society was also evident during the protests. The most important example is MAZLUM-DER's, one of the most popular Islamic associations', support for the Gezi Park Manifesto, which was prepared under the Labor and Justice Platform (Emek ve Adalet Platformu) and signed by the head of the MAZLUM-DER *Ahmet Faruk Ünsal* and the head of the Istanbul branch *Cüneyt Sarıyaşar*. However, according to Sarıyaşar, some of pro-government members of the association resigned after this support was given, and an internal conflict started (See C. Sarıyaşar, Personal Interview, February 07, 2015). For instance, prominent Islamist author Abdurrahman Dilipak suspended his membership in MAZLUM-DER, in which he was founding member. The conflict was regarded as a break in Islamic civil society due to some groups' tending toward the newly emerging left (Radikal, 2013a). This tendency offers another example of how participation in the Gezi protests was individualistic in that it exceeded the organizational boundaries. Anti-Capitalist Muslims were another salient group coming from Islamic civil society during the Gezi Park protests. With their religious practices during the protests as well as in the post-Gezi Park protests period, criticizing the conservative Muslims' engagement in capitalism

based on the tenets of the Anti-Capitalist Muslim author *Ihsan Eliaçık*, the group contributed to the emergence of a new Islamic left mentality (See chapter 5). Thus, the Gezi protests and the time afterwards brought ideological interaction within the civil society, since the new hybrid approaches started to be popular in the social arena.

In the post-Gezi Park protests period the function of civil society continued to increase. Under the governing process of the AKP government, as well as within the new left of the counter-hegemonic sphere that emerged during the Gezi Park protests, the public found a space in the context of hegemonic competition. On the one side, with a pro-AKP position, the activities of the Civil Solidarity Platform (Sivil Dayanışma Platformu) under the leadership of Ayhan Oğan are important to mention. As a civil society base coming from a conservative background, the platform shared the popular discourses of the AKP through a widespread social network majorly in Anatolia. Thus, in cohesion with the ideas of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Oğan regards the Gezi Protest as having evolved into an initiative “to prevent the transformation and development process of Turkey...that we saw has damaged the country” (A. Oğan, Personal Interview, January 30, 2015). On the other side, within the emerged new left, the activities of the After 10 Initiative (*10'dan Sonra İnsiyatifi*) are important, since that group supported the pro-Kurdish HDP's exceeding the 10% election threshold in the June 7, 2015 general elections against the hegemonic position of AKP. The After 10 Initiative was formed by civil society activists, based on the ideas and the principles that emerged during the Gezi Protests, under the slogan, “to breathe, let's form the After 10 together” (Başlangıç, 2015). So, the initiative, as part of the civil society, was an important element of an integrated political struggle that contributed to HDP's gaining 13.12% of the total votes in the June 7, 2015 general elections. As it is seen, in the post-Gezi Park protests period, the debate over political power in the democratic political arena reflected in the civil society arena, as in the Gramscian conception civil society is regarded as the place in which hegemony is formed.

In sum, with the further liberalization in Turkey, civil society emerged as the influential actor in the social transformation process in the post-1980s. Civil society in Turkey contributed to the democratization and pluralization processes by functioning to help solve the important problems of society. The transformative power of civil society was related to the simultaneous existence of the democratic society and organizational life, which peaked in the 2000s. Because of the further reforms during the AKP governments' terms in the 2000s due to the

EU membership negotiation process, the influence of civil society in the solution of social problems, democratization and the advancement of the pluralism in the public sphere has increased. Subsequently, during the Gezi Park protests and afterwards, increasing civil protests and individual engagement to the protesting movements show that the civil society, by also adopting an individualistic character, followed the developments over democratization, freedom and pluralization of the country strictly. In the following sub-sections, this function of civil society is elaborated based on the various emerged social and cultural movements in the post-1980s.

### **3.3.2. The Development and Evolution of Islamism in Turkey**

As stated previously, in the 1980s, within the liberalization process, the pro-Islamic movements marginally extended the area of influence in the social and political arena. This was also related to the state's project of opening an arena for Islam in the public sphere during the coup government and the post-coup, majorly in the 1980s, to fit them in the proposed Turkish-Islamic synthesis project, namely to absorb the pro-Islamic movements into the system to eliminate their revolutionary power, as in the Gramscian conception of passive revolution. Thus, rather than the state's adopting an Islamization project, the major aim of this politics is to temper the movements by leading them in a desired direction. On this point, the post-coup Özal governments period after the 1983 smoothed the way for the pro-Islamic movements in their struggle for involvement in the public sphere, not only with the proposed Turkish-Islamic synthesis project, but also through economic development and the liberalization policies in Turkey which opened a way for the development of counter-hegemonic pro-Islamic movements.

As mentioned in the previous section, the major effect of the liberalization and the economic development period of the post-1980s was seen in Anatolia, where pro-Islamic movements have grown through the emergence of their own bourgeois sector. Artisans and small and medium-sized enterprises in the Anatolia, mainly belonging to the conservative people, underwent major transformations, building themselves up and starting to compete with large companies, in an economic development process known as the emergence of the Islamic capital groups in Turkey. In the literature, this process also was called the emergence of "green capital" as well as "religious orders' capital" due to its wider social spectrum (Doğan, 2006: 52). These Islamic capital groups, by building up without support from the state,

provided an example of the Western capitalist development that was the base for the emergence and development of Islamic civil society through capital support. In this civil society network, pro-Islamic movements, with Islamic capital groups as their core element, brought the Islamic values and their form of life to the public sphere. In fact, this process opened the way for conservative Muslims who had been aloof from the external world, to integrate into modernism while maintaining their Islamic values that influenced their everything from their lifestyles to their clothing styles to their marriages.

As a result of this economically supported social process, pro-Islamic movements have had a wider arena for organization both within Anatolia and in the suburbs of the major capitals where Anatolian religious migrant populations were living. A new parallel public sphere emerged that was built up with the development of the Islamic civil society network. Within this new parallel public sphere, the Islamic media groups emerged alongside the Islamic civil society network and dealt with the individual and collective rights of the conservative Muslims. So, the post-1980s liberal environment could be regarded as the massive rise of the power of pro-Islamic movements, which existed before the 1980s but had been under the state oppression. Moreover, in the post-1980s, not only did the existing pro-Islamic movements increase their power, but also the number of them increased. Many groups and movements based on the precepts of the different opinion leaders functioned to influence the Muslims in this process. In addition to Gülen Organization and Erbakan's MGH, major movements such as Nur Movements (Nurcular) and Sulaymanites stayed connected with the conservative Muslims as the civil society bases. While these groups organized conversations in people's homes, they also created a network, to subscribe the people to their newspapers and magazines. In time this widened their religious ideology and the economic network in which they provided trading potential for the congregants to expand their business. The merchants in this network were expected to donate to the movement. Ömer Caha (2005: 482–483) links the increasing power of Islamism in the society with the increasing activities of the organized pro-Islamic movement. However, it is not possible to talk about an overall Islamic perspective; rather, there was a fragmented perspective concerning Islam.

Within this fragmented structure, these pro-Islamic movements created their own public spheres, relatively autonomous from the hegemonic position of the Kemalist republic. However, the major radical stance came from the Erbakan's MGH, by bringing a transnational understanding, namely Pan-Islamism (Ümmetçilik), against the state-supported

Turkish-Islamic Synthesis project. Although this pan-Islamist perspective included rapprochement to majority-Muslim countries, its transnational nature led to interaction with the major ideologies in the liberal countries of the West that would empower the struggle against the authoritarian nature of the republic. According to Çaha (2005: 478), pro-Islamic movements starting to engage in the globalization process were motivated to understand the West and to internalize the Western values. Thus, in the post-1980s, the EU in particular was seen as the model of democratic culture and pluralism based on the common values, which were felt to be deficient in Turkey (See Aktan, 1999a).

Another major motivation of the pro-Islamic movements toward Western liberalism was related to the increasing level of education. Although the popularity of the private preparatory schools, mostly belonging to Gülen Organization, increased, the children of the conservative families were educated in the public Imam Hatip Schools. The main reason for this preference was that those schools' curriculums combined theology and social and natural sciences. While the students were prepared for the university exams as in other high schools, the families were assured that their children would get a religious consciousness. The resulting increase in the number of educated religious Muslims over time, and the academic environment's maintaining interaction with the public via the Islamic media, led to the emergence of a new Islamist intellectual class that dealt with academic activities, music and cinema (Doğan, 2006: 57). So, Islamic media was a place for sharing the thoughts and artistic activities of these intellectuals with the public.

Moreover, the intellectual stance of pro-Islamic movements was fed by Islamist Intellectuals and their ideas were shared with the religious society in many parts of the country through the organizational chain of these movements in books, magazines and newspapers. The pro-Islamic movements were first concerned, in the 1980s, with printed publications shared within the organizational chain, rather than with TV and radio broadcasting. In this period, some magazines, such as *Ilim ve Sanat*, *Yedi İklim*, *Altınoluk*, *Mavera*, *Sızıntı*, *Vahdet* and *Davet* were published by the various Islamic groups. Many of them were sold by subscription and reached high sales figures; one example was *Sızıntı*, which belonged to the Gülen Organization, a widely spread Islamic group in Turkey since the 1980s. Its readers, like the readers of many other Islamic magazines and newspapers, were mainly conservative.

These ideological differences were visible in the publications of the pro-Islamic movements. This shows that these movements dealt not only with the individual's religious duties, but also

with the political issues that affected all Muslims of the world. For instance, in the discussions in the publications in the post-1980s, there were strict differences of opinion about the 1979 Revolution in Iran,<sup>30</sup> but the same divergence was not seen for the Soviet Afghan War<sup>31</sup> that started in 1979. All the Islamic groups in Turkey supported the resistance of the Afghan ‘Mujahideen’. This shows also the relation of the groups to the official ideology, since in that period Turkey regarded the Islamic revolution in Iran as threat to its own internal security but glorified the success of Afghans as stopping the expansion of the Soviet ideology.

Within this community-based mobilization process in the pro-Islamic movements from the 1980s, the supremacy of Islamic discourses was highly visible. The stories of famous people in the world converting to Islam occupied the central place in the Islamic press. During this period, the moral dissatisfaction in the Western world with the effects of capitalist development led some famous people to turn to religion and to Islam. The most famous example was the British singer *Cat Stevens*, who converted to Islam in 1977, taking the name *Yusuf Islam* (Ibrahim, 1997: 43). This trend was seen in Turkey with famous people who dealt with religion, such as Marxist author and poet Ismet Özel and singer Ahmet Özhan. According to Kenan Çayır (2008: 113), novels about finding the true path also had a function of drawing a framework for the actors to make sense of in their specific experiences and in shaping Islamic identity. The Islamic actors’ dealings outside of the framework transformed the previously experienced Islamic stance to a newly meaningful experience. Thus, while the pro-Islamic movements were taking credit for their own development as a necessary process, they also started to shape their own way based on global developments that gave new meaning to Islam from the West.

In this interaction process with the West, the youth were the major actors in the pro-Islamic movements because of their increasing education levels. Young Muslims from the rural areas who had become new urbanites, as previously mentioned a part of the Islamist intellectual community, criticized the traditional concepts of Islam and started a new approach to

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<sup>30</sup> The 1979 Iranian Revolution refers to the movements whereby Iran transformed from the Constitutional Monarchy under the Shah Muhammed Rıza Pehlevi to the Sharia Republic based on the Islamic law and the views of the Shia sect under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (Wright, 2001). Iran’s new regime was regarded by the MGK as a potential threat to Turkey’s laic republic due to the regime’s potential to export into Turkey. The activities of the pro-Islamic movements in Turkey were watched, mainly in the 1990s, since the political Islam in Turkey seemed to be rising slightly.

<sup>31</sup> The Soviet-Afghan War started when the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan on the invitation of the Marxist government in Afghanistan. The war between the Islamist Mujahedeen and the Soviet Army continued for 9 years until the Soviet Army retreated from Afghanistan. In this war, the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan supported the Islamist Mujahedeen, while India supported the Marxist Afghan government (Goodson, 2001).

understanding Islam through the prism of the age. They produced many literary works, including novels and stories, to reflect the historical problems in the public sphere. For the same purpose, they also entered the cinema sector to work on Islamic thought and lifestyle. The *Akın Group*, which was founded in 1977 and included young Islamist intellectuals such as Abdurrahman Dilipak, Salih Dalıkırık and Mehmet Kılıç, is important to mention (Uçakan, cited in Köseoğlu, 2013: 145). In the 1980s, while the state was promoting nationalistic feeling using Islamic concepts in the cinema, the young Islamists of the Akın Group were critiquing the system in their films by focusing on the Islamic way of life without dealing with these nationalistic feelings. Examples of these films are *Abdullah of Minye (Minyeli Abdullah)* (by Yücel Çakmaklı, 1989), about a religious man's struggle with the system; *You are not Alone (Yalnız Değilsiniz)* (by Mesut Uçakan, 1990), dealing with the headscarf problem at the universities and its sequel, *Walking to the Eternity (Sonsuza Yürümek)* (1991); and *Iskilipli Atif Hoca* (by Mesut Uçakan, 1993), about the execution of Atif Hoca for his opposition to the Hat Law<sup>32</sup> in 1926. These films got great attention from the conservative population, which also increased their interest in the cinema when it portrayed a struggle over religion.

In addition to the cinema industry, music and the theater were important areas that the conservative Muslims in the pro-Islamic movements started to deal with in the post-1980s. In the orthodox understanding of Islam, music and singing by women were forbidden (Haram); in the process of engaging in the modernity of the pro-Islamic movements in the post-1980s, however, women became involved with music. Islamic music started gradually to evolve, first with Islamic-style music without instruments with the popular themes of *divine love, the love of the Prophet Muhammad* and *Shahada*, which occupied a major place in the conservative Muslims' archives. Then, due to interaction with the other music sectors within the public sphere, Islamic music began to be sung with the modern instruments. This became a new music branch, *Islamic pop*, popularly sung by, for example, Eşref Ziya Terzi, Sedat Uçan, Abdurrahman Öñül and Sami Yusuf, whose music included such sufistic elements as melodic hymns<sup>33</sup> (Radikal, 2011). As for conservative Muslims' involvement in the pro-Islamic

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<sup>32</sup> The Hat Law was introduced in 1925, early in the republic period, to regulate the people's dress based on Western style. The law sparked protests in many Anatolian cities, including Kayseri, Sivas, Maraş and Istanbul. The best known case about the resistance to the Hat Law was the execution of Iskilipli Atif Hoca in 1926. Atif Hoca had published his book *Imitation of Western Values and the Hat (Frenk Mukallitliği ve Şapka)* one and half years before the Hat Law was introduced. His book invited the Muslims to unite through the action-faith and said that it is not permissible for Muslims to emulate the dress and cultural habits of non-Muslims (Aktay, 2005: 71).

<sup>33</sup> For examples of Islamic pop music, see: British-Iranian singer Sami Yusuf's "Asma Allah", online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhwdEtO5fJE> and Turkish singer Eşref Ziya Terzi's "The Ways are Yours



movements in the other modern art activities, Islamic theater also enjoyed great attention from the public. Most of the plays were written and staged by conservative author Necip Fazıl Kısakürek. The plays brought together contemporary developments and the past to offer a new meaning to the religious understanding by looking through the prism of modernity. Moreover, these activities were organized and shared with the conservative Muslims within the parallel public sphere through the chain of pro-Islamic movements, hastening the transformation process.

As argued, the privatization and the liberalization policy in the post-1980s provided new opportunities for the pro-Islamic movements' presence in the media industry. New cultural products including music, theater, political discussions, fashion programs—which absorbed both the traditional and modern figures within—found a place on these radio and TV channels. The two major examples of Islamic broadcasting were Samanyolu TV and Kanal 7. Samanyolu TV was established in 1993 by the Gülen Organization and included also the Burç FM, established in 1994. Kanal 7 was established in 1994 under the MGH umbrella following the directives of Islamist political leader Necmettin Erbakan. Thus, these broadcasting channels reflected the religious and cultural figures of the pro-Islamic movements, especially by giving veiled women visibility in the organization, and the opportunity to participate in the programs. The major example is Turkey's first veiled news speaker Serpil Öcalan of Kanal 7 (Milliyet, 2008). Thus, with the headscarf as the indicator of religiousness, Muslim women were given a function of bringing Islamic values into the public sphere, first through the media organs of the pro-Islamic movements, within their parallel public spheres. This provided religious women an arena for interacting with the modernist approach through their active position, which opened a gate for starting a cultural revolution about changes in the basic tenets of Islam. The emergence of this cultural revolution in the conservative Muslims' engagement with modernity was strongly related to increasing education levels, especially for veiled religious women. Religious women's active position in the post-1980s gave them autonomy over issues from their veil wearing style to life decisions, which made them critical of the traditional understanding of Islam that leaves women behind men. As Nilüfer Göle (1991: 84–85) mentions, these new urban religious women's high level of education differentiated them from the worldview of their conservative observant families and made them the new urban critical faces of Islam.

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(Yollar Senindir)", online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZELcrJf9QQ> (Last accessed 12.12.2017).

Within this environment, in which the pro-Islamic movements created their own consciousness, as Çayır (2000: 54) argues, the 1990s was the period for the Islamic actors to concentrate on their own life dynamics by increasing their visibility in the public sphere within this transformation process. Influenced by Western conceptions, pro-Islamic movements focused on the dynamics for the culture of living together. The reference point of the Islamist intellectuals in the 1990s was the emergence of the discourses on the Constitution of Medina, which in 623, during Muhammad's (571–632) time, gave protecting the differences in the city of Medina as the mentality of living together (Çiçek, 2013: 235). In short, the pro-Islamic movements, including various communities and movements, followed a society-based approach to their actions, in parallel to their concentration on the political sphere. Hence, the harmony between Islam, democracy and civil society was the major point of the debates parallel to the increasing visibility of pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere especially in the 1990s.

### ***Toward Integration into the Culture of Modernity***

As was seen in the evolution of the pro-Islamic movements in the post-1980s, there was a transformation process from the traditional perspectives toward a more modern and Western way of life. This transformation was related to the existence, since the establishment of Turkey, of a secular and modern public sphere. Thus, while the pro-Islamic movements were bringing self-made cultural products into the overall public sphere through intensive engagement, the conservative Muslims within these movements were also influenced by existing secular and modern features. Moreover, the development of the pro-transformation counter-hegemonic sphere within the civil society from the 1980s, as well as the formation of a liberal right historical bloc through the emergence of AKP project in the early 2000s, also affected this engagement in the public sphere. Hence, the pro-Islamic movements had also started to integrate into the other segments of society so that wider social support came from both the liberal, pro-transformation left and the Kurds in this pro-transformation historical bloc. As previously mentioned, the economic development in Anatolia had brought with it the emergence of a new conservative Anatolian bourgeoisie. Thus, through the pro-Islamic movements' integration process, this newly emerged bourgeoisie started to compete with the previous elites within the public sphere. Also thanks to the involvement of the pro-Islamic movements into the public sphere, the structural transformation in the public sphere due to globalization increased conservative Muslims' interaction with the global communities as well. As Ali Bulaç mentions, these developments brought a "third generation Islamism" in the

2000s, based on individualism, pluralist society and civil initiatives (Cited in Meşe, 2015: 148).

Moreover, the transformation process in the pro-Islamic movements and among the conservative Muslims has continued from economy to culture as well as to social relations. They became more secularized by interacting with mainstream society, engaging in the public sphere and gaining economic benefits. A hybrid pattern emerged in the public sphere that included both secular and Islamic elements. Furthermore, this secularization trend had been visible since the emergence of the Islamic bourgeoisie and the conservative Muslims' coming to appreciate luxury with the emergence of an Islamic high society in the 1980s. This was seen mainly in the Hijab fashion (Tesettür Modası), which emerged as a new trend in the conservative Islamic society.<sup>34</sup> The first example of combining the Hijab and fashion was in 1995 in the Hijab fashion parade organized by the company Tekbir Hijab Wear. Later, such firms not only sold clothes for veiled women, but also shaped the image of veiled women, showing them how to dress attractively in the Islamic fashion (Meşe, 2015: 148). This was criticized in some pro-Islamic movements, as well as by prominent Islamist authors such as Emine Şenlikoğlu. Şenlikoğlu's critique was based on the idea that the Hijab fashion is for attraction, but that Islam was against women's apparel being attractive to men, and that 'colorful' headscarves as well as clothes that show women's body lines violated the veiling principle of Islam (Yılmaz, 2010).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The wearing of hijab has been a controversial issue in Islam, especially at the establishment of Turkey as a laic republic. While the debates went on pro- or contra veiling women, the veiling issue had been understood in Turkey at the cultural level and the conservative people continued veiling based on their local culture and customs, which came from the Ottoman period. According to Mehmet Dağ (1982: 188), there is no a definite direction about the style of veiling in Islam. He refers to Surah An-Nur (24:31) on veiling in the Quran: "And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their head covers over their chests". This says nothing about style, but about the mentality of veiling in Islam as eliminating men's visual attraction to women. In contrast, the Hijab mode that emerged in the 1990s adding to the women's attraction seems to violate that principle of Islam. For some examples of Hijab Mode, see Smart Veiling Mode (Şık Tesettür Modası), online available at: <http://www.hurrem.com/sik-tesettur-modasi/> and Street Hijab Fashion (Tesettür Sokak Modası), online available at: <http://www.bakimlikadin.net/2013/03/04/tesettur-sokak-modasi/> (Last accessed 20.12.2017).

<sup>35</sup> Social media has been the place for sharing critiques and discussion from the pro-Islamic movements on the conservative women's Hijab wearing style, in order to 'warn' religious women about violating the principles of Islam. As an example, *O Bir Sofi* Facebook page, which included more than 450 000 members almost all from the various pro-Islamic movements, shared a picture on January 22, 2017 showing changes in veiling over the years. The picture showed a struggling veiled girl, probably from the 1990s, studying at the university wearing a headscarf suitable to the traditional veiling style contrasted with a veiled girl following the hijab fashion. The note with the picture stating "This fight was not for this (*Bu kavga bunun için değildi*)" caused a debate in the comments. While some veiled women criticized this sharing as intervening in women's freedom to choose what

Moreover, during this process some of the conservative young individuals who became liberalized and so left pro-Islamic movements, were located between the Islamic way of life and modernity. Within this new hybrid cultural arena of the overall public sphere, in relation to the new Islamic lifestyle, new headscarf creations were designed and new Islamic fashion houses were founded, followed by beauty shops for veiled Muslim women. These women's practices show the integration of the conservative Muslims into modernity through engagement in the public sphere. In addition to the practices of religious women, the increasing popularity of Turkish pop and international music, rather than Islamic hymns, as well as increasing instances of flirting, unmarried sexual activity and abortion (See Çakır, 2000) shows that this trend also applies to the religious men within the wider social spectrum of the conservative Muslim population. Thus, *Conservatism Research*, conducted by *Gezici Research Company*, shows a decrease in religiosity in Turkey over the years, despite the increasing public visibility of the conservative Muslims.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, as stated previously, a trend toward luxury in the conservative Islamic families was seen through the economic development in the conservative Anatolia and the emergence of the Islamic bourgeoisie in the post-1980s. Another reason for the trend was their integration into the capitalist system as they benefited more from the economic development of Turkey, especially in the 2000s. This trend also increased individualization with a new modern cultural emphasis. This trend was also related to the policies of the AKP, which provided a liberal arena for pro-Islamic movements to engage in the overall public sphere by following modern activities and new practices. However, as previously mentioned, the melting of the pro-Islamic movements into the capitalist modernity disadvantaged some people. The Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group emerged as increasingly visible in the public sphere at the end of 2000s, with a critique against Muslim engagement in global capitalism (Özvarış, 2012). Their emergence broke the traditional walls between the left and Islam in Turkey. Parallel to the revival of socialism at the global level, with social uprisings from the 2000s on, the effect of the new left thinking in Turkey was the emergence of critical and anti-capitalist discourses in conservative Islamic parts of Anatolia.

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to wear, on the other side, almost all the men supported the sharing, deeming it their social responsibility to warn their Muslim 'sisters'. For the picture, note and the discussions, see online available at: <https://www.facebook.com/OBirSofi/photos/a.467522266713315.1073741828.467432076722334/980377032094500/?type=3&theater> (Last accessed 23.02.2017).

<sup>36</sup> According to survey, which was conducted with 4860 participants in 36 cities in 7 regions, while 32.3% of participants in 2011 defined themselves as conservative, this decreased to 30.6% in 2013 and 30.2% in 2015. Moreover, while 44,6% of participants had said in 2013 that they would fast during Ramadan, this reduced to 42.1% in 2015. The research also indicates a lower number of daily prayers (CNNTurk, 2015).

In sum, pro-Islamic movements had once been an alternative to capitalist development, but lost this alternative function with the social transformation process in Turkey. Because of the increased economic development in Anatolia and its side effect of increasing the education level among conservative Muslims, an alternative public sphere emerged in the 1980s. However, as this process continued, the conservative Muslims critiqued their own previous practices and integrated into the modernity as well as into the overall public sphere. Thus, even though the visibility of Islam had increased in the public sphere through this integration process, the basic features of the conservative Islamic approach changed, to include more modern and secular images. Due to the pro-Islamic movements' involvement, conservative Muslims integrated into the public sphere and, in this respect, increased interaction with the other social groups and hybrid figures emerged in the public sphere. Moreover, the emergence of the Islamic discourses also on the left, especially toward the end of the 2000s and afterwards, as popularly exemplified by the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group, reveals the disappearance of the traditional walls between Islam and the left in Turkey.

### **3.3.3. From Being a Marginalized Group to Public Sphere: Kurdish Movement**

It was argued in the previous section that the Kurdish movement also had a process of becoming engaged in the public sphere in the post-1980s. This gradual process is called 'Turkeyification'. In order to analyze the evolution of the Kurdish movements, it is important to understand the social relations starting with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. The WWI set the stage for Anatolia, as a region where the majority of the people were Turkish-speaking Muslims, to emerge as a new nation state (Keyder, 2011: 101–106). Subsequently, the decrease in the population of the Armenians and the Greeks from the Anatolian regions<sup>37</sup> facilitated this project by increasing the Turkish majority. Thus, the founding agreement of Turkey, the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, brought non-Muslims to the minority position in the new republic. Moreover, this meant that the principal component of the republic would be the Muslim elements of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>38</sup> Nationality as well as the national identity building project of Turkey meant the creation of a Turkish nation subsuming the other Muslim elements of the Ottoman Empire. However, the most

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<sup>37</sup> According to population census results in 1914, the Ottoman Empire comprised an 81.2 % Muslim population. This drastically increased to 97% in 1927 (Köse, 2010: 164).

<sup>38</sup> Articles 37–45 of the Treaty of Lausanne under the title of "Section III. Protection of Minorities" regulate minority rights. For more information, see: Treaty of Peace with Turkey Signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923, online available at: [http://sam.baskent.edu.tr/belge/Lausanne\\_ENG.pdf](http://sam.baskent.edu.tr/belge/Lausanne_ENG.pdf) (Last accessed 23.12.2017)

considerable threat to the creation of a Turkish national identity through the formation of a nation state was the Kurdish-speaking majority in the southeast of Turkey, which retained its autonomous institutional structure in the region as a historical heritage of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, from establishment onwards, the denial policy against a Kurdish national existence emerged in Turkey.

This denial policy, based on the Turkish Historical Thesis (Türk Tarih Tezi), regarded even ancient Anatolian civilizations as having ethnic Turkish roots. Thus, the policy aimed to prevent all kinds of expression of the linguistic and cultural issues around Kurdish ethnicity (Hirschler, 2001: 147–148). So, through an analysis of the Turkic root of all Anatolian civilizations, Kurds would also be regarded as Turks. As has been seen, the new republic period could be regarded as a transition from the Ottoman social structure based on the various national, cultural and religious identities toward a narrowed ethnic Turkish, secular and Western identity. Nationality was regarded as being Turk, since the mentality that *anyone who considered himself Turk is a Turkish* stemmed from Atatürk's saying "How happy is the one who says I am Turk" (See Ince, 2017).

This top-down process of nationality building spurred many uprisings, starting from the first years of the republic. The many Kurdish rebellions in the first years of the republic were rigorously suppressed. In this social and political atmosphere, the development of an effective Kurdish movement was blocked for quite a while. While the early Kurdish rebellions had some kind of nationalistic character, their aims were mainly religious. For example, the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, which was led by Sheikh Said (1865–1925) and some of the former Ottoman soldiers, aimed to return the Ottoman Caliphate system that was abolished by the Republic of Turkey in 1924 (Mumcu, 1993: 60–61). However, it is not possible to talk about an organized structure for all of the rebellions; the Ararat Rebellions (1925–1930) had a secular character, and the Dersim Rebellion (1937–38) was led by Kurdish/Zaza-Alevi Seyid Rıza (1863–1937) and his followers, but neither had an organized structure.

Moreover, because they were so unorganized, these uprisings were suppressed by state forces. After their suppression, there was no tendency in the Kurdish groups to develop a long-lasting resistance until the 1960s, when the left-right struggle emerged parallel to the aforementioned developments in the world. Tribalism, together with Ankara's power relations with the major Kurdish tribes, was the major reason for this silence. Ankara had followed an Eastern Regions Reform Plan (Şark Islahat Planı) policy since 1925, with strong control mechanisms to

eliminate the roles of the tribes in the region, and the leaders of the Kurdish tribes tried to maintain good relations with Ankara to secure their existence in this process (Tan, 2014: 245–251). Ankara’s harsh security measures, including banishing the resisting tribes to different parts of the country, stopped the Kurdish tribes from questioning the state policies in order to secure their long-term existence.

Moreover, in the 1960s, the Kurdish movement’s effectiveness grew, as a result of the growing left in Turkey. This process was affected by increasing industrialization in the major cities in Turkey as well as the state’s import-substitution growth strategy, which sped up the rural depopulation in Turkey. Thus, a great migration wave from rural areas to the major cities was seen, starting in the 1950s and hastening toward the 1980s (Koçal, 2015: 222). This also gave Kurds a chance to get rid of the pressures from the tribal system. Increasing the Kurdish population in the major cities brought the proletarianization of Kurds, and so they began to engage in left politics in the world conditions of the Cold War. By engaging the left movements and facing exclusion from the popular Turkish, secular and Western national identity in the major cities, the Kurds experienced an ethnic awakening to their identities. So, not only left politics but also identity politics was on the agenda of the emerging Kurdish movement in the leftist groups in the post-1960s.

Furthermore, during the left-right conflict from the 1960s to the 1980s, Kurds came to be included not only in the left politics, but also in the right politics. However, while the Kurds on the right engaged in the conflict without presenting their Kurdish identity, mainly through religious feelings against the ‘godless’ communism, the socialist movements supported the Kurdish existence and criticized the state for following ‘assimilation’ policies. The most important example was in 1970 at the Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi – TİP)’s 4th Annual Meeting, when the party made a declaration calling for recognition of the Kurdish identity by supporting the democratic demands of the Kurds. This shows, as Cengiz Güneş argues, that both the Kurdish and Turkish people in the socialist movements were a part of the struggle against internal and external oppressors during the Cold War (cited in Aksoy, 2014: 88).

As was seen, in this process, the engagement of the urban Kurdish groups in the Turkish left brought Kurdish identity politics into the agenda of the left. In this process, Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearts (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları – DDKO) was founded by the Kurdish members under TİP and the Kurdish movement started to grow within Turkey’s

socialist left until the end of the 1970s. In addition, the support of not only the urban Kurdish proletariat, but also the leftist intellectuals including Behice Boran during this process facilitated the Kurdish movement's development. Consequently, anti-feudalism, being against the Landlord System (Ağalık Sistemi) of southeastern Turkey, mainly gained support in the emerging Kurdish movement from the Turkish left in the 1970s.

### *Emergence of an Organized Arena of Struggle*

One of the effects of the 1980 military coup was an emerging Kurdish question. Especially the Kurdish activists who were jailed and tortured were the core of the Kurdish struggle, and under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan<sup>39</sup> a war was started. The Marxist-Leninist ideological position, including the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist colors of the Kurdish movement from the 1960s, devolved to the emerging PKK in 1978, which began to restore its hegemony over the Kurdish dynamics in the 1980s. Thus, growing out of a break in the military hegemony, the PKK aimed to function as a counter-hegemonic sphere for the Kurdish people. Especially after the coup in which the Turkish Left lost power, the Kurdish movement created an autonomous way, starting to follow identity politics rather than struggling for the proletariat as it did as part of the Turkish left in the pre-1980s. However, as visible in PKK's Marxist stance on the formation of an independent Kurdish state, the Kurdish political movement, in line with the PKK, continued its struggle on the left side of the political arena. Another reason for the Kurdish political movement's left inclination was related to the Turkish's left's tradition of keeping away from religious perspectives, which were popular on the right. Thus, the PKK's nationalist ideology, which was also visible later in the Kurdish political movements' discourses, was based on the belief that the common religion, Islam, allowed Turkish groups to assimilate the Kurds throughout history. Since the PKK's nationalist ideology excluded Islam, it was not accepted by the majority of the Kurds due to their strong ties to the religion. However, the PKK, through continued interaction, affected of increasing national consciousness of Kurds and was an actor in the unstable sociopolitical environment in the post-1980s.

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<sup>39</sup> Abdullah Öcalan, sometimes called by his nickname "Apo", was the founding leader of PKK. Öcalan was born in a Kurdish family in Halfeti, Şanlıurfa in 1949. His political activities started in Istanbul when he became a member of DDKO and in 1978 in Diyarbakır he was one of the founders of the PKK with an aim to establish an independent Kurdish state, based on Marxist-Leninist principles, in the Kurdish-populated areas of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Öcalan was arrested in February, 1999 in Nairobi, Kenya by the Turkish security forces and in June, 1999 sentenced to death. However, due to the EU harmonization laws, his punishment was changed to life imprisonment. He is currently a prisoner on Imralı Island (See Marcus, 2007).



Moreover, after changing the political position of Kurdish dynamics from dealing with Turkey as a whole to the creation of an independent Kurdish state, the PKK started its attacks in 1984 in the majority Kurdish-populated southeastern Anatolia in Erzurum, Siirt and in Şemdinli, Hakkari (Hurhaber, 2009). In response to this, with an aim to cut the local people's backing of the PKK, Turkish military forces launched a forced village evacuation campaign in southeastern Anatolia. This had the side effect of increasing people's support for the PKK, since they tended not to integrate in the new places, and many forced people found their way into the PKK. PKK started to have a strong base among the Kurdish people.

State attacks aimed at eliminating the effect of the PKK's actions, the deterrent effects of feudal structure and the industrialization and increase in economic development under the Özal governments in the 1980s and 1990s led to a second migration wave from rural areas to the cities (See Karpat, 2016). This migration brought the Kurdish question to the heart of the cities. Unlike in the pre-1980s, rather than engaging in the socialist movements, these migrant Kurdish people focused on constructing their own organizations in a networked social sphere. Even as they tended to form their own organizations, however, these movements also contacted the left. This increased social sphere of the Kurdish movement opened a way for future collaborations in the political sphere. The Kurdish question was spread nationwide, mainly in the 1980s and 1990s, especially through the channels of the media as well as intellectual discussions about solutions to the problem.

Even as the Kurdish movement's collaboration with the left continued in the 1980s, within the political environment in which Kurdish movement was trying to form their own way, the most important incident in the separation of their ways from Turkish left occurred in October 1989. This separation also showed the collapse of the socialist left in Turkey, since the 1980 coup's oppressive regime restricted the left. Some Kurdish parliamentarians from the Social Democrat People's Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti – SHP) participated in the Kurdish Conference organized in Paris in 1989; the Party declared that unacceptable, and finally, on November 16, they were dismissed from the party. This was the turning point for the Kurdish movement, leading to the founding of a pro-Kurdish party, on June 7, 1990: the People's Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi – HEP). The Kurdish question was moved to the political arena with a pro-Kurdish party that mainly focused on the recognition of the rights and the freedom of the Kurds. However, HEP lasted for only three years until it was banned by Supreme Court in 1993 for demanding education and broadcasting in Kurdish, a democratic environment to discuss the Kurdish question freely, the removal of the State of Emergency

Law in the Kurdish regions and other issues. In 1993, the Kurdish parliamentarians moved to the Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi – DEP), which had been formed in 1991. However, with by a majority of the votes in the parliament, the immunity of Kurdish Parliamentarians was removed on March 3, 1994, and they were arrested and imprisoned. Again, the pro-Kurdish DEP was outlawed on June 16, 1994 and the members of DEP moved to the People’s Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi – HADEP). HADEP had support from Kurdish voters as a reaction to the previous bans. Thus, in both the 1995 and 1999 general elections, HADEP got more than 1 million votes, and in the local elections in 1999 won 37 municipalities in southeastern Anatolia. Like many other Kurdish political parties, HADEP was banned on March 13, 2003, accused of being “the center of unlawful activities” (Ajanshaber, 2014). However, these bans were like adding oil to a fire, increasing the Kurdish people’s support of the Kurdish political movement. Thus, the Kurdish political movement was one of the major influential socially constructed political actors in the 2000s.

### ***The Way Toward Peace: Kurds in the Public Sphere***

As previously stated, a major motivation for the Kurds to extensively tune into the socially constructed Kurdish political movements was the state’s banning the pro-Kurdish political parties and its ignoring the demands of the Kurdish movement. In addition, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan’s capture by the Turkish security forces in Kenya in 1999 changed the political aims of the PKK, and the organization declared a ceasefire against Turkey that continued until 2004. While the previous aim was the establishment of an independent Kurdish state, the PKK and the Kurdish political movement as a whole set a goal of ‘Democratic Autonomy’ in the majorly Kurdish populated regions: the creation of an autonomous region of Turkey (Demirtaş, 2015: 32). At the beginning of the 2000s, the Kurdish movement was increasing in popularity in southeastern Anatolia as well as in the slum areas of the major metropolises, in which a parallel Kurdish public sphere was formed for them to exercise the cultural values that had been suppressed by the Kemalist ethnocracy. Despite the popularity of the Kurdish political movements in the 2000s, they also faced a struggle for existence. Thus, after the closure of HADEP in 2003, the movement continued its way with the Democratic People’s Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi), which dissolved itself in 2005 and joined the Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi – DTP) in the same year. Then, after the closure of the DTP in 2009, the new party BDP was formed in the same year; it later became part of the new project of the Kurdish political movement, HDP, which was formed in 2013. HDP’s aim was to be a party for Turkey as a whole, and it

achieved this aim by doubling its votes in both the June (13.12%) and November (10.76%) 2015 general elections. The development of the Kurdish political movements from the 2000s belonged to the Turkeyification process under the constant reforms made alongside the emergence of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc under the AKP project, as will be detailed below.

Thus, the AKP's winning the majority of the seats in the parliament in the November 3, 2002 general elections was a sign of the change in the country's founding features and of the development of pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc, since the party was founded by the reformist wing of the MGH, headed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül. Coming from the MGH, which dealt with the Kurdish problem by locating the Islamic discourse in the center within the framework of Islamic brotherhood,<sup>40</sup> and different to the Kemalist ethnocracy, AKP brought this Islamic brotherhood approach toward the Kurds. In the first term of the AKP government, Turkey was under the EU membership reform process, having been accepted as a candidate for the EU membership at the Helsinki European Council in 1999 and having begun negotiations for accession in 2005. Following this EU way, the AKP government differed from the previous governments as to the solution to the Kurdish problem. They had laid on the Kemalist ethnocracy by linking the problem only to the socioeconomic backwardness and the feudal structures of the region, whereas, parallel to the MGH's stance, AKP brought recognizing the Kurdish identity to the forefront as Islamic piety. This stance was also required for Turkey's EU membership process, since the EU Commission Report in 1998 had indicated the required steps and asked for improvement with regard to the rights of the Kurdish minority, as shown:

“The Turkish authorities do not recognize the existence of a Kurdish minority, considering them to be simply Turks of Kurdish origin. Kurds are found all over Turkey but are mainly concentrated in the south-east. They are economically and socially disadvantaged, and in the provinces where the state of emergency is in force they suffer all the consequences of continued terrorist action and the restrictions on the normal exercise of civil and political rights

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<sup>40</sup> The MGH's concern with the Kurdish problem had differentiated it from the state's mainstream approach in the 1990s. Necmettin Erbakan declared in the 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of the RP in 1993 that “for the Kurdish question all kinds of solution processes are discussable and negotiable” and added “the experience that we live in indicates that this important problem could not be solved through the violence and terrorism and also forced assimilation policies” (Quoted in Yayman, 2016: 415). In addition, the first Kurdish Report of the RP, presented by the party's Istanbul provincial Head Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 1991, identified the problem in eastern and southeastern Turkey as the “Kurdish problem”. Moreover, the report included statements that “the regions that are today called East and Southeast were once called ‘Kurdistan’” and also “the language spoken by the Kurds is Kurdish, an autonomous language, and unrelated to Turkish”. Subsequently, the report notes that “the region remains stuck on the one side of the ‘state terror’ and the PKK terror on the other side” and “the local people by being accused of backing the PKK are in a way kept under the pressure and torture” (Hürriyet, 2007b).

resulting from the state of emergency. In that connection, Turkey will have to find a political and non-military solution to the problem of the south-east. The largely military response seen so far is costly in human and financial terms and is hampering the region's social and economic development. It has also damaged Turkey's international image. A civil solution could include recognition of certain forms of Kurdish cultural identity and greater tolerance of the ways of expressing that identity, provided it does not advocate separatism or terrorism" (EU Commission Report, 1998: 20).

Moreover, the political changes in Turkey—engaging in the EU reform process and also bringing the Islamic brotherhood concept of the solution of the Kurdish problem—opened an arena for the development of the Kurdish cultural rights. Since the post-2002 period, nationalization of the Kurdish language and identity took place; this nationalization was to absorb them into society as they engaged in the public sphere, carrying Kurdish identity and culture as a part of the country. The most important development concerning this involvement of the Kurdish language and culture has come through the reforms of the Solution Process that started in 2009 with the talks between the PKK and state intelligences in Oslo, Norway. Since the most important dimension of the Kurdish problem is the Kurdish language, most improvements entailed breaking the barricades to the language. As a matter of fact, the language included all cultural products within it, as well as presenting the national existence anywhere it was used. Thus, in the transformation process, the Kurdish language had the function of bringing the culture and the identity into the public sphere, as a result of the lifting of the ban on using the Kurdish language in public sphere.

After summarizing these socially constructed political processes concerning the involvement of the Kurds in the public sphere, it is important to mention the social and cultural process of this involvement. As mentioned above, the Kurdish cultural products were brought into the public sphere through the Kurdish language. As a matter of fact, the Kurdish movement's struggle over language has continued in the post-1980s. The first attempt at involving the Kurdish language in the public sphere was in the political arena. In 1991, the deputy of Diyarbakır from the pro-Kurdish DEP, Leyla Zana, had wanted to be sworn in to TBMM in Kurdish. After her legislative immunity and that of four other DEP parliamentarians was lifted, they were arrested and charged with treason and membership in the PKK (Çağlayan, 2014). Until 2010 there was no further important attempt in the parliament; in 2010, in the positive climate of the Solution Process the pro-Kurdish BDP tabled a motion in TBMM about copyrights in which the names of the famous Kurdish singer *Şivan Perwer* and a city of northern Iraq, *Xalepçe*, (Haberaktüel, 2010) appeared. The significance was that they were

written using the Kurdish letters Q, W and X—which are not found in the Turkish alphabet—as in the original names.

As stated previously, Kurdish political movements were under state oppression through the judicial system, in particular with the closure of the parties and the detention of political actors. This oppression continued in the 2000s even with the positive climate toward the Solution Process. Within the judicial arena as well, the struggle of Kurdish political movement involved the Kurdish language. Before the mentioned attempts in TBMM, Group of Communities in Kurdistan (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan – KCK*) cases had been opened against the members of the pro-Kurdish BDP in 2010. In the same year the Global Peace and Justice Coalition protested references to Kurdish as the “unknown language” in these cases (Timeturk, 2010). This indicated a desire from the civil society to recognize the Kurdish language. Defendants were not allowed speak Kurdish in trials until 2013; the law on Criminal Procedure Code (*Ceza Muhakemesi Kanunu*) No: 5271/202 states that if the “defendant could not speak Turkish” a translator would be appointed (Yenisey, 2009: 209). Thus, the court did not give the right to defend in other languages since the defendant could speak Turkish. However, in 2013 an amendment was made and the court in Diyarbakır decided to give the right to defend in Kurdish in 2013 (Bozarlan, 2013). This was an important indication of the Kurdish language’s being officially accepted in the court through a translator. Thus, a major contribution that nationalized the Kurdish language in the judicial process was the recognition of these demands, as the KCK trials continued in 2013.

In relation to the further development of the Kurdish civil society as well as the increasing influence of the Kurdish political movements in the 2000s, the desire to make propaganda in Kurdish during the election periods came to the fore. During the campaigns of 2011 general election, there was a desire from the BDP to make propaganda in Kurdish. The Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey (*Yüksek Seçim Kurulu*) declared in March 2011 that using languages other than Turkish would not be punished (NTV, 2011b). Thus, this opened the way for propaganda in Kurdish in the elections. However, the most visible examples began to be seen in the 2014 local elections, when both AKP and pro-Kurdish BDP used banners in Kurdish, and then in the June and November general elections in 2015, when both AKP and pro-Kurdish HDP used Kurdish propaganda techniques, including Kurdish election music and banners.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For an example of AKP’s banners in 2014 Local Elections, see: AKP’s Election Banners in Kurdish (*Ak Parti’den Kürtçe Seçim Pankartları*), online available at: <https://www.cnnturk.com/haber/turkiye/ak-partiden->

As a result of the development of civil society and the increasing number of municipalities belonging to the pro-Kurdish parties, the local administrations were also affected by developments on the involvement of the Kurdish language into the public sphere that had brought the emergence of the multilingual municipalities. Indeed, the problems related to using Kurdish in local activities had been seen throughout the history of Turkey. Nevertheless, due to the positive climate in the 2000s and the demand of the local people, Sur municipality in Diyarbakır became the first to offer multilingual services in 2007. Although a case was opened against this service with an indictment by the governorship of Diyarbakır, the multilingual municipality services continued and the administrative court refused to proceed with the case (Üstündağ, 2007). Sur Municipality's multilingual service included the languages of Kurdish, Zazaki, Armenian, Syriac and Turkish. After 2010, with a more pluralist environment under the Solution Process, the number of multilingual municipalities increased. A common example was for multilingual municipalities to make multilingual signboards; for example, in 2011, the Nusaybin Municipality of Mardin changed the signboards to include Turkish, English, Kurdish, Syriac and Arabic (Nusaybinim, 2011). Furthermore, the municipalities extended multilingual services to many areas. As an example, Viranşehir Municipality from pro-Kurdish BDP began to use garbage containers on which were written 'Şaredaria Werañsar', Kurdish for 'Viranşehir Municipality' (Mert, 2010), and in 2016 the Municipality of Diyarbakır placed direction signs in both Kurdish and Turkish in many parts of the city (Midyathabur, 2016). Moreover, reflecting these practices in the social sphere, the shopkeepers in the region started to use signs written in both the Turkish and Kurdish languages.

The process of nationalizing the Kurdish language continued with discussions about changing the names of the cities to their original names, mainly of the municipalities with mayors from the pro-Kurdish political parties. Due to the previous restrictive practices of the state, since 1925, the names of the 30280 residential areas had been changed from their original names, in Kurdish, Arabic, Georgian, Tatar, Circassian, Lazuri and other languages (Kurban and Ensaroğlu, 2010: 41). This was a state policy mainly based on the Kemalist ethnocracy. Increasing discussions during the reform process in the 2000s about returning to the original names were related to decrease in the domination of Kemalist ideology. With the reform

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kurtce-secim-pankartlari. For an example of AKP's election propaganda music in Kurdish for 2015 elections, see: AKP's Election Music in Kurdish 2015 (Ak Parti'nin Kürtçe Seçim Şarkısı 2015), online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8D0ybaBo68> and an example of HDP's election propaganda music in Kurdish for 2015 elections, see: HDP's 2015 Election Music Kurdish (HDP 2015 Seçim Müziği Kürtçe), online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vjf-EuPmzs> (Last accessed 21.12.2017).

process and the development of the Solution Process for the solution of the Kurdish problem, the original names had begun to be given to these historical places of southeastern Anatolia. Moreover, the democratization package by AKP government in 2013 removed the barrier to returning to the original names of the villages (Demokratikleşme Paketi, 2013: 68). In the positive environment of these developments, the first application to change a village name was accepted in Tunceli province; thus *Güdeç* village was renamed *Xeceriye*, its original Kurdish name before 1958 (Demir, 2013). Subsequently, in the city of Van, 704 neighborhoods were given their original names in 2014 (Agos, 2014). In Şırnak, 12 neighborhoods and 2 squares were given their original names in 2014 (Karatoprak, 2014).

The issue of Kurdish names also involves newborn Kurdish babies. Due to the oppressive policies of the Kemalist republic, Kurdish names were not used in the documented identity papers even in the Kurdish-populated areas of Turkey. The end of the 2000s brought some examples of parents attempting to give Kurdish names to children. A pro-Kurdish DTP member in Şanlıurfa named her daughter *Helin Kurdistan* in 2008 (Kırmızıtaş, 2009) and also in 2009 the name '*Hêvî Jiyan*' was confirmed by the civil registry office of Çankaya, Ankara. However, an investigation was launched after this attempt (Ilkehaber, 2009). This trend has continued with celebrities starting to give Kurdish names to their children. One major example is the famous Kurdish comedian Yılmaz Erdoğan, who gave the name *Rodin* to his son in 2009 (Internethaber, 2009). Also, the famous Kurdish singer Mahsun Kırmızıgül gave the name *Lavin* to his daughter in 2016 (Türkiye, 2016). These examples show that the issue of naming babies began to be internalized within the transformation process, with the acceptance of Kurdish letters facilitating this process.

Concerning the Kurdish language's involvement in the public sphere, developments in education gave continuity to the integration process. Allowing private Kurdish courses was the first step toward education in Kurdish. In the first years of the EU membership reform process under the AKP's first term government, amendments in 2003 and 2004 to the law 2923, the *Regulation on the Teaching of the Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in Their Daily Lives*, opened a way for the Kurdish language to be taught in private courses.<sup>42</sup> The first Kurdish language courses were started in Batman, Şanlıurfa and Van in 2004 (Sevinç, 2004). The courses started with teaching on the history of

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<sup>42</sup> As the original source of information, see: Regulation on the Teaching of the Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in Their Daily Lives, online available at: <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.2923.pdf> (Last accessed 21.12.2017).

Kurdish language and the Kurdish alphabet, and after 2.5 months' training the participants would get a state-recognized certificate (Ibid). In the later years, the courses were opened throughout southeastern Anatolia. However, due to less interest in private Kurdish courses, many courses were closed and after 2010, the demand for the private Kurdish language courses tended toward education in the mother tongue. Even earlier, in the first years of the 2000s, the demand for the education in mother tongue had existed: many Kurdish university students had submitted a petition for education in Kurdish at the universities (Hürriyet, 2001). The basic desire can be understood to be attempting to increase the Kurdish language's function in the public sphere. In turn, this would strengthen the motivation of the Kurdish people to learn Kurdish more, since learning Kurdish would also bring financial benefits.

Furthermore, the most influential public attempt for education in Kurdish was the action of civil disobedience (*sivil itaatsizlik eylemi*) in 2010–2011, a boycott campaign with a call by the pro-Kurdish BDP and Kurdish Language and Education Movement (TZP Kurdi) for the Kurdish pupils to stay out of school for a week (See Radikal, 2010; Haberler, 2011b). These public attempts were made under the mobilization function of the pro-Kurdish BDP, as a part of the Solution Process table, with a call for 'education in mother tongue'. However, after the pro-Kurdish BDP's attempts, the discussions in the media went from the Kurds' right to education in their mother tongue to impossibility of it, due to the existence of different Kurdish dialects and the extra costs to the state. In 2013, however, with the democratization package, the government declared the right to teach in different languages and dialects traditionally used by Turkish citizens; this right is limited to private schools rather than state schools (Demokratikleşme Paketi, 2013: 62–63). The way was opened to teaching in Kurdish in the schools through the private schools. Thus, Diyarbakir Dicle College was the first private school to adopt teaching in Kurdish for the 2014–2015 school year (Haberturk, 2014).

Moreover, the higher education sector was another arena in which important developments in the context of nationalizing the Kurdish language have occurred. The first was the opening of the *Institute of Living Languages* at the respective universities in the Southeast, in which not only Kurdish, but also the Persian, Arabic and Syriac languages would be taught (CNNTurk, 2009). In the following period, in the 2010–2011 school years, Kurdish and Zazaki optional courses were opened at the Tunceli University for associate and bachelor degree programs, and at the Mardin Artuklu University on 'Kurdish Language and Culture' for the Master's degree. Moreover, the number of these masters' programs increased to four in 2013, with



openings at Muş Alparslan, Bingöl and Van Yüzüncü Yıl Universities (Hürriyet, 2013a). All these developments show that a serious nationalization process is underway involving the Kurdish language, culture and history in the Turkish academia.

In addition to the major social and cultural activities, the post-1980s was a revival period for publishing in Kurdish. There had been publishing in Kurdish since the Ottoman time, such as the publication in 1919 of the greatest epic of the Kurds, *Mem û Zîn*, in 1965 of famous Kurdish author Musa Anter's playbook the *Black Wound (Brina Reş)* and in 1968 of well-known Kurdish intellectual Mehmet Emin Bozarslan's *Kurdish ABC Book (Alfabe)* (Milliyet, 2011a; Chaliand, 1993: 67). However, during the republic period, with the development of republican institutions, publications in Kurdish were regarded as a sign of separatism and prohibited, and Kurdish intellectuals and authors produced their books primarily in migrated European countries. Even the liberal pluralist environment in the post-1980s period did not immediately provide a free arena for publications in Kurdish. However, as the first effect of Turkey's developing liberal environment in the post-1980s, Kurdish-origin publishing houses increased from the 1990s onwards, publishing books about the culture, history and political perspectives of Kurds. With the goal of breaking the Kurdish taboo in Turkey, these publishing houses tried to create a Kurdish consciousness in the society through the cultural contributions.

However, the major development concerning publications in Kurdish was seen with the Solution Process that started in 2009. The book fairs in Diyarbakır where Kurdish books were presented were an important reflection of the increasing publications in Kurdish. In 2011, many publishing houses participated in the Diyarbakır book fair and the program included conferences, concerts, films and theater games in Kurdish (Insanokur, 2011). Within this pluralist environment there were many examples of publications in Kurdish after *Mem û Zîn* was reissued by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 2012 (CNNTurk, 2012). Also, a social science dictionary in Kurdish was published by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abdullah Kiran, head of the International Relations Department of Muş Alparslan University (Hürriyet, 2014a). In short, cultural activities related to publications increased continuously. As an important indication of this, the fair in Diyarbakır in 2015 was organized with the support of Diyarbakır Municipality and the Kurdish publishing houses using the original Kurdish name for Diyarbakır, Amed; the First Amed Book Fair was held in May 2015 with an increased number of Kurdish books. According to Kerem Çetin from Aram Publishing House, Abdullah Öcalan's book series

*Political Academy* got the most attention from the visitors, and Murat Karayılan's *Anatomy of a War* and Sakine Cansız's *My Whole Life Was a Struggle*, both by founding members of PKK, were also in high demand (Evrensel, 2015).

Furthermore, these publications in Kurdish came not only from the Kurdish movement but by state institutions as well. Since the ruling AKP approached the solution of the Kurdish problem from the perspective of Islamic brotherhood, the Diyanet led the Islamic-based drive for official publications. Although the Diyanet was not successful in organizing activities such as praying practices in Kurdish, there were important publications by the Diyanet in Kurdish in the Islamic context. The most important one was the Kurdish translation of the Quran, 30,000 copies of which were issued in 2015; 40,000 copies of Prophet Muhammad's biography were published in Kurdish in the same year (Haber 10, 2015a).

The most influential development in the process of involving the Kurdish culture and language in the public sphere was in broadcasting. As mentioned, throughout the years many Kurdish authors and intellectuals had migrated to Europe, and they continued their publications as well as broadcasting activities there, before and after 1980. Broadcasting activities by the diaspora continued in Europe, for example with pro-PKK TV channels in the 1990s including MED TV, Mesopotamia TV, Newroz TV and Roj TV. Starting in the 1990s with the development of the satellite broadcasting, these channels were mainly watched by the Kurdish population in Turkey and brought a public legitimacy among the Kurds for the activities of the PKK. Then, in the positive climate toward the Solution Process and as an alternative to pro-PKK TV channels that were broadcasting from Europe, in 2004 the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) amended article 4 of RTÜK law no. 3984 and 4471 to allow the broadcast of different languages and dialects traditionally used by Turkish citizens, and so opened the way for broadcasting in Kurdish (Önderoğlu, 2007). The first broadcasting in languages other than Turkish, such as Kurmanji (Kurdish), Zazaki, Circassian and Bosnian, began in 2004 on the state TV channel TRT3 for 2.5 hours every week (T24, 2009). This move by the state to open an arena for the demand for broadcasting in Kurdish could be regarded as an example of the Gramscian concept of passive revolution to reduce the power of the counter-hegemonic sphere of the Kurdish movement.

Later, in 2006, the private TV and radio channels were given the right to broadcast in the local languages: TV for 45 minutes a day and radio for one hour (Vatan, 2006). Thereafter, TRT Şeş (6), later called TRT Kurdi, was inaugurated in 2008, as the first national Kurdish TV

channel to broadcast in the Kurmanji, Sorani and Zazaki dialects of Kurdish (İçgen, 2009). While there were critiques from the pro-Kurdish BDP, who regarded TRT Şeş it as a tool for the continuation of the state policy of assimilating the Kurds (Kurt, 2008), on the other side, MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli mentioned that it would be “the first step to divide Turkey into 36 ethnic groups” (NTV, 2009). Subsequently, through the Solution Process, a new regulation in 2009 allowed the private channels to broadcast in Kurdish for 24 hours a day; this, however, was subject to the permission of RTÜK based on the program format (Yeni Şafak, 2009). According to information gathered in 2016, more than 25 TV channels were broadcasting in Kurdish in Turkey (Sabah, 2016). Thus, beginning with state TV channels, broadcasting in Kurdish was an important indication of the involvement of the Kurdish identity and culture in the public sphere.

In sum, the pressures and constraints on the Kurds since the establishment of republic brought about the revival of the Kurdish movements, which in turn effected the construction of an alternative public sphere in the post-1980s. Then, due to the further social developments of democratization and pluralization, effects of economic development, and to the EU membership negotiations process, the way opened for constructing a common public sphere that involved Kurdish identity and culture within it. That is to say, the Kurdish social and political movements, through their involvement in the public sphere, demonstrated that they ‘exist’. The language and the culture of the Kurds, prohibited in the past, became known and recognized. Thus, all these developments brought the Kurdish political movement, represented recently by the HDP, toward Turkeyfication. Vote tallies of 13.12% in the June 7, 2015 and 10.76% in the November 1, 2015 elections, double what they had been, show this tendency and its finding a place in the society. Even as fights between the PKK and TSK began again in 2015 with the Solution Process put in the ‘freezer’, the continued involvement of the Kurdish language in the public sphere, as seen through the continuation of the multilingual municipality services (even though some of the mayors from the pro-Kurdish HDP were replaced with the state’s appointed administrators), Kurdish instruction in some university departments, Kurdish broadcasting on the state and private TV channels and propaganda in Kurdish during the 2017 Constitutional Change Referendum shows that the Kurds have been absorbed by, and indeed have become a part of, the overall public sphere in Turkey.

### 3.3.4. Women's Movement in the Context of the Private–Public Sphere

It was mentioned in the previous sections that major developments in social transformation have happened through the inclusion of different social groups in the public sphere as a result of the ongoing liberalization and pluralization in the post-1980s. In the case of the women's movement, this inclusion has come through different ideological channels and continues to be transformative. It is important to understand that the numerous occasions of the post-1980s solidified the improvements of the women's movement through further inclusion, especially of veiled religious women in the public sphere. However, these recent developments cannot be dissociated from the historical development of the women's movement.

The women's movement in Turkey began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Ottoman Empire with the effect of the global winds of change. In such a world scene, Ottoman women started to struggle to defend their rights. As with many other oppressed social groups, women used press organs such as newspapers and magazines to help in their struggle to assert their rights. The first example was the newspaper *Terakki*'s supplement for women *Muhadderat*, which was founded by Ali Reşit and Filip Efendi. The supplement included letters from women from educated, intellectual and bureaucrat families living in the Ottoman territories, published anonymously or with only their first names. These letters showed the conditions of the women of the time, as seen in the letter below, published in *Muhadderat* volume 5 in 1869 and signed by *Rabia*:

“It is necessary to acknowledge, neither were men created to be servant of women nor women created as slaves of men. While men subsist on their skills and knowledge for themselves and all of us, why are we, women, not capable of earning these skills and knowledge?

What are the differences between men and us in mind and eyes, hand and feet? Are we not human? What is the reason for our situation, just only our sex? No one who is sensible can admit this. If it had been necessary, European women would have been similar to us. Our deprivation of knowledge would have been shown as a legitimate cause because of our veil; I would be contended with pointing out our women in provinces. Because they are helping their men in all kinds of services and working together with them” (Quoted in Keskin, 2003: 37).

Many of the further supplements to the newspapers were independently published by women, and the first magazine published by women alone was *Şükûfezâr* in 1884; it mentioned its founding aim was to prove the capabilities of women that were humiliated by men (Yaşar, 2008: 69–70). Although the struggle of women was continuing in the magazines, in the 1844

population census of the Ottoman Empire, women had already been considered part of the population, an effect of the overall international climate regarding the status of women. Thus, the rise of women's consciousness occurred mainly thereafter. Nevertheless, the most important developments in women's visibility in the public sphere happened in the *Second Constitutional Era* (İkinci Meşrutiyet) (1908–1918) due to the Western liberal environment at the time. In this liberal environment for the women, in 1914, *Women's University* (İnas Darülfunun) was founded in Istanbul to provide a higher education opportunity for women. In this period, women's swift involvement in the higher education sector shows their strong desire for this. Despite critiques against the education of women from conservative groups of the Ottoman society, the general popular trend in the educated strata was against these critiques and propagated further improvements. It can be argued that Turkish intellectuals' supportive arguments in the magazines and the newspapers during the late Ottoman period shaped the public perception. These influential arguments in the Habermasian sense, based on popular Western perspectives of the time, created authority as better arguments. Thus, importantly, with the involvement of women in the public sphere, an arena in which the issue of women began to be discussed overtly by notable people of the state was used to create a control mechanism over women (Göle, 1991: 70). At the end of the Ottoman Empire and within the bourgeois public sphere, a popular pro-westernization movement put forward the idea of training women to act in many respects like European women. Thus, the Republic of Turkey's approach to gender issues was a Western modernist conception of women, which continued as the popular perspective of the time from the Ottoman intellectual society to the establishment.

Nonetheless, the establishment of the republic in 1923 provided more liberty for women concerning, for example, Western styles of clothing and working with male counterparts, and this liberty contributed to republican development plans. Even though the Kemalist policy regarded women's contribution to the state's development together with men's, it could not allow women to act alone. The Kemalist project gave women two roles: contributing to the development of the country, and reflecting the Western modernist perspective of the republic in a new Western clothing style. The press had an important function for expanding this modernist perspective in the early republican arena, not only through publications, but also with practical issues. For example, the pro-Kemalist newspaper *Cumhuriyet* organized a beauty contest in 1929 with an aim of transforming the cultural patterns of the people (Yenituna, 2014: 68). The aim was for women to adapt to a Western lifestyle because of

attractive cultural practices rather than direct pressure. Despite the aim of constructing a modern woman's identity, traditional features of the Turkish society such as women's obeying men and having a secondary position in social practices have continued.

In the 1960s, the modernization of women through the Kemalist ideology began to be influenced by feminist ideology and by increasing waves of socialism around the world. Feminist ideology's influence was due to the ideological conception of Kemalism as liberating women and the fact that its application in practice was quite different: women were under the direction of men. According to Şirin Tekeli (1991:105), a leading feminist academic in Turkey, the women's revolution was an important part of Kemalism; however, this revolution was made not for the individual rights of the women, but as an instrument for the overall transformation of the state and society. Separate from this feminist trend, in the 1960s Islamic conceptions of the position of women came to be seen, mainly in the slum areas as a result of the first migration waves from Anatolia to the major metropolises. Thus, in the post-1960s, Islam, Kemalism and feminism were all featuring women in important roles in the society.

Moreover, mainly, in the 1970s, the independent women's movements started to emerge. Toward the 1980s, organizational features of the feminist movements started to emerge through involvement in protest movements as well as publications. However, like many other organizational protest groups, these women's movements, majorly linked to socialist and feminist groups, were negatively affected by the September 12, 1980 Military Coup. Even so, an important step toward removing the effects of 1980 Military Coup on the women's movements was taken in 1985, with the government's ratifying the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, which had been agreed at the Second World Women's Conference in Copenhagen in 1980 (Korkut, 2009: 18–19). This facilitated the emergence and further development of the women's movements. Within the liberal environment, especially in the Özal period in the 1980s, which was influenced by the further economic development in Turkey, the women's civil society started to develop through the creation of academic and social connections under an active interaction process.

In this period, the activities of YAZKO Group, the first cooperative of writers and translators, were influential in widening the women's right perspective in the society. The group organized the "Our Literature and the Women Question" panel in 1981 and published Mübeccel İzmirli's poem "For Awakening Women" in the YAZKO Edebiyat Magazine in

1982 (Depe, 2014: 87–88, 99–100). In addition to the publications and further organizations, a book club was formed to translate feminist literature of the world, also increased awareness about the women question in Turkey by following developments from around the world. In 1987, Women’s Association Against Discrimination, Socialist-Feminist Women, and Feminist Magazine organized the first walk-out protest against violence against women (Moraliođlu, 2012: 292–293). This protest greatly increased the influence of the feminist movements by creating public awareness in Turkey.

Moreover, with increases in both the quantity and the quality of women’s NGOs in the 1990s, and NGO–academia interaction with the emergence of institutes and research centers at the universities, there have been more research-based academic and literary publications on the women question. Thus, the number of women’s NGOs mostly working in the scientific areas increased. The major examples are Mor atı Women’s Shelter Foundation (Mor atı Kadın Sıđınađı Vakfı), founded in 1990 and Association for Support of Women Candidates (Kadın Adayları Destekleme Derneđi – KA.DER) founded by Őirin Tekeli in 1997 to increase awareness about equality between women and men.<sup>43</sup> This specializing and institutionalizing trend continued in the 2000s, with activities to raise awareness about torture and sexual violence against women, to help women with employment and further education and more. Importantly, in the process of the pluralization of the public sphere in the 2000s, the women’s movements were differentiated. Whereas in previous periods their design was simply modernism, later the women’s struggle encompassed identity and cultural features such as religion and nationality, through the involvement into the public sphere of the pro-Islamic movements and the Kurds.

One result of this extension of the area of influence to identity and cultural features, and also through increasing the power of these women’s rights NGOs, was localization attempts during the 2000s. Of these localization attempts, the Women’s Center (Kadın Merkezi – KAMER) Foundation<sup>44</sup>, which was established in 1997 in the largest Kurdish populated city in southeastern Anatolia, Diyarbakır, is important to mention. By increasing its activities mainly

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<sup>43</sup> While these organizations, founded in the 1990s, dealt first with saving women from being tortured by men, they also intended to improve the position of women in the social and political arenas. For more information, see: official page of Mor atı Women’s Shelter Foundation, online available at: <http://www.morcati.org.tr/en/> and KA.DER, online available at: <http://www.ka-der.org.tr/en-US> (Last accessed 09.02.2018).

<sup>44</sup> KAMER Foundation has been organizing activities dealing with the problems of the women in the least developed areas of Turkey, mainly in the Kurdish-populated southeast Anatolia. For more information, see: official web page of the KAMER, online available at: <http://www.kamer.org.tr/eng/index.php> (Last accessed 04.03.2018).

in the Kurdish-populated Southeast in the 2000s, the foundation became the most regionally active organization working on improving the situation of women. In the same way, Association of Women and Democracy (Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği – KADEM),<sup>45</sup> a pro-AKP association whose vice-president is President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s daughter Sümeyye Erdoğan, provides an important example for the practices of state’s Islamic feminism with branches in 18 cities of Turkey. Consequently, while the women in the pre-1980s process had a passive function under the direction of the various ideological positions, the post-1980s gave them an autonomous arena for the further development of the civil society. This process also brought the women’s cultural and religious characteristics into the public sphere through their further involvement.

### ***Between Tradition and Future: The Adventure of Religious Women***

Religious veiled women had been the weakest link of the women question throughout Turkey’s history. While the women in other parts of the society were being affected by internationalization and the structural changes in domestic affairs, the religious veiled women, engaging in conservative social relations in a secondary position as only a spouse and mother, found no place in Turkey’s westernist and laic-ethnocratic public sphere. These veiled women supported the men and did not regard themselves as social and economic actors until women started to engage in modernity, toward the end of the 1990s. A historical example of women’s position in the pro-Islamic movements can be seen in the party program of MNP, the first political party of the MGH, which was concerned with the position of the women in the family rather than as individual actors: the party program states that “family planning, population politics, birth control, contraception and freedom of having children at choice” were elements preventing national development (Milli Nizam Partisi, 1970: 33).

Women started to be visible in the political arena within the pro-Islamic social and political movements in the post-1980s. However, this function of women served to benefit the overall organization; they did not operate within an autonomous structure. This function was limited to the women’s branches of the pro-Islamic social and political movements whose function was to the houses through women’s networking under the control of men. Moreover, the headscarf had a liberating function for these religious women, since with the headscarf they could feel secure while breaking the walls of the private sphere and moving toward the public

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<sup>45</sup> KADEM also deals with local activities, including the problems of the local women, such as child brides and torture, as well as the recognition of the democratic rights of women majorly in the conservative regions of Turkey. More information can be found on the official web page of KADEM, see online available at: <http://kadem.org.tr/en/> (Last accessed 04.03.2018).



sphere. Within the pro-Islamic movements, the MGH's way became a guide for women studying at the universities; by wearing their headscarves, they would break the laic bans on the Islamic symbols in the public sphere. The practices of religious veiled women thus bring the involvement of the pro-Islamic movements into the public sphere.

Many of the religious veiled women from whom the Islamic political movements benefited were Anatolian conservatives who migrated to metropolises, were living in the slum areas and had an easy connection with the slum-dwellers. Through these connections, and by visiting the slum-dwellers during the religious feasts, as well as creating social responsibility projects under their organizations, the women attracted the attention and support of the people. In this way, Erbakan's RP followed the same strategy that won the municipalities of major metropolises (e.g. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Istanbul; Melih Gökçek, Ankara; Ahmet Bilgin, Diyarbakır), increasing votes by 9.33% in the March 27, 1994 Local Elections (Akıncı, cited in Çaha and Guida, 2011: 178). The successful effect of the women on the elections throughout the 1990s gave these women more space in the political level, so that by increasing veiled religious women's role in the political sphere as a flag of religiousness, they could fight the Kemalist status quo.

When it comes to the 28 February Process in 1997, not only the Islamic political movement, namely the RP, suffered from the military's balancing the politics, but importantly, religious veiled women were the most affected by this process. Before the 28 February Process, the position of the mainstream media was that the veiled women were in a miserable position and were being sexually assaulted by religious community leaders.<sup>46</sup> The mainstream media, by molding public opinion to the belief that women in religious communities are in an 'ignorant' position, attempted to exclude the pro-Islamic movements from the public sphere. These exclusionary activities continued after the 28 February Process over the religious veiled women with an intensification of the headscarf ban at the universities and the state institutions. New practices emerged, such as *persuasion rooms* at the universities, in which the veiled women were forced in a humiliating way enlightened by taking their headscarf off (Atasoy, 2009: 175). So, the public sphere became a kind of psychological torture house for the veiled

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<sup>46</sup> The most important example of this simplification in the mainstream media, which began even before the 28 February Process, was the Fadime Şahin case in 1996; the Aczmeni Cult leader Müslüm Gündüz and Fadime Şahin as a veiled woman was 'found' in an illegitimate relationship by police operation together some media representatives in Istanbul and Şahin became a portrait of the veiled women in Turkey (Hürriyet Daily News, 1997). For Müslüm Gündüz and Fadime Şahin's arrest video and the further arguments, see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1MsgSUHV8> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIUeRx0SPM8> (Last accessed 10.02.2017).

women, and the majority of the veiled women had to return their private spheres, where they also had to obey the conservative men. Others had the opportunity to move to other countries for their further university education.

After the closure of RP in 1998, the Islamic political movement continued with FP, which had been established in 1997. However, the same tradition of limited representation of women in the political arena continued. Even so, FP put great emphasis in the party program on individual rights and freedoms (See Fazilet Partisi, 1998: 29). This meant that the party's perspective on women changed. Thus, in the program, women's education to make them more successful in the social arena was also emphasized (Ibid: 8). As mentioned, again the emphasis on the education of women was related to the religious veiled women's function of bringing the Islamic identity into the public sphere through education as well as in the working life. This was due to religious women's wearing of headscarves as a symbol of their religious identity. The most important example of women's representing the Islamic identity in the political arena at that time was the MP from FP Merve Safa Kavakçı's attempt to enter the TBMM with her headscarf. On May 2, 1999, Kavakçı was precluded from taking her oath at the start of her first day in parliament.<sup>47</sup> She was dismissed from the TBMM due to her headscarf and in the same year denaturalized from Turkish citizenship (Benli, 2011:72). On this occasion, the issue of freedom for headscarf was the major driving force of the continued Islamic political movement in a more reformist sense, since it acquired the support not only of the conservative Anatolian majority, but also of liberal and liberal leftists who were located within the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc throughout the 2000s.

As stated previously, the effect of the 28 February process was seen in the MGH mainly in the early years of the 2000s when political Islam was at a crossroads between Traditionalists and Reformists. By forming the AKP, reformists brought this reformist mentality into the women question together with other aspects. It is evident from the AKP's founding program that increasing the activity of women in the public sphere was encouraged. The main emphasis was on supporting the NGOs that were dealing with the women question and preventing violence against women (AK Parti, 2002: 84–85). Given this innovative mentality, the main responsibility of the women's branch of the AKP was not only canvassing, but being in an

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<sup>47</sup> May 2, 1999 became the scene of a huge protest against Kavakçı's entering the TBMM with her headscarf. While the MPs from DSP and ANAP shouted "Out! Out!", Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit from DSP said "It is not a place in which to challenge the state. Please put this lady in her place!" For the protests and Kavakçı's dismissal from the TBMM, see: the video recording, online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvT2QMpjQeQ> (Last accessed 04.03.2017).

executive position and thereby adding women's sensitivity and capability to politics. Compared to the past, in the 2000s the reformist AKP governments gave women an arena relatively free from the direction of men.

Furthermore, the AKP period was the time in which the improvements in the lives of religious women were made through their involvement into the public sphere. Even regarding the women from the conservative standpoint, protecting women from the violence of men and opening shelters brought a kind of protectionist mentality over women. Thus, from the secondary position under the men's direction, women started to have an actor position, with more equality compared to the previous Islamic political movements. Importantly, by being far from the protesting nature of the RP in the 1990s, AKP became a place for a moderate approach, which gave it the support of the oppressed groups, and also of the Anatolian bourgeois. As stated previously, during the 2000s, as they started to enter the public sphere, religious women's clothing style was a kind of hybrid: women were not wearing the *chador* as those in MGH did; instead they started to wear the headscarf (*türban*) and fashions based on Islamic clothing style, which also reflected Western aesthetic values. The religious women's headscarf was a symbol for religiousness that was supported also by the religious men during the developing process of involvement into the public sphere. This was especially visible in the social practices through the increasing popularity of the Islamic fashion during the AKP period in the 2000s. Thereby, religious veiled women, through their engagement in modernity, started to have self-awareness in the sense of following their own will (See N. Göle, Personal Interview, April 4, 2015). This process empowered the women's movements in Turkey by relatively liberating the movement's weakest link, religious veiled women.

When the major examples of legislative regulations made during the 2000s are examined, the process of improving the condition of women can be seen also as a reflection of an emerging consciousness of religious veiled women in the political sphere during the conservative democrat AKP governments. In the same way, the introduction of 'the labor law no 4857' in the harmonization with the EU regulations during the AKP period to empower gender equality in the labor market was an important step toward recognition of women's equal position in the labor market (See İş Kanunu, 2003). Thus, importantly, this law introduced the equal pay for equal work policy. Furthermore, as many women-oriented NGOs, since their foundation, struggled to secure women from violence, chiefly in the 2000s the number of women's shelters increased. In addition, women's advice centers were opened throughout

Turkey. Women could apply face-to-face or by phone to secure themselves from torture. The ‘Alo 183 Line’ was introduced by the Ministry of Family and Social Polices to protect women; it had an important function in the prevention of torture, honor killing and sexual abuse. The effective coordination of this line allowed immediate intervention in the emergency. Moreover, as another important development at the institutional level, with the 2010 constitutional amendment, to the second paragraph of the law 10 stating “men and women have equal rights. The state has a responsibility to ensure the realization of this equality” was added “measures to be taken to this end cannot be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality”. This was an important development in positive discrimination toward the women (Doğan, 2010). These examples and many others show that during the 2000s and in the post-2010 constitutional amendment process, the modern way of dealing with gender equality increased continuously in Turkey.

Even as important developments concerning the rights of the women took place at the official level, during the reformist AKP period in some cases women were considered in the traditional way, such as in family relationships and with women’s being left behind men. The most important example was the representation of women in the parliament. Even as AKP proactively engaged in the reform process mainly in the 2000s, women’s political representation was weak. Recently, as the AKP became less reformist and more conservative, restrictive voices from the conservative AKP on the individual rights of women emerged, such as offer of abortion law and being against male and female students living under the same roof, which show this conservative mentality.<sup>48</sup> The reformist start of the AKP, which had the support of women-oriented NGOs, turned into not only the conservative conception, but also a reflection of the hegemonic masculinity. Even so, through the involvement of religious veiled women in the public sphere in the post-2000s, the women’s movement was empowered by the further reforms. The government’s attempt to determine the place of the women triggered the women’s resistance. This is especially evident with the women’s involvement in the protest movements such as during the Gezi Protests and afterwards. This participation of women in the protest movements was not limited to secular women; the increasing participation of veiled women in the protest movements shows that the idea of religious veiled women’s being under the protection of conservative AKP is not valid

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<sup>48</sup> Concerning male and female students living under the same roof, Prime Minister Erdoğan at the weekly party talk in 2013 mentioned that “A young university student girl is living together in the same house with a male student. There is no controlling this. This is not suitable to our conservative democrat presence” (Radikal, 2013b).

anymore. This process was also related to the inclusion of Islam, not only in conservative practices, but also in the left, as has been seen with the practices of the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group during the Gezi Protests and afterwards (See Chapter 5).

In conclusion, starting at the end of Ottoman Empire, women in Turkey were affected by westernization throughout the years. While this had been particularly evident in the early republic period, starting in the 1960s many educated women came under the influence of the global waves of socialism and were majorly influenced by the feminist literature through their involvement within this wave. Within the relatively more pluralist environment in the post-1980s, women's civil society organizations emerged and developed further. With the founding of research institutions at the universities on the women's question, interaction among the civil society, academia and the state has continued. Moreover, the post-1980s period provided a new arena for the religious veiled women who sought to engage in modernity released from pressures of conservative men, but protecting their Islamic identity. Thus, engaging in the public sphere, especially in the 2000s during the conservative AKP governments, brought out the hybrid figures of religious women in the public sphere, presenting features of both modernity and Islam. Since becoming a part of the public sphere, the religious women have been influenced by the popular culture, which has Western and modern features. The post-2000s were the modernization period of the religious veiled women who were not free from the religious values but gradually integrated into the Western modernist mentality. Thus, the emerged hijab fashion with colorfully decorated including both religious and modern figures based on religious women's own will and their not being only under the hegemonic position of the conservative political parties, but also in the left, shows that in the post-1980s the religious veiled women increased their independence by shaping their own way through further interaction in the public sphere. Consequently, the improved conditions of religious women empowered the other women's movements through increasing engagement in contemporary Turkey.

### **3.3.5. Turkey's Alevi Awakening: Alevis in the Context of the Transforming Public Sphere**

As noted in the previous sections, major transformations also occurred in the various communities and social groups of Turkey in the post-1980s. An important such community that was in the process of engaging in the public sphere in the post-1980s was the Alevis. In this sub-section, the process of Alevis' engaging in the public sphere through the

liberalization attempts and the emergence of Alevi groups in civil society after the 1980s will be explained by considering also their previous situation of being excluded from the public sphere. Although the scope of this dissertation is limited to the post-1980s process of Turkey, understanding Turkey's Alevi question requires examining its historical background. The Alevis had been segregated from the Ottoman society because the Empire regarded them as agents of the Safavids (1501–1722), who governed in what is now Iran. As Shia Muslims, which was the sect of the Safavids of the time, while the official sect of the Ottoman Empire was Sunniism, Alevis had problematic relations with their Ottoman rulers. The Ottoman system had three court systems—one for Muslims, one for non-Muslims including Christians and Jews and one for trade law—but the Empire's imposing the same *sharia laws* on all Islamic groups regardless of sectarian differences increased these problematic relations.

Moreover, even as the establishment of Turkey in 1923 as a laic-ethnocratic republic opened an arena for the Alevis in the official sectors, the continued sociopolitical structure of the Ottoman Empire caused the continued discrimination of the Alevis. Thus, while the laic system guaranteed equal treatment for different religious groups by distancing itself from all religious perspectives, in practice the system regarded the Sunni Turkish ethnicity as the primary component of the official identity. The most-known conflict between the state and the Alevis during the first two decades of the republic was the Dersim Rebellion in 1937–38. As previously mentioned, in this rebellion an Alevi Kurdish/Zaza tribe resisted against the centralized laic-ethnocratic system, which eliminated their autonomy as well as prohibiting their language and culture. Resistance leader Seyyit Rıza and his followers were defeated and Seyyit Rıza was executed. Later, approximately 15,000 people of Dersim were banished to the western part of the country (Şahin, 2012). Despite this violent suppression, the Alevis sustained a long silence after this period, since the laic system of Turkey provided a safer situation for them than living under religious fanaticism.

Even as the founding ethnocentric ideology of the republic created a serious crisis for the Alevis, as exemplified in the Dersim Rebellion, in the multiparty period after the 1950s Alevis preferred to be on the side of CHP, which offered the continuation of a secular social structure. The single exception to this was during the 1950s, when many Alevis supported DP due to the party's promise "to give back the disowned rights of Alevis" (Doğan, quoted in Mutluer, 2013). However, because the DP dealt with only conservative Muslims in Anatolia, toward the end of 1950s, the majority of Alevis continued to engage in the CHP politics to 'secure' the secular life of the country. Against this majority, the increasing socialist wave in

the 1960s brought some of the educated young Alevi to enroll in the radical leftist groups, mainly because Sunni Islam dominated the state practices even though laicism was protected by the constitution. The most important example was the legal status of Diyanet, since the institution was formed for only the Sunni sect of Islam and through the Mosques only served the religious practices of the Sunni Muslims. Many Alevi criticized this system, because the state was also collecting taxes from them, but was not providing service for their religious practices.

Alevi are the second largest religious group in Turkey (Zirh, 2008: 109). Alevi practice Shia Islam, which differs from Sunni Islam by including pre-Islamic practices in the worship rituals. In addition, they practice their religion not in the mosques, but in the Cem Houses, and since Alevi religious understanding differs from the Orthodox Islamic philosophy, their regular clothes reflect a secular image. Alevi claim that the state must deal equally with all religious groups and provide a representation for the Alevi within Diyanet (Koca, 2014: 44). In addition, the compulsory religion courses that were brought into the education curricula after the 1980 Military Coup were regarded as violating this equality. These courses were based on the Sunni-Islamic philosophy and did not consider Alevism. Thus, the military rule's concentrating on the Sunni-Islamic conception increased the resistance from the Alevi groups after the 1980s. This was generally understood to be assimilating the Alevi into Sunni Islam, as in the past the state had appointed Sunni Imams to Alevi villages and had opened mosques but had not provided any official assistance to the Cem houses.

As was mentioned, the Alevi became involved in the socialist movements after the 1960s as a result of their increasingly educated urban population, in the same process that was seen for the Kurdish groups in Turkey. However, due to the left's losing power after the 1980 Military Coup, the Alevi were motivated to form their own civil society, largely based on the cultural and religious identity perspectives of the Alevi community. The 1980s was the revival period of Turkey's Alevi through increasing urban Alevi population in the major metropolises. Many young people realized their Alevi background and enrolled in a further enlightening process. As an example, the famous Alevi singer Yavuz Bingöl (1964–) describes his enlightening process as:

“I was in the second grade at the primary school when I was humiliated because of being Alevi. I did not know what Alevi was. I asked my mother. She said that there are two kinds of people in the world; good or bad people. You will be the good one” (Quoted in A24, 2014).

As Bingöl's experience exemplifies, the first and second generation of urban Alevi in Turkey were born into families hesitant to express their Alevi identity. However, through discovering themselves, these generations became bound to their Alevi identity. So, toward the 1990s this Alevi awakening started to be visible in the public sphere. According to Aykan Erdemir (2005: 939–940), in this process the number of publications about Alevism increased, as did the numbers of radio and TV broadcasting institutions catering to the Alevi population. As a result of the growing civil society of the Alevi community in the post-1980s, Alevi NGOs increased in number as well as in visibility in the mainstream media, so they not only molded public opinion on the Alevi issue, but also created a consciousness among the Alevi about their identity. Especially important was the Sivas Massacre<sup>49</sup> in 1993 of Alevi authors, thinkers and the poets, which brought the Turkish society to consider the demands of the Alevi. The media's overemphasis on the massacre and the critical discussions in the media, especially on political discussion programs concerning the pre- and post-massacre period in Turkey, increased this consideration in Turkey. Thus, the long silence of the Alevi about the expression of their identities ended with these increasing discussions. However, this changed the features of the Alevi social structure, which had been based on the sayings of Wise Men (Alevi Dedes)<sup>50</sup>; with the emergence of the associations and the increase in publications, TV programs and documentaries, these other social actors took the role of the Wise Men.

Moreover, as mentioned, there was a migration wave from the rural areas to the urban spheres starting in the 1960s, and this migration was not only to the major metropolises in Turkey, but also to industrialized western European countries. The awakening of the Alevi community in the post-1980s began with the new urban Alevi in the major metropolises in Turkey and in the European countries, but came to affect also the isolated Alevi villages in rural area. This widening of the sphere of influence through the migrations and increased interaction among the Alevi helped mold the public opinion on the Alevi issues. Thus, the ideas, political behaviors and tangible assets were in a mutual interaction between Europe and Turkey (Kaya, 2009: 454). Given this interaction, the increasing publications on Alevi culture and identity brought about an awakening process on similar bases in many different Alevi groups. Cemal

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<sup>49</sup> The Sivas Massacre happened on July 2, 1993 in Sivas where Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association organized the Pir Sultan Abdal Festival, including panel discussions with Alevi authors, thinkers and poets. During the festival the Madimak Otel in which the program was going on was set on fire by a 'radical Islamist group', killing 33 participants and the 2 hotel waiters (Hürriyet Daily News, 2015).

<sup>50</sup> Wise Men (Alevi Dedes) were the socio-religious leaders of the Alevi society. While the word 'Dede' had referred to wise and intellectual older peoples of the pre-Islamic Turkic society in the Central Asia, after encountering Islam, Dede referred in the Alevi society to the social and religious leaders that are *Sayyid*, meaning descended from the Islamic Prophet Muhammad through his daughter Fatimah (605–632), wife of the fourth Islamic Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Talib (601–661) (Trowbridge, 1909, cited in Van Bruinessen, 2015: 614).



Şener's book *Alevism Issue (Alevilik Olayı)*, published in 1988, and İlhan Selçuk's *Alevism and Bektashism in Turkey (Türkiye de Alevilik ve Bektaşılık)*, published in 1991, as well as many others, are important examples. These early books provided a clear understanding of the basic issues of Alevism. Without doubt, the increase in publications on the Alevism issue at the end of the 1980s was related to the liberal political atmosphere of that time.

As for the Alevi diaspora in Europe, Alevi associations started to be founded in Europe, especially in Germany, mainly in the 1990s, and these associations started to form a social and political existence. Unlike the conservative Anatolian migrants in many western European countries, Alevis had a secular image in the social life. Furthermore, the founding Alevi associations and their publications in Germany, such as the magazine *Patriotic Unity (Yurtsever Birlik)* (1982–1989) and the magazine *Voice of Alevis (Alevilerin Sesi)*, ongoing since 1994, provide important examples of Alevi literature in Germany. While the first publications mainly followed left and socialist conceptions, because the authors had been members of the socialist movements in Turkey who escaped to Europe as asylum seekers, later publications concentrated on Alevi identity and culture. So, Germany was a new base for the quest for Alevi identity and culture.

As this awakening affected the domestic and international arenas through the Alevi diaspora in the European countries, the EU started to deal with Turkey's Alevi question from the end of the 1990s. In the EU Commission Report (1998: 19), Turkey was criticized for imposing Sunni Islam over the other Muslim minorities. According to the report, "religious minorities recognized by Turkey are free to exercise their religion, but practice of religion other than (Sunni) Islam is subject to many practical bureaucratic restrictions affecting, for example, the ownership of premises and expansion of activities" (Ibid). Also, for the report, "Turkey's Alevi Muslims are estimated to number at least 12 million. There are no government-salaried Alevi religious leaders, in contrast to Sunni religious leaders" (Ibid).

As with many other social problems of Turkey, the Alevi issue came on to the government's agenda due to the EU membership negotiation process. While the Alevi issue had been a major discussion point in the public sphere, in the early years from the 2002, the reformist AKP government did not consider it as important an issue as the Kurdish problem and the headscarf problem. When the AKP obtained the majority of MP seats in the 2002 elections, the lack of Alevi MPs in the AKP provided the evidence for the public perception of "AKP to be a Sunni Party" according to the Vice-president of AKP, Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat (cited in

Yetkin, 2007). However, with the Alevi issue taking an increasingly major place in public discussions and with Alevi associations empowered in the liberal environment, the AKP government was forced to consider the Alevi issue within the reform process. This was to some extent passive revolution in the Gramscian sense, in that its aim was to absorb the increasing Alevi resistance into the transforming public sphere.

An important development in making Alevis part of the AKP's pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc, was the election of the well-known Alevi intellectual figure Reha Çamuroğlu as the first Alevi MP in the AKP in the 2007 general elections. To further this process of approaching the Alevi minority, government declared an 'Alevi Opening' in 2008 aiming for the integration of Alevis into the public sphere. The Alevi Opening gave AKP a chance to facilitate the connection to the Alevi associations. However, none of the planned steps of the Alevi Opening were declared. Also, personal connections with the Alevi associations were made from 2008; for example, in January 2008, a Muharram Fast Breaking<sup>51</sup> meeting was organized by Reha Çamuroğlu, who was adviser to Prime Minister Erdoğan in addition to being an MP at the time. However, while there was good participation from the AKP side, even though the invitation was sent to 279 Alevi associations, only 6 of them participated (CNNTurk, 2008). In the meeting Erdoğan gave a speech emphasizing the Alevis as a part of the Islamic history and culture and saying that "but I've come here to share our mourning. This is our own mourning" (quoted in Ibid). He was reflecting the idea of the 'reformist' AKP of regarding the Alevis in the Islamic tradition rather than as a separate entity. Furthermore, the government's Alevi rapprochement continued with the Alevi NGOs, as the State Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ertuğrul Günay, participated in the opening ceremony of Alevism Research, Documentation and Application Institute at Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Culture Foundation in Ankara. In his talk at the ceremony, Günay apologized to the Alevis for the state's past oppression of them (Bianet, 2008). Also, President Abdullah Gül participated in a *Semah* ritual at the Cem house in Tunceli in 2009 and in Erzincan in 2013. These practices were mainly seen as the state's embracing the Alevis after a long debate.

The government's symbolic actions continued with influential activities. First, the state minister Faruk Çelik organized an Alevi Workshop in June 2009, with discussions of the

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<sup>51</sup> Muharram is the first month of the Islamic Calendar. Muharram is the month of sorrow for the Shia Muslims and Alevis since Islamic Prophet Muhammad's grandson and fourth Islamic Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Talip's son Husayn Bin Ali was killed by the Yazid I, Umayyad Caliph in Karbala of the present-day Iraq in Muharram of the Islamic Calendar in 680 AD. In respect to this, Alevis fast for 12 days during the month of Muharram (Kenanoğlu, 2016).

demands of the Alevi groups from various Alevi associations. The most important demands were for abolishing the compulsory religious courses, recognizing the statutes of the Cem Houses and stopping the building of mosques in Alevi villages. (See First Alevi Workshop, 2009). Six additional state-directed Alevi workshops followed, with various social actors invited. The reflection from these Alevi workshops about making the Alevi religion and culture part of the public sphere was first seen in a limited way: the text book of the compulsory religion course was changed in 2011, with two units of lecture about Alevism added (Oran, 2014). However, the most important case in the Alevism issue was the apology of the Prime Minister at the time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, for the Dersim Massacre, which was committed by the state forces in 1937–38. While mentioning the role of the main opposition party CHP in this massacre, Erdoğan said, “If an apology is required on behalf of the state and if such precedents exists, I am apologizing” (quoted in Hürriyet Daily News, 2011).

This process of dealing with the Alevi workshops in the scope of the Alevi Opening, as well as Erdoğan’s apology for the Dersim Massacre, brought a more empathetic attitude toward the Alevis from the Sunni majority. Thus, the World Value Survey in 2011, concerning the Alevi issue, demonstrated that 58% of participants supported the Cem House’s acquiring legal status, while 42% opposed it. The same research indicated that 73% of participants supported the state’s providing a separate budget for the religious activities of Alevis (Habertürk, 2011).<sup>52</sup> Parallel to the government’s confrontation with the Alevi issue and increased public awareness about the rights of Alevis the Alevi groups’ confrontation with history increased during this period. For example, according to Alevi intellectual and activist Cafer Solgun, head of the Confrontation Association (Yüzleşme Derneği), the Dersim Massacre was not historically questioned by the Alevi groups due to the Kemalist ideology, because “Alevis were proclaimed guardians of this system, which said it was laic but does not recognize them” (C. Solgun, Personal Interview, February 7, 2015). For Solgun, historical facts clarify that “Dersim 1938 was the bloodiest annihilation operation of the Republic” (Ibid). Solgun further argues that in the contemporary situation “Alevis seriously question these distorted relations with Kemalism” (Ibid). As seen from the example of Cafer Solgun, not only being under the CHP umbrella, but also this confrontation process let the Alevis act in an autonomous structure through the activities of Alevi NGOs.

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<sup>52</sup> World Value Survey in Turkey, conducted by Prof. Dr. Yılmaz Esmer from Bahçeşehir University in 54 provinces and 128 districts, with 1605 participants.

The major controversy during this confrontation process was the Alevis' demand for official recognition of the Cem Houses. Contrary to the Alevis' demands, the President of the Diyanet at the time, Ali Bardakoğlu, had said that Cem Houses are not places of worship and the Muslims' place of worship is the Mosques (Hürriyet, 2008). When the Alevis could not obtain their aims from the state institutions, they started to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) over the religious discrimination of Alevis, and the ECHR determined in 2014 that Turkey discriminates against the Alevis over worship places. Turkey was called to recognize the religious rights of the Alevis (Hürriyet Daily News, 2014). During this time, the government proposed a law to cover the expenses of the Cem Houses from the general budget, as was done for the recognized Mosques, Churches and Synagogues. While this happened in some of the CHP and HDP municipalities, because the government's proposed law recognizing the Cem Houses was not passed, the practice did not become common. Consequently, while the AKP government was dealing with removing restrictions from the Sunni Islamic people (e.g. the headscarf ban), it did not consider the demands of the Alevis, and so the Alevis supported the emerging social explosions from the 2013 onwards. As part of the Gezi Protests in 2013 and the resistance movements afterwards, the Alevis were a part of the emerged counter-hegemonic sphere against the proposed cultural codes of the conservative AKP. Subsequently, when the pro-transformation left historical bloc was formed under the HDP project, Alevis were a part of this historical bloc. Also, with the various Alevi candidates in HDP in the June and November 2015 elections, they contributed to the HDP's exceeding the 10% threshold at the end.

In conclusion, since Alevis had been excluded from the Ottoman system due to the dominance of Sunni Islam, they found it better to live in harmony with the laic state function of Turkey, even as they faced assimilation policies with the restoration of the hegemony of the new republic. Nevertheless, parallel to the global wave of increasing the sphere of socialism during the 1960s as well as increasing migration from Alevi villages to the major metropolises in Turkey and to the industrialized western European countries, the first steps for Alevi awakening started in the Turkish left. However, as a result of the 1980 Military Coup, the left lost most of its power in Turkey. In this situation, Alevis were positioned to follow their own way, by following the identity and culture policies of the emerging civil society under the liberal environment of the Özal period. During the 1990s, with an increase in publications as well as cultural activities through continuous interaction with the Alevi diaspora in western Europe, the Alevism issue started to occupy a central place in the discussions in the public

sphere. Although confrontation began in the Alevi groups over the Kemalist system, the reformist AKP governments' major attempts from the 2000s, such as Alevi Opening and the Alevi workshops, were not very successful at integrating, namely absorbing, Alevi groups into the new Turkey. Another reason for this lack of success was most Alevi associations' suspicion about the conservative democratic nature of the party as well as the party's resistance to the demands of the Alevis for the recognition of Cem houses as separate places of worship. Nonetheless, throughout these attempts, the public opinion of recognizing Alevism and supporting Alevis' religious practices has become more supportive. In the end, as a result of this unsuccessful integration process, many Alevi groups joined the Gezi Protests in 2013, becoming part of the pro-transformation left historical bloc under the HDP project for the general elections of June and November 2015. Consequently, within the social transformation process in the post-1980s, not only was the Alevis' involvement in the public sphere achieved, beginning in the civil society and extending to the political arena as with the HDP project, but also the public perception changed to support freedom for Alevis' religious and cultural practices.

### **3.3.6. Changing Perception on Gender Expression in Transforming Turkey: LGBT Movements in the Public Sphere**

It was explained in the previous sections that the 1980s was the breaking point for traditional thinking in all areas and a new arena was opened for the new demands and the new conceptions that arose through the liberalization wave in relation to the development of the civil society in Turkey. These changes were also related to the rural depopulation that had been triggered in the 1950s and hastened in the 1980s by the significant economic growth during these periods. Whereas the old social movements during the cold war period were based on the political division into left and right, the new social movements started to expand into the middle class and emphasis began to be given to ethnic, cultural, religious, gender and sexual identities. These new social movements did not represent a break from the old ones but a continuation of the struggle with an expanded arena for freedom. Importantly, as a reflection of a desire for the freedom of different sexual identities, the formation of LGBT movements in the post-1980s in Turkey falls in to the struggle for freedom for the new lifestyles in developing and urbanizing Turkey. In this sub-section, this emergence of LGBT movements as the new social opposition in the urban areas during the social transformation process in the post-1980s will be explained, starting with a historical analysis.

Historically, Turkey belonged to the Mediterranean and the Middle East cultural sphere in which same-sex relationships were understood to be between a powerful (masculine) older male (active) and a weak (feminine) younger male (passive). According to Aberle (cited in Kıracı, 2013: 107), the older male and young beautiful male relationship had grown in the Greek tradition and passed to the Arab society in the middle ages. In this culture area, the active (masculine) who did the penetration, was regarded as above the passive (feminine) role. Unlike the contemporary perception of homosexuality, same-sex relations were regarded in the Middle Eastern societies such that male (active) sexual activity was a supplement to heterosexual relationships, but the passive side of this relationship was socially excluded. This was also seen in the Ottoman society as pederasty (Oğlancılık) as the practice of active men. *Qabus Nama*, written by *Emir Kaykavus of the Ziyarids* in Persian in 1082 in what is now Persia, as an advice book to his son *Gilanshah*, included recommendations about sexual relationships and offers important insights into the roots of pederasty. As an example from the book:

“In summer incline to women, and in winter to boys, then health and well-being will be found. For the bodies of boys are hot, and if two hot bodies come together in the summer it is harmful to the health. And women’s bodies are cold, and if two cold bodies come together in the winter, it dries up the body” (Quoted in Altındal, 1993: 163).

This mindset continued in Turkey after the Ottoman Empire: the passive side of the same-sex relationship was blamed, but not the active side, as it was not regarded as homosexual to have sexual intercourse with a gay or transsexual man. The family occupies a major place in the nation-state structure of Turkey, and the sense of belonging to the nation includes the continuation of the traditional gender roles. Homo-eroticism was suppressed by the system, since sexual orientations other than the heterosexuality were regarded as contrary to the national values and patriotism and thus destabilizing to the social system. So, after the establishment of the republic, traditional gender roles were supported by the system, and through this heterosexual family orientation, people were encouraged to support the Turkish development to reach the ‘level of contemporary civilizations’. This could be regarded as within Turkey’s imitation of Europe not only in economic and political matters, but also in social relations. Although there was no law prohibiting same-sex relations, the existence of the LGBTs in the public sphere was neglected. However, international interaction transformed this active/passive division into gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and other identities, chiefly in the post-1980s.

However, as in many other areas, in the early 1980s the military's influence, as a result of the coup in 1980, was seen in social morality, with the formation of society based on the *military-nation (ordu-millet)*<sup>53</sup> perspective that did not provide a living space to the LGBT identities. The coup government issued a circular in 1981 stating that “the men dressed in women's clothes are prohibited from working in the public houses” (Demishevich, 2015). This circular clearly targeted the famous Turkish trans woman singer Bülent Ersoy, the most important trans figure in Turkey. According to Demishevich, the story behind this prohibition was that while Ersoy was singing at Göl Casino in the Izmir International Fair arena in August 1980, she was accused of showing her breasts to the audiences in response to their cheers for that (Ibid). Later, an investigation was opened against her that culminated in the circular. However, this circular was legislated away in 2002 with the EU harmonization package (NTV, 2008a).

According to Yasemin Öz (2009), while LGBT individuals were the group most influenced by the 1980 Military Coup, they are not usually mentioned in the traditional analysis. During the cleansing process trans women's hair was buzz cut and they were deported from Istanbul to other cities (Ibid). Thus, the system left them to their fate. These excluded trans individuals constructed their alternative public sphere near Taksim mainly in the Tarlabası region since this location had been neglected by the Municipality of Istanbul. Since they were also excluded from workplaces, they had to earn money from prostitution. The construction of solidarity between the LGBT individuals was facilitated by their living in ghettos, which also somehow limited their interaction with other segments of society. Then with changing capitalist modes in the 1980s, new wealthy trans individuals became visible not only in the ghettos, but also in the rich parts of the metropolises.

Another important obstacle to LGBT individuals entering into the public sphere was the media's presenting them as a source of sexually transmitted diseases and illegal prostitution. So, the people's preconceptions affected this exclusion from the public sphere. This is evident in recent researches also: according to Neslihan Güney's (Ankara University), Eda Kargı's (Hacettepe University) and Aybike Çorbacı Oruç's (Ankara University) research (2004: 9), “Investigation of University Students' Views on Homosexuality”, the view was mostly

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<sup>53</sup> The myth of military-nation (*ordu-millet*) is based on the traditional identification of the nation with the army. The expression of the military-nation myth has been the description of the Turks as a nation that is an army (See Altınay, 2004). This expression was used generally by the general staff as well as the pro-military nationalist groups to present the public sympathy toward the military.

negative; however, the research also indicated that it was less negative than 30 years before.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, according to Umut Şah's (Istanbul Arel University) research (2012), titled "The Relationship of the Descriptions of Homosexuality, Bisexuality and Transsexuality with levels of Homophobia and Acquaintanceship with LGBT people", high homophobia is related to a lower density of acquaintance.<sup>55</sup> Increasing interaction would thus be regarded as a way to promote empathy between different sexual orientations.

Furthermore, concerning the obstructions to this interaction, discriminatory behavior against the LGBT individuals was seen also in the practices of people's duty to the state. One example was seen in the compulsory military service, a duty of all male citizens except those with disabilities and homosexuals. However, homosexuality had to be documented through medical examinations, which brought a humiliating procedure to homosexual males (Karakartal, 2005). So, people's private life was under official examination. However, this procedure and the examination were changed to be more respectful of human dignity in 2013. Even so, the major practices beginning in the 1980s, including serious pressure on and exclusionary activities against the LGBT individuals brought a kind of solidarity to the LGBT groups that affected their emergence in the civil society.

Another important development that empowered the LGBT movements in the post-1980s was the escape of many leftists from the brutal control of the military regime to western Europe. Through their relocation in western Europe, they were influenced by the new left ideas, especially within the left-academia interaction that brought a new vision to the Turkish left in Europe, including anti-militarism, environmentalism and LGBT rights and freedom. This continued transformation of the Turkish left diaspora in western Europe gradually affected the leftist groups remaining in Turkey since their continued interaction brought new ideas that were different from the class-based approach in the Turkish left. The first attempt beyond the traditional class-based left in Turkey was the Radical Democratic Union in the 1980s. This party aimed to integrate the new components of the society under their umbrella (Doğan, 2004) and got support from the youth in the 1980s. Although the party was soon closed, it is known for having hosted the first LGBT protest action in 1987. When the police forces in Beyoğlu region increased their pressure on LGBT individuals near Taksim, they took shelter in the

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<sup>54</sup> The research was conducted on 90 university students (70 female and 20 male) studying at the Ankara University Faculty of Education and Hacettepe University Faculty of Education in 2003–2004.

<sup>55</sup> The research was made with 325 people (140 male and 185 female) between 17–35 years old by asking open ended questions on their definition of homosexuality, bisexuality and transsexuality and their acquaintanceship with LGBT people. For analyzing their level of homophobia the Hudson and Ricketts Homophobia Inventory was used.



Radical Democratic Union's office in Taksim and went on a hunger strike that made a tremendous impact in the country on hearing their voice all across the country for the first time (Ibid).

The emergence of the LGBT movements in Turkey in the 1990s came with increasing individualization through liberalization as a result of interaction with the social developments in Europe. The first example, Lambda Istanbul<sup>56</sup> was founded in 1993, on the initiative of civilian youth who were in interaction with European youth at the time. Subsequently, Lambda Istanbul became the first member of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association from Turkey and started to actively engage with the social organizations concerning LGBT rights (Yüksel, 2013: 10). Importantly, Lambda Istanbul organized a pride night in July 1996 at Club Prive in Istanbul, showing the organization's function as a mobilizer by providing a protective body at that time. In the same period, the organization's first influential activity was restraining an anti-LGBT organization from distributing a brochure that stated a link between homosexuality and transmitting Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Another movement on the LGBT rights that started during this period was KAOS GL Magazine. While the magazine was first established in 1994 by a group of LGBT activists with an anti-discrimination and liberationist perspective, the KAOS GL Association also had cultural activities and organizations dealing with the LGBT rights.<sup>57</sup> Increasing these influential activities made these NGOs popular among LGBT individuals in expressing their sexual identity. Thus, major improvements concerning the liberation of LGBT individuals in Turkey happened due to the increasing activities of the LGBT civil society, in the liberal, pro-transformation period from the 2000s onwards.

### ***The Way Toward the Gezi Protests and Public Visibility of the LGBTs: "What Does Forbidden Mean, My Dear?" ("Yasak Ne Ayol?")***

As mentioned in the previous sections, the idea of democracy and freedom expanded throughout the country in the 2000s through the EU harmonization process. The LGBT movements were positively affected by this process since their public visibility had slightly increased. Their participation in the public protests with their flags, largely within the left

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<sup>56</sup> For further information on the history and activities of Lambda Istanbul, see online available at: <http://www.lambdaistanbul.org/s/lambdaistanbul-lgbti-solidarity-association/> (Last accessed 12.03.2017).

<sup>57</sup> KAOS GL Association was formed in 2005 in connection with KAOS GL Magazine. More information can be found on the official web page of the KAOS GL Association, See online available at: <http://www.kaosgl.com/home.php> (Last accessed 12.03.2017).

liberal social groups, brought public attention that increased the public discussion of LGBTs. In turn, this gave them more opportunity for individual participation that empowered the NGO functions. In parallel to the social developments that brought increasing awareness of the LGBTs and their rights, a pluralist wave was also seen in the political sphere, beginning shortly before the AKP came to power as a single party after the November 3, 2002 general election. As an example, on Abbas Güçlü's TV program Youth View (Genç Bakış) in 2002, a university student asked AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: "I want to know your opinion on gays, should they have marriage rights like in Europe, what's your opinion about them?" Erdoğan answered, "first of all, within the frames of their rights and freedoms they have, their rights must be protected by law. I do not like the way they are treated, as seen from time to time on some TV channels."<sup>58</sup> This view on the rights of the LGBTs and the other social problems of Turkey canalized the liberal votes of the society to the AKP.

Furthermore, from the 2000s on, the LGBT groups and individuals underwent serious transformations concerning increased public visibility not only on the social level, but also in the political sphere. The most important events giving the LGBT groups visibility were *Istanbul LGBT Pride Parade*, which was first held in 2003 and the *Ankara LGBT Pride Parade*, started in 2008. LGBT individuals participated in these events every summer starting 2003, with the support of other social groups. The number of participants increased year by year, and in 2013 more than 100000 LGBT individuals participated in Istanbul LGBT Pride Parade (Özer, 2013). In 2014 and 2015, LGBT Pride Parades were celebrated again in June, but at that time in the Islamic holy month Ramadan. This provided an interesting mixture of society: While the conservative people were fasting during daytime, the LGBT individuals celebrated the pride parade. Consequently, there was no intervention from the other components of the society against the pride parades; however, in 2015 the Municipality of Istanbul asked at the last minute to cancel the pride parade, saying it does not fit the 'spirit of the holy month' Ramadan. The LGBT groups did not cancel, but held the pride parade. However, the organization was not peaceful: there was a police attack (Mccrum, 2015). Even so, the AKP issued an election brochure for the June 7, 2015 elections including pictures from the 2014 Istanbul LGBT Pride Parade, stating that "Turkey is a country that can hold a Gay Pride on Istiklal Avenue even in the middle of the holy month Ramadan. The increased

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<sup>58</sup> The Youth View TV discussion program provided an arena for the university students and the political party leaders or representatives to exchange views on the social problems of Turkey and give the youth a platform to express their views. Also, for the student's question and Erdoğan's answer on homosexuality see the video online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyzizrExiaA> (Last accessed 12.03.2017).

visibility of conservative people does not mean that there is an intervention in people's lifestyles" (LGBTI News Turkey, 2015). So, this created a paradox between the actions and the discourse coming from the government.

Another important development in the public visibility of the LGBTs was the first unofficial public marriage ceremony for a gay couple, held in Istanbul in 2014. The ceremony was held on a ferry on the Bosphorus with the support of LGBT groups and attracted the media's interest, with the pictures and the story shared all around Turkey. The sharing of these images had a positive impact on self-confidence for homosexual couples whose relationships were secret. However, a later interview with the gay couple revealed that they had been negatively affected by this advertisement, having trouble finding jobs as well as renting a home.<sup>59</sup> Public discussions about these public practices, both supportive and critical, went on as LGBT individuals engaged in the public sphere.

Even as the major developments concerning the rights and freedoms of LGBT individuals took place on the social level within the liberal and pro-transformation pluralist environment starting in the 2000s, the exclusionary practices of AKP governments concerning those rights and freedoms brought LGBT individuals and groups to the opposition. The exclusionary talks of the government members who regard homosexuality as an illness have a great share of this critical positioning. As an example, State Minister Aliye Kavaf shared her opinion on homosexuality in an interview in the *Hürriyet's* Sunday supplement, stating that "I believe homosexuality is a biological disorder, a disease," and "I believe [homosexuality] is something that needs to be treated. Therefore I do not have a positive opinion on gay marriage" (quoted in *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2010b). While her comments showed her reaction to the discussions about the LGBT rights in the society, this also reflects the influence of pro-LGBT NGOs on bringing the problems into the debates of the public sphere.

As was seen in the example of State Minister Aliye Kavaf and many others, the government aimed to marginalize the LGBT groups and individuals. As a result, LGBT groups and individuals became part of the counter-hegemonic sphere against the AKP governments' exclusionary practices within the new opposition that emerged during the Gezi Park Protests in 2013. The Gezi Protests also show an important example of LGBT groups being accepted as primary components within a collective action; LGBT groups and individuals had a space

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<sup>59</sup> For the first gay couple marriage ceremony in Turkey, see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD5XPPSokuA> and for the post-marriage ceremony interview with the couple see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48QBr5sXazs> (Last accessed 12.03.2017).

within the emerged Gezi commune to practice their identity functions under their flag. Thus, after functioning in the protests, LGBT groups' previously mentioned social and cultural practices such as the LGBT Pride Parade and the gay couple's marriage ceremony were visible, which shows the empowering function of being in the Gezi commune. Subsequently, by being a part of the counter-hegemonic sphere during the Gezi Park Protests in 2013, a majority of the LGBT groups and individuals were also part of the emerged historical bloc represented within the HDP project in the 2015 general elections. The increasing public visibility of LGBT individuals in the process led not only the HDP, but also other political parties to open places for them. Six LGBT candidates entered the June 7, 2015 general elections to be MPs: Filiz Kerestecioğlu, Özlem Şen, Barış Sulu and Gülistan Aydoğdu from HDP; Deva Elena Özenen from Anadolu Party; and Melda Onurun from CHP. Only LGBT activist Filiz Kerestecioğlu from HDP was elected as an MP (Haber 10, 2015b). In the same election, HDP issued the first election promise in Turkey to legalize same-sex marriage (Yackley, 2015). The demands of these excluded social groups started to be considered also on the political level through this transformation process.

In sum, historically, same-sex relationships had their roots in Ottoman society, with more than a thousand years of cultural practices in the Islamic society. While the aim during the republic period had been to remove this cultural practice from society through further exclusionary and humiliating ways, the effect of international society as well as the liberal environment in the post-1980s continued and strong man-young (feminine) boy relationships transformed into various sexual identities, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual. The major impact on public awareness of these new sexual identities came through the emergence of the pro-LGBT NGOs in the 1990s. Through influential activities over social and cultural matters concerning the rights of LGBTs, they had a function both in the development of their own consciousness of the LGBT individuals and in bringing public attention to the LGBT issue in Turkey. Throughout the 2000s, the LGBT groups and individuals underwent a serious self-development process under the reformist period of the AKP governments. But, the lack of institutional practices toward a solution to the problems of LGBT individuals and groups as well as the exclusionary talks of government members pushed them to join the Gezi Park protests and locate themselves in this counter-hegemonic sphere. Later, when a historical bloc emerged under the HDP project, they were an important component of this bloc. These factors all enhanced their public visibility on both the social and political level. Consequently, from

the 1980s, the LGBT groups and individuals greatly transformed themselves, being involved in the public sphere not with political solutions, but through social practices.

Overall, this section briefly covered the social and cultural dimension of the social transformation process in the post-1980s, considering both domestic and international effects of the process. The first sub-section covered the development of civil society as a counter-hegemonic sphere for the pro-transformation social groups in the post-1980s. The analysis also included the function of civil society as a place of the formation of hegemony during the AKP period in the 2000s. The second sub-section covered the transformation of the pro-Islamic movements and of the conservative Muslims by engaging modernity and being part of the public sphere. The analysis also included the transformation of public sphere through the involvement of Islam as well as the public perception of modernity as a result of this process. In the third sub-section, the Kurdish movement's engaging in the public sphere due to their ongoing struggle and to government-backed reform processes was explained. The fourth sub-section revealed the struggle of women's movements to eliminate discrimination against women and the effect of conservative veiled women's engaging in the public sphere on this struggle. In the fifth sub-section, the Alevis' awakening through the liberalization wave as well as their role in the pro-transformation struggle processes were explained in the historical context. The sixth sub-section analyzed the struggle of LGBTs to be a part of the overall public sphere in the new opposition movements in the post-1980s. These processes all reveal that the civil society of Turkey was an arena for struggle in the pro-transformation social groups, challenging first the hegemonic position of the military in the post-1980s and then, from the Gezi Park Protest onwards, the increasing authoritarian practices in the civilian political sphere. This function of civil society also affected the formation of the pro-transformation historical blocs. The first, during the AKP period in the 2000s, mainly brought the pro-Islamic movements and the Kurds as part of the public sphere. In the second, with the Gezi Park protests in 2013, Alevis, LGBTs, secular Kurds, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, and women's movements were part of pro-transformation left historical bloc that brought them to the public sphere as part of the resistance process. These examples and many others show that a serious social transformation process occurred in Turkey, both by changing the internal dynamics of the pro-transformation groups and by transforming the characteristics of the public sphere into a more pluralist place during the social transformation process between 1983 and 2015. Moving forward, having explained the transformation process in the major

social groups, the next section covers a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of intellectual sphere from the Ottoman Empire.

### **3.4. Ottoman ‘Münevver’ to Contemporary Intellectual: Transformation of the Intellectual Sphere in Turkey**

The previous sections presented the major transformations in economic, cultural and social practices in Turkey from the 1980s onwards. In addition to these, this transformation process also took place within the intellectual sphere. Since the transformation process was in a sense related to the westernization process in Turkey, which had started in the late Ottoman Empire, understanding the transformation of the intellectual sphere in the post-1980s requires a historical analysis of the evolution of the intellectual sphere since the Ottoman Empire. In the historical context, the educated class including Shayk al-Islam, Mufti, Qadi, Professors (Müderris) and Imams<sup>60</sup> could be regarded as early intellectuals in the Ottoman society, being a part of the hegemonic classes through their positioning in administrative areas. They had the function, in the judiciary, religious, educational and governmental areas, of widening the hegemonic position of Ottoman Sultan under the hierarchical leadership. This positioning allowed elites to emerge in the Ottoman Empire, since they claimed material benefits under the hierarchical chain of the Ottoman administrative body, and their children acquired wealth and education as the process continued.

Toward the late Ottoman Empire, the position of the intellectuals must be considered in parallel to the emergence of the printing press. According to Orhan Koloğlu (2013:11), the first newspaper in the Ottoman Empire emerged in 1820s. The newspaper’s coming late compared to the West is mainly due to the relative lack of proper publishing houses in the Ottoman Empire; the first publishing house, Müteferrika Publishing House (Müteferrika Matbaası), published 12,000 copies of 23 volumes of 17 books in the years 1729–1742 (Ibid., 16–17). Later, the first print media were started in French by foreign enterprises; consisting of newspapers and magazines with a Western cultural and political influence, they were connected to the Ottoman Empire’s attempts at westernization and the declaration of the Ottoman Reform (Tanzimat) in 1839.

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<sup>60</sup> While the *Shayk al-Islam* was regarded as the highest body of Islamic sciences of the time, *Mufti* was the representative of the Shayk al-Islam’s authority within the cities. Moreover, *Qadi* was regarded as the Jurists of the Ottoman society and *Müderris* were the professors of the early universities (Madrasa). *Imams*, in the lowest chain, are in charge of the Mosques and so have most interaction with the public.

Subsequently, as the elites emerged, they engaged in these westernization attempts by following the developments in culture and being influenced by the ideological positions of the West. On this point, receiving higher education in the West (i.e., France) and learning French as a foreign language were part of being influenced by the ideas that emerged in the West. This brought a new intellectual class named 'Münevver', meaning 'enlightened' (Mango, 1991:171), a position that entailed having a higher education background and foreign language knowledge as well as following an ideological position that had roots in the West. In the westernizing environment of the Ottomans, Münevvers had a monopoly over certain cultural issues that put them into a privileged position in the society. This knowledgeable position gave them the power to influence the social and political sphere with their ideas. The Ottoman rulers had to collaborate with this emerging class due to their influential ideas, which were expounded in the press as well.

In the late Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman rulers followed the newspapers published in Europe; they were interested in the social functions of these newspapers. The first official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, was published in 1831 at the time of *Sultan Mahmut II* (Öner, 2007: 150). Even as the official press was oppressive and based on the empire's status quo, it was influential in the transformation of the society in many ways, such as secularization, westernization and engaging with the West in terms of modernization. So, newspapers and the early political columns triggered westernization especially in the educated strata in the Ottoman Empire and caused further sociopolitical transformation on the way to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.

The voice of the Ottoman Münevvers increased from the Ottoman Reform in 1839 to the First Constitutional Era (I. Meşrutiyet) from 1876 to 1878 and the Second Constitutional Era (II. Meşrutiyet) between 1908 and 1918, as did freedom in the press. Critical discourses began to appear in the newspapers. Thus, the newspapers had first connected to the public with the reform period; the criticism and people's voice were followed by the new sociopolitical developments. This was mostly related to this new intellectual class of Münevvers' involvement in the public arena with the ideas of 'westernism' and 'reformism'. However, this was in cohesion with the Empire's politics during that time, since the reform period had been declared for the westernization of the Ottoman Empire through the hand of the state (Birand, 1955: 5). Intrinsicly, the Münevvers of this period aimed to legitimize the government's set way of westernization in the late Ottoman Empire. This was the basis for increasing westernism toward the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.

In this path to westernization, it is not possible to talk about a uniform stance of the Ottoman Münevvers, since the process of westernization differed based on various understandings of the public. The first reaction against the reform process that started with the Tanzimat in 1839 was the intellectual movement of ‘Young Ottomans (Yeni Osmanlılar)’. The group emerged in the 1860s against the application of reforms, though not the idea behind them, which was westernization. One of the major figures to emerge in this Young Ottomans group was the famous Turkish intellectual and writer Namık Kemal. Like those of many intellectuals in the Young Ottomans group, Kemal’s ideas encompassed westernization without moving away from the national identity (Uçman, 2014:116). So, through propounding the establishment of a parliament based on national representation, they aimed to achieve economic, social-cultural and political development.

The ‘Young Turks (Jön Türkler)’ followed the Young Ottomans on the way of westernization. Sultan Abdulhamid II came to power in 1876, closed the Chamber of Deputies (Meclis-i Mebusan) which operated only two years, in 1878 and in the same year suspended the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 (Kânûn-ı Esâsî), which had been declared the first Ottoman constitution in the first year of his reign. These changes led the intellectual sphere to actively engage the liberation mentality. So, Young Turks became the intellectual center against Abdulhamid II’s rule. The Young Turks were mostly Münevvers who had been influenced by the social and political ideas that emerged in the West. The major aim of the Young Turks was, by eliminating the increasing nationalism within the Ottoman territories, to solve the problem of the dissolution of the Empire. They also aimed to eliminate the backwardness in the Empire to achieve its further development.

The Young Turks did not espouse a single viewpoint or ideological position. Primarily, the Young Turks had a ‘conservative westernist’ approach that mainly found a voice with the ideas of Mizancı Murad (See Özdemir and Kantaş, 2014). This approach was to gather science and technology from the West, but not the cultural and moral sentiments. Thus, Mizancı Murad also regarded education as the remedy for the dissolution of the Ottoman empire (Ibid: 247). Another approach within the Young Turks group stayed within pure ‘westernism’. This westernist approach was developed by Ahmed Rıza and maintained the supremacy of the West over Islam. The influence of this approach grew with the educated young Ottoman generation in the West that was also affected by the increasing popularity of the materialist philosophy, especially in France. Since Ahmed Rıza studied in Paris, he saw



education and science as the major contributors to the development of the West, and offered his thoughts on applying these principles to the Ottoman Empire to save the country from its 'dangerous' situation (Malkoç, 2007: 99). This westernist approach was chiefly based on the idea that by following the way of science, Ottoman society could develop, as happened in the West. Another approach was based on 'liberalism' and the ideas of Prince Sabahaddin. Prince Sabahaddin had been influenced by Western liberal philosophy while he was in exile in France after 1899. Based on this liberal approach, the Prince saw the Ottoman society's collectivist nature, which eliminated individual creativity, as the reason for its backwardness (Arslanoğlu, 2006: 213–214). The Prince saw the development of private enterprise as the first step for transition to an individualist society that would bring about the development of the Ottoman society. The reformist mentality of the Prince was based on a development from the social level to the political level in a socially constructed political transformation process.

As seen from the different ideological positions, westernization was the main determinant of the Münevvers' discussions in public intellectual life in the late Ottoman Empire. In books, newspapers and magazines, the major debates in the public intellectual life of the Ottoman Empire were on Islamism, westernism and Ottomanism until the end of the Empire (Ülken, 2001: 347). During the late Ottoman Empire, the goal of the Ottoman Münevvers was to enlighten the society through interaction with the Western ideologies. However, the debates over westernization in the late Ottoman Empire were the starting point for the separation of the society between westernism and traditionalism. This was especially seen with the further westernization attempts during the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.

### ***From Ottoman 'Münevver' to Turkish 'Aydın', the Secularization and Westernization with the Intellectuals of Young Republic***

As the major venues for the intellectuals at the end of Ottoman period, newspapers mainly dealt with supporting national liberation. Nearly 100 newspapers had been published in different parts of the country, such as *Hukuk-i Beşer* in Izmir and *Hakimiyeti Milliye* in Ankara (Mazııcı, 1996: 137). Later, in the post-National Liberation War intellectual environment, nationalism and laicism were the most important elements of the new republic, along with westernization. Whereas multidimensional conceptions such as Islamism, westernism and Ottomanism were seen in the intellectual sphere of the late Ottoman Empire, the new Turkish 'Aydın' (hereafter Kemalist intellectual), continued with the Western stance. However, unlike the Ottoman Münevver, the new republic's intellectual had to follow a more

determined ideological position by formulating the new official ideology. This ideological position, later advertised as Kemalism, was based on three pillars: nationalism, laicism and westernism. The founders of the Republic expected this Kemalist intellectual to widen the official ideology by fighting against the enemy ideologies (Meriç, 1983: 130–137). Thus, the position of relative autonomy of the previous Ottoman münevvers, some of whom were critical, was put aside.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, the process of importing ‘ideas’ and ‘institutions’ from the West, which started with the Tanzimat period, continued radically in the republican period, especially in the 1920s and 1930s. On this point, while the radical reforms including the Abolition of Caliphate (1924), Clothing Reform (1925–1934), Hat Law (1925) and Alphabet Reform (1928)<sup>61</sup> showed that the new republic’s direction was toward westernization, they also represented a sharp transformation, removing the new generation’s connection to the history of the social and cultural arenas. Creating the consciousness for the followers of this new ideology and widening it to the different segments of the society was the duty of Kemalist intellectuals that was granted by the founders of the republic. However, as a side-effect of the westernist and secular concern of these intellectuals in the new republic, a step by step loss of contact in this intellectual sphere with the subordinated groups in the conservative part of Anatolia occurred. Thus, the republic provided a new arena in Turkey for the separate laic institutions on the one hand, but on the other hand the conservative Anatolian subordinated groups continued their religious practices through the emerging religious communities (i.e. Nur Movement, Sulaymanites etc.). The Kemalist intellectuals’ influence was restricted to the educated urban strata living in the major cities including Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Thus, the Jacobin Kemalist doctrine continued in its way with the famous maxim of the time, “For People, Despite the People (Halk İçin, Halka Rağmen)” (Zürcher and van der Linden, 2004: 104). The main function of the intellectuals was as missionaries for the Kemalist ideology, like a teacher, since these Kemalist reforms were regarded as beneficial for the society’s development.

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<sup>61</sup> The first major step in this secularization process was the abolition of caliphate in 1924, since the Caliphate institution provided a meaning as the unity of Muslims under the Caliph that is incompatible with the nation state based laicism of Turkey. In the same way, with the Clothing Reform new measures were taken to encourage women to dress like Western women. Also, within the Clothing Reform, the Hat Law forced the men to wear Western style hats rather than the Eastern style fez. Moreover, the Alphabet Reform brought the use of the Latin alphabet, removing the use of Arabic letters not only in the education system, but also in the private life. All these reforms were part of the westernization process in Turkey.

In this respect, in the first decade of the Republic, many restrictions were made on the newspapers to make them the legitimizing actors of the official ideology. Major perspectives in the newspaper and magazines stayed in line with the requirement of westernization of the country to reach the level of developed countries. Ziya Gökalp was an important intellectual figure in the first decade of the republic that influenced Atatürk with his ideas (Altınkaş, 2011:118). Gökalp's ideas, which Atatürk agreed with, related to the requirement for westernization under the nation-state umbrella based on Turkishness to overcome the Western hegemony. These prototype Kemalist intellectuals revised the contemporary understanding of the history and constructed a unitary mentality for the social arena, skipping the multicultural dimension of the Ottoman Empire. Turkishness was the major determinant for inclusion in this intellectual stratum, along with being Western and secular. In this situation, the unitary mentality of the republican period over the multicultural legacy of the Ottomans as well as the exclusion of Islam, which strongly concerned the majority of the subordinated groups, limited the probability of this new official ideology's acceptance by these groups. The domination of the Kemalist intellectuals largely continued until the 1950s, when the multiparty system was introduced.

With the multiparty period in the 1950s, critical voices began to rise in the public sphere. While the number of newspapers was increasing, polarization concerning social and political practices started to be seen in the columns. In the period of 1946–1960, there were two ideological focuses in the columns worth mentioning: discussions on how the democracy needs to be understood, and concerns about and reactions to laicism and the protection of the reforms (Bora and Cantek, 2009: 887–888). Newspaper columns had a function of political propaganda, driven by the major ideologies. This was also related to the further democratization attempts with introducing the multiparty system in Turkey. So columns, as the major discussion places of intellectuals, achieved the major function of the democracies by creating public discussions on the important subject of the social and political system.

Moreover, beginning in the multiparty period in the 1950s, columnists in newspapers became more important, given the increasing literacy rates as well as growing anti-regime activities within the opposition parties. Even so, the dominant Kemalist intellectual type did not change with this multiparty attempt. Not only them, but also leftist intellectuals were visible during the 1960s, as the left was rising in the world. Leftist magazines such as *Yön* used the popular conception of Marxism in the post-1960s for a radical modification of Kemalism (Atılğan, cited in Çetin, 2008: 47). This left stance was not to shake the traditional features of the

system but was located within an open arena of the system with an aim of transforming the state institutions. This was same with the intellectual sphere on the right as a result of the growing anti-communist ideologies during the cold war period. Thus, the intellectual sphere of the republican period until the 1980s was mostly operating in an arena provided by the state for them to act in cohesion with the official ideology. However, due to their lack of a social base and of interaction with the society, the modernization and secularization ideas were not shared in the majority areas of the republic. Hence, as mentioned, religion was the major important point for the majority of the subordinated groups, which was the reason for inconsistency between the Kemalist intellectuals and the conservative Anatolian people who constitute the majority of the population in Turkey.

### ***Liberalization, Civil Society and Intellectual Diversity in the post-1980s***

As previously explained, Turkey underwent a radical transformation beginning in the 1980s that also affected the social sphere. In this period, increasing liberalization occurred in the sociopolitical arena in the Özal period, after the end of the military coup government in 1983. The liberal-right discourses and development of civil society in this liberal environment caused the intellectuals to also widen their domain, which created new engagements and new interactions in the sociopolitical arena. References to the notions of democracy, freedom, liberalism and pluralism were found in the intellectual discourses in this process, and were an effective way to create interaction with the pro-transformation social forces.

Moreover, in the post-1980s, the major tendencies in the intellectual arena cover three different dimensions, first engaging the liberal-right bloc, secondly, locating as the autonomous intellectuals and third, following the Kemalist intellectual position that came from the establishment of the republic. In this fluctuating environment, the types of intellectual multiplied, including various perspectives such as liberal intellectuals, second republicanists, Kemalist intellectuals, EU supporters, Think-Tank professionals, Islamist intellectuals, neo-Ottomanists, liberal leftists, Alevi intellectuals and Kurdish intellectuals. Ongoing debates in the intellectual arena have covered the various topics, which shows the wide variety of ideological positions in this neoliberal era. Moreover, the 1980s also brought a transformation mentality to the intellectual sphere. Within these various ideological positions, many of the intellectuals had positioned as pro-transformation, supporting a pluralist liberal transformation beginning in the social arena. Many of the pro-transformation pluralist intellectuals engaged the liberal-right with the Özal period, adapted to this liberal positioning

by leaving their radical positions, which were mainly seen in the pre-1980s sociopolitical environment. The most important example is the famous journalist and author Hasan Cemal, who had supported the idea of the military's involvement in politics during the debates in the pre-1980s period. However, the 1980 Military Coup dictatorship converted his ideas to democracy and he became one of the major supporters of Özal's liberal policies (See H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015). Not only Cemal, but many other rightist and leftist intellectuals engaged with this liberal-right bloc for dissolution of the hegemony of Kemalist state tradition without being suspicious about the rise of Islamism in the social and political arena.

Especially in the 1990s, there were major discussions of Mehmet Altan's 'second republic' concept, which intended to eliminate the Kemalist state function of Turkey. The civil society, which was growing due to the economic development, started to get major attention from this pro-transformation pluralist intellectual sphere as anti-thesis to the hegemonic position of the military. Thus, this emphasis on the civil society was related to its pluralist feature for carrying different social movements into the public sphere. This is to say, different religious movements such as Gülen Organization, Nur Movement and Sulaymanites, different ethnic groups including the Alevi community and Kurdish movement as well as environmentalist groups and different women's movements were all in this category (Çaha, cited in Talas, 2011: 396). Through interaction among the civil society, private media and intellectuals, this civil societist perspective of the pro-transformation pluralist intellectuals was popularized by blaming the statist functioning of the existing Kemalist intellectuals. This was related to the Kemalist group's engagement in militarism, since civil society was seen as a safe harbor for the pro-transformation groups to escape from the military's domination.

As previously stated, with the continuous migration wave, beginning in the 1960s, from rural areas of Anatolia to urban spheres, the pro-Islamic movements evolved with the conservative Muslims' rising education levels, which allowed new 'Islamist intellectuals' to emerge in the post-1980s within this pro-transformation bloc. Thus, with the new intellectual ideas in the pro-Islamic movements, they became urban social movements (Dilipak, cited in Özbey, 2011: 51). In this pro-transformation bloc, major emphasis was given to the variously called Islamist/conservative or religious intellectuals starting in the 1990s. Another important function of this emergence of the Islamist intellectuals in the popular pro-transformation intellectual sphere was changing the modernist public perception about the intellectuals,

which came from the establishment of the republic, that the intellectuals were free from religious ideologies. Thus, within the modernist perspective on which Kemalism was based, religion was regarded as a boundary to philosophical enlightenment. The Islamist intellectuals' basing their ideas on certain religious understandings and being followers of religious groups were the major grounds for questioning this modernist perspective.

It should be admitted that there is a limitation to referring to intellectuals who construct discourses concerning Islamic thought as just 'Islamist intellectuals'. This conception of them as Islamist underestimates their tendency toward secularism in the post-1980s. Although their standing point was Islamic thought, their ongoing interaction with the secular center during the social transformation process must be considered, since this gradually transformed their perspectives to include secular and Western thought. As an example, Fehmi Kuru, whose function as a pluralist public intellectual will be analyzed in chapter 5, came from a traditional Islamic family and was the major voice within the pro-Islamic movements in support of EU membership and of achieving the global standards of human rights and democracy during the transformation process. As seen from this example, growing out of pro-Islamic movements and constructing Islamic discourses does not necessarily make these intellectuals Islamist.

As seen from the examples of so-called Islamist intellectuals, these counter-actions against the state hegemony provided an arena for the pro-transformation intellectuals to involve the activities of different social groups and classes. Thus, the empowerment of the civil society in the post-1980s also brought new positions for the intellectuals to engage in the activities of social groups and be interpreters of their group's ideology, acting as the organic intellectuals in the Gramscian sense to widen the group's perspectives. Thus, in this post-modern environment where the discourses are pluralized, intellectuals were the major actors for the new hegemonic relations. Concerning the pro-transformation intellectuals' engaging the activities of the social groups and widening the hegemonic perspective of these groups, Abant Platform, which was organized by pro-Gülen Organization Journalists and Writers Foundation (Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı) starting in 1998, is important to mention. This platform was a venue for famous pro-transformation intellectuals, including Murat Belge, Ufuk Uras, Mehmet Altan, Ali Bulaç, Nilüfer Göle, Nazlı Ilıcak and Fehmi Kuru, to discuss the 'major problems' of the country (Çınar, 2016). Later, these were the major organic intellectuals of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc under the AKP project, advocating for their own preferred further reforms and transformations.

In this environment of discursive pluralism, the major debates of the intellectuals in the 2000s concerned the issues of Islam, liberalism and pluralism, and also anti-capitalism toward the end of the decade. Islam came up in the discussions as central to the debates about how to bind the people to the emerging ‘new Turkey’. As one step further in the debates on the ‘second republic’, which was the most important liberal discourse from the 1990s, the new Turkey discourse attracted intellectuals who supported the transformation and they have taken a position with their supportive discourses. Importantly, the new Turkey discourse was used in the 2000s to refer to Turkey’s following the democratization reforms based on the EU membership process, and the reforms for the solution of the Kurdish problem and engaging the global markets (Bora, 2016). Under this new Turkey umbrella, a post-secular pluralist Turkey was formulated, with the intellectual discourses including the discourses of Islam in it. Despite the different conceptions and the various interpretations of Islam, it was regarded as the major transformation force of the social and political practices.

Furthermore, during the 2000s, media became important for sharing ideas, since this brought mediatic intellectuals to the forefront. Intellectuals found a place in the media based on their specialization and on constructing original discourses, which supported the ideological position of the media institutions. Since the positionings in the media began in the 1990s and intellectuals were already engaged with certain social groups through their associated media institutions, the 2000s was the time for the intellectuals to supply opinions for the established order of the liberal right historical bloc under the AKP. With their increasing presence due to mediatization, the intellectuals were active contributors to the important subjects of the society. However, contributing to the debates with the powerful discourses in the media did not mean being in an area of free expression, since there was censorship and self-censorship in the media institutions, in some cases concerning sharing information based on the political position of the media institution (Arsan and Çoban, 2014: 21). Even so, pro-transformation pluralist intellectuals aimed to shape the public opinion by constructing discourses in support of the reform policies of the AKP in the 2000s processes. As will be broadly explained in chapter 5, these intellectuals positioned for the legitimization of the government’s reform policies in the cases of EU membership negotiations, undermining the military’s hegemonic position with regard to Ergenekon and Balyoz trials, the Solution Process of the Kurdish problem and the September 12, 2010 Constitutional Amendment Referendum, among others. However, the Kemalist intellectuals were critical of these reforms and argued that this process would abolish the founding principles of Turkey. The strong critiques of the famous Kemalist

intellectuals Yılmaz Özdil and Bekir Coşkun fall in this category. These will be explained in the next chapter.

Moreover, in the post-2010 period, especially with the Gezi Protests, it was evident that the pro-transformation bloc of intellectuals started to move toward the left, as the existing historical bloc under the AKP hegemony dissolved. Other excluded groups that could not benefit from the transformation process during the 2000s to the same degree as the pro-Islamic movements did, became visible in this new counter-hegemonic sphere by keeping Islam discourse in the movement. Thus, later, in the post-Gezi Park Protests period from 2013, the emerging historical bloc of pro-transformation groups under the socially constructed HDP project included the secular and religious Kurds, Alevis, leftists, other religious minorities such as Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Ezidi and Assyrians, ethnic groups including Albanians, Laz, Pomak, Turkmen and Georgians, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, women, feminists, ecologists and LGBT individuals and groups. The roles of Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy are important in this emerging historical bloc, as will be explained in more detail in chapter 5. In this period, starting with the Gezi Park Protests, social media had an important function in spreading the critical discourses of these intellectuals in the public sphere.

In conclusion, intellectuals' engagement in Western ideologies and the political developments began in the reform period in the late Ottoman Empire. Western cultural influence also shaped the social transformations starting in the same period. Moreover, this process of westernization continued with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and with the secularism and nationalism attempts. This shows the continuity of the intellectual sphere of the late Ottoman Empire into the republican era. However, the exclusion of Islam from the system and the mission of the early intellectuals of the republic to widen the official ideology throughout the republic separated the conservative Anatolian people from the intellectual sphere and gradually demolished the channels for their intellectual development. A new elite social structure emerged in the major cities as educated, Western, secular people. However, the emerged liberal environment in the post-1980s changed this situation, and the subordinated groups of Anatolia started to move into the center as a result of both economic development and the media's interacting with them through the intellectual discourses. New historical blocs were formed, with the engagement of intellectuals, functioning as organic intellectuals, as well as through the involvement of different segments of the society. Thus, empowering the civil society and intellectuals' engagement in social movements as well as



the political processes with the aim of transformation was the major factor in developing the interaction channels in the post-1980s.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter intended to present the broader context of the social transformation in Turkey through a historical analysis starting from the end of the Ottoman Empire, focusing chiefly on the period from 1983 to 2015. The major factor triggering the social transformation process in Turkey in the post-1980s, as presented in the chapter, was economic development, beginning with the change of economic policy toward enrolling into the neoliberal era, which also affected the social and political spheres. Therefore, chapter 3 first highlighted the process of the development of civilian hegemony over the military within the social transformation, which came about by empowering anti-militarism in the social arena as well as with the political reform process during the liberal right historical bloc under AKP governments from the 2000s. Secondly, the change of the economic policy from 1980 onwards with the emergence of liberal economy model was presented as the major issue triggering the social transformation process; it brought privatization as well as economic development in Anatolia. Its side effect of empowering the civilian social sphere through the emergence of the new Anatolian bourgeois was another important focus. Thirdly, the transformation in the social and cultural sphere was highlighted. The first sub-section covered the development of the civil society as a counter-hegemonic sphere to escape from the hegemony of the military in the post-1980s, and then as a venue for the counter-hegemonic social movements during the Gezi Park Protests in 2013. The civil society's function as a venue for the formation of hegemony during the AKP period in the 2000s was also presented. The second sub-section described pro-Islamic movements' evolution in the process of social transformation as a part of the overall public sphere. This sub-section also covered the transformation of the public sphere as well as the people's perception of modernity through the involvement of the Islam in the public sphere. The third sub-section explained the Kurdish movement's Turkeyfication process, beginning with a historical analysis of the emergence of the Kurdish problem including how, beginning in 2009, the reform process called the Solution Process brought the Kurdish language and culture into the public sphere as well as the struggle of the Kurdish movement in the process. The fourth sub-section covered the development of the women's movements in Turkey in the historical context, including how religious women's engagement in modernity and the public sphere contributes to the struggle of the women's movements.

The fifth sub-section presented the emergence of the Alevi problem in Turkey along with AKP governments' approach to Alevis, which aimed for a passive revolution policy toward them and alternatively the Alevis' being part of the public sphere especially in the post-Gezi protests in 2013. In the sixth sub-section, the emergence of the LGBTs' struggle in Turkey was presented in its historical context, including their being an important component in the Gezi Protests in 2013 and their increasing public visibility afterwards. The fourth and last section gave an analysis of the evolution of the intellectual sphere in Turkey from the Ottoman Empire till the contemporary period, which came up with the pro-transformation intellectual sphere.

Overall, all of the presented issues and developments prove the first hypothesis of this dissertation that *Turkey experienced a social transformation process that brought civilian hegemony over the military and allowed historically excluded social groups, including pro-Islamic movements, Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs and women's movements, to enter the public sphere in the post-1980s*. The chapter covered the transformation of the political, cultural and economic aspects of the social space, including some of the key debates that it affected.

Rather than concentrating on these debates, this dissertation intended to find the roles of the intellectuals during this transformation process by presenting their engagement in debates, how they brought concepts to the social movements and the process of constructing the way for the desired transformation in the country. The case study based on seven public intellectuals—Fehmi Koru, Hasan Cemal, Mehmet Altan, Nilüfer Göle, Sırrı Süreyya Önder, İhsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy—should suffice, not only because they cover the main debates of the transformation period, but because each case contains references to others concerning the views, points and counter-arguments to the ideas. Thus, chapter 4, below, describes these sample intellectuals' emergence with a pro-transformation pluralist positioning in the post-1980s followed by a discourse analysis of interview extracts that reveals major implications of their discourses along with the possible historical functions in the practical social transformation process.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Intellectuals in the Public Sphere After the 1980s**

As discussed in the previous chapter, after the 1980s Turkey was in an overtly neo-liberal, economy-based transformation process with a ‘multidimensional’ perspective, which was inspired by the policy ideas and social developments that had emerged through various dynamics. Importantly, as Güney Çeğin (2011) argues, after the 1980s, in the newly formed political and cultural maps, intellectuals extended their effectiveness, even as a significant number of them preferred to acquire supra-ideological identities. However, the intellectuals who began to put forth discourses and participate in the public debates started to engage the social groups as well as the pro-transformation blocs, aiming for a possible transformation in the social and political arena. Informed by these theories, this chapter intends to examine whether the above-mentioned propositions are true. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will investigate the transformation of the intellectual sphere through the emergence of the pluralist public intellectuals as an alternative to Kemalism, which previously had been set in the intellectual sphere in Turkey. The second section will provide a comprehensive discourse analysis of interview extracts taken from interviews of the sample intellectuals, based on their influential discourses and the positions they offer on the subject. Drawing on primary sources, this chapter thus attempts to trace the emergence of pluralist public intellectuals as well as their influential concepts after the 1980s.

#### **4.1. Intellectual Transformism under the Liberalization Process of Turkey: Pluralist Intellectuals vs. Kemalist Intellectuals**

In section 3.4 of chapter 3, it was explained that from the late Ottoman Empire to the 1980s, intellectuals were positioned close to the state policies. The establishment of the Republic of Turkey triggered this relation, which made the intellectuals missionaries for widening the official ideology. Thus, intellectuals’ engaging the military politics as well as their collaboration with the state bureaucrats had been the major points that made them organic intellectuals of the system. However, as was argued, the 1980s brought changes in the intellectual sphere through the pluralization of debates, since the liberal environment opened a

way for the non-state arenas to operate freely, namely for the civil society to become the intellectuals' arena. So it is important to provide a deeper analysis of how, starting in the 1980s, the changes occurred in the intellectual sphere, by covering the sample intellectuals' emergence in opposition to the Kemalist intellectuals. Thus, in this section, this transition in the intellectual sphere will be explained in a broader sense.

Since the establishment of Turkey, the position of the Turkish elites, namely economic, military, political and media elites, had a major influence on the continuation of the hegemonic system. Social and political power was shared within these elite power groups under a continued interaction process. The military and political elites had a greater share in this overall power and were more influential in the decision-making process than other economic and media elites. However, these media elites, namely Kemalist intellectuals, had a function in sharing the official ideology and widening the statuesque over the citizens of the country. As an example of this Kemalist intellectual position in the post-1980s, five days after the September 12, 1980 coup, Oktay Ekşi wrote in his column in the newspaper *Hürriyet* that “Turkey has entered a stage of full repair management. This management is linked to the free democratic system and the principles of Atatürk by being in a position to satisfy them” (Katurman, 2007). Ekşi was not only glorifying the military, but also consolidating his position as the defender of the Kemalist order in one of Turkey's mainstream media outlets, which in turn gave him major support from the military elites.

During the military dictatorship (1980–1983), the mainstream media consisted of these Kemalist intellectuals, and any critical voices that rose were suspended. While these intellectuals were seen to be under the control of the military elites and the political elites, they were the most influential groups in the society, due to their being the control mechanism of the most influential sector of Turkey: the media. These Kemalist intellectuals comprised the directors, editors, influential columnists and reporters in media associations. As the development in mass communication tools provided more influence capacity (Curran *et al.*, 1990: 57–58), the media expanded its area of influence by increasing public reachability and using high technology in the post-1980s, especially with the emergence of the private media, and the importance of the Kemalist intellectuals in the media became a priority for the state. The military's special interest in the media was first seen with regulations curbing the media's freedom; the first attempts against the critical voices in the media were the banning of unwanted media organs, such as *Arayış Magazine*, *Demokrat*, *Hergün* and *Aydınlık* newspapers in 1980. Subsequently, these regulations also affected the mainstream newspapers.

Well-known newspapers were shut down; *Milli Gazete* closed for 72 days, *Cumhuriyet* for 41 days, *Tercüman* for 29 days, *Günaydın* for 17 days, *Milliyet* for 10 days, *Tan* for 9 days and *Hürriyet* for 7 days (Katurman, 2007).

Within this environment that continued to oppress the media, starting soon after the September 12, 1980 coup, the mainstream newspapers, which were under the direction of the Kemalist intellectuals, considered the coup government a necessary step toward finishing the left–right struggle within the country. This opinion became even more popular in the following years, 1980–1983. *Hürriyet*'s headline on September 12, 1981 celebrating the first year of the coup, “Without Forgetting the Past, We Will Reach the Future (Dünü Unutmadan, Yarına Ulaşacağız)”, sheds light on the stance of one of the mainstream newspapers at that time (See *Hürriyet*, 1981). The newspaper dedicated a whole page to justifying the 1980 coup and included a column describing the bad memories of the pre-1980s: “Daily 20–25 Citizens Fall Victim to a Bullet and a Bomb (*Günde 20-25 Vatandaşımız bir Kurşuna bir Bombaya Kurban Gidiyordu*)” (Ibid). The military dictatorship was portrayed as having saved the country from civil war. The headline of another mainstream newspaper, *Milliyet*, in the first-year celebration of the coup, glorified the success of the coup with the headline “Thanks, Soldier (Sağol Mehmetçik)” (See *Milliyet*, 1981). The newspaper *Tercüman*, which also occupied an important place in the Turkish press, had the headline “Peace is 1 year old (Huzur 1 Yaşında)” (Katurman, 2007). The coup government supported these media organizations and the media elites within them, namely the Kemalist intellectuals, by positioning them as the organic intellectuals of the militarist order. By doing so, the coup government aimed to increase the number of its supporters without providing a space for critical voices. In that sense, the ‘need’ for the coup would be clearly explained to the people, since the military had a duty to ‘secure’ Turkey from ‘internal and external threats’. Thus, the Kemalist intellectuals served the military dictatorship as organic intellectuals in the Gramscian sense. They were organic in that they grew from the same specific social groups, and they spoke on behalf of and in the interest of these groups. Their role was to increase the moral leadership of this hegemonic power.

Analyzing the coup government’s intervention into the media reveals that one aim of organizing the media was to increase the Kemalist intellectuals’ functions of working in cohesion with the ruling elites in the economic, political and military areas. This process aimed to strengthen the position of Turkish power elites and their function in all areas of the country. This was also related to the continuation of the hegemony of one cultural perspective

in the country: the Kemalist perspective on Western, secular and Turkish culture. According to Ali Arslan (2004: 8), Turkish power elites had similar social bases, including similar education levels as well as careers. Their position consolidated their cooperation. Despite the military backed Turkish-Islamic Synthesis ideology coming into force for absorbing the growing Islamism within the state order, Kemalist intellectuals in the media after the 1980s have been in a position to strengthen the militarist order, not only through a coalition with the military elites, but also by offering the public a Western, secular, Turkish lifestyle against the increasing Islamism in the public sphere. In that sense, Kemalist intellectuals also aimed, through their influence on the media, to widen the common identity perspective based on Kemalist principles, which required following a Western modernist way of life.

However, especially for the 1980s, it is not possible to talk just about the military's influential coalition with the Kemalist intellectuals; pro-military intellectuals, nationalist intellectuals, neo-ottomanists and others have contributed to the military's hegemonic position by involving the Islamic discourse within it. This was also related to the media's economic politics during that time, which affected the messages that were given to the audience. So the controllers of the media's economic dynamics also controlled the messages that were sent to the people, not only for the state-sponsored media organizations, but also for the private media in the early 1980s. When these private media organs gave the floor to the critical voices that had been banned by the state, they faced economic problems. However, as previously stated, this situation was affected by the political environment, and the increasing liberal arguments from the Özal period in the 1980s allowed more critical voices to rise in the public sphere.

The emerging political liberalism in the Özal period and its side effect on the social arena increased the visibility of the pro-transformation public intellectuals, which had a liberal stance and pluralist approaches to the social problems of the country. In other words, this period in the 1980s created its own intellectuals, in a sense changing the balance of power in the political arena. Intellectuals not only from the liberal tradition, but also from the conservative perspective with a pluralist stance (e.g. Fehmi Koru) were visible in the post-1980s. Importantly, the developing criticism of the Kemalist system in the 1980s and 1990s coming from both the liberal and conservative groups also led to the emergence of a left-leaning critical stance toward the end of the 2000s. As explained in the introduction to the dissertation, the common feature of these intellectuals who were coming from liberal, conservative, left, revolutionist was their pluralist stance that favored a pluralist transformation in the social and political arena. As stated in the introduction, the sample

intellectuals discussed in this dissertation are categorized as ‘pluralist public intellectuals’ because they come from different political ideologies but form an intellectual bloc during the transformation process, widening their pluralist perspectives in different social and political groups.

Moreover, the pluralist ideas that emerged in the intellectual sphere would show themselves to support this liberalization process, especially from the 1980s onwards. The intellectual support in the 1980s for Özalism, which was based on market capitalism as well as liberal democracy, was associated with the increasing anti-militarism in the intellectual sphere. Hasan Cemal, one of the sample pluralist intellectuals for this dissertation project with anti-militarist discourses, became an important supporter of Özalism. Cemal regarded Özal’s stance as aiming to bring change to the military’s hegemonic position in Turkey that would lead Turkey toward a Western liberal democracy, even the economic policy of Özal was based on neo-liberalism. In such an environment, where the people in society lean toward consumption, the intellectuals’ effectiveness would be questioned, since the end of the Cold War also brought the end of new ideological debates. However, these pluralist intellectuals leaned toward the popular culture, which came from the West, and the Western social and political culture became their major emphasis. In that sense, former leftist “revolutionist” Cemal turned to this liberal mentality and became the major supporter of Özal (See H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015). This transformation in the intellectual sphere created a perception of the intellectuals as ‘public’ individuals involved in society in a more personal sense. Later, in Özal’s liberal political environment, new conceptions that contributed to this transformation mentality emerged, and continued alongside the other pluralist public intellectuals’ conceptions in the early 1990s. Mehmet Altan’s ‘second republic’, which questions the Turkey’s Kemalist republican order, and Nilüfer Göle’s ‘Forbidden Modern’, which criticizes the hegemony of the Western modernist perspective from the early establishment of Turkey, were the major influential conceptions from the 1990s and chosen as the other sample pluralist public intellectuals for this dissertation project. Importantly, their liberal pluralist stance within the intellectual sphere developed parallel to the rise of the Kurdish problem and to the social developments of the pro-Islamic movements in Anatolia.

In the historical context, the transformation of the intellectual sphere in the post-military dictatorship period interestingly became the main issue of many discussions. According to Mehmet Özgüden (2007: 94), the intellectuals who were silent during the coup government period slightly increased their voices during the Özal period. One such pluralist intellectual,

Hasan Cemal, who was a journalist at the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* during the coup government, saw the Özal period as a chance to overcome the trauma that had happened during the military dictatorship. Moreover, Özal also secured his own governments from the emergence of resistance to his neoliberal policies in the intellectual sphere by absorbing the older leftist revolutionist intellectuals, replacing the liberal pluralist intellectuals under his hegemonic perspective (Ibid).

According to Özgüden, Özal used the “carrot-and-stick” strategy toward the older leftist intellectuals in order to create an intellectual bloc to support his policies (Ibid). Thus, when the intellectuals started to engage in the right rhetoric, they were rewarded with praise from the pro-capital private media. This process of absorbing intellectuals into an emerging hegemony was found in the Gramscian conception (Portelli, 1982: 106). The emerged liberal-right bloc under Özal used these strategies to absorb both the organic intellectuals of the previous historical bloc and the traditional intellectuals who had not previously been organic to any social groups. Hasan Cemal’s starting to write at the pro-Özal liberal newspaper *Sabah* in 1992 and Mehmet Altan’s 20 years of writing a column for the *Sabah* starting in 1987 are such examples of engaging the liberal-right bloc. This new right rhetoric, which was compatible with the neo-liberal policy, not only absorbed the older leftist intellectuals, but also opened an arena for the conservative intellectuals, such as another sample pluralist public intellectual for the analysis in this dissertation, Fehmi Koru. Koru’s engagement in the Islamic newspapers at that time and his opening a way for carrying the pro-Islamic movements into the center in line with Özal’s strategy of bringing more ideologies into the center clarify his function within this pro-transformation intellectual bloc. Beginning in 1984 as an editor for daily *Milli Gazete*, Koru continued his career at the newspaper *Zaman* till 1998. In this period, *Zaman* became the leading conservative newspaper as part of the chain of Gülen Organization. As will be analyzed in a broader sense beginning in the next section, by engaging with the debate Koru helped bring liberal theses into Islamic thought throughout the years.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the 1990s, with the emergence of private TV channels and diversification of the communication channels, was a period of the mediatization of intellectuals in Turkey. The main issues, debates and problems within the public sphere were discussed in the popular discussion programs. According to Ayşe Inal (1995:67), the major difference between news programs and discussion programs is that news programs form texts based on accredited sources in the name of ‘objectivity’ and ‘impartiality’, while discussion programs invite these sources directly to get their ideas. As accredited sources, the public



intellectuals opened discussions with their original discourses, framing them within the critical political discussion programs of their proposed conceptions. An important example is Mehmet Altan's second republic concept, which was the major discussion topic during the 1990s, due to the function of political discussion programs in bringing these concepts to the forefront. As the venue for these critical voices, the first political discussion program, 32<sup>nd</sup> Day (*32. Gün*) was launched by Mehmet Ali Birand at state TV channel TRT 1 in 1985, with the generic musical intro '*Eve of the War—Jeff Wayne*'. While on the state TV channel TRT 1 the program mainly covered international politics, later, on the private TV channels, it began to deal with Turkey's major internal problems. Bringing critical voices onto the programs caused troubles for Birand; in 1998 a military report accused him of supporting the PKK, and 32<sup>nd</sup> Day was suspended for a year. Another political discussion program that brought the critical voices to the forefront is Political Arena (*Siyaset Meydanı*), which was prepared and presented by Ali Kirca between 1994 and 2013. As a free discussion arena, Political Arena promoted the creation of a culture of debate and democratic participation. According to Turkey Survey Results: Attitudes and Priorities of City Dwellers (International Republican Institute, 1995:59), Political Arena was watched by 34% of city dwellers in Turkey.<sup>62</sup> Especially these political discussion programs had the function of forming the historical bloc of the pro-transformation social groups by popularizing the reformist perspective in the social and political sphere toward the 2000s.

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<sup>62</sup> Concerning the function of the political discussion programs, another research, conducted by Sema Misci Kip and titled "Turkish Television Audiences a Cultural Omnivores? A Study on the Structure of Turkish Television Audiences", revealed that political discussion programs were mostly viewed by the social groups A (at least two generations well educated), B (well-educated families consisting of four people), C1 (more than half of them consist of 3–4 family members and often parents have no university education) and C2 (households of at least four people and householders have an elementary school degree). The fewer viewers of the political discussion programs belonged to the social group D (households of at least five people and one in five households is illiterate). So mainly upper and middle-class families were the subjects of observation and concern for the ideas coming from the discussions in the political discussion programs. However, the increasing public interaction through the development of media technology and the internet provided rooms for expanding these ideas in the lower class. In this research, the data analysis was obtained from the AGB Nielsen firm's measurement report in 2008. TV viewing data were reported on a daily basis for the period between January and June 2008. In the analysis, data about the television viewing behaviors of people over 20 years of age from the social groups of A, B, C1, C2 and D watching the channels (ATV, Cine 5, Discovery, Flash, Fox, Kanal 1, Kanal 7, Kanal D, Show, Star, STV, TRT 1) were analyzed. In the context of analysis, A, B represents the top, C1 and C2 the middle and D the lower social groups. The sample group represented 42,142,150 people. Based on the results of descriptive analysis, 3 social groups' viewing data were reported on 12 TV channels on the basis of 23 program types, and a total of 34,098 pieces of data were analyzed (Misci Kip, 2013: 161–166).

An important factor for the mediatization process of intellectuals was the increasing number of political discussion programs focusing on the reform issues and the existing political conflicts with the rise of the private channels in the 2000s. However, many of them focused on refuting the other side's opinions and simplifying the descriptions by creating slogans. This was seen when the discussions between Kemalist intellectuals and pro-transformation pluralist intellectuals led the discussions into different political camps. Different opinions and the perspectives simply created a multi-conceptual public sphere, which was mainly shaped by the discussions that arose in the political discussion programs. According to Pierre Bourdieu (2008: 238), the TV environment brings out deeper and more intense competition in the expression of ideas. In Turkey, this kind of format especially in the political discussion programs reinforced the polarization of the intellectual platforms, such as privatization proponents/opponents, the EU membership proponents/opponents and Solution Process proponents/opponents in the 2000s. For instance, discussants were expected to take a biased attitude about the AKP government's backed Ergenekon trials against the Military High Command from 2008. In the end, discussants could be labeled in the public opinion as pro-military or subversive. The audiences were forced to be in the position either of defending the military or advocating for the government, especially at times of political crisis between the military and AKP governments in the 2000s. So, within this competitive environment, the pluralist public intellectuals including Mehmet Altan, Hasan Cemal, Fehmi Koru and Nilüfer Göle were positioned under the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc as pro-EU membership, as supporting the Kurdish Solution Process and the involvement of Islam and women with headscarves in the public sphere, and as major supporters of the YES side in the 2010 constitutional amendment referendum.

Moreover, the 2000s was the era when the new media was developed and gradually became a place for discourses about democracy and pluralism which were shared directly with the public. Thus, the development of internet technology facilitated the people's access to information. Also, thanks to the multiplicity and the availability of technical features, these developments brought together similar groups and individuals. Compared to traditional media, faster access to the news and relative freedom from the government's control added to the mobilization function of this new media. This put the audiences in a position to be producers of ideas, not only consumers (Al-Saggaf, 2006: 311–312). If the wider use of the web is considered, in the context of increasing public involvement in the debates, these web interfaces have enabled the blocs to use social media as well as share the columns or

comments of the public intellectuals. Thus, the wider use of the internet in Turkey, especially from the end of the 2000s, increased the interaction between the public and intellectuals.<sup>63</sup>

The debates around bringing democracy and pluralism to the public sphere were triggered by the use of the new media and the internet toward the end of the 2000s. The new media, by creating communication channels, provided opportunities to express ideas and created an interactive environment. This was most evident in Turkey during the Gezi Protests in 2013, whereby social media became a tool for sharing ideas about democracy and pluralism in the public sphere. The new pluralist conceptions on the side of the pro-transformation intellectuals continued with the intellectuals' increasing engagement with the social groups and bringing social and political problems into the agenda by also practically engaging these social movements. On this point, the Gezi protests in 2013 provide important examples of the praxis situation mentioned in the Gramscian conception. Three examples of contributions from the other sample pluralist public intellectuals are important. Firstly, Sırrı Süreyya Önder stopped the heavy machinery works at Gezi Park and called the people to the protest arena during the Gezi Protests on the basis of his 'resistance' discourse. Secondly, Ihsan Eliaçık contributed as Imam of Gezi Park by organizing Friday Prayer as the practical manifestation of his 'anti-capitalist Islam' concept. Thirdly, Foti Benlisoy contributed as an active young intellectual by offering new ideas on the basis of his 'renovation' of the left discourse and reflecting them in the practical arena by preparing the banners for the protesters during the Gezi Protests. This practical involvement brought them to the new media's agenda, which increased the popularity of their ideas in the public sphere in attracting the public attention to the newly emerged counter-hegemony, from the Gezi Protests onwards, as well as to a new historical bloc with the emerged HDP project, as will be explained in more detail in the next chapter.

In conclusion, the 1980s was the period of Özal's liberal policies; these policies turned the intellectuals from the dominant conception of the Kemalist intellectuals to the pro-transformation liberal pluralist intellectuals, as they began to deal with the ongoing social problems in the country. Also, the growing economic and social volume of the media provided new resources for these pluralist intellectuals. Engaging the emerged liberal-right

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<sup>63</sup> According to the Household Information Technology Usage Survey in Turkey, the percentage of individuals using the internet was 53.8% in 2014. As the numbers show, a majority of the Turkish population uses the internet, which somehow clarifies why the influence of information gathered from the internet is so great. For more information about the rate of internet use in Turkey in 2014, see: TUIK, 2014.

bloc based on Özal's policies affected these intellectuals' position within the private media, chiefly in the 1990s, and provided grounds for widening their critical perspectives. Unlike the Kemalist intellectuals, the pluralist public intellectuals critically engaged in the debates against the military's brutal involvement in Turkey's sociopolitical environment. Moreover, during the reform periods in the 2000s, this debate between the Kemalist intellectuals and the pluralist public intellectuals, as part of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc, centered on where the intellectuals stood on the important societal issues (i.e., the military's hegemonic position, headscarf debate, Kurdish problem). Furthermore, with the dissolution of the liberal-right historical bloc, beginning with the Gezi Protests in 2013, the new pluralist conceptions of the intellectuals from the pro-transformation left social spheres brought new debates on the transformation of society (e.g., the Kurdish problem, the Alevi problem, the debates over women's status, LBGTs, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and other oppressed social groups). Thus, in this section, the process of the pluralist public intellectuals' emergence has been shown in its historical context, both in the pro-transformation liberal-right in the post-1980s and the pro-transformation left beginning just before the Gezi Protests in 2013. In the next section, discourse analyses of interview extracts, based on these mentioned intellectuals' influential conceptions, will be presented in order to reveal the major implications and subject positions of these discourses to influence society during the social transformation process.

#### **4.2. Pluralist Public Intellectuals, Concepts and the Nature of Interaction: Analyses of the Interviews and Discussions**

The previous section presented the change in the intellectual environment with the emergence of pluralist public intellectuals in opposition to the Kemalist counterparts in Turkey parallel to the ongoing transformations in economic, social and political arenas. It was also argued that the political discussion programs were an arena for critical discourses, and they increased with the number of private TV channels. Then, with the development of internet technology, social media tools facilitated the spreading of these critical ideas. Pluralist public intellectuals were the leading actors in this process by constructing the critical discourses that had been influential in the social transformation of Turkey from the 1980s onwards. This doctoral project was formulated to analyze the role of the pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey from the 1980s onwards. Thus, this dissertation analyzes the period between the 1983 general elections and the 2015 general elections.

The sample group of pluralist public intellectuals included, first, the journalist and author Hasan Cemal, whose discourses based on anti-militarism and liberal pluralism were influential to cultural pluralization and the increasing anti-militarism in the society, especially from the 1980s onwards. Second, Fehmi Kuru, whose discourses were based on Islamic transformism, is included as a journalist and author influential for the genesis of the reformism within the pro-Islamic movements, especially from the 1980s onwards. Thirdly Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Göle, with her ‘forbidden modern’ discourse, is included as an influential academic and author, for her ideas on conservative veiled Muslim women’s inclusion in the public sphere and empowering Islamic feminism, especially from the 1990s onwards. Fourth is academic and author Prof. Dr. Mehmet Altan, whose second republic concept is aimed at the democratization of the republic, liberalization of Kurdish, Muslim and non-Muslim groups and pluralization of the society, an influential intellectual from the 1990s on. Fifth is film director, actor, screenwriter, columnist and politician Sırrı Süreyya Önder, whose ‘resistance’ discourse, which contrast with the emerged elitism in the Turkish Left in the post-1980s, has been influential in making the Kurdish movement intelligible to the Turkish public and vice versa, in addition to triggering the Gezi Protests and opening a way for the emergence of a new left with his popular discourses against authoritarianism and socioeconomic inequality, mainly from the 2000s onwards. Sixth, author Ihsan Eliaçık, whose concept is called anti-capitalist Islam, is included as influential on the emergence of religious people who are against increasing socioeconomic inequality based on capitalist development and the pro-Islamic AKP government’s authoritarian actions in the neo-liberal era. Also, his ideas were influential, most importantly, in mobilizing some Islamic people, namely Anti-Capitalist Muslims, in the emerging new left in the late 2000s, during the Gezi Protest in 2013 and afterwards. The last pluralist public intellectual included in this project is the author Foti Benlisoy, whose concept is based on the ‘renovation of the left’, which represents the ideas expressed during the Gezi protests including critiquing the gerontocracy mainly on the left. His ideas have influenced the resisting social groups’ stance against neoliberal reforms and the authoritarian waves of Turkish politics as well as their support of the new left’s emergence in Turkey in line with the quest for an alternative to capitalism that would provide an arena for the excluded social groups in the public sphere from the Gezi Park protests onwards. Thus, this section will present analyses of their emerged influential discourses.

#### **4.2.1. Summary of the Analyses**

As mentioned, the research scope of this dissertation has been to identify the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the process of social transformation in Turkey by analyzing their discourses and actions from the 1980s onwards. In order to reveal the meaning as well as power of the sample intellectuals' discourses, discourse analyses of interview extracts are conducted, which present how language is used to construct and position the discourses with the function of these discursive constructions. The relationship between discourses and the existing practices in society is also considered. As mentioned in the methodology section of the introduction to this dissertation, the extracts were gathered from interviews with the seven pluralist public intellectuals, with consideration of their relevance to appropriately revealing the findings. As was also broadly explained in the methodology section, the analyses of the interview extracts are conducted following Carla Willig's (2013: 383–389) version of FDA in six steps, discursive constructions, discourses, action orientation, positionings, practice and subjectivity, all of which reveal how the discourses were constructed in the intellectual sphere, with their possible historical functions in influencing public perceptions and practices. Since there is no strict rule on how to follow the specific guidelines in the FDA, and since researchers are advised to develop their own means of analysis based on the scope of the research, the analyses also incorporate the works of other FDA theorists. In this regard, Ian Parker's (2014) analytic stance is incorporated into the analysis of these steps. Thus, the analytic method includes rules, strategies, variations and context. Moreover, the results that emerged in the analyses are considered with respect to their validity in the major examples based on the qualitative research paradigm.

The analyses reveal that the selected discourses of the sample intellectuals are constructed in various ways. Thus, in the discourse analysis, the words and phrases have special meanings that later turn into institutions and systems, which create certain positionings (Parker, 1999: 5). Through various discursive constructions, the social reality is understood within a social system. As an example from the analyses, concerning Hasan Cemal's 'military problem' discourse, various constructions of it in the extracts such as "deprived of the democratic culture", "why is the military involved that much in politics in Turkey, and why does it intervene?" and "why the military draws red lines around politics?" reveal the social reality in relation to Turkey's military problem (See H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015). The use of such discourses centers the military as the most problematic sector in the country. These discursive constructions often use oppositional labels such as 'democratic governance

versus military dictatorship’, ‘powerful versus weak’ and ‘West versus East’. Reviling something and conversely glorifying its opposite as the single alternative shows the function of this mentality. In the context of motivating people to participate in the transformation process in Turkey, this function set the position for the public to follow a desired direction in the transformation process. The same process applies to all other interview analyses, not only Cemal’s case.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the discourses in all interview analyses have the same standing point concerning the means of desired transformation. This is apparent in the multiple discourses and variations that emerged as a result of the analysis. While each analysis of the interviews provides a perspective from different sides, the transformation and change discourses that are revealed through the analysis process are dominant throughout. These discourses were presented in various ways. For example, in the case of Nilüfer Göle’s ‘Forbidden Modern’ discourse, it was constructed as a ‘transformation of modernity’. It was also presented as an attraction, that Muslims “would like to be part”, overcoming the contradiction between Islam and modernism through conservative Muslims’ “be part of modernity”, etc. (See N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). Wider discourses of transformation and change exist within these discourses. Importantly, in the shadow of these wider discourses, the discussion has led to a more personal understanding, in the phase of subjectivity, based on the innovation of modernity and the creation of self-consciousness in the public as positive concurrent psychological and social developments. Thus, the present discussion deals with a more personal and social transformation process within the sociopolitical dynamics of the time.

The discussion of the analyses is organized in seven sections, based on the influential discourses of each of the intellectuals. The first section, based on the extracts from the interview with Hasan Cemal, relates how his ‘military problem’ discourse is constructed, with the military considered a threat to Turkish democracy. In the second section on Fehmi Kuru the analysis goes over his ‘regeneration’ discourse as a means toward Islamic transformism, and Nilüfer Göle’s ‘forbidden modern’ discourse in the third section comprehensively reveals what innovation to modernity means through the engagement of conservative Muslims. The extracts in the fourth section are analyzed based on Mehmet Altan’s discourse of the ‘second republic’ as the democratization ideal of the republic. In the fifth section, analysis based on Sırrı Süreyya Önder’s “resistance” discourse relates to being part of the revolution process

against the neoliberal authoritarianism. In the sixth section, the analysis is based on Ihsan Eliaçık's 'anti-capitalist Islam' discourse as a revolution in the mentality of Muslims in Turkey. In the seventh and final section, Foti Benlisoy's 'renovation' discourse is analyzed based on the critical questioning of the left to give it a more pluralist stance.

Consequently, within each section, the above mentioned discourses of the intellectuals are delineated through discourse analysis. Under each discourse, its construction and its influence capacity are closely analyzed. Moreover, in the analyses, major emphasis is given to how the discourses overlap with different variations concerning the construction of the discourses and their meanings. In this way, the discourses and the possible practices are revealed in a comprehensive analysis process. After short summaries, the proceeding sub-sections present separate discourse analyses of interview extracts from seven sample pluralist public intellectuals in historically chronological order.

#### **4.2.2. Hasan Cemal: Military as a threat to Turkish Democracy**

The extracts below are gathered from a personal interview with Hasan Cemal. Embedded within his discursive constructions are Cemal's critique of the military's intervention in the social and political life of Turkey and his struggle to empower civil politics as well as civil society in order to bring democratic culture and pluralism to the country. In line with the Ayşe Aslıhan Çelenk's (2009) findings, the extracts reveal the complex constructions of the military problem and democratization in Turkey. The extracts below elucidate the overall topic. Due to the changing nature of the sociopolitical sphere, there also appear to be some contradictions in the arguments on the progress of the democracy in Turkey. These are described in the analysis below.

##### **Extract 1**

“When I was a radical leftist, I had started to question why the state is so rough, so intolerant, so ruthless; why it assaults young people and the people who demand true justice, and imprisons them, stages coups, puts people to death, subjects them to torture. These [questions] bring you inevitably to the role of the military in Turkish politics. What is the relationship between politics and the military? That is, why is the military involved that much in politics in Turkey, and why does it intervene? While thinking about why the military draws red lines around politics, of course you are faced with a civil problem. While thinking about Turkey's military problem, I think about Turkey's civilian problem, too. So, that brings you to the meaning of the civilian problem concerning politicians. Why are civil politics so deprived of the democratic culture in Turkey—what for? While you are exploring this, of course, you say there is a military problem, and also a civilian problem in politics” (H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015).



In the first half of extract 1, the intervention discourse is evident in the scope of a national security discourse, as identified in Çelenk (2009), which constructs the issue of the military's involvement in politics in light of its negative effects on the democratization and the pluralization of the country, and not only in the political arena, but also in the social affairs (I. 1–6). It thereby, it suggests that Cemal's stance is related to freedom and equality, since these are the requirements of a democratic society. Cemal challenges the military's supremacy in Turkey and emphasizes the need for a free political and social arena in which the military is responsible to the civilian government. The intervention is based on the "civil problem" in Cemal's conception, which suggests these continuously downgraded the psychological and social developments in the country, thus needing to be eliminated (I. 5–7). In this regard, the discursive objects concern the lack of democratic culture and confrontation. When these are associated with the "military problem" discourse, they invoke concerns about the emergence of questioning and settling major problems of the country in a historical context, as mentioned in extract 2 below (i.e. "nation-state issue", "1915 (Armenian Genocide/Relocation) issue", "Kurdish rebellions").

Moreover, various constructions of the "military problem" were the main concern of extract 1 in questioning 'the military's intervention' into the politics and social life in Turkey, which suggests these constructions were an attempt to capture the people's attention, because these constructions concern the obstacles to the democratization process of Turkey (I. 2–4). Substantially, the discursive constructions of the "military problem" concern of every individual in Turkey who should be expected to learn some lessons and apply them to their own lives through this questioning process. At the end of extract 1, the reason behind the limits of confrontation was the lack of "democratic culture" in civil politics (I. 8–10), which reveals Cemal's ongoing desire to motivate civil politics. Thus, overall, the intervention discourse in extract 1 contains the subject position of the physical and psychological involvement of the military in the civil sphere, while the discourse of questioning positions the people between knowing about this involvement and challenging it to live in a more democratic and pluralist environment. The extract suggests that Cemal sees questioning as a desire from civil society to cope with its social problems, which would trigger civil politics as a side effect. Therefore, the primary issue here is the knowledge of the military's involvement in social and political life, which is central to the major problems in Turkey, and coping with the "military problem" by confronting the past and forming more wholesome interactions between social and political entities.

Extract 1 also presents Cemal's experiences and memories, the historical facts to which he was subjected (I. 1–4), and his wish for the public to understand his personal confrontations and experiences over the years. This suggests a clear reason-result relationship between the discourses of intervention and questioning, largely due to his desire to understand the perceived military problem in the social and political arena and to contribute to forming a confrontation culture by questioning the reasons behind these social problems. In extract 1, in terms of the lack of “democratic culture” in civil politics and the desire to further confrontation, purely questioning the past and being aware of the roots of the social problems suggests that the people can take action in the social or political arena to resist the “intolerant” and “ruthless” state, in order to achieve further democratization and pluralism. This stance on questioning the past suggests that someone can exercise more objective decisions when approaching social problems and democracy in general, as evident in extract 2 below.

## **Extract 2**

“So, you start questioning your own history. Questioning your own history takes you back to the Ottoman time and to the period of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat Terakki). You are faced with the nation-state issue. While thinking about the Committee of Union and Progress, the 1915 [Armenian Genocide/Relocation] comes to the mind. Why did 1915 happen? Here the signature of unionists and a kind of dark humor passed into the official discourse in the Republic of Turkey. You see that you are trained to believe that way, even in the elementary schools, secondary schools, high schools and universities. In such a case, you start to do some research by saying that 1915 was not how the state taught me. Thus, the state made me live the lie. At the same time, you face the Kurdish reality that comes out in the 1980s, and Kurds were prompting a revolt in that case. In the state archives, 28 large and small Kurdish rebellions are listed. I mean, the official archives say so. The 29<sup>th</sup> rebellion that emerged was the PKK” (H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015).

Extract 2 appears to follow the historical analysis followed by Çelenk (2009) to a wider extent, involving the “questioning” discourse that constructs an evolution in awareness of the past by identifying its negative aspects and working to eliminate them. Cemal mentions the “nation-state issue” and “live the lie” of the state, which characterizes the source of the problems that need to be questioned (II. 3–9). This suggests that, by constructing the discursive object through certain sources in the discourse of questioning, Cemal presents a means to undermine the military's hegemony, which he regarded as the significant obstruction to change in the country. This is explicitly proposed, as questioning and having themselves released from the captive minds position on the issues related to the historical and social matters.

Extract 2 shows a desire for confrontation with the past and concerns about changes in the perception of democracy that affect everybody in the country. Cemal draws upon the “living the lie” of the state discourse, which reveals his attempt to change individuals’ perceptions of the state in order to enhance questioning, which is a direct means of changing mentality (II. 7–9). This provides meaning, a far more important step for Cemal, since the exploration of the backwardness of democracy motivates the public to question the country’s past. Importantly, questioning the past is concerned with changing the mentality (e.g., questioning “the Committee of Union and Progress” period (1908–1918) in Ottoman Empire, the “nation-state issue”, the “1915” Armenian Genocide/Relocation issue, and “Kurdish rebellions”) and having a perception opposing the state’s on the problematic issues of the country.

At the end of extract 2, Cemal appears to justify the evolution of questioning the past in the civilian arena of Turkey, as well as what appears to be a learning process concerning the Armenian Genocide/Relocation, the Kurdish problem and second class democracy throughout the 1980s (II. 7–12). Hence, this suggests that Cemal has become someone who now desires this type of questioning, and that he is not satisfied until he observes this questioning throughout the public. This means that he is someone who desires that his same personal confrontation be practiced by the rest of society. Thus the “questioning your own history” discourse (II. 1) comprises the practice of reading the past through the prism of confrontation and becoming aware of the roots of the social problems. This suggests that to become aware of the roots of the social problems in order to eliminate them in the future, one must have progressive confrontation. In extract 3, below, this progressive confrontation is tested within the contemporary developments concerning the military problem in the political arena.

### **Extract 3**

“The relationship between the military and politics in Turkey still did not fall into place. AKP and Tayyip Erdoğan have taken the right steps and right attitudes in this regard since 2002. [They have] greatly reduced the military’s concern in politics. The fact of the military’s being subject to elected political authority was brought into compliance with the basic realities of democracy that necessitate it. Thus, today the military is subject to the elected civilian authority in Turkey. But, even so, the institutional arrangements were not done yet” (H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015).

Extract 3 describes the contemporary period and shows that further steps were taken: “[T]oday, the military is subject to the elected civilian authority in Turkey” (III. 5–6). In fact, Cemal constructs his overall “military problem” discourse in the context of Turkey as a power

relationship, in that the current era indicates a power exercised over the military by civilian politics, which began during Erdoğan's AKP ruling government period after 2002 (III. 2–5). The extract suggests that he acknowledges of improvement in Turkey's democratic culture, even as setbacks arose during the process. This is clarified as the positive developments that continuously improved the democratic culture, and the lack of “institutional arrangements” for the military's position casts suspicion on the democratic standards (III. 6).

Çelenk (2009: 121) points out how the scope of national security in Turkey was determined by the military, with its inclusion of threats such as Kurdish separatism and political Islam. Extract 3, like extracts 1 and 2, then implicates subject positions of the shared historical experiences facing the hegemonic position of the military within the state. This suggests that Cemal's increasing assigning of meanings to the military's ‘intervention’ reveals his goal of increasing awareness of the military tutelage and motivating confrontation. Extract 3, rather than dealing with the social problems differently, presents the military's intervention as the core of the problems, adopting the subject positions in the struggle to bring the military under civil politics in order to compensate the process of improving democratic standards. This is evident in the example, since it seems that “AKP and Tayyip Erdoğan have taken the right steps” since 2002 to greatly reduce “the military's concern in politics” (III. 2–3). However, further improvements are considered to be necessary, as clarified in extract 4 below.

#### **Extract 4**

“I think we have to protect this democracy and the democratic regimes that are surrounded with the principles of law and respect for democracy, identities, freedoms and human rights. This is the case that I pay the most attention to. Democracy must be embraced. Democracy is also a process that needs to be constantly improved. While improving that, as I said, we should insistently transfuse the democratic culture, containing all of these [notions] with respect to the fundamental values, identities, freedom of expression, gender equality, the people, as well as their education. By rejecting violence and terror, we do not need to be afraid of the democracy that accepts different colors, diversities and equality” (H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015).

Extract 4 provides a general understanding of democracy, through the various constructions of the ‘military problem’, as an ability to embrace the questioning process with people's own will to achieve a democratic society and pluralism, rather than encompassing the authoritarian sense of governance. However, this requires adorning the civil politics with democratic principles by insistently transfusing “the democratic culture” of the people (IV. 5–6), which was particularly unattractive to civil politicians in some historical periods of the country, as

mentioned in extract 1. Such examples were seen in the 1990s, when the major contradiction in the Turkish democracy at that time was the inability of the civil politicians to control the military to expand this democracy mentality to the whole society (Çelenk, 2009). Even so, Cemal's ideas show that if Cemal has had a personal confrontation, so could his followers because he presents himself as an example of a person who had a personal confrontation with the social problems of Turkey and constantly transformed his ideas in a more democratic and pluralist way as was clarified in extracts 1 and 2. In this context, extract 4 suggests that, unlike many people who fear confrontation, Cemal insists on the much more positive side of confrontation in the critique of the military's role, with the hope that Turkish society internalizes democracy and pluralism (IV. 1–4).

In conclusion, in all extracts, the sense of questioning is influential. This suggests that Cemal was attempting to generate a more comfortable existence with democracy and freedom, which is visible in his exploration of the roots of social problems in extract 2, as well as the way he proposes improvements in extract 4. In looking at the narrative form of extract 4, Cemal, throughout his personal confrontation with the basic social problems of Turkey, offers more virtuous qualities of society, in that he expects general questioning and confrontation on the societal level. People outside of journalism, however, may not have the same personal experiences, and perhaps lesser intellectual development, lacking strong defenses for their arguments. Consequently, Cemal's subject position, in questioning the military's intervention and confronting Turkey's social problems, legitimizes the people's struggle to be part of the questioning process on the societal level. This is generally considered preferable for facilitating the transformation, since societal level movements have an impact on wholesome transformation. Following this, Cemal, being a contributor to the social transformation via his personal confrontations, also refers to being ahead of the intellectual standards of the society throughout the period. Hence, parallel to this, all extracts suggest that there has been progress in Turkish society in the last decades, especially with regard to discussing the social problems and making these discussions more open compared to the past. The next sub-section reveals this tendency in the pro-Islamic movements as well, based on the discourses of Fehmi Kuru.

#### **4.2.3. Fehmi Kuru: Toward the Islamic Transformism**

Fehmi Kuru has been a prominent pluralist public intellectual in the post-1980s, coming out of the pro-Islamic movements, which functioned to bring pro-Islamic conceptions into the overall public sphere. The research here analyzes Fehmi Kuru's influential discourses in the

post-1980s in order to reveal the meaning and power of their various constructions. The analysis of Fehmi Koru's concern for the social and political issues of Turkey was based on the textual data extracted from the interview with Fehmi Koru published in *Altınoluk* in 1992, which best represents his ideas under analysis. The discussions within these extracts are concerned with Koru's dealing with the 'regeneration' of the system and provision of a position for the pro-Islamic movements within it. In agreement with Binnaz Toprak (2005), the analysis of the extracts reveals that the debate around Islam, secularism and modernization is mapped onto Turkey's transformation process in the post-1980s. Based on this, the struggle for the democratization and pluralization of Turkey is viewed from the perspective of conservative Muslims.

### **Extract 1**

"Let's look at why the system, which has been implemented for seventy years, is being questioned today in order to bring change, either through minor repairs or in the form of undergoing a radical change. This is because this system has not been malfunctioning just in the last one or two years, nor are the critiques of the system nor the complaints the products of recent times. This system, almost as soon as it was already formed, has externalized its own internal problems. In my opinion, this question is so important that I have asked it myself. This is because, in terms of interpreting the modern day and identifying the problems faced by the system, the answer to this question will be decisive" (Koru, 1992: 12).

In extract 1, the concern of the discursive objects was the "malfunctioning" system and self-renewal through socially constructed reforms. Thus, the "malfunctioning" system discourse refers to one of several major tendencies to question the undemocratic rule of the country, and it opens the way for substantial efforts to further democratize the system, which happened just before the 2000s (Toprak, 2005: 41). Koru's overall concern for regenerating the system is motivated by the emergence of questioning, opening a way for the transformation through confronting the system. So Koru seems to justify the tendency of the people to "question" the system in the first quarter of the 1990s of Turkey; what is important in this questioning is to diagnose the problems caused by "the system" (1. 1–6). Koru's concern with the questioning suggests that it relates to his diagnosis of "malfunctioning" of the system, since he expresses a desire from civil society to challenge it for a radical transformation of the social and political system of Turkey (1. 3–4).

The narrative form of extract 1 reveals that Koru is concerned with the discourse of questioning in the memory of his experiences and the fact that society was under subjugation, and it demonstrates his wish that the people would have this desire for confrontation with the

system in the following years. In this extract, the discourse of questioning and his concern with transformation interlink, since they overtly express the reasons behind the impediments of the system due to his desire to make them perceived by social groups: he wishes to facilitate these groups' contribution to the formation of a confrontation culture by questioning the system. In mentioning his observation of the tendency of the people toward the confrontation, Koru suggests that he positions himself in support of broadening the general questioning of the system. Thus, progress in Turkish society was expressed in the extract in that, since before the 1990s, questioning the system has brought transformation ideas either through the demands of "minor repairs" in the system or through "radical change" (1. 1–3). Below, in extract 2, this tendency of the people, especially in the pro-Islamic movements, offers a specific means of position directed at transformation.

## **Extract 2**

"When it is mentioned that the system 'must undergo a radical transformation', some people strongly disagree with this. Why is that so? Do these people not realize that the system is malfunctioning? Do they not come to realize that the republic that has run for 70 years creates obstructions? They do see and realize. But all the systems have created a group benefiting from them. That is to say, the First Republic has its own ruling elites. These are in the military, in civilian life and in bureaucracy. What we call the regime substantially consists of their understandings. Kemalism, which is today one of the most debated issues, is their ideology" (Koru, 1992: 12).

Toprak (2005: 35) mentions the strained relationship between the laicist and Islamist politics due to the power struggle in Turkey in the 1990s. In extract 2, in dealing with this power struggle, Koru criticizes the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie of the "republic", and he emphasizes the existence of the power bases that eliminate the possibility of change in the system. Koru's dealing with 'regeneration' is linked to the major concerns of the interview extract by way of "undergoing a radical transformation" of the social and political system of Turkey (II. 1–2). This suggests that the discourse aims to impress the people, since it deals with social and political change, affecting the foundational dynamics of society in favor of the subordinated groups. Thus, the regeneration relates to a public issue in Turkey, and through the questioning process it is expected to be understood and applied to the people's own lives. As a matter of fact, the various constructions of regeneration in Koru's conception are connected to the distribution of power. Thus, as extract 2 reveals, the main problem in the establishment of the republic was its concentration of power and especially the creation of power bases by elites.

In extract 2, Koru's desire to question the system suggests a response by civil society against the oppressive rulers of the state, which would affect all in the country. He mentioned the mentality of the "ruling elites" in the hope of changing the public perception concerning the top-down approach of the state and thus empowering the mentality of questioning the system, which is a precondition for meeting the standards of the changed world (II. 5–7). He suggests that questioning the system refers to awakening consciousness (i.e. change in mentality) and developing a bottom-up perception of the characteristics of the system. The extract draws on questioning that leads to the exploration of impediments to the system in Turkey and challenges these impediments in order to initiate the reconstruction of the system through social processes. Furthermore, the "transformation" discourse positions the people to share the power of the elites by distributing power bases throughout the regeneration process.

In extract 2, Koru's concern with 'questioning' also consists in developing consciousness about the hegemonic practices of the 'benefiters' of the system. Benefiting from the system means their social location gives them weight to act in certain ways; here the extract refers to the laicist elites, since as Toprak (2005: 31–32) illustrates, the religious people were not accepted into the political, social and intellectual elite circles of the republic after its establishment. As in the natural process, there must be a realization of the systemic faults in order to take action toward progressive "radical transformation" of the system. In this sense, the word "realize" encapsulates subject positions of shared experiences of facing the hegemonic position of the ruling elites and being aware of the reasons for the system's malfunctioning. Koru's ideas presented in the interview extract show that, instead of dealing with the different segments of social problems, Koru concentrates on the malfunctioning of the system due to its malformation in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As is also revealed to a wider extent in the analysis of extract 3 below, Koru's questioning the system suggests an attempt to actualize his dreamed radical transformation of the social and political system of Turkey, which will provide an arena for the redistribution of power to different segments of the society.

### **Extract 3**

"The period of redistribution of power in Turkey is approaching. The solution to the new problems that will arise with the collapse of the system will only be possible through new organizations. If we make predictions about how this might be, one of them is the creation of the organizations in a way that you said. In other words, in providing possibilities for every faith group, every cultural group, in a way in which they can comfortably perform their



beliefs and culture, [They] live in a world of their own and create their own organizations. Thus, Turkey will become a country where the communities, religious groups, even smaller groups within these religious groups that prioritize their own ways, can live freely. In this regard, I see that it is the purpose of Islamic groups to take into consideration such developments in advance and to design a strategy in accordance with these” (Koru, 1992: 12).

Extract 3 sheds light on the scope of transformation in relation to the overall meaning of Koru’s concern with regeneration, which consists in empowering the actions of civil society toward a more desirable emergence of pluralism in the social and political system of Turkey. A referential strategy (Richardson, 2007) is used in mentioning the ability for faith and cultural groups to “comfortably perform their beliefs and culture”, since these carry the meaning of pro-Islamic movements’ desire in the 1990s in Turkey for religious practice in the public sphere, such as veiled women’s desires to enter university campuses. Accordingly, Koru primarily mentions the role of Islamic civil society in the regeneration of the system and in supporting a bottom-up approach to the transformation design.

The second half of the extract suggests that the lack of action by civil society is the weakness of democratic culture in Turkey. In Koru’s conception, the transformation is concerned with empowering the actions of civil society in order to present the wishes of each religious and cultural group to establish their own world. In relation to this, various constructions of ‘regeneration’ in the extract are perceived as limitations of the regime comprised of Kemalist ideology, and they follow the questioning process in a self-motivated way toward achieving a fair and decent system. In this regard, the subject positions of transformation discourse described in extract 3 propose a way to start the questioning individually and be part of the transformation process by engaging the civil society in the collective action. It seems that, in Koru’s conception, this is much preferred, since the collective action at the societal level may have an impact as part of the desired transformation. Extracts 4 and 5 below reveal the meaning of this collective action as based on the mobilization of pro-Islamic movements.

#### **Extract 4**

“However, I believe that questioning the system in Turkey, starting today, could be done mostly by conservative Muslims, because they are the only group that has no organic link to the system. Thus, questioning coming from them would be more serious and worth considering. But we have to do it quickly by raising generations that both understand the age and internalize tradition” (Koru, 1992: 12).

## Extract 5

“Hereupon, I think that the most important task belongs to the pro-Islamic movements. First of all, the point where the world stands now is a world in peace with the religion. Turkey also will make peace. But what will be the way of this peace? Turkey’s traditions are different from the traditions of the Christians. Therefore, it is wrong to accept an understanding of tolerance for Christianity as an example for Turkey. The tradition of the people living in this land is the Islamic tradition. If peace will be made, it should not be with a hollow religion and religious understanding, but with Islam. The terms of peace with Islam are different from the terms of peace with Christianity of a Christian community. This needs to be accepted by the elitists in Turkey. Once this is accepted, it is easy to discuss how it would be. This would be put across by the people within the pro-Islamic movements. How they should do this is through a strong ability for persuasion, not through bigotry or in a self-opinionated way, but through a tendency that is good for this country. If this happens, the country will progress” (Koru, 1992: 12).

In extract 4, the “questioning” discourse promotes the creation of original ideas by conservative Muslims who should carry deep meanings and have proposals for change, in order to provide better conditions for the society (IV. 1–4). However, it is important to look at where this fits in the extract and how it is narrated. Looking at the narrative form in the extract, that is, looking at how the story is presented in order to reveal its overall meaning (See Richardson, 2007), shows that extract 4 begins with the questioning by “conservative Muslims”, and then later comes to “more serious and worth considering”. This characterizes the pro-Islamic movements as benefiting the least from the system, a reason that Muslim confrontation with the system would be more effective (IV. 2–4). It then opens a way, in extract 5, for the pro-Islamic movements to confront the system, overtly bringing them in relation to certain sources of the questioning discourse. Hence, it is important, as Koru mentions, to prevail upon “peace with Islam”, which may be achieved within the system (V. 7–10). This suggests that Koru’s mentality of transformation consists in moving toward a non-oppressive and emancipatory system, which paves a path to presenting Islamic belief and practice through Islamic peace within. This also suggests that Koru supports this path by observing the motivation of the pro-Islamic movements of that time, which were headed in that direction.

Throughout the extracts, Koru responds positively to the emergence and hastening of the questioning process alongside the change in mentality in relation to the changed conditions of the world, which he overtly insists has triggered the role of the pro-Islamic movements to widen and succeed in the transformation process. This is endorsed by the contemporary world as the “world in peace with the religion”, leading to good will rather than fanaticism (V. 1–4). Thus, this suggests that at the time of the interview, Koru, as a person who has expressed an

overall questioning of the system by the people (i.e. “questioning the system mostly by conservative Muslims”, “peace with religion”), has positioned himself as a guide through this questioning process. Koru’s arguments explicitly imply that he has achieved a personal confrontation process with the system and expects the same process to be practiced by the people. Nonetheless, Koru is mostly addressing the conservative Muslim people and suggests that he expects “questioning the system” (IV. 1–3) to start in the pro-Islamic movements rather than in society as a whole, since his use of questioning terminology is mainly applicable to the conservative Muslim people of Turkey.

Extract 4 provides the meanings for resolving Turkey’s internal problems and achieving a fair and decent system, which will require realizing faults, meaning that the civil society, especially pro-Islamic movements, can take action toward serious and substantial questioning by “understanding the age” through the prism of the tradition (IV. 4–5). His “questioning the system” discourse specifically implicates a serious confrontation by the pro-Islamic movements, which are the largest groups that have no organic link to the system, and which can bring transformation through the sharing of power bases toward further democratization and pluralism in the country. Nevertheless, this will require, in the first place, pro-Islamic movements’ convincing “elites” of the system to make “peace with Islam” (V. 8–12), which would be unattractive to the Kemalist elites engaged in the strict laicist sociopolitical order of 1990s Turkey.

In conclusion, the above discussions were based on the extracts, which reveal the major implications of Koru’s concern with regeneration of the system, which should also show a wave of transformation in the pro-Islamic movements from the 1980s onwards, thus making the pro-Islamic movements the major influential actors in this process. So by capturing the dynamics of the contemporary age, Koru’s stance—based on his discourses of that time—as a conservative Muslim and Western democrat has positioned him as an example for the pro-Islamic movements in Turkey, especially concerning their involvement in the system through tradition. Thus, the effect of Koru’s ideas suggests that if Koru has achieved this position, followers of this Islamic understanding can do so as well. Thus, all extracts give some insight into Koru’s personal and intellectual development. Following this, in the next sub-section, the issue of pro-Islamic movements’ engagement in the system as well as in modernity, mainly specified in the context of religious veiled women, will be revealed through the analysis of Nilüfer Göle’s ‘forbidden modern’ discourse.

#### **4.2.4. Nilüfer Göle: Forbidden Modern as Pursuit of Different Modernity Lines**

As shown above in the analysis of Fehmi Kuru's discourses, the tendency for pro-Islamic movements to engage in the overall public sphere was visible from the 1980s onwards. The extracts below, from a personal interview with Nilüfer Göle in 2015, reveal this on the side of religious women through her 'forbidden modern' discourse. These extracts are about Göle's conception of the 'forbidden modern', in which she has tried to draw and keep the attention of the public on the inclusion of people with different cultural and religious perspectives and symbols within modernity. This is suggested in the hybrid figures in Göle's conception, which attempt to transcend the conflicting relationship between modernity and the forbidden. Thus, in agreement with Binnaz Toprak (2005), the analysis of the extracts below reveals that modernization was one of the main foci of the pro-Islamic movements in the process of engaging with the public sphere in the post-1980s.

##### **Extract 1**

"In relation to your previous question, it is not possible to think that everyone read the book in the same way, which means there is no single message. Some said such Muslims are modernizing, whereas this was not in the book. Inversely, as you said, I meant that Muslims bring innovation to modernity. Also, I saw that it may transform modernity, because there is a conflicting relationship between modernity and the forbidden. Modernity is trying to move the forbidden into the public sphere by constantly keeping the lights on. Just because people are trying to express their privacy. This is psychoanalysis. By going into the public sphere, you can bring out your self-consciousness. However, more traditional communities would have more silence in such an inner world. I have tried to say that Muslim movements, today's contemporary movements, would like to be part of modernity with their own forbidden. We can say there is a power relationship here; when we look at this conflict today we see that it is much more in a new stage" (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015).

In extract 1, it is evident that an "innovation" discourse exists, which constructs a development toward transforming modernity positively, but which does not rest solely on the modernization of Muslims (I. 2–4). Thus Göle's conception, as something related to independence and self-hood for individuals, suggests becoming aware of the needs of the people through their own self-consciousness. Extract 1 initially draws upon the "self-consciousness" discourse, which constructs an evolution in the expression of privacy, by entering the public sphere and taking part in modernity and the forbidden (I. 5–9). Thus, here a contentious discourse is generated through a self-consciousness discourse, which was exemplified in the 1990s by veiled women protesting the ban on headscarves in front of the university gates (Toprak, 2005: 35). The ban on headscarves presents an antagonism between

supporting the universal rights of women and protecting the cultural rights of minorities; banning the headscarf presupposes the modernist conception of the universal rights of all women, but the ban specifically affects Muslim women, eliminating their right to practice their own religion or culture (Freedman, 2007: 29–44). Göle’s conception challenges the dominant discourses about West-centric conceptions of modernism in Turkey, which argued at the time that Islam was not a part of Western values, by offering a hybrid model that includes Islam within modernity. In this sense, the “innovation” discourse explains several social changes, such as veiled women’s involvement in the public sphere as well as the pro-Islamic movements’ engagement with the Western socioeconomic and cultural position, while these appear to support the concurrent psychological and social developments associated with innovation (I. 4–7).

In the middle of the text, the extract constructs the ‘forbidden modern’ as an innovation to modernity in moving “forbidden into the public sphere” (I. 2–6). This suggests an attempt to capture the attention, because it identifies a change in wider social discourse. This has two meanings: The first rests upon bringing the pro-Islamic movements into the public sphere the second reveals the Islamic elements in the whole society, since it is based historically upon an Islamic culture that developed before the establishment of republic. In line with this, Toprak (2005: 36) reveals that in society’s consideration Muslim-hood in Turkey is not related to performing religious practices, such as daily prayer (*namaz*) and fasting during Ramadan, but to a public culture. Thus, access to this metaphoric construction of the forbidden modern is potentially available to everybody, regardless of their religious practice in the public sphere, and everybody should take heed, because maybe they can learn and apply lessons to their own lives. At the beginning of the text, the impossibility for a concept to have the same meaning for everyone—“there is no single message” (I. 1–2)—lays the foundation to which later situations can be compared.

In fact, Göle constructs the forbidden modern concept in the context of Turkey as a “power relationship” between the pro-Islamic movements and the laicist Kemalists, since the current era uses indicators of the forbidden as the symbol for struggle, which, as will be mentioned in extract 2 below, has been the case throughout this struggle. In this regard, Göle’s “innovation” discourse contains the subject position of the psychological and emotional transformation of the modernity perception; whilst her “self-consciousness” discourse positions the people between having an awareness of themselves and bringing this awareness into the public sphere through a process of struggle. Göle’s treatment of the “self-consciousness” discourse

suggests it was an innovative response to the conflict between modernity and the forbidden (I. 3–4). Hence, the subject positions offered by these constructions involve someone enduring great personal and spiritual growth in order to form a more comfortable sense of self, which consequently offers the potential to form more wholesome interactions, that is, to demand a more pluralist environment within the society by including the different images.

On the deeper level, going from personal to social practices, extract 1 offers constructions of the forbidden modern as “bring out your self-consciousness”, which implicates the practice of personal awareness as being closely interlinked with the need to take control of one’s circumstances. Thus, in order to successfully implement changes in one’s life, in order to achieve a better future, one must undergo a journey of self-awareness via making sense of one’s past. For conservative Muslim women with headscarves, this suggests engaging the public sphere throughout the self-consciousness process, which is considered not contradictory, but contributive to Turkey’s road to democracy and modernity (Toprak, 2005: 27–43). In this regard, concerning healthy relationships and settling down, this “self-consciousness” discourse of simply enjoying interactions and being a part of the forbidden modern means that one can exercise more choice over the appropriateness of participation within modernity (I. 4–11), and make more objective decisions in life in general.

Toprak (2005: 28) mentions the tension between laicism and Islam, showing how this tension originated in the authoritarian measures undertaken during the establishment of Turkey. From this, the constructions in extract 1 of entering the modernity with the forbidden as an “innovation” implicate the subject positions for shared experiences of self-consciousness and progression. Göle’s mention of increasing self-consciousness also impacts entrance into the public sphere, as well as feeling this situation. This suggests that Göle is attempting to discover a more comfortable existence, although this still implicates an innovative relationship between modernity and the forbidden, as evidenced by her preoccupation with a transformation discourse. This conception was mainly applicable to the pro-Islamic movements in Turkey, which lived under continual transformation through the process of interaction mainly from the post-1980s. People like Göle are often construed as embodying more virtuous qualities, because they have devoted more time to self-development. Conversely, people not deeply engrossed in the academic community have not had the same opportunities for personal growth and may be considered less developed, lacking the strength of self-hood. Correspondingly, Göle’s adoption of the subject position of the forbidden modernity would function to retrospectively legitimize bringing people into the modernity

through phases of personal growth, specifically the young generation of the Muslim population in Turkey. This is generally considered preferable for facilitating an individual's focus on their journey through self-discovery. Being outside of modernity because of the lack of appropriate conditions may also imply being behind in overall standards. Thus, in extract 2, concerning reaching such standards, the tendency of today's Muslim movements to enter the forbidden modern, bringing the forbidden into modernity, is shown through Göle's practical observations.

## **Extract 2**

“And they [Muslim people] are following both of them; when we look at the Turkey context, all indicators of the forbidden are there. The indicator here is the headscarf. But even that indicator has changed rapidly under the influence of modernity. Today, it has turned into a symbol of consumption. So, to the question of whether Islam transformed modernity or modernity transformed Islam, it now seems that modernity transformed Islam more. I do not see the cultural richness and creativity of the word ‘forbidden’ to carry the debate. Conversely, what has happened today—whose music is listened to—I think we have fallen into much more than a mere modern phenomenon. So, maybe the Muslims would like to get rid of their forbidden as soon as possible. Whereas my concept of the forbidden ascribes something much more positive. It is not only in the religious means, because, of course, there is another layer caused by the religion. But, beyond this, I think that the concept of forbidden might have very important transformative power in the critique of today's modernity. But, I am not sure if I am able to see it today” (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015).

In extract 2, Göle describes “indicators of the forbidden” and indicates the “headscarf” as a symbol of the forbidden and also an indicator of self-consciousness (II. 1–2). By constructing certain sources of the discursive object through the self-consciousness discourse, she sheds light on Muslims' engagement in the public sphere in the 2000s. By creating the meaning of following both modernity and the forbidden through the course of life, Göle creates a particular account of becoming within the forbidden modern. This version describes entering the public sphere as incorporating a blend of modern activities (e.g. enrolling in university with a headscarf, employment both in state and private sectors, acquiring individual freedom through economic freedom and the emergence of the headscarf fashion) with the excitement of independence and self-hood.

Toprak (2005: 30) reveals the truth of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his associates' conception of Islam, since they believed Islam was the reason for the Ottoman Empire's failure to modernize, and that the code of behavior kept religious Muslim women outside the public sphere. Thus, the new republic would concentrate more on emancipating the women and

destroy the Islam in the education system. Given this conflict, the discursive objects in extract 2 invoke concerns about conflicting relationships and the imperative of settling down. While neither are explicitly mentioned or explored within the extract, they are significant aspects of the self-consciousness discourse, especially associated with the forbidden modern. Associations of the self-consciousness discourse with settling down invoke a whole string of implications connected to everyday practice of the forbidden modern. Thus, Göle's particular meaning of settling down opposes the normative values of modernity and perhaps more realistically involves an independent lifestyle. Moreover, it includes different cultural and religious symbols that transform modernity and the forbidden in a way different from the mono-cultural formation of Turkey, which concentrates on Western modernism. Thus, she questions mainstream modernity.

In extract 2, Göle draws upon the “indicator” discourse also to endorse the change of modernity perception of the “headscarf”, which is a direct consequence of a change in mentality (II.1–2). This is a far more positive portrayal of observant Muslim people's inclusion into the forbidden modern than being “changed” is (II. 2–3). Importantly, it suggests that the being “changed” discourse entails differentiating lifestyles (e.g. consumption, type of music listened to, religious beliefs) in the opposite direction. At the beginning of the extract, Göle appears to justify the existence of the “indicators” of the forbidden in the Turkish context and what appears to have been a rapid transformation of the indicator under the influence of modernity (II. 1–3). In this context, she clearly constructs an optimistic view of the forbidden modern as an “innovation” of modernity. This is rectified by the ability to accept differences and not regret weaknesses in order to achieve transformation, as evidenced by the inclusion of different cultural symbols into modernity, as in the case of Turkey in the 2000s (II. 7–10).

Göle's use of transformation discourse in extract 2 allows her to ascribe responsibility to social interaction based on her forbidden modern conception as well as practices, while emphasizing that this requires completing difficult journeys during society's formation. As a function of her conception, the opinion that, in order to achieve a healthy relationship, social actors must first develop self-consciousness before they interact with one another, is prominent in contemporary social relationships. In line with this, Göle approaches innovation with veracity (II. 3–6) and reveals the clear conflict between the modernity and the forbidden. Also, based on her practical observation throughout the years, she does not see the cultural richness and creativity of the forbidden, and claims that, in interaction, two sides would be



affected differently. This positions her such that she is not sure whether a transformation of modernity is visible nowadays. However, this suggests that Göle has become someone who now desires a type of innovation in modernity which she will not be sure she has until she finds it. She is someone who enjoys a new-found innovation via transformation based upon positive developments. Toprak (2005: 41–42) sheds light on the reality of the pro-Islamic movements' self-transformation toward engaging modernity through this interaction process, and as the extract suggests, there is less choice about the preferred innovation Göle desires in transforming the modernity in terms of adjusting to a different path to transformation that is more informed by modernity's transformation of Islam (II. 3–6).

Overall, in both extracts, various constructions of the 'forbidden modern' refer to an ability of conservative Muslims as well as pro-Islamic movements, most specifically the veiled religious women, to embrace the innovation process of modernity with dignity and positivity rather than surrendering to psychological and social decline. However, this requires acceptance of some of the features of innovation, such as leaving the silence of the inner world of "traditional communities", as mentioned in extract 1, which are particularly unattractive to conservative Muslims. Hence the effect of Göle's ideas is essentially, if Göle can do it, so can the reader/listener/follower, because she presents herself in the personal interview as an example of a follower of different modernity lines and presents the hybrid image of an Eastern person living a Western way of life. Thus, the interview extract also reveals some meanings of her personal development, as well as the knowledge and wisdom that she accumulated throughout the years. The next sub-section reveals the meaning and practical implications of Mehmet Altan's 'second republic' discourse. This discourse offers positions for a wider liberal change, from the 1990s onwards, in the basic features of the formation of the country by opening a new arena for different communities and movements to develop a new pluralist public sphere.

#### **4.2.5. Mehmet Altan: Second Republic as a Liberal Democratic Ideal**

Mehmet Altan was an influential public intellectual in the social transformation in the post-1980s of Turkey. His 'second republic' discourse was a leading discussion point from the 1990s onwards in the pro-transformation liberal right bloc, pointing toward the development of a liberal pluralist environment in the 2000s under the hegemonic position of the AKP governments. The extracts below from the personal interview with Mehmet Altan reveal the meanings of Altan's discourses and his contribution to the debate, in the scope of the overall

meaning of this dissertation. In line with the Ayşe Aslıhan Çelenk's (2009) findings, the extracts reveal the complex constructions of the military problem, democratization and pluralization in Turkey. Thus, in light of the experiences and wisdom that he acquired over time, the discussions surrounding Altan's struggle for democracy and pluralism in Turkey, appear together in his arguments with his concept of the 'second republic'. There also appear to be contradictions about the progress of the democracy in Turkey throughout his arguments. These are explained in detail below.

### **Extract 1**

“That is to say, the difference between the republic and a democracy is not clearly known. In a word, the republic in practice does not allow the passage of power from father to son, but that is not meaningful when it is not adorned with democracy. Hence, the regime of Iran is also a republic, as well as Syria and Azerbaijan, even as power began to be transferred from the father to son there. So, I have mentioned the need of adorning the Republic of Turkey with democracy and the transition to a democratic republic, since at that point Turkey's problems could not be solved only by mere republicanism, and this republic would not sustain the current situation of Turkey. Therefore, I have emphasized the requirement of solving the problems through democratization itself. The 'Second Republic' is a democratic republic, which suggests the transformation and alteration of Turkey's Kemalist Republic to a democratic one” (M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015).

Çelenk (2009: 122–123) argues that winning the War of Liberation turned the military into a 'hero', which provided legitimacy to the future actions of the military in founding and modernizing the republic. In relation to this, in extract 1, Altan's concern with democratization constructs a progress of perceiving the limitations of the “Kemalist Republic” and confronting the foundational dynamics of the republic, which gave a powerful position to the military, as a means for reconstructing the state through social inclusion (I. 8–10). In this extract, discursive objects are causally connected and invoke concerns about “alteration”. As Altan explicitly mentions in the interview extract, even the meanings of the discourses associated with the second republic remain applicable to the people depending on their perception capacity, as derived from their ideological positions. Concerning the democratization discourse, associations with alteration apply to the major aspects in practice (e.g. transformation, liberating, reconstructing). Thus, in Altan's conception, the meaning of alteration goes along with positive improvement and involves a transition away from undemocratic rule. In this sense, he questions the foundational perversions of the Kemalist Republic.

In the first instance, the interview extract is concerned with “the difference between the republic and a democracy”, constructing the “second republic” as “adorning the Republic of Turkey with democracy” (I. 1–6). This concern is related to the mostly interested social discourse and suggests discursive constructions of second republic was an attempt to attract the public attention away from its emergence in the 1990s. The constructions of the second republic predominantly deal with important public issues that are available to every individual, and from which everybody can take some lessons and apply them to their daily concerns. Thus, within extract 1, the limitation of “mere republicanism” as the solution to the major problems of Turkey indicate an inability to “sustain the current situation of Turkey” (I. 5–8), which suggests the need to reconstruct the republic in order to improve the democratic standards.

The feedback in the extract indicates that Altan’s constructions provide an optimistic view of second republic as democratizing the republic. Consequently, his constructions of “democratization” relate to being liberated from military tutelage and “transformation and alteration of Turkey’s Kemalist Republic” in order to address the needs of the nation (I. 5–10). This creates a conflict between Altan’s concern for liberation from military tutelage and the military’s guardianship of the interests of the nation, which was proposed by Atatürk as a savior of the country (Çelenk, 2009: 123). Thus, Altan’s confrontation comprises the subject positions of psychologically and emotionally questioning the Kemalist regime, while his democratization discourse positions the people into awareness of the foundational perversions of the Kemalist Regime, and tends to solve the regime’s problems through democratization. In this sense, Altan’s approach to democratization concerns the causal relationship between “mere republicanism” and existing “problems” of the sociopolitical arena (I. 5–9). Therefore, these constructions offer the subject positions of engaging the confrontation process on a much more personal and spiritual level, in order, with an overall social interaction, to lead the change in mentality that provides the potential to widen this confrontation process.

In extract 1, the inclination of the “second republic” discourse toward “solving the problems through democratization” includes awareness of the limitations of the Kemalist Republic and the need to engage in the transformation process in a more collective manner. This suggests that Altan is struggling to reinforce the confrontation culture in society, since this provides a progressive relationship between democratization and liberalization, as clarified through his “normalization” discourse in extract 4 below. Altan, as an academic, grew up in an intellectual family environment and obtained a doctoral degree in France, a background that

give him a more moralistic stance. However, people who have not passed through the same personal development may be less likely to engage in this moral perspective, instead remaining on a more opportunistic level. Even so, Altan's comprised subject position of confronting the Kemalist Republic provides an influential guide for people to adopt an overall questioning approach during their personal growth, since it proposes reaching a positive environment to the benefit of the whole society, as clarified in extract 2 below.

## **Extract 2**

“Turkey did not have the classical social development that took place in the West. At the beginning, development was seen there as a progression from feudalism to mercantilism, liberalism, industrialization and post-industrial society, the accumulation of capital, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Unfortunately, for us, the land order that was transferred from the Byzantine to the Ottoman Empire did not allow such accumulation of capital, because it was anti-feudal. For that reason, when analyzed from the outside, it is very difficult to understand Turkey. The Ottoman Empire transformed into a republic, simply changing the name hastily, while the essence remained the same. The palace of the Ottomans was replaced with the state, and the same goes for vassal with nation. The courtiers continued to live a very good life, and state elites rode roughshod over the ordinary people. Normally the proletarian and bourgeois separation and conflict emerged here as the contention between the state and nation. [In Turkey] the state elites appeal to the army, since they have not the function of representing and addressing the needs of the people. When well-offs hid behind the military, others who were excluded, ignored, shoved around by the regime, those whom the Ottomans treated as vassals and later the state treated as a nation, found a way to take refuge in Mosques and religion. So, the two main axes of the politics in Turkey are neither liberalism and conservatism nor socialism and communism. Here I refer to the Mosque–barrack tutelage, one is religion and the other is nationalism, which have continued in this process. So, if it does not transform to a third way, becoming a democratic republic, for me it does not seem possible to become worldly and catch up with the times. So, up until now, it had been seriously motioned to end the military tutelage. But, at this time, it crashed into the tutelage of political Islam. I hope Turkey will strictly opt for democracy after seeing that it can not continue with the mosque and the barrack” (M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015).

In extract 2, the effect of confrontation largely constructs a progression toward questioning the ‘Kemalist republic’ with its foundational regime character, but also points at its “essence” inherited from the Ottoman Empire for a comprehensive questioning (II. 4–10). The word “essence” could refer to the Ottoman heritage in which the army’s and the state elites’ powerful position in the state was visible (Halpern, cited in Çelenk, 2009: 122). Consequently, it suggests that Altan’s concern for confrontation is a kind of historical questioning, since his conception indicates his awareness of the foundational perversions of the republic. Thus, Altan’s constructions of confrontation challenge the dominant discourse of the establishment

of Turkey as a sharp break with the Ottoman imperial past by mentioning the existing supreme authority of the state elites (military, political, bureaucratic) over ordinary people as a continuation of dominance of the palace over the vassals. His concern with confrontation also defines various historical examples of Western social development and indicates the deficiency of Turkish Republic in developing through a similar process, from “feudalism to mercantilism, liberalism, industrialization and post-industrial society, the accumulation of capital, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat” (II.1–8).

In extract 2, Altan’s inclination toward “third way” can be seen in his construction of the democratization discourse, which refers to transforming the regime into the “democratic republic” by liberating it from “Mosque–barrack tutelage” (II. 17–22). In Altan’s conception, bringing on the second republic through democratization is a requirement to “become worldly” and “catch up with the times”, and a path to transforming the Kemalist Republic (II.18–20). Altan’s inclination toward becoming worldly through democratizing the republic entails a change in mentality that affects everybody in the country. He emphasizes the “catch up with the times” discourse in order to call attention to acquiring Western democratic standards, which, in Altan’s conception, could be achieved through the reform process for EU membership (II.18–21). Thus, Altan mentions, in the last part of extract 2, the serious reform process that has happened to end the military hegemony, which refers to the AKP governments’ EU-backed reform process in the 2000s.

Above all, using different constructions of “second republic” suggests an ability to engage the confrontation process with self will and in an active manner, rather than despairingly engaging with the Mosque–barrack tutelage. In this sense, extract 2 refers to the constructions of the transition to the second republic as “democratization”, encompassing the subject positions for shared experiences of an overall questioning process for a wholesome confrontation and progression toward a healthy democratic status. The impact of Altan’s constructions about confrontation relates to increasingly questioning the Kemalist Republic as well as its “essence”, inherited from the Ottoman Empire, and feeling the way toward liberation. Altan’s conception includes not only liberation from military tutelage, but also embedding the subject positions to be liberated from mosque tutelage, in a process to transform Turkey into a democratic republic since the “two main axes of the politics in Turkey” were built up on Mosque and barrack, which refer to “religion” and “nationalism” (II. 16–22). Altan’s reference to liberation from the Mosque tutelage targets the conservative

Muslims within the pro-Islamic movements, which started to engage into the public sphere during the AKP period in the 2000s. In this, he suggests that a new modern Islamic mentality would emerge through creating their own self-consciousness.

Nevertheless, concentrating on the confrontation process requires first mental liberation from “Mosque–barrack tutelage” (II. 17–22), which is also an inappropriate process for some people since it requires an overall change in mentality. The need for liberation from the barrack tutelage reflects a lack of interest among civilian actors, especially politicians, to deal with the important issues of society, such as security, over which the military exercised a traditional monopoly (Cizre, cited in Çelenk, 2009: 130). However, Altan’s constructions indicate that he had already undergone a confrontation process, being a person with a pluralist perspective and a liberal democratic vision, moving beyond the protectionist mentality. Thus, the effect of his ideas on his followers in confronting the Kemalist Republic means transfusing the feelings that such confrontation is doable and necessary to the process of solving the fundamental problems of the republic. Aside from this debate, Altan favors liberalization for improving Turkish democracy and questioning the Kemalist Republic in order to possibly eliminate “the contention between the state and nation”. In this context, extract 3 below reveals Altan’s position on this liberalization process, based on the fluctuating democratic environment from the 2000s on.

### **Extract 3**

“So, the AKP in some way had an important function in having conservative democrat characteristics and carrying the banner of EU reforms, which made a priority of democratizing the regime and moving the subordinated groups, who were previously excluded by the system, into the system. But, after 2007 and 2008, this attitude changed gradually. Also, from 2010 onwards, contradicting this identity in the opposite direction, the facilities of the state turned toward unearned income and the system moved closer to the statuesque (Ankaralılaşmak); [AKP] became sectarian, taking place within a structure that tends toward fascism by being the shadow of the September 12 [coup] regime. For that reason, we need to divide the AKP into two. So, the AKP until 2007 and 2008 differs from the tendency toward a single fascist dictatorship after these dates, whereafter it declares the confiscation of Turkey by showing its true colors” (M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015).

Extract 3 focuses on the political alteration of AKP from a democratic vision to an authoritarian tendency. This is primarily illustrated in the first five years of the EU reform period of the AKP government in the 2000s, and “democratizing the regime” and “moving the

subordinated groups” into the system (III.1–4) also reveal Altan’s inclination. In the extract, Altan’s encouragement of the AKP continuing with the EU membership reform process is a far more positive step toward achieving the change in mentality than engaging in the statuesque (Ankaralılařmak). Importantly, it suggests that the engaging of the “statuesque” discourse is trapped in the Kemalist Regime (i.e. military tutelage) and directed away from democratization.

Altan’s approach to confronting AKP is based on experiences and wisdom that he gained under the AKP rule; therefore, he aims for his wisdom, which emerged through his knowledge and experiences, to be perceived and practiced in the society. However, there is a conflicting relationship between his discourses of “democratizing the regime” and “tends toward fascism” in presenting the recent situation in Turkey; largely since the AKP’s first term from 2002 to 2007 established a second republic in Altan’s conception, he currently does not see the spirit for continuing the reform process, since AKP’s tendency from the second term onwards has been to draw closer to the statuesque (Ankaralılařma) (III. 4–8). This positions him as unsure whether Turkey is at all in the process of second republic. Nevertheless, his stance suggests that Altan desires the restoration of the second republic direction through further democratization, and his constructions suggest that he views the current period as a kind of turbulence in the democratization process. Below, in extract 4, Altan presents an explanation of his observation of the current period by considering the possible realization of his ‘second republic’.

#### **Extract 4**

“So in a way, of course, an important step was taken with regard to the participation of Muslim, conservative subordinated groups in the system. Similarly, with the Kurds, to some extent we were unable to normalize by meeting the all requirements of the democracy, but we are, in a way, in the process of integrating the elements into the system that were excluded by the system and the state. This integration politically did not bring a very healthy process to the democratic status, but such a process exists. Sociologically the subordinated groups have emerged. It is understood more that the people own the state. So, these are the positive steps. But, Turkey is still very far from democracy, and it resembles an opera in which democracy is quickly and easily massacred” (M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015).

In extract 4, Altan is concerned with the people’s acquisition of power, since democratization requires that “people own the state”, rather than the elites dominating the people (IV. 6–7). Nonetheless, Altan mentions the previously emerged “process” toward a change in mentality

in Turkey, and he cites what has been done so far in this process on the way to a pluralistic society, such as increased “participation of Muslim, conservative subordinated groups in the system” and Kurdish integration into the system (IV.1–5). The word “process” sheds light on Turkey’s EU membership reforms: the military opted against open resistance to the reforms and advocated a selective and gradual change with its pro-Western and pro-modernization position (Karawan, cited in Çelenk, 2009: 128). These provide evidence for the preferred method of “solving the problems through democratization”, revealed by ongoing transformations taking place chiefly on the societal level, as proposed in extract 1 above. Extract 4 positions the people through an awareness of the past, which could make the society go ahead with the development of a healthy democratic status through collective individual action and engagement in the transformation process. Thus, developing a healthy democratic status and becoming normalized in an interactive manner by being a part of a questioning process comprise having a multidimensional perspective on dealing with the democratization process (IV. 1–6).

In conclusion, in each extract above, Altan’s main concern with the second republic concept is democratizing the republic, which would provide individuals with more options to exercise their democratic rights in a pluralistic manner. This opportunistic focus is considered generally preferable for keeping the people’s attention on the confrontation process through self-understanding. Being in prosperity and freedom is preferable to being under constant state oppression. In this sense, as Altan clarifies, there were some socially constructed improvements in the last decade. While these were not ideal, they included a tendency to solve problems through democratization, as is suggested with the movement of subordinated groups toward inclusion, with the participation of subordinated Muslim groups in the system, and with Kurdish integration into the public sphere. The examples in the major discourses from all extracts suggest that a gradual, pluralistic transformation formerly existed in the social sphere, while in the post-2010 era, the increasing tendency is toward civilian authoritarianism on the political level. In this light, in the next sub-section, interview extracts from the personal interview with Sırrı Süreyya Önder in 2013 reveal the major implications of the emerging resistance in the civilian social sphere against the authoritarianism in the political sphere in the context of the Gezi Park Protests.



#### **4.2.6. Sırrı Süreyya Önder: Resistance as a Moral Responsibility**

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, with his ‘resistance’ discourse, is an influential public intellectual in the transition process from the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc to the new left conception, which emerged right before the Gezi Park Protests in 2013. The extracts below are gathered from a personal interview with Önder, who is an intellectual and activist with a socialist stance, and who actively engages in the social processes, as seen especially with his critical concepts just before the Gezi Park Protests in the 2013. The discussion in the extracts below was in line with his moral stance of resisting both the authoritarianism in the political sphere and the increasing neoliberal hegemony in relation to this. In agreement with Ümit Akçay (2014), who dealt with the contemporary anti-system debates in Turkey, the analysis of the extracts reveals that the resistance discourse just before the Gezi Protests in 2013 was based on anti-authoritarianism and anti-capitalism. Thus, various constructions of the resistance discourse reveal Önder’s discursive connection to the Gezi Protest spirit and his position as the leading actor in the Kurdish movement in struggling against ‘neoliberal authoritarianism’.

##### **Extract 1**

“Apparently, there has been an ongoing struggle, and being or not being part of [this struggle] was a moral responsibility beyond my preference. It would be wrong to say that I have chosen the BDP. My situation is rather that it was given to me, in the direction of expressing the right for representation of the socialist movement and the Kurdish Grassroots Movement’s desire for coexistence. I think that, concerning this task, what motivated BDP and the People’s Democratic Congress to choose me there, was the present time itself” (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013).

##### **Extract 2**

“In fact, neoliberalism may be an overarching answer. Thus, it is not difficult to see, from privatization to the state’s new expansionist policies, that being part of these relates to an aggression of capital in the oversight of the state. The aggression of capitalism is a permanent problem in a country where workers’ resistance takes place together with the monthly murder of 30 workers. However, we cannot keep this issue separate: neither the nation state problem, nor the problems regarding women and children. In the dynamics of society, identity and class have become an integral part” (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013).

In extract 1, the “struggle” discourse preliminarily constructs the situation of “being part” of the ongoing resistance, but also presents its ethical consideration as “a moral responsibility”

contrary to its optional character (I. 1–2). This suggests that Önder’s discourse of “struggle” is a general situation assessment, and thus his clarifications offer possible solutions to eliminate the effects of the existing problems of “neoliberalism” and “the nation state”, as mentioned in extract 2. By constructing discourses related to the engagement as “being part” of the struggle, Önder presents his engagement with the Kurdish movement more as a desire of the resisting movements rather than his own. In this context, Önder supplements the current examples of the oppositional left with his own subjective examples, and indicates that his engagement with the pro-Kurdish BDP represents “desire for coexistence” between the Kurdish grassroots movement and the socialist movement in this process (I. 2–5). His “moral responsibility”, in line with the overall “resistance” discourse of “being part”, deals with a renowned public discourse of ‘resisting’, which since before the Gezi Park Protests, was aimed at attracting public attention to an extensive struggle (I. 1–2). Most importantly, the repeated reference to resistance points out the popular social issues from immediately before the Gezi Protests, which affected almost everyone in society such that everyone can learn some lessons in dealing with these issues in their daily lives.

Extract 2 appears to dealing with the “aggression of capitalism” as well as “privatization”, which means paying attention to the reasons behind the present inequalities that bear on everybody in the society. In this context, Önder emphasizes “the state’s new expansionist policies”, bringing awareness of and solidarity with discriminated groups in line with “workers’ resistance” (II. 1–4). Önder’s calling attention to these government policies provides the means for fighting against, rather than being engaged in, capitalist hegemony. At this point, his “being part” discourse suggests, rather than enjoying capitalism, moving in an opposite direction in order to maintain equality.

According to Akçay (2014:2), one of the fundamental features of the last decade in Turkey was the exclusion of social groups other than big capital groups from economic, social and political decision-making processes. Thus, the question that needs to be answered is where these exclusionary practices come from. In this context, Önder’s concern with social equality in extract 2 relates to the social effects of the “neoliberalism” that Turkey increasingly engaged in during the last quarter (II. 1–5). Such details could serve the subject positions of awareness of the negative social effects of neoliberal hegemony by engaging in the confrontation process, beginning on the individual level of the moral bases, and by creating a way for social solidarity during the process within the revolutionary movements of

subordinated groups. Önder's concern with struggle seems to be related to the experiences and knowledge that he acquired throughout his contentious life. Thus, he aims for this experience and sensibility to be perceived and practiced in the society, especially by the subordinated groups, who suffer under the neoliberal hegemony.

Overall, various constructions of 'resistance' in both extracts suggest that "being part", i.e. engaging in the process of struggle in a morally responsible manner, is unlikely to fall within neoliberal hegemony. In extract 1, however, following the process of struggle depends upon "being part", suggesting that this may not apply to people who have no ideologically revolutionary culture in their past. Throughout his constructions, Önder represents his engagement with this process of struggle as a moral responsibility with a pluralist perspective toward safeguarding the rights of oppressed groups. Thus, the impact of Önder's ideas on the struggle against the system refers to the responsibility of everybody to make the system fair and to widen social equality, since this affects everybody regardless of their political stance, identity and religious affiliation. This makes it a doable process, even under the worst conditions, as exemplified by Önder's life: he came from an underprivileged family in an underdeveloped eastern Anatolian province. In such a way, interview extract 1 often constructs the recent resurgence of the revolutionary movements within the process of transforming the system.

Akçay (2014: 5) argues that developmentalism, a dominant ideology in the 1960s, was replaced in the 2000s with competitiveness, which brought the social demands of the working people or social movements like the Gezi Park protests, which were against the commodification of the commons into this process. Although in both extracts the major problems were categorized into political, social and economic levels, Önder's discursive constructions of the struggles favor concentrating on the economic sectors. This expresses the overall social and cultural effects of the increasing neoliberalism through "privatization" and "the state's new expansionist policies" (II. 1–3). Hence, due to Önder's underprivileged background, his enrolling into the socialist movement portrays a morally responsible person touching upon the important subjects of the society. However, even if the same personal development for acquiring moral responsibility is not achieved, Önder's constructions intend to be largely applicable to underprivileged social groups, which grow larger as an effect of the recent neoliberal policies.

### **Extract 3**

“In Turkey, there is the nation-state problem. Öcalan’s definition of capitalist modernity, as well as the critique of capitalism and the nation state by the majority of the left, are actually based on this problem. There is a system that impoverished the people with a strengthening perception of the nation state, and that is also blessing the state and state policies, from identity to economics, through national consciousness. The system creates its effects. The Kurdish issue was perceived as a mere matter of identity for years. Whereas, today, the Kurds have built their own revolutionary culture, and the PKK guerrillas in the same way as well. There will always be a counter-hegemonic group, when hegemony is working on regenerating itself. The origin of the problem in Turkey must be sought out among the people who are trying to keep the hegemonic system in their hands without saying ‘stop’ to its cruelty” (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013).

In extract 3, not only the economic bases but an embedded discourse of equality presents the possible means for achieving social justice on the progressive level. The extract then provides a brief explanation of equality that sheds light on alienation, perceiving the Kurdish issue “as a mere matter of identity” in order to cover the different sociocultural groups in the country (III. 6–8). In extract 3, Önder emphasizes “the Kurds have built their own revolutionary culture”, which brought together the idea of empowering the counter-hegemonic movements in order to eliminate “cruelty” (III. 6–10). At this point, the extract shows his constructions to present ‘resistance’ as a means of eliminating discrimination through struggle and the provision of an arena for equality through social justice. Accordingly, Önder’s constructions on equality are related to being free from “hegemony” and the “nation-state problem”, providing an arena for egalitarian social structures through a reform process.

### **Extract 4**

“The Kemalist system continues through transforming. There must be a revolution in every area of society in order to have a complete break. Pluralism, alone, is not the end of Kemalism. Thus, Kemalism, also, has the essence as an economic ideology” (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013).

### **Extract 5**

“There is wide-ranging research. For instance, while recent research on the political trends indicates positive developments on Kurdishness and similar topics, it also shows confusion among the people in terms of these trends. In brief, the discourses of having Kurdish friends are increasingly heard among Turks. Kurds are clinging to the idea of living together. But, especially when it comes to foreign policy, major divisions are becoming more polarized” (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013).

In extract 4, Önder adopts a sharp tone and opposes the recent discussions on transition away from the Kemalist regime through pluralization of the system. Moreover, Önder is concerned with “Kemalism” as a continuous project, existing in “essence as an economic ideology” (IV. 2–3), which comes up with the need for revolution in all spheres of the society for a complete transformation. Yet, in extract 5, the given examples, based on research concerning the effects of the reform process under the AKP governments, are shown to be “positive developments” of the emerging mentality related to the Solution Process that started at the end of the 2000s; this is seen in the discourses of Turks “having Kurdish friends” and Kurds “clinging to the idea of living together” (V. 2–4). Referring to the research and trends gives authority to the claim that the given information is objective and is to be taken as factual (Waidzunus, 2005: 9–11). By placing emphasis on the current issues, Önder also reveals his position as supportive of the socially constructed reform processes. Nonetheless, this suggests that Önder’s positive approach is due to his engagement in the Solution Process and his opportunity to discuss the issue with the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, in prison at the Imrali Island, and share Öcalan’s messages with the public on a regular basis. In this context, Önder’s positive approach to the Solution Process creates confusion on his position: whether a complete revolution is needed or reforms should be supported from within the current system. However, Önder’s desire to see positive developments suggests that they would bring an egalitarian social structure to the system, either through revolutionary movements or through the reforms made by the governments.

In extract 4, Önder’s proposed subject positions are related to being within the process of struggle that he experienced in his personal confrontations throughout life. This suggests that Önder aims to empower the struggling people, both through individual contributions and through collective actions based on the existing revolutionary movements. He expects that doing so will realize the liberation from hegemony and achieve a system based on equality, that is, by restoring social justice throughout the process. Akçay (2014: 6) explains that the conservative agenda of the AKP in the 2000s was deeply entangled with neoliberalism. In that sense, the AKP was the continuation of the economic system of the Kemalist hegemony. Önder’s offering the subject position of struggle against the ongoing Kemalist system suggests that he deals not only with political, but also social and economic factors. Thus, overall this position could encourage people to confront the system, since there is not just a political but also an “economic ideology” character that affects the whole of society (IV. 2–3). This focus of Önder’s suggests that he aims to keep the people bound to the mission of

struggling to confront the system. Thus, the discursive constructions suggest that not just liberation from state oppression, but also social justice, achieved by focusing on social policies, are necessary, since the latter includes feeling equal in terms of prosperity within the process. On this point, Önder's overt reference to the problem of economic policy shows the predominance of neoliberal policies, against which, he suggests, action should be taken by engaging in the process of struggle. Extracts 6 and 7 below reveal the path toward this process of struggle, not only against the neoliberal policies, but also to safeguarding rights of the society.

### **Extract 6**

“We should avoid saying ‘non-Muslim’ (*Gayri Müslim*). Christians and Jews have more important identities than being non-Muslim. We should give up our logic of asking questions and questioning that Islam was predicated upon. Maybe, we can start from here. There is the equal collective rights issue here. Diyanet urgently needs to be regulated. Serious violations mainly concerning Alevis are at stake, and the solution will begin with making the financial structures of institutions fair” (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013).

### **Extract 7**

“A neoliberal structure exists, and all gains of the welfare state regressed through the emergence of precarious work, along with many other concepts, including subcontractors. Everyone is working with contracts. Positions are about to be destroyed. Under the obligation of others, uninsured, cheap, flexible and unorganized labor is the trouble of our times. As long as we are troubled with this, it is naive to talk about the social state” (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013).

In extract 6, Önder's pointing to equality constructs the desired progress in the social, cultural and economic arenas and aims to eliminate the effect of othering in the struggle to make the system fair. Önder strongly emphasizes “equal collective rights”, aiming to suppress the existing inequalities in society by “making the financial structures of institutions fair”, which would distribute resources equally to all social groups of the country (VI. 4–6).

The discursive objects in both extracts 6 and 7 are concerned with a wide variety of changes in the social, cultural and economic arenas but all are connected with reforms at the institutional level. Önder's ideas implicate, social groups who are discriminated against, as well as ordinary people depending on their stance, which is affected by the uneven

distribution of resources in the country. In terms of the desired equality, by regulating the Diyanet and “making the financial structures of institutions fair”, reforms are made to fit the ongoing transformations (VI. 4–6). Thus, the idea behind the intended reform is to take positive steps toward implementing social rights and concentrate on institutional transformations toward a fair system. This suggests that Önder is confronting the core problems caused by the institutional setting of the Kemalist Republic, which has affected the wider social arena.

Önder’s concern with resistance is also related to citizens’ acquiring “equal collective rights” with the abolition of hegemony over subordinated groups (VI. 4–6). In point of fact, Önder’s implicated stance on struggle involves the subject positions of psychologically confronting the system and physically engaging with the uprisings against hegemony, and at the same time his desire for equality positions the people to understand the systemic features of “serious” human rights violations and to force institutions to take on an egalitarian structure throughout the reform process. This suggests, however, that struggle must begin with an inability to achieve the desired situations, which should motivate the people to engage in the social processes of building up social justice by eliminating “serious violations” (VI. 4–6).

Önder’s constructions of struggle implicate confronting the system that consecrates state policies and, on the individual level, starting to have a collective feeling of moving toward attaining an equal, dignified and fair life. This was seen in the discourses during the Gezi Protests in 2013, which have been described as “an uprising against technocratic authoritarianism” (Akçay, 2014: 7). In this sense, Önder’s constructions implicate not only liberation from the Kemalist System (i.e. “nation-state problem”), but also emancipation from capitalist hegemony, through a process of empowering the social state. As stated in extract 7, this is due to the “trouble” in today’s economic sector: the “uninsured, cheap, flexible and unorganized labor” (VII. 4–5).

Each extract in this analysis provides a brief explanation of the meaning of various discursive constructions of resistance, which comprise the practice of being aware of the reasons behind “serious violations” and building solidarity with oppressed social groups in order to achieve social justice within the country. This relates to being in solidarity with the “opponents of the exclusionary government practices” (Akçay, 2014: 7), as was seen during the Gezi Resistance. This suggests the need to realize the process of confrontation in order to achieve social justice through emerging solidarity, first starting on the individual level, and then moving toward the

wider social groups that are oppressed by the hegemonic system. Furthermore, realizing equal collective rights while achieving social justice through the process of struggle involves the practice of restructuring the system in order to restore equality within it. Thus, the major relevance of equality is that it opens the path to exercising both individual preferences and collective rights in a much fairer environment while transforming toward a pluralist society. In line with the ideas on equal rights and social justice derived in this section within the collective meaning of Önder's resistance discourse, the analysis of the "anti-capitalist Islam" discourse of Ihsan Eliaçık, based on extracts in the next sub-section, will reveal this debate through the Marxist interpretation of Islam, which also implicates the growing critical perspectives in the pro-Islamic movements.

#### **4.2.7. Ihsan Eliaçık: Anti-Capitalist Islam as a Mentality Revolution**

As shown above, during the neoliberal era, especially toward the end of 2000s, the restoration of the hegemony of the pro-capital, Islamic-oriented AKP brought the resistance discourse based on anti-capitalist perspectives to the forefront. However, this process occurred not only on the left, but also in the pro-Islamic movements. At this point, the critique of neoliberalism, as well as the Islamic-oriented AKP's engagement with neoliberal policies, led to the emergence of an influential conception of the Marxist interpretation of Islam, anti-capitalist Islam, which is based on the ideas of Ihsan Eliaçık. The extracts below come from an interview with Ihsan Eliaçık, who was popularly known as a taboo-breaking intellectual on Islamic beliefs, chiefly in the last decade, and reveal the major implications as well as the practical subject positions of Eliaçık's "anti-capitalist Islam" discourse. The discussions within the extracts present Eliaçık's exploration of anti-capitalist practices of Islam and his struggle to make people aware of them, with the aim of motivating them to take a position against the neoliberal policies of the Islamic-oriented AKP. The analysis of the interview extracts reveals, in agreement with Roy Karadağ (2010), that the Islamic neoliberal experiment from the 1980s faced major contradictions due to the norms and moral perspectives of Islamic social practices. Embedded within are various discursive constructions from the analysis of Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam discourse, their major implications and the action possibilities that this analysis provides.



## Extract 1

“It means that a group of Muslims is against capitalism. Hence, recently, Muslims have forgotten anti-capitalism. Even though the AKP government has a solution, or a counter speech, or actions against everything, there is nothing against capitalism. This is going completely through the floor. So, fallen behind. This [anti-capitalist Muslim stance] represents sensitivity against [the recent situation]. Wealthiness, the distribution of wealth and property issues are what we are trying to explain to the Muslims. I think it is a very important issue to dwell on. Now a new global capitalism has emerged. Everything will come periodically here. So, will we indulge in capitalism or produce something alternative? This is the whole point. The global capitalism of this world has agreed to everything, as long as it is not becoming an alternative to capitalism. However, if something alternative to capitalism is produced, so if you close the raw material sources and do not give them, they are declaring you as a terrorist and an enemy. Take it, do whatever you want. Whether sultanate or republic, it does not matter. Because their god is money. This is the religion of money” (Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015).

In extract 1, Eliaçık stresses the “global capitalism” in which today’s Muslim societies engage, which needs to be questioned (I. 1–7). Through this conception, Eliaçık’s constructions are based on a self-criticism that aims to reveal the incompatibility of Islam and capitalism, and that makes Muslims aware of this fact. In line with this, by questioning the position of today’s ‘Muslims’ on capitalist policies, with the aim of making them perceive the anti-capitalist nature of Islam, Eliaçık presents his means for resisting the recent capitalist policies in a more Islamic way. Thus, Eliaçık’s extract carries the idea of resistance and builds on the struggle to discover alternative ways of breaking away from capitalism throughout the process (I. 4–8). In this manner, Eliaçık’s conception regarding resistance is related to the anti-capitalist restoration of sharing and respect for labor, since these are regarded as important aspects of an egalitarian society.

Karadağ (2010: 20–21) explains that the main base for Islamists’ success was the emergence of the “Anatolian Tigers”, the small and medium enterprises in the Central Anatolian provinces, as these were the major points of Islamist engagement with capitalism. They also established their own business association (MUSİAD) and trade union (HAK-İŞ Trade Union Confederation). In line with this, in the spirit of the extract, Eliaçık’s concern for self-criticism and engaging in the struggle against global capitalism requires that the pro-Islamic people and possibly the core of conservative AKP, the former Islamist MGH, engage in this struggle. Thus, he criticizes the pro-Islamic people for neglecting the anti-capitalist nature of Islam and even highly engaging capitalism (I.1–4).

Moreover, Eliaçık’s carrying the idea of resistance throughout the extract builds on the struggle against capitalism, which entails psychologically and emotionally engaging Muslims

in the process of confrontation by searching for alternatives to the effects of global capitalism. At the same time, his discursive constructions are related to his self-critical position that Islamic people should spiritually question the major beliefs arising from their social relations, which reveals his aim to direct their conception of Islam toward the ‘egalitarian’ meaning at its core. In this regard, Eliaçık’s concern with self-criticism seems to be a desire for pro-Islamic people to deal with the negative social effects of capitalism, which should motivate them to question the social policies of the AKP governments in order to empower the social state (I.1–6). Hence, the subject positions offered by these constructions in the extract consist of a Muslim individual who understands the existence of inequalities in society not as predestination, but as due to capitalism: an order established by the people. Rather than engaging capitalism in the post-1980s as the majority of Muslims do—by acquiring economic benefits (Karadağ, 2010: 23–24)—Eliaçık also emphasizes positive issues, including the “distribution of wealth”, which is for the common benefit of society. This reveals his aim for an anti-capitalist interpretation of Islam to be incorporated into Turkish society in the process of the mentality revolution, as is proposed explicitly in extract 2 below.

## **Extract 2**

“There has been the need to say something against [pro-Islamic movements’ engagement with capitalism], and I saw that nobody was saying anything. We expressed some remarks against it. An image has emerged of Anti-Capitalist Muslims. Associations have begun to be formed in some cities. Now we continue with this process. It is a powerful discourse, but somewhat unsuccessful in organizations. It is not the time yet for these organizations, because there first needs to be a personal revolution. We are currently trying to convince religious people on the non-existence of capitalism and the non-accumulation of wealth in Islam. So, that must be shared. The gap between wealthy and poor is not predestination. We are trying to convince the people, including religious Muslims and labor, to believe that the order established by the people needs to be such a way. So, there is a mentality problem. First of all, exactly this mind-set of the people is not ready yet. In this sense, it occurs by coming together and getting organized. Therefore, at the moment, I’m writing books, developing new discourses and writing. I am going everywhere where I am invited. I am using the media tools, going to the programs and doing research. We are trying to sow the cultural seeds of a mentality revolution. We are trying to make such a mentality revolution. Currently, it is supposed to go in that way” (Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015).

Extract 2, by referring to the “mentality problem” and by dealing with self-criticism, points out a desire for Muslims to question the existing mentality of the social and spiritual issues that have emerged through the order established by the people (II. 6–10). Also, Eliaçık expects people to have consciousness concerning the anti-capitalist practices at the core of Islam. In Eliaçık’s conception, this consciousness could be achieved through “a personal

revolution”, that is, by being convinced by resolving self-criticism (II. 4–9). In extract 2, various constructions of ‘anti-capitalist Islam’ capture its main spirit, stressing some level of self-criticism toward contemporary Muslims’ neglect of facts about the “non-existence of capitalism” and the “non-accumulation of wealth” in Islam (II. 4–10). This refers to Eliaçık’s aim to draw people’s attention to these facts, since it is related to the growing discussion about Turkey’s rapidly increasing engagement with neoliberal policies in the last decade. Importantly, the influence capacity of the constructions of ‘anti-capitalist Islam’ matters for a large number of conservatives as well as the left, due to their concern with the same issues. Thus, it is largely expected for conservatives to develop consciousness and to apply that consciousness to their own lives through this process of self-criticism. This is further supported in the current period, and informs “an image has emerged of Anti-Capitalist Muslims” as well as the “associations” founded as resisting groups throughout Turkey (II. 1–5).

The reasons behind Eliaçık’s desire to confront the engagement with capitalism are related to the changes in society’s cultural features that have affected everybody in the country, including people from the pro-Islamic movements. He mentions that “the gap between wealthy and poor is not predestination” with the aim of encouraging people to alter their perception of (pre)destiny, and he opens a way to confront the “order established by the people” that provides a mentality revolution in process (II. 6–13). In line with Eliaçık’s conception, this indicates a misunderstanding of Islamic thinking about the accumulation of wealth, which can be seen in the AKP’s discourses and actions, as mentioned in extract 1. Thus, the last decade reflects the contradictory dynamics between public and private, state and societal roles (Karadağ, 2010: 29). This is a required step for Eliaçık, since exploring the misconception of destiny motivates the people to have a “personal revolution” (II. 3–8). Essentially, confrontation in the “order established by the people” discourse refers to a mentality revolution, to having a completely different understanding of destiny. This necessitates, however, convincing “religious people” (II. 4–7) who have been engaged in the capitalist system for the last 15 years under the ruling Islamic-oriented AKP. Hence, the effect of Eliaçık’s ideas could be perceived by followers as if Eliaçık himself has been enrolled in this self-criticism process; to his followers he is an example of a Sunni Muslim, deeply engaged in the current problems of society by personally confronting today’s Muslims’ enrollment in the capitalist system. Thus, the interview extract sheds light on the intellectual and spiritual development of Ihsan Eliaçık.

In line with his personal confrontation with Muslims' engagement with global capitalism, Eliaçık proposes a way to start a personal revolution of one's own will, toward a mentality revolution at the societal level. This personal revolution is a means for understanding the negative effects of capitalism on society's cultural and spiritual issues through the prism of the Quran. However, Eliaçık is a theologian, and people without a background in theology may not be able to interpret (*Tafsir*) the Quran, and thus may not have the same personal revolution by understanding the core of Islam through its basic sources. While it is not within the remit of this analysis to explore the complex nature of the Tafsir, the ability to interpret the Quran, it should be mentioned briefly. 'Tafsir' is an Arabic word for exegesis, which has to do with the clarification and interpretation of religious texts. In Islamic theology, Tafsir is a field of study dealing with interpreting Quranic meanings. The practice is a thousand years old, the first examples coming from the Islamic theologians *Al-Ghazali* (1058–1111) and *Fakhruddin Razi* (1150–1210) (Demirci, 2014: 233).

Eliaçık's subject position of Muslim self-criticism, about changing true Islamic faith and action, gives individuals positions as part of this confrontation process on a societal level. On the societal level, an overall mentality revolution is considered necessary for making a remarkable impact on society. Moreover, Eliaçık's constructions of continuing the process of widening the "powerful discourse" of anti-capitalist Islam in society may imply that early followers are ahead of the society. Thus, extract 2 clarifies that the tendency within Turkish society toward an anti-capitalist interpretation of Islam already exists, confirmed by the recent progress of groups and foundational "associations", including increasing numbers of invitations from civil society and universities across Turkey for Eliaçık to speak. Accordingly, in extracts 3 and 4 below, the major implications as well as historically constructed practical aspects of Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam discourse are given a broader sense.

### **Extract 3**

"I grew up in a Sunni Muslim family in Anatolia and saw in my father and mother these things: When two things fall, they are taken and placed somewhere higher. One of them is the Holy Quran, the other is bread. This is the root of anti-capitalism in Anatolia. This is the root of it in the Anatolian household. Bread means labor. Why do Anatolian people place bread in a higher space? Bread slaps, the Quran slaps (*ekmek çarpar, Kuran çarpar*) [they say]. Bread means labor. All left ideologies arose from this. The Quran is Allah's book. All religious beliefs arose from this. But the people of Anatolia, the Anatolian household, have combined these themselves. We are trying to do so. They have called it the Islamic left as well as anti-capitalist Islam. In fact, we did not use those names. We have only made those things. In my

speech on Labor Day on May 1<sup>st</sup>, I emphasized that you will now march on this May 1<sup>st</sup> and reveal these things in Anatolia. You will shout them out in the square. So, we did this, as it was our whole goal. This is where Turkey needs to be. This is Turkey's main artery. This has already existed in Anatolia. So, here is where the progress will happen if left to its own devices. The starting point we came from is where the people would go. What the people were doing while they were going home, that is what my father was saying—to carry bread [home] within a closed bag. It is the eye's right (göz hakkı) if somebody sees it and you have to give [either a piece or all of it] to the person who sees it. While he was coming home, bringing more chocolates for our neighbor's children. These are all anti-capitalist things. If these are still alive in society, then something is born; that is the culture. But most of [these things] have been forgotten. Currently, a kind of shopping-center culture, selfishness, dismissing the neighbor from one's mind, have begun to destroy these things. We are trying to change this. Of course, it has its roots in this respect. But, they need to be worked on" (Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015).

#### **Extract 4**

"There is an anti-capitalist core at the bosom of Islam. It is a feature that comes out of people's livings. These are actually enough. But, Marxism and Socialism also address them—will we stay uninterested? No! We have to deal with them, too, and we need to combine the reaction and resistance of them together with this core of Islam. Here, a new synthesis will emerge. Something new will happen, and it will be good. So, both Muslims and the left need it" (Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015).

In extract 3, Eliaçık challenges the hegemony of global capitalism in Turkey and gives priority to (re)inventing the Islamic past, which was an 'anti-capitalist' interpretation of Islam. Throughout the extract, Eliaçık's motivation toward resistance is his sensitivity to the negative effects of capitalism, since these downgrade culture and social justice by planting a "shopping-center culture" and "selfishness" in the process (III. 17–21). At the beginning of extract 3, Eliaçık underlines the roots of anti-capitalist Islam in Turkey and what has been visible in practice, such as the habit of placing both the Quran and bread "somewhere higher" if they fall, as well as "the eye's right" tradition, both found throughout Anatolia (III. 1–16). These expressions of respect and sharing are considered to be rooted within the Islamic tradition in Anatolia. The "eye's right" tradition was often expressed while eating or drinking, since it is always better to give to the people sitting near you. It is not considered a must, but a gesture, a means of saying "you are welcome" to those sitting near you.<sup>64</sup> In this context, Eliaçık clearly constructs a promising future for the expansion of the anti-capitalist mentality by returning to the past, especially for conservative Muslims, even as they are currently

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<sup>64</sup> The following web pages contain more information on the "eye's right" tradition, See online available at: <http://www.dinimizveislam.com/2014/11/goz-hakk-nedir.html> and <http://dinikitablar.com/home/3131-go-z-hakki> (Last accessed 22.12.2017).

engaged in global capitalism. This is delineated by the existing “roots” of anti-capitalism in society and further development of these existing features (III. 18–22).

Starting in extract 3, personal confrontation positions Eliaçık to agree with capitalism’s conversion of Islamic duties and to aim for a mentality revolution in the social relations between Muslims. In extract 4, Eliaçık acknowledges being a Muslim, originally from a Sunni family in central Anatolia, as well as being a theologian who deals with Marxist philosophy. He wants people to be aware of his synthesis of the two traditions, since it would fill the gap between Muslims and the left in a way that achieves an egalitarian social structure. Nevertheless, it is important to look for where the preferred subjects fit into the emerging “new synthesis” (IV. 4–5), since there has been a conflicting relationship between religion and Marxist ideology, especially in the last century. His ideas target mainly conservative Muslims, who have been positioned with mosque tutelage and anti-communism ever since the establishment of the republic (Ceylan, 2013: 336). Nevertheless, by referring to the anti-capitalist practices of the Islamic past, Eliaçık seems to strengthen his concept since these are related to the current problems of the society that also affect conservative Muslims in a broader sense.

In conclusion, all extracts contain constructions of Muslim self-criticism, which includes the practice of questioning the engagement of Muslims in global capitalism. This reveals the intent to change spiritual actions and to reach a level of understanding the ‘true’ belief of Islam. Along these lines, a self-critical questioning process is required in order to reach the level of understanding true Islam and to undertake spiritual actions in the right way, so that Muslims perceive the anti-capitalist nature of Islam. The extracts draw awareness to certain Islamic traditions, such as the habit of placing both a fallen Quran and fallen bread “somewhere higher”, as well as “the eye’s right” tradition. Given such awareness, questioning for Muslims should simply be an act of self-criticism about having moved away from these traditions; perceiving the reasons behind them allows people to take action to return to “Turkey’s main artery”: the existing habits of the people in Anatolia (III. 1–13). In this context, this self-criticism throughout all extracts suggests that conservative Muslim people may practice the true (anti-capitalist) Islamic faith in seeking solutions to the social problems and economic inequalities caused by global capitalism in recent decades. These constructions position conservative Muslim people to be concerned with the questioning process because of their own desire, through self-criticism, to understand the “anti-capitalist core at the bosom of

Islam”. This core is aimed at confronting the problems of global capitalism, and it follows the resistance to the system seeking an egalitarian society, away from the present unequal distribution of power. Through this confrontation, Eliaçık aims to construct a bridge between Islam and Marxist philosophy on the way to a new left in Turkey that includes Islam. In light of these considerations, the next sub-section shows the major implications and the subject positions of the new left in Turkey, based on Foti Benlisoy’s ‘renovation’ discourse.

#### **4.2.8. Foti Benlisoy: Renovation as Breaking up the Hegemony of Neoliberalism**

It was mentioned in the previous sub-section that a new left mentality including various positions began to emerge among the subordinated groups in Turkey, within the critical anti-capitalist discursive environment right before the Gezi Protests. Foti Benlisoy was at the forefront of this with his “renovation” discourse, which pointed out necessary changes to the left in Turkey, based on the transformation ideas that had emerged from the critical protest movements in the last decade. The extracts below are from a personal interview with Benlisoy. His arguments provide a new perspective on the nature of social movements, both on the global level and in Turkey, in the last decade. The discussions in the interview extracts explain Benlisoy’s conception of the emergence of a new left, which covers a large segment of society because of socialism’s newly acquired reputation in Turkey. Additionally, the discussions show how he blames neoliberalism for the emergence of the authoritarian wave all around the world. In relation to these issues, the extracts contain Benlisoy’s critique of the existing gerontocracy in society, and they suggest important meanings and influential positions for the youth movement, which came to the scene largely during the Gezi Park protests in 2013. The extracts reveal discursive constructions of neoliberal reconstruction and the rise of anti-capitalism and anti-authoritarianism in Turkey, and the meanings and subject positions analyzed from Benlisoy’s discourses are in line with Roy Karadağ’s (2010) and Ümit Akçay’s (2014) findings.

##### **Extract 1**

“The gerontocracy issue exists in both ways. Being overwhelmed under the authority of older generations has been visible in the whole of Turkish society. If this is the case as one unit in the left, then there are ten units in, as we can say, conservative, observant communities. We all already live and face this. Even though almost everyone also already complains that it is a problem, the problem is that the youth issue has become a personal fetish after a while. Fetishization and blacklisting are literally the keywords of our time. Now, obviously, I’m not

in that position. So, it is not necessarily that the old is worse than the new; I am not of the position that the older is necessarily worse than the younger. The experience of the older generations, of course, especially in political and social activism, is an enrichment. So, what I mean with gerontocracy is that the experiences of past, political experiences are the things that deepen today, especially if we can enter into a critical dialogue with them. Of course, most of the time, the whole political spectrum in Turkey is still likely to suffer from this. So, we have the attitude of turning history into legend. Rather than questioning and criticizing the past, our position is to submit it as a legend. To the extent that we could establish a critical dialogue with past experiences and call up experiences of the past today—that is very good, if we can make it help us to respond to the concrete problems of today. But what is happening: A) legend making and B) experience of the past are beginning to conceal our political horizons. Therefore, the political experiences of the past are becoming an essential factor rather than an auxiliary factor. It is not a coincidence anyway that all discussion of Turkey’s political life is actually looking backwards, discussing by looking back. We have to look ahead. None of us are a newborn baby, we need not to be so for sure. We come from a past. Nothing is possible to start from scratch. But, you know, if we talk with this famous conservative jargon, we should succeed in being able to become ‘the future that had its roots in the past (*kökü mazide olan ati*)’. This requires a critical dialogue with the past and turning into a critical questioning of the authority of the past over today by establishing a quizzical relationship with it” (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).

In extract 1, a discursive focus on confrontation encourages a kind of renovation by questioning both gerontocracy and the fetishization of “the youth issue”. Its stance deals with the current problems of society by constructing a “critical dialogue” with the debates of the past (I.1–11). Benlisoy’s discursive constructions refer to a desire for overall confrontation, as expressed by the statement “experiences of the past are beginning to conceal our political horizons”. This meaning, as explained in the wider context in extracts 4 and 5 below, is that the left, which includes oppressed groups as those who benefit least from the system, should concentrate more on the current problems caused by neoliberal reforms, instead of sticking with the ideological debates of the past (I.14–19). In this sense, his stance on renovation relates to the major interest of the interview extract in “looking ahead”, which is aimed at drawing the attention of the people to the future. The stance proposes dealing with future social and political issues that will achieve the awaited solutions to the major problems of the society (I.19–25).

Benlisoy’s concern in the extract with renovation is also related to the democratic renewal issue in Turkey, to which the public is already inclined. By engaging in the confrontation process, people are expected to perceive the causes behind the crisis environment and act toward the elimination of those causes. Hence, Benlisoy seems to desire pure confrontation with the “hegemonic” perspectives of Turkey throughout history, including his desire for confrontation with the increasing neoliberal hegemony that absorbed the pro-Islamic



movements into the economic system (See Tuğal, 2009). Thus, he positions himself as a guide by criticizing both gerontocracy and the fetishization of the youth issue, adopting “a critical dialogue with past experiences” and a response “to the concrete problems of today” (I. 1–17). Benlisoy’s arguments show that he himself has personally confronted this hegemony, and that he expects people to practice the same confrontation.

Moreover, Benlisoy’s arguments mainly concern socialism and the left, and the extract implies that the origin of this confrontation will be mainly on the left. This is evident in the Turkish liberal-left’s engagement in the reform policies of AKP, especially through the ‘Yes, But not Enough (*Yetmez Ama Evet*)’ discourse during the 2010 Constitutional Amendment Referendum process (Bali, 2012: 308–309). It was also evident in the Gezi Park protests of 2013, which were against neoliberal authoritarianism in the political sphere. Throughout this process of renovation, the renovated left should attract other oppressed groups in society, and Benlisoy’s arguments apply not only to the leftist movements, but also to labor and oppressed and marginalized groups located at different political positions in Turkey. Moreover, in light of extracts 6 and 7 at the end of this sub-section, the actions of resisting movements could result in the aforementioned awareness over time. In this regard, extract 1 provides the meaning that individuals can engage in opposition movements through solidarity by establishing “a critical dialogue with past experiences” on their own (I. 13–17). Based on this engagement process, extract 2 below presents the means for renovating the left and meeting the needs of the time.

## **Extract 2**

“As a vision of the future of socialism on the world scale, the issue of gaining legitimacy comes to mind. This is the first [issue]. This has very serious political consequences. So, people are becoming unable to think beyond present-day capitalism while great social insurgencies take place almost everywhere in the world. [Legitimacy] is one of the reasons that prevent [socialism] from becoming an alternative itself. Because, as of now, if at all, our envisaged dedication to [socialism] has been given to us in its becoming a holistic alternative to capitalism. The missing experiences and the shortages that would take place are the problems we face due to [socialism’s] defeat. Since we cannot repair this loss of legitimacy and reputation to that extent, this will always remain a problem for us” (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).

Focusing on the left and socialism in relation to the various constructions of confrontation, Benlisoy proposes providing an arena for the ‘new’ left to confront capitalism. Thus, as Benlisoy mentions, “repair this loss of legitimacy and reputation” of socialism is an important

goal throughout the process of transformation (II. 8–9). In extract 2, the inclination toward renovation entails being in a critical dialogue with the experiences of the past. This dialogue is achieved through a change in mentality based on today’s climate and a quest for “a holistic alternative to capitalism” that will affect everyone (II. 5–7). This theme shows that Benlisoy’s position is based on resistance and social reconstruction, since these are important to creating an alternative to the capitalist system.

Extract 2 shows Benlisoy’s feedback to the emergence of the confrontation process in light of the recent anti-capitalist uprisings throughout the world. His mention of repairing the “legitimacy and reputation” of socialism refers to succeeding in this process toward renovation through solidarity. This idea is supported by the Gezi process in Turkey, which achieved an alternative communal space against exclusionary government practices (Akçay, 2014: 7). Thus, Benlisoy’s understanding of confrontation is related to engaging in a systemic discussion of the socioeconomic character of capitalism in Turkey, challenging capitalism with the aim of constructing a holistic alternative through a revolutionary process. This concern positions the people to resist hegemony through solidarity, realizing the equal rights of citizens in a collective manner. Thus, Benlisoy’s stance in this regard suggests that he prefers collective action through the practice of solidarity, since, in this way, the impact would achieve more resistance to increasing neoliberal authoritarianization. This feature is broadly explained in extract 3 below.

### **Extract 3**

“These days, we are faced with an authoritarian wave throughout the world due to neoliberalism, which economically has been increasingly standardizing, impoverishing and depriving important social groups, and which has put forward an exclusionary political hegemony in the whole world. Simply put, when the carrot gets shorter, the stick grows. We live in this new process, not only in Turkey, but in all corners of the world. It has not yet been a year since anti-terror laws were adopted in Spain. Maybe it is worse when we look at the Internal Security Law (*İç Güvenlik Yasası*) adopted in Turkey. However, the basic approach is that it is a pro-security mentality favoring the security of the state, and the state’s and property-owners’ stance against the opposition, non-owners and others. Therefore, formerly, the discussions that we had appeared mainly as a revolt in the democratizing world. Turkey, today, has become a country that applies the rule in a non-democratizing or authoritarianizing world” (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).

Extract 3 presents Benlisoy’s aspiration to confront the neoliberal hegemony, and his desire to form revolutionary movements by resisting the domination of the oppressive state authorities that affects everybody in the country. The reference to the “authoritarian wave” of the world,

with its relation to the “exclusionary political hegemony” of neoliberalism discourses, shows his aim to change the public perception of the link between democracy and liberalism. He regards liberalism as a source of the ideas and actions of neoliberal policies, as shown through the interconnection between increasing authoritarianism and the expansion of neoliberal policies (III. 1–4). In this context, Benlisoy’s demonstrated confrontation with the neoliberal hegemony in extract 3 comprises the widely experienced subject position of suffering under neoliberal hegemony. The extract perceives the nature of neoliberalism as leading governments to increased authoritarianism, which was the major issue behind the Gezi Protests (Akçay, 2014: 7). Confronting the neoliberal hegemony implicates the meanings of subject positions of social and political awakening among subordinated groups and engaging in the resistance processes in a revolutionary manner.

The significance of renovation through reconstructing the system includes both local and global affairs in extract 3. The major concern in confronting neoliberal hegemony is contributing to the struggle against the tendency toward authoritarianism on the global level. In Turkey’s context, the struggle is against the pro-security mentality mentioned in extract 3, since the government’s proposal of the Internal Security Law during the post-Gezi Protests period was to empower the authoritarian feature of the state. Above all, various discursive constructions in extract 3—in being aware of the limitations of Turkey’s oppressive regime, including its neoliberal ideology—entail engaging with the confrontation process voluntarily in order to realize a pluralist system contrary to the ongoing authoritarianization process. Even so, this tendency toward authoritarianism is resisted chiefly from the left, as seen in Benlisoy’s discursive constructions in all extracts. He also presents the idea that an effective resistance must include other oppressed groups and labor, who are the vast majority of society, and who are referred to as “the opposition, non-owners and others” in the extract (III. 7–10). As will be revealed in extract 6, in the contemporary context of Turkey—and as a result of the continual involvement of different, previously excluded social groups in the public sphere throughout the reform process of the 2000s—major public support for the resistance movements was seen during the Gezi Protests in 2013. Before that, in extracts 4 and 5 below, the major implications of this engagement process and alternative actions for progress will be presented.

#### **Extract 4**

“Regarding socialism’s gaining legitimacy as a political alternative—due to the opposition to socialism [through neoliberal reforms] along with the erosion of the power of the labor movement, the working class, the oppressed and laborers to determine their own destiny—big social explosions are taking place. They are creating their own institutions by becoming a political alternative. As an alternative to the current process, the creation of the [new] arena for political and social relations is not happening in the way it used to. An asymmetry exists between the political and social spheres. One foot is shorter. Therefore, it is walking with a limp” (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).

#### **Extract 5**

“Every time the people support a savior. But the people themselves are the saviors. To be more precise, an alternative that will save us from the saviors cannot be formed. Herewith, this has consistently been the most popular idiom of today, [and] we are faced with a process of stealing the revolution and stealing the riot” (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).

In extract 4, informed by the previous extracts, neoliberalism is condemned for weakening the power of “labor” and other “oppressed” groups in social, economic and cultural areas, stressing the erosion of power that prevented society from moving forward. This is interesting, and it suggests that reconstruction requires adopting an alternative economic and social policy that will empower the efficacy of those oppressed groups to “determine their own destiny” (IV. 1–4). Extract 4 is concerned with the power struggle, showing that the empowerment of hegemony was also an erosion of the power of the proletariat and other oppressed groups; reconstruction therefore requires “creating their own institutions by becoming a political alternative” (IV. 4–6), suggesting the desire to transform these social explosions toward a political movement. In contribution to the debate, extract 5 is concerned with the elusion of domination, which may be achieved through “an alternative that will save us from the saviors”, and which asserts “the people themselves are the saviors” (V. 1–2).

Benlisoy’s major concern with confrontation in extracts 4 and 5 suggests that confrontation is connected to his critique of neoliberalism, as seen through “the erosion of the power of the labor movement, the working class, the oppressed and laborers to determine their own destiny”. At the same time, he points out the recent power struggle, through the wide-ranging “social explosions”, that represents the desire of subordinate groups to overthrow this neoliberal system. This brings Akçay’s (2014: 5) arguments to the forefront, in that the social demands of the working people, or of social movements like the Gezi protests, stand against the commodification of the commons and reclaim public space for communal alternatives.

This suggests that the subject positions offered by the discursive constructions of both extracts comprise the subordinated groups' awareness of neoliberalism's domination in all sectors of capitalist economies, including Turkey. This provides the meaning that taking actions against this neoliberal hegemony, by engaging in the resistance process of reconstructing the system, would halt the domination of capital in the common arena. As previously mentioned, this was the main concern of the Gezi Protests in Turkey in 2013, which will be clarified below, along with the major implications and subject positions offered by extracts 6 and 7.

### **Extract 6**

“It is clear that we live in a real sense of renovation. Thus, the Gezi Protests were conducive to such facilities. How [the effects of protests] were evaluated, or not evaluated—that is another issue. In this event, in making a historical renovation, in order to be realistic, such experiences are very, very important. But, as I said, you know, when we look back from now, I will always see the Gezi Protests as a resistance against the commodification and privatization attempts of the common area. As to their origin, it was an uprising resulting from such transition. In particular, if you look at the AKP's last 5 years of accumulating capital, from the economic crisis onwards, we see this construction, the deepening of commodification, and the privatization of the common arenas as an enclosure and locking up of common spaces. Therefore, the protests were directly an objection to the essence of AKP's policies in favor of capital. In this sense, I believe it was a very important experience. Were the protests done in the best way? Will this renovation be carried forward? These are the debates that are needed, and difficult questions to answer. But of course, when we look at the post-Gezi era, the revival of urban demonstrations is not a coincidence” (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).

### **Extract 7**

“Actually, it is a milestone in terms of revealing the limits of the AKP's hegemony. But it has substantially paved the way for these undercurrents, rather than for big political stages. Namely, it has triggered the revival of social movements. The consequences of this do not come to light immediately afterwards. But they constitute a very important contribution” (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).

The major interest in both extracts is ‘the crisis’ of the system and creating an alternative to it through the engagement of the revolutionary movements that represent the idea of the Gezi Protests. In this sense, the “renovation” discourse proposes an arena for the emergence of the confrontation process, and it suggests taking further steps toward reconstruction by confronting the neoliberal system. Furthermore, in Benlisoy's conception, the major concern with the desired confrontation and leading toward the reconstruction, remains “the revival of

urban demonstrations” (VI. 13–14). These “reveal the limits of the AKP’s hegemony” (VII. 1–2), referring to global capitalism, in which the AKP is already perceived to be engaged. Thus, Karadağ (2010: 28) argues that the AKP period represents the erosion of state capitalism and the emergence of oligarchic capitalist features: namely a new pro-government, capitalist class in Turkey. Consequently, both extracts reveal that Benlisoy strongly emphasizes the effects of the social explosions on the democratic and socially constructed renewals of the system. He supports deepening these developments in order to create a political movement that effectively engages the struggle against neoliberal hegemony.

In extract 7, Benlisoy appears to shed light on people’s inclination to confront neoliberal hegemony, and since the second decade of the millennium the importance of this opposition was in “revealing the limits” of hegemony, especially in Turkey (VII. 1). This comes to Akçay’s (2014: 5–6) description of discontented social groups, who have suffered under the neoliberal policies of the AKP, which are the major elements of resistance groups later on. These groups constitute a number of working class people—including white-collar workers, university lecturers, and school teachers who gradually lost their jobs—and students, who are the potential new members of the working class (Ibid). This is evident in extract 6, in which confronting neoliberal hegemony consists of an overall questioning by labor and the other oppressed groups, who were most affected during the neoliberalization process. This confrontation is suggested to open the way for defending the equal collective rights of society. In this sense, Benlisoy’s position as a Turkish citizen of Greek origin, in being oppressed throughout his life, represents an example of the solidarity that he insists on. Thus, extract 6 provides the meaning of the influence of Benlisoy’s ideas throughout his personal confrontation: If Benlisoy can confront the system, then other oppressed people troubled by the hegemonic system can as well.

In summary, Benlisoy reveals the subject positions of engaging in urban demonstrations, both collectively and individually, with an aim of contributing to the desired renovation of the left, which would ensure progress toward the reconstruction of the system through confrontation. This is shown in his awareness of the “revival of urban demonstrations” (VI. 13–14) against the neoliberal policies that led to authoritarianization, especially from just before the Gezi Park protests in Turkey. Thus, his personal confrontation, as inferred from various discourses, provides an example of this confrontation coming from an oppressed person. Nonetheless, it is not possible to accept that all oppressed individuals may have the same personal

confrontation as Benlisoy. Yet Benlisoy's discourses consist of subject positions of taking part in the resistance against the hegemonic system, even without active confrontation. Consequently, Benlisoy's addressing the Gezi Protests as the starting point of the confrontation process against neoliberal hegemony—as evidence of progress in Turkish society—sheds light on his desired path to reconstructing Turkey's system, beginning at the social level.

Overall, by using a socio-political discourse of the post-1980s, the above discussions of the discourse analyses of the extracts from interviews with sample intellectuals, show that democracy, pluralism and transformation have been the major issues. In this way, the influential discourses of the sample intellectuals on anti-militarism, Islamic transformation and modernization, democratization of the republic, resistance against neoliberal authoritarianism, anti-capitalist Islam, and renovation of the left toward a pluralist alternative have contributed to these discursive focuses. The order of the analyses follows the timing of the discourses during the important events of the social transformation. In all extracts, binary discourses are used to present good versus bad, right versus wrong, in order to empower the defended approach. In this regard, being pro-transformation is positioned as morally superior due to the democratic and pluralist ideals it upholds. In contrast, pro-statuesque approaches are presented as undemocratic and oppressive. These debates will be verified in chapter 5, as the major application chapter of this dissertation, which also makes use of discourse analysis.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to present the overall discourses of the sample pluralist public intellectuals after the 1980s with regard to the major debates during the social transformation process in Turkey from the 1980s onwards. The chapter first described the emergence of the pluralist public intellectuals in opposition to their Kemalist counterparts, as well as the function of the media in providing a space for the intellectuals to interact with the people. The second section used the analyses of the discourses in the Foucauldian sense to introduce the meanings, main driving forces and logic behind the pluralist perspectives, as well as the subject positions of these intellectuals in relation to their influential discourses. In summary, the evidence and the arguments presented above strongly indicate that the pluralist public intellectuals have constructed powerful discourses based on the important issues of society and have contributed to the discussions during the social transformation of Turkey from the 1980s onwards. The

pluralist dimension of the sample public intellectuals is clearly evident in their ideas and concepts. The pluralist design of the intellectual discourses is largely applicable to the social struggles that led the transformation in Turkey. After having revealed the major implications of the discourses of the sample intellectuals in a comprehensive analysis process, the following chapter will present the empirical evidence for the role of the sample pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey, taking a historical perspective from the November 1983 general election up to the June 2015 general election.



## CHAPTER V

### **Public Intellectuals as the Agents of Social Transformation in Turkey from the 1980s Onwards**

Building on the explanation in chapter 3 of how different factors led to Turkey's social transformation and in chapter 4 of how the emergence of pluralist public intellectuals fragmented the post-1980s intellectual sphere, this last chapter affirms the pluralist public intellectuals' contribution, through their discourses and practices and their use of the media, to this transformation process. This chapter looks more closely at their contribution to Turkey's public intellectual life as well as to the processes of social transformation over the past three decades. It outlines how pluralist public intellectuals have contributed to public discussions through their books, newspaper columns, participation in political discussions and comments and shares in social media. This chapter delivers detailed analyses on the roles of these pluralist public intellectuals in shaping Turkey's social transformation specifically from its 1983 general election till its June 2015 general election. These sample pluralist public intellectuals are journalists Hasan Cemal and Fehmi Koru, academics Nilüfer Göle and Mehmet Altan, authors Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy and film producer and politician Sırrı Süreyya Önder.

With insight from theory, this chapter is based on the empirical findings of research that I conducted in several stages in Turkey. It offers an analysis of the discursive constructions of the selected pluralist public intellectuals and how they are reflected in the process of social transformation of Turkey from the 1980s onwards. The chapter is divided into four main sections, as well as some sub-sections. The first section will cover the liberal political environment of 1983–2002, showing how the intellectuals engaged, with their liberal, pluralist discourse, in the transformation and how they approached the different social groups. The second section will provide an analysis of the liberal right historical bloc of the AKP during 2002–2010 for the formation of the Second Republic or the New Turkey and how intellectuals' discourses and actions are reflected in the social transformation process. In this section, their contribution to the process of reform that would place the military under the civilian politics, make Islam a part of the public sphere and involve the Kurds in the public sphere through the Solution Process in the post-2000s is analyzed. The third section will critically evaluate the process of reshaping intellectual conceptions during Turkey's transformation of 2010–2015 by analyzing how these intellectuals have legitimized the

emerging protest movements toward the dissolution of the existing liberal-right historical bloc and the formation of a new counter-hegemonic bloc against AKP. The analysis includes these intellectuals' contribution to carrying the historically subordinated social groups into the public sphere. Thus, during the Gezi Protests of 2013 intellectuals were the leading actors for the emergence of a new pluralist left in Turkey. Moreover, as the development of a pro-transformation left historical bloc continued with the HDP project, not only the Kurds, but also the Alevi, LGBTs, women's movements, Anti-Capitalist Muslims contributed as part of the overall public sphere, during social transformation process until June 2015. The fourth section will give a general evaluation of the major analyses presented. Drawing on primary sources, this chapter thus attempts to trace the role of pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey from the 1980s onwards.

### **5.1. The New Pluralist Intellectual Concepts on the Social Problems in Neo-Liberal Era (1983–2002)**

As stated in chapter 3, after the coup government period (1980–1983), the liberal attempts of Özal, different from the military's governing period, opened an arena for transformation actions from fragmented social groups. A historical examination that reveals the conditions at the time these public intellectuals constructed their discourses is needed to understand their role. The next sub-sections will explore how the various, emergent discourses over the 'democratization' and 'pluralization' from the 1980s, different from the struggle of left-right wing ideologies of the pre-1980s, provided a public understanding for the empowerment of civil society and the elimination of the military's influence in the political sphere. This empowerment would gradually effect the demilitarization of the public sphere. Hence, as stated in chapter 3, in the 1990s, civil society continued what it had started in the 1980s and rose up as a scene of people's escaping from military's authority.

This section covers the function of four intellectuals in the process from the 1980s till the 2000s. In the first sub-section, Hasan Cemal's contribution to the emergence of the anti-militarism debate beginning in the 1980s will be analyzed. Cemal became an important figure in the 1980s by revealing the military's hegemony over all areas of the public sphere. When examined in the historical context, Cemal's diaries during the coup government, later published as books, contributed as a ground for the future democratization of the country. Cemal's stance was based on a liberal conception, which became more popular during the Özal period. In the second sub-section, Fehmi Kuru's contribution to the development of the

Islamic transformist mentality in the post-1980s will be analyzed. Kuru also emerged as an important figure in the 1980s on dealing with the democratization and the pluralization of the country. However, unlike Cemal, Kuru became a prominent figure within the pro-Islamic movements since as stated previously, he came from a conservative background. Kuru's positioning in this regard is important because while the military was aiming to base its new stance on a Turkish-Islamic synthesis, Kuru was one of the conservative public intellectuals aiming to focus the pro-Islamic movements toward a post-1980s reformist line.

The third sub-section concerns another problematic issue in Turkey, veiled women, and the contribution of the most prominent intellectual figure on the topic during the 1990s, Nilüfer Göle, will be analyzed. Göle's "forbidden modern" discourse provided a new understanding to approaching modernity vis à vis conservative women's headscarves. Göle's ideas seem to have influenced not only the conservative people, but also the liberal and liberal-left groups, which were supportive of the transformation. Göle's concept supported the pro-Islamic movements with the headscarf struggle symbolizing them in the public sphere. Thus, the developments of the 1980s led to a fragmented social and political situation in the 1990s, in which pluralist public intellectuals started to engage with social groups in a more organic sense. This was similar to Gramsci's (1971:5–6) conception of organic intellectuals' function in speaking for the interest of certain classes, and seeking consent for their actions. In the fourth sub-section, Mehmet Altan's contribution to democratization and pluralization debate with his concept of the 'second republic' will be analyzed. In the early 1990s he propounded the elimination of the militarist order to open a new arena for the pro-transformation social groups. Hence, Altan's concept was a critique of Turkey's Kemalist ethnocracy and offered a more liberal and pluralist alternative as a second republic. Mehmet Altan has been the major intellectual figure in the media starting from the 1990s, as one of the most sought-after intellectuals in TV discussion programs. Thus, this section covers Turkey's social transformation from 1983 till 2002, concerning the roles of the mentioned intellectuals.

### **5.1.1. Confrontation with the Militarism and Liberal Pluralism Debate**

As previously stated, intellectuals who supported transformation based on liberalism began to emerge in the 1980s. These pro-transformation and pluralist discourses formed in parallel with the trend of the time of major social support for Özal's policies. Hasan Cemal is an example of a pluralist public intellectual whose anti-militarist discourses supported Özal's

policies about the elimination of the military's role in politics and opening a way for civil politics. As it was argued, he has been one of the most respected political journalists in Turkey since the 1980s. His reputation is based primarily on his comments on social and political issues, especially about the military question, in various newspapers and on TV programs over the years. In this regard, this sub-section explains Cemal's engagement with the liberal-right in the 1980s by showing his early anti-militarist and liberal pluralist discursive contribution in the social transformation process.

Hasan Cemal has often mentioned the gradual transformation of his ideas on democracy and governance of the republic. To illustrate this transformation, his first examples come from his time as a journalist at *Revolution Magazine* in the 1960s, calling for a Ba'ath regime in Turkey. In his opinion, what the country really needed was revolution, a necessarily military revolution. (H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015). In his book, *Don't Be Mad, I Wrote Myself (Kimse Kızmasın Kendimi Yazdım) (1999)*, Cemal confronts himself and clearly analyzes the protests of 1968. The book includes the socialist movements' criticism of his explanation of the problem of socialism in practice, and provides a comprehensive critique of his intellectual development (See Cemal, 1999: 18–19). In this context, Cemal divided his life into two parts in the book: the early times as a revolutionary, and the later times as more 'experienced' and 'knowledgeable' after facing the military dictatorship from 1980–1983. In Cemal's conception, according to his overall arguments in the book, confrontation with one's life and experiences is an important aspect of intellectual development. Cemal expected this revelation to create a mutual trust between him and his audiences, which would give him a positive public image. This all shows that Cemal's sincere mentality of searching for truth and the welfare of the public changed his views and his life.

His arguments in his autobiography, as well as in the 2015 personal interview conducted for this dissertation, show that his ideas transformed in order to face Turkey's basic problems. His question during the interview "why Turkey has a second-class democracy and legal system" was fundamental to this change of view (H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015). For Cemal, "questioning the history" led him to find problematic formations of Turkey's sociopolitical structure. (Ibid). The questioning of these historical problems had begun in the 1980s and 1990s, and enlightened (informed, educated) not only the intellectuals but also the public (Ibid). This shows that a questioning culture started to influencing them toward a pro-transformation climate. In the words of Cemal, this period was the liberation of the people from the position of "the captive mind" (Ibid). During this liberation period Cemal

wrote 12 books and engaged with society's problems through questioning, as well as referencing the West. Thus, the West was found to be a reference point with the potential to influence by providing solutions to Turkey's problems. His arguments have shown dealing with society's problems and creating an age for the liberalization of minds to have been his duty.

### ***Emergence of Anti-Militarist Perspective and Support for Democracy***

Cemal's book, *Waking Up to the Sound of Tanks (Tank Sesiyle Uyanmak) (1986a)* contributed to the rise of a questioning culture through his endorsement of Turkey's transition from a military-dominated political regime to a liberal democracy. The book is a comprehensive political history of the 1980s, but particularly it is a clear examination of the 1980 coup's effect on many areas of the sociopolitical life of Turkey. To prove his point Cemal wrote the book as a memoir. In his personal interview, he mentions that he looked back over the political history of Turkey and claims that he detected the effects of military rule in 1980–1983 to express at a later time to eliminate these effects (See H. Cemal, Personal Interview, March 24, 2015). Thus, the aim of this book was to raise the anti-militarist perspective in the sociopolitical arena.

Concerning his book's function of bringing critical ideas to the public, Cemal mentions in his personal interview that the period of military Junta was problematic because of the "serious censorship committed by the military authorities" (Ibid). According to Cemal, writing an article against the military's actions was causing imprisonment (Ibid). In this sense, Cemal seems to argue that facing the military dictatorship created a counter-idea, a tendency toward liberalism and freedom from military authority. In turn, this led him to share his ideas in the public sphere to form the public opinion of an anti-militarist perspective and contribute to changing the political status quo. The idea for *Waking Up to the Sound of Tanks* arose from the difficulties encountered by both columnists and the newspaper for their critical columns. It was better to write their realities with the books (Ibid). In this sense, the books emerged as a summary of military rule for the future assessment.

Cemal's other book from the same period, the *Fear of Democracy (Demokrasi Korkusu) (1986b)* is also a memoir and provided an analysis of the military's aim in controlling society during its rule. It is also an analysis of Turkey's sociopolitical development from authoritarianism to democracy. This book argues that greater public demand for the deepening and spreading of democracy would trigger state institutions', especially the military's, fear of

the democratization process. He gives an example from November 1982 of the Coup government's warning to the mainstream newspaper *Güneş*, concerning their opposition to the government's proposal of the same year for a new constitution. The newspaper changed its views and supported the new constitution (Cemal, 1986b: 140). Thus, through these kinds of real examples from the coup government period, Cemal's arguments also implicated the need to introduce democracy in the minds of the military. Consequently, in both his books, Cemal aimed to guide Turkey's transition from the military's hegemonic position to civilianization in all areas of the country. While criticizing the military's actions, Cemal offered his conception of democracy based on tolerance, dialogue and reconciliation. Thus, the books provided the insight that training in democratic culture was a need within civil society as well. In this sense, Cemal's stance from the 1980s was based on sharing democratic culture and pluralism in all institutions of Turkey.

In sum, concerning the first publicly visible democracy and pluralism debate, Hasan Cemal's books made an important contribution to the discussions in society based on the anti-militarist perspective. By focusing in both of his books on the military's brutal involvement in political and social life, Cemal aimed to direct the public toward democratically elected governments: at that time, to the Özal governments as he was engaging with the Özal governments' policies. Not only during the Özal period in the 1980s but also later, he aimed to convince the public to achieve the democratic way in the civilian arena. His books were presented as daily notes from during and after the coup regime from 1980 to 1985. They became major sources to show the interventionist features of the military regime between 1980–1983. Thus, he contributed to a widening anti-militarist perspective and a tendency toward democratically elected governments starting from the Özal period. While Cemal supported Özal's liberal policies from a liberal, anti-militarist left, a major development continued from the pro-Islamic movements through the push for the public support of Özalism because of his reform processes and actions. In the next section, this process will be analyzed, with Fehmi Koru's contribution to bringing the Islamic transformist mentality to the forefront in the post-1980s.

### **5.1.2. Islamic Transformism as an Alternative to Militarist Sociopolitical Engineering**

It was argued in chapter 3 that bringing Islamic discourse to the public sphere has been one of the most important issues in Turkey in the post-1980s. These Islamic discourses gave religious social groups a greater share of influence and more involvement with the

transformation process, specifically with the empowerment of civil society and their increasing economic powers. Fehmi Kuru was an important figure in the emergence of the discourses in the pro-Islamic movements from the 1980s on the transformation of the sociopolitical character of Turkey. Into the 1990s and 2000s, Fehmi Kuru is regarded as one of the most important faces of the conservative and religious movements of Turkey in the media (Küçük, 2014).

Both Fehmi Kuru's religious educational background from Izmir Imam Hatip High School and Izmir Higher Islamic Institute and his interest in modern philosophy had brought him to get a master's degree in Journalism and Theology at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. This time of personal growth shaped his perspective into a hybrid including both the religious and the modern (Ibid). Since that time Kuru has followed a lifestyle of researching and writing, with writing as his main activity; in his own words, he has been writing "ever since I could remember" (F. Kuru, Personal Interview, January 2, 2013). According to Cemal Kalyoncu (2000), with this accumulation of knowledge and further research about the modern world, Fehmi Kuru used examples from the West to bring the new column formats to Turkey. As Kuru mentions, his columns included "things from life, such as bits of information, news crumbs, significant details of books that nobody noticed before, a watched movie and a participated panel discussion, etc." (Quoted in Ibid). Thus, by exceeding the boundaries of the conservative thinking tradition while writing in the conservative newspapers from the 1980s, such as *Zaman*, *Yeni Asır* and *Milli Gazete*, Kuru included both Western and religious perspectives, thereby critiquing the modernist mentality of the founding principles of Turkey. All these developments and Kuru's influential positioning during the transformation period, first in the Islamic media and later in the mainstream media, make it important to analyze Fehmi Kuru's contribution to the development of the pro-transformation consciousness of the pro-Islamic movements and their being a part of the public sphere

### ***Toward a New Mindset beyond the Laic-Anti-Laic Division***

As previously mentioned, Fehmi Kuru was an influential columnist mostly in the conservative newspapers, which were actively followed by conservative Muslims. He also had an active role in the newspaper *Zaman* of the Gülen Organization from its founding, becoming chief editor in 1986. He later continued to approach the subordinated Anatolian religious people from the 1980s as the active face of the newspaper. He contributed to influencing these people

into a pro-transformation mindset. While the 1980s was a period of growth for pro-Islamic movements, in the 1990s, pro-Islamic movements, most importantly Erbakan's RP, started to be a 'threat' for Turkey's Kemalist ethnocracy. Koru became the major supporter of these developments, since for Koru the empowerment of the pro-Islamic movements promised the possibility of change in the social and political arena (Koru: 1992: 12). After all, Fehmi Koru, in his columns at the newspaper *Zaman*, widely read by conservatives, contributed to debates for legitimizing actions of pro-Islamic movements. In his columns in the 1990s, he explicitly argued that the ideas against the pro-Islamic movements were arising because of the electoral success of Erbakan's RP, as the major Islamist political actor. In the wake of the March 27, 1994 Local Elections, in which Erbakan's RP won in the municipalities of major metropolises including Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakır, Koru states in his column in *Zaman* that the mentality of the state elites critical of RP's success was similar to that of the Minister of Education in the late Ottoman Empire. That minister had argued "if schools didn't exist, educational affairs would be easy to handle" (Koru, 1994a). For Koru, RP was "one of the most solid realities of this country" and banning it wouldn't stop public support (Ibid). Against these conflicting ideas, in Koru's conception, Turkey needs to better "understand" each other and work for the needs of the people (Ibid). In this sense, Koru's argument was to open the public sphere to the pro-Islamic movements, to reflect the ideas of the people living the Islamic way of life. Koru understood their ideas had to be recognized in state affairs and their freedom in social life guaranteed. While this could be seen as a partial support of Erbakan's way of politics, since Erbakan's movement was generally regarded as the most important power to end the ethnocratic politics, on the other hand, Koru's discourses contributed to the expansion of a pluralist mentality in that period.

Moreover, while supporting Erbakan's RP, Koru did not hold back his critiques of the Kemalist intellectuals' positioning against Erbakan's RP in his columns. Thus, against these discriminatory behaviors, Koru explicitly indicates in his column that the "interest groups, who have been responsible for all the negative issues that the country is facing, have been trying to invent hostilities because they knew the criticism of the system would bring the end of their hegemony" (Koru, 1994b). Thus, for Koru, the laic-anti-laic division was not enough to get results, and at that time they tried to invent much more dangerous conflicts between Republicans and anti-Republicans (Ibid). However, for Koru, Turkey needs "a new understanding and a new mindset" (Ibid). This new mindset was constantly explained within the public sphere by Koru with his increasing public visibility in the post-1980s.



Private TV channels were broadcasting in the 1990s, and because of the increasing visibility of the pro-Islamic movements, conservative voices became visible in political discussion programs. Mehmet Ali Birand, a famous presenter of a political discussion program, complained about having been criticized for inviting conservative intellectuals to the discussion programs. The same critique was charged to Ali Kırca as the presenter of another famous political discussion program of that time, 'Political Arena'. An example of this increased visibility of conservative voices was Kırca's Political Arena program on February 20, 1994 on ATV, with Ali Bulaç and Fehmi Kuru as conservative intellectuals and Toktamış Ateş, Oktay Ekşi and Bülent Ecevit representing different political ideologies. The discussions went on about the right way of defining laicism in Turkey. In the same way, in another TV discussion program with Mehmet Ali Birand, 'Crossfire (Çapraz Ateş)' on April 25, 1994 on Show TV, the speakers Ruşen Çakır, Ahmet Arslan and Oktay Ekşi admitted that the meaning of laicism was not well-known in Turkey and reached a consensus to require redefining laicism in Turkey (Birand, 1994). In this sense, Kuru, as an organic intellectual with a conservative Muslim background in the pro-transformation camp, by also participating in political discussion programs, contributed to the opening for discussion of one of Turkey's vital problems: defining laicism. Kuru's arguments in these programs sought to convince not only conservatives, but also liberals and the people of the need for transformation in the society. While his arguments contributed to the legitimization of Islamists in Turkish politics, at the same time his perspective was to avoid conflicts based on conceptual differences; therefore, his target was a soft transformation.

The second half of the 1990s was a scene of empowerment for pro-Islamic movements. Erbakan grew as a conservative main power following a political Islamist ideological stance. Kuru constantly brought Erbakan's success in his columns and kept up directing Erbakan's movement's position after a notable success in the December 24, 1995 general elections with their highest ever vote at 21.38%. The 54<sup>th</sup> Government of Turkey under the leadership of Erbakan as Prime Minister and DYP's leader Tansu Çiller as Deputy Prime Minister was formed on June 28, 1996. After the election and before the formation of Erbakan's government, Kuru continued to advise him to move toward the center so as to integrate with the other groups of the society. Kuru argues in his column at *Zaman* that RP moving to the center would "explore the mechanism of integration" (Kuru, 1996). For him, this would be the "major alternative to eliminating the interest groups in the state" since only the governments can solve the chronic problems of Turkey by integrating all people in the center (Ibid). In this

context, Koru explicitly mentions that the social problems reflected in politics can only be solved by “integrating and collaborating with the other segments of the society” (Ibid). In the Gramscian conception, Koru, being organic to the pro-transformation bloc and coming from a conservative Muslim background, shared his experiences and world views with the public in the Islamic, socially constructed political movement of Erbakan, which was a counter-hegemonic movement formed against the Kemalist hegemony. He aimed thereby to direct RP to integrate and collaborate with the other pro-transformation groups. However, RP did not make more effort to be in the center by integrating with the other groups of the society, and neither were the laicist groups ready for a collaboration.

The Erbakan government’s change in domestic policy brought a pan-Islamist shift in the foreign policy as well. This included increasing relations with Islamic countries for the establishment of a free trade area, realized in 1997 as the *Developing 8* organization, consisting of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. This policy shift in both the domestic and international arenas reflected the increasing public visibility of an Islamic discourse in the post-1980s (Görgeç, 2010: 48–49). Turkey’s laic institutional structure regarded this shift as a move toward an Islamic republic that also aimed to restructure its relations with the West. Finally, the Western modernist structure of Turkey was protected with a post-modern coup, called the 28 February Process (28 Şubat Süreci) in 1997, which brought a new laicist design to the country ending the Erbakan–Çiller coalition for the formation of a new westernist government.

Erbakan’s policies on the ideological bases of political Islam and the increasing public visibility of religious groups led to the emergence of the discourses of “Islamic reactionism”, mainly with a Kemalist intellectual base. Against these arguments, however, after the 28 February process, Fehmi Koru argues in his column in *Zaman* that “Islamic reactionism as a terminology was invented by the military with an aim to ban Erbakan’s RP” (Koru, 1997). Koru explicitly criticizes the anti-democratic situation of Turkish politics as the “strange issue here that in a democratic country political parties need to compete, but in Turkey the political parties have to compete with the military” (Ibid). However, for Koru this conflict had a mainly negative effect on the people of Turkey. Koru continues with his wishes that “the military should leave the political arena free in favor of opposition groups, just like in other democratic countries” (Ibid). Moreover, for Koru, democracy meant that the ideas of political parties would compete without the influence of external actors (military) and in this sense he

invites not only the conservatives but also other pro-transformation civil actors in Turkey to stand against the influences of the military (Ibid).

Because of his strong critique on the position of the military, Koru appeared as an important conservative intellectual figure in the Abant Platform, which was first organized in March 1998 in Bolu by the Journalists and Writers Foundation supported by the Gülen Organization. Importantly, the topic of the first conference was “Islam and Laicism”, and in it intellectuals aimed to find a way to ‘redefine’ laicism in the country (See Gündem, 1998). At the end, the final declaration of the conference had a great impact on national media. This was a great ‘success’, especially for conservative pluralist intellectuals such as Fehmi Koru for bringing the meaning of laicism into question. The second meeting of the Abant Platform followed in July 1998 with the similar topic “Religion, State and Society” (Hürriyet, 1999). Abant Platform started to be a venue for intellectuals to discuss the ‘important problems’ of society, and participation increased over the years. The Platform came to be an arena for interaction with civil society since mostly activists, academics and intellectuals participated. Thus, in the Gramscian conception, by interacting with civil society through the Abant Platform, Koru and many other intellectuals contributed to the formation of the hegemony of the pro-transformation camp in the 2000s.

Moreover, as a result of the increased popularity of the pro-transformation position in civil society, Erbakan’s movement divided into the Traditionalists and the Reformists. This reformist structure provided an arena for most of Koru’s support, since his close friends Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, from his past Islamic political movement, were prominent figures of the reformist movement. Koru emphasized in his columns his support for the reformist structure of the Islamic political movement. As an important example, in his column in *Yenişafak* in January 2001, at a time of ongoing debates between the Traditionalists and the Reformists, Koru states: “there is a need for a new comprehensive project, which would combine locality with universality, and a moderate religious concept that demolishes corruption and adopts economic efficiency by integrating with the world and restoring the true sense of the rule of law and constitutional order” (Koru, 2001a). Interestingly, Koru’s arguments demonstrated the main spirit of the AKP project, found later in the reformist period, in 2002. Thus, Fehmi Koru became an organic intellectual through his supportive discourses and positioning in favor of the formation of a new pro-transformation liberal right historical

bloc, including the pro-transformation civil and political societies, with the evolution of the Reformists into the socially constructed AKP project.

To sum up, in the period of the 1980s to the 2000s, Fehmi Koru's personal development and discourses reveal that he supported the idea of reformism in the pro-Islamic movements from the first moment of his intellectual life, which for him would bring different concepts to meet in the center. His ideas contributed to the public intellectual development of the conservative Muslims in Anatolia, especially through the chain of pro-Islamic movements. At this point, by escaping from the military's influence in the social and political arena, Koru found a place in the pro-transformation camp in the 1980s by being in the reformist mentality. Coming from a conservative background and writing in conservative newspapers and magazines, Koru contributed to the moving of the pro-Islamic movements into the pro-transformation camp based on the liberal-right ideology, since he constantly argued for collaborating with the other pro-transformation groups to achieve social and political transformation in Turkey. The socially constructed AKP project has in this way come to be the major bloc since the 2000s, with Fehmi Koru as an organic intellectual for the formation of the hegemonic position of the pro-transformation camp within this transformation process. After Koru's contribution to the pro-Islamic movement's participation in the public sphere, the next section will reveal the contribution to this process of another prominent pluralist public intellectual, Nilüfer Göle, with her forbidden modern concept based on Islam and the modernization debate in the 2000s.

### **5.1.3. Forbidden Modern Discourse and the Rise of Islamic Modernism**

As mentioned, with the increasing power of political liberalism in the 1980s, social groups marginalized under the Kemalist ethnocracy started to revive themselves in the 1990s. In this context, with the increasing economic development in Anatolia, marginalized pro-Islamic movements started threatening the sociopolitical structure of the Kemalist system. Pro-Islamic movements became publicly visible, mainly in major metropolises, since local municipalities were also slowly coming under the rule of Islamic-oriented political parties based on Erbakan's MGH. All of these threatened Turkey's laicist order, which based itself on Western modernism. These attempts by the pro-Islamic movements to enter the public sphere with their religious symbols, especially religious women with headscarves, caused another debate about Turkey's identification with modernism and laicism. Importantly, in the intellectual arena, the major attempt to question this modernist mentality came with Nilüfer Göle's 'Forbidden Modern,' conceptualized in her book, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and*

*Veiling (Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme)* (1991). The book questions modernism in the intellectual arena, and contributes to the debate as a guide for religious women, by providing a convincing argument for allowing these women into Turkey's secular public sphere. This sub-section contains a historical analysis of Göle's contribution to the debate.

In her book, Göle critiques the Western modernist perspective and also sheds light on the situation of young religious women with their headscarves, mainly within the pro-Islamic movements, which have been the subjects of a new modernist understanding that includes religious features. Modernity's conflicting relations with the pluralist cultural conceptions have an important place in Göle's perspective, since for Göle (1991: 59–60) modernity embodies the Western civilization and transforms the culture as a result of its relations with nature, other people and people's religious understandings. Moreover, Göle (Ibid: 58) reveals this relationship between modernity and westernization by citing increasing popular public practices from the first years of the republic including "going out as a couple, throwing a ballroom party, going to cake shops at night, horse riding, etc." These practices reveal modernity's connection to capitalism by showing the modern as a kind of popular and sold item. Göle also argues that when Kemalism carried modernism to Turkey, it changed women in particular as a symbol for modernity (Ibid: 57). In this sense, for Göle, the debate about modernity has continued into discussions about women to determine what styles they should wear and where they were allowed to go (Ibid). This has created a situation in which both pro-Western women emerged in the urban areas that engaged in Kemalist ideology and anti-Western women continued with the religious practices in the rural areas of Anatolia.

According to Göle (Ibid), even in the post-1980s the status of women has been the most visible discussion topic. This is related to the historical practices of the republic and the conflict about modernity and westernization. Moreover, Göle clarifies that modernity discourse in Turkey after the 1980s had two different foci; while the most intense debates are about headscarves, as a result of the increase in numbers of religious university students, the scope of the debate includes the conflict between Kemalism and secularism (Ibid: 92–93). In this sense, within the public discussions, wearing the headscarf was regarded as being not modern, while drinking alcoholic beverages has been an important criterion for being regarded as modern. Thus, Göle's critique stayed in line with Turkey's mainstream perception of modernity, which is based on a Western understanding.

Concerning her proposed understanding of modernity, Göle clarifies how further clashes between westernism and tradition over women would open the way for a transformation in women's practices, by bringing Islamic elements into modernism. This is illustrated in the book by the increase in educated conservative Muslim women in the post-1980s bringing religious practices into the modern public sphere. This is related to the improved status of veiling in the post-1980s as it has become an urban phenomenon (Ibid: 92). Thus, in contribution to the debate, Göle's forbidden modern explains these new urban religious practices, largely a result of the increasing involvement of pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere. As she clarifies in her personal interview, this 'forbidden modern' refers to "bringing innovation in modernity by Muslims" (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). On this point, in Göle's conception the 'forbidden modern' brought a conflicting relationship to some extent as well, as it provided the way to convert to modernity. Göle clarifies this process as, "modernity is trying to move the forbidden into the public sphere by constantly keeping the lights (attractions) open." (Ibid). Göle's conception, by legitimizing the attempts of these urban educated religious Muslim women starting in the 1980s, provided a major support for the emergence of their self-consciousness as well as a self-awareness related to their individual actions for inclusion in the public sphere. Thus, for Göle, inclusion in the public sphere ensures the emergence of self-consciousness and non-inclusion brings silence in the inner world, a kind of non-involvement in the social life (Ibid). In this sense, Göle's 'forbidden modern' has served to ease the attempts and actions of pro-Islamic movements and the conservative women to go into the public sphere. Göle's conception of the 'forbidden modern' has been a guide leading conservative women to enter the public sphere, and it also contributed to softening the opposition of the laicists, by showing the possibility of a different interpretation of modernism.

In the same direction as Göle's proposed 'forbidden modern' conception, during the 1990s, the educated conservative Muslim women in Turkey started to carry the symbols of their private spheres into the public sphere by wearing their headscarves. Conservative Muslim women by reflecting their versions of modernity, also reflected their individuality as well as womanhood by reversing the traditional modernist understanding in Turkey (Ilyasoğlu, 1994: 126–127). This increase in popularity of veiling among conservative middle-class women and conservative female university students also led to the emergence of the headscarf fashion as a way to advance in social status. While following this headscarf fashion had a significant

meaning for socializing and for conservative women's spiritual satisfaction, at the same time, it gave meaning to resisting the exclusionary laicist practices.

### ***Islam, Secularity and Public Sphere***

The 1990s had been a time when the Islamic elements of society started to gain visibility in the public sphere and in the process, through structural transformation, became a part of the public sphere. Nilüfer Göle's book *Hybrid Patterns: On Islam and Modernity (Melez Desenler: Islam ve Modernlik Üzerine)* (2000), was another guide and also an analysis of pro-Islamic movements' as well as the conservative Muslims' attempts at inclusion in the public sphere. The book is a collection of articles analyzing the increasing Islamic practices in the public sphere, and it provides a variety of thoughts similar to Göle's perspective. With this book, Göle (2000: 27) sheds light on Turkey's historical process, as the process for involving Turkey's pro-Islamic movements as well as the conservative Muslims into the public sphere. The analysis also includes how this was perceived by laicist elites as an infringement of the public sphere (university classes, parliament, television, concert halls, streets etc.), historically under their influence. In Göle's conception, increasing the power of pro-Islamic movements has created a power struggle in the public sphere. However, for Göle, in this process, Islamism had also a feature of turning toward a new cultural movement (Ibid: 34). Pro-Islamic movements first created a parallel space, which included practices of the Islamic way of life. This parallel space included the means of cultural criticism, such as the products of Islamism, Islamic novels, films, music and newspapers. At the same time, it gave pro-Islamic movements alternative consumption strategies, such as Islamic dresses and fashion shows, as well as Islamized forms of living in cities, such as non-alcoholic hotels and restaurants, which also took care of prayer times. Both of Nilüfer Göle's books clarify her perspectives of the pro-Islamic movement's developments. They aimed to create an environment within the mainstream public sphere, for pro-Islamic movements' social confrontations too. In this sense, on the way to this liberal Islamist approach to transformation, Göle's book introduced Turkey's pro-Islamic movements to its westernist and laicist social groups by presenting them as being in a reformation process.

Importantly, both her books effected a reformation of Islamic understanding. Göle saw Muslim women's visibility in the public sphere as contrasting the traditional Islamic understanding. Thus, she clarifies in the personal interview that "the Islamic tradition has seen women staying at home, however this brought an important renovation" (N. Göle, Personal

Interview, March 18, 2015). On this point, since the 1990s, Göle has been the major proponent for the transformation of the conservative Muslims toward reaching a new modern understanding. Thus, as an influential organic intellectual of this liberal-right pro-transformation bloc from the 1980s, with her arguments criticizing the modernist understanding of Turkey, Göle contributed to the conservative Muslim's engagement process with modernity through the pro-Islamic movement's integration in the public sphere. Her contribution made her one of the AKP project's organic intellectuals of the the 2000s. Thus, in Göle's conception, the AKP represented the transformation of pro-Islamic movements and Islamic identity in the socially constructed political arena (Ibid).

In sum, by engaging the liberal-right pro-transformation bloc, which included Islam as the main component, Nilüfer Göle contributed to carrying the pro-Islamic movements as well as other conservative Muslims into the public sphere through her 'forbidden modern' discourse. While Göle was aiming to inject self-consciousness into conservative women as they entered the public sphere with their headscarves, she simultaneously aimed to convince the Western laicist population to allow the pro-Islamic movements as well as the conservative Muslims within the public sphere, by showing the possibility of combining religious figures with modernism. As argued, organic intellectuals emerge within a social class/group, and their role is to create self-consciousness within this class/group in economic, social and cultural areas. By emerging within the popular liberal-right, which constitutes Islam as the main component in the post-1980s, Nilüfer Göle contributed to the creation of conservative veiled women's self-consciousness through the process of their engagement with the public sphere. Furthermore, she contributed to widening the emergent hegemonic position of this liberal-right toward an emerging AKP as a historical bloc for the pro-transformation groups. The increasing Islamic influence, combining religious and modern motives, as well as the conservative Muslims' tendency toward Western philosophy, culture and way of life from the 1990s on, proved the validity of Göle's 'forbidden modern'. All these developments increased interactions of secular and religious groups in 2000s Turkey. Continuing with this pluralization of the public sphere with Islam in the post-1980s, the next sub-section reveals another prominent pluralist public intellectual's, Mehmet Altan's, contribution to the debate for a broader sense of transformation, based on his concept of the 'second republic'.



#### 5.1.4. Questioning the Kemalist Ethnocracy and Second Republic Discourse

As was argued, pluralist public intellectuals' engagement with the liberal-right bloc after the 1980s brought inter-personal relations into the ideological arena. This allowed the enrollment of intellectuals into the mainstream liberal media, as well as the newly emerged private media. In this regard, it is important to analyze the contributions of one of the most visible intellectuals in the media during the transformation process, Mehmet Altan. His popularity began in the early 1990s, with discussions in the media about his discourse of the 'second republic'. In this sub-section, Mehmet Altan's position as a prominent intellectual figure in the liberal-right bloc from the early 1990s and his concept of the 'second republic' and intellectual contributions on the transformation debate and practices are analyzed.

While there were major critiques of Kemalism before Altan's 'second republic', his conceptualisation established the basis of this critique and became the most important discussion in the 1990s. Second republicanism, which gained popularity in the 1990s, aimed to strengthen democracy and pluralism in the social and political arena and was used to legitimize the neoliberal policies that emerged in the Özal period. From 1987 to 2006, Altan wrote a column at the newspaper *Sabah*, which brought his discourse to a wider range of critical groups. According to Altan, his columns and writings influenced his readership, especially those in the educated strata; however, Altan states that the "actual spread of [my] discourses was manifested through TV programs, which caused much public discussion" (M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015). In this context, the media's attention has been important for spreading his conception.

*Sabah* was the major mainstream newspaper. It followed the Özal's political line even after the end of his governance and became the basis for criticism of the military's hegemony in the civilian arena. In this context, *Sabah's* success was related to its connection to pro-transformation ideas. The media became profitable in the post-1980s, and being active in mainstream media required having a closer relationship with political powers. In this context, columnists connected not only to media groups, but also to political power bases through their ideological alliance. In this respect, being in a media group entailed multiple tasks, such as writing a column in the newspaper and showing up as speaker on the TV discussion programs belonging to that same media group. This brought the intellectuals' conceptions into increasing public circulation through various channels.

### *YDH as the First Attempt Toward a Second Republic*

Concerning the practical application of Altan's discourses, the wave of liberal pluralism in accordance with the second republic discourse started to widen in the social and the political sphere in the second half of the 1990s. In continuation of Özal's political line, based on neoliberal policies, the YDH was established in 1994 under the leadership of the young Turkish businessman Cem Boyner. The members of the party included intellectuals, businessmen, politicians and authors, such as Mehmet Altan, Asaf Savaş Akat, Cengiz Çandar, Can Paker, Etyen Mahçupyan, Kemal Anadol, Kemal Derviş and Kenan Yılmaz. Importantly for this dissertation, the YDH was the first intellectual project in the history of Turkey that internalized the principles of an open society, pluralism, the free market and liberal values. However, they acquired only 0.48% of the votes in their first general election in December 24, 1995, which brought the end of the party; in 1997 it was closed as an unsuccessful project (Boyras, 2014).

Altan's first unsuccessful experience in politics and the YDH's dissolution in a short period can be explained by the party's positioning: not based on a social class/group but a cosmopolitan project of many individuals from different ideological positions. In order to explain this dissolution, it is important to consider Gramsci's conception. According to Cox (1993: 57). Gramsci speaks of intellectuals' key role in building a historical bloc; he saw them as organically connected with a social class/group. He explains, "they perform the function of developing and sustaining the mental images, technologies and organizations, which bind together the members of a class and of a historical bloc into a common identity" (Ibid). The unsuccessful position of the YDH and their intellectuals' difficulty connecting society, to gather support for their intellectual project, was mainly due to the party's not basing itself in a social class/group (Ersoy, 2012: 53–54). Altan's 'second republic' was a main media discussion point during this time. It was strongly propagated, but its not being able to connect with society ultimately brought the end of this project.

Despite the YDH's lack of a social base and its unorganized party structure, the YDH experience brought Turkey to new discussion points that went beyond Özal's neoliberal economy policies. The YDH provided a venue for discussing important social and political problems like the Kurdish and Alevis as well as political Islam. The major point the YDH brought forward was 'democratizing the republic' (See YDH, 1994), based, importantly, on Altan's 'second republic' discourse. Moreover, the various tendencies the party brought into

the public discussion included liberal democracy, respect for human rights and a goal of creating a new civilian constitution. (Ibid).

Thus, Mehmet Altan, Etyen Mahçupyan and Cengiz Çandar were the major intellectual figures within this movement. As an important columnist and theoretician behind the ‘second republic’, Altan held the most influential position within the movement. However, Altan did not stay with the movement but resigned during its conversion to a political party. Even so, YDH continued to follow Altan’s concept in its positioning on social and political problems. For example, in his columns Altan brought to the fore the republic’s first attempt, during the founding period, at liberalism, mentioning Hüseyin Avni Ulaş as one of the first liberal democrats and an opposition character in the history of Turkey. Altan even visited Ulaş’s grave in 1992 and was motivated to place Ulaş’s bust in Erzurum as a monument to the first attempt at democracy in Turkey (Gürpınar, 2013: 113–114). YDH followed Altan’s attempts to advertise these prominent first democratic figures, by memorializing Ulaş and organizing cemetery visits and similar activities with Altan’s participation as a speaker (Ibid). Although Altan was far from leading the YDH, the YDH was important in expanding Altan’s conception of the ‘second republic’. Thus, after these attempts the critique of Turkey’s Kemalist republic increased, and the marginalized social groups, including pro-Islamic movements and Kurds, started to approach social transformation actively. Spreading the idea of the dysfunctional position of the first republic and the liberal pluralist alternative of the second republic later led to the discourse of the “New Turkey”, which gave birth to an AKP period in 2002.

The increased liberal democratic wave in the early 2000s increased the popularity of Altan’s ‘second republic’ discourse. As a contribution to the debate Altan published his book, *The Notes on the First Republic (Birinci Cumhuriyet Üzerine Notlar)* (2001), which would become a major reference point for the AKP’s reforms in the 2000s. Within the book, he gives important insights about his struggle to share his ideas of the ‘second republic’ in the 1990s, arguing that the Republic of Turkey’s ‘problematic’ structure arose in its establishment. It provides a devastating ideological critique of Turkey’s military elites, Kemalism and its institutions. Even contributing to the debates in the first years of the 2000s, Altan argues that the understanding of ‘republic’ and ‘democracy’ were different things in Turkey during the establishment (Altan, 2001: 25–26). In this sense, Altan speaks of the first republic as a place where the rule of law was not applied, and assimilation of opposition groups was a reality

(Ibid: 47–48). Moreover, for Altan the first republic was, in many ways, an era of fascism, for example the oppression of the military (Ibid: 76). Furthermore, Altan argues that laicism, as a modern ideal, was wrongly formulated in Turkey, since Turkey’s constitutional, military laicism differed from the contemporary democratic one (Ibid: 109–111). Altan contributed to the pro-transformation discourse by arguing that still in the 2000s, the military was influential in many social groups of Turkey, even in the left, social democrat parties (Ibid: 96), ultimately questioning whether the present form of the left was any different from Kemalism (Ibid: 98). Altan expected this inquiry to disengage the Turkish left from the elitist mentality of Kemalism. Altan has been provocative in aiming to dissolve the Kemalist republic in order to bring about a pluralist one instead. Altan’s highest point of influence came about in the 2000s in discussions about the the public sphere’s democratization and pluralization. Thus, Altan’s ‘second republic’ became the major ideology of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of the AKP. He became one of the most important organic intellectuals of the AKP project that will be analyzed more broadly in the next section.

As a conclusion, by engaging the liberal environment during the Özal period, and constructing original discourses of the ‘second republic’, Mehmet Altan has been one of the most influential organic pluralist public intellectuals from the 1990s on. Altan has conceptualized a way of transforming Turkey’s social and political arena with his discourse of the ‘second republic’, through not only the inclusion of traditionally excluded social groups in the public sphere, but also the discursive transformation of the Republic of Turkey, bringing democracy and the elimination of the military in politics. With time, Altan’s ideas were widely disseminated in academia, the social and political spheres and the media. As exemplified in the YDH case, his conception was part of the party program in the second half of the 1990s. Most importantly, Mehmet Altan’s major influence was in his support of the AKP project in the early 2000s, which will be comprehensively analyzed in the second section. Thus, Altan aimed to realize his second republic based on the pro-Islamic movements, with a liberal pluralist tendency.

Overall, the first section of chapter 5 has provided a historical narrative of the emergence of pluralist public intellectuals from the post-1980s and their engagement of the pro-transformation liberal-right bloc, in order to test the second hypothesis of the dissertation: *The motivation for the pluralist public intellectuals to engage with the liberal-right bloc was that they saw it as a newly emerged safe haven from the military’s oppressive policies.* Accordingly,

in line with the theoretical framework of this doctoral dissertation, this section demonstrates how the emergent liberal environment from the Özal period in the post-1980s provided an arena for the intellectuals' critical discourses, and pro-transformation positioning paralleling the development of democratic civil society and a liberal-pluralist consolidation.

Within this pro-transformation liberal right positioning, this section revealed that pluralist public intellectuals offered discourses to legitimate these early transformation attempts. Hasan Cemal brought the military problem into the public discussion with his influential books; Fehmi Kuru provided a new understanding in both his columns and TV discussion programs about the regeneration of the system through the involvement of the pro-Islamic movements. Also, within this Islamic transformist mentality, Nilüfer Göle presented her 'forbidden modern' discourse in her influential books in support of religious women's attempt to integrate into both modernity and the public sphere. In addition, in the 1990s, Mehmet Altan disseminated his 'second republic' discourse in columns, influential books and TV discussions. His concept of the 'second republic' pointed to an overall transformation of the Kemalist republic, by adorning it with democracy and involving different social groups in the public sphere into a new pluralist order. These new conceptions arose in the first two decades of the post-1980s; the next section will analyze how they are reflected in the transformation in the 2000s. The next section of the dissertation will assess the changing parameters surrounding the democratization and pluralization debates of the country, specifically with the formation of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc of the AKP in the 2000s but also with the pluralist public intellectuals' organic intellectual positioning within this.

## **5.2. Transformation of the Pro-Islamic Movements and Bringing Liberal Theses (2002–2010)**

*“Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself. And when you stare for a long time into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you.”*

Nietzsche, 2002: 69

As was argued in the previous section, the 1980s and 1990s were the time of the development of critical discourses against the hegemonic position of the military being within the liberal-right bloc. With the civil society empowered by the critical groups, with the involvement of the pro-Islamic movements and the Kurdish movement, civil society's influence started to

increase in the 2000s. Intellectuals contributed to this process with their concepts intended as a guide for the possible transformation into a liberal environment. The emerged discourses of the post-1980s were reflected in practice in the 2000s, as the 2000s became a scene for major pro-transformation discussions. In this context, social groups have effectively engaged with public discussions, with the 2000s becoming the period of pluralization of the public sphere with its diversity of debates. Social problems and possible strategies for solutions occupied a major place in the agenda of the reformist groups, which were combined under the AKP project as the historical bloc of the pro-transformation groups.

Although a reformist perspective emerged in the 1990s, the major change in the social arena was seen a decade later. In this period, the discursive debates of Fehmi Kuru, Nilüfer Göle, Mehmet Altan and Hasan Cemal turned political, empowering opposition groups by opening a space in the public sphere, especially for pro-Islamic movements and Kurds. In line with these intellectuals' perspective, anti-military campaigns characterized the period. In the 2000s, pluralist public intellectuals discursively positioned the debate against military-led campaigns, and positioned themselves as the guides of this civilian-led transformation process. The opposition groups' transformation perspective was rooted in economic liberalism, compatible with Turkey's democratization process toward EU membership.

In this period, the pluralist public intellectuals played an important role in expressing the ideas of the opposition groups. They brought the country's social problems to the agenda, as well as creating discursive debates to motivate the AKP governments to form a new political system, which would widen freedoms in the public sphere. Thus, Sırrı Süreyya Önder emerged as a new prominent pluralist intellectual figure in the 2000s. Önder remained in the public eye over the years, reflecting these transformative actions with his well-informed cultural debates, absorbing both Western and Anatolian critical perspectives. With his typical eastern Anatolia accent and his discursive constructions based on resistance, Sırrı Süreyya Önder contributed to shaping and bringing into the public sphere the 'common' man's view of the Kurdish question, religion and culture of society. His popularity increased during the hegemony of the pro-transformation historical bloc of the AKP in the 2000s, and with his engagement of the reform processes. His major influence was with the pro-transformation left positioning of the counter-hegemony of the Gezi Park Protests, which will be analyzed in the third section of this chapter, covering the post-2010 period.

In this section, the contribution of these five pluralist public intellectuals to the transformation process, with their influential discourses and practices and their most influential topics, will comprehensively be analyzed. This includes, in the first sub-section, the contribution of Hasan Cemal, Fehmi Kuru and Mehmet Altan to the removal of the military's influence in the social and political sphere, by supporting and legitimizing the AKP government's reform process. In the second sub-section, the contributions of Fehmi Kuru, Nilüfer Göle and Mehmet Altan will be analyzed, specifically their contributions of incorporating Islam in the public sphere with their legitimizing discourses of the AKP government's attempts at reform and as a major actor toward transformation. In the third sub-section, the contributions of Fehmi Kuru, Hasan Cemal, Mehmet Altan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder to a Kurdish reform process, to make the Kurds a part of the public sphere, will be analyzed, with a focus on their influential discourses and actions during the Solution Process that started in 2009. In the fourth sub-section, the supportive positions of Fehmi Kuru, Hasan Cemal and Mehmet Altan during the constitutional amendment process for an institutional change in the military and judiciary's autonomous position will be analyzed. This process ultimately restored the AKP's hegemonic position in the country with the 2010 constitutional amendment.

### **5.2.1. The EU as a Source of Democracy and Pluralism: Civilian Government vs. Military Hegemony Debate**

The pluralist public intellectuals' discursive alliance with the pro-transformation powers was an undeniable fact from the 1980s onwards. The engagement of these intellectuals, except Sırrı Süreyya Önder in this period, in the liberal-right bloc was related to their search for power and so they started to be vocal about more and more social issues, especially those that had a greater social base. This search for power had led them from politics in the 1990s, with the second republic discourse representing an overall transformation of the society, to social arenas, including the realization of individual rights and freedoms for different social groups. In the 2000s, this second republic discourse started to evolve, step by step, into the "New Turkey" discourse, in which not only political liberalism, but also great changes in the social and cultural arena would be realized. In this way, by relying on the increasing power of pro-Islamic movements, pluralist public intellectuals became the major supporters of the AKP project, which positioned itself to work to improve individual rights, remove the military from civilian politics and follow the EU accession process, a push for advanced true democracy. In this sub-section, the sample pluralist public intellectuals Hasan Cemal, Fehmi Kuru and

Mehmet Altan's support for the reform process for removing the military's influence from the social and political arena, and their support of the AKP project for legitimizing the civilian hegemonic power will be analyzed.

Various investigations and explanations highlight the intellectuals' collaboration with the AKP in the 2000s, focusing mainly on the functions of liberal intellectuals (See Ersoy, 2012; Bonzon, 2014). This project does not focus on only liberal intellectuals but also includes sample intellectuals from other political ideologies, referred to as pluralist public intellectuals, so contributions to the debate about this collaboration fall within the scope of this project. Research for this dissertation revealed four main reasons for pluralist public intellectuals' search for power and their support for the AKP.

First, AKP was a socially constructed political project, which had an Islamic core but widened its discourse to include the liberals, following Özal's way of liberal-right politics. In this sense, AKP was criticizing the Kemalist republic's elitist mentality and declaring that it represented the oppressed and the discriminated peoples of Anatolia.<sup>65</sup> This stance of the early AKP attracted the pluralist public intellectuals' support. Secondly, as explained in chapter 3, pro-Islamic movements in Anatolia benefited from the economic development process during the Özal period in the 1980s and created an Anatolian bourgeois, who would finance this struggle against the Kemalist republic. So, pro-Islamic movements were financially ready to make the necessary transformations during this process. Third, pressure on the pro-Islamic movements, which had peaked after the 28 February Process in 1997, especially concerning the issue of conservative women's headscarves in the public sphere, was a major point of the pluralist public intellectuals' critiques of the Kemalist republic. They thought AKP's moderate approach would end the increased Islamophobia in Turkey and bring freedom to women

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<sup>65</sup> This discourse of that the AKP was a representative of the masses was a major discussion point in the 2000s in the media. On the one hand, the Kemalist columnist Yılmaz Özdil calling AKP supporters "Can Heads (Bidon kafalılar)" in his column in the newspaper *Hürriyet* in 2007 (Özdil, 2007) and another Kemalist columnist, Bekir Coşkun, referring to the same people as "men who scratch their belly (*göbeğini kaşıyan adamlar*)" in his column in the newspaper *Hürriyet* in 2007 (Coşkun, 2007) empowered this discourse. On the other hand, pictures shared on social media showed the Kemalists as the elites and culturally different from ordinary people. Also, Erdoğan was shown as a man of the people. In a picture gathered from the Uludağ Sözlük, which is online discussion blog, Erdoğan and Atatürk were compared: whereas Atatürk was eating in the Western elite style, Erdoğan was shown eating a chicken wing as the way of the common man, and the picture was titled "Atatürk's Unfamiliarity with Table Manners (*Atatürk'ün Sofra Adabını Bilmiyor Olması*)", See online available at: <https://www.uludagsozluk.com/r/atat%C3%BCrk-%C3%BCn-sofra-adab%C4%B1n%C4%B1-bilmiyor-olmas%C4%B1-243756/> (Last accessed 12.12.2017) and for the picture at the discussion topic titled "Atatürk's Put Distance between the People and Himself (*Atatürk'ün Halk ile Arasına Koyduğu Mesafe*)" which shows Erdoğan as the peoples' man visiting ordinary people at home and following their behavior and way of life, See online available at: <http://galeri.uludagsozluk.com/r/atat%C3%BCrk-%C3%BCn-halk-ile-aras%C4%B1na-koydu%C4%9Fu-mesafe-876574/> (Last accessed 12.12.2017).



whose individual choice is to wear a headscarf during their studies and working life. Fourth, AKP was leaning toward the struggle of the Kurdish movement: in 1991, when the founder of AKP, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was the provincial head of Erbakan's Islamist RP, he presented a report to Erbakan calling the problem of the East and Southeast of Turkey the "Kurdish problem" (Hürriyet, 2007b). Erdoğan's report mentioned that the region was historically called "Kurdistan" and the spoken language of the Kurds is Kurdish, an "autonomous language". Also, people in the Kurdish regions considered the state's actions to be "state terror" (Ibid). Moreover, unlike the Kemalist ethnocracy, pro-Islamic movements were dealing with the Kurds based on the concept of "Islamic brotherhood", which was broader than the ethnic understanding; pluralist public intellectuals saw it as a remedy for the historical ethnic pressure on the Kurds. As a result, this alliance of the pluralist public intellectuals with Erdoğan's AKP would struggle against the Kemalist republic, which was under the control of the military during this process.

### ***On the Way to Confronting the Militarist Social Order***

As mentioned in the previous section, social confrontation with the military's hegemony and involvement in the political and social life of Turkey dates back to the 1980s. Hasan Cemal's books *Waking Up to the Sound of Tanks* and *The Fear of Democracy*, published in 1986, are a good source for understanding the social struggle for a transition from a military dominated political structure to a liberal democracy. Cemal's clear examination of the effects of the 1980 coup's effect on many areas of the sociopolitical life of Turkey and the subsequent commentaries and critiques of his works in the academia as well as in the media widened his discourses. Hence, Cemal, through his books, facilitated the popular memory by looking back at the political history of Turkey to identify the effects of military rule during the 1980s so that these effects could be eliminated by confronting the military's hegemony. Thus, his books actually help to nurture an anti-militarist perspective among the people.

While some of the pluralist public intellectuals saw Erdoğan's AKP as a chance to eliminate the role of the military in the public sphere, Hasan Cemal stood aloof from the party until the 2002 elections even though he had been engaged with the liberal-right movement since the Özal period. Cemal was one of the columnists, who was critically following the competition between the traditionalist and reformists from 2000 in the FP. In his column for the newspaper *Milliyet* dated January 5, 2001, Cemal mentions that the emergence of "a new

party” within Erbakan’s Islamic political movement was inevitable (Cemal, 2001). As a liberal pluralist intellectual, Cemal was watching the developments from the outside, but he was trying to draw the attention of the people to this reformist development. In his column dated April 27, 2002, after the establishment of the AKP in August 2001 and during their campaign for the 2002 elections, Cemal criticized the rise of Erdoğan and the AKP and mentioned the AKP’s growing popularity as “rising radicalism” (Cemal, 2002). He also criticized the “dysfunctional political parties and parliament” that provide a ground for the military’s involvement in the politics as well as the “rise of Tayyibs (Erdoğan) and radicalism in politics” (Ibid). Cemal was inviting the liberal politicians to be more active in the Turkish political life; he saw this as the best way to eliminate the role of the military and the rise of the radicalism in the political life of Turkey. Although the AKP had been pro-reform since its establishment, Cemal did not believe it, but thought that the AKP would be a new political Islamist movement that would lead the country toward conflicts as had happened during the 28 February Process in 1997.

However, in 2003, after the elections when the AKP got the majority of the seats in the TBMM Cemal’s columns showed that he had changed his opinion about Erdoğan and the AKP. In the first years of the AKP government, Erdoğan’s shift from political Islamism toward a conservative democrat position led to much discussion and debate. Cemal joined these discussions of Erdoğan’s change by being organic to this new historical bloc. In his column dated August 15, 2003, just nine months after the general elections, Cemal declared that he was convinced that Erdoğan had changed and invited the people to trust Erdoğan, since he was doing in practice what he had promised in the election campaign: “defending democracy, human rights and market economy and standing with Turkey’s EU membership process” (Cemal, 2003a). Although he was suspicious of Erdoğan’s stance on laicism, he did not flinch in his support of Erdoğan’s change and invited the people to support the continuation of this process. Thus, Cemal’s support was related to Erdoğan’s policies, which were compatible with his ideas in ways that he had proposed since the 1980s. So, Cemal saw Erdoğan’s change and AKP’s liberal policies as a chance to implement his ideas of democratization and pluralization of the country.

Mehmet Altan’s second republic discourse was the leading concept, along with Cemal’s work, during the first years of the 2000s. With his book *The Notes on the First Republic* (2001), Altan contributed to the democratization debate by presenting the problematic structure of the

first Republic that came with its establishment. Altan's second book, based on his interviews, *The Second Republic: Democracy and Freedom (İkinci Cumhuriyet: Demokrasi ve Özgürlükler)* (2004) was published as a guide to the transformation of Turkey from its anti-democratic days and aimed to create a liberal pluralism on the basis of the new institutional formation that he had been arguing for throughout the 1990s. Altan's publishing the book in 2004 in this increasing liberal environment furthered his aim of shaping the transformation of the country that was underway. Hence Altan calls for a historical confrontation with what he called the 'diseases' inherited from the Ottoman Empire within the socio-political life of Turkey that needed to be gotten rid of (Altan, 2004: 141). For Altan, although the establishment of the Republic of Turkey was a modernizing movement, it had not taken the development of law and democracy seriously since its establishment (Ibid). Altan criticizes the modernization of Turkey as it could not be viewed as happened in the West, since for him, it was a fake modernism forced upon the society by the military (Ibid: 143–144). So, Altan clarifies that modernism in Turkey was an outdated concept and argues that the structural construction of Turkey had not been able to sustain it so far (Ibid). In this context, Altan wanted to influence the public opinion in Turkey that the old system was the main culprit that was impeding Turkey's development to reach the level of contemporary civilizations and, in parallel with the AKP's discourse, he aimed to motivate the people to support the civilians against the military's authoritarianism.

During the early 2000s, Altan's books contributed to an understanding of the difference between the republic and the democracy in Turkey and opened a new critical dimension for questioning the military's hegemonic position. In his books, Altan clarifies that the military had penetrated all walks of life in Turkey, even the left, and provided an account of how the left made it possible for the military to be in the left politics in its acceptance of Kemalist ideology. According to Neslişah Başaran (2012), one of the most important characteristics of the second republic has been hostility toward the left. However, Altan's discourses in his book question the position of the left as a critique of "the manufactured consent" in Gramscian terminology because the left intentionally or unintentionally contributed to the military's political hegemony. In the Gramscian conception, hegemony includes the continuation of the status quo with the support of many groups from different economic and political interests (Cooper, cited in Wickramasinghe and Alawattage, 2007: 469). Altan's critique aimed to attract the left leaning sections of civil society to engage with the pro-transformation historical bloc of the AKP to empower their struggle against the military-

dominated social order. Other critiques in line with Altan's critical posture toward the left emerged in the 2000s in the public sphere with the inclusion of new leftists from subordinated groups, such as Sırrı Süreyya Önder. Consequently, contrary to the general public opinion, Altan's conception required differentiating the left from Kemalism because Kemalists were taking the side of the military against further democratization, especially since the 1990s. Thus, this interaction of the Turkish left with Kemalism opened a way to subordinated groups' leftist politics in parallel with the ideas of the second republic.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the most important examples of left-leaning civil society's confrontation with Kemalism in the 2000s pertained to the Alevi issues. As an important example, Confrontation Association was founded in 2007 under the leadership of Cafer Solgun as a way of confronting the past especially on Alevi issues. The association scrutinized the portrayal of Atatürk's involvement in the Dersim Massacre in 1938 by changing their perception of him from being the "liberator of the Alevis" and through this contributed to the Alevi groups' questioning of Kemalist ideology (See C. Solgun, Personal Interview, February 7, 2015). According to Solgun, confrontation with the Kemalist ideology has been an issue of the post-2000s period since the pro-laicism and anti-laicism debate in the period before that positioned the Alevis within the Kemalist camp (Ibid). Solgun's discursive constructions clarify that the association was influenced by the second republicanist history perspective. Thus, Başaran (2012) claims that the second republicanist perspective removed the Kemalist version of history and provided an alternative view. Solgun's critical ideas and his outreach to the Alevis was not spontaneous: Solgun, like Mehmet Altan, was a board member of the Abant Platform and these critical ideas emerged through his interactions within the Abant Platform. Hence, Abant Platform functioned as an arena for the discussion of 'critical issues' of the social and political arena after 1998.

As was seen, Altan's second republic concept was influential in the reformist days of Erdoğan's AKP. Altan's ideas supporting the reform process during the AKP's early years could be analyzed with his contribution to civil and political society's 'integrated formation', as broadly explained in the Gramscian conception as cultural and ideological codification used in interaction with political and civil societies with the consent of the people (Anderson, 1976: 32). However, the consent of the people is acquired not through coercion but through their own will, which is compatible with the desires of the society. In this context, Altan's

critique of Kemalism and his proposing a democratic socio-political environment were important contributions to the creation of such consent within the people.

In parallel with Altan, as a prominent public intellectual who had a great influence on the emergence of AKP as a liberalized version of Erbakan's MGH, Fehmi Kuru continued his support of AKP against the hegemonic position of the military in the 2000s. After the AKP acquired the majority in the November 3, 2002 general elections to form the government, Kuru continued using his column in the *Yenişafak* with the aim of influencing their policies. In his column just ten days after the elections, Kuru likens the sociopolitical environment in Turkey to "spring weather" and saw calmness on the face of the people as if they were in "peace" (Kuru, 2002). Moreover, Kuru brings into the public discussions possible positive effects of the AKP government such as the solution to the "Kurdish problem" and an end to the fear of the AKP's "religiousness" by politicians' following the way for democracy and freedom (Ibid). At the end of his column, Kuru calls upon the AKP to follow the way for "normalization" of the country by "confronting with the fears" (Ibid). Kuru's arguments have the meanings of confronting the military by following the way of democracy.

As mentioned in the previous section, Kuru had been discussing the need for a civilian power to be on the political agenda since the 1990s. He had presented this in an interview to the magazine *Altınoluk* in 1992. For Kuru, this civilian power would come from pro-Islamic movements "because they are the only group that has no organic link to the system. Thus, questioning coming from them would be more serious and considerable" (Kuru: 1992: 12). In this sense, Kuru had been in favor of this civil power since the 1980s. Thus, this emergence of the reformist group within the pro-Islamic movements brought a great promise for the possible change of the sociopolitical arenas of Turkey especially by challenging the role of the military. This position of Kuru's continued as favoring the civilian power with the aim of eliminating the role of the military in the sociopolitical arena by organically engaging the hegemonic position of the AKP in the 2000s as the historical bloc of the pro-transformation social groups.

Kuru's support of the anti-militarist actions of the AKP governments continued with his influential newspaper columns. As an example, in his column for the newspaper *Yenişafak* in 2004, Kuru suggests changing the structure of the MGK by replacing the secretary general's position from a military nominee to a civilian representative, as an important development in the democratization as well as the civilianization of the country (Kuru, 2004). One of the main

reasons for this change, he argues, was following the “EU perspective”; he also mentions the change in public perception that was reflected in the “new cadres” in the political sphere after the November 3, 2002 general elections (Ibid), namely the AKP government. From these arguments, it is clear that he supported the reform process concerning civil–military relations: he was legitimizing the AKP government by propagating its important achievements. Koru retained this position when major reforms pertaining to civil–military relations were undertaken in the second term of the AKP government. Thus, the pluralist public intellectuals’ position in the first term of the AKP was to support the democratization attempts and to provide discourses to shape the way of democratic transformation that would put an end to the hegemonic position of the military elite.

### ***Ergenekon Trials as Steps Toward De-militarization of the Civilian Social and Political Arena***

As discussed above, during the first term of the AKP government, the pluralist public intellectuals mobilized public support for civilian supremacy in the public sphere through their books and newspaper columns. The second term of AKP started with discussions on possible institutional actions for eliminating the role of the military in the civilian arena. These discussions followed the issuance of an e-memorandum on April 27, 2007 from the Chief of General Staff with an aim to influence the Presidential Elections in 2007. AKP’s candidate for President was Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Gül, whose wife wore a headscarf—a practice contrary to the strict secular public sphere in Turkey. The statement was seen as a threat to the AKP. Thus, the Chief of General Staff mentioned that TSK is a “defender of laicism” and would protect the republic from “the enemies” (BBC, 2007).<sup>66</sup>

This evoked a very strong reaction from the pro-transformation civil society as well as the intellectuals. Hasan Cemal revealed his position one day after the e-memorandum was issued with a clear statement in his column in *Milliyet* titled: “Utterly No to the army’s midnight memorandum!” (Cemal, 2007). He argues in his column that the military’s influence was “bringing the culture of conflict rather than reconciliation” and the need of the hour was to follow “democracy’s way” to protect major values of the republic, including “laicism” (Ibid).

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<sup>66</sup> Concerning the threat coming from the General Staff, these statements are important to consider: “The problem that emerged in the Presidential Election process is focused on arguments over laicism. Turkish Armed Forces are concerned about the recent situation. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party in those arguments, and absolute defender of laicism. Also, the Turkish Armed Forces is definitely opposed to those arguments and negative comments. It will display its attitude and action openly and clearly whenever it is necessary” (BBC, 2007).

So, Cemal's position was related to military's being subject to the elected democracy by making institutional amendments. According to prominent columnist Oral Çalışlar (2010), Hasan Cemal "took a firm stand" on the military's action at that time and maintained his position in the following period, as did the government. Çalışlar's argument shows the influential positioning of Cemal in both social and political actions.

Other pluralist public intellectuals took a stand similar to Cemal's supportive positioning. Fehmi Kuru (2007), in his column in *Yenişafak* three days after the e-memorandum took a stance to support the government by calling the claims regarding the government's actions as a threat to Turkey's laicist republic and secular lifestyle "meaningless". Kuru's arguments show that he wanted to convince the secular groups of the country to allow space to the AKP as well as the pro-Islamic movements in Turkey's secular public sphere. Mehmet Altan had the same position in his column in newspaper *Star* two days after the issuance of the e-memorandum, calling it an "intervention in the democracy" (Altan, 2007). Altan (2007) mentions that there is "no space for the military in the self-protection processes of the system", echoing his second republic discourse that reveals the base of his support for taking the military out of civilian social and political arenas. Such support from the intellectual sphere became the major power base of the AKP in its second term, to further the democratic reforms to end the hegemonic position of the military.

In line with the intellectuals' perspective, most discussions of Turkish democracy have underlined military tutelage as one of the central obstacles to democratic consolidation during that time. A permanent solution to this problem was debated on various institutional levels. New laws were needed to achieve this end since the military would not accept any limitation on its position and prestige in the society. As a consequence of this supportive environment, the government launched the 'Ergenekon Trials' at Istanbul Heavy Penal Court 13 on July 25, 2008. The Ergenekon Trials originally represented an important attempt to challenge the institutional influence of the military in Turkey. Analysis of the behavior against the military staff as well as the accusations of the pro-government media against the General Staff shows that the trials were intended to damage the military's prestige in the eyes of the public. Thus, despite the military's propaganda on the myth of 'Turks are a military nation' especially with the 1980 military coup, Metropoll's survey, which was conducted in 30 cities in Turkey in 2009, showed that 25.6% of people thought that Ergenekon was a criminal organization, 20.5% believed it was a subversive organization, 11.8% saw it as a terror organization, 7.7% said it was a patriotic organization and 34.4% said they had no idea about it (Metropoll,

2009a). This shows the public trust of the military was going down as the people's support of the civilian government's actions against the military grew.

Fehmi Kuru was the first of the intellectuals to bring the existence of this 'secret' organization to the public awareness, even before these trials, with his column on April 30, 2001 for the newspaper *Yeni Şafak* under his pen-name Taha Kıvanç. In his column, Kuru talks about a 24-page document that he had acquired, titled *Ergenekon: Analysis, Structuring, Management and Development Project*. The document, dated October 29, 1999, referred to a plan for the establishment of a new secret organization called Ergenekon and the aims of the organization in the document mentions "to contribute the Ergenekon Organization" that operates under the TSK (Kuru, 2001b). The most notable reaction came from Hikmet Çiçek in the pro-Kemalist newspaper *Aydınlık* (2001), who accused Kuru of being part of the "attrition campaign against the Turkish Armed Forces" with the involvement of the "Central Intelligence Agency of the US, Super NATO and National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı - MİT)". Subsequently, also on May 12, 2001 *Aksiyon News Magazine* of the Gülen Organization made the Ergenekon document, first claimed by Fehmi Kuru, the subject of its cover story. In *Aksiyon*, the Ergenekon 'secret' organization was linked to the 28 February Process and so the first step in confronting the militarist order was taken through this information (Balçı, 2009).

After the Ergenekon Trials started, Kuru continued to draw the people's attention to the trials for facilitating this process. Kuru claimed that the Ergenekon Secret Organization was a project made by the US during the Cold War (Kuru, 2008). Showing that the military was in cahoots with the US and that the only way to get rid of this American influence was to support the government was a way to capitalize on the rising anti-Americanism in the country. Kuru was advising the people to be patient by motivating them to follow the government's actions, as he indicates in one of his sentences: "perhaps politicians know something" (Ibid).

Additionally, Turkey's pursuance of the EU membership process under the AKP regime gave another major inclination to follow this civilianization policy. Thus, it is important that the major focus of Turkey's progress report for the year 2004 was "parliamentarian supremacy", since the EU saw the military position as an obstacle to further democratization of the republic (EU Commission Report, 2004: 14–23). There is no doubt that the EU, by incentivizing full membership, played an extremely crucial role in instigating democratization and civilianization reforms in Turkey in the years 2002–2005. The EU cure was seen as a



solution to Turkey's problems, and the discourse on placing the Chief of General Staff under the Prime Minister emerged from this reform process.

However, the General Staff felt strong pressure over the Ergenekon Trials and the reforms as a part of the EU membership process that would reduce the military's influence in politics. As a result, important military officials started voicing their concerns about these reforms. Chief of General Staff İlker Başbuğ issued a statement on the occasion of the victory week starting on August 25, 2009 addressing the government's Kurdish reform process but including veiled threats to attempts (e.g. Ergenekon Trials) to eliminate the military's role in the social and political life of Turkey:

“TSK will continue to stand for the protection of the unitary state, nation-state structure as Atatürk entrusted to us, as noted in Article 3 of the Constitution” (Quoted in Hürriyet, 2009).

The positions taken within this socially constructed political conflict brought camps that were pro and contra the transformation process. The changing power base from military to civilian government brought a conflicting relationship as the military's engagement with Kemalism was closely related to the interests of the bourgeois public sphere, since the Kemalist elites had been the bourgeois of Turkey since the establishment of the republic. This transformation process was also changing the social structure of the country. The pluralist public intellectuals made great efforts to legitimize the trials, focusing on suppressing the voices coming from the media elites that supported the Ergenekon organization. They argued that it was an 'illegal' organization which was a threat to Turkey's elected government. For example, Mehmet Altan, one of the main supporters of the Ergenekon Trials, criticized the Ergenekon organization in his columns. His column in newspaper *Star* dated July 14, 2008 brought the discussion to the supporters of the 'illegal' Ergenekon organization since that kind of “coup attempt” had a lot of support from the media, which was “indifference” and “shamelessness” in the words of Altan (Altan, 2008a). Altan was very vocal in lambasting the people presenting critical arguments against the Ergenekon Trials, calling them defenders of a “pro-coup mindset” who were “pro-Junta” as well as “massacrer of democracy” (Ibid). Thus public support for the trials was raised by presenting the supporters as being pro-democracy and those opposed to the trials as the enemies of democracy.

As the public legitimacy on the Ergenekon Trials rose, an operation leading to large-scale arrests of bureaucrats, academics and NGO activists, called the 12<sup>th</sup> operation wave was conducted in many cities of Turkey on April 13, 2009 (Hürriyet, 2009b). Altan, as one of the

most vociferous supporters of these trials, was invited to many political discussion programs on mainstream TV channels. On one of these programs, Altan mentioned that he knew “some of the suspects” of the Ergenekon Organization (Oda TV, 2009). Altan was referring to some of the academics he worked with at the Istanbul University, such as Prof. Dr. Erol Manisalı. Prof. Manisalı was arrested under the 12<sup>th</sup> operation wave as a member of the Ergenekon organization. He was a very well known Kemalist. Altan’s public posture shows that he was glad to suppress the Kemalist voices during this transformation process. This created a polemic between Altan and Oda TV, a private TV channel run by followers of the Kemalist ideology. The channel accused Altan of supporting these arrests because of his anti-Kemalism. He was also presented as being intolerant to different opinions (Ibid).

Altan also documented his support of the Ergenekon Trials with his book titled *Hazy Democracy Ergenekon Diary (Puslu Demokrasi Ergenekon Güncesi)* (2010a), a compilation of Altan’s interviews. Altan refers to the Ergenekon Trials in the book as Turkey’s cleaning its bowels (See Altan, 2010a: 45–113). He connects Ergenekon with the Kemalist hegemony of Turkey and also with the Kurdish problem. By hazy democracy, Altan meant that groups and organizations within the state made the environment hazy by eliminating the transparency of the state policies. The book gives a picture of the economic and political power bases related to this Ergenekon organization. It was also an important source of public legitimacy for the Ergenekon Trials.

As mentioned in chapter 3, in 2010, further confrontation with the military’s hegemonic position continued with the ‘Sledgehammer Coup Plan’ case. An investigation was launched leading to the arrest of retired and active duty generals and many military officers. Later that year, with the greater social consensus and again the support of the EU, a Constitutional Amendment Referendum<sup>67</sup> to change some articles and thus end the hegemonic position of the military in the state passed. As one of the major supporters of all these developments against the hegemonic position of military, Hasan Cemal published a book, *Turkey’s Military Problem (Türkiye’nin Asker Sorunu)* (2010), that pictured this process. In it, Cemal provides a comprehensive analysis of the civil–military relations and the historical fear of elected governments due to the military’s influence in Turkey. Cemal clarifies the root of the

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<sup>67</sup> The support of sample intellectuals during the Constitutional Amendment Referendum in 2010 will be analyzed separately in the sub-section 5.2.4. as the amendment represents the start of the period of restoration of the hegemony of the AKP, not only on the military but also other state institutions including the judiciary as well as other civilian social and political arenas. Thus, it was one of the major factors in the emergence of the Gezi Protest in 2013.

military's influence as a guide for further democratization attempts. He mentions that since the establishment of Turkey, all arenas of public policy except for the economic sector were off-limits for the elected governments. In Cemal's conception, in a so-called democratic environment, an elected government was always facing military directives. He gives the example of the former ambassador and MP from CHP Şükrü Elekdağ's critique of Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz on March 23, 1998: Elekdağ is reported to have said that "defying the military is a goof". Cemal presents Elekdağ's critique of Yılmaz as he was not following Elekdağ's ideas in an environment in which the executive power had been shared between the military and government since 1983 (Cemal, 2010a: 287). As seen also from this example, Cemal's book clearly conceived of Turkey's military problem as a civil problem, given that he showed civilian politicians' position of getting used to military's hegemonic position in the country. Another example in this regard was President Süleyman Demirel's critique of Yılmaz. Demirel criticized Yılmaz with the words: "The center-right leader who fights with the army can not increase the votes" (Ibid: 286). Cemal's arguments show that he saw it as important to disclose this situation, which he regarded as a barrier to democratization, to the public. In this sense, focusing on the elected parliament, Cemal was not only legitimizing the government over the military, but also contributing to increasing support for the government's policies of continuing the political reforms, including the Ergenekon Trials and Sledgehammer Coup Plan case against the military personnel.

In parallel with his previous book and other contributions of the mentioned intellectuals to taking the military out of the political arena, Mehmet Altan's book *Turkey in the Mosque–Barrack Parenthesis (Cami Kışla Parantezinde Türkiye)* (2012) provided a historical analysis of the realities Turkey faced due to the influence of the military. In it, Altan gives an account of the historical struggle that has existed in Turkey between the barracks, as shelters for the elites, and the mosques or religion, as lodges for the subordinated Muslim groups (See Altan, 2012). In Altan's conception, this has been a kind of class struggle, and the weapons used in this fight are laicism and the sharia (Ibid: 52). The book reveals the presence of anti-military sentiments in the religious groups and their non-acceptance of the military in their social base. The book gives the reasons for Altan's connection to the AKP's historical bloc fighting to eliminate the role of the military. Importantly, while legitimizing government-backed developments confronting the influence of military, such as the Ergenekon case in 2008, the Sledgehammer Coup Plan case in 2010 and constitutional change in 2010, he also spoke of unsatisfied struggles against the military's influential position. This means that he was also

critical of the AKP government for profiting from the situation. In this way, even as he was appreciated the efforts against the military's influential role in the polity, Altan was also highlighting to the public the benefits to the AKP of the old system. His critical position against the AKP government can be seen as the start of the dissolution of historical bloc as in Gramsci's view, since an existing historical bloc can only collapse if the intellectual bloc that has been organic with it dissolves (Portelli, 1982: 123). Collapse means the obsolescence of an ideology. So, when the pluralist public intellectuals in the AKP's pro-transformation historical bloc regarded the party as having started to drift away from the ideological position of the establishment, which was liberalism, pluralism and democratization, the historical bloc started to dissolve. This was shown in the political practices of the AKP government in the post-Gezi Protests period: redesigning the military for their own political needs rather than being in direct conflict with the military elites.

After all, research shows that the discursive struggle and political actions on eliminating the role of the military in the social and political life of Turkey in the 2000s have contributed to a greater faith in democracy in the society during the covered period of time. This contributed to the growing public perception in supporting the democratic institutions of Turkey. Metropoll's survey shows that 65.2% of people did not support the military's comments on political issues (Metropoll, 2009b). Furthermore, according to another study titled "Turkish Armed Forces and Society: Empirical Approach" conducted in 2011, 89.4% of surveyed persons believed that any state must be governed by democracy, and 46.4% of people were satisfied and 25.5% of people were partly satisfied with the level and function of the democracy in Turkey (Gürsoy and Sarıgil, 2011). The survey shows that the democracy culture was restored in the society at this time; however, the need for further improvements in democracy was a main expectation of the people. Although the post-June 2015 elections period is not covered in this dissertation, the fact that a large number of people participated in the marches against the military vehicles in the anti-coup social mobilization during the failed coup attempt of July 15–16, 2016 shows that anti-coup mentality was restored in the people of Turkey. However, this has coincided with civilian authoritarianism seen in the government's practices. So, in this way we can see that political power in Turkey is not in the hands of the military anymore but has already moved to the civilian political actors.

In conclusion, the discourses throughout the 1980s and 1990s based on eliminating the role of the military in the social and political arena were reflected in the politics during the 2000s,

with the historical bloc consisting of different political positions under the reformist AKP project. The reforms in the scope of EU membership negotiations as well as the government's mobilization of the civil society for ending the military's tutelage affected this process of dissolving the hegemonic position of the military over civilian politics. The Ergenekon Trials, which started in 2008, the Sledgehammer Coup Plan case in 2010 and constitutional change in 2010 also facilitated this process, as the government, with the strong support of the intellectual sphere and the public, aimed to control the military in this transformation process. Individually, Fehmi Koru's first bringing the Ergenekon issue to the public agenda in 2001 is an important example of the contribution of the intellectuals to shaping the public opinion to support the elimination of the military's hegemonic position. Besides this first attempt, Hasan Cemal, Mehmet Altan and Fehmi Koru also contributed to the process of dissolution of the military's hegemony through their books and columns as well as by participating in the political discussion programs. These actions and discussions of the pluralist public intellectuals contributed to the legitimization of the actions of the AKP government to make the military subject to the elected civilian authority. However, this process opened the way for civilian authoritarianism in the government's practices, especially after the Gezi Protests in 2013. Still, this process of confronting not only the hegemonic position of the military but also the Kemalist system of Turkey brought the country into confrontation with social problems in the post-1980s. Most importantly, making Islam and the pro-Islamic movements as part of the public sphere has been the leading topic, especially in the intellectual sphere that has been put into practice in the AKP government's backed reform process from the 2000s; this will be covered in the next sub-section below.

### **5.2.2. Crumbling the Walls between Secularism and Islam: Islam in the Public Sphere Discourses**

As stated in chapter 3, the involvement of Islam as well as the pro-Islamic movements' struggle for inclusion within the public sphere centered on the headscarf debate in the post-1980s. The tension over the headscarf debate in the 1990s was reflected in the discourses of the 2000s, with major transformations at hand. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Nilüfer Göle was the first to contribute to the Islamic modernism debate and the debate about the involvement of Islam and the pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere, with her book *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (1991), which describes young Turkish women who were bringing a modern perspective to the tenets of fundamental Islamic gender codes. The 2000s was the period wherein her conception was mostly realized. Thus, in her book, by

giving a critique of traditional modernity in Turkey, Göle aimed to open a new arena for a new understanding of modernity. Fehmi Kuru added to Göle's contribution to this debate in the 2000s by supporting the headscarf struggle of the religious women in his columns. Mehmet Altan also contributed to this debate in the 2000s through his books on increasing urban religiosity, which showed the possibility of conservative Muslims' involvement in modernity by bringing their religious tenets to the urban areas. A discursive alliance was seen among the intellectuals for the solution to the headscarf problem and the involvement of pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere. As the 2000s was also a period of increased debate about modernity and the pro-Islamic movements' struggle for involvement in the public sphere, this sub-section will analyze the contribution of Göle's concept of forbidden modern through her further publications as well as her artistic activities in the public aimed at legitimizing this process. This sub-section will also include an analysis of Fehmi Kuru's contribution to the headscarf debate in favor of religious women's participation in the public sphere. Mehmet Altan's contribution to this debate with his arguments on urban religiosity will also be analyzed, since they also aimed, within the scope of the second republic concept, to legitimize the process of involvement of pro-Islamic movements into the public sphere and the rise of democracy and pluralism through the involvement of emergent urban religious groups in the capitalist modernity.

As Göle (1991: 57) clarifies in her book, the main approach to modernity within the public sphere after the establishment of Turkey was based on Kemalist ideology. In the 2000s, a new kind of modernity which also included the traditional features of the public life in Turkey became visible in the public sphere. The reformist tendencies of the political sphere through the AKP governments beginning in 2002 brought to the public sphere the confrontation over a basic problem for the pro-Islamic movements: "headscarf". In this sense, pro-Islamic movements' confrontation with the headscarf ban started in the public sphere at the political level with the success of the AKP. For example, the first confrontation in the public sphere over the headscarf was seen when the Speaker of the TBMM Bülent Arınç (2002–2007) was accompanied by his wife wearing a headscarf in the state protocol to see off President Ahmet Necdet Sezer who was flying to the NATO summit in November 2002 (Milliyet, 2002b). This received major criticisms from the laicist elites, especially from the CHP and its leader Deniz Baykal, who spoke of the impossibility of bringing the headscarf to state institutions. With this, the headscarf became a contested issue in Turkey's political discourse.

Göle (1991: 57) mentions that traditionally the modernity debate has focused on discussions about women. After the aforementioned first confrontation with the headscarf in the public sphere, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer explicitly warned the AKP government. In his speech, Sezer acknowledged that wearing a headscarf was a “private sphere issue” and should not be brought to the public sphere since it would contradict the principle of laicism in the “Constitution of Turkey” (Milliyet, 2002b).

In the intellectual sphere, the tension over the headscarf was on the agenda of Fehmi Kuru, who wrote in favor of wearing the headscarf in his column in *Yeni Şafak* on December 1, 2002, questioning the reasons for the problems with the headscarf with his words “in each case headscarf is a problem” (Kuru, 2002b). Kuru also explicitly warned the AKP government against the “booby traps” that were established by the Kemalists against the AKP’s reformist approaches (Ibid). While indicating that the situations of girls wearing a headscarf at the universities and the veiled women in state protocol were similar, Kuru explicitly spoke of a solution on the “social level” by removing this “repressive practice of the state” (Ibid). In this sense, by mentioning this social reality in his column, which was mainly followed by conservatives, Kuru aimed to shape the public agenda over the headscarf debate through his prism. As Habermas (1991: 60) argues, the press act as “a genuinely critical organ of the public engaged in critical public debate”; thus, by expressing the demands of the conservatives in his column and reflecting his proposal of the best way to solve the headscarf problem, Kuru contributed to the discussion of the headscarf problem in the media with the aim to continue the reform process.

Parallel to Kuru’s stance, the Prime Minister Abdullah Gül also spoke on the desire to include the headscarf as part of the public sphere. Gül’s discourses emphasized the headscarf as being a “natural element” of the public that “should be treated as a personal preference” (Yenişafak, 2002). Gül’s arguments were in the transformation position as clarified by Göle in her forbidden modern concept. Thus, Göle’s forbidden modern concept clarifies a desire of the conservative groups: “Muslim movements, today’s contemporary movements, would like to be part of modernity with their own forbidden” (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). For Göle the indicator of the forbidden has been “the headscarf” (Ibid). Göle’s engagement with the headscarf debate can be seen as being in line with Gramscian conception of the formation of bourgeois hegemony, where this hegemony is produced/reproduced in the cultural arena by means of the media, youth movements, trade unions and the education sector, such as universities and the religious institutions (Heywood 1994: 100–101). The

development of this new bourgeois, as previously discussed, came about with the economic development in Anatolia from the 1980s onwards and brought with it the visibility of Islamic bourgeois and their parallel public sphere in the 1990s. The intellectuals' interaction with the desires coming from this new bourgeois was similar to what Gramsci clarifies as organic intellectuals since they grew within this liberal-right environment that includes the Islamic discourse and contributed to the debates based on this perspective. Göle's engagement with the headscarf debate shows her interest in dealing with this discussion topic brought by the growing Islamic bourgeois under the liberal-right political movement of Özal in the post-1980s.

Fehmi Kuru was also influential in these discourses in the 1990s by legitimizing the growing hegemonic position of the Islamic bourgeois. In the 2000s, this continued with his artistic activities that were in line with the tendency of making Islam as well as its cultural products part of the public sphere. Fehmi Kuru's *Fasıl Music Nights (Fasıl Geceleri)* are an important example: he invited leading actors from the media sector as well as important social and political figures to listen to Turkish Classical Music and discuss daily issues in Turkey (Özkartal, 2009). The Fasıl Music Nights became very famous in the mid-2000s and with them Kuru aimed to expand his area of influence within the public sphere. This could be seen as the cultural side of the growing Islamic bourgeois during this period. Kuru's positioning in this process can be seen as that of an organic intellectual as a representative or orator of the liberal-right historical bloc in which Islam and conservatism are the main features, since he came from this particular social background.

### ***Non-Western Modernity Figures Discourse***

As a reflection of the ideas in her book 'Forbidden Modern' in the public sphere, Nilüfer Göle's *Forbidden Modern Exhibition* from October 17–November 21, 2007 in Istanbul is important to mention. With this artistic and intellectual project on the topic of 'Non-Western Modernities', Göle aimed to present the interpretations of modernity in different cultures. In the second half of the 2000s, during the swift transformation of Turkey's public sphere with the involvement of the pro-Islamic movements, Göle's approach provided great support to this process; she contributed by highlighting the compatibility of Islam with modernity discourses in Turkey. In this exhibition, different cultural practices were reflected both in oral and visual ways (See Istanbul, 2007). Moreover, this project dealt with the issue of cultural differences at the global level and provided a new ground for the continued interaction among



cultures (Ibid). Rather than analyzing the cultures through a Western modernity perception, Göle's project aimed to understand one cultural experience through the mirror of others.

Within Turkey's social environment, Göle aimed to present the strengthening Islamic self in tension with Turkey's secular public sphere. The exhibition discussed conservative women's growing self-consciousness and the importance of the headscarf as a way of understanding this Islamic self (Ibid). Hence, Göle's forbidden modern concept also dealt with the effect of veiled women's inclusion in the public sphere and their growing self-consciousness. For Göle, inclusion of the veiled women in the public sphere ensures the "emergence of self-consciousness" and non-inclusion brings "silence in the inner world", which is a form of non-involvement in the social life (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). In this sense, the Forbidden Modern Exhibition provided important insights about the urbanized and modernized nature of the headscarf in contemporary Turkey. It can also be seen as a contribution to the debate in the aftermath of Abdullah Gül's election on August 28, 2007 as the 11<sup>th</sup> President of Turkey with his wife, Hayrunnisa Gül, becoming the first headscarf-wearing first lady of Turkey. While the laicist CHP were pouring down critiques about the incompatibility of Gül's election with a veiled wife, Göle's exhibition contributed to the legitimization by presenting the possibility of modernity with forbidden elements.

Moreover, as a further intellectual contribution concerning the involvement of Islam in the Public sphere, Göle published her book *Secular and Religious: Destabilizing the Boundaries (Seküler ve Dinsel: Aşınan Sınırlar)* (2012) as an analysis consisting of seven articles that provided a comprehensive background on the inclusion of both Islam and secularism in the transforming public sphere. By analyzing the previous developments concerning Islam as a part of the public sphere, Göle argues that the historical uncertainty of the headscarf issue has involved both the secular (self) and religious (self) and this interaction between them has brought the removal of the walls between secularism and Islam (Ibid: 131). For Göle the difference between secular and religious was broken. Therefore, instead of suggesting that one comes after the other with a categorical differentiation between them, Göle saw both conflicts and a combination of them that needed to be considered (Ibid: 25). Thus, Göle's conception of intertwining the secular and Islam provides a duality within a common arena, which is the public sphere.

Göle's stance on identifying the secular and the religious has overtones from Turkey's long debate on sharing the public sphere. Contrary to the mainstream perception, Göle does not

consider the secular and religious as two distinct cultural and historical movements, but instead looks at the issue by analyzing them together. For Göle secularization and Islam are intertwined in their historical evolution. This intertwining is visible in the affairs of the state, in the public sphere as well as in the private lives of individuals. She refers to this intertwining concept as “a person’s living not only in the religious circle, but a composition of all life in it” (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). This brings us to analyze social beings as individuals existing as both secular and religious at different times in their lives. In Göle’s perspective, nobody could stay free from the secular and religious dichotomy during their life. Göle’s aim seems to be the creation of a pluralistic environment in Turkey in which both religious and secular practices mutually co-exist within this intertwined structure.

Subsequently, Göle contributed to the debate with her book, *A Discovery Journey: Turkey, Islam and Europe (Keşif Yolculuğu: Türkiye, İslam ve Avrupa)* (2013), consisting of her interviews, edited by Zafer Özcan. The book presents Göle’s ideas of the emergence of non-Western modernity figures in Turkey and the specification of modernity in the public sphere as this type. This book includes an extensive history of the transformation of Turkey’s public sphere through the eyes of Göle as well as the different public opinions about this transition (See Göle and Özcan, 2013). In the book, Göle sheds light on the fact that modernity in the traditional republican way of Turkey has meant getting rid of the Islamic tradition through a westernization process; however, the counter-Islamic movements and their involvement in the public sphere, through interaction with secular public, have created a hybrid image, which is both modern and religious in its ways of social practice (Ibid: 42–44). In Göle’s conception, modernity and forbidden in the religious philosophy, have not been enemies as has been shown in a polarized environment. On the contrary, both experiences are needed in the life of human beings and are a requirement of a pluralist public sphere (Ibid: 93–95). Göle argues that the inclusion of different figures in life has been the reality in a pluralistic society, and has been the “normalization” process for Turkey in its democratization in the post-1980s (Ibid: 97–98). So, the idea of this book was to show the contemporary developments, through the discourses of Göle, in Turkey’s social and political environment that included the forbidden modern in it. Through this, Göle aimed to contribute to creating an environment that would recognize others.

In light of Turkey’s transformation, non-Western modernity has been a spreading and strengthening issue since the 2000s. Göle accepts that, based on her forbidden modern concept, non-Western modernity has spread in the public sphere since the 1990s and sees the

non-Western modernity figure “at the top of the state” since it is the way of life of Turkish President Erdoğan (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). Göle mentions that the new presidential palace (Aksaray) of Turkey epitomizes non-Western modernity by being both “Western” and “Islamic” (Ibid). In this sense, Göle’s discourses give meaning to the non-Western modernity figures as being both Western and Eastern (Oriental–Occidental) and further including different cultures that the society faced in its historical evolution (such as Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Greek) in the public sphere as a harmonization of cultural concepts in a new social formation.

As these contributions were made within the intellectual sphere, the parallel social process was the governmental reforms for the inclusion of the forbidden within the modernity in emerging non-Western modernity figures in Turkey. In 2008, riding on strong public support for their proposal and with the support of MHP, AKP brought a law to the parliament to remove the headscarf ban at the universities. The draft law was accepted by the majority of the parliamentarians. However, the constitutional court revoked it as violating the principle of laicism (Milligazete, 2008). Later, under the new president of the YÖK, the university headscarf ban was removed in practice. On October 1, 2013, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared a democratization package, and the end of the headscarf ban for all public office holders except military personnel, police officers, judges and public prosecutors. Soon after, 4 parliamentarians wearing headscarves joined the general assembly on October 31, 2013.

### ***Religiosity and Urban Space Debate***

By starting with the pro-Islamic movements’ involvement in the public sphere, most visibly with the veiled women’s inclusion and their interaction with modernity creating an understanding of a new modernity, intellectual discussions about Islam took a new approach. As an intellectual contribution in this direction, Mehmet Altan’s book *Urban Religiosity (Kent Dindarlığı)* (2010) aimed to clarify the social effects of this development in a pluralist way. Altan’s book is a collection of his interviews and articles. In his book, the roots of urban religiosity were given in two different Islamic understandings: Taliban Islam and Seyh Galip Islam. Taliban Islam was not experienced in Turkey, but Altan used it as a comparison with Turkey’s liberal Islamic understanding in 2000s. Altan argues that Taliban Islam represented political Islam, Islamic Law (Fıkıh) and Islamic identity; Seyh Galip Islam represented culture, philosophy, bourgeois and aristocracy. Altan separates these two understandings of Islam as

“political Islam” and “cultural Islam” (2010b: 9–12). By presenting Seyh Galip Islam as an alternative, Altan aimed to change the negative perception of Islam due to the Taliban.

Altan’s conception in the book is a desire to emancipate Islam from the suburban culture by giving it a philosophical and urban identity with the involvement in the public sphere. With examples from Turkey, this conception intends to contribute to the discussions about the increasing visibility of religious Muslims. So, *Urban Religiosity* proposes an Islamic understanding consisting of individual and cultural dimensions of the inner consciousness. In the book, Altan (Ibid: 113) argues that religious perspectives of the poor and helpless people and the rich and safe people can not be the same and mentions that if religion was understood in an aristocratic way, different philosophical meanings of its contribution to the social life of the people would emerge. He also wishes that the Imams would deal with philosophy and sociology as religious intellectuals, rather than dealing with the politics. In Altan’s conception, the sole way to reach the urban religiosity is through the emergence of an Islamic bourgeois. That would bring a new religious understanding and a new lifestyle of the city culture that includes Islam within it. However, for Altan, historically “in Turkey religion was perceived as remedy for the subordinated groups afflicted with poverty, unemployment and income disparity” (Ibid: 144). However, with this concept of the emergence of the Islamic bourgeois, Altan’s major aim was the liberalization of Islam. Hence, for Altan, adapting to the liberal perspective is an inevitable situation because of the increasing interaction of the religious peoples with the other cultures of the world (Ibid: 119).

Altan’s Urban Religiosity concept provides mental exercise for the public under the umbrella of his second republic discourse. Altan’s concept started to be discussed in the public: from media to municipalities as well as the universities—evidence of its influence at the time of pro-Islamic movements’ increasing involvement in the public sphere. Examples of his concept’s popularity in the public include the Sakarya Municipality’s public conference in March 2010 in Adapazarı titled “Turkey is Democratizing, Is Urban Life Changing?” (See Sakarya Yeni Haber, 2010), the conference in Bursa about his Urban Religiosity concept that was organized by Writers Union of Turkey (Türkiye Yazarlar Birliği) Bursa branch in November 2010 (See Erdoğan, 2010) and the conference at Bozok University in Yozgat, titled “Urban Religiosity”, organized by Yozgat Bozok University Young Managers Club in December 2013 (See Haberler, 2013).

As a result of the inclusion of the pro-Islamic movements into the public sphere and the constant interaction of conservative Muslims with modernity that came with it, the religious symbols and their public use started to change. As was explained comprehensively in chapter 3, a very visible example is the headscarf, an indicator of Islamic appearance that transformed quickly with the effect of modernity. In Göle's words: "the question of whether Islam transformed modernity or modernity transformed Islam, it now seems that modernity transformed Islam more" (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). The conservative Muslims' engagement in modernism brought the interaction that caused the transition from the traditional perspectives. Göle explains this as the forbidden having no "cultural richness and creativity to carry the debate"; on the contrary "a mere modern" perspective has been in the public sphere (Ibid). This is explained by Altan in the same way as the inevitable situation of religious people's engagement into the liberal and modern perspective by having an interaction mechanism with the other people of the society (Altan, 2010b: 119).

Consequently, the involvement of the conservative Muslims in the public sphere, a process that secularized them, also brought the religious discourses into the public sphere as a hybrid pattern including both secular and religious. Thus, research shows that with the increasing involvement of the conservative Muslims in the public sphere, majorly through the pro-Islamic movements, their constant interaction with the modernity in the public sphere brings changes in religious practices. According to TNS Piar's survey, conducted in Turkey since 1993, in the years 2001 to 2005, the percentage of girls aged 15–17 who did not wear a headscarf in public increased from 49.5% to 68.8% (Durukan, 2006). Sociologist Nilüfer Narlı argues that "the increased urbanization experience, entering into the modern life, the impact of the global youth culture and Western culture may be the causes of this phenomenon" (Quoted in Durukan, 2006). Research conducted by Gezici Research Company in 7 regions and 36 provinces with 4860 participants shows the number of people who describe themselves as religious has decreased. While the percentage of self-described religious people was 32.3 in 2011, this decreased to 30.6 in 2013 and dropped to 30.2 in 2015 (CNN Turk, 2015). The research also shows that the level of religiousness decreases with an increase in the level of education. This presents important evidence for the effect of conservative Muslims' engagement in the public sphere, including universities, public services and schools, having changed their religious perspectives and practices.

In sum, the debate over inclusion of Islam and the pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere started in the early 1990s with the contribution of Nilüfer Göle's forbidden modern discourse and Fehmi Kuru's Islamic transformism and gained momentum in the 2000s with the involvement of the pro-Islamic movements as well as increasing visibility of conservative Muslims in the public sphere. On this point, Göle contributed, through the discourses of forbidden modern, to the legitimization of veiled women's inclusion in the public sphere with a mixture of religious and modern figures. Fehmi Kuru also created the vision for the pro-Islamic movements to focus on reformist values to transform the oppressive laic system of Turkey. Mehmet Altan contributed to this debate with his book based on the increasing urban religiosity in Turkey. By strongly defending the empowerment of urban religiosity in the 2000s, Altan defended the exercise of religious values within urban areas as well as in the public sphere. Altan thought that with this empowerment, pro-Islamic movements would continue their cultural development by producing new urban religious cultures. Altan's portrayal of this process as vital for the democratization and the pluralization of the republic contributed to easing the transformation process with the inclusion of Islam within the public sphere. In the end, Turkey underwent a transformation of the strict laicist character of its system with the increasing visibility of Islam and of the pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere. In the social arena, this brought the mixture of religious and secular conceptions both in individuals and the society, which indicates that the walls between secularism and Islam in Turkey have been crumbling. Moreover, this transformation process entailed the inclusion in the public sphere not only of the pro-Islamic movements, but of other ethnic and cultural groups as well. In connection with the widening liberal pluralist environment in the 2000s, another important development that took place was the government-backed reform process to make Kurds part of the public sphere, namely to absorb them in the new Turkey. In the next sub-section, this process of major reforms from the 2000s for the inclusion of the Kurds in the public sphere and the pluralist public intellectuals' role within this process will be analyzed.

### **5.2.3. Turkeyification Debate and Kurds in the Public Sphere**

As was argued in chapter 3, one of the major transformations that has happened in the post-1980s pertains to bringing the Kurdish identity and culture into the public sphere. Analyzing the historical development of the recognition of the Kurdish identity shows that starting with the coup in the first quarter of 1980s, the debate over Kurdish identity has transformed itself

from referring to the Kurds as “Turks living in the high mountains”<sup>68</sup> to the recognition of the Kurdish issue. This development of this debate in the public sphere has been the major step toward the recognition of the Kurdish identity and has gradually led to the extension of the Kurdish reality in the social and political arena. The sample pluralist public intellectuals have concerned themselves with this problem since the 1980s by standing for democratization and the provision of cultural rights for the different segments of the society. However, in the 1980s and 1990s their analysis focused mainly on the position of the military as the most important barrier to the democratization process. Even so, when their positions regarding the major problems of the country are analyzed, they have been in favor of an overall transformation that also included the solution of the Kurdish problem.

Furthermore, as was mentioned in chapter 3, the 1990s was the scene for the PKK-led ‘guerrilla war’ or ‘terrorist activities’ that led the state to tend to rely on security measures in southeastern Anatolia, where Kurdish speaking individuals constitute the majority of the population. However, after the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the organization set a goal for democratic autonomy (demokratik özerklik) by struggling for the recognition of Kurdish identity and culture in Turkey. However, the fulfillment of these demands was related to the democratization of the country: in other words, a transformation from the ethnocentric regime paradigm toward a liberal pluralist alternative. Thus, in the 2000s, the democratization and pluralization process of the country was linked to finding a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem.

In the 2000s, the Kurdish problem was seen as a major problem of the country. It was on the agenda within the historical bloc of the AKP consisting of pro-transformation groups, which also included some Kurdish groups, liberals, liberal leftists as well as the pro-Islamic movements in its core. The Islamist MGH and its reformist version—AKP—treated the Kurdish problem based on the Islamic brotherhood, calling the actions of the Turkish military

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<sup>68</sup> Concerning this debate about regarding the Kurds as a branch of ethnic Turkish nationality, the coup government (1980–1983) made a great effort to argue for the elimination of the increasing Kurdish nationality consciousness that gradually started right before the 1980s. As an important attempt in this regard, the 1980 Coup leader Kenan Evren’s media adviser Ali Baransel’s book *The Destructive and Separatist Movements in Turkey (Türkiye’de Yıkıcı ve Bölücü Akımlar)* (1982) conceptualized this Turkishness of the Kurds debate through his arguments in the book that “Kurd: in the high parts of the mountains, there are snow that does not melt yet in the winters as well as in the summers. The upper surface of this snow gently melts in the sun and covered with a bright, hard, glassy ice layer. While the upper part is hard, the base is softer. When you walk on this snow, the place, where the foot is set, dents and makes a voice called “Kart-Kurt”. Here, referring to this voice, the pressed snow is called Kürt snow or Kürtün. Today, this pressed snow, which the storm and wind dragged and poured into the potholes, is still called Kurtuk-Kürtük or Kürtün in many parts of Anatolia and in Azerbaijan. The Turks who live in high plateaus and in snowy regions are called Kürdaks” (quoted in Karataş, 2017).

in the southeastern region of Turkey ‘state terror’. In this period, pluralist public intellectuals, by being in a discursive alliance with the AKP governments, were in a position to legitimize the steps taken by the government. In this sub-section, the participation of the sample pluralist public intellectuals in legitimizing the AKP governments’ steps for the solution of the Kurdish problem and their contribution through supportive discourses to integrating the Kurds into the public sphere will be analyzed.

As was argued, these reforms during the AKP period in the 2000s were related to the Islamic political movements’ approach to Kurdish social demands based on the Islamic brotherhood perspective that differed from the Kemalist ethnocentric understanding. Fehmi Kuru’s concern with the Kurdish problem had started in the 1990s with the increasing activities of Kurdish liberalization movement. His ideas were in the line with the war on “terror action” and, on the other side, he was also supporting “freedom of thought” so that the Kurdish problem could be discussed openly (Cumhuriyet, 1994: 12). Kuru was taking a position on legitimizing the security policies of the state by being at the same time in favor of individual, social and cultural rights. He was critical of labeling people as “terrorist” and “potential terrorist” merely because of their personal thoughts (Ibid). This shows that Kuru was in the same position as the liberal pro-transformation bloc in the 1990s regarding individual rights and freedom of thought about the important problems of the society. Kuru’s position continued in the 2000s when he was in the pro-transformation historical bloc under the hegemonic position of the AKP. Thus, as was explained in the first section of this chapter, Kuru’s influential position in the pro-Islamic movements was to motivate them to take a reformist perspective. Hence, his discourses were related to the parallel structural change of the state and a new social formation (See Kuru: 1992: 12). By being in this pro-transformation historical bloc with the full support of AKP’s politics, Kuru’s conception continued to be that a permanent solution would have to entail bringing the Kurdish movement into the public sphere, rather than suppressing it. This position has been seen in his support for the major reform processes in the second half of the 2000s.

As one of the first intellectual attempts at taking a cue from the historical development in the post-1980s and reflecting it in the pro-transformation spirit of the 2000s, Hasan Cemal, in his book *The Kurds (Kürtler)* (2003), explains the Kurdish struggle for liberation as well as the sociopolitical situation both in the Kurdish regions and the center of Turkey, Ankara. Cemal presented major examples affecting the whole society in order to convey the idea that the Kurdish problem is also a Turkish problem. With the publishing of his book, Cemal



constructed a role for himself within the pro-transformation environment of 2000s, of mediating between the parties in conflict. Cemal's examples in the book show that there have historically been parties in this conflict and he aimed to bring these parties closer to find a solution to this ongoing problem. Cemal was also legitimizing the attempts of the AKP government to question the ethnocentric formation of the Kemalist republic. Thus, as an organic intellectual within the Gramscian conception, Cemal aimed to widen the ideological position of the historical bloc of pro-transformation groups that was reflected in the AKP and convince the other groups by 'enlightening' them about the Kurdish problem. He aimed through this to absorb various opposition groups into this pro-transformation historical bloc.

In order to attract broad public support for the government's position for the solution to the problem, Cemal described the 'authoritarian' nature of both the Kurdish PKK and Turkish military in terms of their self-representation. He mentions that rather than representing all Kurds and Turks, the PKK and the military, respectively, represent small subsets of these two groups. Cemal shows that the Turkish state was dominated by the Kemalist groups in a monocultural structure and the PKK was under the dictatorial rule of Abdullah Öcalan. The first part of the book starts with Cemal meeting Abdullah Öcalan in Bekaa Valley; he portrays Öcalan as a person who likes to lead the discussion to himself (Cemal, 2003b: 37–38). Cemal quotes Öcalan saying that "they say my every conversation is a book" and Öcalan's mentioning that Assyrian Metropolitans told him "You are like a Jesus!" and the Metropolitans' seeing him as a sole leader of the Kurds and saying that he could be "welcomed in Diyarbakir by the 500000 people" (Ibid). So, by showing the undemocratic and authoritarian nature of each side, in cohesion with the pro-transformation spirit of the 2000s, Cemal expected to bring an individualist character to the debate, which would bring the different voices to the public sphere rather than collect the people from the ideological camps.

In line with Cemal's perspective, the 2000s were a time of a new socially constructed official discourse on 'nationhood' emerging within the pro-transformation historical bloc of the AKP. For example, during his visit to Şemdinli in Hakkari province of southeastern Turkey on November 21, 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan delivered a speech bringing a new identity perception as "sub versus supra identity". He said:

"Turk will say 'I am Turk', Kurd will say 'I am Kurd', Laz 'I am Laz' and Bosnian 'I am Bosnian'. However, there is one supra identity, which binds all of us together and this bond is the citizenship of the Republic of Turkey" (Quoted in Hürriyet, 2005b).

This changing official discourse provided space for the different ethnic groups in the country. The AKP discourses dealing with sub and supra identity were criticized by the major opposition parties backed by the military elites as attempts to divide the country on ethnic lines. An important example is the statement of MHP Leader Devlet Bahçeli reflecting the pro-military arguments of that time. Bahçeli regarded Erdoğan's discourses as "repeating the sub and supra identity 'bullshit'" (Takvim, 2005). According to Bahçeli, "if Turkey was a Mosaic, the name of it would be 'Mosaicistan'. It is called Turkey because it was derived from the Turkish nation" (Ibid). Similar arguments were also seen in the Kemalist groups as well as in CHP, all being in the pro-military camp. Hasan Cemal contributed to the discussion in his column in the newspaper *Milliyet* by defending AKP's position, giving examples from European democracies, including France, England and the Netherlands, that had discussions about new identity models. He warned social and political actors not to label each other as "committing treason" since this was not seen in the examples of those countries (Cemal, 2005). Cemal's arguments show that he wanted to remind the actors of their duties, since these discussions make the system better by revising the already constructed identity models to make living with different identities under the umbrella of the same nation possible (Ibid). Thus, Cemal contributed to widening the ideological discourse of the pro-transformation historical bloc through the new hegemonic perspective of the AKP government.

From the hegemonic perspective of the AKP government, nationhood would accept different ethnic groups centered around the Islamic brotherhood, which was expected to bring constitutional patriotism (*verfassungspatriotismus*)<sup>69</sup> for the AKP's desired new Turkey. This perspective of the AKP's also reflected the party's major aim of positioning the Kurdish political movement to go beyond the ethnic nationalist policies. As was broadly explained in chapter 3, major reforms took place in the 2000s within this new identity perspective to provide ethnicity-based cultural improvements, such as the use of Kurdish language in education, with the government's directives to YÖK to open Kurdish Institutes in public universities and the establishment of private Kurdish courses, and the access to radio and TV broadcasting in people's ethnic languages including Kurdish that was implemented by state and private Kurdish TV channels following the EU's demand.

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<sup>69</sup> The term constitutional patriotism was conceptualized by Dolf Sternberger in the 1970s and majorly associated with Jürgen Habermas because he introduced the concept to the international political arena in the 1990s with his arguments for the new European citizenship perspective under the European integration process. The term refers to people forming a political attachment to liberal democratic constitution through their loyalty to liberal values and norms instead of binding to an ethnic nationality conception. For further information about the term and its discussion see: Müller, 2008: 72–95; Habermas, 1992b; Sternberger, 1990.

Indeed, by being in an influential position with his second republic concept as the leading ideological base of the pro-transformation historical bloc of the 2000s, Mehmet Altan was contributing the Kurdish integration into the public sphere in the 2000s. In his columns in the mainstream newspapers, Altan propagated the reformist mentality in Turkey with the AKP's following the EU way. In his column in newspaper *Sabah* in 2005, Altan calls the existing situation in Turkey a "democratization push with the EU process" by bringing this "transformation politics" of AKP to the forefront as a major "success" (Altan, 2005). In this regard, Altan refers to pro-transformation groups as positioning themselves for the good of the society and to the other side—"PKK and politicians around it", namely the Kurdish political movement and "some groups within the Turkish state", namely the pro-military groups—as "seeking their own interests" as well as their "own political interests" (Ibid). Thus, in Altan's conception the solution to the Kurdish problem involves following the EU's way by being in the pro-transformation camp, since the other side wished for the "blocking the solution of the Kurdish problem" (Ibid). So, through these discourses, Altan contributed to legitimizing the AKP's way of dealing with the solution to the Kurdish problem. Altan's position was an important support for the AKP's major reform processes to bring an end to Turkey's Kurdish problem, especially during their second term, when the hegemonic situation of the military started to be removed from the civilian political arena.

### ***Solution Process as an Intellectual Ground for Solution of the Kurdish Problem***

As argued, the intellectual sphere was the carrier of Kurdish problem's solution debate by constantly bringing to the agenda and trying to find a solution to this historical problem by influencing the social and political sphere. Consequently, the Solution Process or Peace Process started in 2009 with the MIT-PKK talks in Oslo, Norway (NTV, 2011c). Having a Solution Process under a government whose core was the MGH—one of the pro-Islamic movements in Turkey—influenced their approach to the issue, not only by going beyond the ethnic understanding, but also due to the democratic ideals that arose within these movements because of their exclusion from the public sphere throughout the 1990s and brought empathy with the other excluded social groups in the Kemalist republic.

Moreover, this position of AKP concerning the solution of the Kurdish problem was supported by the intellectual sphere coming from the same social background. In particular, during the first year of the Solution Process, as a pluralist public intellectual coming from an

Islamic background, Koru focused on the Kurdish problem in his column at the conservative newspaper *Yeni Şafak*, saying it was the result of “armed struggle” by the state and that its economic effects on the state budget would eventually affect also the whole society of Turkey (Koru, 2009). Koru links the Kurdish problem with the economic matters because of the state’s expenditure of “over 100 billion dollars” on fighting against the PKK, which also “cost 40000 people their lives” (Ibid). This column and many others were Koru’s explicit contribution to the debate on the ‘mutual benefits’ of the solution to the problem, which was a popular discourse during the Solution Process, identifying it as a win-win situation. In supporting the Solution Process, Koru’s arguments paralleled the AKP government’s discourses, since as an important example that reflected the government’s approach to the solution to the problem, Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Çiçek on the TV program “Youth View (Genç Bakış)”<sup>70</sup> on Kanal D on November 21, 2007 had expressed the economic side of the fight with the PKK, mentioning that 300 billion dollars was the loss to the Turkish economy from fighting the PKK (Güçlü, 2007). As seen from this example, from government to media as well as the civil society the previously evolved discourses in the public sphere were based on the economic effects of the PKK insurgency and the need for a solution to the problem for mutual benefit.

Moreover, in the starting period of the Solution Process, approaches to the Kurdish problem started to evolve from the security dimension to the human dimension that included also, as argued, a mutual benefit perspective. In this context, Mehmet Altan’s book *Humanizing the Kurdish Problem (Kürt Sorununu İnsanileştirmek)* (2008) contributed to the idea of looking at the issue from human dimension with an aim to change the public perception of the Kurdish problem, since in his book he presents the idea that the Kurdish problem is overly politicized and the solution requires humanizing it. Altan’s expressions in the book reveal a way of solution in the minds of the people through “bringing the wisdom forward” rather than the bargains of the political elites (See Altan, 2008b: 37-41). In this context, as proposed also in Altan’s second republic concept, humanizing the Kurdish problem referred to legalizing the solutions on an institutional basis in cohesion with the reform process of the Kurdish problem, which was expected to gradually change the state structure toward freedom for social differences. Altan’s book offers the idea that the real purpose of politics should be to make the

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<sup>70</sup> The Youth View was a periodical TV discussion program that visited universities around Turkey, giving students the opportunity to express their views and ask questions to the politicians who were guests on the program. When Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Çiçek was a guest on the program on November 21, 2007, it was at Bozok University in one of the less-developed central Anatolian cities, Yozgat.

people happy and provide a better life for them. In this context, the solution to the problem meant for Altan “a better life for society” (Ibid: 167). In particular, by opening a way for the Solution Process, Altan’s book contributed to legitimizing the discussions and practices over the human dimension of the problem.

Altan’s book was regarded as an important contribution in the media to the Solution Process. In 2012 on the local TV channel *Güneş TV* in Malatya in southeastern Turkey, the columnist Ferman Salmış called Altan’s idea of humanizing the Kurdish Problem a “needed thing” for continuing the process in a peaceful environment (Salmış, 2012). This shows that the influence capacity of his concept was not only in the mainstream media, but also in the local press. Altan’s contribution to the debate was a reflection of what Jürgen Habermas calls the authority of the debate based on better arguments within the society (Habermas, 1991: 36). This could be applied also to the process of molding the public opinion in the modern societies. Importantly, in line with Altan’s concept of humanizing the Kurdish problem, the popular discourses in the public sphere during the Solution Process were “let the mothers not cry” and “let children not die” (TRT Haber, 2015).

Altan’s humanizing the Kurdish problem stays in the line of “questioning the way of the governance” in Turkey rather than “who will govern it” (M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015). As he was one of the most important supporters of a reform process for Kurdish liberalization, he was not being backward in criticizing the pro-Kurdish BDP. An important example of this was in 2010: was Altan’s debate over Zerdan Brook in Mardin<sup>71</sup>, which was used as a sewage collection area by the local government under the pro-Kurdish BDP. BDP criticized Altan and some other liberal intellectuals for supporting the AKP government’s propaganda for the Constitutional Amendment Referendum in 2010. Altan’s counter-argument was that he supports whoever is “acting in accordance with his principles”, which meant that Altan and the AKP were together at the ideological level. He accused the BDP of “suppressing” the Kurds since the local municipality was not taking action to protect the public health and the natural beauty of the region (Oguz, 2010). Thus, Altan’s discourses on humanizing the problem aimed at questioning politicians and creating a humanist mentality for the solution of the problem that was mainly seen in the social level.

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<sup>71</sup> Zerdan Brook is located in southeastern Turkey in Mardin-Kızıltepe. Altan’s attention to this brook comes from the fact that it has been used as sewage collection area and has been a threat to the public health and the natural beauty of the region. Instead of political fights, Altan called on the politicians to follow a humanist perspective and deal with the real problems of the people including a peaceful solution to the problems of the region (See M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015).

Following the human dimension of the Kurdish problem, during the Solution Process Altan also came into conflict with AKP for not clearing the Roboski Airstrike<sup>72</sup> on the Kurdish smugglers in 2011. Altan called the government *perpetrator* of the airstrike in his columns. Mehmet Altan was continuous referencing to the Roboski Airstrike in his columns and his demand was that the perpetrators be removed from the government. According to Deputy Director of International Strategic Research Organization, Mehmet Tıraş, the main reason that the Roboski Massacre was on the public agenda was that Altan argued about it on TV and in his columns (Tıraş, 2013). Altan was still bringing the social effect of the Roboski Massacre into his column in Gazete 360 on December 30, 2013, two years after it occurred, identifying the lack of fixation of official responsibility for this massacre as a sign of the state's protection of the perpetrators (Altan, 2013). By linking the human dimension of the massacre, Altan expressed the pain of the local people in his column because of the "shattered lives of their children with the smell of diesel" (Ibid). Altan's arguments show that he was bringing up the problematic issues during the Solution Process to influence the government to deal with the human dimension of the problem. Altan's critical positioning against the AKP government after 2011 with the Roboski Airstrike is also related to the beginning of the dissolution of the historical bloc in the Gramscian conception. As mentioned in the previous sub-sections, in the post-2010s the party was regarded as having moved away from the ideological position of its establishment, which were liberalism, pluralism and democratization.

Hasan Cemal's contribution to the Solution Process was in the same direction as Altan's. The Solution Process was an inspiration for Cemal's other three books: *Be One with Peace (Barışa Emanet Olun)* (2011), *Delila: A Young Woman Guerilla's Mountain Diaries (Delila: Bir Genç Kadın Gerillanın Dağ Günlükleri)* (2014) and *Kurdistan Diaries during the Solution Process (Çözüm Sürecinde Kürdistan Günlükleri)* (2014). In *Be One with Peace*, written during an important phase of the Solution Process, Cemal presents the idea of the requirement for dialogue under the "Qandil, Imralı and Ankara triangle"<sup>73</sup> that meant including all the parts of the problem on the solution table (Cemal, 2011). For Cemal, the conditions for peace ripened and each side of the fight is aware of this (Ibid). The book claims that Kurdish Problem and the PKK are inseparable. The book's message is that without solving the PKK

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<sup>72</sup> Roboski Airstrike was an airstrike by the Turkish Armed Forces in Uludere, Şırnak province in December 28, 2011 that killed 34 villagers who had been involved in regular smuggling in the area. The military declared that the warplanes had targeted the group based on intelligence that a group of armed terrorists would be heading toward the Turkish border to stage attacks on the military. However, later the situation became clear and they were identified as civilian smugglers (Arsu, 2011).

<sup>73</sup> Cemal refers with Qandil to the PKK militants who stay in Qandil Mountain in northern Iraq and with Imralı to imprisoned PKK leader Öcalan, who is in prison on Imralı Island.

problem, the the Kurdish problem would not be solved. Thus Cemal invites the government to see the PKK reality before the Kurdish reality (Ibid: 241). Whereas, from the inception of the Peace Process, the government had aimed to solve the Kurdish problem by dismissing the PKK militants and directly undertaking social and cultural reforms, Cemal shows that the best way to continue the process is to bring each part of the conflict to the table (Ibid:231–249).

Cemal, as an organic intellectual, by supporting the PKK's involvement in the solution aimed to legitimize in the minds of people and increase the public support for the PKK's part in the Solution Process. In his book he presented including all parts of the conflict on the solution table as the best way to achieve peace. The publication of Cemal's book led to major debates from different perspectives. On one hand, columnist Ruşen Çakır (2011) from the newspaper *Vatan* complimented Cemal for bringing the "PKK reality" to the public agenda and highlighted Cemal's role in people's being in present situation "to believe in making the peace come with dialogue". On the other hand, Ihsan Bal (2011) from *HaberTürk* criticized Cemal for not bringing the "pressure of PKK" to democracy and invited Cemal to criticize the PKK also, not only the state. This shows Cemal's influential contribution to legitimizing the PKK's presence at the negotiation table during the Solution Process, which has also been an important contribution to the process of Turkeyification of the Kurdish movement.

As will be broadly explained in the third section of this chapter, right before the Gezi Protests, the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc collapsed with the dissolution of the intellectual bloc, and Cemal, like many other pluralist public intellectuals started to engage in a newly emerged counter-hegemonic sphere against the AKP politics. Even so, Cemal continued his contribution to the Solution Process by focusing on the issue of the Kurdish movement as the core of the newly emerging historical bloc in the post-Gezi protests. In this sense, to legitimize the PKK and Kurdish movement and keep them at the negotiation table, Cemal published *Delila: A Young Woman Guerilla's Mountain Diaries* in 2014, the life story of the young female PKK militant Şenay Güçer. Against the general perception of PKK militants in the Turkish public arena as *terrorists*, Cemal chose to portray them as *humans* with emotions. In Cemal's words, he wrote the story of a "17-year-old girl who went to the mountain, namely the 'guerrilla camps', with a joy of life" (Quoted in Özcan, 2014). According to Cemal, telling her story would make the Kurdish problem clearly understood, and that's why he just gave her story without many comments (Ibid). Cemal wanted to make the readers focus on the human dimension of the problem by basing his account on Delila's

notes, which he quotes. In the various pages of the book, these notes present Delila's thoughts that she had written in the mountain, such as that "my hair's dancing in the wind gives me a terrific enthusiasm", "abnormality is my character, as the Piling friend already told me I would not be liked if I was not abnormal", "daffodils should be in mind, a kind of beautiful flowers, smelling gives life to the spirit", "I do not cry in front of my comrades. This is principle... I want to cry sobbingly and through blowing my nose. My body will come into flower in this land", "I am sending you and all the people a kiss with a laugh coming from my inside. Life is beautiful" and "I am a singing guerrilla" (Cemal, 2014a: 86, 94, 102, 113). As seen from the expressions of young Delila and Cemal's including these notes in his book as her story, the book aimed to dwell on the human dimension of the Kurdish problem, which would also get great attention from the Turkish side of the public and make them focus on the desired solution. Thus, Cemal's book appeared in the discussions in the mainstream media as it was regarded as an important contribution to the Solution Process.<sup>74</sup>

Cemal also published *Kurdistan Diaries during the Solution Process* in 2014, as diaries presenting the withdrawal of PKK militants from the Turkish territory. As mentioned in chapter 3, PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan had sent messages during the 2013 Newroz celebration demanding the withdrawal of the armed PKK groups from Turkey. Cemal's book included the diaries of the first two groups of the armed PKK militants to withdraw, all together approximately 45 people. Cemal met these people on the way and spoke to them, taking notes in his diary. By presenting the arguments of the PKK militants and of the leading actors in his book, Cemal aimed to show what they expected from the Solution Process, which also gave ideas about what would be done within the process. He conveys the PKK militants' emotionally strong ties to their imprisoned leader Öcalan by referring to their discourses, such as "we are not happy with this withdrawal process, but we are moving because we trust our leader" (Cemal, 2014b). Cemal also presented the personal interview he had conducted with the PKK leader of the Qandil group in 2009, Murat Karayılan. The book had a function of presenting Karayılan's arguments for the Qandil's preconditions for the success of the Solution Process. So while Cemal was presenting the militants' strong ties to Öcalan, he was also disclosing their expectations about creating institutional solutions with the recognition of the PKK. With his book, Cemal brought the

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<sup>74</sup> For some examples of the discussions about the book in the media see: Halis, 2014; Hürriyet, 2014b; T24, 2014.



ideas of the PKK militants into the public discussions, and as an important contribution to the Solution Process his discourses gave the message to the public to have empathy with them.

Prominent columnist Cengiz Çandar (2014) devoted a column at newspaper *Radikal* to Cemal's book, calling it "an important milestone of Kurdish story" and Cemal "the author of Kurds". Cemal's book was also followed in the local media discussions. Thus, the function of his book was said to be a reflection of "how the Solution Process was perceived on the PKK side" by columnist Yusuf Tosun (2014) from Jethaber, a local online news page operating in the city of Adıyaman in southeastern Turkey. These media discussions, as well as many others that spread Cemal's ideas, show the contribution of his books for molding public opinion over legitimizing the PKK at the negotiation table during the Solution Process.

In parallel with the works of the intellectuals popularizing the human dimension of the Kurdish problem during the Solution Process, the civil society started to deal with the human dimension of the problem as well. Look at the Peace Campaign (Barış'a Bak Kampanyası), which started in 2014 and was led by activist Cengiz Alğan, is an important example of following the human dimension of the process. It has also been a major example of the NGOs' and activists' support for a process related to the whole society. Alğan mentions in his interview that "we gave a start for Look at the Peace Campaign. The Peace Train was an important event of this campaign. We saw a great support for peace in society. We were warmly welcomed everywhere except for the attacks of small nationalist groups in two cities. Hanging the evil eyes on our jackets, serving desserts on trays, people coming to take pictures with us... We felt the support of the society behind us" (C. Alğan, Personal Interview, April 1, 2015). As seen from Alğan's experiences, the human dimension of the Kurdish problem was also shared within the civil society in parallel with the intellectual sphere. This provided an arena for the major reform process to continue making the Kurdish identity and culture a part of the public sphere. Thus, Look at the Peace Campaign is an important example in which different individuals from many sectors met on the same idea and interacted with the people in different parts of the country.

The government also formed the Wise People Commission in 2013, comprising artists, journalists, academics, NGOs activists and intellectuals. The commission was formed to expand this pro-solution idea to the people by organizing trips, conferences in different cities throughout Anatolia (Akşam, 2013). The influential journalist, Fehmi Kuru, whose ideas for the solution of the problem referred to the economic benefits to society, was nominated to the

commission, responsible for the Aegean Region of Turkey. At the end of these visits, the members of the commission presented a report to the government of their views of the public expectation from the Solution Process and their contributions for expanding these pro-solution ideas to the public. Although the commission had no power to apply any issue related to the Solution Process, it had the symbolic function of attracting public attention to the process by bringing famous people to the scene as supporters of the process. Fehmi Kuru contributed to legitimizing the Solution Process in the eye of the public by being a member of this Wise People Commission. Thus, Kuru's nomination by the government as a member of this commission also shows his influence in the public.

Looking at the issue from within the Kurdish movement shows that, as mentioned in chapter 3, the Kurdish social and political movements had developed in the struggle against the monocultural structure of the state. So, in the first years of the Solution Process, the Labour, Democracy and Freedom Bloc was established in support of the Kurdish political movement under a new party, BDP. One of the sample pluralist public intellectuals for this dissertation was involved in this group: Sırrı Süreyya Önder,<sup>75</sup> who had been elected as an independent MP in the 2011 general elections. Later, he joined the pro-Kurdish BDP and by constructing anti-racist discourses, based on his overall *resistance* concept within the parliament, extended his area of influence. In this context, while his discourses mostly stayed in line with the demands of the Kurdish social and political movements, as an organic intellectual, he positioned himself to be influential for the public involvement in the Solution Process.

In 2012, Önder became a part of the peace talks that were going on between the government and the PKK. While Turkish intelligence officials were visiting and discussing the situation with Öcalan, Öcalan was giving directives to the BDP members, including Önder, who visited him regularly. Önder's perception of the Kurdish problem played an important role in these actions. According to him, the Kurdish issue was for many years perceived as a mere matter of identity, but the Kurds have built their "own revolutionary culture" and "PKK guerrillas in the same way" (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013), and therefore the PKK was a counter-hegemonic sphere. In Önder's view, empowering the PKK and the Kurdish movement was equal to overthrowing the Kemalist hegemony.

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<sup>75</sup> As a younger intellectual compared to the other intellectuals mentioned in this section, Sırrı Süreyya Önder is the newly popularized intellectual, the product of pro-transformation anti-system debates in the post-1980s. The typical example of his emerging in the environment of the pro-transformation historical bloc of the 2000s is his 2006 film *the International (Beynelmilel)*, in which the effect of 1980 Military Coup on the local musicians was filmed as a comedy-drama film in the critical way. Later, he became active in the Kurdish political movement and an influential face of the Solution Process.

As a contribution to this transformation with the aim of making the Kurdish movement a part of the public sphere, Önder had a function during the peace talks of relaying Öcalan's messages to the public in Turkish. Önder's connection to Öcalan and this function of his increased Önder's popularity not only within the Kurdish movement, but also among the supporters of the peace talks. So, each year on March 21<sup>st</sup> Öcalan's letter to the public from the 2013 Newroz celebration was read both in Kurdish and Turkish in Diyarbakır. Önder read the Turkish version of the letter, which included messages of peace to improve the Solution Process. Öcalan's letters were also compatible with Önder's ideas, for example in Öcalan's 2013 letter he said that "we are making the transition from armed struggle to political struggle. The bloodshed of Turkish people and the Kurdish people will stop. The politics will handle, not the gun" (Quoted in Aljazeera, 2013a). Thus, through his involvement in the Solution Process, Önder's positioning also entails opening an arena for democratic politics. As an important example, he mentioned during his talk at the Political Academy training of BDP in November 2013 in Istanbul that "Peace will be achieved by removing obstacles in front of democratic politics" (Quoted in Radikal, 2013c). In parallel with Öcalan's peace call, Önder's discourse reveals his desire for a transition from armed struggle to political struggle for the Kurdish movement. While Önder was giving Öcalan's messages to the public, he was also giving his own messages, which he frequently shared in the later discussions.

In 2013, Öcalan sent a letter to the PKK militants in the Qandil Mountains of northern Iraq asking them to support the Solution Process. MPs Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder from pro-Kurdish BDP went on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to Qandil to get their answer to bring it to Öcalan. This mediator role of Önder's furthered his aim of achieving peace based on his stance. Furthermore, Önder's humor in this process and his locating himself at the heart of the process created a positive image of the Solution Process. With his constant involvement in the process, as in the Gramscian conception, Önder also aimed to direct the Kurdish political movement to his desired way of transformation: to make them a part of the public sphere with the development of the pro-transformation left historical bloc with the spirit of the Gezi Protests, which will be explained comprehensively in the third section of this chapter. With the emerging positive image of the Solution Process as maturing toward peace, public support of the Solution Process increased in 2014, as shown in a 2014 survey by Political and Social Research Center (Siyasal ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Merkezi – SAMER) titled "Solution Process,

Kobane and Attitudes toward the ISIS Terror” according to which 84.7% of people in Turkey supported the Solution Process (Kaplan, 2014).<sup>76</sup>

Önder also dealt with the Kurdish National Congress that was planned to take place in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq as proposed by Öcalan. By bringing Öcalan’s offer to KRG, along with Leyla Zana, Önder contributed to the emergence of the idea of a Kurdish National Congress in which the Kurdish people from all over the world would come to the Kurdistan region to discuss a common future of the Kurds (Şenay, 2014). Önder also became a part of the group to bring Öcalan’s Peace and Democratic Solution Draft to Qandil. Öcalan’s first draft of the Solution Process was not officially shared, but Önder explained details of the draft, including the establishment of the commissions and their working principles (Aljazeera, 2014). In this context, Önder contributed to the development of the process over time. Moreover, in evaluating the process, Öcalan prepared a call for disarming the Kurdish militants in Qandil. In the meeting of government representatives, including Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan and the HDP Committee, in Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul on February 28, 2015, Önder read Öcalan’s message to Qandil on “assembling the congress for discussing the disarmament” and also ten principles to follow that were agreed with the government (Karakaş, 2015). While these statements showed both sides’ dedication to the Solution Process, a positive image of the Kurdish movement and a will to speed the Solution Process strengthened in the western part of Turkey. As such, Önder’s argument after the Dolmabahçe meeting—“we are closer than ever to achieving peace in Turkey” (Quoted in Dombey, 2015)—contributed to empowering this positive wave in process that has also contributed to the socially constructed Kurdish political movement HDP’s becoming the third major party in the general elections on June 7, 2015. Consequently, not only the Kurdish political movement, but also the Kurdish language and culture’s becoming part of the overall public sphere was realized in this reform process. In the third section of this chapter, this process of Turkeyification of the Kurdish movement under HDP as the political society of pro-transformation left historical bloc will be comprehensively explained by presenting the function of the intellectuals within it.

In sum, one of the important transformations in the post-1980s was the Turkeyification of the Kurdish movement. Although in the 1980s and 1990s, the pluralist intellectual discourses were based on confronting the military problem, regarded as the basis of the major social and

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<sup>76</sup> SAMER’s research was conducted between 25–28 October, 2014 in the 22 major cities of Turkey with 3380 randomly chosen people.

political problems of Turkey, the empowerment of the PKK's armed attacks in the 1990s did not allow this confrontation. Thus, one position in the 2000s was the solution of the Kurdish problem. MGH's perception that the Kurdish problem fell under the Islamic brotherhood umbrella was one of the most important reasons for the development of pro-transformation historical bloc reforms under the hegemonic position of AKP, the core of which is the reformist wing of the movement. Within this historical bloc, pluralist public intellectuals positioned themselves for the solution of the Kurdish problem with the aim of including the Kurdish movement into the overall public sphere through recognition of their identity and culture. In particular, the government-backed Solution Process that started in 2009 for the solution of the Kurdish problem was an important issue for these intellectuals. Fehmi Koru's contribution to the debate in his columns of the mutual benefit of the solution of the Kurdish problem, Mehmet Altan and Hasan Cemal's arguments to see the issue from the human dimension and Sirri Süreyya Önder's direct involvement in the peace talks were important ways in which they shared their pro-transformation discourses; the positive image created with these discourses proves their contribution to the process. So, with this socially constructed process, the transformations to improve the social and cultural rights of the Kurds were undertaken, including, for example, the freedom to use the Kurdish language in public communication and services, using the Kurdish language during election campaigns and restoring the original names of Kurdish villages, cities and provinces, which had been increasingly Turkified from the Kemalist one-party era onwards. This is the pluralization of the public sphere achieved by exceeding the limits of the Kemalist ethnocracy that brought the Kurdish political movement into the public sphere with the HDP in the June 2015 general elections. This development is related to the structural change in the state institutions in the democratization process, most importantly, the Constitutional Change in 2010, supported by the intellectuals, civil society and other pro-transformation actors, that clipped the military's and judiciary's powers and increased the hegemonic position of the civilian political actors. In this context, the next sub-section will analyze pluralist public intellectuals' support of this transition in 2010 and their contribution to the construction of the AKP's hegemonic position over the state institutions, which opened the way for civilian social movements in the post-2010 era.

#### **5.2.4. Constitutional Amendment Package: “Yes, But not Enough”**

As was argued in the foregoing, major reforms were undertaken concerning civil–military relations and the civilianization of political life under the AKP governments, as the political society of the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc in the 2000s. In this regard, the Constitutional Amendment Referendum in 2010 was an important event for the civilianization of the state. This concept of civilianization, which was also an important agenda item for the pluralist public intellectuals, existed within the constitutional amendment package. It is important to mention that not all pluralist public intellectuals supported this amendment with yes votes, but they supported the basic idea behind it, since the amendment was proposing an official confrontation with the September 12 regime. The ultimate aim of the constitutional amendment package was to consign the September 12 regime to history, which would be a major factor in creating a more democratic and pluralist environment in the sociopolitical arena. In this sub-section, the pluralist public intellectuals’ support during the referendum process with the popular “yes, but not enough” discourse, stating acceptance of changes in the Constitutional Amendment Package and demanding more, will be analyzed through Mehmet Altan, Hasan Cemal and Fehmi Kuru’s work. These were the most visible sample intellectuals constructing influential discourses supporting the Yes votes in their position as legitimating actors of the liberal-right historical bloc in the 2000s.

As previously mentioned, the major aim of the pluralist public intellectuals was to have a civilian constitution and the reason for their support of the AKP during the constitutional amendment referendum was to realize this civilianization of Turkish polity. On this point, the priorities of the AKP and the pluralist public intellectuals during this period merged to civilian supremacy. As a matter of fact, AKP government’s interest in this new civilian constitution came from its early reformist past. Major attempts had been taken in 2007: a group of experts under Ergun Özbudun, appointed to work out the new civilian constitution, came up with a proposal for the first draft (Bianet, 2007b). Although this first draft was dismissed by the AKP, this constitutional amendment of the 2010 referendum was seen in the intellectual sphere as a chance to achieve civilianization. The referendum was supported by mentioned pluralist public intellectuals as a step toward the “Second Republic” or the “New Turkey”. The basic understanding was that the government was on the way to eliminating the power of the military with the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases and the downgrading of the April 29 Memorandum attempt in 2007, and so the constitutional referendum would be the end point for military tutelage in Turkey. Hence, the package mostly targeted the military tutelage

with the aim of removing the supremacy of the military over the civilian arena. The constitutional amendment referendum in 2010 could be regarded as the pluralist public intellectuals' relationship with the political power being a search for the desired transformation. So, their willingness to participate in the media discussions and bring up the issue in their columns provides this understanding of search for power.

It should be noted again that during the referendum period not all sample pluralist public intellectuals were supportive of the referendum. Thus, not all seven sample pluralist public intellectuals belonged to the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc of the AKP. Pluralist public intellectuals, which were the organic intellectuals of the pro-transformation camp until this referendum process, saw this process as a chance for achieving democracy and pluralism and therefore supported the referendum. As such, during the referendum period, Hasan Cemal was writing a column in one of the mainstream newspapers, *Milliyet*, and his columns were also published through the web page of the newspaper as well as other related web pages. Fehmi Kuru was visible in the pro-AKP media since he wrote in the newspaper *Yeni Şafak* and also appeared regularly on the news as well as political discussion programs of *Kanal 7*. Mehmet Altan was Editor-in-Chief of a mainstream newspaper—*Daily Star*—and directed a political discussion program at *Mehtap TV* of the Gülen Organization. Thus, the pluralist public intellectuals and the media, especially the pro-Islamic media groups, were collaborating on expanding their ideas to the public.

Indeed, the constitutional amendment package also included individual freedoms, economic and social rights; however, most discussions by the pluralist public intellectuals focused on the redesigning of military courts and organizational structure of the Constitutional Court and High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu – HSYK), since the changes in these organizations represented the change of the regime tutelage. As an example, the major focus went to the change in the article 125 of the 1982 Constitution. The statement that “the decisions of the Supreme Military Council are outside the scope of judicial review” was revised in the proposal to add the following words “nonetheless, recourse to judicial review shall be available against all decisions taken by the Supreme Military Council regarding expulsion from the Armed Forces” (T.C. Başbakanlık AB Genel Sekreterliği, 2010: 16). For eliminating the role of the military in the civilian arena, the following was added in the amendment to article 145 “cases regarding crimes against the security of the state, constitutional order and its functioning shall be heard before the civil courts in any event. Non-military personnel shall not be tried in military courts, except war time” (Ibid: 21).

Changes were also proposed for the organization of both the Constitutional Court and the HSYK. As regards the organization of Constitutional Court, the numbers would increase from 11 regular and 4 substitute members, to only 17 regular members, thereby giving more appointing rights to the TBMM (3 members) and the President (14). Furthermore, a way was opened for individual application to the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Council was given the authority to try the Chief of General Staff, military force commanders and the parliamentary speaker in the event of abuse of power (Hürriyet Daily News, 2010a). Moreover, concerning the changes in HSYK, the number of the members increased to 22, with 10 of them being substitute members. The President would select 4 members and the remainder would come from Court of Cassation, the Council of State, the Justice Academy, regular and administrative judges and public prosecutors of the first degree (Ibid). As for the constitutional amendment package, the scope of the amendment package stayed on the line of giving more power to the civilian authorities, namely the AKP government of that time, by removing the power of the military and other Kemalist elites from state institutions.

Here, it could be argued that the pluralist public intellectuals' support of the democratization steps taken by the AKP was because they saw the AKP in a leadership position in the transformation process. The AKP represented the periphery and had the most power to shake the core since this transformation also required a power share from core to periphery by bringing ordinary people into the public sphere. So, this transformation led by the AKP was regarded as a crucial step for the establishment of the 'New Turkey', since the opposition groups as well as the old bureaucracy would lead Turkey back to the 'Old Turkey' again. Even though a lot of researchers regarded the AKP, since its success in the 2007 elections, as having a tendency to turn into an authoritarian power, these pluralist public intellectuals saw their presence within it as a control mechanism to keep the party from engaging the existing military-dominated status quo. However, the referendum process was regarded by some scholars as a tool to increase AKP's hegemony over the social and political arena; Ismet Akça (2010: 11), for example, stated that the 2010 referendum turned into an AKP plebiscite.

This issue of the 2010 referendum as a political competition between the AKP government and the other 'oppositions' was seen in Mehmet Altan's columns. Like other pluralist public intellectuals, Altan regarded the opposition as comprising not only the opposition political parties, but also the senior bureaucracy of the state. In his column in *Star* on July 9, 2010, titled "Less Law, More Politics...", Altan argues that the referendum would be "almost a test for the government and the opposition" (Altan, 2010c). In Altan's conception the referendum



would strengthen the winner's side of the competition. Altan clarifies that he is with the "Yes, but not enough" supporters since he saw the source of this discourse as "so right and accurate" (Ibid). Hence, Altan shares his wishes that this constitutional change package would "open the door to a real change that is democratization of the regime" (Ibid). Altan also shares his expectations from the ruling power for "destroying the September 12 regime", which would lead the country toward "a free regime fulfilling the EU standards" (Ibid).

During that time AKP was seen by the sample intellectuals as representing the periphery and the aim of this referendum was to remove the elite supremacy of the military and the judiciary. In this regard, these pluralist public intellectuals would be expected to offer some directional motivation, since being against the constitutional amendment package was seen as being out of democracy's way. As an important example of this, in his column in the *Yeni Şafak* on July 11, 2010, titled "opposition made the heavy weather of, and how", Fehmi Kuru considered the acceptance of the constitutional amendment as changing the elite status quo. By giving examples of opposition's struggle to stop this referendum process, Kuru sheds light on the elite hegemony of Turkey over the judicial organs as he mentions that "opposition's seeing the state institutions as a natural partner stems from the fact of being as it is. The alliances that were established at a certain period of history have existed; here [Turkey] is the country in the most critical environments, when the power of the political opposition is not enough, bureaucratic opposition steps in. Each intervention from May 27 (1960) to February 28 (1997) is a result of this alliance" (Kuru, 2010). So, Kuru was suggesting that supporting the referendum process would also mean supporting the fight against the elite hegemony, because the changes in the constitution would lead to a power share.

Furthermore, Hasan Cemal as one of the most important supporters of the referendum saw it as a *chance* and contributed to this 'Yes, but not enough' discourse with his reasons. In his column in *Milliyet* on September 9, 2010 titled "Some Reasons for Yes, But not Enough" Cemal gave the comments from the EU as the popular reference point for the democratization of the country. In this regard, he summarizes the words of Director General for Enlargement at the European Commission, Michael Leigh, as "the establishment of an Ombudsman Institution... limiting the Jurisdiction of Military Courts to only military matters... the introduction of positive discrimination for women, children, elderly and disabled... granting the officials the rights for collective agreements and collective bargaining... These make the EU only happy" (Cemal, 2010b). In the same column Cemal also refers to another voice from Europe, Gianni Buquicchio, Head of the Venice Commission of the European Council, who

mentioned “If the law predominates the military, then there can be talk of democracy in that country. One of the important principles of European democracies is military’s staying under the control of civilian administrators” (Ibid). Cemal ends his article with “I also agree in general with these ideas and therefore say yes, but not enough” (Ibid). Thus, referring mostly to EU functionaries and giving their examples, Cemal portrayed the referendum as a chance for Turkey to reach the level of the EU countries in terms of the democracy and pluralism in the sociopolitical arena.

As seen from the sample pluralist public intellectuals’ discourses, these supportive pluralist public intellectuals were seeing the referendum as a step toward a civilian constitution. Their discourses show that they were aware of the increasing polarization in the country and thought that the new civilian constitution would be a new social contract for the people, which would be free from the hegemonic position of the military. As mentioned before, getting free from the hegemonic position of the military was regarded by these intellectuals as an important step to be achieved through this civilianization process. Furthermore, during this period a socially constructed desire to form a new civilian constitution was widely expressed and also in the agenda of the wider intellectual sphere. As an example, in March 2010, more than 200 academicians, journalists, authors, trade unionists and activists from women’s rights organizations and other NGOs signed a declaration of their belief of Turkey’s “need of a new constitution” and also expressed their desire for the continuation of the process “within a dialogue and reconciliation environment” together with all the political parties, universities and NGOs (Milliyet, 2010). These were calls for a greater coalition toward the new civilian constitution; this was the basis of the support for this constitutional amendment package in 2010. The mobilization of the people toward this idea was reflected in its outcome: the referendum was passed with an absolute majority: 57.88% of votes in favor and 42.12% of votes against. Consequently, it is possible to argue that the positive environment coming from the intellectual discourses, media and civil society brought this greater social support for the constitutional amendment. This greater support also opened an arena for the AKP to construct the “New Turkey” in a polarized sociopolitical environment.

In sum, pluralist public intellectuals’ support of the Constitutional Amendment Referendum was related to their perspectives on democratization and civilianization, in which civil society would have a major position within the power share. The sample pluralist public intellectuals Fehmi Kuru, Hasan Cemal and Mehmet Altan were the major supporters of this referendum, actively dealing with this process in their columns, since they belonged to the historical bloc

of the AKP in 2000s, which had already formed its hegemonic position. However, their support for the referendum was not only due to their being organic to this historical bloc, but was also a rational position in accordance with their liberal stance. This was related to their positioning in the intellectual bloc that was motivated toward a possible transformation from the military's oppressive hegemony. Their support was for the possible transformation for further democratization of the country since they popularized the conception that being in a non-supportive position would mean being content with the 'old Turkey'. Thus, through their influential discourses as well as their supportive positioning during the Constitutional Amendment Referendum period, pluralist public intellectuals contributed to institutionalization of the civilianization process in Turkey. The result of the referendum, a majority of YES votes, was gratifying for the supporters, since many discussions going on suggested that the results would open a way toward a 'new Turkey' or a 'second republic'.

Overall, this section presented a selective historical narrative of the function of pluralist public intellectuals within the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc of the AKP and of their contribution to major developments concerning solutions for important problems in the country. This section sought to test the third hypothesis of the dissertation, that: *Pluralist public intellectuals, as the organic intellectuals of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of AKP in the 2000s, brought the country's social problems onto the agenda with the aims of creating social consent for the EU-backed social and political transformation processes and motivating the government to undertake further reforms.* Accordingly, this section has sought to demonstrate how the AKP's engagement with the EU based on the support of the pro-transformation social groups created the way for major reform process accompanied by the pluralist public intellectuals' organic intellectual role for legitimizing this reform process and AKP's forming its hegemonic position in the 2000s.

In this respect, section 2 demonstrated that the pluralist public intellectuals contributed to restoring AKP's hegemonic position over the military with an ongoing reform process from the 2000s, which concluded in the ongoing antagonism between the AKP government and the military. Within the new political grammar of AKP's reformist discourse, which has developed in parallel to anti-militarist actions, major improvements were undertaken to make Islam as well as the pro-Islamic movements a part of the public sphere and to involve Kurdish identity and culture in the public sphere; pluralist public intellectuals functioned as legitimizing actors of these socially constructed reform processes. All these transformation processes provided an arena for creating the hegemonic position of the AKP in the social and

political sphere. Especially, AKP acquired power from the military as well as the other state institutions as a result of the Constitutional Change in 2010. This amendment provided AKP with an arena for exercising hegemonic power that led the party to move away from its ideological position based on liberalism, democratization and pluralization. This brought the dissolution of the intellectual bloc under the hegemonic position of the AKP, and the historical bloc was dissolved with the Gezi protests in 2013. This provided a new arena for the emergence of the counter-hegemonic sphere that included the pluralist public intellectuals and a new pro-transformation left historical bloc by bringing the other excluded groups into the public sphere, as will be analyzed in the section below.

### **5.3. Reshaping Intellectual Conceptions in the Transforming Turkey (2010–2015)**

As stated in the previous section, the inclusion of the pro-Islamic movements, which are the major social base of the AKP, in the public sphere occurred mainly with the reforms in the 2000s. After its success in the 2010 referendum and by acquiring 49.83% of votes in the 2011 elections, AKP declared a ‘mastery period’, which was regarded by many as the party’s gradual move away from the principles of pluralism and democratic governance. This was the start of the dissolution of the intellectual bloc that was organic to the socially constructed pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc of AKP. The process has been clarified in the Gramscian conception as moving away from the founding principles, namely dissolution of the ideology of the historical bloc, opening the way for the dissolution of intellectual bloc in which pluralist public intellectuals existed.

Following on from a discussion of the dissolution of the previous liberal-right historical bloc, which had been important for bringing the excluded social groups such as pro-Islamic movements and Kurds into the public sphere, this section starts with the analysis of the development of a new counter-hegemonic sphere on the left based on the discourses of resistance against the established hegemony of the AKP. However, the main focus will be on this counter-hegemonic sphere’s bringing other excluded groups, such as the Kurdish movement, Alevis, women’s movements, LGBTs and Anti-Capitalist Muslims into the public sphere while forming a historical bloc from the Gezi Park protests period by also developing an intellectual bloc. As with the previous sections, the focus of this part is also the contributions of the pluralist public intellectuals of this bloc, with their influential discourses and actions over the emergence of the social processes that brought the pluralization of the

public sphere with the historically excluded social groups' engagement into the public sphere. Thus, the post-2010s period has been characterized by the continuation of the process by which other excluded groups such as the Kurds, women's movements, Alevis, LGBTs and Anti-Capitalist Muslims become major elements within the overall public sphere by being a part of the new pro-transformation left historical bloc following the Gezi Protests in 2013.

The first sub-section of this section will discuss Foti Benlisoy, a young pluralist public intellectual whose positioning relates to the renovation of the left to cover different ethnic, cultural, economic and social groups in Turkey by dealing with the important problems of the time. His contribution to this renovation of left, as an influential author in leftist magazines and of books that led to discussions, especially among the left, in the post-2010 era with the emergence of a revolutionary wave in some Middle Eastern countries, will be analyzed. His critique of gerontocracy in the left and demand for giving voice to the younger generations will be analyzed as another important contribution that brought him to the fore as a popular public intellectual figure during the Gezi Protests.

In the second sub-section, the contribution of three pluralist public intellectuals to the pluralization debate during the Gezi Park protests will be analyzed. The first is Sırrı Süreyya Önder, who had started to be visible at the time of the major hegemonic positioning of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc in the 2000s and later increased his popularity through his engagement with the Kurdish political movement. Thus, he later became one of the major organic intellectual figures especially during Gezi Protests, where he led the intellectuals at the start of protests by attempting to stop the heavy machinery. Also, Ihsan Eliaçık's contribution based on his anti-capitalist Islam discourse will be analyzed. He has been called the Imam of Gezi Protests because he organized the Friday prayers during the protests: this made him an organic intellectual to the counter-hegemonic sphere of the new left. Next is Foti Benlisoy, whose contribution based on his renovation of the left discourse and his critique of gerontocracy as well as his actively engaging in the protests by preparing the banners will be analyzed.

The third sub-section will analyze Ihsan Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam discourse and its contribution to the new anti-capitalist left group that emerged from the conservative Muslims and to the engagement of Islamic discourses into the left in the post-Gezi Park protests environment. The analysis will focus on the effect of the new Islamic bourgeois and the emergence of inequality among the conservative Muslims on increasing the popularity of his

ideas in the public sphere in the post-2010 era. Also, some artistic examples from Sırrı Süreyya Önder will be presented to show his contribution to this new Islamic left mentality. Then, in the fourth sub-section, the contribution of Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy to the creation of pro-transformation left historical bloc following the spirit of Gezi Protests that culminated in the establishment of the HDP will be analyzed. Also, the positions of pluralist public intellectuals of the old historical bloc, such as Hasan Cemal, Fehmi Kuru, Nilüfer Göle and Mehmet Altan, as absorbed by the new left historical bloc, along with their supportive discourses during the June 2015 general elections campaign, will be presented. In the Gramscian conception this is seen as the absorption of the intellectuals of old historical bloc into the new historical bloc by the organic intellectuals of the new historical bloc (Portelli, 1982: 106). In the next sub-sections, this process of dissolution of the intellectual bloc under the liberal-right historical bloc of the 2000s and emergence of the new counter-hegemonic sphere with a new left historical bloc will be presented with an analysis of the function of the pluralist public intellectuals in this process especially of the pluralization of the public sphere with the engagement of the different oppressed social groups into this counter-hegemonic sphere.

### **5.3.1. Renovation of the Left Discourse and the Revolutionary Wave of Social Uprisings as a Splash in the Collective Consciousness**

It was argued in the previous section that Turkey faced a social and political transformation process in the 2000s under AKP. This pro-transformation historical bloc of the AKP was based on a liberal-right ideological position. Pluralist public intellectuals, with their original discourses, organically engaged the liberal-right historical bloc. As in the Gramscian conception, they contributed to this transformation process by directing the civil society under this historical bloc, thereby widening the AKP's historical bloc's hegemony. However, this historical bloc collapsed in the post-2010 period, as a result of its intellectual bloc's dissolution. The AKP distanced itself from its original principles by bringing about a social inconsistency within political society and vice versa. A new counter-hegemony started to emerge against the hegemony of the AKP's historical bloc. This left-wing counter-hegemony understood contemporary issues, such as neoliberalism, and positioned itself to protect green and anti-authoritarian. Starting in this sub-section, the analysis will cover the roles of pluralist public intellectuals in the emergence of this new counter-hegemony, and a pro-transformation left historical bloc. In this sub-section, Foti Benlisoy's contribution to the renovation of the

left will be analyzed. His work is considered the base of the new left wing counter-hegemony in the post-2010s as he created pluralist structures best seen in the incorporation of excluded social groups in the emergence of the Gezi commune in 2013.

The left's position in this wave of renovation and the emergence of this 'resistance culture' through the involvement of the youth, is best seen with the Gezi protests in Turkey, which will be covered in the next sub-section. Although the Gezi Protests symbolized the new counter-hegemony, their social and ideological background was developed by the intellectual sphere. The journal *New Way (Yeni Yol)*<sup>77</sup> was important in bringing the renovation mentality to the forefront among the leftist youth. As a young academic, Foti Benlisoy published his articles in the *New Way*, since it provided a new arena to share his ideas with the public. The 34<sup>th</sup> issue of *New Way* in 2009 included Benlisoy's article debating the possible reconstruction of the socialist movement and the left, describing the "lack in the new generation, which normally tends to renovate theory, praxis and organization" (Benlisoy, 2009). Benlisoy identifies the 'new generation' issue as the premise for the future of socialism in Turkey, since the new generation would be shaped by new struggles, which in turn would bring new ideas to the left. Thus, in Benlisoy's conception, limiting discourses on leftist renovation undercut the development of the socialist movement. For Benlisoy, the main problem undercutting the Turkish left's renovation is the existence of "gerontocracy" (Ibid). The left's "older brothers (ağabeyler)" have been problematic in their "interruptions of the new generation's emergence" (Ibid). Although Benlisoy questions gerontocracy, he does not support the fetishization of the youth issue. Instead, as he clarifies in his personal interview, his positioning dealt with society's current problems through its constructions of a "critical dialogue" with the past (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015). Even so, by bringing the idea of the lack of the youth power in the left to the forefront in 2009, Benlisoy expanded the idea of a renovation of the left with his argument that the new generation needed to surpass the older one.

Benlisoy's conceptual dissidence from Turkey's traditional socialist movements mainly came with the increasing revolutionary waves of the Middle East, namely the Arab Spring. In this

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<sup>77</sup> The *New Way (Yeni Yol)* is a political journal, defending pluralist, feminist, ecologist, self-governmentist and internationalist socialism as continuation of the first revolutionary Marxist journals, *Permanent Revolution (Sürekli Devrim)*, published first in 1978 and *What to Do (Ne Yapmalı)* in 1980. For more information about the journal and its development process, see its official web page online available at: <http://www.yeniyol.org/biz-kimiz/> (Last accessed 26.12.2017).

regard, Benlisoy's article published in the *Left Notebook (Sol Defter)*, a critique of Kemal Okuyan, the chief editor of the daily newspaper *Left (Sol)* and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, shows an important difference between them. As Okuyan was arguing that the protests were a move by imperialist centers to redesign the Middle East, Benlisoy supported these uprisings as "political space's occupation by subordinated groups" (Benlisoy, 2011). On this point, as a strong critique of the left's cynicism, Benlisoy brought to the forefront the left's inevitable defeat for merely being left, due to a simple fact about socialism: the "driving force that made their struggle historical is the collective power of the oppressed and the other subordinated groups" (Ibid). In this sense, seeing the uprisings in the Middle East as revolutionary action by subordinated groups, Benlisoy wanted to make people believe in and support this process since this could effect Turkey's renovation. Thus, Benlisoy contributed to public debates of different opinions from the left, both pro- and contra Arab Spring, expecting to inspire minds about the possibility for revolutionary movements in Turkey. As will be explained in the next sub-section, the Middle East uprisings and the 2013 Gezi Protests cannot be considered independently of one another. As for the public circulation of his ideas, the effect of Benlisoy's articles on the internet and in social media is important to mention. Benlisoy's post on the *Left Notebook* received 26 comments and was shared on multiple web pages and social media accounts.<sup>78</sup> These, and other examples, show the increasing influence of his ideas on the internet and in social media, as branches of media.

Benlisoy's arguments concerned themselves with socialism and the left. Benlisoy analyzed Middle East uprisings, and his references to the Turkish left's cowardice in confronting contemporary issues revealed his feeling about the left's need for confrontation. So, as in the Gramscian conception, Benlisoy's arguments for widening this emerging counter-hegemonic sphere reveal his desire to increase the new counter hegemony by creating public awareness of the ongoing revolutionary process, and its potential repercussions for a new left, specifically through a critical dialogue with the past. Benlisoy published his first book *The First Revolutionary Wave of the 21st Century: From France and Greece to the Arab Revolts*,

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<sup>78</sup> Ideas from his article were shared in social media. Benlisoy's critique of Okuyan was referred to under the title "Kemal Okuyan" in the *Eksisöztlük*, an online collaborative hypertext dictionary based on the comments of users. For example, user *polocan* referred to Benlisoy's article to understand Okuyan. See online available at: <https://eksisozluk.com/kemal-okuyan--354281?p=4> (Last accessed 26.12.2017). In the same category, Benlisoy's critique was referred to under the title "Foti Benlisoy" in the *Instela*, an online collaborative dictionary based on comments. User Josef Troynki referred to Benlisoy to support his ideas by citing his sentence as agreeing with his concept of the revolution in the Middle East as "political spaces occupied by the subordinated groups". See online available at: <https://tr.instela.com/foti-benlisoy--367025> (Last accessed 26.12.2017).



*the Occupy Movements and the Kurdish Spring (21. yy'ın İlk Devrimci Dalgası: Fransa ve Yunanistan'dan Arap Devrimi, "The Occupy" Hareketleri ve Kürt İsyanına)* in 2012. Divided into three sections, the book is a collection of Benlisoy's articles written in various left newspapers, journals and web pages. It is evident in the book that Benlisoy gives a comprehensive analysis of the increasing revolutionary wave in the world, since the first section of the book analyzes European social movements, including Greece, starting with a series of riots in Parisian suburbs. The second section, titled "The Arab Uprising: Tahrir Zone - The Revolution Mole is Moving", analyzes the Arab Revolt as a similar trend in another region of the world. Even though the two sections of the book deal with different regions of the world, showing them in chronological order sheds light on the continuity of the revolutionary mentality in both regions. In the analysis of both regions, Benlisoy focuses on the transformation of the *youth* through their proletarianization and precariatization (See Benlisoy, 2012). Youth and students are shown as the new political subjects. New political subjects of uprisings that are:

"The youth from 15–16 years of age, living in fear of being unemployed, exposed to the pressure of the labor market, aware of the possibility of unemployment even while finishing school; with two–three diplomas as well as master's and doctoral degrees, seeing the possibility of work in uninsured, precarious, 'flexible' positions. The youth, 'even if he/she works miracles', realizes that he/she cannot reach retirement at his/her father's age, and cannot benefit from the social security services granted to his/her mother" (Ibid: 49-50).

Benlisoy's arguments had great importance for the youth in Turkey since they were going through a similar existential situation but had yet to be tested by an event like that seen with the Gezi Protests in 2013. His arguments had the potential to stimulate the Turkish youth to join the protest wave, by highlighting the collective actions of 'ordinary people' as the forefront of the Arab uprisings. Benlisoy ends his book with articles about Turkey and Kurdish riots. His critique of Turkish revolutionaries focused on their inability to follow revolutionary developments around the world. Inviting the youth to the revolutionary movements, Benlisoy shed light on his aim of transforming a social movement to a political party in a new historical bloc. He argues that "it is essential to make no compromises about the party idea, which is widely recognized as a pluralist anti-capitalist, feminist and ecologist political subject" (Ibid: 301). As an example showing the influence of Benlisoy's ideas, Osman Akinhay argues (2012), in his column at the leftist newspaper *Radikal*, that Benlisoy's identification of uprisings as a "revolutionary process" has been the most valuable

contribution to “our political imagination”. In particular, for Akinhay, what makes the book influential is that in it, Benlisoy analyzes the issue with a hundred years of concepts and observes the movements of the next hundred years.<sup>79</sup>

In conclusion, Benlisoy’s articles and book, presented before the Gezi Protests, denounced the left’s inability to deal with the major problems of society caused by capitalism. His aim was to repair socialism’s lost reputation, opening a space for a new left mentality. Benlisoy favored resistance and social reconstruction for alternative conceptions of public sphere debates. His book, starting with 2005 anti-capitalist uprisings in France, offered positive steps toward a leftist process of renovation. His concern with uprisings and resistance against hegemony underscore the role of solidarity in realizing citizens’ equal rights collectively. This will be covered in the next sub-section with the emergence of the Gezi protests based on this new left mentality.

### **5.3.2. Gezi Park Protests: Cultural Pluralism Debate**

*“The Kemalist system continues through transforming. There must be a revolution in every area of society in order to have a complete break. Pluralism, alone, is not the end of Kemalism. Thus, Kemalism, also, has the essence as an economic ideology.”*

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013

As stated in the previous sub-section, in the post-2010 period, the liberal-right historical bloc was dissolving as a result of its intellectual bloc’s collapse. This was primarily shown by the pluralist intellectuals’ critical discourses of their old historical bloc and their increasingly conflictual relationship with the AKP government. As also a time of a gradually emerging new left discourse post-2010, the Gezi Protests was a period of emergence of a counter-hegemonic sphere that can be understood in a Gramscian light. The organic pluralist public intellectuals who emerged with this counter-hegemony, such as Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy, shared their experiences and their changed world views with individuals and social groups participating in the protests and with the general public. The pluralist public intellectuals of the liberal-right historical bloc, such as Fehmi Kuru, Hasan

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<sup>79</sup> Benlisoy’s book and his focus on the revolution within the book got more attention from the left in Turkey. This inspired major discussions, opening a new arena to debate revolution in Turkey. His book went over the left’s past failures and the possibilities of a renovation for achieving revolution in Turkey. For examples of discussions about his book in the media see: Zileli, 2012; Fennibay, 2013.

Cemal, Mehmet Altan and Nilüfer Göle, started to be absorbed into this new counter-hegemony because of its influential discourses, namely the discourses, concepts and influential arguments provided by the organic intellectuals of the new historical bloc. This sub-section will analyze pluralist public intellectuals' contributions to this new counter-hegemony with the emergence of protests, their function in directing people during the protests and their practical involvement, which disseminated their ideas of cultural pluralism even more. The old historical bloc's pluralist public intellectuals' discourses of the protests will also be presented, to show how in the post-Gezi Protests, this new counter-hegemony absorbed the old bloc's intellectuals into a new left historical bloc.

Zbigniew Brzezinski points out that the contemporary world's "global political awakening" made humanity "politically activated, politically conscious and politically interactive" (Brzezinski, 2009: 53). For Brzezinski, this increased political activism provides new spaces for the "personal dignity, cultural respect and the economic opportunity" for the traditionally oppressed groups of the world (Ibid). As Brzezinski describes it, in this period government authorities often face large-scale protests. In late May 2013, during the *Taksim Pedestrianization Project*, protests started against a plan to remove Gezi Park and rebuild the historical Artillery Barrack (Topçu Kışlası) in Taksim, Istanbul. By early June, the nature of the protests started to change. In the first stage, the protests came from a group of environmentally-friendly greenspace conservationists, but when security forces used excessive power against the protesters, the protests turned against the Erdoğan government throughout Turkey. For the first time in Turkey's history there was a civil uprising, affecting the whole country, and a sign of the emergence of a socially constructed new left ideology.

There are many possible explanations for the uprising in Turkey. The most important is the increasing authoritarianism of the AKP government; the other two most important factors relate to the ongoing social and political changes. First, with the constitutional amendment package, as well as with the civilian government's strong stance, backed by civil society, the hegemony of the Turkish military was removed. This lack of military hegemony provided a great arena for civilian actors. Second, with the transformations of the 2000s, the public sphere absorbed two otherwise marginalized communities, pro-Islamic movements and the religious Kurds. Nevertheless, the Kurdish political movement, women's movements, LGBTs, Alevis, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and others were still marginalized, and as a result motivated

to be a part of the 2013 Gezi resistance. A Gezi commune was born during the protests as a new counter-hegemonic sphere and later emerged as a pro-transformation left historical bloc.

One pluralist public intellectual involved in the protests was Sırrı Süreyya Önder. He was a main actor in the emergence of these protests with his struggle to end the destruction of the Gezi Park. Önder's physical support of the protest started on May 28, 2013, when he came to Gezi Park to support the resistance of a group of nature lovers. He stood in front of heavy machinery, blocking the workers, who therefore withdrew from Gezi Park. From day one, Önder was the leading figure of the Gezi protests. He said on media that "stopping this destruction is the work of our colleagues, who have been the gas-eaters (tear gas-smellers) since the morning" (Quoted in Demokrathaber, 2013). Also, rejecting arguments that these protests were products of the "intellectual sphere", he invited all people to support them. He even touched upon capitalist hegemony, when he said "here are the only tree shades in Taksim where one can sit without paying money for a tea. There are countless (luxury) residences in Istanbul, but not one green space" (quoted in Ibid). Stressing the private-public collaboration, he teased that private company officials were clothed as municipal police officers. Önder stated that "we won't allow these trees to fall, I will stand where the digger hits. We will resist lawlessness with the will of the people" (quoted in Ibid).<sup>80</sup> As it is seen in Önder's discourses, rather than agreeing with the local authorities, he aimed to create a public protest from the beginning. Önder's reference to his colleagues who have been eating gas created a meaning around the protests as a collective action. His discourse of "the only tree shades in Taksim where one can sit without paying money for a tea" showed resistance to the selling of public spaces to capitalist owners. In this regard, displaying the state's collaboration with the capitalist class, Önder called for a collective action against increasing inequality.

Önder continued his stand against the heavy machinery in Gezi Park. Because the mainstream media had stopped covering the protests, Önder effectively interacted with the public through his twitter account and his followers' accounts. On May 28, 2013 Önder's discourses were tweeted "You cannot destroy the park of the poor" with the handle, @140Journos; it was retweeted 48 times. On May 29, 2013 Önder tweeted, "I stand in Gezi Park. Defenders of the right to breathe are here" (Quoted in Cumhuriyet, 2013).<sup>81</sup> With the gradual increase of the

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<sup>80</sup> Önder's further arguments and struggle during the first day of Gezi Park Protests can be seen from the video, see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLMeazVYxeE> (Last accessed 08.01.2018).

<sup>81</sup> The mainstream media's blocking of the protests was broken through the social media. Thus, Önder's arguments against the construction project and his motivational talks inviting the people to the protests were shared through his own and protesters' twitter accounts that had gradually contributed to increasing the

protests in Gezi Park and the police's gradual application of excessive force, on May 31, 2013, Gezi became the first country-wide protest in the history of Turkey. Önder's arguments were related to his strong stance on participatory democracy. Önder mentioned during the protests that the removal of Gezi Park was an indication that the government was incapable of "considering the people in the decision-making process", because for him, "even if the government got 50 percent or 100 percent of the vote, the right to govern does not give them the right to cut the trees" (Quoted in Karabağlı, 2013). The main idea of the protests was an 'equal collective rights' mentality, a questioning of the government's 'authority' and the government's intervention on issues of freedom, human rights and a private life. These demands reflected the inconsistency of the civil and political society at that time.

The mainstream media discourses during the Gezi protests bring to mind Louis Althusser, (2012: 110–111) and his well-known essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". He introduces the term "ideological state apparatuses", an important idea for analyzing the nature of the protests. Althusser used this term to describe the government's exercising ideological dominance of a society by persuasion and pressure, above all to reproduce the capitalist relation of production. The state-dominated media has proved its role of being an "ideological state apparatus" during the Gezi protests. The mainstream media's role was to legitimize the state's violations, trivialize and degrade the subordinated groups, underestimate their solidarity and criminalize them in the eyes of the public. However, thanks to new technologies and media sources, the mainstream media was unsuccessful. Every day, more people got involved, more people believed in the legitimacy of the protest and resistance against state pressure grew. Furthermore, what Althusser (Ibid: 111–113) terms the "repressive state apparatus", which functions by violence, was seen later with police repression. It is important to mention Gramsci's (1971a:12) idea of the state's use of force: upon its loss of social consent, it resorts to violence. Despite its failures, this violence was intended to legitimize the government in the eyes of the subordinated groups. The relationship between the state and civil society is important for the continuation of hegemony: securing the consent of the ruled is vital for the ruling class's continued control of the state.

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participants in the protests day by day. On this point, with the Gezi Park protests, the number of active twitter users increased, from 2 million to 10 million in a short while (Öztürk, 2013). Also, with the *#direngeziparki* hashtag more than 2 million tweeted in one day. Many of the tweets included Önder's arguments. For @140Journos' tweet on May 28, 2013 of Önder's discourse against the construction forces "You cannot destroy the park of the poor" see online available at: <https://twitter.com/140journos/status/339343186914836480> (Last accessed 08.01.2018).

However, this factor of securing civil society's consent was not the case during the first days of the Gezi Protests. Protesters across the country participated through different acts of resistance: by switching their lights off and on at certain times, clanging pots and pans at their windows and honking while driving in cities. During the protests, upon application of *Taksim Gezi Park Protection and Beautification Association (Taksim Gezi Parkı Koruma ve Güzelleştirme Derneği)*, the 6th Administrative Court of Istanbul decided to stop the construction project of the Artillery Barracks. With Erdoğan's declaration that the judicial process would determine the continuation of the project, and that even in the event of judgment in favor, there would be a plebiscite, the protests relatively decreased. Even so, the Gezi Park protests later mainly focused on the ruling party and Prime Minister Erdoğan as one of the main actors during the political polarization in the pre-2014 Local Elections.

To understand the factors behind the Gezi protests, it is instructive to consider Önder's arguments in the personal interview he gave for this dissertation project two months before the Gezi Protests. For Önder, Turkey's major problems are its extreme neo-liberalism, increasing "privatization" and "the state's new expansionist policies" as a result of its neo-liberal perspective (S.S. Önder, Personal Interview, April 2, 2013). Önder's clarification of neo-liberal policies related to the emerging point of the Gezi Protests, since the protests centered on the idea of resisting the state's support of capitalist profit without considering the public interest. Önder argues that "the aggression of capitalism is a permanent problem in a country where workers' resistance takes place together with the monthly murder of 30 workers" (Ibid). In parallel to Önder, the idea of resisting against capitalist hegemony was visible during the Gezi Protests. However, Önder clarifies that this problem cannot be separated from the "nation state problem" nor "problems regarding women and children" (Ibid). As a matter of fact, within the society's dynamic, identity and class have become wholly inseparable in the Gezi Protests, as seen with the visibility of different segments of society, from the Kurds to the Anti-Capitalist Muslims, LGBT groups, Alevis and women's movements. Thus, the protests had a function of providing an arena for the major excluded social groups, to bring them into the public sphere through their practices.

As Önder clarified, the rapid economic development in the 2000s brought a new proletariat, different from the Islamic bourgeois that emerged earlier. In this sense, the economic basis of the Gezi Protests became overly influential on the convictions of this newly emergent proletariat within the transforming public sphere. Intellectuals such as Önder, who gave

references to the economic inequalities, were in the position of contributing to this newly popularized anti-capitalist discourses since that met with the convictions of the subordinated groups. Indeed, the public sphere, as an important arena for the pluralization of discourses, had become a totally civilian arena because of the removal of the military's influence. Thus, in the 2000s, as in Habermas' (1991: 27–28) conception, the public sphere became a forum for “rational critical public debates” where “private people come together as a public”. As mentioned previously, the debates within the public sphere in the 2000s dealt with the Kurdish problem, the headscarf issue and later the discussions of other problems during the Gezi Protests including economic inequality, the problems of women, Alevi, LGBTs.

As a sample pluralist public intellectual of the previous historical bloc who was absorbed into the emerged counter-hegemonic sphere in the post-Gezi Park Protests, Nilüfer Göle argues that the major discourses during the Gezi Protests were based on “questioning the way of economic growth” as well as the “demand for environmentally-friendly cities” (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). For Göle the key one was the demand for green areas within the cities (Ibid). Thus, Göle's arguments show that narrowing the public use of cities either with police or law pressure as well as private equity firms owning the common areas have been the basis for the public opinion in the period of new Turkey.<sup>82</sup> The public discourses showed the importance of the common areas for democracy and the citizens as well. Thus, for Göle, beyond the symbolic function, common areas have very important function of “combining people, without even paying money” (Ibid). According to Göle, “continuously building shopping malls in the cities actually meant confiscating the space that belongs to the citizens” (Ibid). The Gezi movement had an important function of being against this process. Göle pictures the social structure that emerged within the Gezi Protests as:

“A new different social movement was produced that was happening for the first time on the local and national level. There are similar movements in the world. This was not a collective action of a civil society organization. Standing there were people not representing the feminist movement, LGBT movement or environmentalist movement. They represented themselves, but set up a Gezi there. It has been a trial of the citizenship in a sense, a new

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<sup>82</sup> On this point, the top discussions in the social media at that time show the basic problematic of the society in search of a solution. Concerning the public discussions in the social media on the problems of urbanization in Turkey, the major discourses were “unplanned urbanization”, “the lack of infrastructure”, “greedy contractors”, “source of bribery for municipal employees.” As a source for public discussions in the social media on the problems of the urbanization see discussion topic “Unplanned Urbanization (Çarpık Kentleşme)” at Ekşi Sözlük, online available at: <https://eksisozluk.com/carpik-kentlesme--276194?nr=true&rf=carpik%20kentlesme> (Last accessed 18.01.2018).

citizenship. Moreover, it was not like ‘I am a citizen, the state should respect my rights’, but how the citizens will form a new relationship with each other. [It was a trial of] how do we salute, [send] peace messages; how do we shake or not shake hands and how do we kiss hands, bow our heads, be together, help each other; how can we create a common identity with the people we do or we do not recognize and also from below to top how can we create a security arena without state police and gendarmery. I think that Gezi created a very valuable alternative, almost a commune and also a community” (Ibid).

Moreover, the Gezi protests spread nationwide in a short process. Concerning the influential factors for this at the political level, according to Kemal Kirisci, the dynamic that served to spread the Gezi Park protests nationwide was the “authoritarian rule after Erdoğan’s overwhelming victory in the 2011 National Elections” (Kirisci, 2013). In this sense, the Gezi protests were an arena for counter-hegemonic movements within the newly enlarged public sphere that had the seeds for a historical bloc thereafter. Thus, this shows that the Gezi movement shaped the dynamic public sphere with a new left mentality. According to Göle, just like the discursive constructions of women in veils as “they are wearing headscarf because of the pressure of men”, the Gezi movement was also labelled as “looters (çapulcular), plotters (komplocular) and agent provocateurs (kökü dışarda olanlar)”, which was usual for Göle since “the new movements have been treated similarly everywhere in the world” (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). Thus, for Göle, “the legitimacy of the movements, which were for the first time in the public sphere, is questioned because these movements pushed the boundaries of the public sphere” (Ibid).

As previously mentioned, concerning this attempt to push the boundaries of the public sphere, new technological improvements in communication were important for providing interaction among the people. In the Gramscian conception, media is considered an important tool for expanding the hegemonic ideology (Heywood 1994: 100–101). This is also true for counter-hegemonic ideology; with the development of internet technologies, especially the social media became a genuinely critical organ of a public engaged in critical debate. The Gezi Movement created a new platform with these social media tools, different from the traditional debates in Turkey. Twitter became the main platform for this critical public debate during the Gezi protests, and hashtags used during the protests became trending topics not only in Turkey but globally. The first hashtag *#geziparkıçıntaksime* came to the fore in Turkey on May 29. The most popular hashtag during the protests *#direngeziparkı* came to the top level on the public agenda in Turkey by May 30 and had millions of mentions in the world by May 31. There were 120 hashtags used during the protests; the most used were *#direngezi*,



*#occupygezi* and *#direnankara*. Furthermore, by using social media effectively during the protests, protesters made the government legislate on it. The first attempt to make people responsible for their social media accounts was the detaining of 29 people for their tweets about Gezi Protests in Izmir; they were accused of “inciting riots and conducting propaganda” via the social media network Twitter (Hürriyet Daily News, 2013). However, these attempts gave the public protests more momentum throughout the country.

As stated previously, the emerging point of the Gezi Protests had a counter-hegemonic nature beyond the political affiliations as well as the religious–secular debate. It came with a secular discourse, but also involved Muslims within it. The Gezi movement was not an ethnic movement, but it involved the Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs and Anti-Capitalist Muslims as well. In this sense, it emphasized the culture of the society. Another sample pluralist public intellectual, Ihsan Eliaçık, became one of the major public intellectual figures during the protests by giving an Islamic critique of the neoliberal policies of the conservative AKP. The presence of the Anti-Capitalist Muslims—whose perspective was based on Ihsan Eliaçık’s conception of Anti-Capitalist Islam—in the Gezi Protests created a counter-effect on the religiously motivated propaganda of the government. The government represented the protesters as enemies of the religion, saying “they drank alcohol in a mosque” (Hürriyet, 2013b). However, Eliaçık mentions in his interview for this dissertation that there were two Friday prayers during the protests and he was the Imam of the first Friday prayer (Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015).

The first public prayer was held on June 5, 2013 on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Gezi Protests: *Prophet Muhammad’s Rising to Sky* (Lailat al Miraj), organized by the Anti-Capitalist Muslims. During the program, Eliaçık, surrounded by the protesters, prayed loudly, saying “Dear God... May the voices of the young people, resisting at this square for 9 days, be strong. We wish our brothers who died while resisting mercy from Allah, and patience for the rest. May this country always have the young people, screaming for their rights in front of the Cruel Sultan” (Quoted in CNN Turk, 2013). Eliaçık’s prayer was followed by the voices of the protesters saying ‘Amen’. In relation to this prayer, on his twitter account *@ihsaneliacik* on June 5, Eliaçık tweeted that “Gezi teaches ‘respect’: Respect to the Atheists and religious people, Turkish and Kurdish, to miniskirt and headscarf. Great things are going on, we are

getting trained.”<sup>83</sup> This first public prayer also got a lot of attention in the social media. As an example, a humorous tweet about this prayer from @gskraliddaaci06 twitter account said: “Guys, we came as alcoholic looters (çapulcular) to these protests and leave by collectively observing Prophet Muhammad’s Rise to Sky and eating bagels (simit). Did Tayyip play a trick on us?”<sup>84</sup> Another contribution of Eliaçık to the protests was with the second public prayer during the Gezi protests. Eliaçık clarifies, in his personal interview, that the protesters supported the Friday prayer on June 7 by giving an example of his conversation with some protesters:

“I have had dialogues with some people asking me: Sir! We do not know how to pray and if we pray here it would be hypocrisy. However, we would like to support and contribute to your prayer. Also, we would like to show our support to you. What do we need to do? Should we shout or say something? [...] I told them that you hold hands and circle around us and put your hands up [...] A lot of people were hand in hand” (Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015).

Eliaçık’s position on influencing the way of the protests is important, since the international perspective on Gezi Protests changed after the prayer. In this sense, if not for the prayer, the protests would have been seen as a ‘secular uprising against the religious government’. With this prayer, it turned into a ‘public protest’, that included religious people, against the government’s authoritarianism. Inclusion of the religious people in the Gezi protests was influential by breaking the stereotypical perceptions of the inclusion of Islam in the new left. Thus, as discussed in chapter 3, a large majority of the protesters belonged to the left-wing. This shows the anti-capitalist nature of the protests.

Moreover, according to Eliaçık, the government tried to eliminate the increasing support from the religious people for the Gezi protests. For Eliaçık, the government’s propaganda, with statements like “protesters drank alcohol in the mosque” and protesters “pissed on veiled women” in the media, were influential in slowing the participation of religious people in the Gezi protests (Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015). For Eliaçık, these

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<sup>83</sup> Eliaçık’s tweet was retweeted by 2972 accounts and liked by 513. More importantly, his discourses created a discussion topic especially for the conservative Muslims, who have social media accounts. For more information about the discussions and Eliaçık’s tweets, see online available at: <https://twitter.com/ihsaneliacik/status/342277355382902784> (Last accessed 21.01.2018).

<sup>84</sup> This tweet was retweeted by 2893 other accounts and got 1067 likes. At this point, twitter had an effect on sharing this ritual via social media and through the internet in general. For the tweet of @gskraliddaaci06, see online available at: <https://twitter.com/gskraliddaaci06/status/342308837417697280> (Last accessed 21.01.2018).

discourses were produced to take the psychological support of the religious people away from the Gezi Protests (Ibid). According to Eliaçık, rebellion over greenspace and trees drew the attention of AKP supporters too and the only way to counter that was to produce contrary discourses, which became the main reason for the decrease in the support of the religious people in the Protests (Ibid). For example, Metropoll Research Association's research involving 2818 people throughout Turkey between 3–12 June, 2013 reveals that 50% of the people in Turkey considered the AKP government “increasingly authoritarian”, and the perception of “increasing authoritarianism of the government” was not voiced only by the opposition parties' supporters; almost 27% of AKP voters thought the same (Cited in Sandıklı and Kaya, 2013). The survey also revealed that 53% of people in Turkey thought that the media is not free. All of this shows the rising protest mentality in Turkey at that time.

### ***Foti Benlisoy and the Youth in Gezi Uprising: The “Interesting Moments” of Turkey***

Another important aspect of the Gezi Protests was the high participation of the youth. Foti Benlisoy, as a young intellectual dealing with public issues, performed an important role in the mobilization of the youth during the Gezi protests. Prior to the protests, Benlisoy had mainly dealt with resistance movements from Europe to the Middle East in a way that reflected his desire for and expectation of similar uprisings in Turkey. Benlisoy's arguments brought the revolutionary discourse into the public terminology (Akinhay, 2012). Thus, Gezi Protests also brought Benlisoy's conception to the forefront since he actively engaged in the protests as a young activist by contributing to the preparation of the brochures and banners that were used during the protests (Uzunoğlu, 2013). As mentioned previously, the internet and social media became the most important tools for expanding the sphere of influence of the protests, since mainstream media was under state pressure. Benlisoy also used these tools for demonstrating and inviting the people to increase their support for the protests. As an example, Benlisoy tweeted from his personal twitter account, which had more than 20 000 followers: “We will be in Taksim again at 14.00 o'clock... A scene will be set up into the Gezi Park, Talks and Concerts will be held... Moving on...” on June 2, 2013. Benlisoy's tweet came during one of the most controversial times for the protests, from June 1 to June 2. Not only that, but his tweet was retweeted by 735 other accounts and got 24 likes at that time. In this way, Benlisoy contributed to spreading this idea of resistance in the public sphere. Hence, the nature of the protests showed a perspective parallel to Benlisoy's conception on renovation of the left and the revolution that was shown as a development from the protests in 2005 in Paris to the Arab uprisings in the Middle East. Thus, for the previous followers of Benlisoy, the

protests gave the idea that this was the time for revolution in Turkey and for the new followers his conception became a way of understanding the Gezi protests.<sup>85</sup>

Furthermore, Benlisoy continued his contribution to the Gezi Protests by motivating the people with his articles he shared on his Tumblr account, another internationally known social networking and micro blogging web page. In his article shared during the protests on June 4, 2013, titled “No time to lose, let’s dare ...”, Benlisoy shared an analysis of the nature of the protests as being “out of the organizational structure of the socialist movement” by considering the left’s position and mentioning the subjects of the protests as “one or two young generations’ political mobilization, who have grown during the governing periods of Tayyip Erdoğan” (Benlisoy, 2013a). Benlisoy aimed to motivate the socialist movement to base their activities on this youth mobilization since for Benlisoy this happens “for the first time by directly and actively politicizing wider subordinated groups” and it is the “task of the left to invent ways” for the good of this movement (Ibid). This article was liked by 14 other accounts and reblogged by 9 other accounts, which opened the way for it to be liked and reblogged on other shared accounts and shared using other social media tools and web pages. Furthermore, in another article, shared on June 7, 2013, titled “They are right to be afraid...” Benlisoy had an encouraging strategy about the continuation of the protests, mentioning that the government is afraid of the protests and incapable of doing anything against them. Benlisoy mentions that the protesters became “abler” which gave them “self-confidence” and political experience throughout the protests (Benlisoy, 2013b). This situation is clarified by Benlisoy as “we have seen that once we can climb over the barricade, we learned that we can win” (Ibid). All these discourses of Benlisoy show that he saw a future for these protests made him want to make it evolve into a political position and led him to contribute to this process with his discourses. This article was also liked by 8 other accounts, reblogged by 1 account and shared via other social media tools and the web pages supporting the protests.

In another article, titled “Gezi and hastily notes on the present conjuncture...”, shared on June 13, 2013, Benlisoy mentions the ‘fear’ of government by looking at Prime Minister Erdoğan’s actions of that time. Benlisoy argues that Erdoğan is “openly lying, slandering without being embarrassed, threatening, storming around” (Benlisoy, 2013c). This shows Benlisoy’s efforts to continue the legitimization of the protests in the eyes of the people. In the Gramscian

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<sup>85</sup> Followers of Benlisoy’s twitter account multiplied during the Gezi protests. This shows his increasing influence in the public sphere through his ideas. For Benlisoy’s tweet on June 2, 2013 and his personal twitter account see online available at: <https://twitter.com/fotibenlisoy/status/341108807147081728> (Last accessed 28.01.2018).

conception, Benlisoy had a role of legitimizing the ideological position of this new counter-hegemonic sphere in Gezi Protests by contributing to the debates about anti-authoritarianism, renovation and resistance. In addition, in his article, by aiming to legitimize the idea behind the Gezi Protests, Benlisoy again shows his desire to evolve the protests into a leftist political movement, but he mentions that it would need to be “a democratically organized, collective piston” that would further the movement’s energy into a powerful organization (Ibid). This article got 9 likes and was re-blogged by 7 accounts, which also allowed its public circulation through other web pages.

As is seen in Benlisoy’s position during the Gezi Protests, which he also clarifies in his interview, his concern with the protests came from his awareness of “a structural crisis” of the system and the struggle to “create an alternative” through public engagement in the protest movements, which were seen in the streets throughout the protests (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015). Benlisoy’s reason for creating an alternative was that he saw the emergence of the confrontation with the neoliberal system. Hence, Benlisoy’s arguments show he saw a chance in these protests to effect the democratic and socially constructed renewals of the system that would later evolve into a political movement to fight against neoliberal hegemony. Thus, Benlisoy saw not only the social affect, but also the political effect of the protests. He regards the Gezi protests as “a milestone in terms of revealing the limits of the AKP’s hegemony” that opened the way for the “revival of the urban demonstrations” especially in the post-Gezi Park protests as an indication of this renovation (Ibid). For him, Gezi protests provided an alternative to the hegemonic system.

In 2013 Benlisoy published his next book, *Gezi Resistance: Turkey’s Interesting Start (Gezi Direnişi: Türkiye’nin Enteresan Başlangıcı)*, a collection of articles as a memory of the protests. He aimed to make it the primary source for the ideas that emerged during the protests, and his concern for the continuation of the renovation of the left based on the spirit of the Gezi Protests is evident. In the book, Benlisoy gives the nature of the protests as anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist and the reasons for them as capital’s encroachment on the commons by turning them into shopping malls and making them subject to profit (See Benlisoy, 2013d: 28–31). Benlisoy wanted to protect the values that emerged with the Gezi Protests by making connections with other uprisings going on around the world. With his book, Benlisoy wanted people to think of Gezi protests in a strategic context. The dynamics that emerged with this resistance were making progress and Benlisoy presented himself as a

part of it. In the words of Benlisoy, the aim of this book is to “contribute to the collective discussion” as well as “being a part of collective thinking practice” (Benlisoy, 2013e). Consequently, in his book, by emphasizing that the Gezi protests are in the bud, Benlisoy gives the reader the feeling that further renovations are coming that should continue with this process. According to Sarphan Uzunoğlu, by documenting his writings, Benlisoy once again revealed his role in “intellectual guidance” as it was during the Gezi resistance (Uzunoğlu, 2013). For Uzunoğlu, this was because he was “one of the most familiar authors of Gezi brochures” during the protests, which puts him in an important position as a leading actor (Ibid). All these arguments show Benlisoy’s influential position and his contribution to the cultural pluralism debate that emerged during the Gezi protests by bringing the excluded groups into Turkey’s new public sphere.

In conclusion, the struggle of the pluralist public intellectuals to establish the pluralist structure in the ‘New Turkey’ made great progress with the emergence of the Gezi protests. Thus, the idea of the protests with discourses coming from different segments of the society got support from most of the pluralist public intellectuals. Here, one may easily argue that the Gezi protests were a rehearsal of the new social relations in the new Turkey. Based on his resistance discourse, Sırrı Süreyya Önder was an influential intellectual figure from the first days of the protests. With his actions to stop the heavy machinery as well as his influential discourses that were shared through the social media, he contributed to widening the Gezi protests to a greater public arena. Moreover, although the protests emerged from a secular base and a revolutionary perspective, by constantly constructing religious discourses, Ihsan Eliaçık and the Anti-Capitalist Muslims Group contributed by involving Islam in this new revolutionary culture of the left in Turkey. It may be argued that these religious discourses were supported on the left as an attempt to weaken Erdoğan’s claim to be the sole protector of the conservative Muslims of Turkey. By challenging the AKP’s status quo, a way was opened for the emergence of a new left mentality in Turkey that was not completely secular, but included Islamic elements within it. Eliaçık’s concept of anti-capitalist Islam became one of the major discussion points in the social and political arena in the aftermath of the Gezi protests. Furthermore, the youth, as the major actors through their use of the internet, contributed to this pluralization debate by creating a community mentality regardless of religious, ethnic and cultural identities. This also brought important figures from the youth to work to develop the resistance culture in the country. Foti Benlisoy’s involvement in the protests as an intellectual guide mobilized the youth in the new left mentality during the Gezi

Park Protests. Thus, as discussed with the cases of Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy in this sub-section, the pluralist public intellectuals contributed to the cultural pluralism debate by being influential actors for the emergence and development of the Gezi Protests. This has been also an important contribution to opening the way for the involvement into the public sphere of various excluded social groups as parts of the Gezi Commune, such as Alevis, Kurds, LGBTs, women’s movements and Anti-Capitalist Muslims. The next sub-section will present anti-capitalist Islamic practices, based on the discourses of Ihsan Eliaçık, within this new left historical bloc that had the function of reconstructing the leftist discourses to cover the broader subordinated social groups in Turkey.

### **5.3.3. A Critique of Capitalism from an Islamic Perspective, Anti-Capitalist Islam: “Allah, Bread and Freedom”**

*“Land owner, property owner*

*And what about the original owner?”*

Yunus Emre (1240–1321)

It was argued in the previous sub-section that, during the Gezi Park Protests, Islamic discourse started to be enrolled in the left, specifically in the new left that emerged through the Gezi Protests. Importantly, Ihsan Eliaçık’s concept of anti-capitalist Islam was especially influential for enrolling Islamic discourse into the new left, since it critiqued neo-liberalism as well as the authoritarianization of the political sphere, which were the major points of critique of that time, influencing the emergence of the social protests. Thus, in this sub-section, Eliaçık’s role in the emergence of the Islamic left mentality as well as his contribution to the inclusion of the Islamic discourse in the Turkey’s secular left will be analyzed along with his concept of anti-capitalist Islam. The analysis will also include how his concept influenced contemporary Islamic practices, majorly from right before the Gezi Protests. Sırrı Süreyya Önder’s contribution to this anti-capitalist Islam discourse, through his artistic activities such as films, will be also presented.

Concerning the influence of anti-capitalist Islam discourse, although its popularity increased in the public arena through the Gezi Park protests, Eliaçık’s books had already brought the concept to the public debate in the 1990s. These include, for instance, *Revolutionary Islam (Devrimci Islam)* (1995), *Just State: The Power of the Common Good (Adalet Devleti: Ortak İyinin İktidarı)* (2003), and *Property Writings (Mülk Yazıları)* (2010). Yet, from right before

the Gezi Protests, anti-capitalist Islam discourse and Anti-Capitalist Muslims have become one of the most visible actors contesting the Islamic Movements' inclusion in the neo-liberal hegemony under the ruling AKP. This was explained by Eliaçık in his personal interview: he was writing books for 20 years without the public noticing, but the AKP's being a hegemonic power after their origin in the pro-Islamic movements and Eliaçık's critiques of AKP's tending to neoliberalism increased his public support (See Ihsan Eliaçık, Personal Interview, February 3, 2015). This shows that fitting the public needs of a certain time is important for popularizing the intellectuals' discourses. As seen from Eliaçık's arguments, AKP's neoliberal policies and Anti-Capitalist Muslims' participation in the Gezi protests, as explained in the previous sub-section, generated legitimacy for his anti-capitalist Islam discourse throughout Turkey. Since the protests were based on the struggle for freedom and equality as well as against the increasing neo-liberal policies in Turkey, Eliaçık, who conceptualized anti-capitalist Islam through his books, became the main opposing religious actor, criticizing the changing Islamic values and norms during the AKP rule.

As was also presented in chapter 4 while analyzing Eliaçık's discourses, Eliaçık bases his resistance on Islamic philosophy itself. Hence, according to Eliaçık, the main alternative to the neo-liberal policies of today's Turkey is the "revolutionary Islam" (Ibid) that was proposed under his overall anti-capitalist Islam discourse. His stance is based on "nature's annihilation of the falsehood" as stated in the subdivision of a Quranic chapter: "Truth has come, and falsehood has departed. Indeed is falsehood, [by nature], ever bound to depart."<sup>86</sup> Thus, for Eliaçık, Islam gives people the right to fight against the ideologies that eliminate their natural desires (Ibid). Eliaçık clarifies that if a leader or an ideology tries to ban the natural (desire, existence), it returns as resistance, since this is the natural rule (Ibid). In this sense, Eliaçık mentions the revolutionary flow of nature. Thus, banning the lives, works, languages and colors of the people is considered a war against nature, and being within the revolutionary movements against this ban is, in Eliaçık's conception, inevitable.

Even though Eliaçık conceptualized as well as popularized the anti-capitalist Islam discourse based on the contemporary situation of the world, before him the discourse had its root in the Iranian socialist and revolutionary figure Ali Shariati<sup>87</sup>, and before that in the life of Abu Dhar

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<sup>86</sup> Surah Al-Ishra (17:81). See online available at: <http://quran.com/17> (Last accessed 06.02.2018).

<sup>87</sup> Ali Shariati was an Iranian Muslim sociologist, activist, thinker and writer. His works were on the sociology of religion and contemporary Islamic thought and included excerpts from Marxist ideas and their derivations, adapted to Iran in his time. For more information about Shariati's ideas and works see: Rahnema, 1998; Vakili, 1991.



al-Ghifari<sup>88</sup>, a companion to Muhammad. In the practical social arena, based on Eliaçık's conception, the emerged Anti-Capitalist Muslims have started to increase their public visibility with their influential activities majorly in the post-2010 period by creating a theoretical connection between Islamic values and socialism, drawing inspiration from the Marxist interpretation of the Quran, which is based on the class struggle. Hence, in Eliaçık's conception, Islam, founded by Muhammad, takes a position against capitalist exploitation. He also argues that the lifestyle proposed by Islam was against the accumulation of wealth, which was the major reason for suffering today (Eliaçık, 2010: 205). In this sense, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, as the followers of Eliaçık's conception, are reflected in the practical arena as struggling against the capitalist hegemony and see themselves as natural partners of the other struggling groups (Yavuz, 2012).

As was stated, Eliaçık contributed to the Turkish public intellectual life through his books, from the 1990s onwards, without proper notice. His major influential position was mostly during the post-2010 period when conservative Muslims were influenced by the neoliberal policies. He continued his publications contributing to these increasing anti-capitalist discourses and shaping the public agenda. He published his book *Property Writings* in 2010 as a contribution to the debate. Based on the theoretical stance of his anti-capitalist Islamic discourse, the main idea of the book is that Islam considers the accumulation of money the fundamental problem of the social life. By giving the example from the Quran of Qarun (Korah), referred to as a rich and arrogant man of the Israelites who was destroyed in the history, showing that wealth is temporary, Eliaçık mentions the Islamic conception that wealth and power should not be collected in one hand (Eliaçık, 2010: 272). Thus, he regards this as the problem of the world and argues that the Quran shows it as the basic problem of humanity. Moreover, in his interpretation there should be sharing, since for him, Islam teaches "not saving the surplus property", but sharing for "being equal with others" in society (Ibid). In this context, Eliaçık questioned, in turn, the existing hegemonic system, and as an organic intellectual in the Gramscian conception, helped legitimize the emerged Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group which was also a part of emerged counter-hegemonic sphere starting right before the Gezi Protests in 2013. This legitimization is made by connecting the social groups

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<sup>88</sup> Abu Dhar al-Ghifari was one of the first companions of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. According to historian Wilferd Madelung (1997:84), the third Caliph of the Islamic State after the death of Muhammad, Uthman Ibn Affan, started to turn from a communal mentality to his own position on crown land, which also included supplying money from Muslims' collective money (*mal al-Muslimih*) to his relatives as seen in his relative, the governor of Syria *Muawiyah*'s extravagant spending on building a palace at that time. Abu Dahr was against this and protested it, arguing that that behavior was contrary to the principles of Islam. Later, he was killed by Uthman's soldiers. Abu Dahr is known as Islam's first objector to capitalism.

and individuals, who were also interested in the proposed ideas. Thus, not only personal interactions, but also the media and especially the social media played a major role in spreading Eliaçık's ideas in the public sphere.<sup>89</sup>

According to Levent Toprak (2012), Eliaçık's theoretical works were particularly influential, attracting the interest of and opening discussions to the young people in the pro-Islamic movements that brought the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group in the practical social arena. Thus, in line with Eliaçık's concept, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, as a growing social group, were looking for a general understanding about protesting the conditions of the world caused by capitalism itself (Özvarış, 2012). In light of Eliaçık's critiques, the discourses of the Anti-Capitalist Muslims were an overt challenge to the AKP's neoliberal policies, which changed the Islamic values by emerging a wealthy class in the pro-Islamic movements. In this sense, by organizing the alternative critical activities and presenting themselves in the media, Anti-Capitalist Muslims aimed to attract public attention. Moreover, the activities of the group that were alternatives to those of the AKP supporters created more attention from the mass media and created the public legitimacy needed for the group to share their ideas, based on Eliaçık's. The Anti-Capitalist Muslims organized *Hotel-Front Fast-Breaking Dinners (Otel Önü İftarları)* during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan in 2011 (Emek ve Adalet, 2011). The major aim of this event was to criticize the newly emerged Islamic wealthy class's accumulation of wealth, which came as a result of the AKP's neoliberal policies. Thus, by making floor tables in front of the luxury hotels with a simple fast-breaking meal including bread, cheese and olives, they criticized the luxury fast-breaking meals in the neighboring hotels, which mainly served the new wealthy class of pro-Islamic movements backed by AKP. In this sense, the *Hotel-Front Fast-Breaking Dinners* were a counter-hegemonic practice in the Gramscian perspective, as Theodore H. Cohn (2009: 131) clarifies it: "[A] counter-hegemony is an alternative ethical view of society to challenge capitalism". Thus, this counter-hegemonic sphere included figures similar (in religion) to the dominant group, with a different interpretation from their bourgeois-led views.

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<sup>89</sup> Concerning this function of social media, as different from personal connection, for sharing ideas Eliaçık and his proposed anti-capitalist Islam discourse were the subject of many discussions in the discussion platforms. As an important example, in Ekşisözlük, "İhsan Eliaçık" as a discussion topic was opened as in 2007 and continues until now. In the comments, a commentator with the nickname "Sir Williams" referred to Eliaçık in 2008 as "ground breaking author with his every writing" see online available at: <https://eksisozluk.com/ihsan-eliacik--968899> (Last accessed 25.02.2018). After all, the continued discussion in the next 93 pages of Ekşisözlük shows this continued influence of Eliaçık's ideas in the public arena, most importantly through the social media.

In contribution to the newly emerged counter-hegemonic sphere against the capitalist hegemony that was continuing in the newly emerged bourgeois view, Eliaçık published his next book, *Social Islam (Sosyal İslam)*, in 2011. Drawing on the sharing that had emerged as the mentality behind the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group's activities, the book offered a new understanding by presenting Islam as a religion of sharing rather than of capitalist accumulation such as the contemporary pro-Islamic movements engaged in. As an example, an article that shares the book's title "Social Islam", Eliaçık (2011: 147–156) notes major examples from the Quran of the penance for sins in Islam, such as "if an animal is killed during the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj), feeding the poor", "in the case of homicide by misadventure, emancipating a slave" and "in the case of breaking an oath, feeding or dressing 10 poor". For Eliaçık practices such as "feeding the poor" and "emancipating the slave" reveal the importance in Islam of freedom, sharing and voluntarily giving, thereby showing the communitarian feature of Islam (Ibid: 152). Eliaçık's arguments, in bringing this communitarian feature of Islam to the forefront, show that he aimed to absorb the religious people who benefited less from the pro-Islamic movements' engagement in the capitalist economic model into this newly emerged counter-hegemonic sphere so as to eliminate the hegemonic position of the AKP government. This was an important contribution to the new left mentality that included Islam within it.

In line with this communitarian demand against the capitalist hegemony, the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group organized *Fraternity Fast-Breaking Dinners (Kardeşlik İftarları)* in 2012 with the socialist Labor and Justice Platform (Emek ve Adalet Platformu) with the aim of promoting fraternity and a culture of living together within society (Saymadi, 2012). The group also participated in the May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, Labor Day celebrations with the slogan "Allah, Bread, Freedom (Allah, Ekmek, Özgürlük)" (Son Devir, 2013). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, during the Gezi Protests in June 2013, the group conducted Friday Prayers in Taksim Square, which garnered public attention. In all the events, the leftist groups were in solidarity with the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group in their religious practices. The next activity of the Anti-Capitalist Muslims in the post-Gezi Park Protests was the *Banquet on Earth (Yeryüzü Sofraları)*, an alternative fast-breaking dinner during Ramadan in 2013 on İstiklal Avenue. This was referred to in the media as Gezi's reflection on Ramadan (Taştekin, 2013).

With its increasing popularity in the social arena, Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam conception also found a place in the films of the post-Gezi period. As an example, the 2014 film *I have an Objection (İtirazım Var)*, directed by Onur Ünlü and screen written by Onur Ünlü and Sırrı

Süreyya Önder, aimed to give an anti-capitalist Islamic perspective to society. The main character of the film was an Imam, Selman Bulut. In the film, a man in the congregation was shot during the praying in the mosque. Because this murder occurred in the mosque that he served, Imam Bulut dedicated himself to finding the murderer. Imam Bulut, was a former boxer and a *Bağlama* player with a master's degree in anthropology—thus, an extraordinary person. While investigating the murder, Bulut learns that the victim was a loan shark, who was also a child sex abuser and had raped the wife of borrower because he fell into arrears. Imam Bulut also finds that 1.5 million Turkish liras were transferred from victim's bank account to his own one day before the victim was killed. Later, he learns that the victim's lawyer and the bank officer had made the transfer to hijack the money<sup>90</sup>. Thus, overall, the film's messages were that money brings evil and people's enslavement. According to Uğur Vardan, the film, in general, shows the 'necessary' messages about the issues that emerged with the Gezi protests, salutes those who lost their lives during the protests and opposes religious exploitation, unearned gain, pedophilia, large and small profiteers of the system, and bribes (Vardan, 2014).

As Vardan argues, selecting an Imam figure as the leading man in the film shows its connection to the Gezi protests. As mentioned in the previous sub-section, one of the most important discourses from the government side to keep conservative Muslims from participating in the protests claimed that the protesters "drank alcohol in the mosque". Against these accusations, Fuat Yıldırım, *Muezzin* of the *Dolmabahçe Mosque*, which the protesters entered to escape from the police attack, told the media that "I did not see that kind of thing" (Quoted in Ibid). Because of this response, he was relegated to a different working position. According to Vardan, Yıldırım listened to the voice of his conscience, and showed the honesty that should be in all people (Ibid). In this context, *I have an Objection* portrays that kind of Imam, who does not obey the hegemony but struggles against the hegemonic system with an aim of showing the real Islam to the public. Concerning the practice of religion, according to Sırrı Süreyya Önder, the Imam of this film could be analyzed as following folk Islam<sup>91</sup> (Arman, 2014). For Önder, the folk assimilates religion into itself, which means

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<sup>90</sup> A detective comedy, the film was produced in 2014 by U10 Film. Serkan Keskin (Imam Selman Bulut) starred and the cast included Hazal Kaya, Öner Erkan, Büşra Pekin, Osman Sonant, Umut Kurt, Özgür Çevik, Serdar Orçin, Güler Ökten, Mustafa Kırantepe, Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Tansu Biçer. The movie was shot in Istanbul around Karaköy, Üsküdar, Selimiye and Hasköy. The film was awarded best director and best actor at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Istanbul International Film Festival in 2014. The whole film is online available at: [http://bizdeozlediktv.web.tv/video/itirazim-var-2014\\_\\_ptvypxues6](http://bizdeozlediktv.web.tv/video/itirazim-var-2014__ptvypxues6) (Last accessed 01.03.2018).

<sup>91</sup> Here, Önder refers to Şerif Mardin's (1992) concept of *Volk Islam* (Folk Islam), which is not an orthodox interpretation of Islam, but means living with the cultural codes of Islam without making Islam a lifestyle. The

leaving the problematic areas of religion and constructing a suitable one for the public culture (Ibid). The socially active Imam figure in the film represents this idea.

There were also direct influences of Ihsan Eliaçık in the film. Discourses during the sermon by Imam Bulut between minutes 65:56 and 67:24 of the film, were extracted from Eliaçık's book *Property Writings* (2010). These discourses also show Eliaçık as an ideological role model to the Imam figure in the film, since Imam Bulut had an anti-capitalist Islamic stance and gave a historical critique of contemporary Islamic interpretation:

“The goods more than enough are ill-gotten, theft... Gold and silver are used to establish hegemony over the poor... Not to be given away... Committing shirk [worship other than the singular God] through property... Having a one-track mind of one-fortieth (Zakat)... There are those who moved to the rich neighborhoods to not go to bed satiated while the neighbor was hungry... Do you have any idea about the hungry and poor on the streets? What this religion's classical understanding of canon law (Fikh) says about the one billion hungry on the streets of this earth? This Fikh was generated by who had shot Omar, buried Abu Dhar al-Ghifari in the desert, stabbed Ali ibn Abi Talib, left Hussain ibn Ali thirsty, raped 900 *Sahaba* [companions of prophet Muhammad] women while plundering Medina and set Kaaba on fire with the catapults... Nothing [good] comes from that Fikh. It is the Fikh of riches, tycoons, and those pursued of having concubines and slaves. Also, it is the Fikh of Sultans, eunuchs, one-fortiethists and those who left out from dungeon the dead body of Abu Hanifa, which turned black and blue due to whipping. It is the time to stand up. As Abu Dhar al-Ghifari said “I wonder why those who don't find something to eat the whole night, don't go out holding their swords ready to fight.”<sup>92</sup>

This dissertation also aims to reveal the function of the internet and social media in spreading the ideas and conceptions of pluralist public intellectuals, and the film's broadcast on many video sharing web pages, such as YouTube and Dailymotion, also shows its increased influential capacity. The film's trailer, first shared on YouTube on February 25, 2014 and with 565,185 views by May 2, 2018, is one important example. Also, the sermon scene video

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examples show the interpretation of Islam in the general public arena in Turkey, which is regarded as folk Islam, originating in the Ottoman Empire. In Turkish folk Islam, one goes to the mosque weekly for Friday prayers, but does not pray five times a day, which is also a religious duty in Islam. Also, one abstains from alcohol only during the Islamic holy month Ramadan, even though in Islam it is forbidden all year round. Thirdly, in Turkish folk Islam one does not consume pork products, but as mentioned one consumes alcohol, or one has unmarried sexual intercourse, both of which are also forbidden by Islam. As seen in these examples, while some issues were selected in the cultural codes, others were dismissed, since these practices were found to be personally sufficient to regard oneself as a Muslim. These examples do not mean that all are applicable for everybody in Turkey, but they represent general public behavior. As previously mentioned, these are described in Mehmet Altan's (2010) *Urban Religiosity*, which contrasted the cultural Islam seen in Turkey to radicalized political Islam.

<sup>92</sup> These discourses of Imam Bulut during the sermon scene were extracted by the screenwriters from pages 385–391 of Eliaçık's book *Property Writings* (2010). The video of just the sermon scene in the film is online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggqvpDpXszM> (Last accessed 02.03.2018).

extracted from Eliaçık's book *Property Writings* was shared on YouTube on May 19, 2014, and had 141,298 views by May 2, 2018. Furthermore, videos of Eliaçık appeared in the 'coming up' videos on the right side of the YouTube page, indicating the related searches of viewers. At this point, it is possible to say that YouTube functions to influence viewers' ideas through the other videos shared in society, which people then discuss. This provides an arena for interaction in the public sphere, which also includes the internet as the most powerful contemporary tool for spreading ideas. In this case, the videos that are listed were shared by Eliaçık's personal YouTube account as well as other media accounts and viewed between 3,000 and 348,000 times by May 2, 2018.<sup>93</sup>

The increased popularity of Eliaçık's conception, seen as the subject of both public and artistic discussions from just before the Gezi Park protests, is also shown by the influential activities of the Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group. This gave Eliaçık his important position as an influential organic intellectual of the emerged new pro-transformation left historical bloc in the post-Gezi Park Protests. This new historical bloc, with the Kurdish political movement at its core, included historically excluded segments of society, such as the Alevis, LGBT people, women's movements and Anti-Capitalist Muslims. Thus, in contribution to this newly emerged pluralist structure of the left, Eliaçık published his book *Democratic Libertarian Islam (Demokratik Özgürlükçü İslam)* in 2014. In this book, Eliaçık (2014) underlines a society in which the priority of Islam is the civil and pluralistic mentality, rather than the power and the state.. Based on Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam conception, the book seeks to create a culture in which the people of Turkey all live together: Turks, Kurds, Alevis, Sunnis, Shiites, Assyrians, Yazidis, Armenians, Greeks, Persians, Arabs. By also bringing up the Constitution of Medina, which was made, based on the principle of equality, by Muslims, Jews and pagans in 623, during the prophet Muhammad's time, in the city of Medina in today's Saudi Arabia, Eliaçık sheds light on his desire to reemerge the civilian and pluralistic spirit of democratic Islamic understanding (See Eliaçık, 2014: 35–40). According to Semiha Kavak (2015) Eliaçık's book sparked a debate in the traditional pro-Islamic movements, influencing also the Marxist sphere. For her, *Democratic Libertarian Islam* provides a new understanding of the possibility of forming a new Islamic democratic model, by showing the wrongs of the traditional Islamic interpretation and also presenting the truth alternatively

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<sup>93</sup> For the video of the trailer of the film shared on YouTube see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0aO838kRII> (Last accessed 02.03.2018). The film and sermon scene were shared on other online video sharing pages as well. For example, the sermon scene was shared on *Izlesene* on May 7, 2014, viewed 12777 times. For the video of sermon scene on *Izlesene* see online available at: <https://www.izlesene.com/video/itirazim-var-filmi-vaaz/7414594> (Last accessed 02.03.2018).

(Ibid). With his book, as demonstrated in its covering of and commentary on important contemporary issues, Eliaçık contributed to the debate on the inclusion of Islam in the emerged new left, based on the Gezi spirit. This in turn provided a new understanding for the pro-Islamic movements and the conservative Muslims to live in a democratic pluralist environment with the inclusion of different historically excluded segments of society.

In conclusion, the increasing popularity of Ihsan Eliaçık and his concept of anti-capitalist Islam shows that a large segment of the society has been discontented with the sociopolitical and economic model of Turkey during the AKP period. This is evident also from Eliaçık's writing for more than 20 years without the public noticing, but beginning to get attention in the post-2010s. In particular, the emergence of the Islamic bourgeois through the increasing engagement of the pro-Islamic movements in the public sphere in the post-1980s and their harmonizing with the capitalist lifestyle has created its antithesis: resistance groups among the conservative Muslims, influenced by Eliaçık's ideas, such as Anti-Capitalist Muslims. The increasing popularity of Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam discourse in the public sphere effected the emergence of the mentioned anti-capitalist Islamic practices in the public sphere as an alternative to the bourgeois Islam. Concerning Islam's engagement in the new left and widening the democratic pluralist discourses in the pro-Islamic movements, Eliaçık contributed to the debate with his books, practical activities such as Friday prayers during the Gezi Protests, and TV programs and videos, which were also shared through the internet. An increase in activities of the Anti-Capitalist Muslims following Eliaçık's ideas clarifies that Eliaçık's conception was influential in extending these critical anti-capitalist ideals in society. Moreover, as was presented in this sub-section, Sırrı Süreyya Önder has also contributed to this process of the development of a new left including Islam within, with his artistic activities, comments and arguments through the media, including as a scenarist to the film I have an objection. In the next sub-section, this issue of the development of a new left through struggling in the intellectual sphere will be explained through the contribution of not only Eliaçık and Önder but also all other sample pluralist public intellectuals on the eve of the June 2015 general elections in Turkey.

#### **5.3.4. A New Left Toward Social Pluralism: Search for Equality, Freedom and Justice**

The period after the Gezi Park protests became an era of increasing inclusion of social groups and individuals in protest movements, which had a transformative character coming from transforming sociocultural bases. Struggling for the new Turkey from different ideological positions brought a new social texture, not only in the right, but also in the left with the inclusion of various historically excluded segments of society, as well as the youth, in this new protest culture. It thus changed the structure of the left, beyond its ideological positions, providing an alternative arena for the public to get directly involved in the protest movements by handling the contemporary problems. Moreover, the previous sub-sections gave examples of how the Anti-Capitalist Muslims' actions, increased urban public protests, and the inclusion of youth in a new protest culture in the post-Gezi period, signify the fact that society in Turkey was getting more participatory, and much more so that the military was losing its influence capacity in the public sphere. This was true not only for the political sphere, but also in the social arena. Furthermore, in the post-2010 Referendum period, this transformation also entailed the empowerment of the historically excluded social groups through their own struggling, and the civilian authority's handling of social problems, such as how they dealt with the Kurdish and Alevi problems and opened a new way for them through this new consciousness. Thus, it is important to clarify that the particular concern of the pluralist public intellectuals with this new left mentality was in handling the inclusion of historically excluded segments of society in the public sphere, as well as the youth opposition, which included a critique of the past aim at creating a new future.

This sub-section will show the contribution of all pluralist public intellectuals to the empowerment of this new left mentality. However, Foti Benlisoy's contribution, especially on the activist level, is emphasized, as a young pluralist public intellectual with a conception encompassing the renovation of the left as well as the youth view of these protests. Benlisoy's engagement with this youth segment requires reference to Gramsci, since he is an intellectual with an organic relationship to a social group. Hence, as Benlisoy mentions in his personal interview, he also aimed to continue this revolutionary mentality, centered on the youth segment, after the Gezi protests, to "critical questioning of the authority of the past over today by establishing a quizzical relationship with it" (F. Benlisoy, Personal Interview, October 23, 2015).



As mentioned, the post-Gezi process put new concepts and discussion points on Turkey's social and political agenda. While the process affected the wider social spectrum, the most important effect was seen on the left, since an attempt at renovation was started with this newly emerged pluralist conception based on the Gezi spirit. This renovation was parallel with the structural transformation of the Kurdish movement in Turkey. Thus, as mentioned in the second section of this chapter, during the 2013 Newroz celebrations, the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan had called for the end of armed struggle, as a strategic issue. The Kurdish political movement began to adapt itself ideologically and practically into this new process, so that the focus was no longer only the Kurdish issue, but also the class struggle issue. Thus, this led the HDP, which had been established in 2012 as the Kurdish movement, to evolve into a Turkey party, still based on the Kurdish problem but dealing also with participatory democracy, minority rights and egalitarianism. HDP was also a part of the Gezi protests, and its ideological position later showed that was based on the Gezi spirit.

According to Ömer Tekdemir (2015), HDP's radical democratic political project using the discourses "Turkeyfication", "the new life call", "building great humanity", and "ourselves" aimed at opening a new arena in the public sphere for the sociopolitical identities that had been dismissed at the end of the Ottoman Empire. On this point, it is possible to argue that there was no rational compromise as proposed by liberal democracies, but rather, the HDP, as the carrier through its social base of this pro-transformation left historical bloc in the Gramscian conception, came together with the various historically excluded social groups in their common ground to come further into the public sphere in the post-Gezi Park process. With the secular Kurds in the center, this bloc comprised Kurds (secular and Islamic), Alevis (Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, etc.), Leftists, religious minorities (Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Ezidi, Assyrians, etc.), ethnic groups (Albanian, Laz, Pomak, Turkmen, Georgian, etc.), Anti-Capitalist Muslims, women, feminists, ecologists and LGBT individuals. According to Tekdemir (Ibid), by being based on radical pluralism and so without marginalizing any group within it, the bloc aimed to create a new social identity without exclusion and alienation. Thus, on the basis of the pluralist ideas that evolved over time in the post-1980s, HDP, as an intellectual project, became not only a coalition on the political level, but also a historical bloc in civil society, and its aim came to be sharing power at the time of the structural transformation of the public sphere.

Pluralist public intellectuals became the major supporters of the HDP project in the post-Gezi Park process. They historically supported the ‘Turkeyification’ of the Kurdish movement, which would handle the problems not through ‘armed conflict’ but by political means within parliament. As such, Fehmi Koru, as a conservative who was, however, located in the opposition against AKP after the Gezi Protests, mentions in his column at *Haberturk* on February 3, 2015, that the HDP project would be “more useful for the struggle of the solution of the ‘Kurdish problem’ and the people living in the priority region” (Koru, 2015). In the column Koru also expresses his hope of HDP’s exceeding the 10% threshold in the June 2015 general elections. Koru’s arguments were reflected especially in the east of Turkey, where the majority of the population are religious Kurdish. The *Ağrıhürses* news page brought Koru’s arguments to the region on the same day, showing that “Koru put a brave face on HDP” (Ağrı Hürses, 2015). This is an important example demonstrating the importance of Koru’s arguments in local media groups, and showing the increased influence capacity of his discourses.

Hasan Cemal also showed his support for HDP in his column for the T24 independent online newspaper, titled “My Vote Is for HDP on June 7!”, dated March 5, 2015. As the reason for his support, Cemal refers to the “HDP as a nightmare for the Sultan of the Palace” (Cemal, 2015), which showed HDP as the main pluralist alternative against Erdoğan’s rule. Cemal shows pictures of HDP leader Demirtaş’s activities on the bike tour in Diyarbakır during the Presidential Election Campaign in 2014, and his family picture showing ordinary citizens, as support for HDP especially aimed at the educated middle class Turks, who were opposing Erdoğan. On the other side, in the same column, Cemal portrays Erdoğan inside the picture of the new Presidential Palace and writes “HDP’s exceeding the 10% threshold means the bad loneliness of Erdoğan in his palace of 1150 rooms” (Ibid). These were all offered as reasons to support the HDP in the June 7, 2015 elections. On this point, by sharing his critical position against Erdoğan and showing HDP as a remedy to him, Cemal aimed to attract anti-Erdoğan attention to the HDP project running up to the June 7, 2015 general elections.

Nilüfer Göle also showed her support for the HDP project; her personal interview reflects her view of the HDP as a transformative power and that Demirtaş’ candidacy in the Presidential Elections in 2014 was a “very important” process (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015). Göle gives importance to HDP due to their “Turkeyification” attempts, which Göle seemed supportive of during the interview when mentioning “a candidate from within the

Kurdish movement aiming to be a president to all Turkey” (Ibid). However, while it seems that Göle was supportive of the Turkeyification process of the Kurdish movement through the HDP, she was not a public activist, but constructed supportive discourses within the academic arena, such as at the Istanbul Seminars, organized by Istanbul Bilgi University and Reset Dialogues on Civilizations from May 26–30, 2015 in Istanbul. In the round table discussion on “*Rising Internal Tensions in Turkey: What Kind of Dialogue with Europe?*” on May 28, Göle mentioned the possible democratization features of HDP’s exceeding the 10% election threshold in the June 7, 2015 Election and also gave as a motivation for supporting HDP that even some of her “white Turk”<sup>94</sup> friends declared their support of HDP in the elections.<sup>95</sup> Göle thus attempted to legitimize the HDP’s Turkeyification process especially in the eyes of the Turkish and international academics but also of the chattering classes. In Göle’s conception this success would in turn bring the historically excluded segments of society into the public sphere as well, by empowering this pro-transformation left historical bloc in Turkey.

Mehmet Altan also showed his great support for the HDP project, not only in TV programs, columns and academic activities, but also by supporting activities devoted to HDP’s exceeding the 10% threshold in the June 2015 election. For example, in a video that was shared in the social networking websites by *Vote for the HDP! Initiative*, Mehmet Altan gave a voice over supporting the HDP project by saying the people’s vote was needed for the HDP to reach the 10% threshold. Altan referred to the 10% threshold as a “straitjacket that Turkey could not be free from over 35 years”, arguing that “HDP’s passing the 10% threshold would be the only option to eliminate the emerging Turkish-style presidential system.”<sup>96</sup> Thus, Altan invited the people to vote for HDP in the June 2015 elections through his support of HDP’s

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<sup>94</sup> The “white Turk” was a term first used by Ufuk Güldemir in his book *Teksas Malatya* (1992) and popularized in the literature by Nilüfer Göle to refer the Westernized, educated, laicist, elite Turks living in the great cities of Turkey. Thus, white Turks identify themselves as progressives and work in the military and civilian bureaucracy. White Turks were also known through their elitist discourses in the media, disparaging the way of life of the subordinated people of Anatolia, who were referred to as “black Turks” in the literature. For an important analysis of the white Turk-black Turk debate in Turkey see: Oyvat (2014).

<sup>95</sup> For the program of Istanbul Seminars in 2015, see online available at: <http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000022466> (Last accessed 10.03.2018).

<sup>96</sup> The video in which Altan made a call to the people to vote for the HDP in the June 2015 elections was shared on May 21, 2015 from the official Facebook page of the Vote for the HDP! Initiative and got more than 6000 views, 102 likes and 207 shares, see online available at: <https://www.facebook.com/hdpyeoyvergirisim/videos/1564515940476202/>. The video was shared on the same day on YouTube to attract a broader public, see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxAPHKSPzqI> and also in the other social networking sites of Vote for the HDP! Initiative, such as the Facebook group *Vote for the HDP - Break the Threshold - Stop Dictatorship (HDP'ye Oy Ver - Barajı Yık - Diktatörlüğü Durdur)* and twitter: @hdpyeoyver / @hdpyeoygirisimi. (All web links last accessed 19.03.2018). Thus, through the social media, Altan’s ideas about supporting the HDP project were in public circulation during and after the election campaign.

initiatives. In this regard, Altan's call to support the HDP can be understood as channeling the liberal votes by showing the party as the main liberal and pluralist alternative.

Sırrı Süreyya Önder became a parliamentary candidate for HDP for Ankara in the June 7, 2015 general elections (Konuralp, 2015), actively engaging in the movement with his support and participation. Önder was made a candidate for Ankara because of the possibility of his influencing not only some Kurdish groups who did not previously vote for the pro-Kurdish parties, but also the socialist left and other lower-class individuals who were discriminated against, since, as previously explained, Önder's position of socialism placed the common people in the center. In this regard, Önder, being an organic intellectual of this pro-transformation left historical bloc, was in the position of not only a thinker, but also a doer for attracting public attention to the HDP.

Ihsan Eliaçık was another of the major supporters of HDP project as an organic intellectual of the emerged pro-transformation left-historical bloc; his anti-capitalist Islam discourse was influential in attracting the conservative Muslims' attention to this new left. Eliaçık saw HDP as a chance to realize especially his ideas about anti-capitalist Islam as public practices. Eliaçık's support for the HDP project in the 2015 elections was visible in the social media. One of the first examples of this support and of motivating his followers to support HDP, Eliaçık shared Demir Küçükaydın's article "Vote for the HDP – Break the Threshold – Stop Dictator – Continue the Peace initiatives" from his personal twitter account.<sup>97</sup> Eliaçık's receiving comments, critiques and supports in his personal twitter account about the post show that he contributed through his ideas to motivating them to support the HDP.

Eliaçık contributed to this process also by giving an interview to newspaper *Taraf*, published on May 11, 2015, since in the interview Eliaçık showed his support of HDP's election campaign, mentioning their promise to abolish Diyanet, which he thought meant "making religion free from state monopoly and handing it over to the people" (Taraf, 2015). Also, Eliaçık revealed that he had the same Islamic roots as the pro-Diyanet Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and President at the time Tayyip Erdoğan and the previous discourses of the pro-Islamic movements in the 1980s and 90s were for abolishing the Diyanet. For Eliaçık, these

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<sup>97</sup> This support of Eliaçık's for HDP got comments, likes and retweets in his personal twitter account. Given that his ideas were followed mainly for religious reasons, Eliaçık's invitation to support the HDP got critiques and support in the comments on his twitter account also from religious individuals. For Eliaçık's tweet of Demir Küçükaydın's article see online available at: <https://twitter.com/ihsaneliacik/status/581082978006204416> (Last accessed 02.03.2018).

anti-Diyanet discourses of the pro-Islamic movements in the past were “Islam of the Religious Affairs” and “treason affairs (Hıyanet İşleri)”, and works of Imams “the officer of prayer (Namaz Kıldırma Memurluğu)” (Ibid). In Eliaçık’s conception, HDP in its election propaganda was constructing the same discourses as the old Islamic parties. Thus, Eliaçık aimed with these discourses to show the ideological transformation of the pro-Islamic movements and attract some of the people in the pro-Islamic movements to support the HDP to strengthen the hand of the party in struggling against the state’s monopoly over Islam.

As with Altan, Ihsan Eliaçık recorded two video talks during the election campaign for the Vote for the HDP! Initiative that supported the HDP’s exceeding the 10% threshold. In the first video, shared on May 10, 2015, Eliaçık mentions the importance of “breaking the threshold” to “say stop to the government’s action”, since for Eliaçık “the government committed three major sins that are written in the Quran and the other three major holy books [Bible, Torah and Psalms]”: “do not murder”, “do not steal” and “do not lie”. However, Eliaçık argues that the government committed these sins because during their time “33 people were killed at Roboski Airstrike”, and “ people’s money was stolen, collected in shoe boxes by some ministers, the government got a cut and the case files were destroyed” and the government “lied during the Gezi Protests by saying protesters dragged the ‘veiled sister’ along the ground at Kabataş and they hit the booze in the mosque, which were later shown to be not true”.<sup>98</sup>

In the second video, which was shared on May 14, 2015 by Vote for the HDP! Initiative, Eliaçık mentions “making Diyanet free” from state monopoly and spoke of HDP’s election campaign to remove Diyanet, an idea he had been “defending for years”. In Eliaçık’s conception a “civil Diyanet” was a requirement for “religious pluralism”. Eliaçık also mentions that in contemporary Turkey, members of the Diyanet are in the position of “being in gaudiness by driving Mercedes cars and having whirlpool baths at home”.<sup>99</sup> Thus, as an organic intellectual of the pro-transformation left historical bloc, Eliaçık shows with these arguments that he saw this HDP project as a place to achieve the projects he proposed with his anti-capitalist Islam conception. In this regard, during the election campaign, through sharing

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<sup>98</sup> For Eliaçık’s video including these arguments shared with the public on May 10, 2015 through YouTube see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGQrbG2qHHs> (Last accessed 03.03.2018).

<sup>99</sup> This second and longer video was shared by Vote for the HDP! Initiative on May 14, 2015 on their Facebook page and got more than 2700 views, 27 likes and 122 shares. For the video shared on Facebook see online available at: <https://www.facebook.com/hdpyeoyvergiririm/videos/1561422800785516/>. The video was also shared on YouTube, where it got 3433 views, 18 likes and 2 comments. For the video shared on YouTube see online available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHKNNZcK3U0> (All videos last accessed 03.03.2018).

on the internet, Eliaçık's arguments were intended to influence some conservative Muslims to vote for the HDP in the general elections of June 7, 2015. At the same time, Eliaçık's direct support of HDP was also a motivation for his followers to support HDP in the elections.

As mentioned, Foti Benlisoy was a young intellectual influential for youth inclusion in the protest movements and for transforming the left to a new pluralist alternative. By bringing the renovation of the left discourse to the public, he contributed to the inclusion of major excluded social groups within the emerged pro-transformation left historical bloc from the Gezi Protests onwards. In addition to this, Foti Benlisoy actively participated in the *After 10 Initiative*, an important example of the inclusion of the pluralist public intellectuals on the activist level to support this renovation of the left process by focusing on the HDP's exceeding the 10% vote threshold in the June 7, 2015 Elections. The *After 10 Initiative* was formed by activists, academics and intellectuals who were not active in politics within the HDP but were supportive of its principles, including bringing various historically excluded social groups into Turkey's public sphere, as well as its aim to exceed the 10% election threshold in the June 7 elections (IMC TV, 2015). With the slogan "to breathe let's form after 10 together", the *After 10 Initiative* came to the public agenda by sharing videos and messages from their social media accounts. Later, they began to ask for votes for HDP by distributing leaflets in the central points of cities. In doing so, they adapted HDP's "great humanity call" along with the "new life call", which the initiative saw as giving hope for everybody (Özgürlükçü Sol, 2015). They saw the election threshold as the major obstacle to the emergence of HDP's principles and focused on breaking this threshold in the elections. Through this initiative, aiming to mobilize the people to support the HDP's exceeding the 10% threshold in the elections, Benlisoy shared his ideas with the public with his articles and shares on social media.

In this process, Benlisoy used his personal twitter account to advertise the HDP and the *After 10 Initiative*, to call people's attention to them. As important examples, on March 24, 2015 Benlisoy shared the message "To breathe we say #After10 (#10danSonra) because our responsibility is bigger than the ballot box" with his additional comment "to breathe after 10" and on April 4, 2015 he shared information about several election meetings of HDP in different parts of Istanbul with his additional comment "Reminder: Three local meetings of

the *After 10* independent election initiative will be held tomorrow in Istanbul”.<sup>100</sup> Through his tweets, Benlisoy contributed with the aim of increasing the popularity of the *After 10 Initiative* as well as mobilizing especially the younger generation to support HDP.

Benlisoy also contributed to this process with his articles. In his article titled “After 10: Our Responsibility is Bigger than the Ballot Box”, published in May 2015 in the journal *Mesele* (and shared on both *Mesele*’s web page and Benlisoy’s personal Tumblr account), he argues that the reason to support HDP was that the “demands put forward by the HDP open an arena for the major social resistances and struggles” (Benlisoy, 2015a).<sup>101</sup> At this point, for Benlisoy “HDP functions to push the limits of the current political system in favor of oppressed and workers” and so “it is a political task that cannot be avoided for the social opposition forces to support HDP project” (Ibid). As seen in the article, Benlisoy aimed to keep attention on the Gezi spirit, which was shared especially by the younger generation as well as the oppressed from the Gezi protests and mobilize those groups to support HDP by supporting the *After 10 Initiative* which Benlisoy showed represented the struggle and resistance of the streets. Hence, for him, the *After 10 Initiative* is a campaign that reminds voters that “great and significant social transformations are the products of the struggle and resistance on the streets” and of their “call for the vote to HDP as demands of these struggles” (Ibid).

While supporting the HDP’s exceeding the 10% threshold, Benlisoy shared his ideas about the possible situation if HDP passes the 10% threshold; in his article titled “Is after 10 easier?” published in the journal *Başlangıç* on May 25, 2015, he refers to the process after HDP’s exceeding the 10% threshold as possibly “a tall order” due to AKP’s possible reactions (Benlisoy, 2015b). To eliminate these difficulties, Benlisoy argues that “flexible pluralist grounds needed to be constructed that would be open to including different social groups” and not “composed of the union of organizations” and “a political bloc” (Ibid). With his arguments Benlisoy wanted to influence the later situation of HDP. One point that is important to note about the function of Benlisoy in the *After 10 Initiative* is that Kıvanç Ersoy analyzed the initiative’s position and structure and determined that a Marxist intellectual

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<sup>100</sup> For Benlisoy’s official twitter account and his mentioned two tweets see: Tweet of March 24, 2015, online available at: <https://twitter.com/fotibenlisoy/status/580468195053735939> and Tweet of April 4, 2015, online available at: <https://twitter.com/fotibenlisoy/status/584330230141214720> (Last accessed 04.03.2018).

<sup>101</sup> For Benlisoy’s this article shared in his personal Tumblr account, see online available at: <http://fotibenlisoy.tumblr.com/post/118024039219/10dan-sonra-sorumlulu%C4%9Fumuz-sand%C4%B1ktan-b%C3%BCy%C3%BCK> and also the journal *Mesele*’s official Facebook page, see online available at: <https://www.facebook.com/MeseleDergisi/posts/470399326447882> (Last accessed 04.03.2018).

circle including Foti Benlisoy fulfilled the theoretical needs of the initiative (Ersoy, 2015).<sup>102</sup> Thus, this shows Benlisoy as a leading actor in the After 10 Initiative, influencing the group with his conceptions. As a result of this process, HDP passed the 10% threshold in the June 7, 2015 Elections with 13.1% of the votes to be the third largest party in the TBMM. As was stated in chapter 3, through the HDP this historical bloc comprising LGBT people, Alevi, women, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and especially Kurds, many historically excluded social groups were carried into the public sphere. Throughout this process, these mentioned pluralist public intellectuals were importantly contributing actors for this social transformation process with their organic intellectual function in this pro-transformation left historical bloc.

While it is not within the scope of this dissertation's covered period, the post-June 2015 period, unlike the pre-June 2015 period, gradually limited the voice of these intellectuals in the public sphere due to the hastening of authoritarianization in the political sphere. This started with PKK's resuming their armed conflict with the state soon after the elections, a move that reduced the public legitimacy that the HDP had gained with their success in the June 2015 general election, which was perceived by the public as not bringing overall peace to the country. In relation to this, the AKP government, although it had lost its single party government position after the elections, restored its hegemonic position through force, in the name of fighting against terrorism and ending the unstable political situation that resulted when the parties failed to form a coalition government after the elections. All these factors changing the public perception led to a return of the AKP's single governing party position in the November 1, 2015 general elections with the 49.5% votes. In the name of fighting terrorism, further developments included the closure of some media institutions as well as the banning of web sites on which these intellectuals were sharing their voices with the public. Moreover, some of these intellectuals were also on trial as alleged members of terror organizations. Thus, post-June 2015, after the period of analysis of this dissertation, is a period in which the sample intellectuals' connection to society was cut and their influence in the social and political process gradually reduced.

Concerning the above discussions, it may be argued that the pluralist public intellectuals put the post-Gezi Park process to good use by associating the transformation attempts since the protests with the dynamic public sphere in Turkey. Moreover, this use was in accordance with

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<sup>102</sup> In his post with the subject "Fwd: After 10 Turkey Forum Impressions" in *Radikal Demokrasi* Google Group, Kivanç Ersoy shared his impressions about the After 10 Initiative after his participation in the June 20, 2015 Turkey Forum meeting to discuss the June 7 election and the next plans.



the perspectives of increased resistance culture, the attempts at renovation on the left and the pluralization of the public sphere. This association with the dynamic public sphere, furthermore, attracted all sample pluralist public intellectuals to this intellectual bloc to support these popularized pluralization attempts, since not taking this position was regarded as supporting authoritarianism and the government's oppressive policies. It may be argued that this was an attempt to strengthen the Kurdish movement's position in the post-Gezi Park period since the Kurdish movement's Turkeyfication attempt with the HDP project had the implication of challenging this voice of authoritarianism in the political sphere and was providing a new arena for the major subordinated groups as part of the pro-transformation left historical bloc that emerged in the post-Gezi Park Protests period. In this regard, by being in the follower position, HDP was popularized by the intellectual sphere through influential discourses as a flag of democratization and of the pluralization of the public sphere. This intellectual support had a major effect on HDP's success in the June 2015 elections as a result of this Turkeyfication wave that also carried the major subordinated social groups including Kurds, Alevis, LGBT people, women and Anti-Capitalist Muslims to the overall public sphere in Turkey. However, the hastening authoritarianization after the June 2015 general elections destroyed the connection between these sample intellectuals and society, marking the end of their power of influence in the social and political sphere.

Overall, this section has focused on the debates about the dissolution of the intellectual bloc under the AKP's liberal right historical bloc as a result of the party's moving away from the major ideological position of democratization and pluralization in the post-2010s. In so doing, it has described the emergence in its stead of the counter-hegemonic sphere and pro-transformation left historical bloc from right before the Gezi Park Protests in 2013. Thus, section 3 sought to test the fourth hypothesis of the dissertation which contended that:

*With the decrease in the influence of the military and increase in the civilian authoritarianism of AKP government after the 2010 Constitutional Amendment Referendum, a power vacuum emerged in the social sphere, allowing still-subordinated social groups to come together as a new pro-transformation pluralist left bloc, reflected in the Gezi Park Protests in 2013, for which pluralist public intellectuals constructed the conceptual base and involved themselves practically, functioning to shape the direction of the further resistance that contributed to these subordinated groups' involvement in the overall public sphere toward the June 2015 general elections.*

To this end, section 3 has analyzed and assessed the social transformation process in the post-2010s, which entailed the increasing inclusion of the subordinated social groups, including Kurds, Alevis, women's movements, LGBT people and Anti-Capitalist Muslims, in the public sphere, based on the idea proposed by pluralist public intellectuals for the renovation of the left. While analyzing the establishment of a more pluralist stance for the attempt at a new left, section 3 demonstrated that the Gezi protests in 2013 provided a new arena for these social groups as a counter-hegemonic sphere based on resisting proposed cultural codes as well as the AKP's governing style. It also revealed the pluralist public intellectuals' function in this process: creating the conceptual base of the protests and shaping the way of the protests toward the formation of a pro-transformation left historical bloc. Furthermore, section 3 also exposed the function of these pluralist public intellectuals for the inclusion of these subordinated social groups in the Gezi commune that emerged during the protests. Besides covering the new social texture that emerged with the Gezi Park protests, section 3 also analyzed the emergence of the HDP project over the Gezi Park Protests spirit, as the political society of this emerged new pro-transformation left historical bloc consisted of people from various subordinated social groups including the secular Kurds in the center and Alevis (Turkish, Kurdish and Arab), leftists, religious minorities (Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Ezidi, Assyrians), ethnic groups (Albanians, Laz, Pomak, Turkmen, Georgians), Anti-Capitalist Muslims, women, feminists, ecologists and LGBT individuals. In this regard, the party's exceeding the election threshold with 13.1% of the votes in the June 2015 general elections was an important step in consolidating the position of these subordinated groups in the public sphere. Thus, section 3 demonstrated that pluralist public intellectuals, as the organic intellectuals of this pro-transformation left historical bloc, contributed to this success through their supportive comments and arguments in their columns, video shares and academic discussions, and also by being activists as well as candidates for parliament during the election process. However, this influential position of the intellectuals ended as a result of increasing authoritarianization in the political sphere after June 2015, which brought certain limitations for the private media and for the intellectuals concerning sustainable interaction with society. Thus, the analysis ended with the June 2015 general elections due to the end of this influential position in society of these intellectuals after that time.

## 5.4. General Evaluation

With insights informed by theory, this chapter has elaborated the contribution of the pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation of Turkey, particularly from the 1980s onwards. Chapter 5 has sought to demonstrate the function of the pluralist public intellectuals in this social transformation process: in shaping the public debates, supporting reform processes, and being actively involved in the social movements, between 1983 and the 2015 general elections. It has presented scholarly analyses of seven important Turkish thinkers whose places in Turkish culture deserve attention, exploring intellectual discourses in greater detail than previously attempted in the literature in order to reveal the role of the pluralist public intellectuals in the social transformation.

In the scope of social transformation, chapter 5 sought to demonstrate the contribution of the sample pluralist public intellectuals with their discourses and how the inclusion of different social groups has both expanded pluralist perspectives and transformed the public sphere. In addition to this, the analysis aimed to highlight the fact that, starting in the 1980s, these ideas contributed to a structural change in the social and political spheres of the republic through the social struggles. The ideas also promoted the pluralist perspective that contributed to the empowerment of the counter-hegemonic movements, and, in turn, became the bases of the pro-transformation historical blocs in this time period.

This chapter was organized into three main sections as well as a conclusion. The analysis in the first section covered the period from 1983 to 2002 and concerned the emergence of anti-militarist ideas in the social and political arena, as well as further democratization. The aim of these ideas was to downgrade the hegemonic position of the military and bring the historically excluded social groups into the public sphere with the support of sample pluralist public intellectuals through the influential discourses they constructed. Thus, in the 1980s under the Özal governments, the intellectuals ended their long silence of the Coup government years (1980–1983) and became more involved in the public debates (Özgüden, 2007: 94). On this point, the first sub-section covered Hasan Cemal. Through his position, from the 1980s, in the pro-transformation liberal right bloc with his discourses on the military problem, Cemal contributed to the process by expanding his ideas in his books and columns and by supporting also the Özal government's pro-transformation policies with the aim of freeing the social and political arena from the military's influence. The second sub-section covered Fehmi Kuru, as part of the pro-transformation liberal right bloc, for the period by starting from the 1980s.

Personally coming from pro-Islamic movements, he contributed to the process of increasing the pro-transformation mentality of the pro-Islamic movements, by writing a column in the conservative newspaper *Zaman* of Gülen Organization and participating in political discussion programs, both on the conservative private TV channels, and in the mainstream media. The analysis revealed Kuru's contribution to the development of a cultural and social rights mentality in the pro-Islamic movements. The contribution included motivating the movements to channel the EU membership process in order to achieve his desired social and cultural transformation. In turn, the EU-backed democratization and pluralization attempts brought the pro-Islamic movements into the public sphere during the 2000s.

The analysis in the third sub-section covered Nilüfer Göle, since, starting from the 1990s, her 'forbidden modern' discourse became a leading discussion point to open the gate of Turkey's laicist public sphere to the religious veiled women. With her forbidden modern discourse, Göle was arguing for the possibility of conservative Muslims, with their religious symbols, being a part of modernism. The analysis demonstrated that Göle contributed to the process of conservative Muslims' engagement in modernism toward the 2000s by legitimizing their attempts with her scholarly works and public discussions. The fourth sub-section covered Mehmet Altan with his famous second republic discourse and his description of adorning the republic with democracy, referring to the increased interaction among the citizens and increasing demands for transformation in the 1990s, especially from pro-Islamic movements and the Kurds. Altan, with his concept of second republic, contributed to the process a point of criticism of Turkey's Kemalist republic and a demand for more democracy and pluralism for the pro-transformation groups that were a major discussion point in the 2000s within the AKP's pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc. An example in this section was the second republic discourse being a major ideological base for the YDH project in the 1990s.

In the second section, the analysis covered these intellectuals' organic functions in the pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc under the AKP project in the 2000s. In the first sub-section, the analysis covered Hasan Cemal, Mehmet Altan and Fehmi Kuru's engagement in the debates on empowering the civilian government, with their opposition to the military's influential position in the social and political arena. The analysis revealed their contributions through their books and columns as well as by legitimizing the government-backed sociopolitical processes (e.g., the Ergenekon Trials etc.) to take the military out of the civilian social and political arena. In the second sub-section, within the continued Islamic transformism debate from the 1980s, the contributions of Fehmi Kuru, Nilüfer Göle and

Mehmet Altan were presented with their influential books, columns and artistic activities, for example Göle's Forbidden Modern Exhibition in 2007, that aimed to legitimize the process of Islam's and pro-Islamic movements' being part of the public sphere in the 2000s. In this regard, by presenting the possibility of engaging Islam in both modernity and the liberal pluralist mentality, they contributed to legitimizing the AKP government's actions, starting with veiled women's inclusion in the public sphere from the 2000s.

The third sub-section presented the contribution of Fehmi Kuru, Hasan Cemal, Mehmet Altan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder to the process of the Turkeyification of the Kurds. The analysis demonstrated their contribution to legitimizing the government-backed Solution Process to the Kurdish problem. The analysis revealed the contribution of Fehmi Kuru in his columns: giving an idea of the cost to the state of fighting the PKK and bringing the solution of the problem as offering mutual benefits. Hasan Cemal and Mehmet Altan's contribution to the debate was presented as bringing the human dimension of the problem to the forefront in order to also legitimize the Kurdish movement's presence at the negotiation table on the way to Turkeyification, especially during the Solution Process from 2009. Sırrı Süreyya Önder's contribution as a mediator during the talks between the PKK and the state was presented; this position let Önder share his ideas by constructing influential discourses to attract the public and increase support for the process. The fourth sub-section analyzed how the support of pluralist public intellectuals legitimized the AKP's attempts at making structural changes of the state by weakening the military and judiciary's power over the civilian government with the 2010 Referendum for Constitutional Change. The analysis shows the contributions of Fehmi Kuru, Hasan Cemal and Mehmet Altan to passing the constitutional changes through their supportive arguments in their columns and their engagement in the process. Thus, the analysis presented their contributions to legitimizing the process of taking the military out of the political arena and instead opening an arena for the civilian government's control over the military and judiciary.

The third section first presented the dissolution of the intellectual bloc that came along with the dissolution of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc in the post-2010s. Moreover, it showed the emergence of a new counter-hegemonic sphere leading to the Gezi protests and the evolution of that sphere in the pro-transformation left historical bloc during the Gezi Park protests, including major historically excluded social groups such as Kurds, Alevis, LGBT people, women and Anti-Capitalist Muslims. In this regard, in the first sub-section, the analysis dealt with the contribution of Foti Benlisoy to the emergence of this new

pluralist left mentality that functioned as a conceptual base for bringing these excluded groups into the public sphere. He was one of the major actors, bringing this idea of the renovation of the left to the public discussions with his articles and columns starting at the end of the 2000s that suggested how he thought the left should handle the youth and the oppressed and showed the effect of neoliberal policies. The analysis also revealed his contribution to the emergence of Gezi Protests in 2013 based on his proposed renovation of the left conception.

The second sub-section analyzed the emergence of Gezi Protests in 2013, which served as a forum to carry Turkey's historically excluded social groups, such as Kurds, Alevis, women, LGBT people and Anti-Capitalist Muslims, into the public sphere, and the intellectuals' function within this. Thus, in connection to what Zbigniew Brzezinski (2009: 53) calls the "global political awakening" based on the uprisings of major excluded social groups around the world, the Gezi Protests in 2013 provided new spaces for traditionally oppressed groups in Turkey. The analysis revealed the contribution of Sırrı Süreyya Önder with his attempts to stop the heavy machinery in the first days of the protests and his social media invitations to the subordinated people, with discourses based on resistance, to widen the protests in the overall public arena. The analysis also included Ihsan Eliaçık as he became influential as Imam of the Friday prayers and by his followers organizing Islamic holy nights celebrations with the protesters during the protests. The analysis revealed that Eliaçık's being in the protests and these Islamic practices during the protests functioned to change the perception of the protests, from being a secular uprising against an Islamist government to an uprising also including the religious people against an authoritarian government. The analysis also presented Eliaçık's contribution to widening the protests by using social media to motivate some religious people to participate and showed how the increasing popularity of his conception of anti-capitalist Islam in the public sphere was a major contribution to legitimizing the inclusion of Islam in the Turkey's new left. The analysis also included Foti Benlisoy with his contribution as a leader during the Gezi Protests by preparing banners and sharing information via his Twitter and Facebook accounts, which had the largest effect on motivating the youth and other subordinated groups. Benlisoy's contribution was revealed in the analysis as increasing the inclusion of youth and other subordinated groups in the protesting movements that gradually evolved into a new left based on this new anti-capitalist youth mentality.

The analysis in the third sub-section was based on Ihsan Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam discourse, which was popular especially from the Gezi Park protests onwards. The analysis

revealed Eliaçık's contribution to the emergence of this Islamic left mentality by channeling conservative Muslims' criticism toward neoliberalism as well as involving Islam in this new left with certain anti-capitalist practices. Sırrı Süreyya Önder's contribution to this process and the debate, with his artistic activities including his film, was also presented. In the fourth sub-section, the analysis covered the emergence of a pro-transformation left historical bloc under the HDP project that included historically excluded social groups including Kurds, Alevis, LGBT people, women and Anti-Capitalist Muslims with an aim to carry them into Turkey's overall public sphere. The analysis of this process included the support for this bloc, by having an organic intellectual position, of all the intellectuals with their columns, scholarly activities, interviews shared through social media during the process leading to the June 2015 general elections. This brought, in the end, 13.1% of votes for the HDP, exceeding the election threshold. Importantly, the analysis showed that while the organic intellectuals of this new left historical bloc were Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy, the previous liberal-right historical bloc's organic intellectuals also had supportive positions in this process because, as in the Gramscian conception, they were absorbed into this new bloc due to the new intellectuals' influential arguments (See Portelli, 1982: 106). Thus, all these examples mainly indicate how important the contributions of those pluralist intellectuals have been during the social transformation of Turkey in the post-1980s.

Overall, the analysis of the respective stances of the pluralist public intellectuals during the social transformation process from the 1980s onwards revealed that their discourses and proposed conceptions supported the democratization and pluralization of Turkey's ethnocentric regime paradigm. Certainly, the reason that the intellectuals identified the military as Turkey's most important problem, beginning in the 1980s, was the military's influential function in the political system of Turkey since its establishment. Yet the change in the hegemonic position of the military was regarded as important in this intellectual sphere for opening the way for democracy and pluralism. This was verified when the major reform process during the AKP government period in the 2000s followed these intellectuals' organic stance; thus the institutional change to reduce the hegemonic position of the military paralleled the inclusion of pro-Islamic movements and the Kurds in the public sphere through a major civilian reform process. However, authoritarianization in the political sphere after the passing of the 2010 Constitutional Amendment proved that the AKP government's capacity for reform is limited; the observation of this fact has opened the way to the counter-hegemonic sphere. It was based on the new left mentality, with its organic intellectuals,

reflected in the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 and including various subordinated social groups, such as Kurds, Alevis, LGBT people, women and Anti-Capitalist Muslims. The pluralist public intellectuals' conceptualizing the ideological base of this protest and shaping it through interaction with the public was an important contribution to these excluded social groups' inclusion in the public sphere. This was the case not only during the Gezi Protests, but also toward the June 2015 general elections under the pro-transformation left historical bloc of HDP. Even as the party's exceeding the election threshold with 13.1% of votes, with major support from the pluralist public intellectuals, was an important contribution to these subordinated social groups' inclusion in the public sphere, the increased authoritarianism in the political sphere after the election brought certain limitations for the media and these intellectuals to express their ideas to the public. One can only conclude, based on these historical facts, that while this process brought civilian authoritarianism into the political sphere, carrying major excluded social groups into the public sphere also brought relative pluralism to the civilian social sphere compared to the pre-1980s period.



## CHAPTER VI

### Conclusion

The above has considered the legitimizing effects of the sample intellectuals on social movements and reforms as well as their presence in the media in the process of the social transformation of Turkey between 1983–2015, especially with respect to the development of internet technology. In addition to their influential discourses, key to this analysis is considering the intellectuals' contributions to the social transformation process through their activity in social movements, counter-hegemonic spheres, and the historical blocs, as organic intellectuals. The focus has been on the positions of public intellectuals—not only thinkers, but also doers—based on a theoretical perspective in the Gramscian conception of analysis, which has presented their engagement in the social and political reform processes as well as civil-society-based social movements. These processes and movements offered an arena for increased interaction with the public, which benefited also from the technological developments in communication. The analysis also covered the media as an important arena for sharing the ideas of intellectuals, due to the increased interaction between intellectuals and the public.

The sample intellectuals in the analysis are specifically characterized as active followers of social lives, based on their own ideals and principles, connected to democratic institutions and civil society through an anti-militarist, pro-transformation position. Additionally, they have the position of empowering the subordinated social groups, with the aim of shaping those groups' ideas in their own desired way, as well as constructing influential discourses in the public sphere and questioning the hegemonic ideologies. The influential personalities of the intellectuals in the public sphere also give them a specific stance that was fed by their own education as well as an original way of thinking in constructing the original discourses. They have their own stances on the important problems not only in Turkey, but throughout the world.

Importantly, this dissertation has analyzed the pluralist public intellectuals in the context of the liberal sphere that grew due to Turkey's change in economic policy from the 1980s onwards. This sphere opened an arena for privatization and led to the emergence of the private TV channels in which the intellectuals were actively visible. Thus, in the long run, a new gateway was opened for the analysis of the relationship between capitalism and

democratization as well as the pluralization of the public sphere in a free discussion environment. However, the hegemonization dynamics of capitalist development in favor of the majority population, which was evident as well in the post-2010 Constitutional Change Referendum in Turkey, disproves this relationship. Hence, this is not the focus of the dissertation. Even though various dynamics have been influential in the process of social transformation in Turkey, this dissertation has focused on the contribution of the sample public intellectuals in Turkey's social transformation process by considering also other dynamics that were influential in the social transformation.

To this end, the first chapter introduced the dissertation. In the second chapter, major theoretical debates that deal with the intellectuals' function within the social classes, groups, blocs and the public sphere were summarized. The Gramscian conception, as the approach selected for analyzing the role of intellectuals during the social transformation process, was detailed. The conceptual debates facilitated the creation of a frame for the analysis of the functions of the intellectuals. The emerged meanings and new understandings from the conceptual investigation of the Gramscian conception have guided the analysis in the dissertation. In the second chapter, the intellectuals' function in the media as well as within the social groups, counter-hegemonic spheres and historical blocs during Turkey's social transformation process was presented to show how the Gramscian conception was compatible with the research topic. Thus this dissertation contributes to both the debate and the Gramscian analysis.

Following the theoretical chapter, the third chapter aimed to provide a historical narrative connected to the *first hypothesis* of this dissertation, which asserted that Turkey experienced a social transformation process between 1983 and 2015, undergoing a structural change of the state and starting to include major subordinated social groups in the overall public sphere. Chapter 3 comprehensively presented Turkey's social transformation process along with its historical background, from the perspectives of various debates including the effect of economic development as well as international, social and political effects. Accordingly, the process of social transformation was presented with several major trends, namely the development of civilian authority over the military, the development of civil society and civil movements and the involvement of Islam and pro-Islamic movements, as well as Kurds, Alevis, women, and LGBT people in the public sphere. Within the context of the transformation paradigm, the chapter ended with the change in the situation of intellectuals since the Ottoman Empire.

In chapter 4, the first part described the emergence of the pluralist public intellectuals through their function in the social process and the media's role in providing a sphere for the intellectuals. The second part presented the discourse analyses of the interviews with the seven pluralist public intellectuals, to reveal the major implications of their influential discourses during the social transformation process, as well as the positionings of these intellectuals and the subject positionings they gave the public.

Chapter 5 contained the application of the research and the analysis of the findings, which presented various positions of the intellectuals on the practical issues as well as their contributions to debates during the social transformation process. In this regard, the first section aimed to test the *second hypothesis*, which was that the pluralist public intellectuals' engagement with the civilianization policies of Özal in the 1980s in the liberal right bloc was due to their finding that bloc to be a safe haven against the military's hegemonic position. The first section sought to analyze the pluralist public intellectuals' pro-transformation positioning through their influential discourses both against the hegemonic position of the military and for the pluralization of the public sphere through the involvement of Islam and pro-Islamic movements and other subordinated social groups. More particularly, section one demonstrated that the constructed discourses of the sample intellectuals served as an effective means for shaping the direction of the social transformation. Thus, these discourses provided a ground for the civil society as well as the pro-transformation social groups to effectively deal with the social problems of the country, and in turn for reformist positions in the pro-Islamic movements, and specifically Erbakan's MGH, to lead to the formation of the AKP's pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc in the 2000s.

Section two of chapter 5 sought to scrutinize the important actions during the social transformation process due to the major reforms made under the AKP's pro-transformation liberal right historical bloc to advance Turkey's EU membership process in the 2000s. Section two mainly aimed to test the *third hypothesis*, which highlighted the pluralist public intellectuals' function as bringing the social problems onto the public agenda to legitimize the major reform process of the AKP government through an organic intellectual position. In order to test this hypothesis, section two traced the organic intellectual position of the pluralist public intellectuals in the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of the AKP in the 2000s. Section two also traced the intellectuals' contribution to the major reforms through their discourses and actions in bringing the military under civilian government, Islam's involvement in the public sphere through the increasing involvement of pro-Islamic

movements, as well as the Solution Process for the solution of the Kurdish problem in Turkey. Thus, parallel to pinpointing the organic intellectual position of pluralist public intellectuals during the transformation period in the 2000s, section two covered how the AKP government's engagement with the EU membership negotiation process facilitated these major reforms. Consequently, section two demonstrated that pluralist public intellectuals contributed to the formation of the hegemonic position of the AKP over the military as well as to the pluralization of the public sphere through inclusion of the pro-Islamic movements and the Kurds in process. Being organic intellectuals of the AKP project in the 2000s, they contributed through their publications, columns and TV discussion program participation, as well as through their practical involvement within the reform processes.

The analysis in section three considered the dissolution of the liberal-right historical bloc in the post-2010 period through the dissolution of the intellectual bloc and the emergence of a counter-hegemonic sphere against the authoritarianization in the political sphere. Parallel to this was the emergence of a pro-transformation left historical bloc with its own organic intellectuals, which has functioned since just before the Gezi protests in 2013. Accordingly, section three tested the *fourth hypothesis* of this dissertation, which contended that the Gezi Protests in 2013 were based on the new pluralist left mentality against the increased civilian authoritarianization of the AKP government that carried the subordinated social groups of Turkey, including Kurds, Alevis, women's movements, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and LGBTs, into the public sphere, and that pluralist public intellectuals contributed by constructing the conceptual base of the protests and shaping the direction of the emerged resistance toward the June 2015 general elections. Section three examined the continuation of this process of democratic transformation of Kemalist ethnocracy in the left social and political sphere in the post-2010s. The overall analysis in section three demonstrated that historically subordinated social groups including Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs, women and Anti-Capitalist Muslims came together as a new bloc and represented themselves during the resistance movements in the Gezi Park protests, with pluralist public intellectuals, as the organic intellectuals of the new bloc, functioning as legitimizing actors of these movements. The analysis also revealed that the socially constructed HDP project emerged as the new left historical bloc as an effect of the Gezi Protests' creating a forum for the major subordinated social groups. With the organic intellectual function of pluralist public intellectuals within it, the bloc functioned to institutionalize the involvement of these historically subordinated social groups in the public sphere toward the June 2015 general elections. All in all, these three sections presented the

social transformation process between 1983 and 2015 and the role of sample pluralist public intellectuals, through their discourses and actions, in it; they also clarified the sociopolitical situation of Turkey at the time that brought these intellectuals to the forefront. The analysis ended with the June 2015 general elections, when increasing pressure on the media and the intellectuals in an environment of hastening political authoritarianization ended these intellectuals' influential positions in society. Chapter 5 concluded with a general evaluation.

Chapter 6 will conclude this dissertation by discussing the major implications of the previous chapters. It is important to note that, since the research was based on the qualitative methodology of the cases of seven public intellectuals, it is not possible to argue that the research results, analyses and evaluations represent all public intellectuals in Turkey. Moreover, due to the fast-changing conditions of the social transformation in Turkey as well as the situation of the intellectuals, there is no claim that the analysis presents the most current developments. In contribution to debate and in order to fill the gap of understanding the intellectuals' function within the social transformation process, this research was undertaken to reveal their positioning and interaction with the public in the process of social transformation in Turkey and thus to analyze their contribution to the social transformation process. The aim of this contribution to the debate has been to open a new arena for further research and questions on the research topic. Overall, the results of this dissertation concerning the contribution of the intellectuals to the social transformation process are summed up in four major points below.

### **6.1. Civilian Hegemony over the Military**

Historically, the restoration of the hegemonic position of the military has been regarded as the major barrier to Turkey's democratization process. The sociopolitical environment during the 1980 Military Coup was a more institutionalized continuation of the problem. As was broadly explained in chapter 3, the establishment of the MGK and the forming of state institutions based on the hegemonic position of the military were the major developments of this institutionalization process during the coup government period between 1980 and 1983. Through their mission to protect laicism, following the Kemalist ideology, as well as their function of guarding against the 'internal and external threats', the military's position was to direct the country according to the desired principle of single ethnicity and cultural unity. However, as Şaban İba (cited in Görgeç, 2010: 50) noted, the military coup governance took

on a new spiritual character in the social and political sphere for absorbing the subordinated religious groups in Anatolia, which is the majority of the country, into their new ideological position. As mentioned in chapter 3, the aim was to employ Islamic discourse, and not just Kemalist principles, to the proposed Turkish Islamic Synthesis ideology.

Nevertheless, benefiting from the political vacuum in the post-military rule in 1983, Turgut Özal successfully formed a government based on liberal politics and capitalist development policies. During the Özal period, a pro-transformation perspective clashing with the hegemonic position of the military was formed, and a conviction emerged to eliminate the power of the military, toward a liberal, pluralist transformation of the country. In this process, the military was sensitive to Kemalist modernization ideology, which included laicism, and blocked the cultural rights of the Kurdish minority, and other minority groups, regarding them as separatists. Emerged anti-militarist perspectives from the Özal period also included minority rights and freedoms. Thus, in the present study, I have argued that all the pro-transformation perspectives that emerged from the historically subordinated social groups in Turkey were grounded in anti-militarism. In this period, new anti-militarist developments were seen in the social calls for individual rights, women's rights, neo-conservatism, environmentalism, religious rights and the civil society (Akçeşme, 2013: 214).

Within this pro-transformation debate during the Özal period, which focused on eliminating the hegemonic position of the military, the pluralist public intellectuals were positioned to contribute to shaping the transformation process through their influential discourses. In this regard, Hasan Cemal's contribution with his books *Waking Up to the Sound of Tanks* and *The Fear of Democracy*, both published in 1986 as memoirs of the dictatorial rule of the military coup government between 1980 and 1983, could guide future attempts to eliminate the hegemonic position of the military in the country. Cemal engaged the liberal-right bloc of the Turgut Özal governments in the post-military rule with the aim of achieving democratic governance by gradually eliminating the hegemonic position of the military. Thus, Özal came to power with the idea of a liberal economic policy, freedom of enterprise, less state bureaucracy and more rights for local governments. In his book, *Özal's Story (Özal Hikayesi)* published in 1989, Cemal (1989:320) sheds light on the reason for his engagement with Özal's policies: for him, Özal brought the idea that "the nation does not exist for the state, but the state exists for the nation". In this sense, Cemal's engaging to Özal's policies was a first attempt against the military's statuesque.

Fehmi Kuru, as one of the most important faces of the pro-Islamic movements in the media (Küçük, 2014), has been an important contributor to the empowerment of the anti-militarist perspective. In his contribution, he has directed the pro-Islamic movements toward the pro-transformation wave, rather than the military-backed Turkish Islamic Synthesis project which would absorb the pro-Islamic movements under the hegemonic position of the military. He has shared his ideas with the public as an important columnist for the *Zaman* of the Gülen Organization in the 1980s and 1990s and an influential face of the pro-Islamic TV channels mainly in the 1990s, such as Kanal 7 of Necmettin Erbakan's MGH. From the Özal period, Kuru's positioning was twofold: to direct the pro-Islamic movements toward transformism by emulating the Western countries that give no place to the military in their political processes, and to use a strong base in the public to create a psychological advantage for Erbakan's movement against the military (See Kuru, 1994a; 1994b; 1996; 1997; 2001a; 2001b). These goals were achieved chiefly through the establishment of the AKP in 2001 by engaging the pro-Islamic movements in transformism politics.

An important influential discourse in the 1980s and 1990s constructed as a guide to the elimination of the role of the military was Mehmet Altan's second republic discourse. As an important columnist at *Sabah* beginning in 1987, as well as an influential mediatic intellectual in the political discussion programs, Altan shared his concept with the public as well as the politicians. As explained in chapter 5, Altan's second republic discourse has been a reference point in many ways, such as for the YDH project established in 1994 and for the governing period of the AKP in the 2000s. With this conception, Altan (2001: 47–48) gave the idea that during the first republic, in which the military had been the major power, the rule of law was not applied and the oppositional groups were assimilated. The second republic concept was Altan's suggestion for abolishing the hegemonic position of the military in favor of democratic governance and creating pluralism by bringing the subordinated social groups into Turkey's overall public sphere. Thus, the 1980s and 1990s was the period in which the pluralist public intellectuals contributed to the emergence of the anti-militarist perspective through their influential discourses and literary products.

The 2000s was the period in which the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc under the AKP project developed, based on its organic intellectual Mehmet Altan's 'second republic' concept; its important aim in abolishing the hegemonic position of the military was to advance the EU membership negotiations process. By favoring the civilian government over the military, pluralist public intellectuals became the legitimating actors of the AKP

government's elimination of the role of the military. The pluralist public intellectuals' positioning against the e-memorandum of April 27, 2007 in which the General Staff warned the AKP government that presidential candidate Abdullah Gül's veiled wife was violating Turkey's laicist principle was an important example. These intellectuals, through their newspaper columns, were positioned in support of the government and against the e-memorandum and functioned to legitimize the strong stance of the government against the military (See Cemal, 2007; Koru, 2007; Altan, 2007).

The intellectuals' strong supportive positioning was also visible in the Ergenekon Trials, launched on July 25, 2008, to remove 'pro-coup groups' from the military, with the intention of empowering the civilian government over the military. Fehmi Koru's contribution to this matter had first come in 2001 in his column in the conservative newspaper *Yeni Şafak*. On April 30, 2001, Koru first mentioned the existence of a secret pro-NATO organization in the state, referring to a report dated October 29, 1999 titled *Ergenekon: Analysis, Structuring, Management and Development Project* (Koru, 2001b). With a credit for Koru, this report was printed on the cover page of the magazine *Aksiyon* of Gülen Organization in May 12, 2001 (Balci, 2009). This is an important example that shows the influential power of Koru's arguments, mainly in the pro-Islamic groups in the historical context. By bringing this Ergenekon organization into the public agenda Koru contributed to the development of the anti-militarist perspective primarily in the pro-Islamic movements. After the trials began, Koru also supported them in his columns, emphasizing that the Ergenekon secret organization was a US-made project and the government was taking the right step (See Koru, 2008). On this point, in a country where anti-US positions are very common, Koru's arguments aimed to legitimize this process to diminish the military's reputation in the eyes of the people.

Mehmet Altan also positioned himself to legitimize the Ergenekon Trails in the eyes of the public, popularizing them in his columns and presenting non-supportive positions such as "pro-coup mindset", "pro-Junta" and the "massacrer of democracy" (See Altan, 2008a). Especially during his participation in the political discussion programs, Altan accused some well-known Kemalists of being supporters of the Ergenekon Organization. Thus, as mentioned as an example in chapter 5, the arrest of his colleague Prof. Dr. Erol Manisalı from the Istanbul University during the 12<sup>th</sup> operation wave of Ergenekon Trials, shows that Altan's positioning was contributing not only to shaping the thoughts of the public, but also to the government-backed judicial process. Furthermore, Altan contributed to legitimizing the Ergenekon Trials with his book *Hazy Democracy Ergenekon Diary*, published in 2010. In the



book, Altan links the Ergenekon organization with the Kemalist hegemony and set out his aim of replacing it with his second republic concept. During the trials, Altan published his other book, *Turkey in the Mosque–Barrack Parenthesis (Cami-Kışla Parantezinde Türkiye)*, in 2012. By the time this book was published, the civilian government had started to construct its hegemony over the military and was tending toward authoritarianism. Altan’s book aimed to stop this process and, by capturing the powerful position of the military, direct the government to democratic forms of governance rather than authoritarianization.

Hasan Cemal also contributed his support to the attempt to bring the military under civilian politics with the Ergenekon Trials, with his book *Turkey's Military Problem*. Published in 2010, the book depicts Turkey’s undemocratic past under the hegemonic position of the military by giving examples of the politicians’ relations with the military that also presented the military problem as a civil problem. Cemal’s book was meant to contribute to the process of legitimizing the government’s actions against the military, majorly in the eyes of the Turkey’s educated liberal, westernist segments of society, by propagating this process as a step in Turkey’s democratization.

Moreover, the most important contribution of the pluralist public intellectuals to the formation of civilian government’s hegemony over the military was through their support of the “*YES, But Not Enough*” discourse during the Constitutional Amendment Referendum campaign in their columns and political discussion programs in 2010. Hasan Cemal’s positioning in support of YES was due to his belief that this referendum would carry Turkey toward becoming a Western democracy (See Cemal, 2010b). By propagating this idea, he aimed to contribute to the educated liberal westernist people’s supportive positioning in the referendum. Fehmi Kuru’s supportive positioning in his columns in the conservative *Yeni Şafak* was related to his belief that successfully passing the referendum would change the elite statuesque by replacing military and judiciary hegemony with the civilian government, allowing pro-Islamic movements, as the historically oppressed groups in Turkey, to acquire power (See Kuru, 2010). Kuru’s contribution to the debate was to influence the pro-Islamic movements to have a supportive positioning. Mehmet Altan, by calling the “Yes, But not Enough” discourse “so right and accurate” in his column, aimed to motivate the public to position itself with the YES vote, since in Altan’s conception this would bring his desired second republic, which was the basic position of the AKP government in the 2000s (See Altan, 2010c). Since Altan was active in both the liberal and pro-Islamic movements’ media associations, writing at the newspaper *Star* of the liberal wing at that time and engaging in TV

discussion programs of the pro-Islamic Gülen Organization, his contribution was to motivate both liberal and pro-Islamic movements to support this constitutional change in the referendum. These intellectuals' contributions to motivating the people to support the desired changes in the constitution in order to make institutional changes to end the hegemonic position of the military and restore the hegemonic position of the civilian government were evident. Thus, the change took place, with the 57.88% YES votes showing greater social support for the formation of 'New Turkey'. However, rather than a more democratic process, this increased power of AKP brought Turkey the beginnings of civilian authoritarianism, with the AKP shaping the military for its own needs, which was the major reason for the Gezi protests in 2013.

One of the important results of the Turkish social transformation process between 1983 and 2015 was that the hegemonic position of the military was replaced with the civilian government. Pluralist public intellectuals—in this case Fehmi Koru, Hasan Cemal and Mehmet Altan—contributed to this process by constructing influential discourses, beginning in the 1980s, that pointed out the authoritarian nature of the military hegemony and suggested an alternative democratic structure for the country. The first way in which pluralist public intellectuals used their influential discourses to act as guides was by publishing memoirs that presented the authoritarian nature of the military; for example, with his 1986 books *The Fear of Democracy* and *Waking up to the Sound of Tanks*, Hasan Cemal engaged Özal's policies. Another contribution has been with the political parties using them as a guide for the elimination of the hegemonic position of the military; for example, the YDH following Mehmet Altan in the 1990s and the AKP following him in the 2000s, and his shaping the way of Ergenekon Trials by influencing the judiciary process. An important contribution to shaping the ideas of the public was Fehmi Koru's first bringing the existence of the Ergenekon organization into the public eye in 2001 in order to influence the public about the emergence of the confrontation process. All these examples, as well as the sample intellectuals' strong support during the Ergenekon trials and the Constitutional Amendment Referendum process in 2010 for restoring civilian hegemony, shows that they contributed to the process of the creation of civilian hegemony over the military from the 1980s onwards. This has been evident also in the research reflecting the public perception that the anti-militarist perspective has gradually widened in society. According to a Metropoll survey conducted in 2009, 65.2% did not support the military's commenting on political issues (See Metropoll, 2009b). Also, the "Turkish Armed Forces and Society: Empirical Approach"

research conducted in 2011 shows that 89.4% of people surveyed answered that under every circumstance Turkey must be governed by democracy (See Gürsoy and Sarıgil, 2011). Thus, in the current situation, the civilian hegemony is already established over the military, due to the worsened reputation of the military in the eyes of the people after the Ergenekon and other trials and to the reduced position of the military at the institutional level after the unsuccessful coup attempt on July 15, 2016. Even so, due to increased civilian authoritarianism since the Gezi protests in 2013 and the restored hegemonic position of the civilian government over the military, state institutions and the public, it is not possible to talk about the emerged situation in Turkey as representing the desires of the intellectuals for a full democracy.

## **6.2. Islamization of the Society**

As has been shown throughout this dissertation, Turkey faced an Islamization process, beginning in the social arena and moving toward the political arena, from the 1980s onwards. Starting from the coup government between 1980 and 1983, the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis ideology came to the forefront as a political instrument of the military to absorb the pro-Islamic movements into the military's constructed nationalist discourse. After the Islamic discourse was brought into the public arena through the nationalism discourse in the coup government period, during the Özal governments, from 1983 onwards, counter-Islamization began, bringing a pluralist dimension of Islam to the forefront through the Islamic civil society based on Özal's pro-transformation politics. Hence, the Özal period opened the process for empowerment of the Islamic social and political movements including the Gülen Organization, Sulaymanites, Nur Movement and Erbakan's MGH toward the 1990s. Moreover, the pro-Islamic movements' empowerment through increasing economic development in Anatolia as well as the liberal policies from the Özal period provided the way for their engagement in the pro-transformation liberal-right bloc. Thus, although Islamic discourse had been brought into the public arena in the military coup period, the widening of this Islamization process began during the Özal period through the pluralist dimension of the Islamic discourse, which covered the major oppressed social groups in Turkey by locating Islamic communitarian solidarity at its core.

As this dissertation has revealed, Islamization has been one important element of the new liberal-right sphere that began in the Özal period. The pluralist public intellectuals' contributions to this Islamization process have been through engaging this Özal-era liberal-

right bloc, which had a pluralist dimension that included Islamic discourse. Specifically, Fehmi Kuru's contribution starting in the 1980s has been to bring the Islamic transformism idea to the forefront through the media: as an influential columnist at the newspaper *Zaman* of the Gülen Organization, in magazines and on TV, such as for *Kanal 7* which belonged to Erbakan's MGH. In that period, Islamization has progressed, and unlike the military's desired Turkish Islamic Synthesis, the nature of the political Islamism that emerged in the 1990s brought about the powerful positioning of the Erbakan's RP in both local and general elections. During this process, Kuru, in his columns, constantly supported the party against the military's strong oppression, aiming to direct it to reformism so it could be absorbed in the liberal-right bloc (See Kuru, 1994a; Kuru, 1994b; Kuru, 1996; Kuru, 1997; Kuru, 2001a). Fehmi Kuru's constant handling of this debate became an important contribution to the emergence of pro-transformation Islamism toward the 2000s, which formed the base of the AKP project as different from military-influenced nationalism within the Islam debate.

In continuation of this contribution to the Islamic discourse in the emerged liberal-right pro-transformation bloc, Nilüfer Göle has, with her 'forbidden modern' discourse in the 1990s, been an influential intellectual in the academic sphere (See Göle, 1991). Göle's contribution to this process of Islamization, the idea that Islamic practices such as the veiling of women could be compatible with modernity, has been an ideological support for the pro-Islamic movements' attempt to be part of the public sphere in which modernity has been the major driving force. Thus, the pro-Islamic movements' fight for involvement in the public sphere has been over women's headscarves, as their increased public visibility implicated the increased visibility of the pro-Islamic movements in Turkey. In addition, Göle's bringing the 'forbidden modern' discourse into the public agenda beginning with academic discussions contributed to the legitimization of the pro-Islamic movements' attempt to become involved in the public sphere also in the eyes of Turkey's liberal, Westernist, secular groups.

Furthermore, concerning the Islamization of society, Mehmet Altan has contributed implicitly based on his second republic discourse. Thus, Altan's conception entailed not only the oppositional positioning against the military, but also the pluralization of the public sphere through the involvement of the major oppressed social groups, including pro-Islamic movements (See Altan, 2001; Altan, 2004). Thus, Altan positioned himself against the military in the February 28 Process, in which the military carried out a post-modern coup in 1997 against Erbakan's RP, regarding it as a center for reactionary activities. After that period, the understanding of laicism and the possibility of a new secularist model in Turkey that

would also include pro-Islamic movements within it became the major discussion topic among intellectuals on the Abant Platform, backed by Gülen Organization. Altan, as an executive member of this platform, contributed, along with Fehmi Kuru and Nilüfer Göle, to the major discussions that shaped the way for the emergence of a reformist position in the pro-Islamic movements with the emergence of the AKP project in the 2000s.

Moreover, in the 2000s, in relation to this Islamization process, the pluralist public intellectuals' positioning in their columns and TV discussion programs was based on defending women's right to wear headscarves, in support of AKP government's attempts to involve the Islamic headscarf in the state protocol, universities and public arenas. However, importantly, their positioning involved not only their writings, but also artistic activities. As an example covered in chapter 5, Nilüfer Göle's Forbidden Modern Exhibition in Istanbul in 2007 was an important contribution to the debate during the fluctuating political environment in Turkey. AKP had nominated Abdullah Gül as a candidate for the Presidential Elections in TBMM in August 2007. However, his candidacy was not welcomed by the military and CHP, who regarded Gül as violating the principle of laicism by having a veiled wife, and who thought having a veiled first lady would damage Turkey's prestige. The military's issuing the April 28, 2007 e-memorandum and the Republican Rallies of CHP supporters in the metropolises of Turkey, such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, are important examples of this oppositional positioning. After Gül's election as president, Göle organized this Forbidden Modern Exhibition in Istanbul between October 17 and November 21, 2007 in contribution to the debate on the involvement of the Islamic headscarf into the public sphere. It presented different cultural practices reflected both orally and visually to show the harmony of modernity with the cultural and religious symbols made by artists around the world (See Istanbul, 2007). With this project, Göle contributed to the debate over the compatibility of Islam with modernity, which has also been an important contribution to legitimizing the AKP's attempt to involve the Islamic headscarf at the top of the state. Göle contributed to this involvement of Islam in the public sphere debate with her further books *Secular and Religious: Destabilizing the Boundaries* published in 2012 and *A Discovery Journey: Turkey, Islam and Europe* published in 2013 as the major reference points for this Islamization process.

In the 2000s, Mehmet Altan also contributed to this Islamization debate with his publications on legitimizing the transformation process. Thus, he published the book *Urban Religiosity* in 2010, which describes the effects of Islam's historical exclusion from the public sphere: it had become a rural religion that could develop neither itself nor the people who strictly follow it.

The example to prove his point is from the Ottoman period of Şeyh Galip (1757–1799), when religious people engaged in the philosophy and culture that contributed to the Ottoman city culture (See Altan, 2010: 9). In this regard, Altan contributed to the debate, suggesting that the emergence of the Taliban and other radical organizations was related to the exclusion of Islam from the public sphere (Ibid: 9–10). Altan’s arguments aimed to convince Turkey’s secular, liberal and westernist groups to allow the process of Islamization. Thus, Altan offered the idea in his book that a religious person could be urban and absorbed into the democratic system, contributing to human knowledge and culture. When considered from this point of view, this process toward engaging the public sphere in the post-1980s had already led to pro-Islamic movements handling academic activities, music and cinema as intellectual activities (Doğan, 2006: 57). Thus, Altan’s book was a contribution to legitimizing the AKP’s attempt to involve Islam in the public sphere. The TV discussions, organized academic discussions and the conferences in many cities of Turkey that were based on his urban religiosity discourse and his contribution to debate showed how popular his discourses were, and gradually the public came to agree with them (See Sakarya Yeni Haber, 2010; Erdoğan, 2010; Haberler, 2013).

Concerning this Islamization process, based on the AKP government’s opening an arena for the pro-Islamic movements in the state departments, various socially constructed Islamic organizations, including Gülen Organizations, Sulaymanites and Nur Movement created their own institutional network through the state institutions, just as in the military and the Ministry of Justice.<sup>103</sup> Thus, with the support of these organizations as well as others under the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc in the 2000s, AKP continued their attempts to bring freedom of religious practices in the public sphere. These started with the freedom to wear headscarves in the universities and continued, with a new government’s bill in October 2013, with total freedom in the public sphere except for the military personnel, police, judges and public prosecutors. However, in the practical arena, the right for these groups to wear a headscarf was also opened by individual attempts in some cases. As an example, a woman judge joined a session of the court in Istanbul Anatolia the Court of Peace for the first time on November 3, 2015 (Aydın, 2015). In this regard, pluralist public intellectuals engaging in this process with the influential discourses shared with the public in their columns, published

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<sup>103</sup> The cleansing of Gülen Organization members from the state departments, including the military and all ministries, after the July 15, 2016 failed coup, shows how powerfully this Islamization process effected the creation of a chain of religious organizations within the state departments over time.

books and practical events made important contributions toward realizing this kind of smooth transformation process in Turkey.

Moreover, it is not possible to talk about carrying the pro-Islamic movements into the public sphere through their traditional features alone. As was comprehensively explained in chapter 3, this process of conservative Muslims' interaction with modernity by engaging in capitalist economic practices brought new practices, such as hijab fashion, new music styles, new forms of art, education and a luxury lifestyle, in parallel to their increasing social and economic status in society. This Islamization process came not through the traditional Islamic understanding but through a new transformed version that combined traditional, modernist, Western and secular dimensions within it. Even though this Islamization process carried the pro-Islamic movements and the conservative Muslims into the public sphere, especially women's new practices of wearing the hijab were met with major critiques from conservative Muslims, because this apparel made religious women attractive, which was forbidden by the religion (See Meşe, 2015: 148; Yılmaz, 2010). In her 2012 book, *Secular and Religious: Destabilizing the Boundaries*, Göle explains this process as increased interaction between the Muslims and modernity bringing the removal of the boundaries between them, and new practices, both secular and religious, emerging in the public sphere (Göle, 2012: 131). The concept of these newly emerged figures shows that this process is an important example for the application of Göle's 'forbidden modern' discourse. Göle agrees and regards the forbidden modern as being in the public sphere, even "at the top of state" (N. Göle, Personal Interview, March 18, 2015), meaning that the way of life of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his veiled wife, in the new Presidential Palace of Turkey, is both modern and Islamic. Similar examples from the civil and political spheres show that the Islamization process has occurred in parallel with the ongoing interaction between the state and society.

As mentioned, the major debate about the visibility of Islamization has been with regard to religious veiled women's increased participation in the public sphere, from the social to the political arenas, beginning with universities and moving to other state organs. Religious veiled women's increased participation in the public sphere through engaging in modernity also brought changes in traditional gender roles as they developed self-consciousness and gradually left the oppression of men. Of course, this does not apply to every woman, but shows a general tendency. Concerning the intellectuals' contributions to this trend, Nilüfer Göle points out that her forbidden modern concept supports religious veiled women's acquiring their self-consciousness through participation in the public sphere. This process

opened the development of Islamic feminism in time. The religious veiled women's position on Islamic feminism emerged from the civil society and reflected itself also in the AKP governments' policies from the 2000s. As Nilüfer Göle points out, AKP government policies to eliminate violence against women, such as opening additional women's shelters, placing public service ads in the mainstream media, organizing conferences and NGO activities, show that the "state's Islamic feminism" emerged in Turkey (Ibid). An important example of these NGO practices is the activities of the pro-AKP association KADEM, which opened branches mainly in Anatolia, where religious conservative people constitute the majority, and, with the support of the government, works for the elimination of violence against women. These are all important examples reflecting the Islamization process in Turkey from the 1980s onwards.

This process of the Islamization of society under the liberal-right positioning was also a factor in the involvement of Islam within the new pro-transformation pluralist left discourses in Turkey's newly emerged left positioning from the Gezi Protests in 2013. Ihsan Eliaçık, with his anti-capitalist Islam discourse, had the greatest share in this involvement. As stated in chapter 3, pro-Islamic movements' engagement in the neoliberal policies from the 1980s, which was also hastened under the AKP project in the 2000s, caused the emergence of not only the Islamic bourgeoisie, but also the Islamic proletariat, who did not benefit from this engagement of neoliberal policies. The various implications of Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam discourse led to major ideological positioning for some groups of the conservative Muslims, who have been critical of capitalism. Thus, the Anti-Capitalist Muslims group, based on Eliaçık's ideas, emerged and through their practical engagement, which also included Eliaçık, contributed to the involvement of Islam in Turkey's new left. They were a part of Turkey's newly emerged left counter-hegemonic sphere during the Gezi Protests as well as the emerged pro-transformation left historical bloc toward the June 2015 general elections.

Moreover, the practices of Anti-Capitalist Muslim groups in the public sphere brought new meanings to religious practices, based on Eliaçık's ideas. These include fast-breaking dinners with simple food such as olives and bread, organized from 2011 onwards under different names—"Hotel Front Ramadan Dinners", "Faternity Iftars", "Banquet on the Earth"—by Anti-Capitalist Muslims during the Islamic holy month Ramadan to criticize the new Islamic bourgeoisie's breaking their fasting in the luxury hotels (See Emek ve Adalet, 2011; Saymadi, 2012; Taştekin, 2013). Their participation in the May 1, 2013 Labor Day celebration with the "Allah, Bread and Freedom" discourse and also critical religious practices during the Gezi Protests in 2013, such as organized Friday praying and praying over Prophet Muhammad's



rise to the Sky with the protesters, were important contributions to the involvement of Islam in the new left practices. In this process of involvement, Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam discourse has been popularly used in the public sphere, such as in the film *I Have an Objection* (2014) in which his discourses from his book *Property Writings* (2010) were used in a sermon scene. Thus, with his discourses, books and practical engagement, Eliaçık contributed to the process for the involvement of the Islam in Turkey's new left as an important contribution to the Islamization of society.

In summary, in the post-1980s, Turkey faced the Islamization of society in parallel to a decrease in the power of the military, a combination that opened the public sphere for the involvement of Turkey's major oppressed social groups, including the pro-Islamic movements, in the social transformation process. The Islamic conception of the people engaging with modernity within the public sphere also changed, beginning with the apparel of religious women, specifically the new hijab style, the practice of listening to music and the luxury lifestyle that neoliberal policies made possible. Pluralist public intellectuals contributed to this Islamization process by constructing influential discourses that became the conceptual bases of the transformation. They functioned to legitimize these Islamization attempts coming from the pro-Islamic movements in the eye of Turkey's secular, westernist and liberal groups. Fehmi Kuru, by engaging in the liberal-right bloc, contributed to the Islamization process with his Islamic transformism idea, aimed at bringing the pro-Islamic movements in line with the reformists, which he shared in his columns and TV discussion programs and in the intellectual discussion environment. Nilüfer Göle contributed to the process with her 'forbidden modern' discourse, which offered a way for the pro-Islamic movements, especially the veiled women, to become involved in Turkey's secular public sphere by interacting with modernity. Mehmet Altan's contribution to this process has been through bringing his urban religiosity concept onto the public agenda based on his second republic discourse. Altan's urban religiosity conception contributed to the debate by serving to legitimize the process of pro-Islamic movements' engaging in the public sphere with the belief that they could live confidently with democracy and pluralism. Thus, Altan aimed to legitimize this process in the eye of the public. Moreover, this process of Islamization happened not only in the right, but also in Turkey's new left, which emerged from the Gezi protests in 2013. Ihsan Eliaçık contributed to this Islamization process in the left with his anti-capitalist Islam discourse, which brought anti-capitalist practices with an Islamic interpretation to the public sphere. Consequently, it has

been shown that pluralist public intellectuals have contributed to this process of Islamization of society in the scope of Turkey's social transformation from the 1980s onwards.

### **6.3. Kurds in the Public Sphere**

As was clarified in the dissertation chapters, wide-ranging changes have taken place in the social and political spheres, beginning with economic change that empowered pro-transformation social and political groups in the post-1980s. The newly empowered situation of pro-transformation social and political groups can be best explained using the Gramscian conception of the emergence of the counter-hegemonic spheres. This means that while the hegemonic position of the military was constructed during the coup government period between 1980 and 1983, the major oppression and exclusion exercised by the military caused the emergence of counter-hegemonic spheres. Following this, the liberal policies of the Özal period opened an arena for individual and group freedoms in the social sphere that gradually empowered these counter-hegemonic movements. In this regard, Kurds have been struggling in this transformation process in the post-1980s, forming their own counter-hegemonic sphere as one of the traditionally subordinated social groups of Turkey.

Historically, the empowerment of the Kurdish movement came through already-established organizations within the Turkish left in the pre-1980s period. In particular, their torture and humiliation in the prisons during the coup government contributed to the empowerment of these organizations. During this period, the coup government was trying to absorb the Kurdish dynamic that emerged within the left into Turkey's ethnic identity politics, especially by supporting the invention of new theories that the Kurds had Turkish origins (e.g. the "Kart-Kurt" theory explained in chapter 5) (See Karataş, 2017). This opened the way for the emergence of the counter-hegemonic sphere of the Kurdish movement by empowering the already established PKK with increased activities in the post-1980s. Parallel to the PKK, the left-wing Kurdish political movement HEP also formed in 1990, separating from SHP and continuing their political activities under their own Kurdish party umbrella.

The pro-transformation line of the Kurdish movement was not only in the left, but also engaged with Erbakan's RP. Religious Kurds especially helped RP to win the March 27, 1994 local elections in the southeastern Anatolia region, in which Ahmet Bilgin of RP was elected as the mayor of Diyarbakır municipality, the largest Kurdish city in southeastern Turkey (Akıncı, cited in Çaha and Guida, 2011: 178). Substantially, RP approached issues on the

basis of Islamic communitarian solidarity rather than the military-backed Turkish Islamic Synthesis ideology. Thus, the RP closely connected with the Kurds in the region. Indeed, in 1991, the party's Istanbul Provincial Head Recep Tayyip Erdoğan presented a Kurdish Report to Erbakan, which stated that Kurds have "autonomous language" and referred to the state operations against PKK as "state terror" (Hürriyet, 2007b). Erdoğan's critical pro-transformation position in the RP times of the 1990s also brought this debate into the reformist AKP project; a significant portion of the Kurds of southeastern Turkey were brought into the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc in the 2000s, a major justification for socially constructed reform processes to make the Kurds part of the public sphere.

Fehmi Kuru's position on the Kurdish problem in the 1990s concerned the need for more freedom of thought; he rejected their being labeled as terrorists for their ideas (See Cumhuriyet, 1994: 12). This rejection is connected to his position in the intellectual sphere, as the sample pluralist public intellectual coming from the pro-Islamic movements, in cohesion with the emergence of the pro-transformation idea of pro-Islamic movements. It also reflects the position of the pro-Islamic movements of tending to follow the basic freedoms of society. Concerning popularizing this rights and freedoms issue of the minority groups, especially the Kurds, Mehmet Altan's second republic discourse from the 1990s provided a major ground for not only the Kurds, but also other subordinated social groups to bring their cultural agenda into the liberal-right bloc. Thus, his second republic concept, as the handbook of the liberal-right, was not only anti-militarist, but by eliminating the hegemonic position of military would offer Turkey's historically excluded social groups the opportunity to engage in the public sphere in the alternative second republic (See Altan, 2001; Altan, 2004). Altan's conception in the liberal-right bloc provided an important positioning for handling the Kurdish problem. In the 1990s and 2000s this positioning was also related to Turkey's EU membership strategy, as during the negotiation process the EU applied strong pressure for improvement with the regular reports on their observations. As an example, in 1998 the EU Commission Report indicated a requirement to develop a civil solution for implementing the Kurdish cultural rights to express their identity, thereby improving the democratic culture of the country (See EU Commission Report, 1998: 20). Thus, the idea emerged that, if Turkey was to continue with its EU prospects, improvements in safeguarding the cultural rights of Turkey's minority groups would be a must.

Even though the issue of improving the situation of Kurdish minority came to the public agenda through the discourses of the 1990s, major attempts at supportive positioning by the

pluralist public intellectuals first came in the 2000s. Thus, after the formation of the government in 2002, AKP provided a reformist discourse not only for the elimination of the role of the military, but also for improving the situation of the minority groups, including the Kurds. An important contribution from the intellectual sphere during the first half of the 2000s came from Hasan Cemal with his book *The Kurds*, published in 2003. In it he provides extensive historical context to the Kurdish problem by discussing the discourses from both sides, presenting the state and PKK as authoritarian in nature, aiming to create a supportive positioning during the reforms for this pro-transformation liberal-right bloc under the AKP project (See Cemal, 2003). Thus, Cemal had an organic intellectual function of legitimizing the AKP government's positioning for the solution of the Kurdish problem with his supportive discourses in this process. In this period, the reformist position of the AKP government for opening a new arena for the subordinated social groups, including the Kurds, in the public sphere continued despite strong opposition from the pro-military groups. Thus, Erdoğan brought the “sub versus supra identity” conception to the public agenda in the 2000s, locating the citizenship of Turkey as supra identity and all other ethnic identities such as Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, Armenian and Arabic as sub-identities (See Hürriyet, 2005b). In dealing with the solution to the Kurdish problem, the positions the intellectuals expressed in their columns and TV programs were supportive of this new identity setting.

However, the major contribution of the intellectuals to this process for Kurdish involvement in the public sphere was as major supporters and legitimizing actors of the Solution Process to the Kurdish problem, which started with the PKK-MIT talks in Oslo, Norway in 2009. As this dissertation has revealed by considering the government, public and intellectual discourses triangle, this process was the product of the social consensus that emerged when the pro-solution discourses that aim for the overall benefit of society were popularized. In particular, one of the important discourses coming from the government sources for the solution of the Kurdish problem, of particular interest to conservative people, refers to the economic benefits of solving the problem, by avoiding the huge expenditure of the armed struggle against the PKK (See Güçlü, 2007). Fehmi Kuru brought this economic benefit issue into the public agenda with his columns discussing the state's expenditure for fighting the PKK (See Kuru, 2009). Kuru handled the economic side of the solution in his columns from the perspective of mutual benefit. Since he was writing for the conservative *Yeni Şafak* at the time, he contributed to spreading this pro-solution mentality especially in the conservative segment of the society, which was the majority of the country. Due to his influential positioning in the

media in contributing to the emerged mentality on the solution of the problem, Koru was included in the government-set Wise People Commission in 2013 with other notable intellectuals, journalists and academics in Turkey. He was responsible for expanding the solution idea in the Aegean Region (Akşam, 2013). Koru's inclusion in the list shows his influential position in the Turkish public, attracting their attention to the Solution Process. Thus, Koru contributed to legitimizing this process in the eyes of the public through his involvement in the commission, which organized trips for public meetings and conferences.

Another debate concerning legitimizing this Solution Process to the public related to the human dimension of the Kurdish problem. Mehmet Altan's book *Humanizing the Kurdish Problem*, published in 2008, was an important contribution to bringing the human dimension of the problem onto the public agenda. Altan's aim with this book, based on his second republic concept, which promoted the idea of pluralization of the public sphere through the transition to a democratic republic, was to create a solution in the minds of people through "bringing the wisdom forward" rather than with political bargains (See Altan, 2008b: 37-41). While Altan was supporting this process of the solution of Kurdish problem, he criticized the political parties: both the pro-Kurdish BDP in southeastern Turkey for "suppressing" the Kurds in their municipalities and the AKP for not clarifying who perpetrated the Roboski Airstrike in which 34 Kurdish smugglers were shot by military aircraft in Uludere, Şırnak province in 2011 (See Oğuz, 2010; Tıraş, 2013). In this regard, Altan's position on bringing out the human dimension of the Kurdish problem, while both supporting and criticizing the parties, relates to his aim of attracting the public attention to the Solution Process.

Hasan Cemal also contributed to the Solution Process of the Kurdish problem, bringing the human dimension of the problem into the public attention, largely through his influential books and columns. During the Solution Process, Cemal published three books, *Be One with Peace* (2011), *Delila: A Young Woman Guerilla's Mountain Diaries* (2014) and *Kurdistan Diaries during the Solution Process* (2014) to support the process by keeping the public's attention on it, and to legitimize it, especially by including the PKK in the negotiations. In his books, Cemal's examples of the PKK militants' life and thoughts presenting them as human beings, different from the mainstream idea that they are terrorists, contributed to legitimizing the Solution Process in the eyes of the public. During the process, the government's negotiating with the PKK drew strong criticism from the public, especially among the nationalist groups; however, as Ruşen Çakır (2011) argued, Cemal brought the PKK reality to the forefront with the idea that a solution would come through dialogue.

Through his position in the Kurdish political movement during the Solution Process, Sırrı Süreyya Önder also contributed to the Turkeyfication of the Kurdish movement, with his actively engaging talks and as a mediator between the PKK and government. In particular, Önder was regularly visiting the imprisoned PKK leader Öcalan and sharing his messages supporting the Solution Process with the public. Thus, as an important contribution to the Solution Process, Önder read the Turkish version of the letter from Öcalan during the March 21, 2013 Newroz celebrations in the largest Kurdish city of southeastern Turkey, Diyarbakır, and shared his messages about transitioning from the armed struggle to democratic politics, to the PKK and the public (See Aljazeera, 2013a). While he was sharing Öcalan's discourses with the public, Önder also popularized himself and shared his own ideas with the public; they were also based on the Kurdish movement's tending toward the democratic politics (See Radikal, 2013c). Thus, his contribution, as a legitimizing actor of this passive revolution, has been to legitimize the Solution Process as well as the PKK's participation in it, on both the Kurdish and Turkish sides, so as to integrate the PKK into the democratic political arena.

Within this reformist process from the 2000s, the integration of the Kurds by absorbing the Kurdish resistance into the overall public sphere, beginning with the Kurdish language, took place throughout the the Solution Process. This could be regarded as the AKP government creating a passive revolution under the pro-transformation umbrella, as in the Gramscian conception, through a solution process in which intellectuals played the role of legitimizing actors in the reform process. This is a kind of social transformation, since the Kurdish groups followed this process, finding a similar wave of their ideas within it. As was comprehensively explained in chapter 3, this transformation process brought in the Kurds as part of the overall public sphere. This process continued with the Kurdish language courses in the 2000s, followed by opening state and private TV channels in Kurdish, starting a multilingual municipality in southeastern Turkey, replacing the names of cities with the old (Kurdish, Arabic, Armenian) names, giving Kurdish names to babies, posting Kurdish direction signs in the cities and opening private Kurdish-language schools. By supporting this reform process as well as the Solution Process, popularizing and legitimizing them in the public eye, the pluralist public intellectuals contributed to the development of a soft transformation process, in which Kurds would be made a part of the public sphere.

As all these developments in the process of involving the Kurds in the public sphere continued, they also empowered the Kurdish movement. Thus, against the authoritarianization of the government in Turkey in the post-2010 referendum process, the Kurdish movement

became a part of social movements, such as the Gezi Protests in 2013. GENAR's research conducted in June 2013 revealed that 15.8% of Gezi protesters belonged to the pro-Kurdish BDP (T24, 2013). Sırrı Süreyya Önder's active position during the protests also reveals the active participation of the Kurds and Önder's role in attracting them to the protests. Kurdish involvement in the Gezi Protests also made an important contribution to the Turkeyification of the Kurdish movement, namely Kurds' being part of the overall public sphere. Hence, the post-Gezi Park Protests brought a pro-transformation left positioning for the subordinated social groups who were part of the protests. Thus, in the aftermath of Gezi Protests, by locating the Kurdish movement in the center, a new pro-transformation left historical bloc emerged under the HDP project, which included not only the Kurds, but also Alevis, Leftists, other religious minorities such as Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Ezidis and Assyrians, ethnic groups including Albanians, Lazs, Pomaks, Turkmens and Georgians, Anti-Capitalist Muslims, women, feminists, ecologists and LGBT individuals and groups. The Kurdish movement was for the first time concerned with the rights and freedoms not only of ethnic Kurds, but also of other oppressed social groups, as the new Turkish left aimed to cover all of Turkey. This was an important indication that the Kurds were part of the overall public sphere toward the June 2015 general elections as well as of the success of the Turkeyification of the Kurdish movement that came from separating from the PKK insurgency. In this process, as explained in chapter 5, the pluralist public intellectuals contributed to the HDP's exceeding the election threshold in the 2015 general elections with 13.1% of votes, indicating that the Kurdish movement had been Turkeyified. The contribution came from their supportive positioning of the HDP project, legitimizing it through their discourses and practical involvement during the general election campaign.

In summary, the Kurdish movement first organized themselves in the 1980s, under the PKK, as the counter-hegemonic sphere against the military's oppression. Afterwards, during the reform process under the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of the AKP in the 2000s, the movement was mostly integrated into the overall public sphere. This integration came about through the involvement of the Kurdish language and culture in the public sphere as well as the emergence of the HDP project to cover all of Turkey in the run-up to the June 2015 general elections. In the 2000s, the AKP's handling of the solution of the Kurdish problem from the perspective of Islamic communitarian solidarity, inherited from Erbakan's MGH, brought the party into reform politics as well as the Solution Process for the Kurdish integration in the public sphere. Thus, beginning with opening Kurdish language schools, TV

channels and multilingual municipality activities, Kurdish integration, namely absorbing the religious Kurds into the public sphere, was achieved. Moreover, the Kurdish movement—because it was against authoritarianization in the public sphere and was part of the Gezi Protests for secular social reasons and, in the post-Gezi process, became the core of the pro-transformation left historical bloc under the HDP project—became Turkeyified, in line with the party’s vision to cover all of Turkey. The emergence of reforms in the 2000s, the Solution Process to the Kurdish problem, and the Turkeyification of the Kurdish movement all concerned bringing the Kurdish movement as well as the Kurds into the overall public sphere. The contribution of the pluralist public intellectuals to these key developments was through their discourses and practical involvement in achieving Kurdish integration.

The important contributions of pluralist public intellectuals to this process have come during the Solution Process, from 2009 onwards. Fehmi Koru, for instance, brought the economic benefit of the solution of the Kurdish problem to the public agenda in the popular debate during the first years of the Solution Process. Thus, Koru contributed to legitimizing this process in the eyes of the public, especially the conservative Muslims, among whom he was very influential. Altan’s and Cemal’s contributions, through their books and columns, were based on bringing out the human dimension of the Kurdish problem, by also legitimizing PKK’s part in the process. In particular, they contributed to increasing people’s emotional support of the Solution Process, which has been the major factor for this soft transformation process. Moreover, not only writing, but actively engaging in the Solution Process has been important, as in the example of Sırrı Süreyya Önder, who was part of the peace talks as a mediator between the government and PKK leader Öcalan. Thus, he contributed to the process by reading Öcalan’s letters to the public, including his messages of peace that noted his desire for the PKK’s disarmament. These actions increased Önder’s popularity, and this popularity gave him the chance to widen his own discourses and in time contribute to the Kurdish movement’s Turkeyification process. As mentioned, also in the post-Gezi Park protest period, the Kurdish political movement in the spirit of Gezi continued its Turkeyification process by including all of Turkey, not only ethnic Kurds, in the empowering HDP project as the political society of the emerged pro-transformation left historical bloc toward the June 2015 general elections. All the sample pluralist public intellectuals contributed to this process, supporting the empowerment of the HDP project to exceed the vote threshold in the election through their columns, video interviews, social media sharings and activism. Thus, HDP’s passing the threshold with 13.1% of votes was an important



indication of the success of Turkeyification for the Kurdish movement and of the involvement of Kurds in the public sphere.

#### **6.4. Development of the Civil Movements and the Pluralization of the Public Sphere**

As was explained in the chapters concerning the development of the civil society, the 1980s was a time of empowerment of the civil society, which started the ongoing process of social transformation. Beginning with Islamic discourse and also pro-Islamic movements' attempts to involve themselves in the public sphere, followed by the empowerment of the PKK and Kurdish movements as well as Alevi, women and LGBTs, the civilian arena became the place for the emergence of the new counter-hegemonic sphere against the militarist order. Importantly, whereas in the pro-Islamic movements, empowerment, for example of the Gülen Organization, Nur Movements, MGH and Sulaymanites, came as increased activities from major developed social groups, the Kurdish resistance came to the public agenda with PKK's first attacks in the southeastern Anatolian cities of Erzurum, Siirt and Şemdinli, Hakkari in 1984. As for bringing the voice of women into the public sphere, the first walk-out protest was organized in 1987 by Women's Association Against Discrimination, Socialist-Feminist Women, and Feminist Magazine (Moralıoğlu, 2012: 292–293). The Alevi awakening emerged in the 1980s with an increase in publications on Alevism and a growing number of institutions, radio and TV broadcasting toward the Alevi population. The first LGBT protest action happened in 1987: the occupation of the Taksim office of the Radical Democratic Union in Istanbul to protest the increased pressure from the police in Istanbul. These all show the increased self-awareness of the civil society as well as the beginnings of a push on the historic Kemalist republic's boundaries in the post-1980s public sphere.

Moreover, this struggle, based on empowering the civil society, to transform the Kemalist republic into a pluralist one by decreasing the military's influence in the country continued into the 1990s. Thus, the major developments that took place in the 2000s during the AKP governments not only eliminated the hegemonic position of the military, but also opened the public sphere to the historically oppressed social groups. In particular, Mehmet Altan's popular second republic discourse in the 1990s and 2000s served a legitimizing function of opening the way for the pluralization of the public sphere by eliminating the hegemonic position of the military. Thus, Altan's concept focused on "democratizing the republic" and

bringing the subordinated social groups into the public sphere (See M. Altan, Personal Interview, February 12, 2015).

Even as the reformism of the 2000s provided an arena for the pluralization of the public sphere, the major improvements within the transformation have been the abolishment of the military's hegemony, the pro-Islamic movements' involvement in the public sphere and Kurdish integration into the public sphere through major reforms and the Solution Process. Concerning the secular side of the country as well as the secular Kurds, Alevis, women's movements and LGBT movements, although some increases in freedoms and rights were achieved, there was no major improvement in the organizational recognition that hindered their integration into society and being part of the decision making in the social and political processes. The authoritarianization in the political sphere after the 2010 Constitutional Amendment Referendum also affected the civil society. The wider social support that used to be behind the AKP's historical bloc has dissolved due to the dissolution of the major pro-transformation liberal right ideological position and the intellectual bloc. A new counter-hegemonic sphere emerged with the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 that included secular Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs, women's movements and Anti-Capitalist Muslims as the major components of this newly emerged bloc, in which the new social relations emerged through increasing interaction by the participating groups and individuals.

Here, it is possible to argue that there have been improvements concerning the rights and freedoms of not only the Islamists and Kurds, but also the Alevis, women and LGBT people, who were the major visible actors starting from right before the Gezi Protests. However, in the case of Alevis, women's movements, LGBTs and Anti-Capitalist Muslims, their involvement in the Gezi commune and creation of cultural products were the major factors carrying them into the overall public sphere. Hence, in the case of the Alevis, as explained in chapter 3, despite the government-backed workshops for discussing the problems of the Alevis that started in 2009 and Prime Minister Erdoğan's 2011 apology for the "massacre" in Tunceli, Turkey (See First Alevi Workshop, 2009; Hürriyet Daily News, 2011), the Alevis' position of living in an exclusionary environment did not change. However, the Gezi Park Protests were important for enrolling Alevis as important actors in the public sphere. Thus, Gezi Protests provided an arena for the newly emerged pro-transformation left counter-hegemonic sphere and Alevis were a part of it. In the continuation of this pro-transformation left positioning, they were also a part of the pro-transformation left historical bloc with the HDP project. Thus, in this positioning they have gradually become involved in the overall

public sphere as major actors, especially in this pro-transformation left historical bloc. HDP nominated three Alevi candidates for MP in the June 2015 general elections, thus showing their involvement in the public sphere through their legislative positions as well.

As mentioned, the women's movements gradually evolved to be more active in the post-1980s, especially with veiled women's increasing involvement in the public sphere in the 2000s. Such involvement brought Islamic feminism to the forefront, with a struggle to increase women's participation in social and political decision-making processes. In the same direction, the Gezi Park Protests in 2013 also provided a major ground for the women's movements, with the resistance figures of "lady in red" and "lady in black" reflecting the women's suppressed reactions over time (Oktay, 2013). Especially, the increased involvement of the veiled women in the Gezi protests against the AKP government has been an important contribution to this resistance. This shows that the increased involvement of religious veiled women in the public sphere through the reform process from the AKP governments led to the emergence of their self-consciousness, and with more freedom they started to have a certain positioning based on their own will. Thus, the Gezi Protests provided a major ground for religious veiled women, as well as secular women, to express their own cultural products and contribute to the emerged commune through their own desires during the protests. While the Gezi Protests contributed to the empowerment of women in the public sphere, they also contributed to religious veiled women's gradual inclusion in the left, which became more pluralist and more inclusive after the Gezi Protests. The major examples can be seen from the HDP project as the pro-transformation left historical bloc emerged over the Gezi spirit. Thus, in the June 2015 general elections 40% of HDP MPs elected were women: 31 MPs out of 80 total, including 3 MPs with religious headscarves (See Çubukçu, 2015). Also, 18 women MPs with headscarves were elected for the AKP. Clearly, the social movements that emerged through the Gezi Park Protests provided a larger sphere for women to express their individuality concerning their own desires and women were gradually involved in the public sphere and empowered to make decisions in Turkey's social transformation process.

The 2000s also saw an increase in the activities of LGBT people in the public sphere. These activities included the *Istanbul LGBT Pride Parade*, which was first held in 2003, and the *Ankara LGBT Pride Parade*, first held in 2008. Both of these continued every summer until 2015, with ever-increasing numbers of participants (in 2013 an estimated 100 000 or more LGBT individuals and activists participated in the Istanbul LGBT Pride Parade) (Özer, 2013). These were successes of the reformist policies of the AKP under the liberal-right historical

bloc of the 2000s. However, these developments did not go beyond the organizational boundaries that empowered the LGBT people's own public sphere. Thus, from the Gezi Park Protests onwards, they were part of the overall public sphere on both organizational and individual levels. They were a part of the Gezi commune with their rainbow flag and so contributed to the newly emerged social relations based on the new left mentality. The Gezi Protests made the LGBT movements country wide: in the post-Gezi Protests period LGBT organizations started to be formed in many parts of the country. As for social practices, concerning the increased public visibility of LGBT people, the first unofficial public marriage ceremony for a gay couple was held in Istanbul in 2014 attended by a group of LGBTs as well as heterosexual people. Through the media's attention as well as the couple's sharing it on social media, the ceremony was widely viewed by society in Turkey. LGBT people continued to enroll in the new left, also after the Gezi Protests. Hence, after joining the counter-hegemonic sphere of the Gezi Protests in 2013, they gradually became a part of the pro-transformation left historical bloc of the HDP project toward the June 2015 general elections. Thus, 6 LGBT activists were nominated as candidates for the June 7, 2015 general elections: 4 from HDP, 1 from CHP and 1 from Anadolu Party. However, only Filiz Kerestecioğlu of HDP was elected as an MP in TBMM, as an example of the involvement of LGBT activists in the public sphere and specifically in the state's legislative body under the new left umbrella (See Haber 10, 2015b).

In the overall debate on the contribution of the pluralist public intellectuals to these historically oppressed social groups' involvement in the public sphere, it is important that some of these intellectuals (e.g. Mehmet Altan) had constructed various discourses as organic intellectuals of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc. Thus, by legitimizing the reformist actions of the AKP project, they first contributed to taking the military's hegemony out of the public sphere by gradually empowering the social groups, which provided the way for the process of pluralization of the public sphere. Hence, the Gezi Protests emerged in an environment in which civilian hegemony over the military had been restored, bringing civilian authoritarianism, and in which the civil society had already been empowered by the further reform processes. As this dissertation reveals, had the military hegemony still continued, this kind of civil uprising would not have been realized. In these circumstances, the pluralist public intellectuals, by contributing to the creation of the protests' ideological bases and supporting the protests through their discourses and actions, also contributed to the emergence of a kind of pluralist commune in the protests. A specific example is Foti Benlisoy

contributing to the process with his discourses on the renovation of the left. Thus, by popularizing this renovation of the left idea from before the Gezi Protests with his various articles and his 2012 book *The First Revolutionary Wave of the 21st Century: From France and Greece to the Arab Revolts, the Occupy Movements and the Kurdish Spring*, he contributed to the left's own transformation that left its sexist, nationalist, unitary position and instead involved the youth, LGBTs, Alevis, women and Anti-Capitalist Muslims within it, especially from the Gezi Park Protests onwards. Benlisoy contributed during the protests by writing banners and his columns and sharing in the social media, directing the protesters to his own desired transformation wave. His contribution continued in the post-Gezi Park Protests environment when, in 2013, he published the articles he wrote during the Gezi Protests as a book titled *Gezi Resistance: Turkey's Interesting Start*. He thus contributed to the continuation of the process by creating a reference book in the environment of continued resistance after the Gezi Park Protests. Based on this, the spirit of the Gezi Protest continued under the HDP project with the formation of the pro-transformation left historical bloc, with Kurds in the center and including Alevis, Women, LGBTs and Anti-Capitalist Muslims. Foti Benlisoy also contributed to the empowerment of the HDP project as an organic intellectual through his theoretical contributions of published articles and sharing in the social media. Moreover, he was also an activist in the *After 10 Initiative*, contributing to HDP's exceeding the 10% threshold in the June 2015 general elections, carrying Turkey's major subordinated social groups into the higher space of the overall public sphere.

Sırrı Süreyya Önder also contributed to this process through his resistance discourse on the neoliberal policies as well as the authoritarianization in the political sphere. By stopping the heavy machinery in the first days of the Gezi Protests and inviting people to protect Gezi Park in the scope of his proposed positioning of equal collective rights in society, he contributed to widening the protests to overall public participation. Like Benlisoy, he contributed to opening the left to a wider range of the public, including LGBT people, women, Alevis, Kurds and Anti-Capitalist Muslims, due to his influential position during the Gezi Protests in 2013. Furthermore, in the post-Gezi Protests period, Önder contributed to the formation and the empowerment of the pro-transformation left historical bloc under the HDP project as an active politician in the HDP and an MP as a legitimizing voice to widen their discourses in the social and political sphere. Thus, Önder made an important contribution toward the June 2015 general elections by attracting the left votes in the west of Turkey to the HDP project.

Ihsan Eliaçık also contributed to the Gezi Protests with his religious practices during the protests as well as by criticizing the AKP government for its neoliberal policies. Eliaçık's anti-capitalist Islam conception, already followed by Anti-Capitalist Muslims, gained popularity during the Gezi Protests by attracting conservative Muslims' attention to the protests, thus also contributing to the empowerment of the Gezi commune, which was functioning by carrying the Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs, women's movements and Anti-Capitalist Muslims into the overall public sphere. Thus, in cohesion with the ideological position of the Gezi commune, Eliaçık provided an Islamic understanding that would arrange social relations with a more equal base structure rather than focusing on the accumulation of money and power. He contributed with this understanding to the pluralization debate in the social transformation process. He has been also an important supporter of the HDP project as the organic intellectual within it. Thus, he contributed to the HDP's exceeding the 10% threshold in the June 2015 general elections with his video interviews in support of the *After 10 Initiative* and also his social media sharing and advertisements on the TV discussion programs. As the organic intellectual of this pro-transformation left historical bloc, Eliaçık aimed to legitimize the HDP project, by attracting the religious people to it. With the success of the HDP, this, in turn, contributed to the involvement of the historically subordinated social groups in Turkey's overall public sphere.

Moreover, during the election campaign in 2015, other pluralist intellectuals from the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of the 2000s, such as Fehmi Kuru, Mehmet Altan, Nilüfer Gölle and Hasan Cemal, had supportive positions, especially through their discourses on HDP's exceeding the 10% threshold. In the Gramscian conception, this was related to their having already been absorbed into the pro-transformation left historical bloc in the post-Gezi Park protests period because their previous intellectual bloc had been abolished. So, they were absorbed by the powerful discourses of the organic intellectuals of this new pro-transformation left historical bloc, such as Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Ihsan Eliaçık and Foti Benlisoy from the Gezi Park Protests. Thus, all pluralist public intellectuals contributed to this pluralization process by supporting the HDP project so that it exceeded the threshold with 13.1% votes in the June 2015 elections.

## **6.5. Concluding Remarks and Further Discussion**

To sum up, as this research and analysis shows, Turkey faced a social transformation process in the post-1980s beginning with the liberalization of the economy and its effect on the social and political sphere. As these effects were revealed, analyzing the emergence of the pro-transformation liberal-right bloc in the Özal period in the post-1980s also revealed pluralist public intellectuals through their organic positioning within that social sphere. This dissertation additionally revealed the emerged reformist perspective in the pro-Islamic movements toward the 2000s and its side effect, the formation of the pro-transformation liberal-right historical bloc of AKP in the 2000s. One important contribution to the debate was that pluralist public intellectuals were organic intellectuals of this bloc in the 2000s under the AKP hegemony and how they contributed to major reforms. Thus, the research revealed that in the 2000s, major developments—abolishing the hegemonic position of the military, Islamization of society, Kurdish involvement in the public sphere—arose through socially constructed reform processes to which pluralist public intellectuals contributed as the legitimizing actors. Chiefly in the 2000s, these organic intellectuals of the AKP project contributed to the pluralization of the public sphere by including some of the historically subordinated social groups in Turkey. Their publications, columns and TV discussion program participation, as well as practical involvement within the reform processes, were essential contributions to Turkey’s social transformation.

Moreover, while the pluralization of the public sphere during the 2000s did not make major contributions to the inclusion of secular Kurds, Alevis, LGBTs, Anti-Capitalist Muslims and women’s movements in the social process, their participation in the emerged Gezi commune during the Gezi protests in 2013 did achieve this inclusion. In the counter-hegemonic positioning, the engagement of these subordinated groups in the Gezi Protests in 2013 carried them to the public sphere. This dissertation revealed that pluralist public intellectuals, through their influential discourses as the ideological base of the protests that included the renovation of the left for a new pluralist positioning and resistance to neoliberal reforms and the civilian authoritarianism of AKP government and through anti-capitalist Islamic positioning, contributed to legitimizing the protests as well as the emerged cultural product in the eyes of the public. Through their engagement in the resistance that emerged from the Gezi Park Protests, the pluralist public intellectuals’ supportive positions have also been important to the emerged pro-transformation left historical bloc under the HDP project. With their support, HDP exceeded the election threshold, by carrying all social groups within the historical bloc,

including Kurds, Alevis, LGBT people, women and Anti-Capitalist Muslims into the overall public sphere.

Overall, this dissertation provides important contributions to future research on the roots of Turkey's social transformation through the roles of intellectuals. It has analyzed the period from 1983 to the June 2015 general elections, when the pluralist public intellectuals were in their most influential positions due to the media and the civil society. This dissertation shows that the transformation process in contemporary Turkey was based on the struggle of various social groups and movements, who were already engaged in the public sphere, even as they were historically excluded before, and who continued the political power struggle in the political sphere. In fact, this trend has continued: as a result of HDP's exceeding the election threshold in June 2015, AKP lost its single party position, provoking a political power struggle. No government was formed in time, so a decision was made to renew the elections in November 2015. In the meantime, armed conflict between the state and PKK began once again, due to the end of the Solution Process to the Kurdish problem. As a result of this armed conflict, PKK was cleansed from the cities of southeastern Turkey and HDP remained as the platform for Kurdish resistance in the political sphere. Although the post-June 2015 process empowered the ongoing authoritarianization in the political sphere through the AKP's victory in the November 1, 2015 general elections, a relative pluralist position continued on the social level among the social groups already engaged in the public sphere. Yet despite this engagement there has been a decrease in the cultural, social and ideological practices, such as, for example, the restraint noted at the annual LGBT Pride Parade in 2016 and 2017. This could be explained as authoritarian pluralism in the contemporary situation of Turkey. Thus, while authoritarian practices exist on the political level, a relatively pluralist environment exists in the public sphere, compared to the pre-1980s, with various social and cultural practices coming from different ethnic, cultural and religious groups, although decreasingly so.



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## **Interviews**

Interview with Fehmi Koru (January 2013, Istanbul – K. Çekmece)

Interview with Sırrı Süreyya Önder (April 2013, E-mail)

Interview with Ayhan Oğan (January 2015, Istanbul – Fındıklı)

Interview with Ihsan Eliaçık (February 2015, Istanbul – Fatih)

Interview with Cüneyt Sarıyaşar (February 2015, Istanbul – Fatih)

Interview with Cafer Solgun (February 2015, Istanbul – Üsküdar)

Interview with Mehmet Altan (February 2015, Istanbul- Fatih)

Interview with Hasan Cemal (March 2015, Istanbul – Bebek)

Interview with Nilüfer Göle (March 2015, Online (Skype))

Interview with Cengiz Alğan (April 2015, E-mail)

Interview with Foti Benlisoy (October 2015, Istanbul – Beyoğlu)