HYPERPOLITICIZED POST-POLITICS: THE CASE OF "CIVIC ATATÜRKISM"

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

ÖZGÜR UMUT BAZ

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

JUNE 2024

Approval of the thesis:

HYPERPOLITICIZED POST-POLITICS: THE CASE OF "CIVIC ATATÜRKISM"

submitted by **ÖZGÜR UMUT BAZ** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in Political Science and Public Administration, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

_____

Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Tarık ŞENGÜL
Head of Department
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

_____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fahriye ÖZÇOBAN ÜSTÜNER
Supervisor
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

_____

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Necmi ERDOĞAN (Head of the Examining Committee)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

_____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fahriye ÖZÇOBAN ÜSTÜNER (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

_____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kadir DEDE
Hacettepe University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

_____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Özgür Umut BAZ

Signature:

ABSTRACT

HYPERPOLITICIZED POST-POLITICS: THE CASE OF "CIVIC ATATÜRKISM"

BAZ, Özgür Umut

M.S., The Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fahriye ÖZÇOBAN ÜSTÜNER

June 2024, 243 pages

This study attempts to re-problematize and answer three interrelated questions by combining three corresponding sets of literatures. First, it re-problematizes the concept of Post-Politics. As a concept that has not been defined in precise terms in the past, the study at hand seeks to give it a proper definition, thereby making it relevant once again amongst faulty claims that the Post-Political age has ended, and give it a mode of operationalization that allows for its concrete scrutiny. Second, it re-problematizes the subjective repoliticization which emerged in recent years. Locating the said repoliticization, defined as Hyperpoliticization, within the symbolic realm of Post-Politics, the study seeks to analyze the said change and transformation in the subjective realm within the matrix of Post-Politics, thus rendering them compatible. Third, it re-problematizes the phenomenon of Civic Atatürkism (Civil Atatürkism) in academic terms. On a theoretical backdrop of Kemalism, Civic Atatürkism is contextualized, developed into a literature and its claims are analyzed in terms of it being the current mode of Atatürkism. These three realms are posited in combination in order for them to be analyzable in terms of each set with regards to the whole combination.

Hyperpoliticization in the subjective realm and Post-Politics in the symbolic realm is combined into "Hyperpoliticized Post-Politics", with its exemplifying phenomenon of "Hyperpoliticized and Post-Political as Civic Atatürkism". A qualitative fieldy study employing a Laclauian Discourse Analysis is established in order to discuss all of these issues in concrete terms.

Keywords: Post-Politics, Hyperpoliticization, Civic (Civil) Atatürkism, Kemalism, Laclauian Discourse Analysis

ÖZ

HİPERPOLİTİK POST-POLİTİKA: "SİVİL ATATÜRKÇÜLÜK" ÖRNEĞİ

BAZ, Özgür Umut

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Fahriye ÖZÇOBAN ÜSTÜNER

Haziran 2024, 243 sayfa

Bu çalışma, birbiriyle ilişkili üç soruyu yeniden sorunsallaştırmayı ve bunların yer aldığı üç literatürü bir araya getirerek mevzubahis soruları yanıtlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Yeniden sorunsallaştırılan ilk mesele, Post-Politika kavramıdır. Bu çalışma, geçmişte açık ve seçik biçimde tanımlanmamış olan Post-Politika kavramını detaylı bir şekilde tanımlamak, bunu Post-Politika devrinin bittiği iddialarına karşı yeniden güncel kılmak ve kavramı operasyonalizasyona uygun hale getirerek somut şekillerde inceleme imkanları yaratmak gayesini güder. Çalışma, ikinci olarak yakın dönemde ortaya çıkmış öznel siyasallaşma dinamiğini inceler. Hiperpolitizasyon olarak tanımlanan mevzubahis siyasallaşma, Post-Politika olarak tanımlanan sembolik boyutun içerisine yerleştirilir ve öznel bağlamda yaşanan değişim ve dönüşümler Post-Politik matris çerçevesinde incelenir. Bu sayede Hiperpolitizasyon ve Post-Politika kavramları, geçmişte iddia edildikleri üzere birbirleriyle uyuşmaz olmaktan çıkarılıp uyumlu hale getirilir. Bu çalışma, üçüncü olarak Sivil Atatürkçülük kavramını akademik bir çerçeve içine oturtarak ele alır. Kavram, Kemalizme yönelik yapılan teorik incelemeler yoluyla bağlamına oturtularak, Atatürkçülüğün güncel modu olarak değerlendirmeye tabi tutulur. Sivil Atatürkçülük Literatürü olarak adlandırılan

literatürün temel argümanları, bu literatürden hareketle kavramın (fenomenin) özsel nitelikleri incelenir. Bu üç soru(n)'un bir arada incelenebilmesi, bunların bir bileşim olarak ele alınmasından geçer. Öznel boyut hiperpolitizasyon, sembolik boyut Post-Politika ile tanımlanacak, bu ikisinin bileşimi "Hiperpolitik Post-Politika" olarak adlandırılacaktır. Bunun örneği ise "Hem hiperpolitik hem de Post-Politik" olarak adlandırılan Sivil Atatürkçülük'te bulunacaktır. Tüm bunları somut şekilde tartışabilmek adına, Laclaucu Diskur Analizi kullanan nicel bir saha çalışması inşa edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Post-Politika, Hiperpolitizasyon, Sivil Atatürkçülük, Kemalizm, Laclaucu Diskur Analizi

Dedicated to those who abled the pen

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADD – Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği (Atatürkist Thought Association)

ADT – Atatürkçü Düşünce Topluluğu (Atatürkist Thought Society)

AKP – Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)

CHF – Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası (Republican People's Party)

CHP – Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)

ÇYDD – Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği (Association for the Support of Contemporary Life)

İEA – İstanbul Ekonomi Araştırma (İstanbul Economics Research)

KAF – Konrad Adenauer Foundation

KASF – Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation

SEKAM – Sosyal Ekonomik ve Kültürel Araştırmalar Merkezi (Social Economic and Cultural Research Center)

TGSP – Türkiye Gençlik STK'ları Platformu (Turkish Youth NGOs Platform)

TSK – Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri (Turkish Armed Forces)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> "A science's level of development is determined by the extent to which it is *capable* of a crisis in its basic concepts"
> (Martin Heidegger, 1927)

> "The trouble Turkey has been facing in the recent years in areas of science, art and politics, is due to the lack of theory"
> (Sencer Divitçioğlu, 1967)

June 2013 was a cornerstone in Turkey not just due to its obvious political implications, but due to the fact that it marked a definitive end to a 30-odd year old *tale*: The *tale* that youth in Turkey was "apolitical"[1]. During and in the aftermath of Gezi Park Protests, popular discourse, newspapers, magazines and academic journals were flooded with discussions about the so-called demise of *the tale*, i.e. the particular mode of politicization of the youth being "apoliticism" in Turkey[2]. In its essence, what this *tale* of apoliticism proclaimed was not entirely wrong. Beginning with the coup d'etat of 1980, in an atmosphere of years-long oppression and violence, alongside growing neoliberalization and marketization of everyday life, and with the seeming politics of consensus in the 2000s, *the tale* could be said to be hinting at some sort of a truth. Nonetheless, rather than discuss whether the *tale* was true or not, it is important to consider how Gezi Park Protests were transformative of it. After the protests, the *tale* about the apoliticism of the "80s generation" simply faded away.

---

[1] The work *apolitik* has a very peculiar use in Turkish. Its circulation in everyday language is particularly common in talking about a sense of carelessness, blasé and disenchantment concerning politics. It is strictly used as an adjective, almost as an extension of subjectivity, a personal trait of some sorts. Although it sounds unusual in English, "being apolitical" is, interestingly, a quite common way of self-definition in Turkish.

[2] In addition to my archival research, I recall this from personal experience. In the first few days of the protests, all that the people talked about was how baffled they were in seeing the youth participate in the protests, from whom they would not expect such an exhibition of political consciousness and political action.

Having been part of the said generation myself, those born after 1980, as a rule of thumb, were immediately assumed be apolitical. Tanyaş (2015, p. 29) states that the discourse of 'the apolitical youth' had begun to circulate in the 1990s. In time, this discourse had come to function like a fact. A study done by Konrad Adenauer Foundation in 1999, *Turkish Youth 1998: Silent Majority Highlighted*, found that the youth was distancing itself from politics as much as possible, and its display of political activity was "very weak" (Konrad Adenauer Foundation [KAF], 1999, p. 117). Moreover, it showed that the youth, back then, was quite disinterested in the political and economic state of Turkey, with more than 20% of the participants having refrained from voting in the 1995 elections (KAF, 1999, p. 117). Demet Lüküslü suggests that all other studies conducted at the time found similar results about the disinterested attitude in youth towards politics (2009, pp. 145-146). Moreover, she argues that all generations born before 1980s (and 1990s, and 2000s) agreed upon the idea that the 1980s youth exhibited an apolitical stance, a careless way of life (2009, p. 133). What's more is that even the 1980s youth itself had internalized this idea of being apolitical and was critical of themselves and their peers for this, she puts forward (2009, p. 139). Nevertheless, Lüküslü does not agree with the idea that the youth was *actually* apolitical. She puts forward two main reasons for this. First, she contends that while there were apathetic, disinterested and disenchanted qualities in youth towards politics, this should be attributed to the political system itself and seen as *a* mode of politicization (2009, pp. 161-166). Second, she suggests that the discourse of apoliticism had its roots in the so-called "myth of Turkish youth", which dates back to the 19th century, and argues that the said discourse does not actually mirror reality (2009, pp. 14-17). Lüküslü suggests that the particular mode of politicization at hand, which resembles apoliticism, should be understood as a response to neoliberalism, a self-incurred conformism mounted as a tactic of survival (Lüküslü, 2008, pp. 293-295).

Gezi Park Protests had such a profound impact on the tale of apoliticism that it shook up the long-held assumptions, premises and hypotheses about the nature of politics in Turkey. Tanyaş suggests that the protests had "bewildered people (especially in the popular media) and challenged the discourse of the apolitical youth" (Tanyaş, 2015, p. 26). Many began to discuss the mode of politicization of the youth throughout history,

and with reference to the protests. In the media, some confirmed *the tale* and argued that with Gezi Park Protests, those who used to be apolitical had politicized, or "become political" (Gürsel, 2013; Molinas, 2013; Valansi, 2013), while some contended that *the tale* was never true to begin with, but only dissipated with the advent of the protests (Koptaş, 2013; Çayır, 2013; Öztan, 2013; Toker, 2013; Kürkçü, 2013; Aytekin, 2013; Erkmen, 2013). A study conducted during the protests found that more than 54% of those who attended did not consider themselves apolitical (Bilgiç & Kafkaslı, 2013, p. 7). Tanyaş, as well, found that those who attended the protests tended to distance themselves from apoliticism, arguing that they were not apolitical (Tanyaş, 2015, pp. 42-43). These results mark a strong contrast with the previous studies done about a decade prior, which all showed sky-high numbers and strong indications of an apolitical attitude (KAF, 1999; Lüküslü, 2008; Lüküslü, 2009).

Rather than a discussion about whether or not the tale was *actually* true, what's more important is how Gezi Park Protests functioned in transforming the mode of politicization and the various narratives about it. After Gezi Park Protests, the studies done in the years between 2013 and 2019 showed a rising interest in youth towards politics and the political affairs of the day. For example, a youth study done in 2016 found that 79,8% of the participants were either very interested or interested in the political, economic and social conditions in the country (Sosyal Ekonomik ve Kültürel Araştırmalar Merkezi [SEKAM], 2016, p. 418). Although other studies conducted in similar years found relatively lower rates of interest than that of the aforementioned study (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation [KASF], 2017; Türkiye Gençlik STK'ları Platformu [TGSP], 2018), they were still much higher than the corresponding numbers in the reports written about a decade or two earlier[3]. Therefore, Gezi Park Protests could be said to be not only transformative about the tale of apoliticism, but it could also said to have, itself, amounted to a change in the mode of politicization of the youth. Various studies conducted in the 2020s all seem to find very high numbers of interest in politics among the youth. For example, KASF's 2021 report (p. 23) finds that 95,1% of the youth follow the national and global affairs, suggesting that young people

---

[3] Obviously, research methodology plays a big role here in this relative difference, since the results vary depending on different questions, categorizations and conceptualizations.

are very conscious towards human and social values, prioritize contemporary scientific thought over traditional conservative values, are mostly Atatürkist-Kemalist in a political sense, are skeptical of the political landscape, follow domestic political events closely, follow international affairs, believe in gender equality and human & animal rights, are sensitive to environment issues, are low in trust regarding the basic national institutional structures (KASF, 2021, p. 27).

KASF's 2023 report indicates similar results as well, with an 85,5% of interest in current affairs (KASF, 2023, p. 18). Furthermore, in a similar fashion, İstanbul Ekonomi Araştırma's 2021 report suggests that "it is hard to say young people are 'distanced to politics' or 'apolitical'" (İstanbul Ekonomi Araştırma [İEA], 2021, p. 9). In a similar vein, Yaşar et al. (2021, pp. 879-880) argue, using the dataset for a research conducted in 2020, that the assumption that the youth was not interested in politics had become outdated, and that they were, in fact, displaying a political attitude. However, there seems to exist a paradox in this virtual interest. While the youth seems to be very much interested, or *engaged*, in the current political, economic and social affairs, they still seem to be very much distanced from *political participation*. KASF's 2023 report, albeit showing high numbers of interest, suggests that the youth "seems to be not very much politically engaged[4]" (p. 20). Therefore, in some sort of a contradicting fashion, the report follows that "we can talk about a youth distanced to certain political views, but a youth who follows the current affairs and will vote in the elections" (p. 20). The same report finds that 95,2% of the youth are not members of a political party (p. 18), and a report by Türkiye Raporu indicates that 92% of the youth had not, ever, engaged in any kind of protest (Türkiye Raporu, 2023a).

The exact *paradox* here lies in the following: *The youth is engaged in political matters as never before*, in that young people are quite aware of the political conditions, are conscious of political and social issues, and are eager to make themselves heard; *nevertheless, they still show incredibly low indications of political participation*. Almost all reports univocally suggest that the youth is not apolitical[5], but they still

---

[4] The use of the word "engagement" here should not be confused with the conceptualization of *engagement* developed in the later parts of the thesis. KASF's report refers to participation, as developed below as well.

[5] Even though KASF's 2021 and 2023 reports, respectively, indicate that 18,8% (2021, p. 381) and 17,1% (2023, p. 18) declared themselves apolitical, this seems to be considered unimportant by the

struggle to find appropriate concepts to describe their exact form of engagement in politics[6]. Furthermore, to add even more complexity to the *paradox*, even though young people are argued to be distanced from traditional forms of politics, and to show a distrust towards traditional political parties, political institutions and political actors (KASF, 2021; KASF, 2023; İEA, 2021; Ateş, 2021; KONDA, 2014; KONDA 2022), they still seem to be showing incredibly high numbers of turnout. A research conducted by Türkiye Raporu in 2023, covering those between the ages of 18 and 30, found that 89% of the participants stated that they would "definitely vote" in the 2023 elections (Türkiye Raporu, 2023b). In fact, KONDA's 2024 youth report suggests that "those between the ages of 18-30 believe that the most effective method for change is voting" (KONDA, 2024, p. 45). Thus, taking all these into consideration, the matter of what the exact mode of politicization of the youth is becomes increasingly complex. The youth seems to have gone through a process of *repoliticization* after Gezi Park Protests, *but such repoliticization does not seem to reclaim a politics proper*, hence the paradoxical nature of the said repoliticization. It is a very peculiar form of "repoliticization", as KONDA's same report shows that the youth strongly prefers social media activism over participation in political parties or NGOs (KONDA, 2024, p. 9). Amidst all this conceptual complexity and seemingly paradoxical characteristics, what kind of a mode of politicization the youth exhibits, then, is an issue that must be tackled in a more meticulous theoretical fashion. A proper theoretical discussion will not only solve the conceptual complexity, but also provide tools in discussing the phenomena at hand in further dimensions.

The study at hand will, thus, problematize first the seeming "repoliticization" (*hyperpoliticization*) of the youth; second, the dominant mode of politics within which the said "repoliticization" takes place, namely, what I will call the *Post-Political*

---

reports, in that both interpret the youth to be politically "involved" in some sense. What's more is that both these numbers are much lower, again, than those of the studies done in the past.

[6] For example, İEA suggests that the youth is not apolitical, but anti-political (2021, pp. 6-7). They argue that "anti-politics does not mean being distanced to politics, not engaging in politics, or being apolitical, but is a concept that expresses a distrust towards politics (political actors/institutions)" (p. 6). KASF (2023) similarly has trouble defining whether the youth is disengaged or disinterested in engaging in traditional forms of politics, while still arguing that they are not exactly apolitical. Ateş (2021), in a similar fashion, points to a similar dynamic and chooses to call them "depoliticized", rather than apolitical. This usage has nothing to do with the usage of *depoliticization* in this thesis.

condition[7]; and third, the *phenomenon* of "Civic Atatürkism", an example that perfecly demonstrates both of these dimensions. These three dimensions will be handled with the combination of three correlating sets of concepts and three correlating literatures. In order to remain faithful to the synthetic method of explication employed in this thesis, in the Introduction, the concept of hyperpoliticization will be discussed, and the relevant introductory themes about Post-Politics and Civic Atatürkism will be brought forth. In Chapter 2, a precise definition of Post-Politics, through its spatio-temporalization into a *condition,* will be attempted to be made. In Chapter 3, the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism will be discussed on the backdrop of Kemalism/Atatürkism. Chapter 4 will present the results of the field study conducted for this thesis, and, finally, Chapter 5 will lay down the conclusions.

1.1. The changing mode of subjective politicization: From the apolitical to the hyperpolitical

The aforementioned complexity, and even the paradoxical nature in the subjective mode of politicization of the youth, when accompanied by discussions about the hegemonic mode of politics *in itself*, becomes increasingly more messy. The ending of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s were marked by discussions on Post-Politics (See Mouffe, 2005a; Rancière, 1999; Žižek, 2000; Crouch, 2004, Brown, 2006). Moreover, amidst all the arguments about Post-Politics, it was not unusual then to hear discussions about apoliticism or antipolitics, various kinds of disenchantment and disinterest regarding individuals' relationship vis-à-vis politics (See Crouch, 2004, p. 4; Beck, 1997, p. 57; Mouffe, 1999, p. 745). Mouffe suggests that the consequence of Post-Politics "has been a growing disaffection with politics and a drastic fall in participation in elections" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 63). In fact, Giddens claims in 1998 that "the party which has grown most over the past few years is one that isn't part of politics at all: the 'non-party of non-voters'" (Giddens, 1998, p. 20). In other words, not only an attitude of apoliticism coincided with the emergence of the Post-Political *condition*, Post-Politics as a dominant political outlook had been associated with apoliticism regarding its subjects. However, as it has been suggested, the latter does not seem to

---

[7] This will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 2.

be the case anymore, as the youth, in the example explained above, no longer seems to display a simple apolitical stance. There is, as it has been argued above and shown by empirical data, a clear dynamic of repoliticization, albeit having paradoxical characteristics. In addition to this dynamic of repoliticization, which could very well be argued to be a global phenomenon[8], some even claimed that the hegemonic mode of politics, i.e. Post-Politics, itself had been subjected to change[9]. "The era of 'post-politics' has clearly ended", wrote Anton Jäger in 2022 (Jäger, 2022a, p. 81)[10]. With some claiming that we had virtually exhausted the arguments about a Post-Political world, for the concept had been of a handful of people's interest in recent years in the face of rapid repoliticizations and the emergence of populisms, this was not that surprising of a claim, and maybe even an overstated one, as others had been claiming for almost a decade the "end" of the Post-Political *condition* (See Dean [Jodi], 2014; Mouffe, 2017). However, what made Jäger's claim so important is that it heralded the coming of a new age, that of "Hyper-Politics", in his words. Jäger points to a few interesting developments in the current political climate, most especially in a realm of politics that concerns the subjects' mode of politicization, or the "private sphere". He suggests that the old Post-Political era had ended, since what the world was witnessing

---

[8] A youth study conducted at the request of the European Parliament found that 85% of its participants were constantly discussing politics with their immediate social milieu, while finding only voting and various methods of activism meaningful in terms of involvement in politics (European Parliament, 2021). In a similar strain, Booth (2023) argues, after a survey conducted in USA by them, that youth is quite engaged in politics but lack the mechanisms for further involvement. Both studies could be said to be pointing to a global phenomenon where the youth is *engaged* in politics, as opposed to a blatant apoliticism in the past, but do not *participate* in it.

[9] For example, Jodi Dean, back in 2014, argued that the Occupy Wall Street protests had challenged Post-Politics and shown once again the communist horizon, displaying what she deemed a "rupture with post-politics" (Dean [Jodi], 2014, p. 273). Mouffe, as well, who happens to be one of the original theoreticians of Post-Politics, claimed in 2017 that what she called the "'populist moment' points to a 'return of the political' after years of post-politics" (Mouffe, 2017, p. 6). It must be mentioned that Mouffe talks about the challenges to Post-Politics even in her first book that discusses the term (See Mouffe, 2005a). Although it is of a quite similar strain, I take Jäger's claim, which is explained above, to be a bit different. They all converge, albeit being proposed in different climates with regards to different events, on the grounds that all three concern a repoliticization in the subjective dynamic (Dean with Occupy, Mouffe with the populist revitalization of the Left -maybe concerning the symbolic more relative to the others- and Jäger with BLM and social media activism); however, they diverge on one important facet: While Dean and Mouffe point to a "rediscovery" and "return", respectively, Jäger proposes a "new" mode of politics, i.e. Hyper-Politics. Thus, although Dean and Mouffe are to be handled in more detail in Chapter 2, I will be treating Jäger's account here with specific attention, due to its suggestion, with certain corrections and theoretical operations to be developed in the following pages, of hyperpoliticization.

[10] See Jäger, 2022b for similar arguments, in a more academic form.

now was high turnout levels, massive protests like Black Lives Matter, and the incredibly strong politicization of the private sphere[11] (2022a, pp. 80-81; 2022b). "Today, *everything is political*[12]" concludes Jäger (2022a, p. 81); nonetheless, he is quick to warn that this politicization does not resemble that of the 20th century. He deems this "reentry of politics into society" (2022a, p. 87), or this hybrid form of politics and anti-politics, Hyper-Politics.

While Anton Jäger is correct in pointing to a recent wave of repoliticization, I believe he fails to notice that this change is occurring in not the hegemonic *mode of politics* itself, but in a dimension that concerns the subjects' modes of politicization. In other words, his mistake lies precisely in the fact that he is talking about a reinvigoration in individuals' mode of politicization while talking about a shift in the wider framework of politics. I offer, here, a dualistic model of analysis, one being the *subjective* dimension of politicization(s), and the other being the *symbolic* dimension of politics[13].

---

[11] Jäger talks about how social media, TV, and even interpersonal relationships had turned into sites of political debate.

[12] The italics belong to the original author.

[13] In my use of the word "symbolic", I am directly referring to Lacan. Lacan distinguished between three levels in psychosexual development, the Real, the imaginary and the symbolic. The symbolic refers to the closed –whole and universal totality in Lacanian terms (Lacan, 1991, p. 29)– system of language that we simply call "reality" –not to be confused with the Lacanian Real, which "is but another name for ... 'incompletion', ... [to which] every subject, regardless of its social and historical conditions, is liable" (Butler, 2000, p. 12)–. I employ this concept, the symbolic, in order to distinguish between the subjective dimension of politics, i.e. the mode of politicization displayed by the subject in it, and the *general, wider context of politics* that transcends the subject, i.e. what some might call the "objective" dimension of it. The word "objective" is refrained from, due to its ontological implications. Stravrakakis suggests that even though Lacan uses the term "objective" and emphasizes the role of the objective over the subjective (to be understood as the role of the symbolic order in constituting the subject) his thought is very much anti-objectivist (Stavrakakis, 2002, p. 41). Such a separation between the symbolic and the subjective, in this thesis, is made in purely Lacanian terms that the subject is constituted precisely through entrance into the symbolic. In what Lacan terms "the preeminence of the signifier over the subject" (Lacan, 1988, p. 51), it is denoted that the symbolic precedes the subject and constitutes it within. Laclau acknowledges this, in that with Lacan, "we can see a movement of thought with a clear direction: the increasing emancipation of the order of the signifier" (Laclau, 2005, p. 104). Lacan suggests that there is no extra-discursive reality, a naively natural reality that functions outside signification, but that reality as we understand it is nothing but the symbolic order itself (Lacan, 1999, p. 33). Thus, the relationship between the signifier and the signified, in classical Saussurean terms, is inverted. Žižek explains this inversion in terms of how the nodal point is not a state arrived at the end of the chain of signification, a state of linguistic "richness", but that it is a "quilting point" that "enables" the chain: "The *point de capiton* [nodal point] is rather the word which, *as a word,* on the level of the signifier itself, unites a given field, constitutes its identity" (Žižek, 2008, p. 105). There's no longer the Cartesian or Kantian subject in Lacan, but a subject bound by the symbolic. He even goes as far to argue that the subject is "determined" by the signifier (Lacan, 1998, p. 67), but a relationship of overdetermination between the subjective and symbolic realms is found to be more fruitful in the case

The former covers the subjects' relationship with politics, their interpretation of the world, and their economies of political action, while the latter concerns the hegemonic mode of politics within which the subjects take shape. Thus, while Jäger is right about the dynamic of hyperpoliticization in the subjective dimension, his claimed transition from Post-Politics into Hyper-Politics, one that denotes a shift in the symbolic dimension of politics, i.e. a change in the hegemonic mode of politics, is *faulty*. I propose a relationship of *overdetermination* between these dimensions, in the sense of the symbolic overdetermination of the subjective. This is due to my conceptualization that the subjective is formed *within* the symbolic, and is the object of the forces of the symbolic. Thus, although there is no simple determination of the symbolic over the subjective (hence the variations in the subjective mode of politicizations), the elements forming within the subjective have already been determined over and over again within the symbolic matrix. i.e. overdetermined[14]. I mean, by overdetermination, the

---

of politics and politicizations, since the methodology of this thesis rejects the notion of linear determination. If the symbolic were to simply determine the subjective, there would be no transformation in the subjective, and in fact, the perfect parallel between these two dimensions would mean that such a separation between the two realms would be simply *internal*, and a separation wouldn't be possible to begin with. Even the designation of a subjective realm would be close to impossible. Laclau means, by overdetermination, (alongside other things) the impossibility of a literality in the social, in that all elements of the social are subjected to condensation and displacement (Laclau, 2015, p. 26). See the next footnote for a more detailed handling of overdetermination.

[14] My use of the concept of overdetermination is much closer to Freud's original usage, rather than Althusser's or even Laclau's. Freud defines overdetermination as a factor in the process of the selection of elements in dream-formation. He puts forward that "each element of the dream-content turns out to be *over-determined*, to be represented many times and in many ways in the dream-thoughts" (Freud, 1999, p. 216). Even though "the selection of elements for the dream is not always a primary factor in forming it" (1999, p. 235), those elements that are selected are, before their entry into the dream, determined over and over again. Therefore, overdetermination happens not in the formation of the dream but in the preparation of the "list of elements" that may appear in the dream. The result of such conception is that the dream-content, although not a factor in dream-formation, are at all times *inscribed* by the unconscious. Even though the elements are condensed or displaced, they still bear the *imprint* of the unconscious. What I propose with the *symbolic overdetermination of the subjective* is exactly this: The elements forming the subjective might differ in time or from one another, but it is the case that the selected elements have already been determined over and over again by the symbolic. I use, thus, the concepts of *inscription* or *imprint* to denote that. Even though the formation of the subjective is quite contingent [What Freud deems in terms of the dream-formation as "some power at work in the psyche as yet unknown to us" (1999, p. 235)], the elements that are available in its formation have been *inscribed* by the symbolic, or have the *imprint* of the symbolic. Freud's use of the notion has been interpreted with a focus on condensation or displacement, by both Althusser and Laclau; however, I believe Freud points to a notion that occurs *in spite of* and *through* displacement and condensation: the *inscription*. Althusser, in his use of overdetermination, points to the reciprocal relationship between "the contradiction" and its "instances". He suggests that "[relations of production] is radically *affected by [the instances it governs],* determining, but also determined in one and the same movement" (Althusser, 2005, p. 101). Thus, his use emphasizes the dialectical quality in overdetermination, and even puts forward overdetermination in order to reject the Hegelian rationalism in dialectics. However, the problem with Althusser's account, which Laclau criticizes as well, is that *the contradiction* as one

inscription of the symbolic into the subjective, or in other words, the *symbolic imprint within the subjective*[15]. Although the symbolic overdetermines the subjective dimension of politicization, I contend that the subjective is more susceptible to

---

of the instances of itself, precedes in quality from its instances. Alhusser focuses on condensation and displacement exactly to emphasize the character of the privilege of the primary contradiction, in that for him, the contradiction may appear in condensed and displaced forms, thus preserving its central character as the primary determinant. He argues that "there is always one principal contradiction and secondary ones, but they exchange their roles" (Althusser, 2005, p. 211), and the exchanging of the roles point to condensation and displacement. Therefore, one element among the others is given a pre-determined character that determines all the others, and is determined by them in turn. Laclau (and Mouffe) argues that Althusser's conception does not complete its premise, in that "*the relations between the overdetermined instances and the last instance must be conceived in terms of simple, one-directional determination by the latter*" (Laclau &Mouffe, 1985, p. 99). Althusser's point, while showing the reciprocal quality, misses the *crux* of overdetermination that there is no single "privileged" element that precedes others, and has the quality of "determining in the last instance". Laclau explains: "For Freud, the overdetermining instance depends entirely on a personal history - there is no element that is overdetermining in and by itself" (Laclau, 2005, p. 236).

[15] In the *symbolic overdetermination of the subjective,* symbolic is not designated as one element among others, but is proposed as the whole *ground* of overdetermination that governs the elements. Although Laclau's critique with his Freudian use of the notion is quite appealing for using "his definition" of overdetermination, it is clear, when one inspects closely, that Laclau's use of the concept is not coherent throughout his corpus. Laclau means a couple of things when he talks about overdetermination. The first, and most important, use of overdetermination by Laclau is, unquestionably, pointing to the idea that there are no "given"/rational/conceptual fixities, but only contingent and malleable ones. This use could be said to be present in all of his uses. Laclau too, emphasizes the character of condensation and displacement in his use. He (and Mouffe, regarding this book) points to the character of overdetermination as denoting a "plurality of meanings" in Freud's use of the term (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 97), through condensation and displacement. He gives a "potential" interpretation of Althusser in providing the symbolic as constitutive of the social: "The symbolic -i.e., overdetermined- character of social relations therefore implies that they lack an ultimate literality which would reduce them to necessary moments of an immanent law" (1985, p. 98). This is an attempt to suggest that symbolic is *not* a plane that is separate from "reality" (economy in the Marxist sense). "Society and social agents lack any essence, and their regularities merely consist of the relative and precarious forms of fixation which accompany the establishment of a certain order" (1985, p. 98). Thus, Laclau, in his first use, is trying to reject the Marxist base-superstructure separation and the Althusserian "determination in the last instance". As mentioned above, he suggests that with such a separation, there is simple determination and not overdetermination. I must admit that I accept this as a given in my use of the concept of overdetermination. My Freudian use is precisely to *emphasize* the *imprint* of the symbolic over the subjective. Laclau's use of overdetermination at different times denotes that an element (especially identity) has no pre-determined, a priori existence (Laclau, 2005, p. 249); that overdetermination is the constitutive function of the symbolic, close to Derridean *différance,* and that there's no element that has a privilege of being "outside overdetermination" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2015, p. 98); that there is no fixed relationship between a signifier and a signified (Laclau, 1996, p. 36); that overdetermination is the symbolic order itself (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 98); that it refers to the non-literality of the social, i.e. all signification as condensed and displaced (Laclau, 2015, p. 26); and that some struggles within the chain of equivalence are determining and constitutive of others (Laclau, 2005, p. 110). Laclau, by his rejection of Althusser and in his referral to Freud, seeks to establish by overdetermination in such a way that there are no fixed/given/conceptual relations, but that all relations are unfixed. As explained above, I take that as a given, due to the Laclauian methodology of this thesis (See more in Chapter 1.5.). However, the exact point I want to establish is the *imprint* or *inscription* of the symbolic within the subjective, as I believe Freud denotes, as explained above. Since in Freud, overdetermination is not a process by which the dream is formed (i.e. the symbolic "determines" the subjective), but a process by which certain elements are determined over and over again before they make their way into the dream (i.e. they are *inscribed* by the unconscious).

transformation, to a degree, without breaking with the logic of overdetermination, or in other words, it can *mutate* without totally escaping symbolic overdetermination[16], carrying the symbolic *imprint* while nonetheless transforming. In fact, there could be said to be no *necessary* relationship between Post-Politics and apoliticism to begin with, but a contingent articulation. These two dimensions of *the subjective* and *the symbolic* could be said to be reciprocal, therefore the contingent transformations in the subjective, while potentially able to affect the symbolic in *quanta*, does not necessarily need to wholly alter the character of the symbolic. In the context of today's subjective repoliticization, for example, the subjective transformation does not alter the symbolic dimension of Post-Politics, since the Post-Political *condition* is still present and is *conditioning* the subjective dimension (*"condition" as the symbolic dimension itself, and "conditioning" as the symbolic imprint in the subjective*[17]). On the contrary, I would argue, against Jäger's conception that this repoliticization marks an end to Post-Politics, that Post-Political qualities are *imprinted* in this dynamic of repoliticization, and that this repoliticization takes place *perfectly within* the matrix of Post-Politics. The mistake in Jäger's account, I believe, owes to his faulty account of Post-Politics. Since, as Bülent Diken states:

> Ours is, after all, a post-political society that cannot imagine radical political change; a 'one-dimensional' society, in which politics is emptied out of its constitutive, transcendent dimension – 'the political' – and has become a routinised game, a form of hyper-politics, with no possibility of changing the game itself (Diken, 2009, p. 579).

---

[16] This relationship may be likened to Saussure's co-functioning of both the immutability and mutability of the sign within the same principle (Saussure, 2011, pp. 71-78). Although Saussure's explanation might seem contradictory, it is not. Saussure argues that the arbitrary nature of the sign functions both in terms of its immutability (the relationship between the signifier and the signified is completely arbitrary, hence there cannot be a -rational- consideration, nor power, upon changing the signifier or the signified) and its mutability (the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, hence a shift in their relationship, in time, is possible). The arbitrary (and differential) nature of the sign allows language to function as a totality, being susceptible to potential changes without the power to alter the totality itself, with the whole totality being altered or evolving over time nonetheless. This is exactly the relationship I want to emphasize in *mutating without escaping overdeterination.* Subjective modes of politicizations may be sites of transformation, without altering the symbolic itself. The symbolic is able to function through various alterations in its elements. Changes in the symbolic are possible, but not as common or easy as in the subjective.

[17] The difference between *condition* and *conditioning* will be explained further in Chapter 2. Whenever the words *condition* and *conditioning* are italicized, the reader must understand that what is referred to is *the Post-Political condition (the symbolic itself)* and *the Post-Political conditioning of the subjective (the symbolic imprint itself).*

Therefore, along Diken's suggestion, it must be acknowledged that Post-Politics *is already* a form of Hyper-Politics. Hence, Jäger's claimed transformation in the hegemonic mode of politics is actually not a transformation at all, since the two conceptions at hand, Post-Politics and Hyper-Politics, are *perfectly coterminous*. What this "hybrid" is, in Jäger's words, is nothing but a dyad of repoliticization (or hyperpoliticization) in the subjective realm, and Post-Politics in the symbolic.

It is true that Post-Politics had come to be associated with a subjective dynamic of apoliticization, or antipoliticization, but its actual form today is, without a doubt, a repoliticized one[18]. Since this is not a repoliticization that recalls a politics proper[19], I propose to follow its definition as "hyperpoliticization". In other words, it is precisely due to the *paradoxical* nature of the said repoliticization that I opt to regard it as "hyperpoliticization". As Wendy Brown suggests, the prefix of "hyper" in hyperpoliticization denotes the *trivialization* of politics, i.e. the perfect paradox of politicization without politics[20], what Jäger calls "furiously stepping on the gas with an empty tank" (Jäger, 2022a, p. 87). This new dynamic in today's world, acknowledged as hyperpoliticization, has begun to be discussed upon in recent years. Wendy Brown, for example, makes such an observation of hyperpoliticization, suggesting:

> Today this hyper-politicization (hence trivialization) of values reaches to consumption practices, family forms, home decor, gun ownership, school curriculums, sports preferences and athletes, ecological practices, fashion, sexual practices, gender presentation, diet and exercise (Brown, 2023, p. 31).

---

[18] Recall here the strong indication of repoliticization in the youth studies stated above.

[19] Recall once again the *paradox* emerging out of the said studies.

[20] Baudrillard argues that what characterizes the hyperreal is the loss of the imaginary function that delineates the real from the imaginary (Baudrillard, 1994, pp. 2-3). In hyperpoliticization, *the perfect paradox of politicization without politics* is enabled through the very loss of the imaginary distance between *the political* and *politics*. The *over-engagement* of the subject with politics is precisely happening through an operation of the *foreclosure of the political*. Thus, the trivialization of politics occurs exactly due to the reason of the loss of *the political* in engagement with politics. Furthermore, I would suggest that hyperpoliticization is a subjective mode of *repoliticization* that is *par excellence* Post-Political. In a dominant mode of politics that effectively "forecloses" the political (Žižek, 2000, p. 198), i.e. "the constitutive aspect of antagonism" (Mouffe, 1993, p. 7), the perfect fit for a *repoliticization* that *obeys the symbolic (a mode of politics where the political is foreclosed)* is hyperpoliticization.

Such hyperpoliticization is noticed and remarked upon by others as well (Haider, 2022; Celikates, 2022; Jäger, 2022a; Jäger, 2022b), and could be argued to be the central characteristic of the subjective dimension of politicization today. Although a wave of repoliticization had been made a topic of discussion in the mid-2010s, due to the populist revitalization of the Left (Mouffe, 2017; Jones, 2016), these were not suggesting that what was occuring was a hyperpoliticization. The current wave of hyperpoliticization and the discussions upon it differ from the various earlier repoliticizations, in that this dynamic today takes place without any sort of horizon of transformation in the symbolic (like a populist moment that is claimed to be able to alter it)[21], with much less focus on alternative political apparati[22], only within the confines of the individual subject with less emphasis on collectivity, and with an incredibly strong politicization of the private sphere alongside a narrow horizon of political action. What defines the character of the prefix of "hyper", to be simplified for the purposes of this thesis, is exactly the *paradox* mentioned above: While an interest and *engagement* in politics is incredibly strong, this does not translate into political *participation*[23]. I believe a further example shall clarify the aspect of hyperpoliticization in today's world, and the need to distinguish between the subjective and the symbolic dimensions. Asad Haider, discussing Wendy Brown's work, suggests that:

> Here right-wing populism appears to be a kind of repoliticization, or even hyperpoliticization. But the antipolitical, or perhaps pseudopolitical reaction of the Right, despite appearing to be a repoliticization, is in fact complicit with neoliberal depoliticization. It would be mistaken to see right-wing authoritarianism, as liberals frequently do, as a hyperpoliticization. This fails to perceive the complicity between neoliberalism and right-wing authoritarianism, and thus urges further depoliticization (Haider, 2022, p. 124).

Haider's seemingly complex analysis points to one important thing, that hyperpoliticization is actually a form of depoliticization. Nevertheless, his seeming

---

[21] See Mouffe, 2017.

[22] The wave of repoliticization in 2010s was translated into a parliamentary struggle with the establishment of, or use of, political parties and political actors.

[23] Or translates only in the form of electoral action.

complexity is overshadowed by his mistake in referring to hyperpoliticization in discussing the subjective dimension of politicization, i.e. the hyperpoliticization of the Right (subjective), when talking about the symbolic dimension of depoliticization (symbolic)[24]. Therefore, Haider is correct in pointing out that there is a seeming hyperpoliticization in the subjective level and that the said hyperpoliticization is complicit with neoliberal depoliticization; however, he is talking about two different dimensions, in that hyperpoliticization does not occur outside depoliticization, but that it is a relatively contingent subjective dynamic *within* it, and it is complicit with it since it is overdetermined by it, what I propose to call a *hyperpoliticized Post-Politics*. In other words, Haider's mistake lies in the confusion between the two said dimensions. Relegating the current repoliticization, or hyperpoliticization (subjective), to depoliticization (symbolic) obscures the fundamental difference between the subject and the structure, and overlooks the aspect of the repoliticization itself (not only a theoretical claim, but was shown in empirical studies as well), which hyperpoliticization denotes. Thus, as shown, not distinguishing between the two dimensions creates the central problem for both Jäger and Haider.

Robin Celikates (2022), in his recent work, observes the same repoliticization, but handles it more successfully from the two mentioned above. I must state here that what I propose and what Celikates designates are quite similar, and that his account is much less problematic than Jäger's and Haider's, and the exact difference might be interpreted simply as a difference in terminology. However, I believe the different terminology highlights two different qualities of the said repoliticization, and one could be said to be self-contradictory, while the other is not. Therefore, I would favor treating his account differently from others. Celikates points to the said dynamic, in that "we seem to be witnessing a backlash that has taken the form of a massive repoliticization" (Celikates, 2022, p. 142), and argues that this dynamic is better understood as a dynamic of pseudopoliticization, since it does not break with the logic of neoliberal depoliticization (2022, p. 143). He, obviously, without loudly acknowledging it, makes a separation between the two realms of the subjective and the symbolic. However, with the designation of the subjective as

---

[24] In Wendy Brown's analysis, depoliticization is not a subjective dynamic, but a symbolic dimension of politics, which could be interchangeably used with Post-Politics. More on Chapter 2.

"pseudopoliticization", i.e. the *phenomenon itself* being considered a pseudopoliticization, what he deems a "massive repoliticization" is undermined. The implicit "falsity" in pseudopoliticization highlights its inability to reclaim a politics proper, or in other words, its Post-Political *imprint*; nonetheless, the implicit "over-excitation" in hyperpoliticization highlights *both* its inability to reclaim a politics proper (its symbolic imprint) *and* its character of subjective repoliticization (transformation in the subjective). The prefix "pseudo", while successfully showing the logic of Post-Politics within the said repoliticization (symbolic imprint), suggests a "falseness" on the side of the subjective repoliticization, and undermines the subjective *phenomenon* itself[25]. Thus, although Celikates is correct in terms of the former, his designation of the phenomenon as pseudopoliticization returns back to undermine his first suggestion that there was a repoliticization. In other words, he suggests that the *phenomenon* is already coterminous with *depoliticization,* thus, there is no politicization to begin with; nonetheless, the cotermineity is possible only after a *combination* (through overdetermination, since the two dimensions at hand are distinct, i.e. it is the *imprint* that "combines" both sets).

It is only when the subjective and the symbolic dimensions are separated, and the subjective is posited in a relationship of overdetermination vis-à-vis the symbolic, that the repoliticization could be acknowledged as hyperpoliticization, making it able to function on both ends: There is very much a "real" (re)politicization, but one that is *inscribed* by Post-Politics. Therefore, in order to overcome this paradoxical quality of repoliticization (or hyperpoliticization) and depoliticization (or Post-Politics), we must separate between the two dimensions of the subjective and the symbolic. Such separation not only allows us to observe the variety and potential changes in the subjects' mode of politicization and their relationship vis-à-vis politics, but also enables us to discuss these in a wider overview of politics, the paradigmatic framework within which subjects are made, a dimension which does not easily alter. The relationship of overdetermination between these two, i.e. the symbolic overdetermination of the subjective, is made clear with such separation, and the potentialities of the subjective escape from said overdetermination, i.e.

---

[25] To emphasize it one more time, the empirical studies *do show* an apparent repoliticization in the subjective realm, i.e. the phenomenon.

underdetermination (a state of subjectivity where the *symbolic conditioning* dysfunctions*, or is not present in radical cases*), are rendered more crisp. Moreover, this separation also allows us to observe the possible shifts in the symbolic more correctly as well, unlike Jäger. A shift in the symbolic would require a radical break that covers more than the realm of subjective politicizations.

Thus, in conclusion, I believe, rather than apoliticism, the current mode of politicization of the youth closely resembles hyperpoliticization in which the founding characteristics of Post-Politics is *inscribed,* or in another word preferred above, is *imprinted*. However, the issue of hyperpoliticization alone does not do justice to discuss the change in the subjective mode of politicization of the youth in Turkey, since there is another (!) crucial endemic strand present in it: The rise of Atatürkism among the youth. This, I argue, needs special attention.

1.2. Civilian celebrations of the republic and Atatürkism: From 1998 to 2023

Zülfü Livaneli, a columnist for the newspaper Sabah, back then, wrote in the aftermath of the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of the republic: "Millions walk… The love for Atatürk growing tremendously… And this is all happening with the will and effort of the people themselves. No one imposes anything upon them" (Livaneli, 1998a). Moreover, he would go on, a few days later, to call it a "civilian parade" that occurred without the intervention of the state (Livaneli, 1998c). In a similar fashion, a couple of days after one of the celebrations for the 75th year of the republic, Şükran Soner, a columnist for the newspaper Cumhuriyet, wrote: "Whatever anyone may say, the public attended the celebrations… The people, without any directions from political actors… voluntarily took their place in the celebrations" (Soner, 1998, p. 13). In fact, there were many, in the media, who championed the civilian outlook of the ceremonies and parades, and how people "spontaneously" took to the streets to celebrate the 75th anniversary (Özkök, 1998; Sazak, 1998; Selçuk, 1998a; Selçuk, 1998b; Aşın, 1998; Toker, 1998; Bila, 1998; Alpman, 1998; Birgit, 1998; Ulagay 1998; Ertem, 1998; Usumi, 1998; Tanilli, 1998; Ateş, 1998; Sayar, 1998; Oral, 1998; Uluç, 1998a; Uluç, 1998b, Uluç, 1998c; Livaneli, 1998b; Ataklı, 1998a; Ataklı, 1998b; Ataklı, 1998c; Mengi, 1998; Doğru, 1998; Tamer, 1998a; Tamer, 1998b).

Interestingly enough, 25 years later, after the 100th year celebrations of the republic, the same newspaper Cumhuriyet was published with a declaration that stated: "The people protected the republic" (Cumhuriyet, 2023, p. 1), talking about how the centennial was celebrated by civilians, in a civilian fashion despite the claimed lack of official celebrations (2023, p. 1). Nuray Mert asserted that with the 100th year celebrations, "more lively, more intimate, civilian parades replaced the old, formal celebrations" (Mert, 2023). In fact, Rahmi Turan would state that it was the people who properly celebrated the centennial, as opposed to the passive attitude of the state (Turan, 2023). There were many, in the media, similar to those in the 75th year celebrations, who lauded the civilian celebrations of the centennial (Meydan, 2023; Kalkandelen, 2023; Oral, 2023; Türmen, 2023; Doğan, 2023; Dorsay, 2023; Kepenek, 2023; Tılıç, 2023; Gültekin, 2023; Sağlar, 2023; Baykam, 2023; Bayraktar, 2023; Alçı, 2023; Şahin, 2023; Günay, 2023). Both the 75th year and the 100th year celebrations were met with an astonishment about the "civilianization"[26] of the celebrations. The questions follow immediately: *Why the insistence on civilianization 25 years apart, and how many times are the parades going to be civilianized? Is there a difference between the subject and object of civilianization in these two virtually same dynamics?*

When looked from afar, it is interesting to see how in both celebrations, there exists an incredibly similar emphasis on civilian participation, and it is odd that the celebrations, virtually, *became civilianized twice,* first in 1998, and then in 2023. Esra Özyürek argues that the 75th year celebrations were a milestone, in that it was the first time that non-governmental organizations coordinated it, rather than an official celebration organized by the state (Özyürek, 2006, p. 125). However, she points out that the said NGOs were assigned by the state, and given funds to organize various ceremonies (Özyürek, 2006, pp. 134-140). Nonetheless, she fails to notice that there were more than one organization for the 75th year celebrations, some of them organized by various NGOs (Cumhuriyet, 1998, p. 6), some organized by local municipalities (Hürriyet, 1998), and some by the state actors themselves (Milliyet, 1998, p. 17). Thus, even though she acknowledges that the civilian parades and organizations were done

---

[26] I prefer the word "civilianization" to denote *sivilleşme,* in order to distinguish it from civilization, *medeniyet*.

in coordination with the state and along the lines of official ideology (Özyürek, 2006, p. 126), the result is missing the interwoven structure of the celebrations.

Although both celebrations claim a "civilianization", when inspected closely, it is visible that the same signifier is articulated in two different ways. The "civilianization" of the former rests on the fact that there was civil participation *in addition* to the usual official celebrations. İlhan Selçuk (1998a) and Raif Ertem (1998), especially, underline this point by emphasizing how the army and the civilians were "hand-in-hand" in the celebrations. The columnists of the day all suggest that what the celebrations showed was a solidarity between the civilians and the military. Organized in the backdrop of the 28 February coup, the claimed civilianization could be argued to be due to the fact that the military resorted to the much-needed popular support for its intervention into civilian politics. In fact, Özyürek suggests that:

> Secularist groups and the government working in close collaboration with the army expressed the hope that an active celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary would raise the people's consciousness as citizens of the Turkish Republic, connect people to Republican ideals, and show to Islamists that people supported the secular ideology of their free will (Özyürek, 2006, p. 134).

In the 100th year celebrations, however, no longer was a picture of a solidarity between civilians and the state present. The signifier "civilian" was used, now, precisely in such a way as to *generate a distance away from the state*, in complete contrast to the former. The "civilian" character of the celebrations was, now, contraposited against an "inactive" state. While in the former, the signifier civilian was articulated as "hand-in-hand" with the state; in the latter, the signifier civilian was to imply a "single-handedness" by the people, relative to the state.

Correspondingly, in both celebrations, there was a strong emphasis on the "growing love for Atatürk" and the rise of Atatürkism. For example, Orhan Birgit, in 1998, claimed that in the 75th year celebrations, "we witnessed, once again, how Atatürk, 60 years after his death, still lives in the hearts and thoughts of millions" (Birgit, 1998). Again, there were many who emphasized such a phenomenon at the time (Sazak, 1998; Ertem, 1998; Usumi, 1998; Soner, 1998; Ateş, 1998; Oral, 1998; Ataklı, 1998a; Livaneli, 1998a; Livaneli, 1998b; Mengi, 1998). Quite similarly, such a phenomenon

was mentioned in the 100th year celebrations as well. About a week after the celebrations, in the day of Mustafa Kemal[27]'s death, Zülfü Livaneli (2023), once again, wrote "the love for Atatürk [nowadays] is growing ever stronger than before, spreading among the people, the youth… I can say with ease that I've never seen any period in Turkey with love for Atatürk growing this much". This was put forward by many who wrote about the celebrations (Dorsay, 2023; Baykam, 2023; Oral, 2023; Sağlar, 2023; Turan, 2023).

Therefore, in both celebrations, quite similar to the "twice-claimed" character of civilianization, *Atatürkism is argued to be on the rise twice*. There is, nonetheless, a difference between the forms of those that concern the natures of both of them. In the 100th year celebrations, one interesting claim about the "new" wave of Atatürkism immediately steals the show: *The "civilianization" of Atatürkism itself*. This "civilianization" is different from that of the 25 years prior, because in the former, what was claimed to be civilianized was the parades themselves, with civilians attending the celebrations *hand-in-hand* with miliary personnel. However, in the 100th year celebrations, what had become civilianized, as it is put forward, was the *subjective mode of politicization of the people*. In other words, it was not only the celebrations, that was claimed to be civilianized; but the very *mode of Atatürkism itself*, goes the argument. In the 75th year celebrations, although there was a strong emphasis on the resurgence of the image of Atatürk and Atatürkism, the only claim of civilianization is about the celebrations themselves. However, in the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the republic, not only were the parades, as in the past, claimed to be civilianized, but it was Atatürkism, in addition to the parades, that was claimed to be taking a more civilian form. Thus, it is understood that both "rises" of Atatürkisms are different from each other as well, since one of them concerns a whole civilianization of the political outlook itself. In fact, there were those in the media who discussed such a *civilianization of Atatürkism* with regard to the 100th year celebrations (Sabuncu, 2023; Çetin, 2023a; Çetin, 2023b). What would civilianization mean in terms of a subjective mode of politicization, and why would it become civilianized, are questions that must be answered.

---

[27] I will be calling Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal when it is referred to the real person, and Atatürk when it is evaluated strictly as a *signifier*.

1.3. New Atatürkism as a "Civic" one

The emergence of a "new" wave of Atatürkism had been of some debate in Turkey in the past few years. The amount of the academic work on this sociological phenomenon is relatively low, due to its novel character. There are only a handful of academic materials that mention such phenomenon (Öztürk, 2017; Öztürk & Karakuş Öztürk, 2019; Tekinırk, 2022). However, in popular media, the rumors of a reemergence of Atatürkism has been present for some time. Having started as early as 2016, the debates on a *new wave* of Atatürkism has been making appearances every now and then in the media (Öztürk, 2016; Fırat, 2017; Aktoprak, 2017; Esen, 2021b; Esen, 2021c; Medyascope, 2019; Medyascope, 2022; Aslan, 2022)[28]. This new wave, although not entirely a youth phenomenon, is claimed to be most popular among the youth in Turkey[29]. Such an observation is strengthened by recent studies which heavily claim that there is, in fact, such a rise of Atatürkism in Turkey, especially among young people (TGSP, 2020; KASF, 2021; KASF, 2023; KONDA, 2024). The results mark a stark contrast between those of the youth studies done in the past. For example, KAF's 1999 study, mentioned above, found that only 5.5% of its participants, aged 15-27, defined themselves as "Kemalist/secularist" (KAF, 1999, p. 82), and SEKAM's 2016 study similarly found that other ways of self-definition, like Muslim and progressive, had overshadowed Atatürkism, even though Atatürkism was found to be a relatively higher choice of self-definition (2016, pp. 85-86). Similarly, TGSP's 2018 report found that nationalism overtook Atatürkism, even though both are high in numbers[30] (TGSP, 2018, p. 11). Thus, earlier studies show that there was not such a strong identification with Atatürkism in the past. However, when we fastforward to the 2020s, there is a stark difference in the results about Atatürkism. TGSP, in 2020, found that Atatürkism was the primary way of self-definition for the youth, with %23,5 of the

---

[28] I believe discussions in the popular media are important for this matter, since such a sociological phenomenon is usually discussed in the media before it makes its way into academic material. Therefore, I will be cautiously using those discussions in print or online media to refer to the roots of such a sociological phenomenon.

[29] See Karabağ, 2022.

[30] The high numbers in SEKAM's 2016 and TGSP's 2018 reports could be said to be due to a difference, once again, in research methodology. The seemingly "high" results, when considered alongside the fact that there were even higher ones than Atatürkism/Kemalism in both, do not affect the claim that Atatürkism was not the primary category of self-identification in the past.

participants defining themselves as Atatürkist (TGSP, 2020, p. 18). KASF's 2021 and 2023 studies, as well, found that, respectively, 20,5% (2021, p. 25) and 37,6% (2023, p. 18) of the participants, aged 18-25, defined themselves as either "Atatürkist/Kemalist" or "Atatürkist", once again being the primary way of self-definition. KONDA's most recent study done in 2024 shows an even starker result: 44% of the youth were found to be defining themselves as Atatürkist (KONDA, 2024, p. 57). Furthermore, a recent report by Türkiye Raporu (2022) found that 91% of people in Turkey define Mustafa Kemal as either a savior or a revolutionary, thus strenthening the arguments about a recent revitalization of Atatürkism.

With virtually almost the half of the youth being Atatürkists, this wave of Atatürkism is different than the previous waves, in that, in comparison to the various "rise"s of Atatürkism in the past, this one is argued to be a *wholly civilianized* one. Although there were (pseudo)"civilianization" attempts in Kemalism in the past (See Erdoğan, 2001; Erdoğan, 2021), this one is claimed to be different and "even more civilian" from those as well (Aktoprak, 2017, p. 47; Medyascope, 2019; Medyascope, 2022), at times even rejecting the so-called "civilian" Neo-Kemalism in defining itself. In fact, there are many, in the media, who suggest that this wave exhibits a more civilian form of Atatürkism (Esen, 2021a; Dağı, 2021; Mahçupyan, 2021; Medyascope, 2021a; Yaşlı, 2023; Göle, 2023; Dağı, 2024; Öztürk, 2024). It was claimed to be such a strong dynamic of civilianization that Armağan Öztürk had coined the term "Civic Atatürkism"[31] to define this wave back in 2016 (Öztürk, 2016). Therefore, while the previous waves were claimed to be civilianizing attempts *in* Atatürkism/Kemalism, this one is designated as a civilianization *of* Atatürkism[32]. In addition, what is the most striking difference between the two claims of "civilianizations" is that in the older

---

[31] The translation of *Sivil Atatürkçülük* as "Civic Atatürkism" belongs to Armağan Öztürk, one of the pioneers of the concept. Although I would personally opt to translate it differently, and go even as far to suggest that it is a "mistranslation", the word Civic entails different dimensions than a simple civilianization. Thus, when treated specifically as a signifier, the word Civic opens up interesting possibilities. It denotes not a civilianization *in* Atatürkism, but a civilianization, a.k.a. the perfect Civic-ization, *of* Atatürkism. In other words, it is not the case that the claim goes Atatürkists are civilianizing, but that Atatürkism has itself become civilian. Thus, the signifier "Civic" is found to be creating unexpected paths in terms of the discussion of Civic Atatürkism. Moreover, I stand by this decision in order to create a coherent discussion on it in academic terms. Although it may denote various things, I will be taking Civic simply as "*civilianized*", in my discussion.

[32] See the argument about the *current mode of Atatürkism*, in Chapter 3.3.

"civilianization" in 1998, such dynamic was an *extension* of Atatürkism. In other words, the former "civilianization" functioned in perfect harmony with the *existing mode[33] of Atatürkism,* with civilianization being posited as an *extension of it, a quality of it.* There was not a comparison and contrast between the so-called "newer forms" and "older forms" of it. However, with Civic Atatürkism, it is claimed that *the older mode of Atatürkism has been replaced by a wholly new, Civic one.* It is the claim of Civic Atatürkism, which will be explained in further detail in Chapter 3.3., that it is the *new mode of Atatürkism,* with strict oppositions on various fronts vis-à-vis its older *modes*.

The concept of "Civic Atatürkism"[34] has been gaining more and more attention today. However, it has not been set as an object of academic scrutiny as of yet. My intention, throughout this thesis, will be to inspect the term "Civic Atatürkism" in the backdrop of the subjective mode of repoliticization, or hyperpoliticization, of the youth in Turkey, alongside a discussion of Post-Politics within which the said hyperpoliticization takes place. The designation of Civic Atatürkism as an object of scrutiny in terms of *hyperpoliticized Post-Politics* is due to two factors: First, the youth displaying *both hyperpoliticized and Atatürkist* modes of politicization (as established in the youth studies discussed above), and second, Civic Atatürkism as a *phenomenon* having emerged within the *Post-Political condition.* Moreover, it was observed that some of the main claims of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism[35] had associated it, in an unacknowledged way, with Post-Political qualities. These empirical data, personal observations and theoretical considerations (alongside the consideration of all determinants established above) led me to the understanding that Civic Atatürkism could possibly be exemplifying the subjective characteristics of *hyperpoliticized Post-Politics.*

---

[33] See Chapter 3 for the distinguishment between *modes* and *appearances* of Atatürkism. Shortly, *mode* refers to a spatial-temporal *configuration* of Atatürkism, while *appearance* refers to a non-spatial and non-temporal *variation* of Atatürkism.

[34] I will be capitalizing the first letter of the word "Civic" throughout the thesis in order to distinguish it from various other attempts of civilianization in Atatürkism/Kemalism. Moreover, the special treatment of the signifier Civic in the thesis could be put forward as another reason for it. See Chapter 3.3.3. for the constitution of the signifier Civic around six arguments, or the six central characteristics "quilted by" the signifier Civic.

[35] See Chapter 3.3.2.

1.4. Research Questions and Research Design

Although it is hard to disentwine the intertwined nature of the questions around which this thesis was formed, within this historical background and overview of the main theoretical and conceptual framework, the central questions of this thesis could be put forward as*: 1) What are the subjective and symbolic dimensions of, respectively, hyperpoliticization and Post-Politics? 2) Is a hyperpoliticized Post-Politics possible? 3) How does Civic Atatürkism relate to hyperpoliticized Post-Politics? 4) What is the history behind Civic Atatürkism and what are the main components of it? 5) What enables the articulation of Atatürkism as Civic? 6) Is Civic Atatürkism truly "Civic"?*

In this regard, I will be building my research in two parts. First, I will be analyzing the theory and the history of the concept of Post-Politics. In doing so, in order to give the concept its much-needed precision, I will be separating the *subjective* and the *symbolic* dimensions of it. In the subjective dimension, I will be analyzing the various modes of politicizations that occured within Post-Politics. It is one of the main contentions of this thesis that Post-Politics need not necessarily mean apoliticization in its subjective dimension, as it is usually assumed to be. In contrast, what this thesis will put forward is precisely the idea that within a Post-Political context, various modes of politicizations are possible. Any wave of repoliticization or hyperpoliticization does not necessarily entail the "end" of the Post-Political context, as suggested by Jäger and others[36]. The central necessities of Post-Politics may be present even in a hyperpoliticized subjectivity, and Post-Politics could possibly survive, in its all-encompassing framework, the various changes in its subjective dimension of politicizations, which happens to be hyperpoliticization in this case, as will be shown. In Chapter 2, Literature Review/Post-Politics, I will be laying down the difference between the said dimensions of Post-Politics, and will be establishing a coherent account of its symbolic dimension. In doing so, I will be attempting to achieve the broadest and most precise definition of Post-Politics. This definition will allow me to build the field study of this thesis, through enabling the operationalization of the concepts of Post-Politics and hyperpoliticization (in terms of research tools), and allow

---

[36] See Dean [Jodi], 2014; Mouffe, 2018.

me to create ways for detecting the character of overdetermination of Post-Politics within a hyperpoliticized subject.

Second, I will be analyzing the recently-emerged mode of politicization called Civic Atatürkism. I will be offering a history and a detailed outlook of Civic Atatürkism, against the backdrop of Kemalism/Atatürkism, the fundamental characteristics of which is seen to be enabling the articulation of it as a Civic one, as will be shown, and other (pseudo)civilianization attempts in the Atatürkist/Kemalist ideology. In my analysis, I will be distinguishing between the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism and the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism. The former will be treated as the actual, concrete subjective mode of politicization, i.e. as the *phenomenon*; on the other hand, the latter will be treated as the corpus of works written on Civic Atatürkism, i.e. as the *theoria*. Although it is a fairly new phenomenon, recent research has shown that Atatürkism, its civilianized form, is on the rise, especially among the youth (KASF, 2021; KASF, 2023; TGSP, 2020; Türkiye Raporu, 2022), as established above. I will be treating the signifier "Civic" as exactly the *defining quality of the current mode of Atatürkism*, or in other words, *current mode of Atatürkism,* as it is argued in the literature[37]. The designation of Civic Atatürkism as the current mode of Atatürkism, which is established in the Civic Atatürkism Literature, I argue, allows the researcher to treat *all current Atatürkisms* as Civic. This allowed me to approach the interviewees in a specific way as to observe in what ways they displayed the claims of Civic Atatürkism, and in what ways they did not.

In order to analyze how hyperpoliticization, Post-Politics and Civic Atatürkism relate, I established a field study comprised of 15 participants, and endeavored to observe the qualities of each in terms of the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. In my study, I devised my sample based on the two reports written respectively in 2021 and 2023 by KASF, which both show a rise of Atatürkism among the youth (KASF, 2021; KASF, 2023). These reports cover a field study, the target population of which consists of young people between the ages of 18 and 25. In the report, the *rationale* in restricting the age as such is explained in terms of the age group belonging to Generation Z, who are argued to be born into a period of transition marked by globalization and internet.

---

[37] See Chapter 3.3 for Civic Atatürkism Literature and the "current mode of Atatürkism".

Moreover, it is suggested that they show similar political, ethical and occupational patterns (KASF, 2021, pp. 42-44).

While the study at hand does not consider Civic Atatürkism to be a *necessarily* youth phenomenon, as the rise of the same mode of politicization could be observed cross-generationally[38], it is seen that such a mode is most prominently observed among the youth, which is shown in both the empirical research in the field (KASF, 2021; KASF, 2023; TGSP, 2020; KONDA, 2024), and in the written and verbal discussions, enough to be called a proper literature, on Civic Atatürkism[39]. Therefore, since it is put forward by both empirical studies and the relevant literature that (Civic) Atatürkism[40] is a mode of politicization seen *prominently* in young people, the research sample of this study will be limited to those between the ages of 18-25, or what is called Generation Z by others. I believe this decision to specifically study the youth will yield more accurate results due to the assumption that the mode of politicization will be more "sterile" in the youth, "unsullied", in a sense, by the more complex articulations of various political signifiers into Atatürkism which could possibly occur in an older person. In other words, it is expected that a more *concentrated* form of Civic Atatürkism, with lesser manifold articulations, will be observed in the youth; in contrast to the possibly more complex and more stratified forms, which might overlap with different historical stages, i.e. different *modes*, of Atatürkism/Kemalism and different political attitudes, which could be expected to be observed in different generations. Thus, the sample of this study is created on two purposive criteria: Describing oneself as an Atatürkist, and being in the age group between 18-25.

The field study is designed as a qualitative one, employing semi-structured in-depth interviews. It is constructed around two fundamental questions: *What is Civic Atatürkism,* and *what kind of a mode of politicization does it depict?* In my study, I

---

[38] A study done by KONDA in 2022 observes that 39% of *all those above the age of 15* define themselves as Atatürkist (retrieved from KONDA, 2024, p. 57).

[39] For arguments that focus on the youth character of Civic Atatürkism, see Karabağ, 2022.

[40] The empirical studies do not make specific remarks on the "civicness" of Atatürkism. They only describe Atatürkism as a common, rising mode of politicization in the age group generally between 18-25 or 15-30. However, in the general framework of the studies, some kind of "civilianization" of the Atatürkist subjects is possible to be seen, in their answers to other different questions.

wanted, first, to understand the basic qualities of "Civic Atatürkism", and tried to see whether that particular mode of Atatürkism could actually be said to be Civic (civilianized) or not, as it is claimed to be in the literature. Second, I wanted to understand the particular mode of politicization the interviewees exhibited. Analyzing this mode of politicization in terms of two dimensions, the *subjective* dimension of (hyper)politicization and the *symbolic* dimension of Post-Politics, I wanted to see whether the said subjective mode is a hyperpolitical one, and the symbolic overdetermination (or *imprint*) is of a Post-Political one, and whether it is possible for these two seemingly paradoxical qualities to function together, coterminously (cotermineity in terms of the combination of both sets)[41]. Therefore, I devised three determinants of analysis regarding the mode of politicization, in other words, I operationalized hyperpoliticized Post-Politics in three determinants: "Political analysis" (What kinds of characteristics their discourse has, in what various dualities and binaries they rest upon, what kind of a terminology is used etc.), "political organization" (How they understand political motivation, policial participation and collective action), and finally, "radical imagination" (What kind of a logic their interpretation of politics revolves around, and their understanding of what is "radical"). These all constitute the traces of how (Post-Political) hyperpoliticization is made able to be operationalized in such a study. Furthermore, the analyses concerning Post-Political overdetermination revolve around such determinants as well.

In terms of "Civic Atatürkism", my questions revolved around (1) how they defined Atatürkism, (2) how they described Mustafa Kemal, (3) with what other political ideas or forms they related Atatürkism, and with what they contrasted it, (4) who they thought was an Atatürkist, (5) and what kind of a relationship Atatürkism had in terms

---

[41] I refer to the "Post-Political overdetermination of hyperpoliticization" in order to point to the idea that Post-Politics itself would be observed not only through individuals, but more properly in the constitution of political, social, economic etc. relations, i.e. discourse in the Laclauian sense, "not ... something that is essentialy restricted to the arenas of speech and writing, but any complex of elements in which *relations* play the constitutive role" (Laclau, 2005, p. 68). Thus, an analysis of Post-Politics *itself* would require more than an analysis restricted to individuals. It would require the analysis of all social and political relations. However, analyzing its *inscription* into the subjective would allow the researcher to trace *not* Post-Politics itself, but the Post-Political overdetermination or *inscription* present in hyperpoliticization, only within certain mechanisms of analysis. What I call "Substitutions" serves, I would assert, exactly to reveal that Post-Political inscription present in hyperpoliticization. In other words, I will be analyzing not Post-Politics itself, but the *imprint* of Post-Politics within hyperpoliticized subjects.

of politics. Furthermore, regarding hyperpoliticization and Post-Politics, my questions were built upon (1) how they politically described themselves, (2) how they defined politics, (3) their modes of politicization and engagement with politics, (4) their understanding of political action and political participation, (5) their understanding of political change, (6) their ideas and practice about organization and collective action, (7) their understanding of antagonism and consensus, and finally, (8) their expectations from politics and their personal future, taking into account the three aforementioned determinants. Although certain central questions appeared in each interview, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to engage with the interviewees in varying emphases on different questions, depending on their answers.

I will present my discourse analyses in a more complex fashion than designated above, under three headings. This is due to my observation that the various discursive mechanisms employed by the interviewees relied on different linguistic formations. First, I will be analyzing the subjective modes of politicizations of the interviewees under "Articulations". In this part, the simple articulations present in the interviewees' discourse, under various *nodal points*, will be put under scrutiny. In this part will be shown all characteristics that are central to the participants: Their *particular mode of Atatürkism* and its various articulations, the hyperpoliticized character of their subjectivity, and the Post-Political imprint present in that hyperpoliticization. Nevertheless, since all three rely on different linguistic matrices, additional analyses have to be made in order to show other characteristics pertaining to them, which could not be analyzed through simple articulations. Second, I will analyze the various semi-complex binaries/dualities/oppositions established in the interviewees' discourse under "Entanglements". These are more complex than simple articulations, in that the dialectical fashion in which the "entangled" signifiers are posited against each other is more complex than the former, and more revealing of certain facets of the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. In other words, instead of a single nodal point and its chain of signification, the signifiers in this part will be observed to be strictly quilting and to be quilted by their (contingently related but strongly entangled) opposites. Third, I will analyze the logic of overdetermination of the symbolic dimension of Post-Politics present in the dynamic of hyperpoliticization, and show how hyperpoliticization in the universe of Post-Politics is possible, and how the Post-Political is *inscribed* in

hyperpoliticization in "Substitutions". In this part, the very functioning of Post-Politics within hyperpoliticization will be made explicit through analyses on how the political is substituted with (*displaced*) other categories in the discourse of the interviewees.

1.5. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

In this thesis, I will be employing Laclauian Discourse Analysis[42] in order to analyze the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. In describing my methodology as "Laclauian", I am referring to certain characteristics of it that are peculiar. Even though the particular mode of discourse analysis I will be using in this thesis is made up of various elements of discourse analysis, I believe Laclauian Discourse Analysis, with its rich methodological tools in its encompassing of the tenets of Saussurean linguistics, Derridean deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis[43], is the one that most generally explains it; and moreover, serves as the perfect tool for such a task. More than that, however, it is due to my strict allegiance to Laclau's political ontology that such a preference is made; therefore, this is *not simply a calculated decision* made on the grounds that it is just a rich methodological tool which explains my object adequately, but it is a *natural conclusion* of having a Laclauian political outlook in general. Since Laclauian Discourse Analysis could be summarized to be built around the triad of Saussure, Derrida and Lacan (with more other influences, from Freud and Althusser to Gramsci and Foucault), it is quite tricky to lay down a full description of it. Moreover, since "Laclau and Mouffe's texts aim at theory development, they do not include so many practical tools for textually oriented discourse analysis" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 24), it is quite hard to explain with specifics the exact methodological system to be used. Nonetheless, I shall explain its inheritance from the aforementioned triad (regarding language) and Laclau's basic conceptual tools that I will be operationalizing in this thesis in order to present a preliminary understanding

---

[42] Although this theory was first established by both Laclau and Mouffe in their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, written in 1985, it was further developed and explained in Laclau's own corpus. Mouffe does not so much develop the theory further, but employs it in her work. Therefore, I chose to denote it as "Laclauian discourse theory" in this thesis.

[43] This thesis employs Lacanian psychoanalysis in terms of a methodological tool of discursive analysis, rather than a method of treatment. Moreover, it is understood to be a tool for social/political analysis, rather than an individual one. As Somay explains, psychoanalysis is "a methodological/epistemological tool of looking at/observing phenomena, a *theory* (*theoria*, *Anschauung*), rather than a 'science', a discipline of individual psychology or a method of healing" (Somay, 2014, p. 3).

of the theoretical basis of Laclauian Discourse Analysis. In other words, this will not be an attempt to capture the entirety of Laclau's political, epistemological and methodological theory in its already-impossible-to-capture nature; this will, rather, be an attempt to introduce to the reader the fundamental *understanding* of politics and language in Laclau's theory, alongside some central concepts that I will be employing throughout the thesis.

The most important facet of Laclau's discourse analysis is his peculiar definition of *discourse*. At the outset, it must be established that Laclau & Mouffe's theory of *discourse* is built directly against, or as an alternative to, the concept of *ideology* in Marxist literature, and was the fruit of "an attempt to overcome the paradoxes of Althusserian theory of ideology" (Çelik, 2009, p. 221). Hence, against such grain, Laclau's discourse theory puts forward that there are no fixed, pre-discursive relationships (against the Marxist distinguishment between *ideology* and *reality*), no extra-discursive elements (against the Marxist understanding of *economy*), and no essentially prioritized entities (against the Marxist conceptualization of the essential agency of the *proletariat*), but only *contingent relationships* that are established through *articulatory practices*.

> In part, their deconstruction of the distinction between science and ideology is predicated on a questioning of a sharp split between thought (in its various representational guises) and reality, and by the elaboration of their concept of discourse, which embraces ideational, linguistic and non-linguistic forms (Howarth, 2015, p. 7).

Howarth notes that Laclau & Mouffe "reject a purely linguistic or cognitive approach to discourse analysis by defining discourse as an articulatory practice that constitutes social relations and formations, and thus constructs their meaning" (Howarth, 2015, p. 5). Influenced by the Foucauldian definition of discourse, Laclau's conceptualization does not take *discourse* to be a speech act, nor a practice regarding utterances, nor one about linguistic expressions. Rather, Laclau asserts that *discourse* is "not ... something that is essentialy restricted to the arenas of speech and writing, but any complex of elements in which *relations* play the constitutive role" (Laclau, 2005, p. 68). Those relations, in Laclau's discourse theory, are defined as *articulations*. Articulation is not

an "utterance"[44] in Laclauian Discourse Analysis, but "establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). Therefore, insofar as *discourse* is understood to be "structured totality" made up of *articulations* (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105)*,* Laclauian Discourse Theory rejects the distinguishment between discursive and non-discursive practices. Since "discourse is the primary terrain of the constitution of objectivity as such" (Laclau, 2005, p. 68), what enables the "objective existence" of an element, a practice, a subject etc. is *articulation*. This means that everything is understood to be discursive. Discursivity, thus, "signifies the fact that identities (objects, subjects, technologies, problems and so on) inevitably appear relationally, for example, only in relation to something else do social identities take on meaning" (Andersen, 2003, p. 50). In fact, Laclau suggests that with such an approach, *discourse* "transcends the distinction between the linguistic and the extra-linguistic" (Laclau, 2015, p. 28). As Howarth explains,

> discourse is articulatory in that it links together contingent elements – linguistic and non-linguistic, natural and social – into relational systems, in which the identity of the elements is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. A key condition of this approach is that all such elements are contingent and unfixed, so that their meaning and identity is only partially fixed by articulatory practices. The outcomes of such practices are incomplete systems of meaning and practice (Howarth, 2015, p. 5).

Laclau & Mouffe define *discourse* as a "structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105), which is constituted by "an ensemble of differential positions" (1985, p. 106). The understanding of *discourse* in terms of "differential positions" comes directly from Saussurean linguistics.

Historically, it was argued that there was a *natural correspondance* between *a word (signifier)* and *a thing (referent)*. What *a word* meant, or pointed to, was thought to be *the thing itself.* Saussure, introducing his concept of the *linguistic sign*, rejected such an understanding and rather established a relationship between *a word (sound/signifier)* and *a representation (concept/signified).* He suggested by this that he was to "retain the word *sign [signe]* to designate the whole and to replace *concept*

---

[44] Stuart Hall states that the double-meaning of the concept of *articulation* is peculiar to British. It both means to "utter" something, and to establish a link between two things, in the example of the usage of an "articulated lorry" (a truck that is connected to a load) (Grossberg, 1986, p. 53).

and *sound-image* respectively by *signified [signifié]* and *signifier [signifiant]*" (Saussure, 2011, p. 67). In other words, Saussure approached *the word* as a *sign,* and argued that it was made up of two parts: *the signified* and *the signifier,* i.e. "a concept and a sound-image" (2011, p. 66). With such an understanding of the *sign*, Saussure defined language in terms of, above others, two crucial characteristics: *the arbitrariness of the relationship between the signifier and the signified,* and *language being a purely differential system of signs.* He suggested that "the bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary" (p. 67), where there was no necessary relationship between *a word* and *its representation*. In other words, there was no relationship between the word *d-o-g* and the concept of *a dog* (as the concept of *a dog* could have been uttered by the sound *c-a-t* as well, had the system been built as such). What established the bond between the word *d-o-g* and the concept of *a dog* was an arbitrary linkage, which nonetheless rested on a system. Saussure asserted: "In language there are only differences *without positive terms*" (p. 120). This understanding of language in terms of a *pure differentiality* established that signs were only meaningful vis-à-vis their difference from other signs. Laclau calls this differentiality the *logic of difference,* where it is assumed that the elements within a "closed" complex are in a relationship difference and nothing else (See Laclau, 2005, p. 78). "Rooted in the structural linguistics inspired by Saussure, … Laclau and Mouffe conceptualize discourses in terms of systems of difference, in which the identity of an individuated element is defined … by reference to the other components of the structure" (Howarth, 2015, p. 5).

While Saussure contended that what was privileged in this relationship between the signifier and the signified was *the signified,* it was Lacan, who inspired the post-structuralist turn of Laclau & Mouffe, that transferred the privilege to the *signifier.* Although Laclau notes that it was Freud who first "loosened" the relationship between the signifier and the signified, "this tendency is radicalized by Lacanian theory in what is called the *logic of the signifier*, i.e. the permanent slide of the signified under the signifier (the latter becoming the stable element)" (Laclau, 2015, p. 26). The signifier, thus, in Lacanian psychoanalysis is not a *random point* where what actually matters is the *signified,* or it is not some point of surplus born out of the richness of the chain of signification, but rather is the stable point that enables signification in the first place.

31

In other words, Lacan, with his "sliding of the signified under the signifier" (Lacan, 1989, p. 117), asserted that "signifiers influence that which they signify" (Andersen, 2003, p. 54). Instead of simply *representing,* the signifier *quilts* the chain of signification, where the meaning of a signifier is deferred to other signifiers, rather than an arbitrarily-but-strongly-established-link between the signifier and the signified. In other words, instead of the signifieds "obtaining a name" for their already-established-identity, "the identity and unity of the object result from the very operation of *naming*[45]" (Laclau, 2005, p. 104). Lacan, therefore, reverts the relationship between the signifier and the signified with his "preeminence of the signifier over the subject" (Lacan, 1988, p. 51), where the signifier is observed to be *constructing* the signified, instead of simply representing it.

In Saussurean linguistics, characteristic of structuralist approaches in general, language is designated as a closed totality, a fixed system. However, in Laclauian theory, *discourse* cannot subject itself to a *total fixity.* "Meaning can never be ultimately fixed and this opens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity, with resulting social effects" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 24). Albeit strongly stating the impossibility of such closure, Laclau acknowledges that there must be "some kind of closure", in order for the system to function. In other words, there must be an *excluding limit* to the system, in order for it to be able to "close" as a totality (Laclau, 1996, pp. 37-38). This is due to his understanding that a system of differences (where prevails a *logic of difference*), in order for each difference to be constituted vis-à-vis the others, needs a closing point where *the whole* differentiality is established. This, for Laclau, seems like a logical requirement, for a system that does not have a *qualitatively distinct difference from the heap of differences within it*, a final point where *all differences* are established as a *totality*, there would be no system at all. In that case, there would only be an infinite sequence of differences where the infinity *does not stop,* hence, the totality could not establish itself as a totality in the first place. Saussure *assumes* such a point of closure; however, "in contrast to the Saussurian tradition whereby structure covered all signs in a *permanent* closure, discourse, for Laclau and Mouffe, can never be total in the

---

[45] The italicization belongs to me.

Saussurian sense" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 29). In Laclauian discourse theory, *totality*, *fixation* and *unity* are all always momentary and malleable. Laclau (2005, p. 70). calls this momentary closure "both impossible and necessary", for there would be no signification without it. What constitutes these *partial fixities* in a discourse are the *nodal points* (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 112). The *unity* of the discourse, which is the result of contingent articulatory practices, is thus established through the central position of the *nodal points.*

> *The practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn, of the constant overflowing of every discourse to the infinitude of the field of discursivity* (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 113).

In line with the *logic of the signifier,* rather than the nodal point being the conclusory point of signification, it is the "anchoring" point that enables signification in the first place. Therefore, nodal point is not a *surplus* of signification, but it is the *lack,* the *halting point*, the *founding stop* itself that allows it. In other words, it is what *excludes* other possibilities in the field of discursivity, in order for meaning to be possible, in order to cancel the possibility of infinite signification. Žižek states that "the *point de capiton* [nodal point] is rather the word which, *as a word,* on the level of the signifier itself, unites a given field, constitutes its identity" (Žižek, 2008, p. 105). For example, in Chapter 4.2.1., it will be observed that *Anıtkabir* is not a sign that "represents" Atatürk's already-existing sacred personality, but that it is precisely the anchoring point that "allows" the *sacralization itself* to be constructed. With the injection of *Anıtkabir,* the interviewees are seen to be in a tendency of sacralization; nevertheless, as soon as *Anıtkabir* disappears, such sacralization leaves its place to a more "realistic" tendency, one which contradictingly denounces the previously expressed sacralization. Thus, the "sacredness" does not lie outside the signifier of *Anıtkabir*, does not precede it, but that the signifier, or nodal point, of *Anıtkabir* itself allows the sacredness to be constituted. The polysemic character of sacredness is, thus, momentarily fixed around the signifier of *Anıtkabir.*

So far, the differential character, or the *logic of difference,* that described a *discourse* as a totality seemed conclusory. Nonetheless, Laclau defines the "momentary closing

of the totality" not in a linear fashion where the *excluding boundary* simply renders the system possible. In contrast, the very closing of the *discourse* against an *excluding boundary* results in the discourse itself being transformed as well, where another *logic* comes to define the relationships between its elements.

> Each signifier constitutes a sign by attaching itself to a particular signified, inscribing itself as a difference within the signifying process. But if what we are trying to signify is not a difference but, on the contrary, a radical exclusion which is the ground and condition of all differences, in that case, no production of *one more* difference can do the trick. As, however, all the means of representation are differential in nature, it is only if the differential nature of the signifying units is subverted, only if the signifiers empty themselves of their attachment to particular signifieds and assume the role of representing the pure being of the system - or, rather, the system as pure Being - that such a signification is possible (Laclau, 1996, p. 39).

What operates in this positioning of the *discourse* as "pure Being", is a *logic of equivalence.* This *equivalential logic* is one that which cancels out all differences within the system, and enables its existence as a whole. This is not a teleological point in Laclauian discourse theory, where each discourse goes through the the sequential logics of *difference* and ends up in *equivalence.* This, rather, is a *constant tension* that marks the functioning of all discourses. In that sense, all discourses go back and forth between these two *logics.* As Laclau explains, "equivalence is precisely what subverts difference, so that all identity is constructed within this tension between the differential and the equivalential logics" (Laclau, 2005, p. 70). When there is a system of differential elements, there prevails a *logic of difference* (a wall that is painted with a bunch of different colors); however, at the point the system is momentarily closed, there prevails a *logic of equivalence* (the same wall posited next to an unpainted wall, where the system of differences within it are cancelled out and the antagonism is reduced to "being painted" and "being unpainted")[46]. At the point of the closure of a *discourse,* "the realm of discursive differences, becomes homogenized into a chain of equivalence *vis-à-vis* a purely negative outside" (Critchley & Marchart, 2004, p. 4). This is an impossible but a necessary *tension,* as Laclau explains:

> Impossible, because the tension between equivalence and difference is ultimately insurmountable; necessary, because without some kind of closure,

---

[46] This "painted wall" example is given once again and detailed further in Chapter 3.

however precarious it might be, there would be no signification and no identity (Laclau, 2005, p. 70).

In this his momentarily closed, impossible totality where the differences are cancelled out and turned into *equivalences,* "the hegemonic identity becomes something of the order of an *empty* signifier, its own particularity embodying an unachievable fullness" (Laclau, 2005, 71). In other words, the identity of the closed and *equivalentialized* system is represented in an *empty signifier,* one that which *homogenizes*[47] the differences within its own body and represents the whole system through its particular self. This condition *where a particularity stands for the universal* is the exact reason why that signifier is "empty". Since it tries to embody an impossible-to-embody system where there are no differences, which means that there is actually no such system, it gets "emptied out". Furthermore, it is possible that the same signifier *float.* A *floating signifier* is a signifier the meaning of which is "indeterminate between alternative equivalential frontiers" (2005, p. 131). Both *emptiness* and *floating* are the characteristics of a signifier. However, Laclau suggests that they are structurally different (p. 133). The *emptying out* of a signifier happens at the antagonism between the system itself and the *constitutive outside,* whereas the *floating* of a signifier takes place between antagonistic frontiers (here, the antagonism is between the frontiers, rather than the signifier itself, where the signifier's emptiness is able to conveniently signify contradicting things)[48].

In Laclauian Discourse Analysis, formation of a discourse, the hegemonization of a nodal point, the equivalentializing of elements (or demands) are never "neutral" processes, but those which are the objects of *power*. "Discourses are constructed by the drawing of political frontiers between differently positioned social subjects via the exercise of power, in which certain elements are included in a discourse or political project and others are not" (Howarth, 2015, p. 6). Thus, *power* and *politics* is among the most important reasons as to why the nature of the relationships is *contingent*. In other words, it is in the political, antagonistic, undecidable nature of "reality" that

---

[47] Laclau seems to use equivalence and difference interchangeably with homogeneity and heterogeneity (See Laclau, 2005, p. 153).

[48] The points about the *empty signifier* and the *floating* signifier will be developed further in Chapter 3. Equivalence and difference will be further explained there as well.

Laclau's thought is marked by the notion of *contingency*. The overstepping of a signifier, the halting of a nodal point, the embodiment of a system, these are all processes whereby the true denominator is *hegemony*. The fixities being momentary, and given forms being malleable, overturnable, re-constitutable are due to their *hegemonic articulation*. Laclau, therefore, interprets "reality" as a process of *hegemonic struggle,* where the "particular closures", the "momentary meanings" and "established identities" at a given time are nothing but *contingently established hegemonic forms.*

The methodology and theoretical framework of this thesis will hold fast to these foundational tenets of Laclau, and employ the theories, assumptions, concepts and tools explained above. Should there be a facet of Laclauian Discourse Analysis which was not established here, it will be given and identified in full detail within the text.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

This study is, as explained above, a qualitative one about the characteristics of hyperpoliticized Post-Politics and Civic Atatürkism. The qualitative nature of this study restricts the claim of representability for the general framework of Civic Atatürkism. Nevertheless, the extremely-detailed-close-up, due to the semi-structured in-depth attribute of the interviews, allows me to analyze the discourse of the interviewees in a more meticulous and specific fashion. For the field study of my thesis, I interviewed 15 Atatürkists, 10 of whom happened to be men and 5 women. The disproportionality in the gender identities of the interviewees was, sincerely, unintentional[49]. This marks the first limitation of the study at hand. Second, the majority of the interviews covered the span of students from 3 universities in Ankara, Turkey: METU, TED University and Hacettepe University, with 10 of them currently being students of METU, and with almost half of the interviewees being students of Political Science. There were only two non-university students (one being a university graduate from METU, and the other being a high school graduate). Therefore, since the whole study, in general, is limited to 3 universities, the results may be said to

---

[49] It is important to note that 4 women, in total, with whom we had arranged the interviews, cancelled, for unnamed reasons, at the last minute. This observation may imply certain things to whomever it may concern.

display an unintentional bias. Third, even though there are 9 interviewees who do not belong to a political organization, and 6 who do, those 6 belong to 3 different organizations, namely, Atatürkist Thought Society [ADT], Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi [CHP] and Türkology Society in METU. Thus, the variation in the type of organizations is low and might lead to partiality in the results. Fourth, although there were a lot of control variables (age, gender, education level, mode of subsistence, employment, university department, organization) in the analysis of the interviews, class was not one of them. Only the "mode of subsistence" of the interviewees were covered (whether they depended on their families or were independent, economically). Thus, the class character of the interviewees may have been overlooked[50]. All the interviews, except one, were conducted in a face-to-face manner. The vast majority of them spanned between 45 to 90 minutes. In conclusion, although there is not much of a claim of representability in this field study, the extremely-detailed nature of it allows me, I believe, to make strong claims regarding the analysis of Civic Atatürkism, hyperpoliticization and Post-Politics. Albeit these limitations, it is my strong contention that this study could provide an illustrative ground for further qualitative and quantitative studies to be made concerning Civic Atatürkism.

---

[50] Albeit my strong supposition that class is not an important factor here.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW / POST-POLITICS

In 1989, Francis Fukuyama declared that he could not "avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history" (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 3). With the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with the emergence of liberal democratic movements in the communist East, in what could be deemed nothing other than a (self-acknowledged) pseudo-Hegelian framework, Fukuyama made his infamous suggestion that humanity had reached the "end of history", meaning that "the ideal that will govern the material world *in the long run*" was set once and for all (1989, p. 4), and "the basic *principles* of the liberal democratic state could not be improved upon" (p. 5). In other words, he contended that Western capitalism and liberal democracy had "won" the "battle" that determined the course of the 20th century, against the communist Eastern world. This, in Fukuyama's account, led to the conclusion that the one we lived in was no longer the world that was split between two rival ideological frameworks, but a "de-ideologized world" (p. 15). In fact, the old "world of ideology" was so far gone, and had been left behind so clearly that Fukuyama even mourned of its loss and claimed that he was almost "nostalgic" of it, with the economization and technicization of political matters "having saddened", "made boring" the existence of humanity (p. 18).

As much as Fukuyama's declaration was an awkward, "shocking", and even an overly courageous one, it was not "original" in the sense that it could be considered the symptomatic result of an already-emerging process in the Western world. It was long before the "fall of communism" that discussions and debates about a *new world*, a *new modernity*, *new society* and a *new politics* had begun. Daniel Bell, for example, in 1976, had prophesized the advent of the "post-industrial society", one that was marked by a new techno-economic order. Bell contended that with the transition from the

industrial to post-industrial society, the order of the *machine*, which previously characterized the former, was furthered by the order of *intellectual technology*. This was not a "replacement", as many facets of the industrial society were still relevant; however, this was an impactful overriding of some sorts, where there were radical transformations in the industrial social structure. Bell delineates the most important of them as the rising importance of theoretical knowledge, the emergence of new intellectual technologies, rise of the "knowledge class", rise of the service sector, invention of new communication and computation technologies, the growing centrality of science and so on (Bell, 1999, pp. lxxxvii-c).

In what followed, those like Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash developed the theory of *reflexive modernity* in order to frame the new conditions in which the Western world persisted, i.e. those that Bell had described. This was not so much the case for the East, as it was the side who had "lost" the battle[51]. The East, now, was at a crossroads between its "traditional" form, and this new modernity. It could continue its existence insofar as it could adopt the Western political framework, i.e. liberal democracy. According to Beck, reflexive modernity denoted the "possibility of a creative (self-)destruction for an entire epoch: that of industrial society" (Beck, 1994, p. 2). In other words, he contended that the forms of industrial society had subjected themselves to an *autophagy* of some sorts, where industrial society was *destructing* itself, while *radicalizing* its premises at the same time. This dual *destruction* and *radicalization* was the product of a double movement of history: "first the disembedding and second the re-embedding of industrial forms by another modernity" (1994, p. 2). Beck distinguishes this from the "self-destructions" of previous epochs, in that this one did not take place through a revolution or a crisis, but was the direct result of the success of the West. Therefore, the reflexivity at hand was defined on the grounds of an unplanned consequence of history (pp. 2-4). It was a piecemeal process, an unnoticed one, both "unseen and undesired" (p. 10). Thus, the reflexivity of the newly-emerged era was both the result and the product of the industrial society.

In such a framework, *reflexivity* "refers to the use of information about the conditions of activity as a means of regularly reordering and redefining what that activity is"

---

[51] See Beck, 1994, p. 1.

(Giddens, 2007, p. 86). For Beck, it is another way of denoting "self-confrontation" (Beck, 1994, p. 5). This is a "self-confrontation with the effects of risk society that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society" (1994, p. 6). What this suggested was the claim that "the motor of history does not reside any more in instrumental rationality, but [resides] in the 'side-effect'" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 36). Therefore, whereas *reflection,* for Beck, denoted "instrumental rationality", *reflexion* concerned the "side-effects" of modernization. This was an attempt to put forward that the "modern" forms of politics, like Marxism, had "missed the mark", and that against their political conceptions, history unfolded in the most "unplanned" of fashions. Thus, Beck contended that "it is those side-effects, not the political struggles, which are at the origin of the profound changes which have taken place in a wide range of social relations" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 37).

What characterized this new, *reflexive* modernity were a handful of things. First, Beck suggests that it was the phenomenon of *risk*. He associates *the social* of reflexive modernity with his concept of "risk society", where the element of *risk* is no longer controllable, monitorable, not even predictable (Beck, 1994, pp. 5-8). Giddens contends that this element of *risk* creates the outcome of *manufactured uncertainty,* where the challenges that confront humanity and its conditions of existence are no longer manageable with the Enlightenment model of simple "knowledge" (Giddens, 2007, pp. 3-4). Second, both writers put forward that *globalization* was a prime factor in such *destruction* of "older" forms, as Giddens suggests that "as a direct result of globalization, we can speak today of the emergence of a *post-traditional social order*" (Giddens, 2007, p. 5). The *risky, uncertain* conditions, created and exacerbated by the effects of globalization, and with the overall change in what Giddens terms the "post-traditional social order", resulted in the loss of the "political subject", in its dissolution into a heap of positions, suggests Beck (1994, p. 12). Thus, as a third point, in reflexive modernity, no longer does the *political subject* exist, which used to be defined in the industrial society by "older" antagonisms like Left and Right, socialism and capitalism etc.. In contrast, Beck argues that the *political subject* was replaced by *the individual*, and these "older" forms of antagonisms had become obsolete in the reflexive period of modernity. Thus, instead of an antagonism between, say, Left and Right, "lines of conflict are coming into being over the what and how of progress, and they are

becoming capable of organization and of building coalitions" (1994, p. 13). Furthermore, the positions Left and Right themselves were argued to have been blurred into non-existence as well, as Giddens suggests that "with the demise of socialism as a theory of economic management, one of the major division lines between left and right has disappeared, at least for the foreseeable future" (Giddens, 1998, p. 43).

Therefore, as a result of all of these transformations, *the political* (associated with the state)*,* Beck claims, had become *unpolitical,* and what was previously thought to be *unpolitical* spheres of life had become *(kind of) political.* Nevertheless, this claimed politicization was a quite peculiar one: one which Beck calls *sub-politicization* (Beck, 1994, p. 23). Since politicization for him is related to the state and institutions, parties, parliaments etc., "politicization … [in the case of sub-politicization] implies a decrease of the central rule approach" (p. 23), and an increase in the autonomy of action of individuals and certain collective bodies (Giddens, 2007, p. 7). In other words, it was argued that "a series of issues which were previously considered of a private character, such as those concerning the lifestyle and diet, have left the realm of the intimate and private and have become politicized" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 40). Beck argues:

> In the wake of subpoliticization, there are growing opportunities to have a voice and a share in the arrangement of society for groups hitherto uninvolved in the substantive technification and industrialization process: citizens, the public sphere, social movements, expert groups, working people on site; there are even opportunities for courageous individuals to 'move mountains' in the nerve centres of development (Beck, 1994, p. 23).

In accordance with such an understanding of *depoliticization* and *sub-politicization*, Beck suggested that politics was, now, occuring at the "realms of subpolitics" (Beck, 1997, p. 52), which suggested that the target of politics was no longer to function in an institutional and rule-based understanding but to organize other decision-making areas, previously thought to be non-political, with new agents who were different from those of the "older" political *mode*. In such an understanding, there is an explicit claim that the general political atmosphere would function under the so-called "necessary" basic Consensus relying on "expert knowledge and ability" (1997, p. 57). His central argument in *sub-politics* was against what he claimed to be an erroneous "equation of politics and state, of politics with the political system" (Beck, 1994, p. 17). He

distinguishes *sub-politics* as a *mode* of politics from "the older mode of politics" under two criteria: First, the agents of *sub-politics* are understood to be "*outside*" the system, and second, they are not only collective bodies but individuals as well (1994, p. 22). He contended that what used to be political in the industrial society was becoming unpolitical, and what had been left out of the borders of politics was becoming (sub)political. Thus, he argued that those who sought *the political* in reflexive modernity were at a fault if they were searching it within the confines of the state and its institutional setting (parties, parliaments etc.). Beck put forward that politics was occuring at the level of private life, everyday life, business, science etc., i.e. at the *sub-political level*. In its very fundamentals, what underlied all this transformation for Beck was an individualization process Western societies were going through (pp. 18-21). It must be noted that what Beck specifically means by "the state" and "the political" is *institutions*. Thus, he does not consider trade unions, for example, a part of that private life, but associates them with the "old, political" institutions. He does not consider *the proletariat,* for example, to be a "private" group. Furthermore, albeit his contention that the agents of *sub-politics* were those who were *outside* the system, that *outsidedness* does not apply groups, for example, that were *outside* but concerned with "older" forms of politics. Although he suggests that the "older" political poles did not simply disappear, but were still functional in their combination with new ones, he follows that they were nonetheless senseless without such combination.

He contends that *sub-politics* "means shaping society *from below*" (Beck, 1994, p. 23); however, as to the question of *what constitutes the below,* or *who is outside the system*, it is Beck who has the say, and the answer is unclear. As mentioned above, Beck notes certain occupation groups, citizen initiatives, "social movements" and individuals as the agents of *sub-politics*. While these have no such common ethico-political framework that could possibly help unify them under a common realm, it is Beck's very *signifier* of *"outside the system"* that allows such signification. Only with a particular designation of a *system* can Beck define its so-called *outsiders.* In other words, without that specific operation provided by *outside,* Beck's account would dysfunction. He delineates the *subjective* dynamics of his *outsider agents,* and the blurring of the line between the Left and Right (one that denotes a transformation in the *symbolic* dimension) as the following:

42

> Everyone thinks and acts as a right-winger and left-winger, radically and conservatively, democratically and undemocratically, ecologically and anti-ecologically, politically and unpolitically, all at the same time. Everyone is a pessimist, a passivist, an idealist and an activist in partial aspects of his or her self. That only means, however, that the current clarities of politics - right and left, conservative and socialistic, retreat and participation - are no longer correct or effective (Beck, 1994, p. 21).

It must be clear to the reader that Beck (and Giddens) welcomes and celebrates the process he describes. When one takes a closer inspection, it is immediately noticeable that Beck does not talk about the reverse *politicization* and *depoliticization* of two distinct poles. Seemingly, there is no mention of a *politicization* at any side of the polarity. What takes place is a so-called *sub-politicization*, the central idea of which rejects the very notion of politicization in the first place. Therefore, although Beck attempts to establish a stability where the *equilibrium* of (de)politicization is balanced out, his so-called *sub-politicization is actually nothing but another form of depoliticization.* Therefore, the polarity of *depoliticization and sub-politicization* is not built on an *equilibrium,* but is seen to be an *imbalance* where sub-politicization is actually *a further depoliticization* of politics, and both sides are observed to be *agitating* depoliticization.

Giddens presents a quite similar account to Beck's *sub-politics* with his concept of *life politics,* and quite similarly suggests that the non-orthodox spheres of political life, thanks to *the reflexivity of the social,* had become *(kind of) political.* With the "failure" of the Left to provide answers to issues like globalization, the transformations in the nature of traditions, the advent of the post-traditional social order, and manufactured uncertainty (Giddens, 2007, pp. 4-7), he contends that "to the emancipatory politics of the classical left we have to add … *life politics*[52]" (Giddens, 1998, p. 44). Thus, Giddens, in explaining his account, makes a distinction between *emancipatory politics* and *life politics* (Giddens, 2008, p. 210)*.* Furthermore, he associates the two with further essential qualities: The politics of *life chances* (associated with the "old" *emancipatory politics*) and *life styles* (associated with the "new" *life politics*) (Giddens, 2007, pp. 14-15). Whereas, for Giddens, *emancipatory politics* is a "generic outlook concerned above all with liberating individuals and groups from constraints

---

[52] The italicization belongs to me.

which adversely affect their life chances" (Giddens, 2008, p. 210), *life politics* is a "politics of self-actualisation in a reflexively ordered environment" (2008, p. 214), which is not so much concerned with *exploitation, inequality, oppression, power* and *participation*[53]*,* but concerned with *morality* and *ethics.* He contends that "the terms right and left no longer have the meaning they once did, and each political perspective is in its own way exhausted" (2007, p. 78). In the epoch of reflexive modernity, thus, he explains, the "older" *mode* of politics, *emancipatory politics,* had been rendered ineffective, and the relationship between the "older" political actors and political action had been torn apart. They were replaced, claims Giddens, by questions concerning the *morality* of issues, *ethical* decisions to be made upon certain things, rather than competing frameworks. What (not so much replaced) had emerged alongside this ineffective mode of politics was *life politics.* Giddens suggests:

> Life politics, and the disputes and struggles connected with it, are about how we should live in a world where everything that used to be natural (or traditional) now has in some sense to be chosen, or decided about (Giddens, 2007, pp. 90-91).

Hence, one crucial aspect of *life politics* for Giddens is *morality,* as it "brings back to prominence precisely those moral and existential questions repressed by the core institutions of modernity" (Giddens, 2008, p. 223). Although he explains that *life politics* is not a simple individualization or personalization of politics, it is understood to be something that which pertains to them. Moreover, it involves some kind of an understanding of *emancipation* as well, explains Giddens, but not the kind that is present in *emancipatory politics* (2008, p. 214)*.* Even though *life politics* could still relate to the "orthodox areas of political involvement" (Giddens, 2007, p. 91), *emancipatory politics* could only enter within the borders of politics insofar as it concerns "the collective humanity"[54] (2007, p. 92). Albeit Giddens' emphasis on the "collective" character of *life politics,* the crucial issue here is that the said political *mode* is defined on the grounds of *deferring* political action towards Consensus. In other words, it is no longer the question of the "why" of Progress and its alternatives,

---

[53] All are words that Giddens uses to distinguish *life politics* from *emancipatory politics.* See Giddens, 2008, p. 215.

[54] Giddens' use of "collective" is quite peculiar here. He defines "collective" in a precise way that connotates with globalism and alternative forms of solidarity.

but a question "over the what and how of progress" (Beck, 1994, p. 13) and its methods.

If what matters is *sub-politics* and *life politics* in reflexive modernity, then what of the *depoliticizing political,* or in other words, institutional politics? To put it in another way, in the face of *depoliticization,* what happens to "the political"? Giddens suggests that the "older" political actors, institutions and configurations, in such conditions of reflexive modernity, were faced with a *crisis.* Beginning with the 1980s, Western social democratic politics [institutional politics] began to feel responsible to answer certain challenges (Giddens, 1998, pp. 5-6). The main challenge to social democratic politics had come from neoliberalism, with its "impactful" free market philosophy. This challenge, suggests Giddens, led to a *crisis*, which was the overall result of various further factors laid out in the theory of reflexive modernity: globalization, individualism, the problems pertaining to the environment, the blurring of the line between Left and Right, and the new frameworks of democratic politics and new roles of government and society (1998, pp. 27-28). Nevertheless, Giddens is clear that there was one crucial reason among others that laid beneath all these. In other words, there was one reason as to why this challenge turned into a *crisis* in the first place: the "inadequacy" of socialism in grasping and providing an answer to those developments (pp. 4-5). He suggests that the "old Left" had failed to take into account these newly-emerged phenomena, and could not align its political framework with the state of the world since it followed the tenets of socialism (p. 4). The social democratic response to the crisis was the invention of a *third way* of politics. Although it is quite a conflicted term, having had various uses in the past, Giddens defines it as

> a framework of thinking and policy-making that seeks to adapt social democracy to a world which has changed fundamentally over the past two or three decades … it is an attempt to transcend both old-style social democracy and neoliberalism (Giddens, 1998, p. 26).

Even before its modern coinage in Tony Blair's New Labour, Giddens suggests that Western political parties had begun to implement dramatic changes in their political frameworks[55]. Nonetheless, it was most prominent in the political outlook of Tony

---

[55] Giddens notes here the "Basic Programe for the SPD", enacted in 1989, which introduces new issues like ecology into their political outlook (Giddens, 1998, pp. 19-20). Braunthal puts forward that even

Blair in the UK, and Bill Clinton in the US. Although Giddens does talk about a *depoliticization* concerning the role of the state and institutional politics, he strives to balance out the equation with the advent of *life politics*: "What to some appeared as a process of depoliticization - the draining away of influence from national governments and political parties - to others was a spread of political engagement and activism" (Giddens, 1998, p. 49). He argues that what the state and institutional actors must adhere to, in a period characterized by *reflexivity,* was *generative politics,* i.e. a form of politics that allows individuals to *act*, and acknowledges the primacy of the public, thus transcending the distinction between state and market (Giddens, 2007, p. 15).

It is clear that both Beck and Giddens define, respectively, *sub-politics*[56] and *life politics* as new *modes*[57] of politics which not if dethroned, seriously relegated the "older" *mode* of politics. With their *spatio-temporal* characterizations, both concepts argue for a *new, current mode* of politics. The concept of *Post-Politics* emerged precisely to both verify and undermine the claims of such an understanding of politics[58]. Chantal Mouffe, in *On the Political*, written in 2005, establishes her account of Post-Politics directly as a critique of Beck and Giddens. Mouffe suggests that "what

---

though the programme was an attempt to align the politics of the party with the newly-emerged global and ecological developments, it did not actually answer the problems arising from a "post-communist" world (Braunthal, 1993, p. 396).

[56] Beck also talks about *sub-politics* in terms of a *process*, as the "process of *sub-politicization*". Thus, it could be argued that he considers it both as a *mode* and as a *process.* His account of *the process* could be understood as the process of emergence of the *new mode.*

[57] The concept of *mode,* in this thesis, is distinguished from *process* and *appearance* on the grounds of its spatiality and temporality. While *process* is a purely *temporal* configuration of a political outlook (not bound or loosely bound by *spatial* determinants), *appearance* is a purely *spatial* configuration (not bound or loosely bound by *temporal* determinants). A *mode* is bound *both* by a specific *spatiality* (a geographical setting, a locus, a specified place etc.) and a *temporality* (a specific period, an era, a level of modernity etc.). I use *mode,* thus, to denote "a configuration that denotes the present of a thing". In the case of *sub-politics* and *life politics,* it is due to my understanding that they encompass both determinants (Emerged in and characterizing a specific period in the Western world) that they are *modes* of politics. Although the two are virtually different accounts, it is my contention they describe the *same mode.* In order to clarify the distinctions, depoliticization, for example, is a *temporal* configuration of politics. The West, on the other hand, denotes a *spatial* configuration of politics. What constitutes a *mode,* I argue, is the combination of both. See Chapter 3 for a distinguishment between the *modes* of Kemalism and *appearances* of it, made on the grounds of both determinants of *spatiality* and *temporality*.

[58] Verify it in the sense that the characteristics described by Beck and Giddens explain the qualities of the Post-Political *Zeitgeist,* and undermine it in the sense that their general framework is posited as an example of the Post-Political *Vision.*

the approach advocated by Beck and Giddens aims at eliminating from politics is the notion of the 'adversary'" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 48). It is clear that Mouffe designates what Beck and Giddens called "older" or *emancipatory "modes"* of politics as *adversarial modes.* By making a distinction between an "enemy" and an "adversary", she puts forward that "the Beck/Giddens approach forecloses the possibility of giving an 'agonistic'[59] form to political conflicts" (2005a, p. 50). Hence, it is through their "appearance of scientificity and incontestability" which hides their *foreclosure of antagonism* that their "post-political vision" is defined, according to Mouffe (p. 54). In other words, it due to their "denial of the constitutive nature of antagonism" (p. 56) that Mouffe suggests that Beck and Giddens exemplify the Post-Political *Vision.* Furthermore, it is due to their relegation of politics to *morality* that Mouffe considers them of a Post-Political *Vision* as well. As she explains:

> [The political] still consists in a we/they discrimination, but the we/they, instead of being defined with political categories, is now established in moral terms. In place of a struggle between 'right and left', we are faced with a struggle between 'right and wrong' (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 5).

In short, it is directly against Beck and Giddens' Post-Political *conceptualizations (Vision)* of *sub-politics* and *life politics* that Mouffe defines the Post-Political *Zeitgeist.* She establishes the relationship between the *Vision* and the *Zeitgeist* as the former of Giddens and Beck having provided the central tenets of the latter (See Mouffe, 2005a, p. 35). Nonetheless, I believe the relationship must be reversed. It is the case here that the *Zeitgeist* and *Vision* coincide; nonetheless, it is not that a Post-Political *Vision* provides the central characteristics of it, but one where the Post-Political *Zeitgeist overdetermines* the *Vision.* This separation is actually one that pertains to the distinguishment between the two *dimensions* of politics: *Symbolic dimension* and the *subjective dimension.* While with her use of *Zeitgeist,* Mouffe denotes "the current conditions" (See p. 35), with her use of *Vision* she denotes a *subjective mode* that is *Post-Political,* as in the example of Beck and Giddens. The coincidence here occurs through what I have called the relationship of *overdetermination* between this two

---

[59] Mouffe's definitive characteristic of an adversarial *mode* of politics that transforms the notion of "enemy" into an "adversary". With such a conceptualization, Mouffe is endeavoring to acknowledge the antagonistic character of the political and the inevitability of conflict (rather than to repress or foreclose it), through giving its actors a "legitimate" form of expression. See Mouffe, 2005a, pp. 19-21 and pp. 51-55.

dimensions. Therefore, the *Vision* at hand must be distinguished by Post-Politics itself (*Zeitgeist*), while nonetheless being posited as a "Post-Political" *Vision.* In accordance with the theoretical distinguishment and explanations made in Chapter 1.1.[60], I will be analyzing the literature on Post-Politics in terms of the two levels of the *symbolic* and the *subjective,* and will strive to establish an answer that provides a satisfactory definition regarding the concept of Post-Politics, with its position as a *condition* which *conditions*. However, before that, some other problems regarding the definition of Post-Politics must be resolved: namely, those that pertain to the ambiguous difference between *anti-politics* and *Post-Politics,* and between the *repression of the political* and the *foreclosure of the political.* I contend that leaving these problems unadressed will result in a problematic account of Post-Politics, the *spatial-temporal* determinants of which is not constituted, and the position of which as a *mode* has not been established. Only with the distinctions of these determinants of *definition, operation* and *spatio-temporality* can Post-Politics be re-posited, today, as a *hegemonic mode* of politics, and only through the explanation of the relationship between *Post-Political Zeitgeist* (symbolic) and *Post-Political Vision* (subjective) can the current subjective outlook of *hyperpoliticized and Post-Political,* today, be understood.

2.1. Defining Post-Politics: Resolving the problems of a concept

Post-Politics[61] is a concept that has rarely been treated with due rigour, meticulousness and care. Although it has originated from strong theoretical accounts regarding the characteristics of an era and a political context (See Mouffe, 2005a; Rancière, 1999; Žižek, 2000), the concept never "took off", in a sense, and never delivered its promise. It never came to be widely acknowledged as a fruitful concept that defined the

---

[60] The reader is urged to re-visit the said Chapter, as the delineations of both dimensions and their fundamental inter-functioning (through *overdetermination*) was explained in detail there.

[61] In this thesis, I will be using the concepts Post-Politics and Post-Democracy interchangeably. This is due to, first, my understanding that they describe the same "object" and employ similar ontologies. Both concepts provide efforts to describe the same historical period and its complex of politics, society and economics. Moreover, both rely on a distinguishment between *politics* and *the political*, albeit in different forms. Second, although it is specifically Rancière who uses the term Post-Democracy, Mouffe can be seen to be using it in certain works of her (See Oppelt, 2014). Alongside these two, Mouffe uses the terms of depoliticization and de-democratization in order to describe a similar *process* as well (See Oppelt, 2014). The latter two will be argued to be different from the former two based on certain criteria. A detailed handling of both can be found in this Chapter.

hegemonic mode of politics of an *era,* but *failed* to prove its prowess during its short lifetime. It has, indeed, been a topic of dispute and contention, but *not* upon its explanations and descriptions vis-à-vis its object, rather upon its problems, contradictions and "endings" (See Jäger, 2021; Jäger, 2022; Dean [Jodi], 2014; Mouffe, 2017; Buller et al., 2019; Dean [Jonathan], 2014). The reason as to why Post-Politics seemingly *failed* to constitute itself as a successful concept is, I believe, due to certain fundamental problems in the literature. These problems pertain to the "theoretical" aspects of the concept, and not the "empirical" descriptions made upon its object.

To begin with, first, "in the literature on post-politics, there is a great deal of confusion and divergence over the precise meaning of the term" (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 7). It is true that the concept has never had *a definition,* but rather functioned as an umbrella term that denoted some general characteristics of a specific *period* and a specific *subjectivity.* Nevertheless, albeit the lack of a common definition, in general, all accounts of Post-Politics similarly

> refer to a situation in which the political – understood as a space of contestation and agonistic engagement – is increasingly colonised by politics – understood as technocratic mechanisms and consensual procedures that operate within an unquestioned framework of representative democracy, free market economics, and cosmopolitan liberalism (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 6).

Thus, although there is some kind of a similarity concerning the nature, scope and object of the accounts on Post-Politics, there was rarely any attempt to "refine and define" the term and re-posit it against criticisms (See Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014; Taşkale, 2016). Whenever there was an attempt, it was not the case that the crucial problems of the concept had been solved, but rather that the concept was further detailed and further made complex *through* its problems.

Second, quite related to the problem of *definition* (which could even be regarded as an extension of it), there is a lack of consensus upon the precise *operation* of Post-Politics. It is the case in all accounts of Post-Politics that the constitutive, antagonistic aspect of politics, *the political,* has *disappeared* (which nonetheless returns in violent

ways)[62]. However, the accounts are observed to be diverging over what the exact kind of *disappearance* this is. As Wilson & Swyngedouw explain:

> Whereas for Mouffe the post-political is defined by *repression*, and for Rancière post-democracy is a specific form of *disavowal*, Žižek distinguishes post-politics from other forms of depoliticisation on the basis that it operates not through repression or disavowal but through *foreclosure* – the total erasure of the political from the Symbolic[63] (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014, p. 15).

Thus, the accounts differ upon the precise *operation* of Post-Politics towards *the political,* which is among the essential characteristics of the concept. Mouffe employs the terminology of *repression* and *exclusion* (of the political) (Mouffe, 2015, p. 18), and argues that the Post-Political *Vision* partakes in an *anti-political* attitude. Taşkale, as another example, uses the terms *foreclosure* (Taşkale, 2016, p. 12), *suppression* (2016, p. 2) and *denial* (of the political) (p. 36). Diken, furthermore, uses *emptying out* (Diken, 2014, p. 127) and *negation*[64] (of the political) (2014, p. 130), while Wilson & Swyngedouw (2014, p. 6) employ *colonization*. Although these might seem similar, and even pretty much the same accounts of the relevant *operation* insofar as they converge on the *disappearance of the political,* they all belong to various kinds of political *modes*. The distinctive quality of Post-Politics is that it defines the said *disappearance* under the *hegemonic mode* of politics in a specific era, and a specific political entity, namely the West (as described by Beck and Giddens). Therefore, all these terms point to different *modes* of politics under which the political has

---

[62] It must be put forward that the exact point made by the literature is that the said *disappearance* of the political is nothing but an illusion. All theoreticians of Post-Politics claim, much to the dismay of the liberal intelligentsia who proposed that an all-encompassing Consensus would sweep the world after the fall of communism, that *the political,* the conflictual character of politics, could never be done away with, hence the return of religious fundamentalisms, violent nationalisms, "irrational", excessive politics of the Right etc. (See Mouffe, 1993; Žižek, 2000, Diken, 2014). "Instead of the heralded 'New World Order', the victory of universal values, and the generalization of 'post-conventional' identities, we are witnessing an explosion of particularisms and an increasing challenge to Western universalism" (Mouffe, 1993, p. 1). As Diken explains, "it seems as if the lack of antagonism in post-political society is countered with an excess of antagonism" (Diken, 2014, p. 130). Nonetheless, I do not consider this "return" to be specific to Post-Political *foreclosure.* This "return" is *the political* itself. Despite attempts to *repress, supress, foreclose, evade,* even *erase* it, this second movement of the return is inevitable. Therefore, I do not consider this to be specific to Post-Politics (as *the repressed* could very well return within an *anti-political* framework as well), hence, a specific discussion on it will not be made. It is, rather, I contend, the specific *operation* with which the political is *foreclosed* is what defines Post-Politics, and not the "return" of the *foreclosed.*

[63] The italicizations of *repression* and *disavowal* belong to me.

[64] Possibly derived from Schmitt's account of the liberal *negation* of the political.

disappeared. To clarify, a simple *suppression* or *repression* of the political need not necesarily be definitive of a Post-Political *mode,* as they might, much more prominently, describe an *anti-political* framework. Quite similarly, the *temporalization* of an *anti-political* framework (within an era that is defined by Post-Politics, namely the 1990s and 2000s) would come to create problems for the Eastern operationalizations of the concept (since *anti-politics* in the East is not a "new" political outlook). A form of politics that has been instituted upon the strict *repression* of the political is not foreign to the East. Nonetheless, it is the precise *articulation* of the East into a (post)modern, Western, neoliberal global political-economic framework that the form of *disappearance* of the political differs, and could be said to be "new" to the Eastern context[65] (See Kamat, 2014)[66]. In fact, Necmi Erdoğan defines the difference between the Kemalist anti-political *mode* and the Neo-Kemalist Post-Political *mode* of politics within that exact difference between *repression* and *foreclosure* (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 591). The distinguishment between these notions, thus, of *repression, suppression, foreclosure* etc., provide us with different *forms* and *modes* of the political. Without a precise definition of the exact *operation*, the concept would create nothing but further confusions regarding its object and context.

Third, once again quite related to the problems of *definition* and *operation*, but nonetheless one that must be handled separately, the exact *spatio-temporal* characteristics of the concept have not been defined clearly so far[67]. For example, Taşkale equates Louis Bonaparte's regime with Post-Political *foreclosure* of the political, hence *de-temporalizes* it and confuses the *anti-political repression* with *Post-Political foreclosure* (Taşkale, 2016, p. 26). Furthermore, he argues that "there are different temporal chapters of neoliberalism … post-politics is a very recent form of

---

[65] The problematic of operationalizing the concept within an Eastern context will be discussed below.

[66] Sangeeta Kamat, operationalizing Post-Politics within the context of India, argues that it is exactly through India's "entrance" into the Western neoliberal order which promotes a "democratic ethos while simultaneously repudiating conflict and contradiction" (Kamat, 2014, p. 68) that the relevance of Post-Politics could be argued upon in the Global South. In other words, it is through Kamat's contention that "the imperatives of global capitalism produce similar tendencies in the 'Global South'" (2014, p. 69) that the East and West could be argued to *meet* on a shared, *hegemonic mode* of politics.

[67] *Definition* and *operation* are already built upon *spatio-temporal* chacaracteristics; therefore, in that sense, all three problems are not even separate. Nonetheless, they all constitute different *parts* of the whole problem, hence my decision to handle them separately.

neoliberalism" (2016, p. 1), thereby reducing Post-Politics to be simply a *form* of neoliberalism. In other words, Taşkale reduces a political configuration *directly* to an economic one and could be said to reproduce the "current *rationality*[68] of replacing politics with economics" (p. 1) of which he is critical. He also talks about "Post-political neoliberalism" (p. 131), which defines Post-Politics not as a *hegemonic mode* of politics, but rather as an extension of neoliberalism, or a quality of it. However, due to the *spatio-temporal* characteristics of Post-Politics as a *mode,* i.e. the neoliberal hegemony of the market in the Western political system, I argue that neoliberal rationality and its domination over politics *is already within* the conceptualization of Post-Politics. Following Taşkale's explanation, we may ask: Is there a non-Post-Political neoliberalism? Is not Post-Politics so strongly bound by its *spatio-temporal* characteristics that we can define it without neoliberalism, and vice versa? I believe it is the case here, with Post-Politics (*foreclosure* of the political) and neoliberalism, that two perfectly coincide into the *mode of politics* that they are considered attributes of the same *condition.*

Fourth, and as related to but much more important than all three problems explained so far, the literature on Post-Politics does not distinguish between the *symbolic* and *subjective* dimensions of politics and politicizations. As exemplified in Taşkale's definition of Post-Politics as both a *form* and a *rationality* given above, the concept of Post-Politics is associated both with a *mode* of politics (the exact *mode-ness* of which it is not clear), and a *subjectivity* produced by it. Thus, in other words, Post-Politics is used in the literature in such a way that it is both the *cause* of something, and the *effect* of it. Mouffe, for example, suggests that Post-Politics is both a *Zeitgeist* (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 1) and a *Vision* (2005a, p. 54). Although *Zeitgeist* posits Post-Politics successfully as a *mode* (with *Zeit* providing the *temporality,* and *Geist* providing the *spatiality* of the concept), the problem as to how it could *also* be a *Vision* has not been explained. I consider this double-functioning to be essentially correct. Post-Politics does, indeed, exhibits itself both in the *hegemonic mode* of politics today, and in a particular mode of subjectivity produced by it. Nonetheless, its position as both the *cause* and the *effect* must be distinguished carefully, and the relationship between this

---

[68] The italicization belongs to me.

double-functioning must be explained. It is through the distinguishment between the *symbolic* and *subjective* dimensions of politics that I shall endeavor to make such a explanation. It is only through the *symbolic overdetermination of the subjective* (or *symbolic imprint present in the subject*, in other words), that the relationship between both can be established, and the Post-Political-ness of *Vision* can be put forward.

In such an effort, I first will be establishing the *definition, operation* and *spatio-temporal* characteristics of Post-Politics together in Chapter 2.1.1.. In the following, in Chapter 2.1.2., I will be laying down an alternative account of Post-Politics, as a *condition* that *conditions,* through the distinguishment between the *symbolic* dimension of politics and its *subjective* dimension, which are argued to be distinct but bounded by a relationship of *overdetermination.*

2.1.1. Spatio-temporal characteristics of Post-Politics: Anti-political *repression* and Post-Political *foreclosure*

In terms of its, virtually, only theoretical commonality, the literature on Post-Politics dwells on the distinguishment between *politics* and *the political.* This distinguishment mainly characterizes a difference between what we may call the institutionalized/consituted dimension of politics, and its fundamental/constitutive dimensions. Mouffe explains that "politics refers to the 'ontic' level while 'the political' has to do with the 'ontological' one" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 8). This kind of a separation is borrowed from Heidegger's formulation of the question of Being. Heidegger distinguishes between the *ontic* and *ontological* in the sense that while the former is concerned with Beings as entities, the latter is concerned with the Be-ing which marks all entities but itself is not a Being (Heidegger, 1996, p. 11). Consequently, *politics* concerns the facts, institutions [instituteds], practices of politics and society; on the other hand, *the political,* i.e. "the ontological concerns the very way in which society is instituted" (Mouffe, 2005a, pp. 8-9), its conditions of possibilities, its modes of appearances and its processes of appearance. *The political,* although formulated by thinkers like Hannah Arendt[69] as well, finds its most striking form in the work of Carl Schmitt, the framework of whom is employed by many theorists of Post-Politics, like Chantal Mouffe.

---

[69] See Mouffe, 2005a, p. 9.

Schmitt contends that *the political,* much like the categories of the ethical, the aesthetic and the economic, "resembles" an independent domain of human life and culture. Strauss quickly warns against this "resemblance" and suggests that Schmitt does not actually posit *the political* alongside those other domains of culture. Instead, Schmitt's "understanding of the political implies a fundamental critique of … the prevailing concept of culture" (Strauss, 2007, p. 102). Thus, Strauss argues that in Schmitt's thought, *the political* is not simply another domain, but is *fundamental* of all of them (2007, p. 104). Schmitt understands these categories of culture not in a positive sense (i.e. in terms of posit-ions within, say, an area), but in terms of functioning around a *criterion,* a foundational point of opposition. Therefore, it is the due to his understanding that *the political,* too, functions around a *criterion* that it resembles those domains of culture. This criterion, for Schmitt, is a *final distinction* which orders the functioning of a realm. It is the *ultimate* point where the central opposition of the realm is resolved and reproduced; an authoritative, *ultimate* point of distinction. To put it in another way, *final distinction* for Schmitt is both the point of exhaustion and the locus of production of the contents of those categories. In the realm of aesthetics, for example, the *final distinction* rests on the opposition between beautiful and ugly (Schmitt, 2007, pp. 25-28). Thus, just like in the distinctions of other domains, says Schmitt, "the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between *friend and enemy*[70]" (2007, p. 26). Schmitt, in other words, argues that *the political* rests on the distinction between *friend* and *enemy.* This is a distinction that cannot be reduced into other ones, and cannot be explained in terms of them as well. The enemy in question, for Schmitt, is not a private adversary (inimicus), but a public enemy (*hostis*), to whom a war would be waged (pp. 28-29).

In formulating such an account, Schmitt's address is directly against a liberal conceptualization of politics, which attempts to transform the concept of *enemy* into a "competitor" or a "debating adversary" (Schmitt, 2007, p. 28). As Strauss explains: "Schmitt confronts the liberal negation of the political with the position of the political, that is, with the recognition of the reality of the political" (Strauss, 2007, p. 108). Therefore, with such an account of politics, Schmitt highlights the *antagonistic nature*

---

[70] Italicization belongs to me.

of politics. "The political is the most intense and extreme antagonism, and every concrete antagonism becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the most extreme point, that of the friend-enemy grouping" (Schmitt, 2007, p. 29). It is his central contention, against liberal rationalism, that this *antagonistic character* could never be eliminated. "A world", says Schmitt, "in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated … would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy and hence a world without politics" (2007, p. 35). Hence, "the political is *the* status as the 'natural,' the fundamental and extreme, status of man" (Strauss, 2007, p. 106). Schmitt, in defining the *status* of humankind with the *ineradicability of antagonism*, shows, argues Mouffe, "that every consensus is based on acts of exclusion, [and] it reveals the impossibility of a fully inclusive 'rational' consensus" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 11).

Mouffe, defining her account of Post-Politics, associates it with the *repression* of the political, where the political is claimed to have disappeared (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 18). As Wilson & Sywngedouw (2014, p. 12) suggest, in Mouffe's account "the post-political names a hegemonic order in which the antagonistic dimension of the political has not been sublimated, but repressed"[71]. In line with such an account of *repression,* Mouffe argues that Post-Political accounts "all partake of a common anti-political vision" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 2), thus not establishing a clear line between Post-Politics and anti-politics. Her use of Post-Politics is somewhat confusing, as she calls it as a "Zeitgeist" (2005a, p. 1; 2005b, p. 127), a "vision" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 54), a "common sense" (2005a, p. 1), a "period" (p. 108), and a "perspective" (p. 109). These could all be categorized under the separation between *Zeitgeist* and *Vision,* two terms that denote two different dimensions of politics, namely, the *symbolic* and the *subjective.* Of the *Zeitgeist,* she argues that the central characteristics are the disappearance of the boundaries between Left and Right (p. 5), the rationalization of political decisions (to be undertaken by a technocratic elite) (p. 6), and the "disappearance of collective identities" replaced by a sweeping individualization (p. 49). Of the *Vision,* she suggests that it is marked by the desire to repress the *final distinction* of the political (i.e. the we/they distinction, borrowed from Schmitt) (p. 2), "the belief in the possibility of a

---

[71] She also calls it a "denial" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 55), an "elimination" (Mouffe, 1993, p. 1) and an "evasion" (1993, p. 2).

universal rational consensus" (p. 3), and the *moralization* of politics (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 5; Mouffe, 2005b, p. 123).

It is one of her most important contributions that she lays down a competing model of politics that recognizes the antagonistic aspect of *the political.* "For Mouffe, a liberal politics based on consensus and aimed at consensus is not possible" (Üstüner, 2007, p. 320), since it overlooks the antagonistic aspect of politics. Nevertheless, albeit her criticisms of the aggregative and deliberative models of democracy (Mouffe, 2005a, pp. 12-13), Mouffe paradoxically argues that consensus is still a necessary requirement of politics (2005a, p. 31). What she offers instead of these models is one in which democracy is played out in terms of a "conflictual consensus" (p. 121). In developing such an account, she argues that those ineradicable antagonisms could be transformed into agonisms, where the violent aspects of antagonistic relations could be tamed with their transformation into adversarial relations. She strives to provide political dissent a legitimate form of expression[72] with the agonistic model of politics, where there is no longer an enemy to be eradicated, but an adversary to be struggled with over the interpretation of democracy (pp. 19-21).

Rancière's account of Post-Democracy, as explained above, shares many similarities with that of Mouffe. Just like Mouffe's distinguishment between politics and the political*,* Rancière distinguishes between what he terms the police and politics. He argues that politics is not an institution, nor a regime, but something that which "exists when the natural order of domination is interrupted by the institution of a part of those who have no part" (Rancière, 1999, p. 11). In other words, Rancière connotes politics with a *rupture.* This is a *rupture* that operates upon the so-called normal distibution of positions (Rancière et al., 2001). It is only when the distribution is challenged, thus, does politics exist. Democracy, insofar as it is to be understood to be essentialy bound, if not the same, with politics, is argued to be "*the* regime of politics" (2001). *The*

---

[72] As to what counts as "legitimate", Mouffe does not provide a clear answer. In a paradoxical fashion once again, Mouffe necessitates that the form of expression of dissent not override the ethico-political framework of democratic politics. "For Mouffe, democracy could only be possible with those who accept the rules of the game" (Üstüner, 2007, p. 323). Thus, in a contradicting fashion with her critique of Rawls (Mouffe, 1999), she argues that only some forms of expression are acknowledgeable in a democratic framework. Nonetheless, as to her own question of "what if there is a cry of justice that expresses a sense not of having lost in an unequal yet fair struggle, but of having from the start being left out" (Cavell, as cited in Mouffe, 1999, p. 750), she does not give a satisfactory answer.

police, on the other hand, is a particular distribution of the sensible. It is, argues Rancière, the symbolic constitution of the social itself. In such a framework, politics is posited directly against *the police* in such a way that "the essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus" (2001). Therefore, in Rancière's theoretical account,

> democracy is … politics' mode of subjectification if, by politics, we mean something other than the organization of bodies as a community and the management of places, powers, and functions. Democracy is more precisely the name of a singular disruption of this order of distribution of bodies as a community that we proposed to conceptualize in the broader concept of the police. It is the name of what comes and interrupts the smooth working of this order through a singular mechanism of subjectification (Rancière, 1999, p. 99).

Rancière's central argument in his account of Post-Democracy is built around his conceptualization of Consensus, in line with his understanding of politics[73]. Consensus, rather than being a state of peace, assent, and agreement, is the cancellation of the possibility of dissensus itself. It is the momentary freezing of a community, and the clear defininition of its parts, the "given" distribution of a community, or in other words the *count* of the community (Rancière et al., 2001). Since democracy involves by its nature a *miscount* (Rancière, 1999, p. 6), any claim to a "true count" is the institution of the impossibility of politics for Rancière. In other words, "consensus is the reduction of politics to the police" (Rancière et al., 2001). In that sense, "consensus democracy" simply denotes an oxymoron where democracy is already foregone for Rancière (Rancière, 1999, pp. 102-103). Post-Democracy, thus, is "a democracy that has eliminated the appearance, miscount, and dispute of the people and is thereby reducible to the sole interplay of state mechanisms and combinations of social energies and interests" (1999, p. 102). The specific *operation* of Post-Democracy for Rancière is, therefore, the *disavowal*[74] of politics, argue Wilson & Swyngedouw (2014, p. 13).

Žižek's account shares many similarities (and differences) with both Mouffe and Rancière's frameworks. It is important to note here that Žižek does not so much lay down a comprehensive account of Post-Politics like Mouffe and Rancière, but makes a crucial suggestion upon its definitive quality, which is strictly followed in this thesis.

---

[73] See Panagia & Rancière, 2000 as well.

[74] He also suggests that it is the "disappearance" of politics. See Rancière, 1999, p. 102.

Žižek builds his account of Post-Politics upon Rancière, but drifts away regarding its central characteristic, arguing that

> today … we are dealing with another form of the denegation of the political, postmodern *post-politics*, which no longer merely 'represses' the political, trying to contain it and pacify the 'returns of the repressed', but much more effectively forecloses it, so that the postmodern forms of ethnic violence, with their 'irrational' excessive character, are no longer simple returns of the repressed but, rather, represent a case of the foreclosed (from the Symbolic) which, as we know from Lacan, returns in the Real (Žižek, 2000, p. 198)

Žižek's distinguishment between *repression* and *foreclosure* is found to be the essential theoretical intervention in defining the *spatio-temporal* characteristics of Post-Politics. Without such a distinction, Post-Politics would be reduced to instances of anti-politics with the confusion between a *prevention* of the political and the *repression* of it, as explained above. In other words, Žižek's intervention lays down the distinguishing quality of the Post-Political *operation,* differentiating it from other *operations* of suppressing, repressing, avoiding, evading etc. *the political.*

Although Mouffe, Rancière and Žižek are the three most important theoreticians of Post-Politics, there are other accounts of it which at certain cases contribute to the concept and at other cases define it differently. Wendy Brown's conceptualization of *depoliticization*[75]*,* for example, is crucial to understand the central *dynamic* of Post-Politics. As argued in Chapter 1.1., Brown's use of depoliticization does not denote a *subjective* quality, but denotes a quality of the *symbolic.* Associating neoliberalism with the *economization* of all realms of life, Brown suggests that the result of this is *depoliticization* (or de-democratization). In other words, it is due to neoliberalism that this *process* takes place, as Brown argues that "neoliberalism seeks to both constrict and dedemocratize the political" (Brown, 2019, p. 57). As observed, Brown employs the concept in order to explain an operation on *the political.* This is obviously related to the *symbolic* dimension of Post-Politics, which is associated with the *operation* of the *foreclosure* of the political. Even though this is a crucial account in defining the *symbolic* dimension of Post-Politics, it can lead to confusion between the two realms

---

[75] Brown also uses the term "de-democratization" (See Brown, 2006; Brown, 2019). Even though de-democratization and depoliticization could be argued to be different, and the definitions of the former may have changed throughout years, they will be used interchangeably in this thesis, as they are understood to be denoting the same phenomenon.

of politics as observed in Haider and Celikates' handling of the concept (See Haider, 2022; Celikates, 2022), and run the risk of reducing Post-Politics to one of its qualities.

Colin Crouch lays down a wholly different account of Post-Politics[76]. It is questionable whether his account should even be handled within the scope of Post-Politics, since not only does it not resemble the accounts of Post-Politics given above theory-wise, but also both politically and empirically differ from them. First, Crouch's account does not rely on a distinguishment between politics and the political. Crouch employs democracy to strictly talk about the "instituteds" of politics, like trade unions, various mechanisms of "involvement" in politics, and welfare reforms etc.. In that sense, what defines the prefix of "post" for him is not an *operation* upon *the political,* but a purely temporal (and *a-spatial*) understanding of politics. Second, Crouch only deals with a partial outlook of Post-Politics, which could be termed as elite rule and disinterest in politics (Crouch, 2004, pp. 23-25). Therefore, many other qualities defined by the authors above are not present in his work. Crouch's understanding of democracy rests on a *temporal* premise. He argues that "societies probably come closest to democracy in my maximal sense in the early years of achieving it or after great regime crises" (Crouch, 2004, pp. 6-7). He suggests that democracy functions like a *parabola*, maximizing at certain points and minimizing in others (2004, p. 5). Crouch's account purely *temporalizes* politics into certain states converging or diverging from his defined maximal ideal. Therefore, Post-Democracy in such a *temporal* account entails what he deems pre-democracy and maximal democracy (p. 20). Although Crouch lays down some qualities of the "period" he talks about, his understanding is restricted specifically to periods, where *spatial* characteristics are not intersecting with the *temporal* ones, but exist as "given" positions within the moving *parabola,* even before the *parabola* is established. He defines Post-Democracy as a *condition* where the

> public electoral debate is a tightly controlled spectacle, managed by rival teams of professionals expert in the techniques of persuasion … The mass of citizens plays a passive, quiescent, even apathetic part, responding only to the signals given them. Behind this spectacle … politics is really shaped in private by interaction between elected governments and elites that overwhelmingly represent business interests (Crouch, 2004, p. 4).

---

[76] In his account, he prefers the term Post-Democracy. See Crouch, 2004.

In addition to these accounts, as contributions to the concept, Bülent Diken and Ali Rıza Taşkale define crucial qualities pertaining to the *subjective* realm of Post-Politics. Diken associates Post-Politics with a *lack of radical imagination* on the part of the subject (See Diken, 2009; Diken, 2014)*,* as he argues, in addition to various characteristics of Post-Politics, that it also "designates a society that cannot imagine radical events" (Diken, 2014, p. 128). This point will be crucial in operationalizing the *symbolic imprint over the subjective* in this thesis and its field study. Furthermore, Taşkale defines a corresponding affective framework with the Post-Political subject, namely, ressentiment, fear, cynicism and spite (Taşkale, 2016). Although such affective framework will not be operationalized in this thesis, it is considered important in extending the definition of the concept of Post-Politics.

2.1.2. Post-Politics as a *condition* which *conditions*: The Symbolic *Zeitgeist* and Subjective *Vision*

Regarding the problems pertaining to the *symbolic* and *subjective* dimensions of Post-Politics, the solution I propose here is one that posits Post-Politics both as a *Zeitgeist (mode)* and a *Vision (Post-Political subjectivity),* and provides an explanation as to why the concept is used to denote *both* a *Zeitgeist* and a *Vision,* with the careful consideration of the *symbolic* and *subjective* dimensions of politics. The solution is the definition of Post-Politics as a *condition* that *conditions* a particular subjectivity, through a relationship of *overdetermination*[77].

First, the word *condition* contains both the characteristics of *spatiality* (a particular configuration of something, such as "working conditions" or "conditions of an agreement") and *temporality* (the present state of something, such as "the condition of a house"). *Condition* further has the capacity to denote a relationship of *overdetermination.* As a verb, *condition* establishes a relationship between two entities one of which might be said to be *conditioning* another (the influence of someone over another, as in "being conditioned to do something")*.* The definition of Post-Politics as a "*condition* which *conditions*" would not only, thus, posit the concept in a spatio-temporal matrix as being the *hegemonic mode* of Politics in the West, but also explain

---

[77] This was established in Chapter 1.1.. The reader is urged to re-visit the said Chapter.

the Post-Political character of various modes of subjectivities that emerge and function within it. Through such an account, not only a mode of politicization like *apoliticism* could be explained, but *hyperpoliticization* (insofar as it contains the Post-Political *imprint*) could be put into context as well.

The second reason as to why Post-Politics should be defined as a *condition,* is due to the fact that such a conceptualization seeks to resolve the never-ending debates about the "end of Post-Politics". I believe it is precisely due to the unclear separation between the *symbolic* of Post-Politics and its *subjective* that the debates about its "demise" have occupied the concept for so long. It was established in Chapter 1.1. that Mouffe (2017), Dean [Jodi] (2014) and Jäger (2022a), at different times, regarding different subjective revitalizations, had argued about the "end" of the Post-Political *condition*[78]. It was explained that all those claims were made on the grounds of various subjective (re)politicizations (Mouffe and the populist revitalization of the Left, Dean and Occupy Wall Street, Jäger and BLM). It was argued that the precise failure of all those conceptualizations was one pertaining to a lack of distinguishment between the *symbolic* and *subjective* realms of politics. Mouffe, Dean and Jäger commonly spoke of a transformation in the *symbolic* by observing a transformation in the *subjective.* However, this was found to be a mistake, since Post-Politics as a *hegemonic mode* has not been subjected to "much" transformation (the central characteristics of it are still present), while the particular modes of subjectivities grounded in it *have*. Only by distinguishing between the two, therefore, would it be possible that Post-Politics (*symbolic*) be stripped of its confusing tendency of being reduced to the modes of politicizations it *overdetermines.* Hence, the *coincidence* between the Post-Political *Zeitgeist* and *Vision* (which is curiously not established in the literature at all) could only be explained with such a distinction and such a relationship between the two realms. To put it in another way, the definition of Post-Politics as a *condition* would "end" the "ends of Post-Politics", and revive the concept once more in current conditions of depoliticization, technocratic rationality and neoliberal domination. Without such explanation made concerning the said dimensions of politics, the concept would induce further confusion.

---

[78] It must be noted that Mouffe and Dean talk about the *possibility* of a transformation, while Jäger talks about the *actuality* of it.

Third, the formulation of Post-Politics as a *condition* would also resolve the confusions pertaining to transformations in the *subjective*. As seen in Haider (2022) and Celikates (2022), *hyperpoliticization* was acknowledged as a current *phenomenon,* but was refuted on the grounds of being, actually, *depoliticization[79]*. This was found to be the most crystal case of the problems of a lack of distinction between the *symbolic* and *subjective* levels of politics and its results. By offering to replace the notion of *hyperpoliticization* with *depoliticization* (*pseudopoliticization* in Celikates' case, which is due to its depolitical aspects)*,* both Haider and Celikates were found to be at a fault of confusing the *symbolic* and *subjective* levels. As it was observed in the empirical studies as well, the current storm of *hyperpoliticization* was one that concerned the *subjective* level of politics. To state it in the crudest way possible, current conditions reflect a *paradoxical* picture: Neoliberal hegemony, the *foreclosure* of the political, technocratic rationality etc. (Post-Politics as a *hegemonic mode* of politics) are all still very much alive; nonetheless, people are seemingly much more political than they used to be (in a peculiar way). By reducing the latter to the former, Haider and Celikates are not only confusing between the two dimensions of politics, but end up "denying" this transformation about which they talk.

Fourth, the concept of *condition* both spatializes and temporalizes Post-Politics more specifically as a *dominant mode* in the West in a specific period of time. By denoting a political framework that is built around the economization of politics, centralization of Consensus, and prevention of radical subjectivities *through* a so-called post-ideological world of unfettered neoliberalism which marks a particular period in the West, the Post-Political *condition* denotes a very specific set of conditions that would "secure" it in the face of further confusions vis-à-vis any case of *anti-politics* and *anti-political repression.* Positing (postmodern) *foreclosure* as the definitive *operation* of Post-Politics, thus, would state the spatio-temporal characteristics of it once again. Without a strict attachment of the concept to these *spatial* and *temporal* determinants, any instance of any repression, suppression, foreclosure, avoidance, evasion of the political could be deemed Post-Politics, and the concept would be infinitely *atemporalized.*

---

[79] As established in Chapter 1.

Fifth, the Post-Political *condition* would state the concept not as a *process,* but as a *mode* of politics. Wendy Brown (2019), for example, designates *depoliticization* to characterize the *symbolic* dimension of politics as explained above. Even though their account of *depoliticization* is quite the same with Post-Politics, I believe it comes with a set of problems. First, *depoliticization,* as a *process*, fails to account for the definitive quality of Post-Politics as a *hegemonic mode.* Since *mode,* in this thesis, is defined on the grounds of both *spatial* and *temporal* determinants, *depoliticization* is observed to be lacking the former. A *dynamic* does not constitute a *mode.* Therefore, although her account could very well be considered part of the literature on Post-Politics, it is the problem with it that *depoliticization* does not describe the extensivity of Post-Politics as a *mode.* Second, I consider *depoliticization* to be an *essential quality* of the Post-Political *condition.* Nevertheless, it does not *exhaust* the limits of Post-Politics, but highlights only one of its characteristics. The reduction of Post-Politics to *depoliticization,* I believe, would be to reduce a complex constellation into only one of its elements. Third, as explained above but to be stated once more, *depoliticization* is generally confusedly employed both to denote the *symbolic* level of politics and the *subjective* realm of it (See Haider, 2022; Celikates, 2022). It being a source of confusion that hinders the separation between the *symbolic* and *subjective* dimensions leads me to consider it problematic and prefer the use of Post-Political *condition* instead.

It is through these that I put forward Post-Politics as a *condition,* denoting a specific spatio-temporal configuration of politics in the West, one that *forecloses* the political, and constituted around Consensus, neoliberal rationality, the desire to do away with antagonisms, and lack of radical imagination, which *conditions* a particular subjectivity through its *inscription* into it.

2.2. Post-Politics in the East: Operationalization of the Post-Political *condition* in a non-Western context

So far, it has been stressed over and over again that Post-Politics denotes a *hegemonic mode* of politics in the West. An inevitable question subsequently follows: Does the concept offer anything in the case of the East? Are Eastern uses of the concept, thus, necessarily wrong insofar as the concept denotes a Western *spatio-temporality*?

The simple answer to this question would be, yes. It would be of an utmost naïveté to think that the concept would be readily-applicable to the East. Since the concept denotes a strictly Western *spatio-temporal* matrix, its specific application to the East would only be possible within the Eastern *articulation* into that very Western matrix. In fact, Sangeeta Kamat analyzes Post-Politics within the Indian context exactly with such a mediation. In Kamat's account, it is the very globalization of capitalism that the Post-Political *condition* be deemed relevant in an Eastern context. As she explains:

> While much of the literature on post-politics relates to advanced capitalist democracies, I argue that the imperatives of global capitalism produce similar tendencies in the 'Global South'. In the field of international development, the post-political operates in multiple registers, from global policy formulation to local community interventions, through which the established divisions between public and private, state and market, individual and community are dissolved to form a post-ideological global compact on growth and democracy (Kamat, 2014, p. 69).

Therefore, it is only through certain *mediations* that the concept be applicable in the case of the East. The first *mediation* would be upon the "entry" into a Western political and economic framework. The Post-Political *condition* would require that the entity at hand be functioning within the neoliberal global hegemony. The second *mediation* would be that *anti-political repression* and Post-Political foreclosure be distinguished on the grounds of neoliberal, scientific, technocratic Consensus and its desire to do away with antagonisms in its terms. The *repression* of the political is not a Post-Political, nor an *exceptional* attribute of politics in the East. The real *exception* in an Eastern context could actually be said to be the Post-Political *foreclosure* of the political. Therefore, in a tightly woven fashion to the first *mediation,* the *foreclosure* operates not on a "violent" eradication of the political, but upon a so-called rational, scientific, pedagogic triumph over it. The third *mediation* would be that the Post-Political subjectivity (which carries the *imprint*) would be enmeshed with various endemic forms of politicization and subjectivization in the East. As in the case of Civic Atatürkism, a *hyperpoliticized* subject not only comes with a simple repoliticization, but with another set of subjective determinants that are interwoven with *hyperpoliticization.* Both dynamics, in the case of the said *phenomenon,* are observed to be so perfectly tangled up that the task of distinguishing between them becomes increasingly hard. The fourth *mediation,* finally, is that Post-Politics as a *hegemonic*

mode itself is articulated into an already-existing political framework. This could be said to be a *inversion* of the first *mediation*, in the sense that in the peculiar Eastern "inclusion" into global neoliberalism, Post-Politics itself is articulated into the East in its own peculiar way, through an endemic *mode* of politics[80]. In other words, Post-Politics in the East must be understood as not a *pure* form of politics, but a *combined* one, in the sense that the complex of Post-Political characteristics are introduced *through* and within an already-existing political framework.

As another pitfall to be avoided, certain determinants of Post-Politics must be left out in terms of their applicability to the East. For example, both Diken and Taşkale argue that the Post-Political *condition* is one in which there is a "direct militarisation [sic] of politics" (Diken, 2014, p. 130). In fact, Taşkale suggests that "Post-politics … is as much about *economisation* as it is about the *militarisation* of society" (Taşkale, 2016, p. 43). Although I acknowledge the ultrapolitical character of *exception* in Post-Politics, arguments about militarization does offer little in an Eastern context. An Eastern operationalization of Post-Politics would require the inversion of Taşkale's suggestion[81]: In the East, Post-Politics is about the *economization* of society, alongside its *militarization*.

Therefore, upon such considerations, I will be operationalizing the Post-Political *foreclosure* in contrast with an anti-political *repression*. It will be argued in this thesis that the *foreclosure* of the political takes place through a (rational) Consensus around Atatürk that Civic Atatürkism obtains its definitive quality against the *repression* of the political in Kemalism[82]. In other words, while Kemalism will be associated with anti-politics[83] (Bora, 2017, p. 175; Erdoğan, 2021, p. 591; İnsel, 2021), Civic

---

[80] The political, economic and social aspects of the Post-Political *mode* were introduced by an Islamist party in Turkey, for example.

[81] Almost everything requires an inversion when it moves between the East and the West, something which İdris Küçükömer was quite aware of, as seen in his inversions of the Left and Right in the East (See Küçükömer, 2021). More on Chapter 3.

[82] It was established above that Necmi Erdoğan had distinguished between Kemalist *repression* and Neo-Kemalist *foreclosure* in 2001.

[83] Tanıl Bora relates the Kemalist vision of a homogenous society with anti-politics. See Bora, 2017, p. 175.

Atatürkism will be associated with (*hyperpoliticized*) Post-Politics (*imprint*). As it was established in Chapter 1, this thesis will not deal with Post-Politics itself, which is a particular configuration of politics, but with the Post-Political *imprint* present within the subject.

While *hyperpoliticization* will be operationalized within the subject's outlook on political *action* and collectivity[84] (terms which are distinguished from activism, discussion and voting, which will denote *hyperpoliticization*), the Post-Political *imprint* will be sought in the subject's understanding of Consensus, antagonism, the relationship between rationality and politics and views on technocracy. Moreover, as indicated by Diken, the lack of a radical imagination will be understood to be the definitive quality of the Post-Political subject (and a *hyperpoliticized* one, since *hyperpoliticization* is precisely not concerned with radical politics).

I will be omitting two aspects of Post-Politics established so far, since I do not consider them to be relevant within the East. First, the *militarization* of politics, and second, the *moralization* of politics. I believe the first one speaks for itself, as I had discussed it above. The second one, however, requires more attention. It is due to my understanding, first, that the *ethico-political* grounds and *moral* grounds of politics being quite close that I avoid the operationalization of *moralization.* Second, a simple *moralization,* one that Mouffe (2005a) and Rancière (1999) talk about, for example, will not be considered the case in the East as the *poles* of politics have been rather contentious due to the both the ontological and ontic configurations of politics. The separation, thus, has never been that simple of a *moral* difference in the East. Moreover, with the *passionate hyperpoliticization* in today's world, I am tempted to claim that the *moralization* aspect is getting less and less relevant.

---

[84] Mouffe argues that loss of collective identities and growing individualization are central characteristics of the Post-Political *Zeitgeist* (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 49), as established above.

CHAPTER 3

KEMALISM / CIVIC ATATÜRKISM

It is a most daunting task to attempt to define what is possibly *undefinable*. Kemalism, "one of the most important and most problematic topics in Turkish political life" (Parla, 2020, p. 11) is defined in the literature as many things, and put under many categories. A single-party ideology (Köker, 1993; Demirel, 1996), an official ideology (Bora, 2017; İnsel, 2021; Parla, 2020; Çelik, 1998), and a semi-official ideology at certain times (Parla, 2020), a programme and guide -alongside being an ideology- (Demirel, 1996; Köker, 1991; Özerdim, 1996), a (hegemonic) political thought ("Sunuş", 2021), a system of ideas (Eroğlu, 1981), ideas and ideals (Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, 1984), a worldview (Heper, 2012; Köker, 1991; Moğukoç & Telseren, n.d.; Selçuk, 1993), a "state-view" (Bora & Kıvanç, 1996), and many other things that concern political classifications and the level of cultural, social or political identifications. In addition to the impossibility regarding its classification, the *ambiguity* pertains to its character as well:

> Political scientists and political historians, while from time to time acknowledge that it carries not an incoherence but an immanent ambiguity, usually separate it under subcategories ("left-wing", "right-wing", "liberal", "authoritarian" Kemalism) or chronological groupings ("first", "second", "third" or "high" Kemalism) (Clayer et al., 2019, p. 14).

Moreover, the issue at hand gets even more complicated when one endeavors to disentwine the many *modes* with which Kemalism confronts us: Kemalism, single-party era Kemalism, Kemalism after Mustafa Kemal, Atatürkism, Neo-Atatürkism, Neo-Kemalism, and Civic Atatürkism, the most recent and *current mode* of Atatürkism, which is to be analyzed in this thesis, alongside many other *appearances* of Kemalisms and Atatürkisms (which concern not *modes* of Kemalism but rather its

various *appearances*)[85]. Furthermore, the issue does not only involve the "analyses", categorizations and classifications of Kemalism in the literature, but Kemalism itself, in the various *articulations under it* as a discourse. Thus, Kemalism not only comes to be associated with its self-proclaimed *six arrows* [which to some are *nine arrows* (Moğulkoç & Telseren, n.d.) and some even *twelve arrows* (Aslan, 1999)], but also "corporatism" (Parla, 2020), "solidarism" (Köker, 2021) "scientism, biological materialism, … social Darwinism" (Zürcher, 2021) etc., i.e. as an *empty signifier* that operates at the level of other signifiers, quilting them[86].

To this must be added Kemalism's *own articulations into* various other things, i.e. as a *floating signifier* that operates at the level of other discourses. Žižek defines *floating signifiers* as those signifiers

> whose very identity is 'open', overdetermined by their articulation in a chain with other elements - that is, their 'literal' signification depends on their metaphorical surplus-signification. Ecologism, for example: its connection with other ideological elements is not detetmined in advance; one can be a state-orientated ecologist (if one believes that only the intervention of a strong state can save us from catastrophe), a socialist ecologist (if one locates the source of merciless exploitation of nature in the capitalist system), a conservative ecologist (if one preaches that man must again become deeply rooted in his native soil), and so on … The 'quilting' performs the totalization by means of which this free floating of ideological elements is halted, fixed - that is to say, by means of which they become parts of the structured network of meaning (Žižek, 2008, pp. 95-96).

---

[85] *Modes* and *apperances* are distinguished between on the grounds that the *mode* pertains to a spatial-temporal fixing of Kemalism/Atatürkism, i.e. its wider and more general picture in a specific period and set of conditions. *Appearance,* on the other hand, is put forward to denote a *spatial* but *non-temporal variation* of Kemalism. While *Neo-Kemalism* is a *mode of Kemalism* (since it denotes both a temporal and spatial configuration of Kemalism)*,* for example, "Wardrobe Atatürkism" (Gardrop Atatürkçülüğü) is not a *mode* but rather an *appearance* (for it is not bound by a temporality, bound only by a spatiality)*.* It will be shown in Chapter 4 that Asım Aslan (1999) names 17 different *variations (appearances)* of (fake) Kemalism, like "Parrot Atatürkism", "Spirit Atatürkism" etc. These are not taken to be *modes* of Kemalism such as Neo-Kemalism, Neo-Atatürkism, Civic Atatürkism etc., in that the *modes* are more general and *periodic* versions of Kemalism/Atatürkism that cover a span of time as being *the present of Kemalism,* or *what Kemalism is understood to be in a specific temporality and a specific spatiality.* In other words, *a mode* could be said to be that which *represents a particular Kemalism as the universal in a specific period of time (through temporalization and spatialization),* i.e. a *sutured* Kemalism, rather than its non-temporal and non-spatial variations which are not *sutured* in terms of the *current* of Kemalism, but only perform simple variations on it (like "Wardrobe", "Parrot" and "Spirit"). See Chapter 2 for a similar distinguishment between *modes* of politics and *processes.*

[86] The point about the *empty signifier* will be developed further below.

When an inspection be made unto Kemalism, it is observed that it functions precisely in such a way. In the first place it quilts certain signifiers, like the *six arrows* in its function as a discourse. Secularism, for example, is never *secularism* without a quilting operation*,* it is only when it is quilted by Kemalism that it obtains its meaning. In other words, it is always a *Kemalist secularism,* and "gains" its meaning *only* through such quilting. With the articulation of various "tenets", ideas, practices etc., the (already empty) signifier of Kemalism (as a discourse) gets more and more *emptier*. As Laclau suggests, "the more extended the equivalential tie is, the emptier the signifier unifying that chain will be" (Laclau, 2005, p. 99). This *emptying,* thus, takes place through the articulations of signifiers into Kemalism. However, Laclau warns us that the space of the political, the frontiers that divide it, are never stable. Thus, the "meaning" of the empty signifier becomes "indeterminate between alternative equivalential frontiers" (Laclau, 2005, p. 131), and the signifier *floats*, it itself becomes able to be articulable into other signifiers or discourses. In other words, the *empty signifier* not only denotes an "emptiness" regarding its *content/elements* (A "Leftist Kemalism", for example), but also an "emptiness" regarding its *identity*[87], with its *floats* to other frontiers ("Left-Kemalism", for example). Thus, *both emptiness and floating* are two interconnected characteristics of an *empty/floating signifier.* Laclau argues the *empty* and *floating* signifiers are "structurally different" (p. 133), in that the former concerns the chain of signification of the signifier itself, while the latter concerns its own articulation into other antagonistic frontiers; nonetheless, they *both* are characteristics of the signifier. They are like the sides to the same coin, one without the other is unimaginable. A distinguishment between them, says Laclau, is only "analytically possible" (p. 133).

> Both are hegemonic operations and, most importantly, the referents largely overlap. A situation where only the category of empty signifier was relevant, with total exclusion of the floating moment, would be one in which we would have an entirely immobile frontier - something that is hardly imaginable. Conversely, a purely psychotic universe, where we would have a pure floating without any partial fixation, is not thinkable either. So floating and empty signifiers should be conceived as partial dimensions (Laclau, 2005, p. 133).

---

[87] The distinguishment between the "content" and the "identity" is only made for an attempt to clarify the explanation. It must be stated that what is denoted as the "content" is already an identity, in the sense that the equivalential chain (of the elements of a totality) does already indicate its identity, before its *floating* to another frontier. The distinguishment is made because the *float* precisely operates on the *identity* of the totality, rather than operating on the equivalential chain of the elements necessarily.

Thus, emptying, argues Laclau, relies on a *logic of homogenization* while floating relies on a *logic of heterogenization* (2005, p. 153), which are closely related with *logics of equivalence* and *difference,* the perfect concentration of one of which is impossible to be achieved. Therefore, Kemalism not only functions as an *empty signifier*, as a nodal point that enables the articulations of other signifiers, but also as a *floating signifier,* which itself is articulated into other discourses:

> Kemalism, like many currents of political thought, cannot be reduced into one singular understanding. Therefore, it is better to talk about Kemalisms. These are articulated into other currents of political thought as right or left Kemalism, statist or liberal Kemalism, conservative, culturalist or reformist Kemalism. These Kemalisms do not constitute a unique and powerful source of inspiration to the currents of thought they are articulated into, but rather provide them a source of legitimacy ("Sunuş", 2021, p. 14).

Thus, Kemalism, when it is to be treated, never appears in one, single, crystallized form; it rather appears, all the time, in a multiplicity of articulations. Nur Betül Çelik puts forward that what "renders impossible the search for an origin of Kemalism is the process of articulations" (Çelik, 1998). What enables this heap of flexible articulations, then, or why it's so easy for other signifiers and discourses to be articulated into Kemalism, and vice versa, is due to the fact that "Kemalism does not contain an epistemology, a method, and also [due to] its pragmatic hegemonicist content" ("Sunuş", 2021), or in other words, its *empty* and *floating* character. Thus, it is impossible to speak of *one, universal, true* Kemalism. Whenever it is spoken upon, it is always one *particular* Kemalism, with a specific set of articulations, which excludes other Kemalisms. Asım Aslan, for example, a self-proclaimed Atatürkist, is concerned about this multiplicity of articulations and *particular Kemalisms*, in his book *Sömürülen Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük [Exploited Atatürk and Atatürkism]* (1999) about the "exploitations of Atatürk": "Anyone who reads Atatürk's ideas, speeches and talks can find some phrases that fit their own views and make Atatürk seem like he agrees with them" (Aslan, 1999, p. 7), and *ironically* goes on to design 14 different variations of (fake) Atatürk, and 17 different versions of (fake) Atatürkism (*not modes, but appearances)* by using only his speeches in order to prove that *any kind of portrait* about him can be drawn. He proves, once again *ironically,* that he can designate a "capitalist Atatürk", by referring to his speeches on economy and tradesmen, a

"communist Atatürk", a "fascist Atatürk", a "racist" one, an "anti-racist" one and so on (1999, pp. 7-30), and a "Parrot Atatürkism", a "Fashion Atatürkism", a "Spirit Atatürkism" and so on (1999, pp. 157-162). He holds responsible the "pragmatic" character of Mustafa Kemal in allowing the possibility of this heap of endless articulations (p. 46), and suggests that "Atatürkism, today, has become a *banana*[88] that changes its taste according to the intentions of the eater" (p. 149). Aslan's "solution" to this *banana-problem* is creating a "realist, scientific and objective" interpretation of Atatürkism (p. 152), one that cancels out all "ideological" interpretations. Nonetheless, Aslan's so-called scientific, extra-ideological attempt must be put forward as the *ideological operation par excellence.*

This problematic leads Aslan, and many others, to try to draw up a so-called extra-ideological definition of Atatürkism. As a contrary attempt, it might lead one to the conclusion that it must, at all times, be spoken of *Kemalisms,* in their hyper-relativization to one another. Obviously, this perfect *logic of difference,* which externalizes all moments as scattered elements without a point of reference, would render the discussion of Kemalism impossible. A third option here, I argue, would be the following of the Laclauian conceptions of *empty signifier (and floating signifier, for the two are never separable)* and *hegemony,* which will allow the singularization (singularized through the acknowledgement of the multiplicity of articulations, only analytically singularized in that sense) of Kemalism (while nonetheless preserving its *articulatory character*) in its discussion.

3.1. The empty signifier and the banana-problem

The *possibility* of (a singular) *Kemalism* could only be realized, as argued, through the acknowledgement of it as an *articulatory practice*[89]. It must be stated that the multiplicity of articulations *is* acknowledged by some; however, this very fact of *articulation* is what creates *the problem* for them, due to their designation of the possibility of an *unsullied* Kemalism exempt from articulations. For example, although

---

[88] The italicization belongs to me.

[89] Nur Betül Çelik does, as well, employ a Laclauian methodology and treats Kemalism as an articulatory practice. See Çelik, 1998; Çelik, 2000; Çelik, 2009, Çelik, 2021.

Ahmet İnsel argues that the pragmatic character of Kemalism does allow a multiplicity of articulations, he asserts that this multiplicity (in its interpretations, which are nothing but articulations, or the "floats" of the discourse) "makes the dimension of political thought of Atatürkism shallow" (İnsel, 2021, p. 27). Ahmet Demirel, as well, suggests that "Kemalism began to be interpreted in other ways after the transition to the multi-party system" (Demirel, 1996, p. 770), which implies an imagination of Kemalism as an ideology strictly defined vis-à-vis the single-party era, with a *distortion* on its part in the following years. Nonetheless, it will be argued here that there was never such a "coherent", "fixed", "original" Kemalism to begin with. For example, Ahmet Yıldız, in his work on the constitution of the Turkish national identity between 1919 and 1938, shows how there were different, "conflictual" elements and articulations (of other discourses) in the Kemalist narrative of national identity during different periods, at the time of Mustafa Kemal's lifetime (Yıldız, 2019). Asım Aslan, as we had seen, complains of the different tastes of the *banana*, in the sense that Atatürkism is interpreted in so many ways that there is a universe of differential Atatürkisms that function "as one wishes". Thus, the articulatory character of Kemalism/Atatürkism becomes an issue of complaint for many in the literature. The complaint, arising from the "floating" of Kemalism towards other political frontiers, is so strong that it led the likes of Nadir Nadi to "quit" Atatürkism, *ironically,* with his infamous declaration, "I am not an Atatürkist" (Nadi, 1993), and those like Süleyman Ekim to assert in a more *ironic,* even more *cynical* way, "I am getting divorced from Atatürkism" (Ekim, 1999, p. 53). Nonetheless, it will be argued here that the multiplicity of articulations and different interpretations are not "shallowing", "muddying the waters" or "deviating from the *original* understanding of Kemalism". On the contrary, it will be argued that this multiplicity of articulations *is* what precisely defines Kemalism in the first place. Without the acknowledgement of such quality, one necessarily falls into the trap of privileging one Kemalism over the other, which indubitably involves the crossing of ideological, ethical and political axes[90], and fails to observe the *empty (and floating)* character that defines Kemalism. In other words,

---

[90] This is not to imply that there can be a non-ideological approach. On the very contrary, by such "crossing" I am indicating that the preference of one Kemalism over another involves more than a simple choice to be made on purely "scientific", "academic" grounds. *It is ideological,* is what I am trying to emphasize. Therefore, the *axes* in question are not those of preference, but rather of necessity here.

emptiness will not be treated as a *deviation* from one, "higher" Kemalism, but will be treated as the constitutive quality of Kemalism *par excellence.* Nur Betül Çelik, in that strain, suggests that "it is necessary to conceive Kemalism not as a particular and original ideology or a project defined with a fixed content, but rather as a plurality of meanings which always calls in its diverse interpretations" (Çelik, 2009, p. 228).

Ernesto Laclau develops his account of the *empty signifier* on the grounds and basic premises of Saussurean linguistics. Holding fast to Saussurean tenets that language is a system made up of arbitrarily differential signs (with the relationship between the signifier and the signified being a purely arbitrary one), Laclau suggests that for signification to be possible there must be an *end* to that totality, a limit, which must necessarily be *outside* signification, *outside* the system of differences, in order for it to *condition* the existence of the totality. This argument lies on the assumption, in other words, that a totality must somehow "be closeable", in order for it to be able to function in the first place. The differentiality (the arbitrary linking of a signifier and a signified) would not be possible without the "knowledge" of each difference, of all others. In other words, since each sign is posited in terms of a difference with *all others* in Saussurean linguistics, a sign must be able to "know" all other signs in order to differentiate itself from *each and all of them*, hence the limits of the totality must be "known"[91]. This *outside* must be posited in terms of a *radical exclusion*, therefore, for any possibility of its inclusion within the system would render its occupiance of the *outside* meaningless, and *internalize* it. This negative outside, the *exclusion,* by its counter-positioning (rather negationing), *cancels out* the logic of difference with which the system functions, and equates all its elements around the principle of equivalence. From the point of view of this antagonistic positioning (or negationing), the difference between the elements are destroyed, and the excluding systems (the system and its outside, which may itself be another system) are "singularized", we may say, on the grounds that they oppose each other *as a whole.* Thus, a *chain of equivalence* is established between the elements of the system, rather than *difference.* This exclusion is what renders the system *possible,* Laclau claims, since the *limits* of the totality are required in order for it to "close" as a totality. However, in this very

---

[91] The over-emphasis on "knowing" is just for explanatory matters, must not be understood in terms of a "literal" knowing.

limiting, the differences are rendered *equivalent*, in the sense that there is, virtually, no difference at all in the system anymore. This could be likened to a wall painted with hundreds of different colors. Although each part of the wall (signifier) differs from the other in terms its color (signified), when the wall is compared to an "unpainted" wall next to it (excluding outside), the colors are rendered meaningless (equivalence instead of difference) and the opposition is reduced to "being painted" and "being unpainted".

Laclau suggests that this limitation of the totality cannot be made on the grounds of a "surplus" of the already-existing differences (with a new color, for example), since that would internalize the difference as a moment of the totality, and would not provide an *excluding limit,* but at most provide a dividing line between certain signifiers within the totality. The logic of equivalence between the elements of the system that is constituted with the negative, excluding boundary, thus renders possible the *empty signifier.* Since the differences between the system are cancelled out, the system resembles a whole functioning through the equivalence between its elements. Thus, it could represent its *impossible image* (it is impossible because the totality is never perfectly closeable, and both the inside and outside are never stable) only through an *emptiness.* Although a perfect representation is impossible, since the image is that of an *absent fullness*, this *emptying out* is found to be a *necessity* for Laclau, for the system must be "closeable" in order to function. Therefore, he calls this *impossible but necessary* situation a "positive impossibility" (Laclau, 1996, pp. 36-40).

It must be noted here that Laclau does not designate this *emptying out* in a linear fashion, suggesting a mere transition from difference to equivalence as a teleological point. Rather, he suggests that "all identity is constructed within this *tension*[92] between the differential and equivalential logics" (Laclau, 2005, p. 70). Thus, the "closure" of the totality is always precarious. It is necessary for signification (equivalence), but at the same time renders signification meaningless (emptying out). "The totality is an object which is both impossible and necessary", argues Laclau (2005, p. 70). Therefore, it is always a "failure", in a sense. The *empty signifier* is that which "give[s] the successive concrete contents a sense of temporal continuity" (p. 76). In other

---

[92] The italicization belongs to me.

words, *empty signifier* is that which enables the articulation of arbitrarily different things, *through its cancellation of difference*.

It is the *empty* character of the signifier of Kemalism, thus, that enables the equivalential articulation of the *six arrows*. There is no "inherent" relationship between those arrows, prior to their articulation into Kemalism. Levent Köker, for example, explains this articulation with regards to the "content" of the arrows: "In terms of their definitions provided here, these six principles could be articulated to each other consistently" (Köker, 1991, p. 28). This explanation is rejected here on the grounds that it affords a "pre-discursive" meaning to the content of the "definitions". The articulation, thus, is rendered possible on the grounds of this pre-discursive nature. In other words, in Köker's explanation, articulation is no longer articulation, but is reduced to a conceptual linkage between the *already-related* arrows. On the contrary, this, I argue, is not the case. Not only are there differences in the content and modes of articulations of the *arrows* in the 1931 and 1935 programmes of CHF/CHP (which Köker talks about), where they were first uttered together as six[93], there were also differences in how they were interpreted, understood, taken etc.[94] The signifier of *populism (halkçılık),* for example, appears in a shorter, more ambiguous fashion in the 1931 programme of CHF, where *people (and the populist)* is defined as all "individuals that accept equality before law and who do not privilege any individual, any family, any class and any community"[95] (CHF, 1931a, p. 31).

When we come to 1935, however, we see that while the same article is preserved, to *populism* new articulations have been made [In the 1931 programme, the following statements were made as a separate *feature* of CHF, not related to *populism* (See CHF, 1931, p. 32)]: "It is among our main principles that we do not conceive of the Turkish republic as comprised of separate classes, but as divided in terms of labor and areas of

---

[93] Which used to be ambiguously four in the 1927 programme of CHF. See CHF, 1927. It was first formulated as six in the 1931 party programme of CHF. See CHF, 1931. See also Tunçay, 1981, p. 312 for a discussion on the "two new articles" (etatism and reformism) on the CHF party programme.

[94] See Aykut, 1936.

[95] "Kanunlar önünde mutlak bir müsavat kabul eden ve hiç bir ferde, hiç bir aileye, hiç bir sınıfa, hiç bir cemaate imtiyaz tanımıyan fertleri halktan ve halkçı olarak kabul ederiz"

service for individual and social life"[96] (CHP, 1935, p. 8). The programme goes on to detect that the Turkish society is made up of those elements like farmers, small business-owners, industrialists, tradesmen and so on, with the "aim" of the party defined as creating a harmony between these functional categories, instead of class conflict, *under the principle of populism* (CHP, 1935, pp. 8-9)[97]. Thus, there does not seem to be a conceptual consistency *of the arrows*, as claimed by Köker, but an *articulatory consistency,* where the very practice of articulation *enables its own conditions of possibility.*

Akçoraoğlu Yusuf Bey (Yusuf Akçura), had acknowledged that this articulation was not a conceptual one ("a priori", in his terms), way back in the Third Grand Congress of CHF, in 1931. During his speech in the congress, he lauds the programmatization of Kemalist tenets, which were mostly scattered in the past, and suggests that "the general picture of the programme being a product life itself, as opposed to a theoretical organization that is built in a biased (=a priori) fashion, is incredibly valuable in my opinion" (CHF, 1931b, p. 25)[98].

Furthermore, and an even more fundamental point, there could be no fixed attachment between a signifier and a signified in the first place. The signifier of *nationalism* in Kemalist discourse, for example, claims Yıldız (2019, pp. 16-17), carries a stong undertone of "religion" between 1919 and 1923, a "secular-republican" characteristic between 1923 and 1929, and an "ethnic-racial" character between 1929 and 1938. The same signifier of *nationalism,* furthermore, obtains a different set of "signifieds" in the discourse of the Yön movement, which enables the articulation of *socialism* alongside it (See Atılgan, 2008), and another set of "signifieds" in the discourse of the military elite of the 1980 coup, which enables the articulation of *militarism* (See Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, 1984)[99]. Thus, what enables their articulation is not a pre-discursive,

---

[96] "Türkiye Cumuriyeti [sic] halkını ayrı ayrı klaslardan karışıt değil, fakat, ferdiğ ve sosyal hayat için, işbölümü bakımından, türlü hizmetlere ayrılmış bir sosyete saymak esas prensiplerimizdendir"

[97] A similar case is observed regarding the economic principles quilted by *etatism.* The chapters on economy in both programmes differ strikingly.

[98] "Programın heyeti umumiyesi, bilhassa hayattan çıkmış olması itibarile, yani kıbeli (=apriyori) olarak tanzim edilmiş nazarî bir şey olmamak itibarile, kanaatimce fevkalâde kıymettardır"

[99] The examples will be handled in detail below.

conceptual similarity, as Köker claims, but the equivalential, and even the homogenizing logic of the *empty signifier of Kemalism.*

What Asım Aslan proposes as the *banana-problem*, i.e. that Atatürkism "has become" a *banana* that tastes different according to the intentions of the eater (1999, p. 149), is actually, I argue, the constitutive principle with which Kemalism functions, as an *empty and floating signifier*. In accordance with the Lacanian maxim that "there is no sexual relation" (Lacan, 1991, p. 116), in the sense that there is no pure, unmediated sexual relation, escaping fantasy, and the gaze of the Other, and in the sense that there is no *a priori* sex that is not subjected to sexuation, Aslan's problematic must be solved in purely Lacanian terms: *There is no banana*. In order to be clear, the denial of the *banana* does not state that the *banana-problem* does not exist, but rather states that *banana-as-banana,* or in Aslan's terms, a "banana that tastes like banana" (a conceptual fixation between the signifier and the signified) does not exist. The *banana* is always eaten through a set of certain articulations, and a non-articulated, purely conceptual banana, a *banana of jouissance* does not exist. Laclau suggests that "the very notion of an extra-discursive viewpoint is the ideological illusion par excellence" (Laclau, 2014, p. 13). Thus, he inverts the Marxist critique of ideology, which argues that the *distortion* occurs at the point of overturning of "reality" into "falsity", towards an opposite understanding. He argues that the *distortion* exists in the *very imagination of a reality* which escapes any possibility of a falsity, i.e. the imagination that *there is a banana that tastes like a banana,* rather than "the banana not tasting like a banana anymore". Thus, Aslan's *banana of jouissance* exempt from ideology, developed through a so-called "scientific approach", *is what is ideological.*

It is precisely the founding character of Kemalism that it has the ability to create an equivalence between its elements, whatever the elements may be, and float into anywhere. Therefore, Kemalism could be said to be the *empty and floating signifier par excellence,* in the sense that it functions as the signifier which constitutes the conditions of possibility of politics through its equivalentializing of *the political*. Asım Aslan's *ironic* variations on Kemalism, thus, display a very "real" character of Kemalism that the articulation of *any* element within its frontiers *is* possible. When one considers it, how *ironic* is Aslan's proclamation really? Žižek suggests that the

77

"cynical reason is no longer naïve, but is a paradox of an enlightened false consciousness: one knows the falsehood very well … but still one does not renounce it" (Žižek, 2008, pp. 25-26). Or in other words, "the cynical subject is quite aware of the distance between the ideological mask and social reality, but he none the less still insists upon the mask" (Žižek, 2008, p. 25). Was it not the actualization of what was thought to be the "most impossible of articulations" that made Nadir Nadi "quit" Atatürkism in the first place? Or, was it not the very *nature* of Kemalism, as a *purely empty signifier that allows any articulation within it (and a purely floating signifier that allows any articulation to/of other signifiers/discourses),* that led Süleyman Ekim to "divorce from Atatürkism"? What enables the Yön movement's "new Atatürkist programme" with its articulation of the signifier of "socialism" among the tenets of Kemalism, "as a natural result of the tenets of etatism, nationalism, populism and reformism" (Atılgan, 2008, p. 52), is the same dynamic with what enables *Genelkurmay Başkanlığı* [Presidency of General Staff] to quilt Atatürkism with the signifiers of "strong state" (Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, 1984, p. 1) and "market" (1984, p. 219), where the foundational elements are argued to be "full independence and national sovereignty" (p. 7). It is the equivalential logic and *empty character* with which Kemalism functions that enables the easy articulation of such "contradictory"[100] signifiers. The Kemalist equivalence is, moreover, so powerful that even its elements, like *nationalism*, achieve a high degree of emptiness, as shown in the example of it functioning both in a socialist and a conservative-militarist discourse. Both Çelik (2021) and Yıldız (2019) suggest that the Kemalist tenet of nationalism show "contradictory" characteristics over the years. The *emptiness* pertaining to it, I argue, is what enables the quilting of different "meanings" of nationalism both between 1919 and 1938, and between the Yön movement and the military elite of the 1980 coup. Just like the articulation of the signifier of "democracy" in 1960 (Çelik, 2021, p. 89; Çelik, 2000, p. 197), which had nowhere appeared in the chain before, the *empty* character of Kemalism and its *floats* allow all sorts of articulations. In conclusion, therefore, Kemalism is found to be a purely *empty signifier,* under which any signifier can be articulated, like "nationalism", "democracy", "strong state" etc., and a purely *floating*

---

[100] I am using quotation marks precisely to emphasize that *there is no contradictory or conflictual signifiers* for an *empty* signifier like Kemalism. All signifiers are *equivalently articulable*. Their articulation depends on nothing other than the practice of articulation itself.

signifier, which allows Kemalism to articulate into other signifiers/discourses, i.e. appear in forms of "Left-Kemalism", "Right-Kemalism" or "civilian Kemalism". This leads us to the conclusion that what *enables* the articulation of Atatürkism as "Civic", or in other words, what creates the conditions of possibility of Civic Atatürkism, is precisely the *empty* and *floating* characteristics of Kemalism/Atatürkism.

How, then, does Kemalism "survive", in a sense, all of its articulations and floats, is found in the concept of *hegemony.* Since the *empty signifier* must represent an *absent fullness* (an impossible but necesarily "closed" totality with equivalence among its elements, an impossible perfect homogenization of the system, absent in the sense of its impossibility, and full in the sense of its necessary "closure") (Laclau, 1996, p. 42), the "overtaking" of one signifier in this representation is a hegemonic process, i.e. a process whereby one signifier hegemonizes all others into representation of the whole within its own particular body (1996, p. 43). Thus, the *empty signifier* is possible only through a *hegemonic relationship.* It is a particularity coming to stand in representation for the whole signifying chain (Laclau, 2005, p. 131). It both "constitutes the chain, and at the same time represents it" (2005, pp. 162-163). Thus, the equation of Kemalism with the state and the nation in the single-party era, and the Kemalist structuration of *the political,* as the constitutive ground of politics, in the years that followed, point to the *hegemonic* character of the empty signifier of Kemalism. Thus, its *survival* is due to its *hegemonic* character. Even at times of crisis, which is to be discussed below, Kemalism articulates itself *out of itself* (as in the case of Nadir Nadi and Süleyman Ekim), and still survives the operation. Kemalism has, thus, such a powerful *hegemony,* and it portrays such a powerful *emptiness* that even the *denouncing of Kemalism* (in other words, its *floating* into its perfectly antagonistic frontier) still ends up *in favor of the Kemalist hegemony,* in that an even *anti-Kemalism becomes articulable into Kemalism.*

3.2. Crisis and civilianization attempts in Kemalism: Neo-Kemalism

Nadi and Ekim's articulation of Kemalism *out of itself* was not the product of a neutrally infinite variation on Kemalism, but rather the result of a crisis Kemalist hegemony faced in the and 1980s and 1990s.

The coup of September 12 opened a new era for Atatürkism where its political and ideological appearances took on interesting variations. In this era, while Atatürkism did continue its role as the main arsenal of official ideology, a new Atatürkism that claimed to be a civil and adversarial political current emerged (Bora & Kıvanç, 1996, p. 777).

Necmi Erdoğan argues that the Turkish social formation faced, in line with a Gramscian conceptualization, an "organic crisis" in the 1990s, due to mainly two factors, the "Kurdish problem" and the rise of the Islamic movement (Erdoğan, 2001, p. 235). Çelik asserts that what was encountered in this historical process was "a kind of 'return of repressed' that surfaced through 'unusual' forms of representation" (Çelik, 2000, p. 200). She adds to Erdoğan's reasons for the crisis the role of globalization, the rise of anti-statism, the women's rights movement and the Green movement (2000, p. 200); and Borovalı & Boyraz add to these the new understandings of modernity that came to the fore after the end of the Cold War (Borovalı & Boyraz, 2015, p. 437). In this conjuncture, the Kemalist response to the organic crisis, where it could not perpetuate its authoritarian means only through the mechanisms of the state, (in addition to the cynical *de-articulations* of Kemalism as seen above)[101] took the form of "the establishment, dissemination and development of many Kemalist civil society organizations (NGOs)" (Erdoğan, 2001, p. 235). Although there are much more than what could be named here, the most important of those NGOs could be said to be *Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği [ADD-Atatürkist Thought Association], Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği [ÇYDD-Association for the Support of Contemporary Life]* and *Atatürkist Thought Society(s) [ADT-Atatürkçü Düşünce Topluluk(ları)][102]*.

Upon facing the challenge of the Kurdish and the Islamist movements, Erdoğan suggests that Kemalism lost its hegemony as an *articulatory practice* of the state, and could not provide an alternative political project to re-hegemonize itself. It was, thus,

---

[101] To those we must add the attempts of various intellectuals to "civilianize" Kemalism, which could not be discussed in detail here. See Turan, 2021 for the explanations of the initiatives of Ergun Özbudun, Bülent Tanör and Sami Selçuk. See also Özbudun, 1989 and Selçuk, 1993.

[102] The Atatürkist Thought Societies are university-based, relatively autonomous Kemalist non-governmental organizations. They do not display a coherent character, but differ in political and ideological grounds from each other based on universities, hence the need for pluralizing their name. As an anecdote, during my field study where I interviewed various ADT members, they were quite avid to clarify their autonomy (both from ADD and from other ADTs), even to the point of recounting stories of their fights with the ADTs of other universities, at points blaming them for being pseudo-Atatürkists (*Perinçekçi*).

a novel development in the history of Kemalism that a new, "civilian" initiative was put forward as an alternative to that of the state (Erdoğan, 2001, pp. 235-236). What he deems "Neo-Kemalism", "sought to hegemonize Kemalism once again by re-articulating it with a new emphasis and in a new context" (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 589). Although they were understood to be quite close to *Halkevleri [People's Houses]* with regards to their function, their peculiear mode of articulation differed from it with regards to its position vis-à-vis the state, in that it was the first time that "Kemalist pedagogy of enlightenment and modernization relied not on the state but on civilian initiatives" (Erdoğan, 2001, p. 240). This specific civilian pedagogy, argues Erdoğan, was built upon the development of a "technology of self", with its emphases on the importance of contemporaneity, rationality, health etc. in the everyday lives of individuals (2001, p. 242). The most important facet of this "civilian" Neo-Kemalism was, according the Erdoğan, its *defensive-reactionary* attitude. Its imagination of its conditions as one of victimhood (pp. 244-249), and its separation of the political space into two, between those who are Atatürkists and those who are not (p. 243) (in variations of Atatürkists versus 2. Republicans, nationalists and separationists etc.) reveals its *defensive-reactionary* attitude in the sense of "resisting counter-revolution"[103] and "stopping regression". "The founding of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the 1990s to build a 'civil Kemalism' can therefore be seen as the response from one section of the society to counter the 'threats' to national unity, secularism and economic independence" (Borovalı & Boyraz, 2015, 437). In addition to all of these explanations about the re-hegemonization attempt through the instrumentalization of NGOs, Keyman & İçduygu reflect upon an important dimension concerning the rapid rise of NGOs, not only Kemalist, but also Islamist etc. as well, that they were "a 'necessary factor' in creating stability in the relations between Turkey and the European Union" (Keyman & İçduygu, 2003, p. 226).

Nonetheless, the question of the "civility" of Neo-Kemalist NGOs could be a matter of discussion. Erdoğan suggests that the discourse of Neo-Kemalism is built upon an ambiguity regarding the state, where it "swings between officiality and civility"

---

[103] Sina Akşin, an ex-vice chairman of ADD, for example, contends that Turkey has been in an uninterrupted process of counter-revolution since 1950 (Akşin, 2017). It is one of the most prominent qualities of Neo-Kemalism that it understands Turkish politics and the history of Turkey as a ground of conflict between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces.

(Erdoğan, 2001, p. 251). Thus, he suggests that its emphasis on civility is ambiguous as well, for "its emphasis on civil society and citizenship is intertwined with *statolatry"* (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 588). Çevik & Taş (2013, p. 138), as well, question to civility of these NGOs, stating that they were being heavily funded by the state, and that ADD was administered, right when ADD was organizing the *Republican Rallies (Cumhuriyet Mitingleri),* by Şener Eruygur, who was an ex-General.

Althought it is a general claim of Neo-Kemalism to be active in civil society organizations, civil society, as a concept, is a quite controversial one in non-Western societies. İdris Küçükömer suggests that there is no such civil society in Eastern societies as in the West (Küçükömer, 2021; Küçükömer, 2013; Küçükömer, 1994). His main theses lie on a historical analysis and premise: In the West, argues Küçükömer, the "productive forces", i.e. the Left[104], had been the powering subjects of modernization. In the East, however, the modernization/Westernization project was undertaken by the "Western-laicist" bureaucratic elite, *in spite of* and *in contradiction with* the productive forces. His deconstruction, thus, of the so-called necessary relationship between the *subjects* of modernization and and the "*objective*" process of modernization concludes that the bureaucratic-interventionist character in the East resulted in the failure of the establishment of civil society (Küçükömer, 2021). In his later work, Küçükömer makes a distinguishment between two kinds of societies, *civil society* and *political society*, the former being the *social* aspect of life that is grounded in production, distribution and exchange, while the latter denoting an *elite* who make decisions in the name of society on internal and external affairs that concern the welfare of the society, i.e. the state (Küçükömer, 2013, p 173). Küçükömer argues that Western history saw the separation between *civil society* (which denotes market

---

[104] Küçükömer's conceptualization of Left and Right are not built upon an ethico-political framework, but are understood as "objective/historical" positions. It is through this conceptualization that he was able to *invert* the historical scheme of Turkish politics, with the modernizing elite being assigned to the position of the Right (which has historically been considered Left), and the "Islamic frontier" being assigned to the position of the Left (in spite of its right-wing ethico-political framework) (Küçükömer, 2021). His *reversal* could be thought of in terms of an ontic-ontological separation as well. With his "objective historical analysis" (of the ontological), Küçükömer, regardless of the ontic content of the positions (ontic left and ontic right, CHP and DP, for example), re-aligns the ontic in accordance with the ontological (CHP as the Right and DP as the Left). He, in other words, re-configures the ontic in line with the objective historical trajectory of the ontological antagonism, regardless of the ontic left's "ontic attachment to a left-wing discourse" (Laclau, 2005, p. 88), but with its ontological position on the Right.

relations) and *political society* (the order of the state)*,* with the autonomization of the former from the latter (Küçükömer, 2013, p. 186). Such separation, in his terms, did not occur in the East. Therefore, what seems to be "civilization/civilianization" to some, is explained in his work with the concept of the *politicization* (extending the *political society* over sub-society)[105] of *sub-society* (the non-political society that exists instead of civil society):

> The most important contradiction of such a transformation is between the political society, which does not have a civil society, and sub-society … The central bureaucratic state makes the sub-society its apparatus through its ideological unity (Küçükömer, 2013, p. 61).

Similar conceptualizations of "extension" of the state over what is called "civil society" in Western terms have been developed by others as well. Chatterjee, for example, argues that civil society in non-Western countries does not lie in an opposition to the state, but almost functions like an extension of the state, where the endless "modernization" process is endeavored to function through pedagogy, not free associations opposite the state as in the West, undertaken by a "modernizing elite" (Chatterjee, 1998, pp. 61-62). In fact, after the 1980s, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the "modern transformation" of Eastern European countries, "establishing or strengthening civil society via the financing of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) became a quick fix for policy makers and international donors to achieve consolidation of democracy" (Çevik & Taş, 2013, p. 131). Nevertheless, such "quick fix" began to be questioned in the following years. Navaro-Yashin, in her analysis of the Islamist and secularist discourses in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s, similarly argues that there was no spatially differential civil society in both discourses as such, but that civil society resembled "a symbolic ground on which legitimate state power was going to be based" (Navaro-Yashin, 1998, p. 21). Rather than state and society functioning as two separate entities, they were "enmeshed, intermerged, rendered inherent to one another to the point where it was not ethnographically possible, in most instances, to distinguish spontaneous expressions of civil society from discourses for state power, and vice versa" (1998, p. 21). She suggests that "the

---

[105] This is not a *politicization* which is referred to be occuring in the *subjective* dimension, as developed in this thesis. *Politicization* in Küçükömer's terms denotes the *extending* of political society *over* or *towards* sub-society (not to be confused with civil society).

realm of what some have called 'civil society' in contemporary Turkey is marked by many scenes, more statist than the state" (Navaro-Yashin, 2002, p. 119). In conclusion, although Neo-Kemalist discourse is understood to be presenting a *different articulation* regarding Kemalism, as established in the literature above, the limits of that *difference* is questionable, regarding its civility. With the civil society functioning as an extension of the state in the East, the "civilian" Neo-Kemalist NGOs' claim to civility lose its lose its place to a discussion of (self-acknowledged) *convergence* with the state, rather than *divergence.*

3.3. Discussing Civic Atatürkism and the problematics of "literature-ization"

I propose to conceive of Civic Atatürkism both as the performance of a subjective mode of politicization, i.e. the *phenomenon* itself, and as the political/academic discourse that accompanies the said mode, i.e. the *literature*. While there are not many "academic" works on it as of yet[106], there is a vast array of discussions on "Civic Atatürkism" which are usually led in various journals, magazines and newspapers.

In this thesis, I will be treating Civic Atatürkism in two aspects, that is, first as *the discourse of Civic Atatürkism*, and second as *the discourse on Civic Atatürkism*. The former will be treated as the social, phenomenal, subjective outlook of Civic Atatürkism as a mode of politicization, as the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. The latter, on the other hand, will be treated somewhat separately as the *theory* of Civic Atatürkism; in other words, the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism as a mode of politicization, those accounts that describe what it is, how it functions and detect the various horizons of it as a mode of politicization. These two levels of Civic Atatürkism function separately but are in some kind of a harmony[107]. Moreover, the hyperpoliticized *and* Post-Political characteristics can be said to be apparent in both of

---

[106] See the only two existing book chapters and articles that deal with or mention the issue: (Öztürk, 2017; Öztürk & Karakuş, 2019)

[107] The former is the mode of politicization itself, i.e. what could be called the *praxis* of Civic Atatürkism; while the latter is the corpus of work that describes, explains and interprets Civic Atatürkism, i.e. the *theoria* of Civic Atatürkism. There is nothing *necessarily* "Civically Atatürkist" in making a discussion on Civic Atatürkism, thus the need to separate between two. However, since most of the work on the matter have the characteristics of a "theory", in that they endeavor to explain Civic Atatürkism and *quilt* Civic Atatürkism; and in that they both operate on similar logics of hyperpoliticization and Post-Politics, both will be the object of treatment.

them[108]. Their *harmony,* thus, occurs exactly where the Post-Political *Zeitgeist* and *Vision* meets.

The corpus of work on Civic Atatürkism, or the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism not only functions as a *theoretical ground* for the new and rising mode of politicization called Civic Atatürkism, but also establishes the basis of my study through its hypotheses that could be put to the test. Therefore, in this study, I will treat the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism as a literature in itself. The reason for my designation of Civic Atatürkism as a literature, instead of it simply as archival material, is due to my suggestion that it engenders a discussion, both political and academic, and draws intellectual attention to the topic, making it an object of intellectual/theoretical inquiry, thus transforming the nature of the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. It is not with the case of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism that it only describes the actuality in social reality; but the case that it develops a distinction between Civic Atatürkism and past forms of Atatürkisms/Kemalisms, positing it as an important force in the contemporary political scene in Turkey, explaining its various qualities, and projecting it a horizon towards future. It is not exactly separate, in that precise sense, from the actuality of Civic Atatürkism, in that it creates and seeks debate for the sake of it, thus transcending Civic Atatürkism into a *new mode of Atatürkist attitude*. The novelty in Civic Atatürkism as a *new mode of Atatürkism*, I'd argue, is not an objective fact, but emerges at the very moment of its articulation as such, with reference to and in contrast with previous forms of Atatürkisms and Kemalisms, by the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism. In other words, it is precisely the very operation of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism that articulates Civic Atatürkism as a new, "Civic" wave of Atatürkism. Therefore, I will be attempting to "literature-ize" the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism (to be referred to as the Civic Atatürkism Literature from now on), or to put it differently, attempting to treat it as a literature, showing its earlier developments, discussing its important qualities, and outlining its hypotheses about the Atatürkism of today. Furthermore, the claim of the literature that Civic Atatürkism is the *new, current mode of Atatürkism* will be treated with special attention.

---

[108] As for the technicalities of conducting such research, the conception of the matter and the designation of the field study was done on the basis of the written body of works on Civic Atatürkism. Thus, having functioned as my base point, the corpus on Civic Atatürkism provided me with the hypotheses about Civic Atatürkism that I put to the test in this work.

Such a task is not an easy one for various reasons. First, the number of academic works on this sociological phenomenon being quite low, it is hard to pinpoint the main themes, foci and properties of the discussion at hand. Second, the dispersed nature of the discussions, both in terms of their conceptual operation and in terms of their form of dissemination, and the lack of an academic formality in their content creates further hardships in defining its constitutive characteristics, and distinguishing between the central and the peripheral material on the issue. Nonetheless, I believe there are some crucial reasons as to why it could be treated as a literature.

First, although there is not a "school" from which the claims on Civic Atatürkism emerges, there are some central figures who propose certain foundational characteristics of it. The most important figures are, without question, Armağan Öztürk and Berk Esen, alongside others. These two have employed the concept in their corpi in various ways throughout years. There are other academics, journalists or intellectuals who, although not as consistently and coherently as the former two, both observe and endeavor to define, laud or criticize such a phenomenon. Second, albeit its dispersed characteristics, the literature functions on some coherent bases. This concerns both the world-view of its "theorists", and the fundamental characteristics of Civic Atatürkism developed by them. Certain arguments, themes, similar modes of observation and results about Civic Atatürkism could be said to be running across many who write about it. Third, its "theorists" work together in a similar political orientation as well, thus giving Civic Atatürkism a political characteristic, and its motivation an *end*. Fourth, it is posited against both Post-Kemalism and a *claimed previous* of Atatürkism/Kemalism as a mode of politicization and assumes a new historical term in its actuality. Fifth, it is both retroactive and projective, in that it *constitutes Atatürkism with reference to its past, and it projects it towards the future*. Sixth, it is responsive, in that it functions like a living being, disseminated by various figures, contains internal contradictions and responds to certain developments and criticisms. "Theorists" of Civic Atatürkism posit their literature against various other theoretical and political formulations, and develop their points in dialogue with them.

Therefore, it is not only crucial to take seriously these works that aim to explain and "theorize" upon a novel sociological phenomenon, but also quite important to make a

discussion about *them*. However, I will, first, be discussing the roots of such civilianization in Atatürkism before I make a discussion about Civic Atatürkism. In this discussion, I will be omitting the pseudo-civilianization attempts in Kemalism, explained in Chapter 3.2. I will be focusing on the civilianization of Atatürkism that pertains to an Atatürkism in the personal level, rather than through NGOs.

3.3.1. Roots of the "Civic" attitude in Atatürkism

Although "Civic Atatürkism" is a fairly new phenomenon and concept, in that it began to be uttered as such from 2016-2017[109] on, the claimed "civilianization" *of* [110]the Atatürkist mode of politicization precedes it. Leaving aside the (pseudo)civilianization attempts in Kemalism, through utilizing various NGOs, as discussed above, it was Esra Özyürek (2006) who first argued that Atatürkism/Kemalism at the individual level had begun to adopt a more "civil/civilian" attitude. Özyürek, in her book *Nostalgia for the Modern*, suggests, through her anthropological study, that through dynamics of privatization and marketization, Atatürkism (or Kemalism) which used to portray a formal, official ideology had begun to become more civilian. Analyzing various aspects of this civilianization around the celebrations for the 75th year of the republic, she argues that the dynamic of privatization of symbols is a practice of governmentality, and is complicit with the logic of neoliberalism (2006, pp. 5-8). In fact, she goes as far to argue that "nostalgia and privatization are among the powerful driving forces behind neoliberal ideology" (2006, p. 8), and describes this dynamic as a result of neoliberal governmentality. In her analysis of such privatization, she could be said to be pointing to a politicization of the private sphere, not only a characteristic of the civilianization of Atatürkism, but also a characteristic similar to the dynamic of hyperpoliticization, i.e. a subjective mode of politicization that exhibits itself through

---

[109] The exact date is conflicted, due to the fact that there are various works that could be attributed the quality of being the first piece of material to coin the notion of "Civic Atatürkism". Moreover, the fact that some of the first newspaper and magazine articles that discuss the term have been removed does make the job even more complicated. However, Armağan Öztürk's first piece in *Politikyol*, removed from the website today, titled "Sivil Atatürkçülük", written in 2016 could be said to be the first work ever that mentions the notion as such (Öztürk, 2016). However, his book chapter, written in 2017, titled "Civic Atatürkism in the Dissolution Process of Post-Kemalism" could be taken as the first "proper" source to have coined the term (Öztürk, 2017).

[110] Once again, this thesis distinguishes between the civilianizations *in* Atatürkism and civilianization *of* Atatürkism. What the Civic Atatürkism Literature claims is exactly the latter.

aesthetics, like wearing a particular set of clothes, badges, posters etc.[111]. One of her most important contributions is showing how the image of Mustafa Kemal, once portrayed strictly as a statesman, was facing a transformation in the 1990s, being portrayed with an emphasis on his personality (pp. 93-95), and that there was a voluntary civilian interest in privatizing such symbols, from hanging up posters to wearing badges that carry his picture (pp. 100-102). Moreover, her description of how the said image was transformed in terms of its physical size pointed to an important characteristic of civilianization in her analysis. By abandoning the previous symbolization of the image of Atatürk in public spaces, in large sizes, the image was being scaled down, made able to be wearable, displayable, and turned into an extension of the individual body (pp. 112-115). She calls this new version of civilianized Atatürkism/Kemalism, "nostalgic Kemalism", arguing that this was the then-new *appearance* of Kemalism[112], which used to portray a statist/corporatist character in the past (p. 182). Hers was a crucial study in denoting that Atatürkism, beginning at the end of the 1990s and in the 2000s, was going through a transformation, at its individual level and everyday performance.

Although there was not much discussion about Atatürkism for about ten years after Özyürek's book (barring a few exceptions like those during Gezi Park Protests, considering that they concerned, once again, NGOs and the youth branches of various self-proclaimed Kemalist political parties) Elçin Aktoprak (2017) observes a similar dynamic of civilianization a decade later than Özyürek, suggesting that there is some kind of a transformation in the image of Atatürk and the mode of Atatürkism. Although written chronologically after the coinage of Civic Atatürkism, Aktoprak's suggestion could be considered an important observation that lays down a similar framework of civilianization, as acknowledged by Öztürk as well (Öztürk, 2017, p. 97; Öztürk & Karakuş Öztürk, 2019, p. 2404). Aktoprak, in her article, suggests that in the recent

---

[111] See Özyürek, 2006, p. 20.

[112] It is hard to designate "nostalgic Kemalism" as a proper *mode* of Kemalism. While it may be said to refer to a spatial facet of Kemalism (even though nostalgia may suggest temporality, its designation as an affective quality is, I believe, a spatial characteristic), the adjective of *nostalgic* seems to me to refer to *an attribute* of Kemalism, rather than denoting a spatial-temporal *mode*. It is more appropriate to call it, thus, an *appearance* of Kemalism (or maybe even an *attribute* of another appearance or mode of Kemalism).

resurgence of the recitation of the *İzmir March*, in various protests, football matches and social media, we are witnessing the emergence of a new kind of identification with the image of Atatürk. She argues that we cannot simply call this identification a display of an older version of Kemalism. The crucial difference, she puts forward, lies in the relative position of the subjects towards the state. The old Kemalists were, she argues, in their identification with what I may call the *signifier* of Atatürk, exhibiting a reaction that posits itself *within the state*. However, she follows, the new identification with Atatürk, especially among the various sections of the youth in Turkey, is a peculiar one in that it no longer occupies a position along or within the state, but a position that *opposes the state*. In other words, it is no longer a matter of protecting the state and claiming their "rightful" ownership of it, but a position that is in woe of having lost it. The image of Atatürk, thus, no longer functions as the representative of the state, but begins to function as an adversary of the state, she claims (Aktoprak, 2017, pp. 46-47). Although she does not explicitly say that there is the rise of a new kind of Atatürkism present in Turkey, her observations point to the idea that Atatürkism and the mode of articulation of the *signifier* of Atatürk vis-à-vis political identification have changed, and is now almost in perfect contrast to its mode of articulation in the past. In her analysis, the *İzmir March* functions as an anthem of various crowds that want to show their opposition towards AKP, in such a precise way that it enables those who recite it to posit themselves in an act of rebellion and salvation. The ambiguous character of the "enemy", sung about in the march, allows its singer to be able to oppose an array of enemies with a strong nationalistic overtone present in the lyrics (2017, pp. 49-50). This precise mode of articulation, she suggests, must direct us to define "something new" about the image and role of Atatürk. Because, she contends, "it is not the Kemalists anymore who hinder the development of democracy" (p. 51), there is a need to redefine Kemalists and Kemalism.

The new dynamic of civilianization in Atatürkism and its rise has been pointed out, as well, by those in the media. As early as 2019, figures like Ruşen Çakır, Nuray Mert, and İhsan Dağı began to argue that there could be defined a "new wave" of Atatürkism, which is a more civilian one compared to others (Medyascope, 2019; Medyascope, 2021a; Dağı, 2021; Dağı, 2024; Medyascope, 2021b). As an important facet of the discussion of Civic Atatürkism, as will be established below, in Chapter 3.3.2., the

definition of Civic Atatürkism is sometimes made on the grounds of its opposition to the concept of Post-Kemalism[113]. In fact, one of the first discussions on Civic Atatürkism defines the term as a response/reaction to AKP and Post-Kemalism (Öztürk, 2017, p. 95), claiming that Atatürkism became an oppositional framework in a context where Post-Kemalism was no longer relevant (2017, p. 87), and due to the "systematic othering campaign towards Kemalist sectors" (p. 97). It is clear, when one inspects the Civic Atatürkism Literature, that Civic Atatürkism is generally posited against AKP or Post-Kemalism, and is argued to have emerged as a reaction against these. The next chapter will, thus, present exactly the central arguments, foundational themes and *nodal points* of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism. These *nodal points* will be argued to be quilting exactly what is "Civic" about this new Atatürkism.

---

[113] Post-Kemalism is a concept that has been introduced into the literature on Kemalism in 2015, by İlker Aytürk [Although his was not the first piece that coined the term "Post-Kemalism", it was the "most successful", in a sense. It was actually Sungur Savran who, back in 1993, coined the term "Post-Kemalism". His coinage was different than Aytürk's, in that Savran used "Post-Kemalism" in order to define the *Second Republican* literature (Savran, 1993). Aytürk differs from Savran in that he associates Post-Kemalism with an academic paradigm. Therefore, while Savran's usage was more like an "adjective", Aytürk's is claimed to define Post-Kemalism on the grounds of a "paradigm". See Savran, 1993, for the original use, and see Dağı, 2011 for another use that precedes Aytürk's]. Aytürk, in his first piece on his newly-coined term "Post-Post-Kemalism", argues that Post-Kemalism was an academic paradigm that "wrongly diagnosed" the issue of tutelage and democracy in Turkey (Aytürk, 2015, pp. 34-35). It had, Aytürk claims, a "wrong prescription" as well, upon the treatment of this "wrong diagnosis" (2015, p. 44). Regarding the "wrong diagnosis", he argues that this paradigm had two most important problematic qualities: first, it equated the military regime of the 1980s with Kemalism (Aytürk openly assumes here that it is not), and second, it related the problem of democratization and lack of democracy in Turkey with Kemalism (Aytürk, 2019, p. 5). What is "wrong" here, argues Aytürk, is the relation established between Kemalism and lack of democracy. Regarding the "wrong prescription", Aytürk means first, the Post-Kemalist desire to properly confront and scrutinize the history of Kemalism, and second, the main actors of the democratization being deemed Islamists and the Kurdish Movement (2019, p. 6). He outlines the paradigm in the following qualities: It was born against the militarist-Kemalist dynamic of the 1980 coup, it problematized the early republican era and Kemalism, it re-posited the official Kemalist narrative of nationalism, language and history in the realm of the tutelary, jacobin and elitist qualities of Kemalism, and it reversed the Kemalist discourse on women. In general, the Post-Kemalist paradigm sought, claims Aytürk, to reverse the hegemonic narrative on Kemalism (Aytürk, 2015, pp. 35-36). He suggests that this paradigm became the "dominant" one after the first electoral victory of AKP in 2002, and, thus, lost its oppositional characteristic (2015, p. 37). Considering it an essentially political paradigm, Aytürk claims that although he agrees with the basic motivations of the said paradigm, he contends that with its post-orientalist and post-modern qualities, the paradigm ended up in the wrong conclusions through its "wrong diagnosis" (pp. 38-42). In his conclusion, Aytürk puts forward that the Post-Kemalist paradigm is no longer viable, and that the Turkish academia is beginning to enter into another phase: One swept by the Post-Post-Kemalist paradigm (pp. 45-47). This issue of non-viability of the Post-Kemalism "paradigm" is due to his simple understanding that "problems associated with Kemalism are still continuing their existence today" (Aytürk & Esen, 2023, p. 15). This is problematic on many levels, the most important being *logical*. It is clear that with his emphases on "science" (See Aytürk, 2020), Aytürk's call is for a non-ideological/scientific evaluation of Kemalism. Nonetheless, such an evaluation, bereft of ideology, is what is argued to be ideological in this thesis, as put forward in several points. For further discussion of Post-Post-Kemalism, see Chapter 5.

3.3.2. Central arguments of the Civic Atatürkism Literature

In order to develop a comprehensive picture of Civic Atatürkism, it is obligatory to evaluate the arguments and its claimed defining characteristics put forward by the literature on Civic Atatürkism. These arguments aim to present various qualities of Civic Atatürkism, while trying to summarize its outlook and state what exactly makes it "Civic". These are crucial not only to understand how the discourse *of* and the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism relate, but also to be assessed as claims that could be put to the test, which I do in the next chapter of this thesis, through my field study. I define six central characteristics of the Civic Atatürkism Literature, in their attempts to define the concept. I argue that the signifier *Civic*, which is differently and ambiguously defined in the said literature, *quilts* precisely these six arguments that the exact "meaning", so as to say, of Civic Atatürkism *lies in this chain of signication*. The main six arguments are defined as follows: (1) Civic Atatürkism as having emerged through the termination of the relationship between Atatürk/Atatürkism and the state; (2) Civic Atatürkism being a spontaneous phenomenon, as opposed to its predecessors; (3) Civic Atatürkism having a protest outlook, or having emerged as a response to the AKP government or Post-Kemalism; (4) Civic Atatürkism being not an ideology but a lifestyle; (5) The image of Atatürk functioning as a metapolitical entity under which many different subjectivities can co-exist, and Civic Atatürkism itself being a metapolitical phenomenon; (6) Civic Atatürkism being more democratic/pluralist from its predecessors. These six arguments do not exist in its whole in every material in the literature, but are distilled forms which are in different variations and emphases in each piece of material. Such an abstraction is found to be necessary in order to analyze the exact functioning of the *nodal point* of "Civic", in its quilting dynamics.

The first, and the most common, defining argument of the Civic Atatürkism Literature is the suggestion that Atatürkism *no longer functions as a statist ideology*. In other words, it is widely claimed in the literature that the relationship between Atatürkism and the state has been eliminated. Armağan Öztürk puts forward that Atatürk no longer functions as a symbol of the state, arguing that "the distance between Atatürk and the state has increased" (Öztürk, 2016), and that "Atatürk has more and more become a

symbol of civil society" (Öztürk, 2016), finally ending up in such a position that "Atatürk is not a taboo enforced by the state anymore" (Öztürk, 2023b). Interpreting this in terms of a temporality, Fatih Yaşlı suggests that the severed relationship between Atatürkism and the state is the result of the "De-Kemalisation" process that had begun even before the AKP took to office (Yaşlı, 2023). Civic Atatürkism, thus, is imagined to be the *result,* the *product,* the *consequence* of a characteristic period in which the functioning of the *signifier* of Atatürk has changed. Öztürk, alongside others, deems the novel sociological phenomenon of Civic Atatürkism as one produced by the Post-Kemalist dynamic, specifically as an antithesis of it (Öztürk, 2017, p. 95)[114], arguing that "Atatürk who has recalled [sic] to public life by the civil society has become a general justifier for mistreated masses" (2017, p. 97). Nevertheless, this argument is found to be incoherent since he would acknowledge, years later, that it was due to the fact that "Kemalism had become a right-wing phenomenon, and the state had lost its Atatürkist character to a large extent" (Öztürk, 2023a), rather than as a response to Post-Kemalism. That being said, it is a general contention in the Civic Atatürkism Literature that Civic Atatürkism emerged as a response to the AKP government (Coşkun, 2021; Dağı, 2021; Dağı, 2024; DW Türkçe, 2023). However, the various versions of Atatürkism that could be said to be responsive against the AKP are distinguished between. Ruşen Çakır, similar to Aktoprak (2017), posits the new wave of Atatürkism against an older version, by comparing it with the Atatürkism of ADD/ÇYDD. He argues that "while the *Republican Rallies[115] (Cumhuriyet Mitingleri)* were a series of protests organized by the owners of the state, the current strand of Atatürkism rises from society itself" (Medyascope, 2019), calling it a rediscovery of Atatürk. Such a distinguishment is not uncommon, as Burak Bilgehan Özpek, too, suggests that "this is different than the Atatürkism of 2005… A more civilian Atatürkism is replacing the older, unpleasant Atatürkism of Canan Arıtman and Nur Serter" (Medyascope, 2022). The interesting point here is that the Civic Atatürkism Literature, with its *denouncing* of the *Republican Rallies*, is rejecting the claim that Neo-Kemalist NGOs, who claimed that they were civilian initiatives as established in Chapter 3.2., were civilian. In other words, the Civic-ness of Civic

---

[114] See Göle, 2023; Medyascope, 2021a.

[115] The italics belong to me.

Atatürkism is seen to be quilted through the "de-civilianization" of Neo-Kemalism, which were established with the *very* claim that Civic Atatürkism Literature strips it of. İhsan Dağı makes a similar distinguishment by pointing to a "danger" in the possible future of Civic Atatürkism, suggesting that it ought to not "regress" into a traditional Atatürkism or a Neo-Kemalist reactionism (Dağı, 2024), thus making a distinguishment between the *current mode* of Atatürkism and its *regressive modes*. In general, this first argument is uttered in such a way as to claim that Atatürkism, which had been *trapped* within the official state ideology has, finally, been freed and became a civilian phenomenon[116] (Dağı, 2021; Dağı, 2024; Coşkun, 2021; Karabağ, 2022; Medyascope, 2021a; Medyascope, 2021b). The suggestion of the *entrapment* of the symbol of Atatürk or Atatürkism is quite common in the Civic Atatürkism Literature (Esen, 2021b; Karabağ, 2022; DW Türkçe, 2023). *Entrapment* is the most important signifier that allows the articulation of Civic Atatürkism as a mode, as different from other modes, and as the *current mode*. However, it is as much conflicting, since such an *external relationship* between the state and Atatürk is questionable with regards to the vast academic literature on Kemalism. Bora & Kıvanç, for example, suggest that Atatürkism is "a 'worldview' that posits the state as the fundamental subject of social life" (Bora & Kıvanç, 1996, p. 780). Ahmet İnsel, as well, suggests that the Kemalist principle of *etatism* is not only a principle on economic grounds, but "more than that, it is the complement of political statism" (İnsel, 2021, p. 20). In other words, there are many academic works that would reject the idea of *entrapment* in the first place, arguing that the relationship between Kemalism and the state is not an external one to begin with, but an *internal,* almost *essential* one. In fact, Murat Utkucu criticizes Civic Atatürkism on the grounds that it, actually, is still compliant with the ideology of the state, and locates itself in such a position that it distinguishes between the state and the AKP, favouring and aligning with the former against the latter (Utkucu, 2024). In that strain, Ruşen Çakır states that in new Atatürkists, there is still an insistence on separating the AKP and the state, in that the new Atatürkists still do not speak ill of the state in their protests, but specifically target AKP instead (Medyascope, 2021b). Thus, it is questionable whether there was such a relationship of *entrapment* in the first place, and to what extent there exists such an escape from the said *entrapment*.

---

[116] In denoting the said *entrapment,* various words were also used other than it.

However, rather than a discussion about whether it is true or not, it must be shown that the signifier of *entrapment* functions in such a way, in the literature, that it amounts to the "creation" of a new kind of Atatürkism. In other words, it is the signifier of *entrapment* that allows the positing of Civic Atatürkism as the *new mode of Atatürkism,* externalizing the relationship between Atatürkism and the state and, thus, contrasting it with its previous *modes*. Without the precise functioning of *entrapment,* no such signification would be possible.

The second central argument of the Civic Atatürkism Literature is that Civic Atatürkism is *spontaneous*, as opposed to the older ones being promoted by the state or pseudo-civilian actors. This spontaneity is in a close relationship with the argument of *entrapment,* such that what this strand of Atatürkism exhibits, for the first time in history, it is claimed, is a spontaneous development of an identification with Mustafa Kemal, or love for him. Moreover, the spontaneity at hand is quite commonly established with reference to emotions, i.e. relying on an affective framework as opposed to a political one. As Murat Sabuncu states:

> Civic Atatürkism does not have a locomotive… Does not have a party, or a leader… It rises straight from the bottom, in accord with people's spontaneous desires… Rather than an ideology, it is a 'plea for a particular lifestyle', an emotion, which is getting even more widespread day by day (Sabuncu, 2023).

It is once again idea of *entrapment* that allows the establishment of an affective framework, and the claims about "rising from the bottom". Without it, the designation of the *current mode of Atatürkism* as a *spontaneous* one would not be possible. Thus, spontaneity is observed to be obtaining a "meaning" the quilting of which is directly due to the signifier of *entrapment.* Sadun Çetin, similarly, suggests that "today … the love and respect for Atatürk does not grow with the involvement of the state, military, or public institutions as in the past, but from within the hearts of the citizens" (Çetin, 2023a). There is, again, present here a silent comparison of the *current mode of Atatürkism* and the various versions of it from the past. It is, once again, precisely this comparison that creates the conditions of possibility of this phenomena being a *new mode*. Ruşen Çakır, accordingly, argues that "there is, now, a spontaneous wave rising from society, which rather than aiming to protect the power, aims to protect the country" (Medyascope, 2019). Nonetheless, it is, again, questionable to what extent

this spontaneity is original, or occurs for the first time in history, since, as was mentioned in Chapter 1.2., incredibly similar arguments of spontaneity regarding the love for Mustafa Kemal and Atatürkism was made back in 1998 as well. Although there was not so much a claim about the *mode* of Atatürkism in 1998, the argument of spontaneity is, once again, functional as an imagined characteristic in making a distinguishment between a privileged form of Atatürkism and its "deviations" (as was instumentalized by some writers in 1998 in order to distinguish the "civilian-parade-Atatürkism" from its other forms, without specifically making a claim about whether this "new" one is the *current mode of Atatürkism* or not).

The third central argument of the Civic Atatürkism Literature is the idea that Civic Atatürkism displays a *protest* attitude towards the state, or the party in power. In fact, Berk Esen suggests that "especially in the last ten years, a love and defense of Mustafa Kemal that is almost part of a protest culture has emerged" (DW Türkçe, 2023). This claimed protest nature of Civic Atatürkism is closely developed with reference to the AKP government, as Gülçin Karabağ points that "the garden of Anıtkabir has turned into a site of protest where people voice their complaints towards [the party in] power" (Karabağ, 2022). İhsan Dağı goes as far to suggest that "Atatürkism, which had been excluded during the 20 year-long AKP government, which had almost been *ripped out of the state*[117], which had been thrown to the opposition has nowadays seems to have been turned into a civil/social 'resistance'" (Dağı, 2021). It is obvious that the signifier of *entrapment* is still functional here. İhsan Dağı's claim that Atatürkism was *trapped* within the state, and then was *ripped out* hints at the understanding that the *ripping out* is something, in the first place, that was mourned about, being spoken of in terms of an "exclusion" (from a rightful ownership). Nonetheless, with its unintended consequence that ended the *entrapment,* the *ripping out* becomes something that is celebrated, at the end. Thus, *spontaneity* is understood to be functioning as the unintended consequence of the *ripping out* (the abolition of *entrapment*) in the literature.

The fourth central argument of the Civic Atatürkism Literature is that Civic Atatürkism is *not an ideology, but a lifestyle*, as argued by Murat Sabuncu (2023) in

---

[117] Italicization belongs to me.

such words that it was a "plea for a lifestyle". İhsan Dağı suggests that this is due to the fact that the AKP targeted people's private lifestyles (Medyascope, 2021b), which led them to a politicization concerning that. Lifestyle, here, is posited directly opposite ideology, in that Civic Atatürkism is not an ideology, or does not have an ideology, but represents a more ambiguous, more flexible "way of life". In fact, Etyen Mahçupyan argues that the consitutive difference between Kemalism and Atatürkism is *ideologylessness* (Mahçupyan, 2021), thus implying that while Kemalism was presented as an ideology, Atatürkism is its mirror image without a comprehensive ideological framework. He, thus, goes on to suggest that Atatürkism had always been "civilian" in that sense, in its comparison with Kemalism, which had a clear-cut ideology (Mahçupyan, 2021). Burak Bilgehan Özpek, as well, carries this opposition forward, suggesting that "while twenty years ago, Kemalism was a harsh ideology that sought to create a standard subject by force, i.e. it was depicted in the past like that, but it has now become a defense of elitism against populism, or excellence against mediocrity" (Medyascope, 2022). The arguments about elitism and populism, and even those that relate Civic Atatürkism to the liberal conception of minimal state[118] seem a bit far-fetched, but nonetheless shows how the writers in the literature assign a so-called non-ideological spirit to Civic Atatürkism by articulating into it various other signifiers.

The fifth central argument of the Civic Atatürkism Literature is that Civic Atatürkism is a *metapolitical* phenomenon, and that Atatürk is a *metapolitical* figure. Although the accounts on it vary, usually both the signifier of Atatürk and Civic Atatürkism are argued to be metapolitical. This twofold claim of metapoliticality could be observed in Burak Bilgehan Özpek, where he argues that the image of Atatürk is "beyond politics", stating:

> Mustafa Kemal is probably the only remaining safe shelter for the opposition today… Atatürk symbolizes what is beyond politics, the outside of politics, he symbolizes national unity and solidarity. Atatürkism does not fancy dividing the political scene into camps. Thus, [Atatürk is], an image that is beyond everyting, something which we cannot attribute a political role, a political

---

[118] İhsan Dağı suggests that Civic Atatürkism exhibits a civilianization that recalls the forgotten values of liberalism, like free individual and the minimal state (Medyascope, 2021b).

identity, something which symbolizes the perpetuity of the country (Medyascope, 2022).

As it is clear, Özpek (Medyascope, 2022) suggests that both the image of Atatürk and Atatürkism are metapolitical phenomena, one being a stable symbol within politics that can constitute national unity, the other being the general political outlook that aims to realize a politics as such. However, he is quite wrong about his claim that Atatürkism does not divide society between camps. It must be stated that almost all forms of Atatürkism function on a space divided between two groups, the most prominent division of which is between the "real Atatürkists" and "fake Atatürkists" (See Köker, 2021, p. 97), the origination of which is traceable to 1963 (See Velidedeoğlu, 1963, p. 1)[119]. Moreover, Necmi Erdoğan shows that "the Neo-Kemalist discourse separates the political space into two antagonistic camps, like secular/anti-secular, republican/anti-republican, modern/reactionary…" (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 586). Thus, Özpek's suggestion must be taken with caution. Etyen Mahçupyan considers the metapolitical aspect to be a general characteristic of Atatürkism, stating that "the main attraction of Atatürkism is the feeling of reaching a meta-ideological truth" (Mahçupyan, 2021). Kemal Can, as well, confirms this metapolitical character in Atatürkism, arguing that Atatürkism functions across parties as a metapolitical tool for constituting political integrity, in such a way that politicians across many ideological positions are blamed for "not being Atatürkist enough" (Medyascope, 2022), and even the self-proclaimed Atatürkist ones do not escape this blame. It is interesting to see how a metapolitical quality could be lauded upon, but when the desire for *ideologylessness* is reconsidered, such claim of a metapolitical nature begins to make sense, since what the "lifestyle-ization", or in other words the depoliticization, of an ideology requires is a political space *beyond politics*. An imagined space *beyond politics* creates the very possibility of the politicization of the private sphere.

The sixth and final central argument of Civic Atatürkism Literature is that Civic Atatürkism is *more democratic and pluralist* from the earlier strands of Atatürkism. Ruşen Çakır suggests that "it is possible to say today's Atatürkism is more democratic, more pluralist and more civilian from the old, state-sponsored Atatürkism"

---

[119] See Chapter 4.3.4. for more on the earliest conceptualization, to my knowledge, of "real" and "fake" Atatürkisms.

(Medyascope, 2019). Berk Esen, too, argues that Atatürkists, by becoming civilian, has become democratic as well (Esen, 2021a). Nonetheless, Murat Utkucu goes against this claim, stating that such civilianization does not entail a democratization (Utkucu, 2024). Such an automatic relationship between civilianization and democratization is problematic. Moreover, there are quite undemocratic characteristics present even in the Civic Atatürkism Literature itself. Armağan Öztürk openly states that "Civic Atatürkist stance is not only against Islamism and AKP but also against Kurdish movement equally" (Öztürk, 2017, p. 97). Moreover, both Sabuncu (2023) and Dağı (Medyascope, 2021b) suggest that Civic Atatürkism exhibits a "secular nationalist" outlook. Within a nationalist matrix, and within clear demarcations between Civic Atatürkists and other kinds of political movements mounted by Öztürk, the argument that Civic Atatürkism is more democratic and pluralist could be said to dysfunction inside its own logic.

The signifier "Civic", I argue, quilts exactly these six arguments, thus, from Civic it is understood *the current mode of* Atatürkism differs from the older ones in that it abolished its *entrapment* within the state (1), it is a *spontaneous* mode of politicization (2), it is a *protest* phenomenon (3), it is a *lifestlye*, as opposed to an ideology (4), it is a *metapolitical* thing, with both Atatürk and Atatürkism lying in the *beyond* of politics (5), and that it is a more *democratic/pluralist* mode of Atatürkism, as opposed to previous modes (6). The arguments, with their distinguishment of the new Atatürkism from that of an *imagined past*, are able to posit the Atatürkism of today as the *new mode of Atatürkism.* This is no longer a civilianization among the Atatürkist subjects, thus, but a whole *Civic-ization of Atatürkism itself.* The operation is found to be realizable only through the *imagination of the past* in a particular way. Without *entrapment,* for example, the re-imagination of Atatürkism's actuality to have freed itself from a state of *entrapment*, no such Civic-ization would be possible. Furthermore, it is clear that Post-Political characteristics are quite visible in the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism. The voluntary distinguishment between ideology and lifestyle itself is an ideological statement that seeks to distance itself from ideology[120].

---

[120] The reader should note that the third argument of the literature, that about Civic Atatürkism being a *lifestyle* rather than an *ideology,* is quite close to the Beck and Giddens' conceptualizations of *sub-politics* and *life politics.* Giddens, with his notion of *life politics* was talking about the idea that people's private *lifestyles* and *bodies* had become areas where the political operated. Through such connection,

As mentioned, there is present here the imagination of a political space that is *beyond politics*, the very positing of which degrades politics itself and seeks the metapolitical. The "protest" culture that is remarked upon does not describe a protest in the usual sense, but a protest that is quite tame, one that is only displayed only in national holidays and in close connection with the image of Atatürk, which, as described by Özpek (Medyascope, 2022), is a "safe shelter" for national security. Therefore, this is not that radical protest reminiscent of a transformative event, but a domesticated parade of some sorts that seeks to reinvigorate and reinstitutionalize the lost equilibrium. Murat Utkucu shows how Civic Atatürkism precisely functions on that nostalgia for the lost equilibrium (Utkucu, 2024). Most writers of the Civic Atatürkism Literature, laud the advancement of Civic Atatürkism due to its metapolitical character, in that it can present an opportunity for a cross-cutting, asymptotic unity. Its asymptotic character is due to the fact that it still excludes some through its characteristics of nationalism[121], while nonetheless aiming to achieve the broadest possible representation[122].

the Post-Political characteristics of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism could be observed within its arguments. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed handling of Giddens and Beck. See further explanations of *sub-politics* and *life politics*: Beck, 1994; Beck, 1997; Giddens, 1998; Giddens, 2007; Giddens, 2009.

[121] See Aktoprak, 2017 for a discussion on the new wave of Atatürkism and nationalism. Moreover, Öztürk's (2017, p. 97) clear exclusion of the Kurdish movement from the horizons of Civic Atatürkism is quite self-explanatory.

[122] Meanwhile, the Neo-Kemalist discourse, although silent upon the claims of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism (except for one interviewee, who was a member of ADT, who voiced his criticisms against the concept of Civic Atatürkism, which is to be handled in Chapter 4.2.5.), still insist upon the relationship between Kemalism, civil society and NGOs (See Çeçen, 2020).

CHAPTER 4

FIELD STUDY

So far, the relevant theoretical and historical accounts of hyperpoliticized Post-Politics and Atatürkism/Kemalism have been made. Furthermore, the central characteristics of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism have been put forward. These, consequently, lead us to a concrete discussion about all these terms. The main theses of the Civic Atatürkism Literature had been put forward in the precious chapter. Now, I will be putting these into the test. I have, thus, conducted a field study on Civic Atatürkism. As mentioned in chapter 1.4., I will be analyzing my field study in three levels. However, before I delve into the analysis, I must state one of the most important observations of my field study, which is surely worthy of being mentioned before an excursion be made into the study, concerning the question of whether Civic Atatürkism is the *current mode of Atatürkism* or not, and whether there's such a civilianization, or "Civic-ization", in Atatürkism/Kemalism or not. In the literature, as it had been shown, Civic Atatürkism was defined as the new *mode* of Atatürkism. In other words, what was civilianized was not the Atatürkists but *Atatürkism itself*, thus enthroning Civic Atatürkism as the *current mode of Atatürkism*. The adjective of civilianization in phrases like "civilianizing Kemalism" (Esen, 2021a), "civilianized Atatürkism" (Dağı, 2021), "the civil state of Atatürkism" (Coşkun, 2021) project the civilianization directly onto Atatürkism itself, rather than Atatürkists, thus quilting it as the *current mode* with the signifier of Civic Atatürkism. This means that Atatürkism as a form of politicization had altogether become Civic without a significant source of deviation among Atatürkists, argues the literature. Nevertheless, I observed in my field study that this claimed dynamic of Civic-ization did not apply to all forms of Atatürkisms. There, I believe, is one crucial reason for this, which has been present in the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism from the very beginning. The second central argument of the literature on Civic Atatürkism, laid out in Chapter 3.3. suggested that Civic Atatürkism

presented a *spontaneous* outlook, in that people *voluntarily* displayed their mode of politicization, without the incentive, involvement or organization of any other actor, especially the state. This argument itself actually points to a *necessary* dynamic of *disorganization[123]*, i.e. not being part of any organization, of Civic Atatürkists, in such a way that Civicness is attributed to a necessary requirement of not being part of an organization. When defined in terms of *spontaneity*, in such a specific articulation of it in opposition to various forms of organizations, the involvement of any Atatürkist within a strictly or even vaguely Atatürkist organization shakes up the whole framework of the so-called Civic spontaneity. In fact, this was found to be not only a *necessary* theoretical entailment, but also the actuality itself, for what this field study showed was exactly that. The responses of the participants that covered the questions on the six central arguments of the Civic Atatürkism Literature *split* the sample into two, based on that exact, single criterion: The answers to the questions showed incredible similarity depending on whether the interviewee was part of an (Atatürkist) organization or not[124].

In the interviews, it was observed that those who belonged to any kind of organization that could vaguely be called Atatürkist, or related to Atatürkism in some sense, including nationalist organizations, showed certain qualities that defied the six central arguments put forward in the Civic Atatürkism Literature. Especially the first

---

[123] The Turkish word *örgütlülük,* which denotes both the "being organized-ness" of a community (a community oriented towards a common goal), and "being part of an organization" of the individual (usually an organization like a political party, a collective etc.), is a quite common word in the jargon of the Left in Turkey. *Örgütsüzlük,* on the other hand, suggests the exact opposite of *örgütlülük*, a disorientedness on the part of the community, or some kind of an apolitical attitude regarding the individual. Due to the fact that with respect to both *örgütlülük* and *örgütsüzlük*, the exact sense of the words does not easily translate into English, various concepts like "organized" and "organizationed" will be used to denote *örgütlülük*; while "disorganization", "organizationless(ness)", "non-organizationed" and "non-organized" will be used to denote *örgütsüzlük.* I will be using both terms in the level of the individual, i.e. with respect to the *subjective dimension* as outlined in Chapter 1.2., since this concerns the level of the mode of politicizations (of the individual). Therefore, "organizationed" (or its variations) will denote those individuals who are part of an organization, and "non-organizationed" (or its variations) will denote those individuals who are not part of an organization.

[124] Since the literature draws a comparison between Neo-Kemalism and Civic Atatürkism, a difference between the discourse of the non-organized Atatürkists and those from an older "civilian" NGO like ADT was expected. However, the difference between *the organized* and *the organizationless* went much far beyond a difference regarding Neo-Kemalism. The difference functioned through youth organizations of CHP, and even more vaguely Atatürkist university societies like the *Türkology Society* (Initiative, since not officially a society recognized by METU) as well. Therefore, the dynamic is observed to be not due to a difference strictly between the pseduo-civilian Kemalist organizations like the ADT, but a difference between *being part of an organization or not* par excellence.

argument, that Atatürkism had severed its ties with the state, was seen to be not very much the case for the said participants. For example, in talking about the various coup d'etats that took place in the history of Turkey, the "organizationed" Atatürkists were seen to be strongly in favor of at least some of them, like the coup of May 27. The "non-organizationed", on the other hand, were much more on the fence about coups. Moreover, while the organized did not have any problems associating themselves with Kemalism and the concept of ideology, the latter group was sceptical of the notion of Kemalism due to its association with ideology, and tried to differentiate their mode of politicization as a lifestyle. While the former group did not hesitate to state that there was a natural bond between Kemalism (their predominant choice of word) and the military, and complained about the so-called severance of that relationship in recent history, the latter showed comparably strong confusion and hesitation about such a link, with some even refusing to establish it. Even though the ages, genders, education levels and mode of subsistence[125] of the interviewees was roughly the same, the results strictly split around the dimension of *organization(lessness)[126]*.

This observation leads to certain results. The first, and the strongest, result might be that Civic Atatürkism is *not* the *current mode of Atatürkism,* as claimed by the literature. Even if we were to acknowledge that there is, in fact, a rise in Atatürkism among the youth and that this was a Civic form of Atatürkism, it is clearly seen that such Civic rise applies only to a *portion* of Atatürkists, who happen to be *not organized* under any Atatürkist organization. The signifier Civic, here, need not contain a necessarily positive character, as is usually assumed in the literature, but that its *vagueness* is inscribed in its character of "spontaneity", in that the argument follows a certain circularity: i) Civic Atatürkists are Civic because they are not organized, ii) they cannot be organized due to their Civic spontaneity, the organization of which destroys the logic of Civicism, iii) thus unintentionally disposessing the possibility of

---

[125] I only recorded the mode of subsistence of the interviewees, based upon a design on whether the interviewee was economically dependent on their family or economically independent. Thus, I am reluctant to comment upon the class scheme of the interviewees, thus exposing one dimension of limitation of this thesis, as mentioned in Chapter 1.6. Further research could include class as a control variable which might present interesting results, albeit my strong supposition that it is not a significant factor that would radically reconfigure the results outlined above.

[126] This has obvious implications concerning hyperpoliticization and Post-Politics, which will be discussed upon later.

Civicness from any Atatürkist who belong to an organization, iv) making Civicness applicable only to the non-organized Atatürkists. The argument is circular in that while "i" presents the spontaneity of Civicness as a postulate, "iv" makes it verify itself by referring to itself. Thus, not only that the results of my field study were in contradiction with the literature, but the argument of the literature is contradicting in itself. A second result might be that even if there's such a Civic-ization, this, once again due to the logic of spontaneity, halts at the point of organizations. This is different from the first result in that the former suggested that only a *portion* was Civic-ized, but the latter suggests that there is an all-engrossing wave of Civic-ization, which is halted for some due to their organizationed-ness. In other words, while the first tentative result suggested that Civic-ization concerned only a *preceding portion* of Atatürkists (preceding in the sense that the the emergence of the *portion* happens before their becoming Civic, outside Civic-ization), the latter suggests that Atatürkism itself is being Civic-ized, but the contingent dynamic of organizationedness stops it, thus *ending up* in the Civic-ization of a *portion.* Therefore, the first result implies that what precedes is the *portion,* i.e. only a chosen *portion* is becoming Civic-ized; while the second result implies that what precedes is the Civic-ization, being able to be realized only in a *portion,* due to the matter of organizations. Regarding this, there was no indication in the field as to what the *reason* of this might be and whether the *portion* preceded or succeded Civic-ization. These are two possibilities for such *split.* Such reason could be exposed in a further study about the nature of organizations, and the attribute of being organizationed or not, one which concerns the recent history of politics in Turkey. Thus, in other words, whether the preceding phenomenon is the *portion itself* or the Civic-ization itself could be the topic of another study.

This picture points to a result concerning hyperpoliticization as well. It could be seen that the organizationed Atatürkists are much more on the active side of *political participation*, while the non-organizationed show exactly the characteristics of hyperpoliticization, what I deem *engaged, instead of participating*. While the organizationed are attending protests, enter into political frameworks and assume some kind of an agency about change, the non-organizationed do not show such qualities, being passionately engaged with politics while nonetheless refraining from any sort of action, distancing themselves from any possibility of agency in terms of

politics and change. *Although the organizationed are not hyperpoliticized per se, the Post-Political logic is observed to be inscribed in both sides of the sample.* Consensus, the desire towards the foreclosure of antagonisms, the limited horizons of radical imagination, and the substition of the political with the rational (configuration of politics in accordance with reason) and the economic (technocratic management of economy and politics, and the reducing of political configurations into economic ones) are apparent in both categories of the sample[127].

Therefore, in my analysis, I will be treating the *split sample* separately, when such an indication is needed. Even though there are such commonalities that will be handled in concert, I will specifically be indicating whether the interviewee is an organizationed or non-organizationed Atatürkist.

4.1. Three Levels of Analysis

Even though the Laclauian Discourse Analysis to be employed in the field study was laid down in Chapter 1.5., it is required that an explanation be made concerning the three levels of analysis. My designation for the tripartite structure in the presentation of the analysis is due to my understanding that there are different linguistic formations under which the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism is founded. While some facets of it rely on simple articulations around a nodal point (i.e. Freudian condensation in reverse), some concern the binaries around which the discourse functions (the strict entanglement of two signifiers that constantly refer to each other rather than a nodal point in the discourse, and are inter-discoursal), and some concern the substitution of certain categories within the discourse of Civic Atatürkism itself (i.e. Freudian displacement).

The first level concerns the positions and functions of various signifiers within the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. In other words, what this first level is to present is the hegemonic signifiers, i.e. the nodal points, in the said discourse and the chains of signification they quilt. This level seeks to observe both the *possibility* of articulation under the *nodal point,* and the character of it. In other words, what will be analyzed is

---

[127] The organizationed do not necessarily display the substitution of the political with the aesthetic, due to their privileging of ideology over lifestyle.

exactly the *quilting* of certain other signifiers (or signifieds, in the sense of a chain of signification) in one signifier, in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. This is quite similar to Freudian *condensation,* where various forms are singularized into one entity. However, the *nodal point* precisely reverses the condensation, the singularity is not a combination, fusion or a merger of a handful of entities, but that the condensed signifier, i.e. the nodal point, *allows* signification, it enables articulation.

The second level analyzes the signifiers which are *entangled*[128] into each other. Karen Barad suggests that "to be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as

---

[128] In my use of *entanglement*, I am very ambiguously, tentatively and gently referring to *quantum entanglement*, a sub-atomic phenomenon handled in quantum mechanics. Although what I designate in *entanglements* is, without question, *same* with that of Derridean binaries and *différance* [the dual character of "differing/deferring" (Derrida, 1997, p. 23), "delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour, postponement, reserving" (Derrida, 1981, p. 8), what I call constantly referring back to each other], I am emphasizing the issue of *expression* with regards to the articulation of those binaries. Derrida presupposes that the so-called "meaning" is constituted by a tissue of differences, and the resulting texts gain their meaning due to the *trace* it contains of other texts (1981, p. 33). However, the foundational *différance* for Derrida precedes expression. "It already differs (from itself) before any act of expression" (1981, p. 33). This is especially the case for metaphysical oppositions. Therefore, there is a "violent hierarchy", asserts Derrida, in which "one of the terms governs the other" (1981, p. 41). The task of deconstruction, thus, becomes "to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment" (1981, p. 41). Entanglement offers a close but different path here. In its rejection and later disprovement of EPR's "hidden reality model", which suggests that entangled particles hide pre-given values before their disentanglement (Einstein, Podolsky & Rosen, 1935), entanglement suggests that while there is an oppositional interconnection between two entangled particles, the "values" of each are not given before their measurement. Thus, an opposite relationship between those particles are posited, but the "direction", so as to say, of the opposition, or the opposite values to be assigned to both are not given before their uncovering. In conclusion, the entanglement is observed to be "deconstructing" itself at all times, while preserving the *a priori* character (*a priori* in the sense that even though there might be an originary discourse, the entanglement is non-local and moves in an inter-discoursal fashion, above the discourses themselves) of opposition nonetheless. Rancière, talking about oppositions like appearance/reality, activity/passivity etc., suggests that although they do presuppose an *a priori* distribution of the sensible and capacities afforded to both, "we can change the value of the terms, transform a 'good' term into a 'bad' one vice versa, without altering the functioning of the opposition itself" (Rancière, 2009, p. 12). Thus, the binaries covered here differ slightly from Derridean metaphysical oppositions with a pre-given hierarchy. Although the two signifiers in entanglement are intricately connected in opposition, the values to be assigned to each and the direction of the hierarchy differs in each expression. For example, there are two common statements in Civic Atatürkist discourse that reveal this entanglement. While the Civic Atatürkist posits itself opposite the "villager", revealed in such statements as "*my vote is not the same with that of the villager*" (*köylüyle benim oyum bir mi?*), the same signifier "floats", in the Laclauian sense, into another common statement of Atatürk's, that "*the villager is the master of the nation*" (*köylü milletin efendisidir*). Thus, although the values of the signifier of *villager* and *nation* (*Civic Atatürkist*) changes, the opposition (that they are always posited against each other, always to gain opposite values) stays the same. Therefore, this is different from a floating signifier, in that the float always occurs between the two entangled signifiers, villager and the Civic Atatürkist here, also observed to be in the superposition of secular/modern/contemporary versus bigoted/reactionary/religious. Thus, the float occurs in the expression within the demarcations of the contingent opposition of these entangled signifiers. Since this is not that much different from Derridean oppositions, entanglement could be read simply as *binary opposition,* and the result will be the same. Thus, I will not expound on *entanglement* in the following parts of the thesis but will leave it at that,

in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence" (Barad, 2007, p. ix). Thus, by entanglement, I am simply speaking of the *binaries* that emerge, or are functionalized, in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. These are slightly different from those articulations in the first level, in that there is a dualistic structure present in entanglements. These are signifiers that are seen to be in a continuous opposition, which is of a contingent character (in the sense that the opposition is not conceptual nor logical)[129]. Thus, a different form of treatment and presentation is required in order to handle the dualistic structure properly. *Entanglement* that is spoken of in the text could very-well be read as *binary* or *opposition,* since the matter is quite the same.

The third level of analysis, namely, substitutions, precisely aims to reveal the Post-Political *inscription* present in the hyperpoliticized mode of subjective politicization. This substitution is quite similar to Freudian *displacement,* in that various forms are disqualified and *replaced* with others, or appear in the guise of other forms. The exact object of displacement in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism is the displacement of *the political* with other categories. I believe this is precisely how *Post-Political overdetermination* or *inscription* operates. As established above in Chapter 2, Žižek argues that the Post-Political *condition* "no longer merely 'represses' the political ... but much more effectively 'forecloses' it" (Žižek, 2000, p. 198). It is argued in this thesis that this *foreclosure* is observed to take place exactly through the *displacement* of the political. The reconfiguration of the political through three different axes, namely the rational, the economic and the aesthetic, is where the *Post-Political overdetermination* is to be found. Although Post-Political characteristics could be said to be apparent in all three levels of analysis, the substitution of the political with other categories is exactly the site where the said overdetermination takes place. Here, *the political* is seen to be displaced and replaced by some other categories, or modes of appearance.

---

and will use it interchangeably with binary opposition. For more on quantum entanglement, see Einstein, Podolsky & Rosen, 1935; Schrödinger, 1935; Barad, 2007; Aczel, 2001; Horodecki et al., 2009; Rosenblum & Kuttner, 2006.

[129] It could be claimed that there is no conceptual or logical opposition to begin with (in the sense of the impossibility of an extra-discursive, non-articulated, non-mediated existence), and that what seems to be purely logical oppositions are only strong contingent entanglements, as even the most logical of differentialities was shown to be "*synthetic* a priori" in the past.

4.2. Articulations: Nodal points in Civic Atatürkism

This sub-chapter will present the analyses of the *nodal points* in Civic Atatürkism under several parts. Although a somewhat complete analysis of *hyperpoliticized Post-Politics* is present here, different linguistic formations will be handled separately in the subchapters below.

4.2.1. Atatürk as *Das Ding/jouissance*: The lack in the Other

Lacan, in his 1959-1960 seminar, upon his reading of Freud, makes a distinction between the German words *die Sache* and *das Ding.* Building upon Freud's opposition between *Wortvorstellungen (world-presentations)* and *Sachvorstellungen (thing-presentations)*, Lacan points out the fact that Freud does not use the word *das Ding,* which is another word for "thing" in German, and asks why Freud talks about *Sachvorstellungen* instead of *Dingvorstellungen.* Thus, he turns Freud's opposition around and states the obviousness of the relationship between *Wortvorstellungen* and *Sachvorstellungen,* since "the word", he argues, is obviously linked to "the thing" (Lacan, 1997, pp. 44-45). He designates *die Sache* as "the thing, a product of industry and of human action as governed by language" (1997, p. 45), and thus suggests that "*Sache* and *Wort* are, therefore, closely linked; they form a couple" (p. 45), they operate within the symbolic. *Das Ding,* however, Lacan asserts, operates at a different level. "The world of our experience, the Freudian world, assumes that it is this object, *das Ding,* as the absolute Other of the subject, that one is supposed to find again", argues Lacan (p. 52). It is that which is the "beyond-of-the-signified" (p. 54), the thing in its "dumb reality" (p. 55), in the sense that it is impossible for it to be introduced into the symbolic as it is in its uninterrupted state of *jouissance.* Nonetheless, *das Ding* introduces itself into the symbolic *through its very lack,* argues Lacan. "It is around *das Ding* that the whole adaptive development revolves, a development that is so specific to man insofar as the symbolic process reveals itself to be inextricably woven into it" (p. 57). It is at the very center of the symbolic, but only in the sense that it is excluded, never to be reached (p. 71). It is towards which the subject is always bound to turn, the "search for a privileged state, for a desired state" (p. 63), but never be able

to find. *Das Ding* thus, is "an incarnation of the impossible *jouissance*" (Žižek, 2008, p. 146) around which the symbolic is structured. "The symbolic order is striving for a homeostatic balance, but there is in its kernel, at its very centre, some strange, traumatic element which cannot be symbolized, integrated into the symbolic order" (Žižek, 2008, p. 147). The symbolic order, therefore, the site of "existence" of the subject, comes to be marked by a *lack* within its very functioning. The Other, thus, synonymous with the symbolic order, is the "locus" of speech (Lacan, 1989, p. 106), "not where speech is uttered, but where it takes on the value of speech" (Lacan, 2008, p. 37) operates upon presence of the *lack* of *jouissance,* an "absent fullness" in Laclau's terms (Laclau, 2005). The Other, thus, that which is wholly foreign to the subject (Homer, 2005, p. 70), as that which *speaks through* the subject, what Žižek calls "the second nature of every speaking being" (2007, p. 8) is constituted around a *fundamental loss,* even before the subject's entrance to it.

"The father of Turks", "the perpetual ancestor", "the great leader" are only some of the descriptions used for Mustafa Kemal. Karpat notes that the name Mustafa Kemal Atatürk literally translates into "the chosen, the perfect, the father of Turks" (Karpat, 1985, p. 895). Along with this *metaphorical* character of a father, in popular discourse, it is quite common to see Atatürk depicted as a *literal* father figure. Falih Rıfkı Atay, for example, in his book *Babanız Atatürk [Your Father Atatürk],* literally posits Atatürk as a "third parent", in parallel with biological parents, that "without him, you would be left homeless and without freedom" (Atay, 2012, p. 6). In the imagery of Atatürkism/Kemalism, Mustafa Kemal is usually said to be posited as an omnipotent, superhuman entity (Ünder, 2021; Bora, 2017). Esra Özyürek points to the tradition of capitalizing the first letter of phrases that refer to Atatürk, in that "this practice marks his superiority to all other human beings, implying his omnipotence and omnipresence" (Özyürek, 2006, p. 193). Ünder suggests that this omnipotence sometimes resembles the depiction of Atatürk close to Superman (Ünder, 2021, p. 138)[130].

Bülent Somay (2014) analyzes the relationship between the founder of the Republic and his image as the Father. He interprets the process towards modernity and the

---

[130] See Bektan, 1998, for a depiction of Mustafa Kemal that is quite superhero-ic.

transition to modern nation-states as one of killing the "primordial Father". He suggests that this passage to modernity required the emergence of a new father figure in order to anchor an ego-ideal for the "modernizing" societies. While the European/Western transition towards modernity (which was not a "modernization", just a "neutral" historical development)[131] gave birth to transitional father figures who could only occupy their place for a given period, the Oriental transition towards modernity was a much rockier one than the Occidental (Somay, 2014, pp. 141-142). "Both capitalism and nationhood were *imported* in these [Oriental] cultures, without the gradual development of a civil or bourgeois society" (Somay, 2014, p. 141). The Ottoman Empire having already lost the father figure (and *phallus*, we might add) with the advancement of the West in economic and political matters,

> the Turkish nation-in-the-making also necessitated such a figure, and it was precisely this role Mustafa Kemal intended to play. It was four years after the successful conclusion of the 'National Liberation Struggle', when the Sultanate and the Caliphate were abolished, the Republic was declared and a new mass of citizenry was in formation complete with a new body image, language and way of life, that Mustafa Kemal started to establish himself as the new 'Father of the Nation' (Somay, 2014, p. 142).

He puts forward that Mustafa Kemal solidified this role by declaring himself the "sole possessor of *jouissance*" (Somay, 2014, p. 147), and suggests that the image of "the omnipresent" marked the difference between Mustafa Kemal and the Ottoman Sultan. While the Sultan, says Somay, was rarely seen, had no statues and no portraits that was available to the public, Mustafa Kemal's omnipresence was literally engraved by his many statues and pictures in public places: "The new Father was omnipresent, watching everyone, all the time, everywhere" (Somay, 2014, p. 148).

The *loss* of Atatürk as a Father, as the "sole possessor of *jouissance*" signifies the irreplacable *lack* that constitutes the Atatürkist symbolic. A poem by Vehbi Cem Aşkın portrays this perfectly: "My father [Atatürk] is gone/What will I do without a father/Let my heart burn/and my eyes rain/I am a soft wind/I spring like floods/My father is gone/I cry day and night"[132] (As cited in Aslan, 1999, p. 76). İzzet Ulvi Aykut,

---

[131] See Somay, 2014, p. 10 for the difference betwen the "modernization" processes of the West and the East. Somay puts forward, rightfully so, that "modernity" as the *telos* was established after the advent of capitalism and modernity in the West, as a model for the East.

as well, states this *lack* with the *loss* of Atatürk as: "There is a chasm in our souls, there is a lack, a gap in everything and everywhere/O Atatürk, hope, joy, sun, turns out you are everything"[133] (As cited in Aslan, 1999, p. 81). The 1923-1938 era is quite often used to describe a state of *jouissance,* that lost era of "wholeness", an era of perfection without such constitutive *lack.* Thus, it is no surprise that there is a desire in the Atatürkist discourse to go back to that lost *jouissance* (See Meydan, 2017). The image of Atatürk has some sort of a "sacred" quality in the discourse of Atatürkism, and Atatürk is described as someone to which the citizens of Turkey are "forever indebted". Atatürk is seen to be always asked to "come back", and restore the *jouissance* that "once was" in his lifetime (See Velidedeoğlu, 1963). Tanıl Bora suggests that there is almost a "religious" aspect to this sacralization, where Atatürk is depicted as a prophet at times (Bora, 2017, pp. 121-122). In fact, Şeref Aykut, in his book *Kamâlizm,* written in 1936, defines Kemalism as a religion (Aykut, 1936, p. 15). More than that, in popular discourse and poems about Mustafa Kemal, it is seen that the depiction goes as far to suggest that Atatürk is a God (See Aslan, 1999, pp. 59-67). This sacred quality is usually discussed in the literature in terms of a "cult of personality" (See Zürcher, 2012; Glyptis, 2008; Bora, 2017). In this field study, I will be operationalizing *jouissance* as "sacralization". While many traces of this sacralization, which was seen to be present in Atatürkist/Kemalist discourse above, was found in the field study, it must be asserted that there were two co-existing tendencies that could be said to be present in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. While one, especially around the image of *Anıtkabir,* the grave of Mustafa Kemal, tended to *sacralize* Atatürk, and assign him certain metaphysical characteristics, there was also a more "*realistic*" attitude, one that acknowledged the mistakes and faults of Mustafa Kemal. These tendencies were usually observed to be functioning in harmony, with a varying mixture characteristic to each interviewee. It is no surprise, thus, along the first tendency, hearing the interviewees talk about Atatürk almost as a metaphysical entity. "When I was a kid, I thought Atatürk was God, and I don't think this has changed for me even now, as an adult"[134] (Tülay), one interviewee proclaims. Atatürk

---

[132] "Atam gitti giderim/Ben Atasız niderim/Ellemen yansın yürek/Kurumasın gözlerim/Belirsiz bir rüzgarım/Seller gibi çağlarım/Atam gitti, ardından/Gece gündüz ağlarım"

[133] Ruhumuzda bir uçurum, her yerde, her şeyde bir eksiklik, bir boşluk var/Ah Atatürk, umut, neşe, güneş, her şey, meğer ki hep sen imişsin"

is posited as a "father figure, for everyone"[135] (Selva) in such a way that even though "everyone is not expected to be an Atatürkist, everyone is expected to love him"[136] (Sumru). Leylek even explicitly states, "Atatürk is sacred"[137] (Leylek), in discussing his legitimizing power. In the interviews, *Anıtkabir* was precisely seen to be the signifier that allowed such tendency of sacralization. The chain of signification around *Anıtkabir* usually led to similar accounts about Atatürk, a tendency that was observed to be quite coherent throughout the interviews. The yearly visit (sometimes more than once) to what Bozdoğan calls "the 'holiest' site of modern Turkey" (Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 282) is described in terms of a required pilgrimage.

> I go there every year, in order to visit. I feel like I am... Visiting... It is similar to the feeling of necessity to visit the elder members of your family in holidays. Quite like such an instinct. It is just prove to myself that I went there this year. I have an instinct to go there, to visit.[138] (Ayşe)

> When I am going to Anıtkabir... I mean I don't know... Last year, for example, when I was going to party demonstrations in May, you go with excitement, with enthusiasm, with a political attitude. Anıtkabir has a similar thing too, when you're walking past it, you get a feeling. There is a different feeling, for me at least.[139] (Tülay)

> I think it is an established tradition at this point. Going to Anıtkabir, whether it is April 23, whether October 29, whether November 10... I consider going there to stand in silence before Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, to show him our gratitude, a big sacrifice. We show our gratitude to him there[140] (Roni)

---

[134] "Ben küçükken Allah'ı Atatürk sanıyordum. Yani şu anda da çok değiştiğini benim için çok sanmıyorum" (Tülay)

[135] "Atatürk biraz gerçekten baba figürü gibi. Aslında bence çoğu kişi için öyle" (Selva)

[136] "Yani Atatürkçü olmayan birisine hiçbir şey demem, sonuçta herkes olmak zorunda değil, ama mesela Atatürk'ü Türkiye'deki herkes sevmek zorunda diye görüyorum" (Sumru)

[137] "Atatürk bir kutsal" (Leylek)

[138] "Ama yani her yıl giderim zaten… Ziyaret amaçlı. Yani sanki böyle kendimi... Böyle ziyaret... Hani bayramlarda büyükleri ziyaret etmek, kendine ödev bilinir ya böyle. Sanki öyle bir içgüdüyle... Hani gideyim, bu yıl hiç gitmedim olmasın hani... Bir ziyaret amaçlı bir gitme içgüdüsü hissediyorum." (Ayşe)

[139] "Anıtkabir'e giderken... Yani ister istemez... Ne bileyim geçen sene, yani Mayıs ayındaki o mitinglerde bile giderken böyle insan bir heyecan, coşkuyla gidiyor, politik şeyle gidiyor. Şimdi Anıtkabir'in, oradan geçerken bile insanın içinde bir his oluyor. Yani benim en azından içinde değişik bir his oluyor." (Tülay)

[140] "Daha çok artık oturmuş bir kültür gibi galiba. Yani 23 Nisan'da olsun, 29 Ekim'de olsun, 10 Kasım'da olsun Anıtkabir'e gitmek, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'e karşı saygı duruşunda bulunmak falan,

Similar accounts about "the visit" were given by almost all the interviewees. The visit was described as an act of gratitude, respect and sacrifice for the savior of the nation. It was observed in the interviews that the existence and survival of the nation was directly related to the sacrifice of Atatürk; therefore, the visit was posited as a corresponding sacrifice by the nation in return for that of Atatürk. There is, thus, a *linear relationship* between the past and the present at play here.

Even though most of the interviewees strongly expressed their complaints about the present, when the linearity is established vis-à-vis Atatürk, the complaints are observed to fade away. This is most perfectly crystallized in Ayşe and Timuçin's explanations. At the beginning of the interviews, when asked about why they felt compelled to visit *Anıtkabir* at least once a year, both quickly establish a linear relationship between their present conditions and Atatürk. In this relationship, the present is imagined to be a state of peace and comfort:

> If we are able to live in peace today, if the ladies, for example, can live in comfort in these times it is because of him[141] (Timuçin)

> Atatürk... He is the reason we could achive all this today[142] (Ayşe)

However, just a couple of minutes after these explanations, when asked about the current atmosphere of Turkey, the linearity breaks down into a complex set of conditions. Both Ayşe and Timuçin's imaginations of the present become the exact opposite of their previous descriptions. Rather than conditions of peace and comfort, the present is immediately devalorized, drawn up in a different image, embedded with economic crises, political turbulence and ambiguous paths concerning their lives:

> Turkey is not an Atatürkist country today. I mean, it partially is. Half of it is, the other half not. If it were so, we would not be in this condition today[143] (Timuçin)

---

ona olan minnettarlığımızı göstermek adına orada toplanmamızı, bence, büyük bir fedakarlık olarak değerlendiriyorum. Ona karşı minnettarlığımızı orada sunuyoruz" (Roni)

[141] "Bu devirde rahat yaşayabiliyorsak, bayanlar mesela, bu devirde rahat yaşayabiliyorsa sırf onun yüzünden" (Timuçin)

[142] "Atatürk... Şu anki duruma gelmemizin sebebi aslında..." (Ayşe)

I think we sort of... Went backwards... After Atatürk, as the years went by, we went backwards a little bit[144] (Ayşe)

This double-image was found to be the case for most interviewees, and is the exact point where the other tendency was observed to begin. With the suspension of the signifier of *Anıtkabir,* the counter-tendency of the "realistic" attitude was observed to take place. Therefore, it is seen to be the signifier of *Anıtkabir* itself that allowed the tendency of sacralization in the first place. The "*realistic*" attitude, as the second of the aforementioned co-existing tendencies in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism, focused on the mistakes of Mustafa Kemal, and there was a strict emphasis against the over-sacralization of him. Güntan even instrumentalizes a word-play, in order to distinguish his "realistic" stance from others. He uses the term *Ataputçu*[145] to denote and degrade those who he claims "worship" Atatürk:

Ataputçu is... Those who worship Atatürk in a sense. I mean you can worship him, it's your thing, but... That guy we mentioned, for example, is always pretending on Twitter like Atatürk is flawless, like Atatürk is a god, but everyone has flaws, Atatürk must have had some flaws as well[146] (Güntan)

I mean, of course he had certain mistakes... A lot of... Executions for example... It does not matter whether it is right or wrong, I don't know, but nonetheless it is not normal[147] (Güntan).

In this respect, Atatürk is a human- Mustafa Kemal is a human too. He may have mistakes. Maybe I am not quite aware of these due to my education and life experience, but I am not for the idea that anyone, not only Atatürk, could be one hundred per cent right[148] (Ümit)

---

[143] "Türkiye Atatürkçü değil. Kısmen yani, yarı kesim öyle yarı kesim böyle. Eğer öyle olsaydı biz bu hallere düşmezdik ya" (Timuçin)

[144] "Ama biz, hani, aslında birazcık... Atatürk'ten sonra da yıllar geçtikçe de, birazcık daha geriledik bana kalırsa" (Ayşe)

[145] Somewhat translatable as *Atafetishist.*

[146] "Ya Ataputçu şey işte, hani... Atatürk'e tapıyor resmen. Hani tapadabilir tabii ki, kendi şeyi ama, mesela... O adam mesela twitlerinde her zaman Atatürk sanki kusursuz bir varlıkmış, tanrıymış gibi davranıyor ama herkesin illa kusurları olmuştur, Atatürk'ün de kusurları olmuştur" (Güntan)

[147] "Yanlış yaptığı şeyler olmuştur, mesela çok fazla, işte... İnsan asmalar... Yani sonuçta haklı veya haksız, bilmiyorum ama, normal bir şey değil baktığımız zaman" (Güntan)

[148] "Bu anlamda, Atatürk de bir insan- Mustafa Kemal de bir insan. Hataları olabilir. Şu an belki, ben kendi eğitim, okuma ve hayat tecrübesiyle bunların farkında değilim, ama herhangi bir insanın yüzde yüz doğru olduğu fikri Atatürk dışında da çok sıcak baktığım bir yaklaşım değil" (Ümit)

Ümit's immediate preference of the name Mustafa Kemal over Atatürk is exemplary here. At the exact moment the "humanization" of Atatürk begins, Ümit halts his speech and corrects himself by saying Mustafa Kemal instead of Atatürk. Thus, the co-existing tendencies of sacralization and realism could be said to be functioning with the exchange of the signifiers here. *Since Atatürk is an object of sacralization, the mistakes are to be referred to another signifier, namely, Mustafa Kemal.* The interviewees generally claimed that they were indifferent to the use of various names for Mustafa Kemal, be it *Gazi,* be it *Atatürk,* or be it *Mustafa Kemal*. However, it is clear that the choice of a particular name *does* indicate differing significations, as seen in Ümit's immediate correction. It is interesting to note at this point that Neo-Kemalist discourse attaches the signifier of *Anıtkabir* precisely to Civic Atatürkism, in order to scorn its character of lifestyle over ideology. In his strict preference of Kemalism over Atatürkism, Zarif, one of the interviewees who belonged to ADT, argues:

> Those who claim that they are Atatürkists and that they do not adopt Kemalism are contradicting themselves, in my opinion. Because as I said, Atatürkism is formed around the figure of a hero. You can't have your way by saying I am going to Anıtkabir on November 10, I am celebrating national holidays, I am secular, I am democratic etc. Gazi Mustafa Kemal gives me a duty in his Bursa speech. He says the Turkish youth is the owner and protector of the revolutions. And when those are in jeopardy, the youth, without relying on the police and the army of the country, will do all it could in order to defend them, whether it be with a stone, with a stick, or with a gun. With Atatürk's words clear as day, I can't understand how someone can overlook the struggle aspect of this, and be a wardrobe Atatürkist[149] (Zarif)

As a final point, Atatürk was seen to be a big influence of the everyday life of most of the interviewees. The interviewees were observed to be viewing Atatürk as not only a leader from the past, but also a guide for the present, a source of hope that concerns their everyday lives. In that sense, in accordance with the privileging of lifestyle over ideology, which is to be explained in detail below, the signifier of Atatürk was

---

[149] "Zaten ben Atatürkçüyüm, Kemalizmi benimsemiyorum diyen bir insan kendiyle çelişiyordur benim gözümde. Çünkü dediğim gibi Atatürkçülük bir kahraman figür etrafında gelişen bir şey. İşte bu 10 Kasım'da Anıtkabir'e gidiyorum, milli bayramları kutluyorum, işte laikim, demokratiğim ve saire demeyle olmaz. Gazi Mustafa Kemal bana Bursa nutkunda bir görev veriyor. Yani Türk genci cumhuriyetin ve devrimlerin sahibi ve bekçisidir diyor. Ve bunlara yönelik en ufak bir tehditte, bu ülkenin polisi vardır, işte askeri vardır ve saire demeden elinde taşla, sopayla, silahla nesi varsa bunları savunmak için elinden geleni yapacaktır diyor. Ve halihazırda böyle bir şey denmişken ben nasıl hani mücadele etme kısmını kenara ayırıp sadece işte, belki o gardrop Atatürkçülüğü kavramına bürünebilirim..." (Zarif)

observed to be functioning as constitutive of the various lifestyles of the participants. Thus, the image of Atatürk is observed to be losing its political character in this influence. It is not an influence in the sense that Zarif talks about, one that concerns the political actions of the Atatürkists, as exemplified above, but an "emptier", more ambiguous influence, one that pertains to everyday actions and personal traits of Atatürkists. For example, Sumru's words are illuminating of this:

> But in terms of Atatürkism, when I am hopeless, I tell myself that I cannot be hopeless, because Atatürk says one should not be hopeless. I lead my life in accordance with this. I see Atatürkism just like that.[150] (Sumru)

4.2.2. Atatürk as a metapolitical figure

Atatürk's designation as a metapolitical figure is not surprising coming from the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism, since it was present in the discourse *on* it as well, if one recalls the fifth argument of the literature laid down in Chapter 3.3.3.. Moreover, Tanıl Bora suggests that Atatürkism is designated specifically as a "system of thought … in order to be posited as a meta-ideological, objective method that renders ideologies meaningless" (Bora, 2017, p. 174), and this "has a depoliticizing function that pushes all political currents towards the same center" (İnsel, 2021, p. 27). In the general framework of the study, it was observed that almost all interviewees posited Atatürk *outside* politics[151]. Atatürk was quite generally observed to be a metapolitical entity; nevertheless, the exact political ontology and phenomenology of this metapolitics took different forms. The *outside* of politics was never posited to be an *outside* as such, but took on competing formulations and conceptualizations, most especially regarding the spatiality of the realm of metapolitics. In other words, there were distinct pictures of where that *outside* may be, and these all carry crucial traces regarding the interviewees' understanding of the *inside* as well. To begin with, some of the interviewees contended that Atatürk and politics were necessarily external, and that Atatürk was undoubtedly *beyond* politics. In this first description, it is clear that two

---

[150] "Ama Atatürkçülük olduğunda mesela, işte, umutsuzluk konusunda umutsuz olamam diyorum, çünkü Atatürk umutsuz olunmaması gerektiğini söylüyor, diyorum mesela kendime. Biraz daha hayatımdaki yolu ona göre çiziyorum. Atatürkçülüğü öyle görüyorum." (Sumru)

[151] Thus, revealing their understanding of politics as a *site* or *area* as well, with some elements that are inside, and some others that are outside, both in the sense of *exclusion* and *transcendence.*

fundamentally different realms emerge from within the account of the interviewees: The realm of politics and the *beyond*, the realm of metapolitics. In such scheme, politics is obviously relegated to an inferior realm, spatially upon which stand certain "non-politicizable" things (thus indicating a separation between the *ontics* of the two realms), such as "national values", "the constitution", and "Atatürk". Güntan's use of *beyond* is a good example of this first understanding:

> In terms of paying respect to and loving Atatürk... I think this is something which cannot be discussed upon, and I think Atatürk is something beyond politics. I think he is someone you can't make politics upon[152] (Güntan)

> What I understand from Atatürkism is, as I said, concerns love and respect. It's not about a political dimension. I actually think Atatürk should not be defended on political grounds, because he is a value of this country[153] (Güntan)

It is clear that Güntan seeks to keep Atatürk *out of* politics. His designation of the political and the metapolitical realms are found to be *necessarily excluding*, and the functioning of Atatürk within the political realm is designated to be conductable only through love and respect. As an alternative political ontology, second, the *outside* of politics was observed to be characterized in terms of the *ground* of politics. This is different from the *beyond* of politics, in the sense that in the former, no contact between politics and its *beyond* was allowed. Not only was the universe *ontologically split* in two strict realms of politics and metapolitics, their *ontic content* were seen to be pre-assigned as well, with an already-given hierarchical privilege of the metapolitical ones over the political ones. Atatürk was found to belong to that very *beyond,* the other realm strictly separated from politics. Such separation is made on the grounds of "preserving" Atatürk, declaring an "unquestionability" on the side of Atatürkist tenets or the love for Atatürk; nonetheless, in designating the unquestionability of Atatürkist tenets, the first approach also effectively shuts down any possibility of Atatürk functioning within the political realm. Thus, metapoliticization in the first approach

---

[152] "Atatürk'e saygı, sevgi gösterme konusunda bunun... Tartışılmaması gereken bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorum ve Atatürk'ün siyasi üstü bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorum. Hani siyaset yapılmaması gereken kişi olduğunu düşünüyorum, Atatürk üzerinden." (Güntan)

[153] Ya benim Atatürkçülükten anlayışım, dediğim gibi, sevgi ve saygı çerçevesinde, hani daha siyasi bir boyutu olarak değil de, zaten en çok siyasi diyip savunulmaması gerektiğini düşünüyorum Atatürk'ün. Sonuçta yani bu ülkenin bir değeri" (Güntan)

also leads to the strict exclusion of the metapolitical elements from the realm of politics. In this second conceptualization as the *ground* of politics, no longer are politics and metapolitics separated as two horizontally opposing realms, but *politics itself* is vertically divided within itself, between its own *ontological* and *ontic* levels.

This understanding posits the metapolitical as the ontological, the constitutive ground of politics and *politeia*. Thus, the relationship is not a matter of *transcendence* and *exclusion* as it was in the first approach, but one of *constitution*. While the former was mainly built on a negative framework, i.e. the relationship of negation between Atatürk and politics, this second understanding of metapolitics functions on a positive framework, i.e. the constitution of the space of politics along the lines of the metapolitical.

In conclusion, the vertical divide within politics does still privilege the metapolitical over the political, but does not any longer establish a relationship of exclusion between the two realms. The *ground,* the metapolitical, is designated to be the very constitutive realm of politics. When one pays attention to Ayşe's words *idol* and *path,* her reversal from the almost-uttered *ideology*, and her amazement over why there exists people who don't adopt Atatürkism, such an understanding could be easily exposed:

> I see both Atatürk and Atatürkism as a national value... [Atatürk] must be an idol for us. Or... For example, let us assume that you are establishing a party or an ideolog- you are establishing something political. You can view him as an idol. Or in the decisions you are going to make... He must be seen as a path to follow[154] (Ayşe)

> I don't get why people don't adopt Atatürk's tenets. Whichever of Atatürk's tenets contain elements that would do evil to us, or that would be the opposite of what we are? I am thinking about why people would not want to adopt his tenets... I mean that's what I think, for the reason for adoption... Is there someting really controversial? Does it benefit only one group? Of course there is not such a thing. As I'd said, nationalism, contemporaneity, something that defends these... Why wouldn't parties adopt this approach?[155] (Ayşe)

---

[154] Milli bir değer olarak görüyorum ben Atatürkçülüğü de, Atatürk'ü de... İdol olmalı bence. Veya... Atıyorum, bir parti kurulacak veya bir ideoloj- bir şey kuracaksın siyasi. Hani bunu da… İdolün olarak görülebilir. Veya hani yapacağın, alacağın kararlarda... Hani izleyeceğin bir yol olarak görülmeli. (Ayşe)

[155] "Atatürk'ün benimsediği ilkelerden hangisi böyle çok bizim zıttımıza ve kötü olacak bir karar içeriyor da benimsenmiyor... Ben bunu düşünüyorum, yani hani benimseme sebebi… Çok aykırı bir

This is obviously different from that of Güntan, established above. As laid down above, Güntan was drawing up a bold border between the political and the metapolitical, without any possibility of interrelation between the two; Ayşe, however, is indicating a *constitutivity* of the political *through* the metapolitical. This is quite clearly expressed in her suggestion that if one is to "establish something political", they "must follow Atatürk/ism as a path", and her assertion of "how could someone possibly reject these political values". These two competing conceptualizations of the metapolitical, those of Güntan and Ayşe, i.e. the *beyond* and the *ground*, I assert, give us a *shared* account with regards to the position of Atatürk in a metapolitical space; however, their *difference begins* at the ontico-ontological configuration of the metapolitical space. Thus, although it agrees on the metapoliticality of Atatürk, there are two designations of the metapolitical in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism.

Therefore, on the one hand, although the exact form of where metapolitics lies differs, Atatürk is seen to be assigned a position within the realm of metapolitics; however, on the other hand, the very ontological configuration assigns different roles to Atatürk. While the former seeks to shut down any possibility of a relationship between Atatürk and politics, the latter seeks to build up politics along the lines of Atatürk. There is one more quite similar function of Atatürk which was found to be quite common within the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism, that could be naturally related to the first two: Namely, Atatürk's functioning as a figure of Consensus.

4.2.3. Atatürk as a figure of Consensus

This is quite close to the conceptualization of Atatürk as a metaphysical entity and a metapolitical entity. However, this one has much stronger implications regarding Post-Politics. As established in Chapter 2, one of the central characteristics of the Post-Political condition was the idea of Consensus. Although this was an issue raised by many interviewees, in that "there is nothing controversial in Atatürkism, that there is nothing that could be objected to in it"[156] (Ümit), and that "Atatürk as the founding

---

şey mi var? Sadece bir grubu mu kayırıyor? Yani öyle bir şey yok. Dediğimiz gibi milliyetçilik, çağdaşlık hani, bunları savunan bir şey... Yani bunları neden benimsemesin ki partiler?" (Ayşe)

[156] "Aslında çok da tartışılabilir şeyler söylemiyor işte. Halkın daha rahat etmesi için, toplumun daha iyi ve rahat yaşaması için birtakım fikirler sunuyor. Bunu… Tabii, nasıl yapılacağına dair tartışmalar olabilir, ama fikir olarak tartışılabilir çok da bir şey yok Atatürkçülükte" (Ümit)

will of the state is a point of legitimacy for many people"[157] (Zeytin), due to him being "the greatest value to come out of Turkey"[158] (Kelebek), I believe one specific interview expresses the idea of Consensus and homogeneity in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism perfectly. Serdar's designation of Atatürkism as a necessary dimension of a political subjectivity, one that cancels out all other identifications, is crucial to understand here. Serdar, at the outset of the interview, explains his dream of what an ideal politics should be, in terms of a *common ground,* a singularity of Consensus around which all can come together, regardless of their accidentalities:

> Here's my dream... I want people... to be able to come together in a group... I want them to be able to find a common ground. I feel like this common ground is being taken away right now[159] (Serdar)

For Serdar, Atatürkism comes into play for the very function of this *common ground,* and provides the isomorphic parallel of it in political terms. He follows:

> If one adheres to the foundational values, the first four articles of the constitution, to the tenets of Atatürk... As long as I know that someone adheres to those, it doesn't matter for me what the economic ideology or the political ideology of someone is[160] (Serdar)

Thus, Atatürkism serves as "the center" that depoliticizes all other politicizations (İnsel, 2021, p. 27), and cancels out all other identifications (in accordance with its character of *emptiness* and logic of equivalence). Nevertheless, the said *common ground* is not observed to be functioning in terms of a voluntary entrance. Serdar

---

[157] Yani çünkü devletin kurucu iradesi. Kurucu iradesini temsil ediyor, tek başına tabii ki Atatürk devletin kurucu iradesi değil ama... Yani nasıl ki Amerika'da, işte atıyorum kimse o kurucu babalar denilen figürlere çok da böyle rahat rahat karşı çıkamıyorsa doğal olarak Türkiye'de de öyle bir durum olduğunu düşünüyorum. O yüzden yani çok rahat işte kendini meşrulaştırabileceğin bir figür Atatürk. Ve yoruma da çok açık olduğu için işte ne bileyim, sol… Kendini sol olarak adlandıranlar bir taraftan tutabiliyor, sağ olarak adlandıranlar bir taraftan tutabiliyor. O yüzden yani kendini meşrulaştırmak istiyorsan aslında, herkesin aklına birinci gelen şey büyük ihtimalle Atatürk." (Zeytin)

[158] "Atatürk, Türkiye'nin çıkarttığı en büyük değer" (Kelebek)

[159] "Tahayyülüm şu, daha… insanların… bir kümede birleşebildiği, yani bir ortak nokta bulabildiği bir şey istiyorum. Şu an insanların elinden bu ortak nokta alınmaya çalışılıyormuş gibi hissediyorum" (Serdar)

[160] "Bu ülkenin kurucu değerlerine, işte anayasanın ilk dört maddesi, Atatürk ilkelerine… bağlı kalınacağını bildiğim sürece, o insanın ekonomik ideolojisi, siyasi ideolojisi benim için önemli değil" (Serdar)

strictly states that the *common ground* is not a point around which people *could* come together, but it is a point that they *must* come together. In other words, the *common ground* is not a point where a logic of heterogeneity functions, but a point where there is a homogenization present:

> I don't think anyone should be able to say something wholly outside of Atatürkism within politics. I mean, if one says something outside of Atatürkism, I don't think that will be for the benefit of Turkey[161] (Serdar)

This homogenization is proven, once again, in its cancelling out of all other axes of one's identity. The various axes are transcended with the homogenization of Atatürkism, and lose their character vis-à-vis the political. This quite perfectly represents the *empty* character of the signifier of Atatürkism, as was developed in Chapter 3 and 3.1., in that the signifier "Atatürkist" cancels out all its articulations, elements and moments, with its equivalential/homogenizing logic. In fact, Laclau argues that this *logic of homogenization* is the *definitive quality of Kemalism*, in that "the internal split inherent in any democratic demand within the equivalential chain collapses; the 'people' loses its internal differentiations, and is reduced to a substantial unity" (Laclau, 2005, p. 208). In Serdar's explanations, the *empty signifier* "*Atatürkist*" cancels out all other signifiers like Kurdish, Alevi, and socialist, and reduces everything into a unified bloc of "Atatürkist":

> It doesn't matter for me if someone is a socialist, as long as they are Atatürkist. Or it doesn't matter whether they are Alevi, Kurdish...[162] (Serdar)

Therefore, in correspondance with Ahmet İnsel's suggestion that Kemalism functions on the "vision of a homogenous society" (İnsel, 2021, p. 23), *the Post-Political idea of Consensus serves perfectly the Atatürkist vision of homogeneity*. Therefore, just like what the literature on Post-Politics reveals, the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism is found to be configuring Consensus as a point of homogenization, on the grounds of an "extra-ideological ideology" that *cancels out all differences*, the entrance to which is not

---

[161] "Siyasette herhangi bir insanın ben Atatürkçülüğün tamamen dışında bir şey söyleyebilmesi gerektiğini düşünmüyorum. Yani, söylerse bunun Türkiye'nin yararına olmayacağını düşünüyorum" (Serdar)

[162] "Atatürkçü olduğu sürece bu insan sosyalist olmasının benim için bir önemi yok. Ya da işte Alevi, Kürtmüş..." (Serdar)

voluntary but rather *imperative*. Atatürkism, as an *empty* signifier, in accordance with its history of being defined in extra-ideological terms fits perfectly the logic of Post-Politics, as a ground of Consensus. This is found to be a requirement for such homogenizing logic, in Laclau's assertion that "the more extended the equivalential tie is, the emptier the signifier unifying that chain will be" (Laclau, 2005, p. 99).

4.2.4. Between *empty* and *floating*: Atatürkism as a mode of politicization

The *empty* and *floating* character of Kemalism/Atatürkism was explained in Chapter 3 and 3.1., through its definition as an *articulatory* practice, the equivalential logic of which cancels out all differences within it, thus making it able to articulate *within* it anything (empty), and be articulated *into* anything (floating). Ünder shows both the *empty* and *floating* characteristics of Atatürkism:

> Today, many individuals and groups with competing political ideas and tendencies are using, and have used in the past, Atatürk's speeches and principles, which has become identical with the regime itself and respected as a national value, in order to legitimize their causes … Everyone can find a phrase, a tendency or a principle in Atatürk, who had a quite flexible, pragmatic view as opposed to other political and economic doctrines, and build up an Atatürkism that fits their purposes (Ünder, 2021, pp. 153-154)

Atatürkism's designation as a mode of politicization takes place at the very *tension* between its *empty* and *floating* characteristics. While some interviewees contend that Atatürkism, in terms of the so-called political spectrum, is someting close to the Left (Zeytin, Leylek, Kelebek, Zarif, Güntan, Tülay, Selva, Roni, Nükhet), some contend that it is closer to the Right (Sumru, Serdar), while others contend that it is in the very center of it (Bülent, Ayşe, Timuçin, Ümit).

There were a handful of "contradicting" characteristics and signifiers associated with Atatürkism throughout the interviews. As an example, while Sumru strongly emphasized that Atatürkism was a branch under Turkism, and that it contained nationalist, even ethnicist tendencies, explained as "one must be a nationalist, a Turkist in order to be an Atatürkist, I think that is what Atatürkism is built upon"[163] (Sumru),

---

[163] Atatürkçünün milliyetçi olması gerekiyor, Türkçü olması gerekiyor, bunun üzerine kurulmuş bir şey bence Atatürkçülük" (Sumru)

Tülay quite strongly rejected such Atatürkism, calling it a right-wing, or even at times, a fascist scheme, relating Atatürkism with socialism, expressed in her words as:

> In the sense that they asked Atatürk, are you going to save the country for these people, and he answered, it is for this very people that I am going to save it. I think I can relate this to socialism. Other than that, I don't know, I think socialism, with respect to the youth in Turkey right now... There are Zafer Party [Victory Party] supporters everywhere and this incredibly bothers me, really. Maybe that's why I relate socialism with Atatürkism, because I see it as the opposite of fascism[164] (Tülay)

Alongside socialism and Turkism, it was observed in the interviews that some participants defined Atatürkism in terms of "social democracy" (Roni), "feminism" (Tülay, Selva), and "republican leftism" (Zeytin). Most of the interviewees were quite conscious of the *empty* and *floating* characters of Atatürkism, in the sense that there was a strong acknowledgement that Atatürkism could be articulated into various, even contradicting, frameworks. This sometimes took the form of "objective observation", but at times functioned similar to Asım Aslan's (and many other Kemalists') complaints about the "float". The interviewees were observed to be acknowledging such character of Kemalism/Atatürkism, and seen to be developing accounts about critiquing such character:

> The cult of Atatürk appeals to everyone today, from those who call themselves Kemalist, to those who identify as liberal, as socialist, as nationalist, as conservative[165] (Kelebek)

> It is a quite subjective matter, actually. Because the tenets of Atatürk could be interpreted in a lot of different ways. People could understand very different things and they can turn it... into different things. Therefore, I don't think Atatürkism could have only one explanation[166] (Bülent)

---

[164] E tabii yani çünkü Atatürk'e de demişler ki sen bu halk için mi kurtaracaksın diyor ya işte. Asıl bu halk için mi kurtaracağım demesi mesela. Sosyalizmle ben bağdaştırabilirim bunu. Bunun dışında başka yani, bilmiyorum, sosyalizmi daha çok şu anki ülkedeki gençlere karşılık.. Yani her yerde Zafer Partililer falan türedi ve inanılmaz bir şekilde beni rahatsız ediyor, gerçekten. Bu yüzden de faşistliğe en çok karşı olarak sosyalizmi düşündüğüm için belki de sosyalizmi bağdaştırıyor olabilirim şu anda (Tülay)

[165] "Atatürk kültü, bugün kendisine Kemalist diyene de, bugün kendisine liberal diyene de, sosyalist diyene de, milliyetçiyim muhafazakarım diyene de, her yere hitap eden bir şey" (Kelebek)

[166] "Öznel, çok öznel bir konu aslında. Çünkü Atatürk ilkeleri de bir yandan baktığımızda çok farklı yorumlanabilir. Çok farklı şeyler anlaşılabilir ve farklı… şeylere dönüştürülebilir bir durumda. Ondan dolayı, Atatürkçülüğün tek bir açıklamasının olabileceğini düşünmüyorum" (Bülent)

When we look at it, everyone is Atatürkist. There are those people, who are the opposite of each other, both in the Right and in the Left that call themselves Atatürkist. It seems like making a distinction is incredibly hard. This is due to the fact that ideologies today are quite tangled with each other, and I don't think there could be a clear cut definition[167] (Roni)

I think Atatürkism could encompass every kind of activity that we can do in order to lead our country to better conditions[168] (Roni)

The floating character of Atatürkism was "legitimized"[169] on the grounds that it did not resemble a "dogmatic ideology", and simply that it was not even "ideological" for some. While for many it functions as an "observation" or "complaint", with nonetheless the interviewee "chooses" one float over the other, Sumru's interpretation of the float (and emptiness) has peculiar consequences. Sumru's answer to the question of "who could be an Atatürkist" reveals the awkward conclusion of the float perfectly. She suggests:

I can't call myself completely Atatürkist, but I am trying to be. I think in order to be completely Atatürkist, you need to put a lot of effort. Or you have to sacrifice a lot[170] (Sumru)

No one could be completely Atatürkist, actually, according to my opinion[171] (Sumru)

In her explanations, the horizon of being a *complete* Atatürkist is designated as an impossible task. This, I assert, is due to the *floating* (and empty) character of Atatürkism, i.e. its ability to be able to articulate into other, different discourses. Since every particular instance of Atatürkism is *diverted*, due to its floating character, from the impossible-to-be universality of Atatürkism, the actuality of Atatürkism itself is put as something *incomplete*. Therefore, the horizon, or the *telos* of Atatürkism is

---

[167] "Aslında baktığımız zaman tüm kesim Atatürkçü yani. Sağ kesimde, sol kesimde, birbiriyle çok zıt olan partilerden her bir insan ben Atatürkçüyüm diyor. Ayırt etmek çok zor gibi görünüyor. Çünkü artık ideojiler falan birbirine çok girdiği için net bir şekilde bir ayrım yapmak, bilmiyorum" (Roni)

[168] "Ülkemizi olduğu koşullardan daha iyiye taşıyabilmek adına yapabileceğimiz her türlü faaliyeti bence Atatürkçülük adı altında toplayabiliriz diye düşünüyorum" (Roni)

[169] The interviewees felt the need to legitimize such float without any incentive or suggestion by me. That was a common reflex in many interviews.

[170] "Kendime tam olarak Atatürkçü diyemem, ama olmaya çalışıyorum. Tam olarak olmak için çok çaba sarf etmek gerekiyor. Veya çok fazla ödün vermek gerekiyor bence" (Sumru)

[171] "Kimse tam olarak Atatürkçü olamaz zaten" (Sumru)

designated as someting deferred at all times. Sumru's desire for the *impossible complete Atatürkist*, thus, just as in the case of the *banana of jouissance* of Asım Aslan (1999)[172], seeks an Atatürkism that is not sullied by articulations, not mediated and not floating into various political frontiers, the impossibility of which was explained in Chapter 3. The "true", or *complete* in Sumru's words, Atatürkism/Kemalism, I assert(ed) lies not in a horizon of extra-discursive, non-articulated future, but in its very quality of being an *articulatory practice,* an empty and floating signifier *par excellence.* The means of being an Atatürkist, in Sumru's explanation, is believed to be embedded in constant hardship, effort, struggle. It is almost as if a *price* has to be paid through the *passion* of the Atatürkist that through this negation of the actuality of Atatürkism, the *always-incomplete Atatürkist* could *sublate* into the synthetic state of *complete* Atatürkism.

Although Atatürkism/Kemalism is defined on the grounds of the *complete possibility of any articulation,* the *Civic mode of Atatürkism* presents certain signifiers that have a more "stable" place within its chain of signification. The "stability" does not contest the definition of Atatürkism laid out in Chapter 3 and here, but rather points to a momentary, malleable fixation, a *suture*. "Suture names not just a structure of lack but also an availability of the subject, a certain closure" (Heath, as cited in Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 88). It is through the *suture* that a discourse *momentarily closes* and becomes a discourse. Thus, it is through this *momentary* (this can't be emphasized enough) fixity that any positive presence is possible. The crucial point is that "the moment of the 'final' suture never arrives" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 86), thus it is impossible to assign a "given stability" to any discourse. The "stability" of some signifiers in Civic Atatürkism is due to its *momentary suture* and relativization to other Atatürkisms/Kemalisms. It is through these signifiers that a differentiation between various Atatürkisms be made. Therefore, the articulatory and empty character of Atatürkism is exactly what allows "various Atatürkisms" to exist. The actualization of those "various" Atatürkisms as different "Atatürkist discourses" is due to the very stabilization of certain signifiers, i.e. *the suture.* It was observed in the interviews that the relatively stable signifiers around which the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism

---

[172] See Chapter 3.

functioned were: contemporaneity/modernity, republicanism, secularism/laicism, reformationism/revolutionism and the "level of modern civilizations" *(muasır medeniyetler seviyesi)*. "The level of modern civilizations" is a signifier that is to be handled specifically in Chapter 4.2.8., due to its close relationship with Post-Politics. Its main indication is found to be "a perfect state of Consensus, a fissureless political condition with the full foreclosure of antagonisms". However, it is to be introduced here in somewhat different terms. All of these so-called relatively more stable signifiers were found to be related to the *six arrows* of Kemalism. When asked about their particular understanding of Atatürkism and what kinds of elements it contained, some interviewees immediately referred to the *six arrows*. Even though others did not *explicitly* refer to them as *the six arrows* or *six tenets,* they listed those elements within the six in various combinations. Thus, I would suggest that there is not that big of a difference here. Generally, it was observed that there were "certain arrows" or "certain tenets" around which Atatürkism sought stability:

> When I think about Atatürkism, what I have in mind is a concept... that revolves around the tenets of Atatürk. I have an image of civilization, a path to achieving the level of modern civilizations[173] (Ümit)

> The level of modern civilizations, contemporaneity, continuing his revolutions, since he could not complete them, due to the fact that he passed away. And continuing the republic, carrying it to a better tomorrow[174] (Güntan)

> I can say that it contains nationalism. Other than that... Actually, I think it contains most of the six tenets. Be it nationalism, laicism... Umm... Etatism? Maybe[175] (Zeytin)

> Our main priority is that Kemalism does not have a dogma. We pay close attention to innovation and revolutionism, a requirement of the six tenets, so

---

[173] "Atatürkçülük diyince zihnimde canlanan, işte, Atatürk ilkeleri üzerinden bir… bir kavram oluşuyor. Daha çok medeniyet, muasır medeniyetler seviyesine ulaşmak için bir yol gibi zihnimde canlanıyor" (Ümit)

[174] "İşte muasır medeniyetler seviyesi, çağdaşlık, onun yapmaya çalıştığı devrimleri devam ettirebilmek, sonuçta tamamını yapamadı, ömrü yetmediği için. Ve cumhuriyeti devam ettirip taşıyabilmek, daha iyi yarınlara" (Güntan)

[175] "Milliyetçiliği içerdiğini söyleyebilirim. Onun dışında... Aslında altı ilkenin çoğunu içerdiğini düşünüyorum. Milliyetçiliktir, laikliktir... Iıı… Devletçilik beeelki" (Zeytin)

that it does not become a dogma... I think anyone who feels close to the six tenets could be a Kemalist[176] (Leylek)

There was somewhat of a difference between the *organizationed* and the *organizationless* in their answers to the interviewes. Zarif, for example, a member of ADT, argues that the "stable basis of Atatürkism" is due to the whole, complete nature of the six tenets themselves, thus implying that there exists a conceptual affinity between them; moreover, it functions as the criteria of being an Atatürkist as well:

> The fact that it has no dogma does not show that it lacks a basis. There are elements which we call the six tenets. If you call yourself an Atatürkist, a Kemalist, you cannot say that I take only five of those tenets, I don't include nationalism, or you can't say I embrace Atatürk, he founded the republic, he saved our country but I don't agree with him on religion, I don't adopt laicism. This is a whole. If you are a Kemalist, you will take those six tenets as a whole[177] (Zarif)

In contrast to Zarif's understanding of the complete nature of the *arrows*, it was observed as a counter-character in Civic Atatürkism that the *organizationless* did not, in fact, take those six as a whole. They mostly defined their particular Atatürkism as a varying mixture of some tenets, with operations on, and with reformations and reconfigurations of some of the tenets. The *organizationless,* in close connection with their rejection of ideology, tended to mention only *some* of the six tenets, since they expressed that they rejected the "ideologization" of Atatürkism, i.e. since they privileged lifestyle over ideology. Ümit explains the reconfiguration of the six tenets in such words that:

> The actions that were taken in the 1940's and the actions to be taken today necessarily have to be different. Because the era is different, technology is different, the needs are different[178] (Ümit)

---

[176] "En temel önceliğimiz Kemalizmin bir dogmaya sahip olmaması. Sürekli yeniliği, altı ilke gereği devrimciliği baz alması için dogmalaştırılmamasına özen gösteriyoruz... Ben altı ilkeye yakın hisseden her kişinin Kemalist olabileceğini düşünüyorum" (Leylek)

[177] "Dogmalarının olmaması bir temelinin olmadığını göstermez Kemalizmin. Yani altı ilke dediğimiz unsurlar var. Sen eğer kendine Atatürkçüyüm, Kemalistim diyorsan, işte efendim ben beş ilkeyi alıyorum, milliyetçiliği almıyorum, ya da efendim işte tamam Atatürk'ü benimsiyoruz, cumhuriyeti kurdu, ülkemizi kurtardı ama din konusunda ben katılmıyorum, ben laikliği benimsemiyorum diyemezsin. Bu bir bütündür. Sen eğer Kemalistsen o altı ilkeyi bir bütün olarak alacaksın" (Zarif)

[178] "1940'larda alınan aksiyonlarla bugün alınan aksiyonların haliyle aynı olmaması gerekiyor. Çağ değişiyor, teknoloji değişiyor, ihtiyaçlar değişiyor" (Ümit)

Thus, in light of Ümit's words, the rejection of the whole character of the *six tenets* could also be interpreted as the continuation of the "*realistic*" tendency, since it is indicated that there is a difference between the conditions of the time when the *six arrows* emerged, and today's conditions. What Ümit's statement implies is a kind of "realism" with regard to the approach. Etatism, for example, as could be observed in Zeytin's expression, who happens to be a member of ADT, was either questionable, or not influential for many interviewees, even for some of the Neo-Kemalists.

Populism, as well, was not mentioned, virtually almost at all, in the interviews, in terms of Atatürkism. With the articulation of populism[179] and *the people* with the discourse of the AKP, populism as one of the six tenets was observed to disappear from the Atatürkist discourse.

> It's because they are populists. He says whatever he wants, he manipulates Kılıçdaroğlu's videos, he gets the support from the people. This is populism[180] (Nükhet)

In other words, *the people* (through the rejection of populism) is observed to be an *antagonistic category* to the Civic Atatürkist. Civic Atatürkist discourse always posits itself *against* the people; therefore, the principle of populism (*halkçılık*) disappears from the Civic Atatürkist *six arrows*, since the *people* are posited on an antagonistic frontier. Secularism or laicisim, to be handled in detail in Chapter 4.3.3. with its opposition to "bigotedness", was also found to be "reformed" in certain senses. Although the interviewees, when asked what they understood from laicisim, stated "the separation of the religious affairs from the state", when a close inspection was to be made, it was seen that it meant a handful of things, not actually related to that.

A perfect example here is Güntan's articulation of secularism/laicism, contemporaneity and freedom with drinking *alcohol*[181]. In other words, the nodal point

---

[179] Translation may be misleading here. The word *halkçılık* in Turkish is rarely associated with *populism*. Nonetheless, the Civic Atatürkist discourse precisely equates *the people* with AKP(s populism); thus, *halkçılık* as well is seen to be rejected, on the grounds that *the people* is an antagonistic category to the Civic Atatürkist.

[180] "E çünkü popülistler ya. Adam çıkıp kafasına eseni söylüyor, o şeyleri, Kılıçaroğlu'nun videolarını falan montajlıyor, halkı arkasına alıyor. Popülizm yani bu" (Nükhet)

[181] The signifier of *alcohol* was referred to by other interviewees as well, but Güntan's account is the most explicitly and specifically discussed one.

of *alcohol* itself was observed to be *quilting* secularism, contemporaneity, freedom etc. This relationship was also observed by Güntan, in that he became aware of such articulation after the third time, stating in a funny way how he overemphasized the role of alcohol in thinking about the tenets of Atatürkism. *Alcohol*, thus, was observed to be a signifier enabling the chain of signification of some of the six tenets, mainly contemporaneity and secularism/laicism, alongside other signifiers like *champagne* and *belly dancer.*

> I mean day by day, for example, years ago, when it was the New Years, belly dancers would appear in TV. Now, even saying champagne is censored. Alcohol is censored[182] (Güntan)

> Turkey today... I mean it's not that laicist, but they are still selling alcohol. Nonetheless, it is restricted after 10:30 PM, there is an intervention into people's lives, clearly. As I said, there is censorship on alcohol in the movies. Therefore, I don't think we have laicisim that much, it is just at the edge[183] (Güntan)

> They are changing our lives by intervening... As I said, be it alcohol, to state the obvious... I am talking a lot about alcohol, but it's because it's the current thing... Or, that they are heavily taxing alcohol[184] (Güntan)

> Because as this process goes on, we will not be able to drink alcohol in the university campus- Why do I keep talking about alcohol... (laughing)[185] (Güntan)

> We won't be able to drink alcohol, we won't be able to sit in comfort. We will be stripped of our freedom[186] (Güntan)

---

[182] "Yani gitgide atıyorum mesela bundan yıllar önce işte yılbaşı olduğunda, ne bileyim, televizyonda dansözler çıkardı. İşte şu an mesela şampanya deyince bile sansürleniyor. Alkol sansürleniyor" (Güntan)

[183] "Türkiye bugün... Yani çok laik değil, ama hala en azından alkol falan satışı var. Ama 10:30'dan sonra yasak mesela, insanların hayatlarına müdahale var çok açık bir şekilde. Dediğim gibi işte, veya, içki sahneleri sansürleniyor. O yüzden yani laiklik çok kalmadı, böyle ucunda" (Güntan)

[184] "Ya şöyle zaten hayatımızı değiştiriyorlar ya işte müdahale ederek... Dediğim gibi işte alkol olsun, en basitinden... Sürekli oralara kayıyorum da en çok o gündem olduğu için. Veya işte mesela alkolden dünya kadar vergi alınıyor" (Güntan)

[185] "Çünkü o süreç devam ettiği sürece biz işte okulda alkol de içemeyeceğiz- Benim bu alkol muhabbeti... (gülüyor)" (Güntan)

[186] "Yani alkol de kullanamayacağız, ne bileyim rahat rahat oturamayacağız da. Özgürlüğümüz gidecek yani" (Güntan)

In addition to these, it was found that the *level of modern civilizations (muasır medeniyetler seviyesi)* was an imporant anchor in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. Again, as this will be observed below as a separate topic, an introduction here will suffice. There are two different words in Turkish that indicate modernity/contemporaneity: namely, *muasırlık* and *çağdaşlık*. In terms of their literal "meaning", both have the same grammatic structure and indicate pretty much the same thing. The only seeming difference is that *muasır* is a quite old-fashioned word, while *çağdaş* is newer and more common in everyday use. In the interviews, it was observed that there is another layer of difference in the interviewees' preference of one over the other. The interviewees used *muasır* whenever they pointed to an impossible horizon regarding Turkey, and used *çağdaş* whenever they described themselves. Thus, while *muasır* simply "means" contemporary or modern, it was seen in the interviews that *muasır* stricly signifies an *impossible condition*, and interesting phrases like "there are no modern/contemporary civilizations" (*muasır medeniyet yoktur*) were uttered.

In order to specify its use, *muasır* will be referred to as *modern*, and *çağdaş* will be referred to as *contemporary.* Moreover, the *level of modern civilizations* will be indicated as LMC. When asked "who is a modern civilization today", the interviewees put forward that any deviation from an imagined ideal of modernity, with the most important being antagonisms, curbed one's claim to modernity. In other words, the interviewees contended that whenever and wherever there was an antagonism, *there was no modernity*. Thus, modernity was a-spatialized and a-temporalized (re-temporalized only in terms of an impossible future) on the grounds of antagonisms. In a quite interesting conclusion, many interviews revealed that *there was no civilization who could be named modern* (in the sense that there were no contemporary civilizations). While some civilizations had "class problems", others had "ethnic issues" and some were disqualified of modernity due to "crime rates". Serdar's understanding of modernity is exemplary:

> I don't think a society who has not solved income inequality could be a modern civilization[187] (Serdar)

---

[187] "Bugün gelir eşitsizliğini çözememiş bir toplumun muasır medeniyet olamayacağını düşünüyorum" (Serdar)

Although other accounts of the LMC are to be evaluated in Chapter 4.2.8., there is one peculiar one I want to shed light upon here. Zeytin gives a quite interesting account of LMC, which is different from that of others. At the outset, his account is virtually the same with that of Serdar and others, in that there are no modern civilizations to be found anywhere:

> When I look at it, I don't personally name any civilization as modern today. This is because I think most civilizations are in a decline. The world civilization in general[188] (Zeytin)

After a couple of questions, however, he jokingly suggests that Turkey, in fact, could be named as a modern civilization, due to conditions of authoritarianism. In other words, although Zeytin first considers modernity in an impossible-to-achieve sense, he then reposits it within the *actuality of the West,* and states that Turkey is quite modern in the Western sense, since it is an authoritarian country. This is the only time in the interviews where the present of Turkey is posited in terms of modernity. Furthermore, this is one of the rare uses of modernity in its actuality. Although modernity is constantly deferred to an ambiguous future, with the horizon of a fissureless society, Zeytin here grasps modernity in its *actuality*, as a rare instance to be observed in the interviews:

> Turkey is a modern civilization right now. You know, with authoritarianism and all that (laughing). I mean, what we see all around those other modern civilizations we see in Turkey[189] (Zeytin)

There were two other interviewees who both gave the example of Scandinavian countries in discussing modernity (Tülay, Selva), but other than that, none of the interviewees thought there existed modern states. The impossibility of modern states will be handled below in more detail, and will indubitably reveal much more regarding the discourse. Although other signifiers were observed to have *some place* within the discourse of Civic Atatürkism, namely "republicanism" and "reformationism/revolutionism", they were seen to be not that much central to the

---

[188] "Bugün ben şahsen baktığımda hiçbir medeniyeti muasır adlandıramıyorum. Çünkü her, çoğu medeniyeti aslında biraz gerilemede görüyorum. Dünya medeniyetini genel olarak" (Zeytin)

[189] "Türkiye şu an aslında muasır bir medeniyet bence. Hani o otoriterleşme ve saire (gülüyor). Yani tam da diğer o muasır medeniyetlerin sahip olduğu olgular Türkiye'de yaşanıyor" (Zeytin)

discourse, what Freud would have called "elements of low value" (Freud, 1999, p. 235). Thus, I will not be making a specific discussion upon both terms.

4.2.5. Between Civicness and pseudo-civilianization: *Lack* and *Abundance*

As established in the introductory parts of the field study, the main *split* around which the interviewees concentrated was that of *organization.* Only the *non-organized* were seen to be carrying certain characteristics of Civicism, while the *organized* did not. This *split* was first and foremost functional regarding the issue of militarism, coups, and the army. The organizationed were seen to be much comfortable defending what could be called militarist outlooks; in contrast, in some accordance, to an extent, with the first argument of the Civic Atatürkism Literature, in Chapter 3.3.3., the non-organized were carefully emphasizing that they were "not militarist" (Güntan, Selva) even before they talked about anything pertaining to the army[190].

An organizationed interviewee, Roni, who is a member of CHP, makes clear indications regarding his understanding of the army. He posits the army as a check-and-balance mechanism opposite politics. In answering the question "whether there is a relationship between Kemalism and the army", a question to which the non-organizationed gave a resounding *no,* Roni argues there *was* a relationship, and that it has been *broken apart*:

> Those soldiers who define themselves as Atatürkists, those who would seize power when they see bigotry, when they see reactionism are now gone. Is such a relationship between Atatürkism and the army wrong? I think not. This is because those figures like Atatürk and İsmet İnönü are people who grew up on a military framework, educated in military schools, coordinated war and politics at the same time, administering the country. Since they have such military background, I think there is a relationship. However, this is also a relationship that has been corrupted[191] (Roni)

---

[190] Nonetheless, a total separation from an etatist understanding is questionable, as at certain points, it was observed that the interviewees held fast to such framework.

[191] "Kendisini Atatürkçü olarak tanımlayan, yani yeri geldiği zaman bir bağnazlık, bir irtica gördüğü zaman yönetime el koyabilecek olan askerler şu an çok, yok durumdalar. Böyle bir ilişkinin kurulmuş olması Atatürkçülükle ordu arasında yanlış mı? Bence değil. Çünkü Atatürk olsun, İsmet İnönü olsun, bunlar askeri tabandan yetiştikleri için, yani askeri okullarda okumuş insanlar, keza bir tarafta cephede savaşırken bir tarafta politika var, ülke yönetimi var. Bu tabandan yetiştirildikleri için bu bağlantının kurulmasını açıkçası doğru buluyorum. Ki kurulmalı da ama, zamanla çok yozlaştırılmış durumda bu bağlantı" (Roni)

While the non-organizationed usually tended to reject such relationship, and even when they acknowledged it tended to devalorize it, Roni was observed to be *valorizing* the relationship, and mourning its loss. After I wanted him to clarify the *valorization*, Roni followed:

> I think the severing of the relationship is a negative thing. I think the army should be able to stand as a balance mechanism. It should be able to say I am here. However, when a secondary or third person intervenes into the army, and the democratic structure within the army and within its hierarchy collapses, I don't think this could lead to right results[192] (Roni)

It was seen in the discourse of the *organizationed* that there was a strict separation between the coup of 1960 and of 1980. While the former was defended with fury and related to Kemalism, the latter was rejected and it functioned as a separation point in the positioning of Neo-Kemalists outside the state, what Dağı had called the *ripping out* (Dağı, 2021). Zarif and Kelebek, members ADT, state regarding the coup of 1960:

> The army has a duty at the end of the day. It secures the country. It defends the motherland against any possible danger coming from outside or from within. Therefore, it has a natural relationship with Kemalism. When we look to the Adnan Menderes era, the May 27 process, the danger comes from within. Thus, the army feels the need to intervene[193] (Zarif)

> May 27 is a coup that is generally welcomed by the political crowds in Turkey, but slandered after September 12, with the growing discontent for soldiers... At this point, I am completely thankful for May 27, I must admit… May 27 is a coup done by patriotic officers who did not want to see the country tumble down the hill[194] (Kelebek)

---

[192] "Bence bağlantının kopması olumsuz bir şey. Çünkü ordu bence bir denge olarak durabilmeli. Yani ordu ben buradayım diyebilmeli diye düşünüyorum. Ama işte orduya ikinci, üçüncü bir kişinin müdahalesi olduğu zaman, yani ordu içerisindeki demokratik yapı olsun, ne bileyim, o hiyerarşi bozulduğu zaman çok, bunun doğru sonuçlara yol açabileceğini düşünmüyorum açıkçası" (Roni)

[193] "Ordunun bir görevi var sonuçta. Bu ülkenin güvenliğini sağlıyor. Aynı zamanda dışarıdan ya da içeriden gelebilecek herhangi bir tehdit unsuruna karşı vatanı savunuyor. Sonuç olarak Kemalizm'le doğal bir ilişkisi bulunuyor bu noktada. Yani Andan Menderes dönemine, 27 Mayıs sürecine baktığımızda, bu tehdit içerden geliyor. Yani, ordu da kendinde bir müdahale ihtiyacı duyuyor" (Zarif)

[194] "27 Mayıs çoğunlukla Türkiye'nin politik kitleleri tarafından benimsenen, ama 12 Eylül sonrasındaki asker karşıtlığıyla beraber literatürde tekrar kirletilen bir darbe... Yani bu noktada ben sonuna kadar 27 Mayıs'tan razıyım, açıkçası... 27 Mayıs ülkenin uçuruma yuvarlanmasını istemeyen birtakım vatansever subayların darbe yapmasıdır" (Kelebek)

However, their accounts drastically change with the coup of 1980. This change is so strong that even the previously established relationship between the army and Kemalism, which was explained in "natural terms", is suspended:

> For people, there is a relationship between Turkish Armed Forces [TSK] and Kemalism. TSK always seems like the defender of Atatürk, Atatürkism, and like the army of Atatürk. However, when we make a historical inspection, we see that this is not the case in the coup of 1980. After the coup of 1980 we see the exact opposite. Rather than the favoring of Kemalist governments, we see that the counterrevolutionary formations, whom we can call anti-Kemalist, are having a say in government more and more[195] (Leylek)

> There's a so-called Kemalist coup, and İmam Hatip schools skyrocket, İmam Hatip graduates become district governors, İmam Hatip graduates become governors. How could that be Kemalist?[196] (Kelebek)

The discourse of the *organizationless* differs strikingly from the other here. Even though some non-organized participants did hesitantly establish a relationship between Kemalism and the army, this only concerned the fact that Mustafa Kemal was a soldier, and rejected what they deemed to be a "radical" approach. Beyond that, the *organizationless* were seen to be not establishing any relationship between their particular Atatürkism and the army:

> In terms of a relationship, I think there is this kind of one. Since Atatürk is a military personality, and at the same time that there are people in the army who... radically adopt his views... My Atatürkism is not like that[197] (Bülent)

Other organizationless participants outright denied any possibility of a relationship between Atatürkism and militarism, positing themselves along what they called universal values:

---

[195] "Halk gözünde TSK ile Kemalizm arasında bir ilişki var. TSK her zaman Atatürkçülüğün, Atatürk'ün savunucusu, Atatürk'ün ordusu diye gözüküyor. Ama bu tarihsel bağlamda değerlendirildiğinde, 80 darbesi özelinde aslında hiç öyle olmadığını görüyoruz. 80 darbesinden sonra tam tersi, Kemalist hükümetlerin gözdeleşmesinden ziyade, anti-Kemalist diyebileceğimiz karşı devrimci oluşumların hükümette daha çok söz sahibi olmaya başladığını net bir şekilde görüyoruz" (Leylek)

[196] "Kemalist bir darbe oluyor ve İmam Hatipler bir anda fırlıyor, İmam Hatipliler kaymakam oluyor, İmam Hatipliler vali oluyor. Bu Kemalist olabilir mi?" (Kelebek)

[197] "Ya ilişki, şöyle bir ilişki olduğunu düşünüyorum. Atatürk askeri bir kimlik olduğu için aynı zamanda, askeriyede daha… radikal bir şekilde benimsenmiş düşünceleri olduğunu düşünüyorum... Benim Atatürkçülüğüm böyle değil" (Bülent)

I mean of course I don't condone coups. When looked from the perspective of some people, they might be symphatetic towards them, but I believe there are humane values above personal ones, like right to life, right to freedom of expression of thought. When I think about these universal things, I don't condone coups... I don't condone any of them, neither those done in the name of Atatürkism, nor others who were done against those who were claimed to be reactionaries[198] (Ümit)

One of the organizationed participants, Kelebek, a member of ADT, had coincidentally read about Civic Atatürkism in the newspaper a couple of weeks prior to our interview. When I delivered the information about the nature and scope of my study, he immediately objected to the concept of Civic Atatürkism. He criticized it for employing the signifier Civic. "Atatürkism is already civilian, why the need to use such an adjective?" he plead. In concluding the difference between the two groups vis-à-vis the military, Kelebek's points about Civic Atatürkism could be useful in its reflection. When asked why he was rejecting the notion of Civic Atatürkism, Kelebek explained:

Because of its qualification of Atatürkism as civilian [Civic]. That means Atatürkism, in accordance with the political-historical paradigm of the 90s, is presumed to be militarist. Or that it is not civilian, that it does not resound within the people... It is a word put forward by people who define Atatürkism as militarist, top-down, unable to reach the people, away from people. Therefore, by using such adjective, they presume that Civic Atatürkism is something new, and that Atatürkism was not civilian before, as if it is only now displaying a civilian outlook[199] (Kelebek)

Along this counter-positioning between Civic Atatürkism and Neo-Kemalism, as an interesting point, the examples of famous Atatürkists/Kemalists given by the participants differed on the determinant of *organizations* as well. While the

---

[198] "Yani tabii darbeleri doğru bulmuyorum. Belli bir kesim tarafından bakınca, bazıları sıcak bakıyor ama insanın kişisel doğrularının üstünde bir insani doğrular olduğuna inanıyorum. İşte yaşama hakkı, özgürce fikrini beyan etme hakkı, düşünce hakkı gibi. Evrensel şeyleri düşününce darbeleri doğru bulmuyorum... Atatürkçülük adında yapılanları da, diğer bunlar irticacı diyerek yapılan darbeleri de doğru bulmuyorum" (Ümit)

[199] "Ya, çünkü sivil diye nitelemeye ihtiyaç duyuyor. Bu demek ki Atatürkçülüğün aslında, bu 90'lardaki yazımla, siyasi tarih yazımıyla militarist olduğu ön kabulüne dayanan bir şey. Yani veya sivil olmadığı, halkta bir karşılığı olmadığı ön kabulüne dayalı bir şey... Ve hani daha öncesinde Atatürkçülüğü işte militarist, tepeden inmeci, halkta karşılığı olmayan, halktan uzak diye nitelendiren insanların, genelde o kesimin ortaya attığı bir kelime. Dolayısıyla bence bu sıfatı koyarak, aynı zamanda sivil Atatürkçülüğün yeni bir şey olduğunu, aslında Atatürkçülüğün sivil olmadığını, ama şu an sivil bir izlenim verdiğine dair bir ön kabul içeriyor bence" (Kelebek)

organizationless referred to "more civilian figures", like Haluk Bilginer (Tülay), Haluk Levent (Nükhet), and Cem Karaca (Selva), the organized referred to incredibly obscure Kemalist figures like Emine Ülker Tarhan (Zeytin), various Kemalist academics (Leylek, Kelebek, Zarif) or mainstream party leaders like Ümit Özdağ (Sumru). It was also observed that the organizationless were hesitant to call themselves nationalist. While the organizationed, alongside the six tenets of Mustafa Kemal, were comfortable in identifying as nationalist, the organizationless tried to differentiate themselves from mainstream nationalists, sometimes even referring to concepts like cosmopolitanism in their accounts:

> No, I wouldn't say I'm nationalist. I think the concept nationalism should not exist in this century. Everyone is living in a cosmopolitan way, we are too at the moment. I think nationalism is a very hollow concept today[200] (Güntan)

> I would call myself a nationalist, but it's different from what is understood from nationalism today... Now, for example, when one says nationalism, what emerges in people's minds is too radical of a nationalism. I think too much of it is wrong[201] (Ayşe)

> Would I directly call myself a nationalist? Maybe a nationalism from Atatürk's perspective … But it's never in the sense that Turks are superior, never. It's in the sense of a nationalism built upon national values and preserving the national unity[202] (Selva)

Although the Civic Atatürkist privileging of lifestyle over ideology is to be discussed below, I must state here that there was a common preference of ideology within the *organizationed,* and a common preference of lifestyle within the *organizationless.* In accordance with the fourth argument of the Civic Atatürkism Literature, that the mode of appearance of Atatürkism today resembles a lifestyle rather than ideology, as

---

[200] "Yok, ben milliyetçiyim demiyorum. Milliyetçilik kavramı artık bu yüzyılda bence olmaması gereken bir şey. Herkes kozmopolit bir şekilde yaşamaya başladı artık, biz de öyleyiz şu anda. Milliyetçilik kavramının artık çok içi boş bir kavram olduğunu düşünüyorum o yüzden" (Güntan)

[201] "Kendime milliyetçi olarak söylerim, ama şu anki anlaşılan milliyetçiden farklı olarak… Şu anda mesela milliyetçi olarak dendiğinde insanların aklında oluşan şey, bence yani, aşırı fazla milliyetçiliğe giriyor. Bence fazlası bana göre yanlış olan bir şey" (Ayşe)

[202] "Yani kendime direkt olarak milliyetçi der miyim? Atatürk'ün perspektifinden olan bir milliyetçilik belki ... Yani asla şey bir yerden değil, Türkler daha üstündür gibi bir yerden değil asla. Ama milli değerlerimiz ve milli bütünlüğü koruma üzerine bir milliyetçilik aslında söylenebilir" (Selva)

established in Chapter 3.3.3., the non-organized (Civic Atatürkist)[203] portion of the participants pretty much reflected the claim of the literature. The organizationed called it an "ideology" (Kelebek, Zarif, Zeytin), a "programme" (Leylek) and a "framework" (Roni), with the exception of Sumru who ideologically defined herself as a Turkist, while living her life in accordance with Atatürkism; while the non-organized preferred "lifestyle" (Selva, Timuçin, Nükhet), "life view" (Ayşe), "inheritance" (Bülent), with the exceptions of Ümit, Serdar, Güntan and Tülay who struggled to lay down a strict definition and preference. Alongside this separation, the former, the organizationed, was observed to be preferring the word Kemalism over Atatürkism, and the latter was seen to be distancing themselves from Kemalism. For example, Zarif, a member of ADT, suggests that those who distanced themselves from Kemalism were actually ill-intentioned people who consciously sought to hurt it:

> For me, those who distinguish between Kemalism and Atatürkism, and who say that they are Atatürkists but not Kemalists are malevolent people who seek to tarnish Kemalism[204] (Zarif)

Much to Zarif's dismay, the non-organized were seen to be doing exactly that which he objected to. For example, Güntan related Kemalism with his aforementioned conception of *Ataputçu,* Tülay distanced herself from Kemalism in her specific association of it with old republican women, and Ümit distinguished between two types of ideologies, one of which was defined as close to a *dogma*:

> I think the Kemalist people are closer to what I called the Ataputçu people[205] (Güntan)

> Would I call myself a Kemalist? I don't know. I'm not someone who believes that what Atatürk said was one hundred percent right. Of course. I mean... I don't believe that, I don't say everything he did was right, that everything about him was great. But I don't know the concept Kemalism that well if I'm to be honest. That's why I... When I hear the word Kemalist, I have in mind the CHP

---

[203] It must be obvious here that Civic Atatürkism *could be applicable* only to the non-organized portion of the participants, as the organizationed group are seen to fit more to a framework of Neo-Kemalism. More to be explained in the conclusion of this sub-chapter.

[204] "Ama bana göre, işte günümüzde Atatürkçülük ile Kemalizm'i ayıran, işte ben Atatürkçüyüm ama Kemalist değilim ve saire diyen gürüh, Kemalizme zarar vermek isteyen art niyetli grup olarak nitelendiriyorum" (Zarif)

[205] "Ya Kemalist kesim dediğim bu Ataputçu kesime daha yakın bence" (Güntan)

aunties who live in İzmir (laughing). That's why I'm not sure if I would define myself as such[206] (Tülay)

When I think about Atatürkism, I am thinking more about an ideology that functions around Atatürk's ideas, but when I think about Kemalism, I think about an ideology that takes as right and defends without question everything that Atatürk did[207] (Ümit)

In concluding remarks, I believe the exact difference between the discourses of the *organizationed* and the *organizationless* (what I believe could be the group that might be close to an understanding of Civic Atatürkism), is seen to be first and foremost due to *their being organized*, as shown in this study, with other differences being due to this first one, or being the extensions, natural conclusions and results of it.

However, there is one other difference that was seen to be a crucial determinant in distinguishing between the two discourses (which may still be an extension of the determinant of organizations, but as imporant as it nonetheless). This pertains to the difference in their mode of description of Atatürkism/Kemalism. While the former, organized, group *positively* describes Kemalism, in that they posit an *abundance of criteria* that operates in *being* a Kemalist, the latter, non-organized group *negatively* defines Atatürkism, in that they talk about a *lack of certain things* in *being* an Atatürkist. The *abundance* is captured in Sumru's aforementioned "effort and sacrifice" (for Atatürkists), and her assertion that "everyone must love Atatürk" (for non-Atatürkists). The *lack* of the latter, on the other hand, is crystallized perfectly in Güntan's formulation of, respectively, "love and respect (lack of ideology/Ataputçuluk)" (for Atatürkists) and "no disrespect" (for non-Atatürkists). In that sense, this could be regarded as another determinant that that distinguishes between the two discourses at hand, those of the *organizationed* and those of the *organizationless.*

---

[206] "Kemalist der miyim... Bilmiyorum yani Atatürk'e de tam olarak her dediği çok doğru diyen bir insan değilim. Tabii ki. Yani şey... Düşünmüyorum yani, her yaptığı doğru, her şeyi çok iyi demiyorum. Ama Kemalist kavramını da çok bilmiyorum açıkçası. O yüzden çok... Kemalist sözcüğünü duyunca yani İzmir'de yaşayan CHP'li teyzeler canlanıyor (gülüyor). O yüzden o şekilde tanımlar mıyım bilmiyorum" (Tülay)

[207] "Atatürkçülük diyince daha çok Atatürk'ün fikirleri üzerinden bir ideoloji düşünürken Kemalizm deyince daha çok Atatürk'ün yaptıklarını, her şekilde, yaptığı her şeyi olduğu gibi kabul eden ve bunu savunan bir ideoloji gibi daha çok tahayyül ediyorum" (Ümit)

Atatürkism for me is, actually, I'm not on the side of Ataputçu people, those who worship Atatürk, but more on the side of loving and respecting Atatürk... I think this is something that should not be discussed[208] (Güntan)

One should not be disrespectful of Atatürk. Respecting him could be arguable, but one should not disrespect him. They live in this country and should not be disrespecting the founder of it. However, I'm not saying one must love and respect him[209] (Güntan)

Thus, it is seen that Sumru's definition of Atatürkism lays down a set of criteria for Atatürkists which is impossible to be fulfilled but nonetheless must be endeavored to do so, and asserts that those who are not Atatürkists must nonetheless "love him". There exists the conception of *abundance* here, with the *positivity* of certain criteria, certain "duties" (Zarif), certain "sacrifices" (Roni). However, in Güntan's conception the only "criterion" is found to be "love and respect" for Atatürkists (which the organizationed dismissed as a criterion of Atatürkism, but saw it as more of a natural necessity), and the *negation of negation* in his notion of "*lack of disrespect*" designated for the non-Atatürkists, where exists a *lack* in the conceptualization of Atatürkism, with a *negativity* pertaining to the definitions. This rivalry between the descriptions of Atatürkism that are built up on *abundance* and *lack,* is the central difference between the two discourses of *the organized* and the *non-organized.* Although this difference between the *abundance* and the *lack* stems from the status of being organized or not, since it concerns the very core of the self-identification of Atatürkists, and the very modality of Atatürkism itself, it is found to be a difference of utmost importance.

This competition between *abundance* and *lack* was reflected in the rhetorical outlook of the interviews as well. The organizationed were stongly preferring the use of *we* in the interviews. The non-organized, on the other hand, preferred *I* in presenting their accounts. The *abundance* could be argued to be thought of in terms of reflecting a spirit of *community*, while the *lack* strictly functioned within the *sole, lonely subject* that does not seek a community, but rather tries to distance itself from any conception

---

[208] "Benim için Atatürkçülük, aslında ben şöyle hani, Ataputçu olarak, yani Atatürk'e tapan insan tarafından değilim de, daha çok Atatürk'e saygı, sevgi gösterme konusunda bunun... Tartışılmaması gereken bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorum" (Güntan)

[209] "Ya Atatürk'e saygısızlık yapmamalı diyeyim. Saygı duymalı tartışılabilir, ama saygısızlık yapmamalı bence. Sonuçta bu ülkenin içinde yaşıyor ve bu ülkenin kurucusuna saygısızlık yapmamalı. Ama kesin saygı duymalı sevmeli diyemiyorum" (Güntan)

of community (which is in line with the understanding of the Post-Political *imprint* established above). The organizationed, in conclusion, defined and understood themselves around the unifying bond of a collective that operated around an *abundance*, the *we*; in contrast, the non-organizationed rejected such a communitarian understanding and functioned around negative definitions, those that reflected the *lack* of certain things (lack of disrespect, for example), thus both beginning and ending up in the tautological individual position of the *I*.

4.2.6. Hyperpoliticization: *Engaged, but not Participating*

The paradox of *engagement instead of participation*, laid down in Chapter 1, is the most crystallized form under which the aspect of hyperpoliticization in Civic Atatürkism is observed. In the interviews, it was seen that the *organizationless participants,* a.k.a. Civic Atatürkists, were quite knowledgeable about Turkish politics, and involved in the sense that they were "entering into debates with their friends" (Ayşe), "mediating upon the nature of Turkish politics" (Serdar), and "going into online debates" (Güntan), even to the point where Güntan was blocked on Twitter by some famous Atatürkists (Güntan), and "supporting online causes" (Tülay).

> I enter into debates among friends, I don't hold back. I mean I speak about things. Nonetheless, the demonstration aspect, the protests etc. seem to me like too much partizanship. I think that is too much[210] (Ayşe)

> The essence of our society is... I think, in contrast to what is presumed, that we have a multicultural structure in our society, and I think that's something to be proud of[211] (Serdar)

> He is crazy too, I was blocked by him as well, he too claims that he is an Atatürkist but he's very weird character, you probably know what he did when Kılıçdaroğlu announced his candidacy... I was blocked by him as well... It's like that, I follow the news on Twitter[212] (Güntan)

---

[210] "Konuşma ortamlarında falan bayağı da tartışmalara falan girerim, ederim. Yani konuşurum o konuda. Ama hani o miting boyutu, bir şeylere katılmam olsun bana çok partizanlık gibi geliyor. Hani gerek yok bence o kadar" (Ayşe)

[211] "Bu toplumun özü şu... Ben sanılanın aksine, buranın çok kültürlü bir yapısı olduğunun ve bununla gurur duyulması gerektiğini düşünüyorum" (Serdar)

[212] "O da bir manyak, ondan da engel yedim, o da mesela Atatürkçüyüm diyor ama o da çok üslubu çok garip bir adam, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu aday olduğunda belki n'aptığını biliyorsunuzdur... Ondan da engel yemiştim... İşte Twitter'da öyle, gündem falan takip ediyorum" (Güntan)

I use social media. I use Twitter. Other than that, even though I know Change.org is not that helpful, I support it. I haven't done anything in it yet, but I support it[213] (Tülay)

Nonetheless, even though they were quite *engaged,* they distanced themselves from various kinds of *participation,* most prominently protests, in that some thought protests were "too political":

I didn't participate in any protest. There were ones I supported, though. I signed some stuff etc. However, I did not participate in anything. I never went in person and protested etc.[214] (Serdar)

I am going to protests, I try to participate, as long as it's not something too political[215] (Güntan)

As established in Chapter 1, it was seen in the recent youth studies that there was indeed a "repoliticization" in the youth; however, the studies had trouble denoting exactly what kind of "repoliticization" this was, since it still *lacked participation.* İEA, for example, defined the youth as not apolitical, but anti-political, (İEA, 2021, pp. 6-7), KASF argued that although they showed serious interest and involvement in politics in some forms, they were disinterested in traditional political mechanisms (KASF, 2023, p. 20), and Ateş (2021) suggested that the youth was not apolitical but depoliticized. All of these studies (including other studies like KASF, 2021; KONDA, 2024; Yaşar et al., 2021) univocally suggest that the youth is not apolitical, but they struggle to find the correct term regarding the recent "repoliticization". Hyperpoliticization, as displayed perfectly in the paradox of *engaged, but not participating* is, I assert, the answer to this problem. The paradoxical character of *engagement* observed in the interviewes precisely excludes *political* forms of *participation* out of its horizon, and chooses those that escape politics, like activism, supporting online causes, signing petitions, writing stuff on Twitter etc. The interviewees are observed to be seeking a *voice* in terms of politics, but regarding the

---

[213] "Sosyal medya kullanıyorum. Twitter kullanıyorum. Onun dışında Change.org çok yardımcı olmasa da bir yandan Change.org'u da destekliyorum en azından. Ben henüz hiçbir şey yapmadım ama en azından destekliyorum" (Tülay)

[214] "Katılmadım. Desteklediğim oldu. İşte imza verdiklerim ve saire oldu. Ama katılmadım bir şeye. Birebir gidip yürüyüşe ve saire katılmadım" (Serdar)

[215] "Gidiyorum genel olarak, katılmaya çalışıyorum, aşırı böyle politik bir şey olmadığı sürece" (Güntan)

voice, they do not articulate it with *action*. In other words, the *voice* is observed to be something that must be given to them, rather than something that is taken. Thus, there could be said to be a lack of *action* on the part of the interviewees.

This lack of *action* reveals the privileging of *engagement* instead of *participation.* It is through this that a *passionate involvement* in politics is possible, without *action.* The only form of political action the interviewees displayed was a *voting-based* one. *Passion*, in both senses of the word in addition to an affective quality, namely *passivity* and *suffering* (of their *voiceless* conditions) was seen to be a dominant mode in Civic Atatürkism, and the determinant that allowed the paradox of *engaged but not participating*. It is through the very *passionate* involvement in politics that *action* is deferred. To exemplify, both Güntan and Ayşe assert that they want politics to listen to them:

> This is my expectation from politics, I expect it to listen to me, to create better conditions for my life, I am voting with an expectation at the end of the day[216] (Güntan)

> How much do they listen to us? We don't have a voice. Even those whom we trust to be our voice do not become our voice[217] (Ayşe)

Nevertheless, when the participants are asked "what they *do*" in order to get that voice, and how the current conditions can change, they are observed to be referring to change in the most abstract, obscure way, as something that *naturally* happens, without any kind of *agency*:

> I think things are definitely going to change in the upcoming years… I think the current political situation will end at a certain point, obviously[218] (Ayşe)

> Change is everywhere. Everything is changing. This will change too, since the conditions are changing, the times are changing, the needs are changing.

---

[216] "Bu yani siyasetten beklentim, beni dinlemesi, hayatımı daha iyi noktalara getirmesi, sonuçta ben orada bir beklentiyle oy veriyorum" (Güntan)

[217] "Ne kadar dinleniliyor? Hani bir şekildeyse sesimiz olmuyor. Aslında sesimiz diye güvenebileceğimiz belki de en yakın taraf diğerine göre, ama o bile sesimiz olmuyor" (Ayşe)

[218] "Ama zaten bence net bir şeyler değişecek ilerleyen yıllarda… Şu anki siyasi durumun bir yerde biteceğini illa ki düşünüyorum" (Ayşe)

Politics will change too. It's maybe because the conditions are not ripe yet that change has not come[219] (Nükhet)

Thus, political change is seen to be *somewhere,* or happening in a *natural fashion.* It is designated in such a way that it does not have an agent, does not have the possibility of intervention, and does not have a strict temporality. None reject the idea of change, but once again not each one of them are thinking of themselves as the *agents of change.* Change is explained to be a natural phenomenon, a normal part of life, and political change is understood simply as an extension of that *natural change.*

Bülent's account of political change, for example, is quite similar to this understanding of *natural change,* but revealing of another dimension of hyperpoliticization. Any possibility of *agency* is taken out of the equation, and *change* is expected to occur within and due to itself. This is quite close to the seeming character of *passion* observed above. The political subject is posited in such a way that it only *passively* relates to the political process, watching the *change* occur without any possibility of affecting it.

Therefore, I think what will overthrow the AKP [Justice and Development Party] is their own wrong policies, rather than the right policies that the other parties are going to implement[220] (Bülent)

His account perfectly *externalizes* any kind of active subjectivity that may affect politics, thus creating a configuration of politics to which the subject is necessarily distanced. According to his account, any action on the part of the opposition is rendered meaningless. Therefore, what will bring the change is nothing other than this natural process of change itself.

Ayşe, as well, displays some kind of an externality regarding her agency vis-à-vis politics. In her accounts, the lack of agency is expressed in terms of a powerlessness. She situates herself in what seem like a state of chaos which she is not able to affect in any way:

---

[219] "Değişim her yerde zaten. Her şey değişiyor. Bu da değişir, sonuçta koşullar değişiyor, zaman değişiyor, ihtiyaçlar değişiyor. Siyaset de değişir tabii ki. Koşullar uygun olmadığı için o değişim henüz gelmiyor olabilir" (Nükhet)

[220] "O yüzden ben asıl AK Parti'yi iktidardan düşürecek şeyin kendi yanlış politikaları olacağını düşünüyorum. Diğer partilerin iktidara gelmek için yapacağı doğru politikalardan ziyade" (Bülent)

142

> The politics of the country, the administration got off the track, I think… What can I do now, how can I do it? There were a lot of moments in the country where things had to be done, but nothing happened at the end[221] (Ayşe)

It was observed that the interviewees were not necessarily "complaining" about that powerlessness. Most of them, in fact, designated politics precisely in such a way that left them powerless. Serdar's account is exemplary here. Change is afforded, in his account, to a *technocratic elite* who will influence the public in a scientific way in order for them to make decisions. Here, as well, the subject is posited in an *external* fashion vis-à-vis politics. It is designated as an entity *outside* politics, coming into contact with it in ways that are only *drawn up* by the elite themselves, namely, elections. Since the predominant, and virtually only, mode of political action observed in the interviews was voting, it is transcended into a perfect *technocratic decision-making* where even the *decision itself* was bound to scientific grounds (where there was no decision at all, at the end), thus was the subject left without any sort of possibility of an alternative *agency*. This aspect of a politics dominated by technocratical rationality is not surprising, as it was established that one of the most important components of Post-Politics was the position of a technocratic elite. Nevertheless, Serdar's perfect reduction of politics into a practice coordinated by a pure technocratic mentality is worth seeing:

> I mean there are legal experts, political scientists… Let the experts come and discuss, let us listen and then make a choice[222] (Serdar)

It must be noted here that the description of *engaged but not participating* does not apply to the *organizationed* Atatürkists, since they were much more active compared to the *non-organized,* attending rallies, going to protests etc. and defined politics in a much more extended fashion, one that transcended a voting-based understanding, which was seen to be the predominant understanding of Civic Atatürkism. It is only when hyperpoliticization is understood can one understand both Civic Atatürkism, and *hyperpoliticized Post-Politics, the hegemonic mode of politics today.*

---

[221] "Çünkü çok saptı bence amacından. Ülkenin yönetimi, ülkenin siyaseti... Şu anda nasıl, ne yapabilirim, şu an mesela? Yani çok fazla bir şey yapılması gereken nokta olduğu ülkede, ama bir şey olmadı sonucunda hiç" (Ayşe)

[222] "Yani, onun hukukçusu var, işte siyaset bilimcisi var… Uzmanı gelsin, tartışsınlar, ve biz de dinleyelim, ve bir kararınızı verelim istiyorum." (Serdar)

4.2.7. (Lack of) Radical Imagination

In a quite close fashion to the *natural change, lack of agency* and *voting-based understanding of political action* discussed above, along the lines of a Post-Political imaginary, the interviewees were observed to distance themselves from any kind of *radical imagination*, jargon and thought. Bülent Diken suggests that "the concept of 'post-politics' gestures towards articulating a vision of a disappearance of 'politics' in its radical sense, as the attempt to change society" (Diken, 2014, p. 126). In other words, the Post-Political *condition* is that in which we "cannot imagine radical political change" (Diken, 2009, p. 579). I took this understanding of radical imaginary to its most literal and extreme in the interviews, inquiring whether the participants possessed an out-of-the-box understanding about various things, the most important of which is politics.

If we are to take Jameson's words *literally,* that "it seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism" (Jameson, 1994, p. xii), such lack of radical understanding must be expected to seep into many facets of the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism. Not only that I designated questions on fictional, dystopian scenarios about the world, future and politics, and asked the interviewees to contemplate upon them, I also sought to understand what sort of a mode of appearance and presentation their discourse relied upon in its various facets. Thus, the result was that, fitting the Jamesonian maxim perfectly, it was quite easy for the participants to *literally* imagine the end of the world, such as in the examples of a total environmental breakdown due to climate change, the terraforming and inhabitation of Mars, and the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) to the point where it enslaved humanity; in contrast to their mode of thought which functioned in a quite rigid sense when imagining political change. Selva, for example, perfectly illustrated such understanding in her account two distinct futures, one quilted by *politics,* and another quilted by the rise of *artificial intelligence (AI)*:

> I am hopeful for the future. I am not that pessimistic. Okay, our spirits are down, the elections don't end up like we want to … But in the long run, I am

thinking whether it will go worse or better in 10 years… If you'd ask me whether things will be better, I would probably say yes[223] (Selva)

I am incredibly afraid because the AI is developing, there are crazy things. Do you know what happened with Taylor Swift? An AI sex tape of her was released … There are these kinds of crazy things. It scares me a lot. Especially the development of artificial intelligence …You write a prompt, it writes you a scenario. It writes you a book, a scenario, it creates a photograph, photographs of people who were never born, who have never been. There are AI influencers now, for example … That's why the current state of the world terrifies me[224] (Selva)

Although speaking in terms of politics she is observed to be quite "hopeful" (exemplified in the first quote), when the matter turns to AI, she suddenly expresses that she is "incredibly afraid". This is closely related with the understanding of *natural change* developed above. Her imagination of political change rests on the premise of an *ambiguous temporality,* through which change will naturally occur. Moreover, this indicates that the participants, as there were many accounts of the lack of radical imagination similar to Selva's, *do not understand politics to be related to their lives.*

Although the signifier of *politics* does quilt various things[225], from "being aware" (Roni), to "dirty game" (Nükhet), and "ambiguity" (Zeytin), it was seen that whenever there was a discussion without the mention of the word "politics", the mode of thought differed radically from that of politics. *Politics* itself was observed to be *externalized* to the status quo. Even within the confines of a dystopian scenario, *politics* was observed to be deferred. Güntan, for example, instead of working out a political configuration, goes on the verge of denying climate change:

---

[223] "Umutluyum ya. Yani çok karamsar değilim. Tamam evet hepimizin moralleri çok bozuluyor, işte seçim istediğimiz gibi gitmiyor ... Ama yine de uzun vadede düşünüyorum, 10 yıl sonra daha mı kötüye gider… Daha mı iyiye gider gibi bir soru sorsanız bana, daha iyi derim büyük ihtimalle" (Selva)

[224] "Çok korkuyorum çünkü şey böyle işte AI'lar çok gelişiyor, saçma sapan şeyler çıkıyor. İşte Taylor Swift hakkında yapılan şeyi biliyor muydunuz? O şeyi... İşte, AI seks kaseti yayınlandı.
Ya böyle saçma sapan şeyler oluyor. Çok korkutuyor beni. Özellikle yapay zekanın bu kadar gelişiyor olması …
İşte bir şey yazıyorsunuz, size senaryo falan yazıyor. Kitap yazıyor, senaryo yazıyor, fotoğraf oluşturuyor. Hiç doğmamış, olmamış insanların fotoğrafları, AI influencer'lar çıktı mesela …
Ondan çok korkutuyor beni dünyanın bu gidişatı yani" (Selva)

[225] It must be noted here that the majority of the interviewees thought politics was not necessarily a negative word, but a word that might be said to have some negative connotations.

People were saying that there was climate change and the world was going to end 100 years before today, it's been 100 years and they're still saying the same thing. I don't care at all… I let it go. I mean we're using paper straws and all that, recyling stuff… Acun hops on a jet, and ruins all our thousand-years-worth recyling, it means nothing. That's why I've been thinking it's a very stupid thing[226] (Güntan)

Although Güntan is quite aware of the shortcomings of an individual activism, instead of problematizing *Acun's jet*, for example, an image he himself draws up, he problematizes the discourse of climate change. It is almost as if there exists some kind of "mental barrier", which has been historically called "ideology", that restrics the participants from any imagination about politics that could be deemed even a bit ouf-of-the-box. Thus, in light of this, it might be argued that two kinds of lack of radical imagination were seen in the interviews. First, a *literal* lack of radical imagination, in the sense that the interviewees could not think of a radical political change, but mostly referred to a *natural change,* the *agent* of which was unknown. Second, there was an issue of what we may simply call "thinking politically". Whenever politics was not specifically referred to, the political aspect of the discussion was averted from, as if there operated an *invisible hand* continuously destroying the relationship between politics and social phenomena, i.e. ideology.

4.2.8. Foreclosure of Antagonisms (Perfect Consensus-LMC)

The phrase "level of modern civiliations" (*muasır medeniyetler seviyesi*) is a quite popular one in the discourse of Atatürkism. Having appeared in in similar conceptualizations in the speeches of Mustafa Kemal from 1925 on, it had its formulation in terms of a "level" in 1933, in his "10th Year Speech" (See Atatürk, 2006). In the speech, Mustafa Kemal talks about his objective of taking the Republic "over" the level of the modern states, thus simply repeating his endeavor of modernization, which he talked about elsewhere as well. Nonetheless, in the Atatürkist discourse, the phrase is used in a quite peculiar, even awkward sense. As it was established above in Chapter 4.2.4, the *level of modern civilizations (muasır*

---

[226] "Bundan 100 yıl önce de iklim krizi, dünya yok olacak deniyordu, 100 yıl geçti hala yok olacak deniyor. Artık hiç şey… Onu saldım ben yani. Bir de mesela biz şimdi atıyorum kağıt pipet kullanıyoruz, veya işte ne bileyim, bunu geri dönüşüme atıyoruz... İşte Acun bir jet kullanıyor zaten, bizim belki 1000 yıllık geri dönüşümümüzü çöp ediyor yani. O yüzden ben onun artık boş bir şey olduğunu düşünmeye başladım ben" (Güntan)

medeniyetler seviyesi-LMC) is a signifier of utmost importance in the discourse of Civic Atatürkism. Furthermore, it is *the* signifier that is most closely associated with Post-Politics. This is due to my observation that LMC, as a *nodal point*, quilts a state of perfect Consensus, a society without fissures, without antagonisms, without inequality, without ideology and without any kind of conflict. This chain of signification, consequently, means to the Atatürkist that *any society within which any kind of antagonism operates is not a modern civilization.* Thus, I came across many times in the interviews a claim that I found to be incredibly awkward: The claim that *there were no modern civilizations.* Even though the concept of *modernity*[227] (in English) could involve a self-reflexive discussion upon its actuality (See Osborne, 1992), when it is recalled that the word *muasır* literally means *contemporary*, the awkward nature of the suggestion becomes more visible: *There are no contemporary civilizations.*

This claim is most explicitly observed in Sumru's account. Talking about Mustafa Kemal's infamous conception of LMC, when asked to give examples of the *modern civilizations,* in other words, when asked if she could name *what those modern civilizations are*, she suggests that "there are no modern civilizations". She follows:

> I don't know if it's possible in conditions where a government exists. It seems to me that governments are restricting it. At the end of the day, every

---

[227] I use "modern" here to denote *muasır,* in order to distinguish it from *çağdaş,* which I translated as "contemporary". This decision does not involve a discussion upon the nature of modernity. There are two Turkish words in use in the discourse of Atatürkism, which "mean", in the naive sense, the same thing, modern or contemporary, but used in quite different ways. One is *muasır*, which is an old-fashioned term used by Mustafa Kemal in his infamous line *"muasır medeniyetler seviyesi"* (the level of modern states), the level of the modern/contemporary civilizations to which the modern Turkish Republic aspired to put itself. The other is *çağdaş*, a fairly newer term which means, again, modern or contemporary. However, in the discourse of Atatürkism, *muasır* is a signifier that denotes a sense of an impossibe horizon to which a society can strive to achieve, while *çağdaş* is closer to the everyday usage of "being modern". When asked about *muasır medeniyetler seviyesi,* the interviewees strictly pointed out that there were no modern civilizations, at all, around the world. However, when asked about *çağdaşlık,* the interviewees considered themselves, various countries, various behaviors or attitudes as being *çağdaş.* Although the latter is used in forms like "I am *çağdaş*", the former never appears in such a case as "I am *muasır*". The different significations of the terms may be attributed to the fact that *muasır* is an old-fashioned, out-of-use word in Turkish. Nevertheless, it is observed that *muasır*, in time, came to signify the pure homogeneity of society and the complete foreclosure of antagonisms, towards which a society must strive. In contrast, *çağdaş* is used in its proper sense of "being of the present, the presentness" in the examples about societies, and even "secularism" or "drinking alcohol" in the case of politicizations and individualities. In this thesis, *muasır* will be translated as "modern", while *çağdaş* will be translated as contemporary.

government in the world has an ideology and when you have an ideology you cannot be a completely modern civilization[228] (Sumru)

Interestingly enough, many of the interviewees agreed with Sumru in her argument that there were no *modern civilizations*, because the precise mode of articulation of the signifier of LMC functions in such a way in the discouse of Atatürkism that it refers to the *impossible horizon of homogeneity*. Sumru is quick to denote the impossibility of LMC once again, in that the first stipulation sublates itself into another impossibility:

But there could not be a future without governments[229] (Sumru)

When the obvious consequence of the suggestion is presented to her, that "no one could ever be modern", she redefines the LMC in an asymptotic fashion, as not only an impossible horizon, but an *impossible horizon towards which every society must strive*:

We can't completely be [muasır], but we can progress to be, we can strive for it. However, I'm still not sure if it is completely possible[230] (Sumru)

Finally, when asked to clarify what she means, she gives out the exact explanation of what she understands from *modernity*:

A world that could get on with each other, a world that has no conflict, a more peaceful world[231] (Sumru)

Therefore, it is clear that *modernity (muasırlık)* is a signifier that quilts a peaceful condition where everyone gets along, where there are no conflicts and no ideology. Correspondingly, the signifier of *the level* functions precisely within the matrix of *modernity* as a guardian that guarantees the impossibility of its realization. To clarify,

---

[228] "Yani, hükümetler olduğu sürece çok mümkün mü bilmiyorum ya. Hükümetler biraz kısıtlıyor gibi. Yani sonuçta her hükümetin belli bir ideolojisi var şu an dünyada ve belli bir ideoloji olduğu sürece tam olarak muasır medeniyet olamazsın gibi" (Sumru)

[229] "Ama hükümetsiz bir gelecek de olamaz" (Sumru)

[230] "Tam olarak olamayız, ama olmak için ilerleyebiliriz, olmak için çabalayabiliriz, ama tam olarak mümkün mü bilmiyorum" (Sumru)

[231] "Birbiriyle anlaşabilen, çatışmanın olmadığı, daha huzurlu bir dünya" (Sumru)

the words *of* and *civilizations* do not have any part in the semantics of *level of modern civilizations*. The quilting agents in this example are the words *level* and *modernity*. While the latter indicates the conditions of perfect Consensus and the complete foreclosure of antagonisms, the former seeks to destabilize the possibility of the latter at all times (as if it were not impossible to begin with). *Modernity* is a desired condition, and *level* always reminds the desire of its asymptotic character while nonetheless reproducing the infinity as the asymptote gets closer. Bülent, as well, lays down the same framework with that of Sumru. Even the steps towards the definition seem to be resembling each other. Nonetheless, rather than ideology, Bülent argues that it is capitalism due to which there would be no modern states today:

> I would define a modern civilization as a civilization that went through the developments I talked about earlier, went through the technological developments, with a high level of welfare, with a low level of crime, low level of unemployment, low level of economic discrepancy between the classes[232] (Bülent)

When asked whether he could give an example of a country that fit those criteria, Bülent explains, in the same way as Sumru does, that there are no modern countries in the world right now, due to capitalism:

> There's no example according to my definition. It's because capitalism reigns all over the world… And the class separation that I talked about is huge[233] (Bülent)

Other similar accounts were observed, regarding the claim that *there are no modern civilizations*. The actuality of *modernity* kept hitting on certain barriers regarding various antagonistic points in societies.

> I don't think a society who has not solved income inequality could be a modern civilization[234] (Serdar)

---

[232] "Ya muasır medeniyet, daha önce dediğim gibi teknolojik gelişmeleri yaşamış, refah seviyesi yüksek, suç oranı düşük, işsizlik oranı düşük, sınıflar arasındaki, ekonomik sınıflar arasındaki fark düşük bir şekilde tanımlarım" (Bülent)

[233] "Bu tanıma göre yok. Çünkü dünyanın genelinde zaten kapitalizm hakim… Ve o bahsettiğim sınıf ayrımı çok büyük" (Bülent)

[234] "Bugün gelir eşitsizliğini çözememiş bir toplumun muasır medeniyet olamayacağını düşünüyorum" (Serdar)

I don't think there are any civilizations that we could call modern. I mean everyone has their own problems. There's war. When we talk about modern civilizations I understand something more abstract. These kinds of problematic things seem to me to affect the condition of modernity[235] (Nükhet)

Modern civilizations… I wouldn't include America for example. We see certain incidents where individuals are not feeling safe regarding their race. In this sense, I would not include America[236] (Ümit)

I can't personally name any civilization as such. I see most civilizations in a state of decline. The world civilization in general, that is[237] (Zeytin)

The chain of signification under LMC included "choosing science over religion" (Roni), "enlightened" (Roni), "freedom" (Güntan), "economic and intellectual development" (Ayşe). All that being said, there was one interview where *modernity* was articulated with a sense of *actuality,* rather than a constant deferral to an impossible horizon. As established in Chapter 4.2.4., Zeytin, who suggested in the earlier parts of the interview that there were no modern civilization, interestingly claimed in the later parts that Turkey was a modern country, due to its close resemblance to the developed countries in the world, but with a surprising twist:

Turkey is a modern civilization right now. You know, with authoritarianism and all that (laughing). I mean, what we see all around those other modern civilizations we see in Turkey[238] (Zeytin)

4.3. Entanglements: Binary oppositions in Civic Atatürkism

This chapter will discuss *entanglements*, a specific linguistic formation under which the Civic Atatürkist discourse takes shape. Entanglements are, simply, binary oppositions which function within a discourse, and around which a discourse functions. More detail upon the issue may be found in Chapter 4.1.

---

[235] "Ben bugün muasır diyebileceğimiz bir medeniyet olduğunu düşünmüyorum. Yani herkesin sıkıntıları var. Savaş var. Şimdi burada muasır medeniyetler diyince ben biraz daha soyut bir şey anlıyorum. Böyle sıkıntılı şeyler sanki muasırlığı etkiliyor gibi" (Nükhet)

[236] "Muasır medeniyetler… Amerika'yı saymam mesela. Özellikle ırk üzerinden insanların güvende hissetmediklerini gördüğümüz hadiseler yaşanıyor. Bu anlamda Amerika'yı katmam" (Ümit)

[237] "Bugün ben şahsen baktığımda hiçbir medeniyeti öyle adlandıramıyorum. Çünkü her, çoğu medeniyeti aslında biraz gerilemede görüyorum. Dünya medeniyetini genel olarak" (Zeytin)

[238] "Türkiye şu an aslında muasır bir medeniyet bence. Hani o otoriterleşme ve saire (laughing). Yani tam da diğer o muasır medeniyetlerin sahip olduğu olgular Türkiye'de yaşanıyor" (Zeytin)

4.3.1. Reason/Rational/Logic/Science-Unreason/Irrational/Heart/Doxa

Every discourse has its own peculiar mode of *imagination* of a political space. Consequently, they all have, as well, a peculiar *parcelling* of that *imagined* political space. It is a general trait of the Atatürkist discourse that it divides the political space into two in its own peculiar way. As established above, Necmi Erdoğan suggests:

> The Neo-Kemalist discourse separates the political space into two antagonistic camps, like secular/anti-secular, republican/anti-republican, modern/reactionary, Kemalist/2. Republican, nationalist[ulusalcı]/separationist. Against the Kemalists stands a counter-revolutionary frontier constituted by sharia supporters, Kurdists and Second Republicanists. Both wings of this polarity creates their own chain of equivalence (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 586)

Therefore, (Civic) Atatürkism, as well, possesses its own conceptualization of political space, and its own parcellations. Furthermore, it is built upon other, already-existing binaries that it "borrows" from other discourses as well. I endeavor to explain the binaries that are functional in (Civic) Atatürkism (and over which the discourse is built) in terms of *entanglements*[239]. The first of these is undoubtedly the entanglement (or opposition) between *the rational* and *the irrational,* which is the most commonly expressed opposition in the discourse of (Civic) Atatürkism.

It was observed in the interviews that there was a strong entanglement between the signifiers of *rationality* and *irrationality* (and their respective superpositions of reason, logic, science *and* unreason, heart, doxa). The discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism strictly revolves around a separation between *the rational* and *the irrational*. This is found to be a purely positional relationship, which is to be explained below. The interviewees' imagination of the society and political space rested on this separation in general, but most aggressively observed with regards to voting behavior and political identification. They, the Atatürkists, aligned themselves on the side of the *rational*, while aligning various sections of society on the side of the *irrational*. Nükhet explains, for example, with her choice of the word *logic* that:

---

[239] The reader is encouraged to re-visit Chapter 4.1. in order to get a more detailed picture of entanglements, or what could be simply called binaries.

But we have a difference between us and them. We follow logic in our actions. I mean I'm not voting in terms of fanaticism. I am looking at the programmes of the parties, I am watching the TV programs of party leaders. They are following their emotions when voting. They are supporting political parties as if supporting football teams[240] (Nükhet)

Therefore, as is clear in Nükhet's account, politics is observed to be imagined as simply a *mode of reason.* Anything outside reason or logic concerning politics was imagined to be in a counter-position of *rational politics*, relegated to *irrationality* and sought to be dismissed from politics. Ayşe, for example, in describing a political debate, puts forward:

For example, when you're talking to someone you assert certain things as counter-arguments, you say this is like this, and that is like that, but no, says the other, and chooses the opposite. Even though you say the exact opposite, they do not accept it. This is because there is no logic here, there is only a commitment of the heart. They don't think logically[241] (Ayşe)

In what follows, she stongly asserts that she thinks "logically". Nonetheless, ironically, when presented with the fact that she voted for a candidate she did not want in the first place, she legitimizes her action as a choice made in favor of the "lesser of two evils". The binary opposition, thus, was understood to be not established in terms of a specific operation, but in terms of *positions[242],* since any action within both frameworks could be legitimized as rational on certain grounds. Although one might claim to act rationally, what counts within the binary opposition is the *position* of the subject. Roni's opposition between science and religion, thus, is exemplary in terms of this *positionality*:

To whom can we call Atatürkist… I think I can call anyone an Atatürkist who follows science closely, who does not instrumentalize science for their

---

[240] "Ama onlarla aramızda şey farkı var. Biz mantığa göre hareket ediyoruz. Yani ben öyle fanatiklik yapmıyorum oy verirken. Partilerin vaatlerine bakıyorum, parti başkanlarının programlarını izliyorum falan. Onlar oy verirken duygulara göre hareket ediyorlar. Takım tutar gibi parti tutuyorlar" (Nükhet)

[241] "Bir insana mesela konuştuğunda karşı argüman olarak bir şeyleri sunuyorsun, bu böyle ama şu şöyle diyorsun, ama hayır, yok, diğeri diyor. Tam tersini söylemene rağmen kabul etmiyor. Çünkü mantık yok aslında, kalben bir bağlılık var. Mantıken düşünülmüyor mesela" (Ayşe)

[242] *Positionality* here does not mean *locality.* Entanglements are, following the description of quantum entanglements, *non-local,* in the sense that even though they might have originated in a particular discourse, they transcend that discourse and behave in an intra-discoursal way. Quantum particles have the property of *position* (and polarization, momentum and spin), being nonetheless *non-local.*

152

ideology. I mean in terms of ideology, what I mean could be a religion, a view. Atatürk has a lot of speeches about this, you know. Like his statement that if my words contradict science, choose science[243] (Roni)

The *positionality* observed in Roni's account functions on the previously parcelled (opposite) positions of science and religion. In other words, it is not that Atatürkists are rational, therefore they follow science; on the contrary, someone is an Atatürkist only insofar as they position themselves in alignment with science. This *positionality* is also observed in another superposition of the binary opposition of *rational* and *irrational.* Serdar's opposition between *individual* and *society* lays on the same opposition between *rational* and *irrational*. The *individual,* defined as "a person who reads books and who could make decisions by themselves", is posited as a separate entity against *society*, with the latter being defined in terms of a culture of "not reading books":

> Someone who is an individual for me… For example, the reading rates in Turkey are getting higher in a piecemeal fashion. People don't even read 10 books a year. Someone who could do that, for example, has stepped out of society and did the right thing… If I am to give simple examples, a person who reads 10 books a year is an individual for me. Since what we have learned from our elders, what the society forces on us is built upon not reading[244] (Serdar)

The *them* that was talked about, in counterposition vis-à-vis the Civic Atatürkist (individual), was revealed to be, thus, *society.* This quite close to the disappearance of the signifier *populism (halkçılık)* in the discourse of Civic Atatürkism, as established in Chapter 4.2.4.. The designation of the *them* as *society* was a common theme in the interviews. Ümit, for example, directly rests his understanding on an opposition between *reason* versus *society.* In his account, both Roni and Serdar's explanations seem to combine, as he uses *society* and *religion* interchangeably:

---

[243] "Kime Atatürkçü diyebiliriz… Bence bilimi yakından takip eden, bilimi herhangi bir ideolojisine devşirmeyen insanlar olarak tanımlayabilirim Atatürkçülüğü. Yani bunun, ideolojiden kastım bir din olabilir, bir görüş olabilir. Çünkü Atatürk'ün bununla alakalı birçok sözü var biliyorsunuz. İşte benim sözümle bilim ters düşerse, bilimi seçin gibisinden" (Roni)

[244] "Benim için birey olabilen kişi… Şu an mesela Türkiye'deki okuma oranları yavaş yavaş yükseliyor da olsa az. Yani yılda 10 kitap okuyan insan neredeyse yok. Bunu yapabilen insan, mesela, toplumun dışına çıkıp doğru bir şey yapabilmiş demektir… Basit örnekler vermek gerekirse yılda 10 kitap okuyabilen bir insan Türkiye'de birey olarak tanımlanabilir bir insan. Çünkü toplumun bize baskıladığı, bizim büyüklerimizden öğrendiğimiz şeyler okumamak üzerine kurulu" (Serdar)

> We must take actions towards reason and civilization, without denying the reality of the society in which we live… We live in a predominantly Muslim society[245] (Ümit)

The binary of the *rational* and *irrational*, thus, rests on the separation of society between two: The part of the *rationals* (regardless of their rationality, sometimes articulated in terms of education), and the part of the *irrationals* (the "essence" or "reality" of *society*, which is defined in terms of Islam in Ümit's account). It is interesting that the *claim to the name of society* was afforded to the latter, as the Civic Atatürkist is observed to be trying to distinguish itself from an imagined but very much concrete (part of the) society. Politics, at the heart of this *split* society, thus, was understood to be a an *activity of Reason,* which was done properly only by the former. The generation of a distance away from *society*, and the privileging of the *individual,* thus, reveals a crucial dynamic of the hyperpoliticized character of Civic Atatürkism, with its *Post-Political imprint.* Politics is designated to be not a collective endeavor, but much more of an *entrepreneurial endeavor,* acted upon by the *individual* who stands opposite *society*.

4.3.2. Lifestyle-Ideology

Another binary opposition on which the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism (*the organizationless*) rests is the opposition between *lifestyle* and *ideology.* It was no surprise that such opposition came to the fore in the interviews, since this, as the fourth argument of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism, was one of the constitutive points of Civic Atatürkism. Furthermore, as another expected point, this opposition was found to be at work, only in reverse (with a counter-valorization of the signifiers in entanglement), in the discourse of the *organizationed* (especially Neo-Kemalists) as well. While the Civic Atatürkist is observed to be privileging *Atatürkism as lifestyle* over *Atatürkism as ideology,* the privilege is reversed for the *organizationed*, with a stronger preference of ideology. The precise functioning of the entanglement worked in favor of one or the other, assigning positive or negative values to either term. This opposition holds for most interviews (with the exceptions of Ümit, Serdar, Güntan,

---

[245] "Hani toplumun gerçeklerini de yadsımadan daha çok akıl ve medeniyet yolunda aksiyonlar alınması gerektiğini düşünüyorum… Çoğuna yakını Müslüman olan bir toplumda yaşıyoruz" (Ümit)

Tülay who could not provide a strict definition of Atatürkism) where the organizationless were choosing lifestyle and the organizationed were choosing ideology, with the exception of Sumru, who had both a *lifestyle (Atatürkism)* and and *ideology (Turkism)*, which is to be explored below. Even then, as an organizationed participant, she was seen to be privileging her ideology over her lifestyle, as was observed in all of the organizationed participants. Moreover, this binary opposition was at work in the demarcation between Atatürkism and Kemalism. Etyen Mahçupyan's assertion that the difference between Kemalism and Atatürkism lied in *ideologylessness* (Mahçupyan, 2021) was observed to be exactly the case here. It was seen, thus, as it was established in Chapter 4.2.5., that the non-organized were strongly preferring *Atatürkism* over *Kemalism,* and vice versa for the organized, as Atatürkism came to be associated more with lifestyle, and Kemalism with an ideology.

It was observed that the non-organized tended to define Atatürkism as a *lifestyle.* Even though the exact wording differed, in that it was presented in the forms of "lifestyle" (Selva, Timuçin, Nükhet), "life view" (Ayşe) and "inheritance" (Bülent), the signification was found to be the same, in a strict opposition towards *ideology*:

> I don't think Atatürkism is an ideology. It could be named… A life view… Yes, a life view. I think ideology is used for things that have sharp boundaries, for me at least. However, in Atatürkism, there are things that you think in your mind, things that you think are true, according to your ideas… And there are things that you think are good, it is shaped accordingly… Ideology is something that has sharp boundaries, I think[246] (Ayşe)

> What I understand from Atatürkism is a lifestyle, mostly[247] (Timuçin)

> I think it's a lifestyle. I'm not defining it in strict terms, that is for me at least[248] (Nükhet)

> It could be a lifestyle. A collection of ideas. I don't know exactly, Atatürkism for me is more, how shall I say… It's not like Marxism. Atatürkism for me is

---

[246] "Bence Atatürkçülük bir ideoloji değil. Bir… Yani hayat görüşü denebilir… Aynen, bir hayat görüşü. İdeoloji daha bence keskin sınırları olan şeyler için kullanılıyor, bana göre yani. Ama onda hani aklında düşündüğün, doğru olduğunu düşündüğün şeyler var Atatürkçülükte, onun da kendi fikirlere dayanarak... Ve hani iyi yaptığını düşündüğün şeyler var aslında, bunlara göre şekil alıyor… Ama ideoloji daha keskin sınırı olan bir şey bence" (Ayşe)

[247] "Benim Atatürkçülükten anladığım hayat şekli ya, genelde" (Timuçin)

[248] "Bence bir hayat biçimi denebilir. Çok öyle sert tanımlara şey yapmıyorum kendi adıma" (Nükhet)

more of a… Lifestyle. Ideas… It's somewhere where we uphold his ideas in the background at all times[249] (Selva)

It's not an ideology, as I said. It's more like adopting Atatürk's views, seeing them as an inheritance and endeavoring to continue them[250] (Bülent)

This binary opposition was observed to be at play in the distinguishment between Kemalism and Atatürkism as well, as explained in detail in Chapter 4.2.5.. Although most interviewees did not mind defining themselves as both, they nonetheless indicated that they thought the terms had certain differences. Moreover, the organizationed (Neo-Kemalist) reversal of the entanglement, the valorization of ideology, was explained in Chapter 4.2.5. as well. Therefore, it is fitting to only take a closer look at Sumru's exceptional case where both *lifestyle* and *ideology* were found to be co-existing, with the hierarchical superiority of the latter over the former nonetheless.

Sumru argues that Atatürkism, for her, is a lifestyle, rather than an ideology. Nonetheless, she posits it as a branch under Turkism, suggesting that Mustafa Kemal was actually a Turkist first and foremost. Furthermore, she posits Turkism under the higher category of nationalism. She argues that nationalism was, in fact, the *highest signifier* in the constitution of Atatürkism, and suggests that Atatürkism was build strictly around nationalism, and that nationalism had a superiority over all other *arrows,* which later obtained a lower position among the remaining 5 *arrows*. Therefore, she distinguishes between nationalism and the other 5 *arrows* in such a way that it is placed above Atatürkism, and even above Turkism, as their constitutive element. The remaning 5 arrows are argued to be "coming later" in the chain of signifiers of Atatürkism.

It seems to me more like a lifestyle, not ideology. For example, if you'd ask my ideology, I would say I am a Turkist, but I try to lead my life as attached to Atatürk. This is because Turkism is not something that I could go to when I wonder what I should do. It is just a structure that my ideas are close to, or my

---

[249] "Ya bir yaşam biçimi olabilir. İşte fikir bütünü. Tam bilmiyorum, Atatürkçülük bende çok daha, nasıl diyeyim... Marksizm gibi bir yerden değil bence. Atatürkçülük benim için… Daha çok yaşam tarzı. Böyle fikirlerin... Hep arka planda onun öğretilerini taşıdığımız bir yerde bence" (Selva)

[250] "Bir ideoloji değil dediğim gibi. Biraz daha Atatürk'ün ilkelerini benimseyip, miras olarak görüp onu devam ettirmeye çalışmak" (Bülent)

desires are similar to. But in terms of Atatürkism, when I am hopeless, I tell myself that I cannot be hopeless, because Atatürk says one should not be hopeless. I lead my life in accordance with this. I see Atatürkism just like that[251] (Sumru)

She asserts that she consults to Atatürkism for a more "realistic" attitude. Since Turkism is not "realistic" enough, in her understanding, there is the need for a more practical view that can offer simpler solutions. In her very complex scheme of ideology and lifestyle, she privileges ideology which is defined to be Turkism; however, the aims of Turkism she does not find "realistic" enough to be applicable, thus she turns to Atatürkism as a lifestyle, the aims of which she assigns an applicability.

> I mean yes, my thought is directly Turkist. The importance of Turkishness is different for me, as I wouldn't think the same of someone from another nation with a Turk. Not in the sense of superiority, but it's just not the same. I want to do things that concern all Turks in general, but that is not exactly possible. In such cases, Atatürkism becomes much more reasonable, in the sense of Turks in Turkey, for example[252] (Sumru)

As a final point, even though she claims that she does not designate Turkishness in terms of superiority, in the later parts of the interview, she talks about the "blood" of the races, and asserts that even though she tries to build her understanding of Turkishness on secular terms, she cannot overlook the aspect of "blood".

4.3.3. Secular/Modern/Contemporary-Bigot/Religious/Villager/Reactionary

One of the strongest entanglements that was observed in the discourse of Atatürkism was that between *the secular* and *the religious* (with their respective variations of modern, contemporary *and* bigot, villager, reactionary). This entanglement is quite

---

[251] "Biraz da hayat tarzı gibi geliyor, çok ideoloji değil. Yani mesela ideolojimi sorsanız Türkçüyüm derim, ama biraz da Atatürk'e bağlı olarak hayatımı yürütmeye çalışıyorum. Çünkü Türkçülük çok şey değil, böyle, acaba ne yapsam dediğinde başvurabileceğin bir şey değil. Sadece fikirlerimin daha yatkın olduğu, ya da isteklerimin o tarz olduğu bir yapı. Ama Atatürkçülük olduğunda mesela, işte, umutsuzluk konusunda umutsuz olamam diyorum, çünkü Atatürk umutsuz olunmaması gerektiğini söylüyor, diyorum mesela kendime. Biraz daha hayatımdaki yolu ona göre çiziyorum. Atatürkçülüğü öyle görüyorum." (Sumru)

[252] "Yani evet, düşüncem Türkçülük direkt. Türklüğün benim için önemi ayrı, yani diğer milletten birisini bir Türk'le aynı koymam. Daha üstün anlamında değil, ama benim için aynı yerde olmaz mesela. Genel olarak bütün Türkleri düşünerek bir şeyler yapmak isterim, ama mesela bu da çok mümkün olmuyor. O zaman Atatürkçülük daha mantıklı oluyor, Türkiye'deki Türkler anlamında mesela" (Sumru)

close, and even could be argued to be related in a sense, with the first entanglement, that between *rationality* and *irrationality.* The *positionality* that was exposed in the first is found to be effective here as well. It is the case with entanglements that I propose that they are *non-local* (a characteristic of quantum entanglement), or inter-discoursal in other words, in the sense that (even if they might have originated in a particular discourse) the entanglement exists in various degrees of opposition (with changing counter-valorization of each signifier in differing degrees) in many discourses[253].

Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, in 1963, had suggested that "one cannot be a sharia supporter and an Atatürkist at the same time"[254] (Velidedeoğlu, 1963, p. 8). More than 30 years after him, in 1994, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan would go on to state what seems to be the same sentence: "You cannot be a *laik* and a Muslim at the same time"[255] (Hürriyet, 2001). These statements are the perfect crystallization of the entanglement between secularism and religion. Both Velidedeoğlu's and Erdoğan's statements not only explain perfectly the logic of entanglement, that the opposing signifiers are always in counter-values, w*ithout the possibility of a surplus in the entangled totality* (the positive valorization of both signifiers), but also explain the inter-discoursal character of the entanglement, its non-locality. The entanglement, or the opposition within the binary coupling, is so strong that it forces itself into various discourses, it does not stay in the originary discourse, i.e. it is *non-local* (which does not mean non-positional). Even though, for example, we might argue that this entanglement originated in Kemalist discourse (even though any claim on the "originary discourse" is found to be irrelevant, since the entanglement transcends its "originary discourse"), the opposition functions in a perfect symmetry in what could be termed an Islamist discourse, with simply the opposite valorization of each signifier. It is not the case in Erdoğan's speech that there is a *disentanglement,* i.e. the wholesale abolishing of the opposition altogether, but just variations on the same entanglement, a simple counter-valorization.

---

[253] Thus, positionality and locality are different, as in quantum entanglement.

[254] "Hem şeriatçı hem Atatürkçü olmak mümkün olmaz"

[255] "Hem laik hem Müslüman olunmaz"

Güntan defines "contemporaneity" in terms of the strict negation of "bigotedness". This example is a perfect one in terms of binary oppositions, i.e. entanglements, where one signifier is *directly quilted* by the negation of another:

> Am I a contemporary (modern) person? I think I am a contemporary (modern) person. I mean, when I say contemporary (modern), I refer to not being bigoted… And you're going to ask me what I mean by not being bigoted… I can define as bigoted the intervention into people's lives or pushing their thoughts, their religious beliefs etc. as if everyone's under their responsibility, messing with people… I can define these as bigotedness[256] (Güntan)

As observed, Güntan designates his definition of "contemporariness/modernity" in terms of its opposition to bigotry. His suggestion that "when I say contemporary, I refer to not being bigoted" explains the fundamental logic of entanglements. It is through the direct mediation of another signifier (i.e. direct negation), or what could be called the direct deferral to another (very specific) signifier, that the signifier at hand obtains its "meaning". This mediation or deferral is not random, as the first signifier is observed to be quilted *at all times, in all discourses* by its specifically entangled opposite. Ayşe's explanation, much more obscure than Güntan's in terms of its definition, is more revealing of the *positionality* that was exposed in the first entanglement. Here, the same positionality is found to be at function. The imagination of the social functions over a *split* around which are assigned two radically different positions. Just as in the first entanglement, the positions are assigned regardless of the content of the elements:

> For example, my thinking can't be the same with an old guy living in a village. His conditions in his lifetime and my conditions now are quite different. And his brain is much more accustomed to the conditions of his time. I mean of course there are people who developed themselves, changed their perspective, but I think people can't change many things after a certain age. And his perspective can't be the same with mine. I am, of course, more modern when compared to him[257] (Ayşe)

---

[256] "Ben çağdaş biri miyim? Ben çağdaş biri olduğumu düşünüyorum. Yani şöyle, çağdaşlık derken, yobaz olmamak... Ama diyiceksiniz ki yobaz olmamaktan kastın ne... İnsanların hayatlarına müdahale etmek, veya işte kendi düşüncesini, işte dini inancını ve saire, insanların da sanki onun sorumluluğu altındaymış gibi, insanlara karışmak... Bunu yobazlık olarak tanımlayabilirim" (Güntan)

[257] "Mesela köyde yaşayan bir amcayla benim düşüncem aynı olamaz. Onun yaşadığı zaman dilimindeki koşullarla benimki çok farklı şu anda. Ve o, o zamanki koşulların beyin olarak ona alışık daha çok. Hani, tabii ki kendini geliştirmiş, değiştirmiş bakış açısında olan insanlar vardır ama hani, insanlar bir

Regardless of the possibility of repositioning, opened up here with the "developing of oneself, changing of perspective", and rapidly closed with regards to its impossibility "after a certain age", the *split* is found to be *external to the content*. In other words, the *split* precedes and functions through the alignment. The "old guy living in a village" has already been assigned a position *against the modern*. Any repositioning is seen to be impossible (or rendered impossible by the *other side* of the split). This is, once again, quite close to the first entanglement in the sense that *the individual/the modern* is placed directly against *the society/the villager*.

4.3.4. Real Atatürkism-Fake Atatürkism

Due to the very nature of Atatürkism being a floating signifier, as established in Chapters 3 and 4.2.4., there are oppositions against its various fluctuations. In such a scheme, every Atatürkist discourse places itself as the universal, against others' particularities. The Kemalist/Atatürkist discourse has long functioned on a separation between "real" and "fake" Atatürkisms. Levent Köker, for example, suggests that

> the words Kemalism and Atatürkism is often made topics of different and competing interpretations, and every interpretor or political current blames its adversary as fake with regards to its own 'real' Kemalism or Atatürkism (Köker, 2021, pp. 97-98).

The earliest designation of a "real Atatürkism/Kemalism" against a "fake" one goes back to 1963, to my knowledge. Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, in a piece titled "Gerçek Atatürkçülük Nedir?" [What is Real Atatürkism?] (1963), written for the periodical *Kemalizm,* which began to be circulated after the coup of 1960 by Türkiye Kemalistler Teşkilatı [Turkish Organization of Kemalists], by a group close to Cemal Gürsel (whose pictures and speeches often occur in the magazine), explains his designation of "real Atatürkism" as "a phrase you might find weird" (Velidedeoğlu, 1963, p. 1) in beginning his piece. He then goes on to designate the difference between the "real" Atatürkism and its fakes as the difference between a real piece of art and its forged copies. In his designation of the "fake" Atatürkists as "politicians", it is obvious that he points to *Demokrat Parti* (Democrat Party) and *Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party), with

---

yaşı geçtikten sonra bence çok da bir şeyleri değiştiremez. Ve onun zaten bakış açısı da benimki aynı olamaz mesela. Ben ona göre tabii ki daha modern kalırım" (Ayşe)

his mentions of the "Law for the Preservation of Atatürk"[258], and Islamism. He designates the "real" Atatürkist as one that is on the side of progess, secularism and the *six arrows.* At the end of his piece, he cries for the resurrection of Mustafa Kemal, in order that he can teach everyone *once and for all* what "real" Atatürkism is. He does not "blame" *people*, in that sense, due to his claim that they are deceived by politicians, in his paternal referral to them as "the ignorant people" (Velidedeoğlu, 1963, pp. 1-8). The entanglement between "real" and "fake" Atatürkists, in line with the denial of the *empty* and *floating* characteristics of Kemalism/Atatürkism established in Chapter 3 and 3.1., continued to operate in the discourse of Kemalism/Atatürkism. İlhan Selçuk (2019), in his piece in the Yön magazine, written in 1966, invented the term "Wardrobe Atatürkists" (Gardrop Atatürkçüleri) to designate his own version of "fake" Atatürkism. In his piece, Selçuk bases his explanation on the term *tenperestlik (body-worshipping),* and suggests that the "fake" Atatürkists are those who worship the Ottoman body, while wearing indifferently the Atatürkists garments in order to be legitimized. Thus, just like Velidedeoğlu's differentiation in terms of a real piece of art and its forged copies, Selçuk distinguishes between the body and garments in devising his separation. This entanglement between the "real" and the "fake" Atatürkists went so further in the following years that Asım Aslan, who had been the topic of an important discussion in Chapter 3 with his *banana of jouissance,* suggests that the *Atatürkist political space* is divided between two, between the "real" Atatürkists and "fake" ones (Aslan, 1999, p. 162), and lays down the most detailed list of "fake" Atatürkists with 17 different designations: "Parrot Atatürkists", "Parade Atatürkists", "Commercial Atatürkists", "Fashion Atatürkists", "Spirit Atatürkists" and so on (Aslan, 1999, pp. 157-162).

Therefore, this was, obviously, an expected entanglement. As it had been, once again, established in Chapter 4.2.4., there were who articulated Atatürkism with "social democracy" (Roni), "feminism" (Tülay, Selva), and "republican leftism" (Zeytin), in addition to whether it was closer to the Left or the Right. It was observed in the interviews that the interviewees, by their very negation of certain other Atatürkists/Kemalists, established their particular mode of Atatürkism as the *real* one,

---

[258] A law enacted in 1951 by Democrat Party.

against terms like "wardrobe Atatürkist" (Roni), "keyboard Atatürkist" (Leylek), "moderate Atatürkist" (Leylek), and *Ataputçu* (Güntan). It was no surprise that this binary was more strongly expressed by the *organizationed* interviewees, since they defined Atatürkism/Kemalism as an *ideology*, rather than the more-flexible definition of *lifestyle.* Roni, a member of CHP, for example, suggests:

> I think there is such a distinction. This is because we see that people try to legitimize their various actions in the guise of Atatürkism. We can see this clearly in politics. Various parties, by saying that they are Atatürk's party, and many people within the party, could do things that are quite contrary to Atatürkism. And they, by using populist discourse, claim that they are Atatürkists. I think they are wardrobe Atatürkists. I think we need such a distinction[259] (Roni)

Nevertheless, he is quite conscious of the *empty* and *floating* character of Atatürkism, in that he acknowledges the "flexible" character of its elements, and its ability to articulate into different signifiers:

> For example, when we look at things like İzmir Economics Congress, those could be related to a more liberal economy. However, things like etatism, populism could be related to a more left framework[260] (Roni)

Leylek, a member of ADT, as a different example, generates a similar Atatürkist political space and distinguishes between his Atatürkism and what he calls "keyboard Atatürkism" or "moderate Atatürkism", quite close to all the definitions of "fake" Atatürkisms explained above. It is worth noticing that he distinguishes between the *presentation (which denotes fake)* and the *unconscious (which denotes real)*, in a quite similar fashion to İlhan Selçuk's distinguishment between *garment* and *body*:

> This is a tactic used in active politics. Presenting yourself in a guise, in order to legitimize yourself, and then laying down your unconscious, doing what you

---

[259] "Böyle bir ayrım olduğunu düşünüyorum açıkçası. Çünkü insanlar çeşitli davranışlarını Atatürkçülük kisvesi altında meşrulaştırmaya çalışabiliyor. Bunu siyasette gayet açık ve net bir şekilde görebiliyoruz. Çeşitli partiler adı altında, biz Atatürk'ün partisiyiz diyerek, mesela o parti içerisinde bulunan birçok kişi aslında Atatürkçülüğe aykırı hareketler yapabiliyor. Bunlar da açıkçası o popülist söylemden faydalanarak kendilerini Atatürkçü olarak addediyorlar. Bence onlar gardrop Atatürkçüsü. Bence böyle bir ayrım yapmamız gerektiğini düşünüyorum ben" (Roni)

[260] "Mesela İzmir İktisat Kongresi'nden falan olsun işte, onlar biraz daha liberal ekonomiye çekilebilir. Ama devletçilik olsun, halkçılık olsun buralar daha çok sol kesime çekebilir" (Roni)

really sought to do. In addition, we make an extra definition as well. Keyboard Atatürkism, or moderate Atatürkism[261] (Leylek)

In the following, he suggests that the "moderate Atatürkists" were a result of the coups. In his understanding, the coups installed a wrong sense of Atatürkism in the people that since people thought the republic was safeguarded by the army (after the various coups), they did not need to be as strict Atatürkists as in the past. Zeytin, another member of ADT, on the other hand, reverses the relationship established by Leylek that it was the identification of Kenan Evren with Atatürkism that people were being distanced from it:

> Maybe it's because of the fact that the representation of Atatürkism is seen in the wrong people. I mean February 28, for example, everyone deems this Atatürkist, but I don't actually see it like that. Or even Kenan Evren could be called an Atatürkist. That's why I think people are being distanced from Atatürkism. That might be one of the problems[262] (Zeytin)

The non-organizationed, albeit their general difference vis-à-vis the organizationed interviewees, were still seen to be preserving the entanglement in some forms and degrees nonetheless, as seen in Güntan's conceptualization of *Ataputçu*. However, the "fake" Atatürkists this time, different from the accounts of the organizationed, were the organizationed themselves, with their strict privileging of ideology, a trait that Civic Atatürkists did not find acceptable. This is seen to be in line with Özpek's earlier suggestion that Civic Atatürkism endeavored to differentiate itself from the "unpleasant" Atatürkism of the Neo-Kemalist discourse (Medyascope, 2022).

4.3.5. Other Entanglements

It was observed that there were other entanglements around which the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism functioned, which were not as commonly stumbled upon in the

---

[261] "Bu aktif siyasette kullanılan bir taktik. Kendini meşrulaştırmak için önce bir şekle bürünüp sonra bilinçaltını ortaya koyma, esas gayeleri gerçekleştirme. Ekstra olarak biz şöyle bir tanım da kuruyoruz. İşte klavye Atatürkçülüğü, ya da ılımlı Atatürkçülük" (Leylek).

[262] "Belki veya işte Atatürkçülüğün temsilinin yanlış insanlarda görülmesi. Yani işte 28 Şubat, mesela hani herkes böyle Atatürkçü bir şey olarak adlandırıyor ama aslında ben öyle görmüyorum mesela. Veya hatta Kenan Evren bile Atatürkçü olarak adlandırılabiliyor. O yüzden insanların biraz Atatürkçülükten uzaklaştığını düşünüyorum o yüzden. Sorunların sebeplerinden biri de bu olabilir aslında" (Zeytin)

interviews. Although I am compelled to suggest that the rarity in the instances of the expression of such binaries is most probably due to the fact that my questions did not revolve around them, it will suffice to simply state them here. Further studies that specifically address the content of such binaries may reveal that they hold a more common and central position in the discourse *of* (Civic) Atatürkism.

First, the interviews revealed that there was an entanglement between *education in native language (anadilde eğitim)* and *national unity (milli birlik)*. Such binary was expressed both by a member of ADT and an organizationless interviewee. In the Atatürkist discourse, whenever the former was uttered, there seemed to be a loss in the latter (and vice versa, but in a more non-conscious, obscure way). Even though in one of the cases the exact language was not specified, the signifier *native language* was understood to be denoting *Kurdish*. In both interviews, *education in native language* was immediately related with *separation (bölünme)* and contraposited against *unity*:

> The solution of the Kurdish problem does not mean the following. Let us give them education in their native language, let them establish autonomous administrations… Today, giving Kurds cultural rights, giving them rights like education in native language, are really, not even in a funny way, separationist statements[263] (Kelebek)

> I definitely think that any Turkish citizen… Even though they might not define themselves as Turkish, or be Turkish, any citizen of Turkey must have equal rights, equal social, economic rights, right to speak their own language… Yes to all those, I'm okay with them. What confuses me, and what I'm not sure about are the things about… Like education in native language, things like those. I don't agree with that … The reason that I don't agree with that concerns the unity of Turkey. I believe that education in Turkey must be given in accordance with İstanbul Turkish, which is the official language of the state. I think that's how it should be. In that sense, I don't support something like education in native language. Or I don't support a state, a new state. I don't support separation. Just according to laws, according to social rights, and maybe with education so that the prejudices in society, maybe the prejudices can, I don't know[264] (Selva)

---

[263] "Ancak Kürt sorunun çözümü şu demek değildir. Anadilde eğitim verelim, özerk yönetimler kuralım… Bugün Kürtlere kültürel haklar vermek, anadilde eğitim gibi haklar vermek, çok, gerçekten, hani şakası olmadan bölücü söylemlerdir" (Kelebek)

[264] "Açıkçası kesinlikle herhangi bir Türk vatandaşının... Kendini Türk olarak tanımamasa bile, Türk olmasa bile, herhangi bir Türkiye vatandaşının kesinlikle eşit haklara, eşit sosyal, ekonomik haklara, kendi dilini konuşabilmesine... Bunlara evet, kesinlikle okeyim. Benim kafamı karıştıran ve emin olmadığım konu, işte şey söylemleri olabilir. İşte eğitimde anadil, tarzı bir şey. Buna katılmıyorum…

Another entanglement that was observed in the interviews was the entanglement between *republic* and *sharia.* It was observed in the interviews that the opposite of the word "republic" was thought to be "sharia" or "caliphate". In other words, and to clarify, the opposite of republic could have been imagined in many senses, like "monarchy". Nonetheless, it was strictly "sharia" that counter-quilted it. Güntan, for example, when talking about what he understood from *republic,* inserted the signifier of *sharia* without any prior mention of it. Although there is no "logical" opposition between the two, as there are republics governed with *şer'i* law (a fact that I specifically emphasized in the interview), the fact that the signifier of *republic* quilts the signifier of *sharia,* i.e. its immediate counter-position against it, is interesting.

> When I think of republic, I think of independence… That people are… And democracy, of course, comes to mind when I think of republic. People choosing the person who is going the rule them. Of course, that's not always a good thing but… Freedom, again, comes to mind with regards to republic. Since, I don't know, women are not really free in countries where there is caliphate or sharia[265] (Güntan)

4.4. Substitutions: Displacements of the Political in Civic Atatürkism

This chapter will discuss the *substitutions* that are present in the discourse of Civic Atatürkism. These *substitutions,* which could be understood as *displacements* as well, reveal exactly the Post-Political *imprint* present in the Civic Atatürkist discourse. It is the case here that *the political* has *disappeared* in the discourse*,* and instead substituted with another category, namely, *the rational, the economic,* and *the aesthetic.* Although the *substitutions* concerning the former two are understood to be quite close to each other, they will be handled separately due to certain characteristics that are specific to each.

Buna katılmama sebebim Türkiye'nin bütünlüğüyle alakalı. Yani Türkiye'deki eğitimin aslında devletin resmi dili olan İstanbul Türkçesi ile verilmesi gerektiğine inanıyorum. Böyle olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. O konuda eğitimde anadil gibi bir durumu desteklemiyorum. Ya da herhangi bir devleti, yeni bir devleti desteklemiyorum. Bir ayrılığı desteklemiyorum yani. Sadece kesinlikle yasalar nezdinde, sosyal haklar nezdinde ve toplumda da kesinlikle bu konudaki öngyargıların zamanla belki, belki eğitimlerle, belki, bilmiyorum" (Selva)

[265] "Cumhuriyet yine bağımsızlık… İnsanın… Ya demokrasi tabii ki yine, cumhuriyet diyince aklıma gelen. İnsanın kendi yöneteceği insanı kendi seçebilmesi. Tabii bazen her zaman iyi olmuyor bu şey ama... Yine özgürlük, cumhuriyet dediğimde aklıma gelen. Çünkü, işte ne bileyim, hilafet olan ülkelerde veya şeriat olan ülkelerde mesela kadınlar ve saire çok özgür değiller" (Güntan)

4.4.1. Replacing the Political with the Rational

The most common *displacement* observed in the discourse *of* Civic Atatürkism is that of *the political* with *the rational*. This displacement, I believe, is perfectly illusory of the *Post-Political overdetermination of the hyperpoliticized subjectivity (i.e. the Post-Political imprint present in the discourse of Civic Atatürkism)*, as the political was "taken out" and replaced with the rational. It was observed in the interviews that *the political,* in the accounts of the interviewees, was either seen to disappear completely in the face of Reason, or that it was relegated to a point where it had no distinctive character other than that of Reason, thus, in close connection with the entangement between *the rational* and *the irrational* where politics was defined as a modality of Reason. The displacement took various forms. For some, *the rational* was a horizon towards which politics should strive, somewhat connected to the framework of LMC developed above, even though its articulation was not found to be necessary (Serdar, Roni). In this displacement, it was also observed that *the rational* took the forms of a *technocratic elite* at times, in the sense that the participants sought a line of development in accordance with the dictates of Reason through an *elite* who would guide the Platonic ship of progress due to their access to Knowledge. In this specific instance where *the political* was replaced with *the rational* in terms of technocracy*,* I devised my questions based on *the signifier of Mehmet Şimşek*[266]. For others, *the rational* was a mechanism that must operate within politics, to the dismay of politics itself, as a dynamic that enables politics to function properly (without which the functioning of politics was seen to be improper). This is observed most clearly in the commonly seen issue of "strategic voting", where the participants stated that they did

---

[266] The new and current minister of treasury in Turkey, who is lauded by virtually all sections of society for his "good CV", but nonetheless somewhat doubted due to belonging to the party in power. His appointment as the new minister was met with confusion among the political opposition. His new economic program and "correct" interest policy place him at a very specific location within the imagination of the oppositional subject. On the one hand, the *hyperpoliticized character of their subjectivity* drives the subject to criticize Şimşek, for simply belonging to the party in power, but on the other hand, *the Post-Political imprint* functions through this drive in such a way as to keep silent about him due to the fact that he represents the restoration dynamic towards "correct" economic policies, in the sense of a correctly-applied neoliberal program. The criticisms about the economy from the opposition, with the appointment of Mehmet Şimşek, simply faded away. The *imprint,* thus, functions in such a strong sense that it *cancels its own drive out.* Thus, I employed the *signifier of Mehmet Şimşek,* which I thought to be *quilting* exactly the *imprint* above, in order for my questions to make sense for the interviewee. I would assert that it *did* make sense, and it *did* reveal the technocratic aspect of the displacement at hand quite successfully, the results of which are to be revealed below.

not vote "politically", but made strategic decisions to vote for the "strongest" (who they thought to be the strongest, mostly according to media sayings and online surveys) opposition party in their hometowns, so that they could bring the biggest blow to the party in power (Zeytin, Timuçin). In some participants, this displacement was observed as the replacement of *the political* with *the pedagogical*, a quality that was most possibly inherited from Kemalism, where they though political problems could be overcome by education, i.e. a system of rational thought (Roni, Selva).

To begin with, when asked what his vision of politics is, Serdar explains that he seeks a political state which is grounded on *pure Reason*, within which can exist no distortion, thus closely resembling the idea of Consensus established above. "Influencing people", understood to be devised in terms of a "political persuasion" was observed to be distorting Rational Consensus in his account, as the "political" space had to be based on Reason "100%" of the time. Roni, as well, notes on the role of the experts as true agents of change, thus indicating, once again, the lack of agency discussed in Chapter 4.2.6.:

> What's important while doing that is not to influence people, but to establish a 100% reason-based system[267] (Serdar)

> When things are left to experts, I think we see that things are changing[268] (Roni)

The signifier of Mehmet Şimşek, in the relationship between the dictates of Reason and its natural conclusion of a technocratic administration of society, perfectly revealed the *Post-Political imprint* of a hyperpoliticized subjectivity. Güntan and Roni, for example, when asked about *Mehmet Şimşek,* explain:

> Mehmet Şimşek, I actually don't know much about what he did in the past, but I think his current policies are pretty okay. But it's going to weigh on the poor, as he himself said too… However, I think it's good that he fixed the interest policy. There's a very experienced person with a great CV in the Central Bank now as well … I consider correct what Mehmet Şimşek is doing now. But I can't really say I'm supporting Mehmet Şimşek, because we don't

---

[267] "Ama bunu yaparken önemli olan insanları etkilemek değil, %100 bir şekilde rasyonel temelli bir sistem oluşturabilmek" (Serdar)

[268] "Yani işin ehli insanlara verildiği zaman bir şeylerin değiştiği görülebiliyor buradan diye düşünüyorum" (Roni)

know what he will do tomorrow. As I said, he is a man from the party in power[269] (Güntan)

I think he (Mehmet Şimşek) possesses merit. When you think about his education etc. for example… Be it Mehmet Şimşek, be it the new head of the Central Bank. I think they are quite well-qualified people[270] (Roni)

As observed, although they are hesitant to directly support him due to his political framework, they state their symphaty and/or support to him, thanks to his "good CV" and his allegiance to the dictates of Reason.

Strategic voting, an action that legitimizes voting behavior on the grounds of Reason, was observed to be much more common than expected in the interviewees' political framework. Most interviewees suggested that they voted according to certain calculations, certain rational considerations and certain "informations":

Actually, I voted strategically back then, not according the what I thought about the party, and whether it would represent me or not. I thought maybe it could lead to AKP having one less MP. That's how I voted[271] (Zeytin)

I mean like it or not, there is the issue of percentage of votes. Now if I am to go and vote for İyi Party [The Good Party], I know that it is not going to win. My vote will be wasted, at the end of the day. However, if I go and vote for Mansur, there's some chance of things happening[272] (Timuçin)

I knew how much vote the party I support in my hometown was going get in the elections. Thus, I acted in a more… Like I looked at voting calculations on

---

[269] "Ya Mehmet Şimşek şöyle, ben geçmişindeki yaptıklarını çok bilmiyorum açıkçası, ama şu anki uyguladığı işte politika fena değil bence. Ama fakiri de daha çok ezecek. Zaten onu da kendi bizzat söyledi yani… Ama şu faiz politikasını düzeltmesi açısından iyi oldu bence. Merkez Bankası'na da gerçekten çok CV'si sağlam, deneyimli bir insan geldi.
Mehmet Şimşek'in şu anki yaptığı şeyleri doğru buluyorum. Ama Mehmet Şimşek'i şimdi kesin destekliyorum diyemem, yarın n'apıcağı belli olmaz. Dediğim gibi çünkü iktidar partisinde bir adam" (Güntan)

[270] "Bence liyakat sahibi biri olduğunu düşünüyorum açıkçası. Çünkü aldığı eğitimler falan gözünde de bulundurduğumuz zaman... Gerek Mehmet Şimşek olsun, gerek Merkez Bankası başkanı. Gayet liyakatlı insanlar yani donanımlı insanlar olarak düşünüyorum bunları" (Roni)

[271] "Aslında ben oy verdiğim partiye biraz daha böyle beni temsil edeceğini düşünerek değil de, o dönemin şeyine kapılarak işte biraz stratejik oy verdim. AKP'den bir vekil daha belki düşündüm. O şekilde oy verdim" (Zeytin)

[272] "İster istemez oy oranı var. Şimdi ben gidip de İyi Parti'ye versem kazanamayacak doğal olarak. Oyum da boşa gitmiş olacak. Ama ben gidip de Mansur'a versem bir ihtimal" (Timuçin)

the internet, I checked the surveys, and I voted strategically back then[273] (Nükhet)

The substitution of the *political* with the *rational* appears in the guise of reducing political problems to problems of education at times, in line with the conceptualization of *pedagogy* in the discourse of Kemalism. Roni, for example, explains:

> I think change regarding many things, including governments, is related to education. It's because governments come to power with elections. And people voting in the elections are from among people, the people... If education could be ameliorated, so that these people can let go of their certain thoughts in choosing who governs them... Let go of thoughts that hinder them, and have a quite rational, critical culture, I think governments can change[274] (Roni)

> I think we need to look at education. I think many things are based on education. Be it the integration of the people into society, be it the political participation of people, many things are based on education. If we can change some things with education, I mean if we can follow certain things closely in terms of science, I think politics can change[275] (Roni)

It is observed that Roni's imagined relationship between education and politics rests on an understanding similar to the Marxist separation between *base* and *superstructure*, where education is seen to be the primary determinant of change of various things in society, i.e. *the base*, and politics is reduced to a secondary, accidental character that is altered with various changes in education, i.e. *the superstructure*. Thus, a linear relationship of determination between education and politics, similar to the Kemalist pedagogical conceptualization of progress, is at play in the discourse of Atatürkism. I believe it is both through the *Post-Political inscription* and Kemalist

---

[273] "Yani benim bulunduğum yerde desteklediğim partinin kaç alabileceği belli. Daha böyle şey davrandım, internetten oy hesaplarına falan baktım, işte anketlere baktım, o şekilde stratejik oy verdim o dönem" (Nükhet)

[274] "Çoğu şey gibi bence iktidarların değişmesi de eğitimden geçiyor diye düşünüyorum. Çünkü iktidar dediğimiz şey seçimle başa geliyor. Seçimde oy veren insanlar zaten halktan, halk olduğu için... Eğer eğitim iyileştirilebilirse, yani bu insanlar kendilerini yönetecek insanları seçerken çeşitli görüşlerini... Engel oluşturabilecek görüşlerini bir kenara bırakıp, çok rasyonel bir şekilde, eğer, eleştirel bir kültüre sahip olabilirlerse, eleştirel bir düşünceye sahip olabilirlerse, bence iktidarlar değişebilir diye düşünüyorum." (Roni)

[275] "Bence eğitimde aramalıyız diye düşünüyorum ben. Çünkü çoğu şeyin eğitimden geçtiğine inanıyorum ben. Yani bunu insanların bu topluma entegre olmasından tutun da bir insanların siyasal katılımına kadar çoğu şey eğitimden geçiyor bence. Eğer eğitimle bir şeyleri değiştirebilirsek, yani bazı şeyleri yakından takip edebilirsek bilim bağlamında, bu şekilde siyasetin değişebileceğini düşünüyorum" (Roni)

pedagogical inheritance that the displacement of *the political* with *the pedagogic* takes place. Atatürkism is, thus, posited to be in the crossroads where the displacement of *the political* with *the rational* takes place, and where the *Post-Political inscription* of Consensus and rationality intersect with Kemalist secular progressivism, as explained perfectly in Serdar's account:

> The most important thing about Atatürkism, its most important contribution to us is the rational mind. And in order to progress with a rational mind, we need to approach things in a more secular fashion[276] (Serdar)

Atatürkism comes as a *framework of Reason* at the exact point where the *substitution* between *the rational* and *the political* is made. Since, as it was established, Atatürk is considered to be a metapolitical figure of Consensus and rationality, and that Atatürkism is associated with rationalism, *the political is deferred and replaced with the rational* via Atatürkism. It is precisely because of the presence of Atatürkism here that the *displacement* takes place. Therefore, *hyperpoliticization with an immanent dynamic of Post-Political overdetermination* is found to be what Civic Atatürkism exactly is.

4.4.2. Replacing the Political with the Economic

There were cases where *the political* was observed to be replaced with *the economic.* This is quite close to the first displacement, in that they could have been handled together successfully; nonetheless, I believe there is a specific displacement here that needs special attention. It is observed that in many instances in the discourse *of* Atatürkism, political problems, issues and matters are *reduced to economic ones*. What I mean by that is that political problems which originate from politics are sought to be resolved in an economic realm, with economic tools. This is present in many of the participants' accounts:

> Without fixing the economy, I don't think politics can be fixed. At the end of the day, everything depends on the economy, even how politics itself is going to be conducted… Those problems that we listed, for example, the immigrant

---

[276] "Çünkü burada Atatürkçülüğün en önemli konusu, bize kattığı şeylerden biri rasyonel akıl. Ve rasyonel akılla ilerlememiz için biraz daha seküler bir noktadan yaklaşmamız gerekiyor olaylara" (Serdar)

thing etc. can only be solved through economic development, I think[277] (Nükhet)

It's not about Alevism or Sunnism, it's more about economic things, social life, lifestyle, they are more influential I think. If he were a good administrator, it would have been fine. But he's not, as we see in the economic conditions are going worse day by day[278] (Timuçin)

[Talking about the Kurdish problem] I think this can be solved with economic development… Of course this has a cultural aspect, but if the people can't satisfy their basic requirements, I think it is meaningless to think about the culture, social consciousness aspect of all this. There is a need for an economic model where everyone's needs are met[279] (Ümit)

This displacement has natural conclusions, in that, as seen in some interviews, economic progress is favored over political allegiances. Güntan, for example, a strong opponent of the party in power, stated that if the government had provided better economic conditions, he would support it. In other words, with economic progress, his political attitude, of which he was so *passionate*, as seen in his relationship between *alcohol* and *freedom,* established in Chapter 4.2.4., totally melts away and leaves its place to a disinterestedness of politics. Towards my designation of an imaginary scenario in which the same party is in power, but the economic conditions are better than ever, Güntan answers:

Let me think… (long silence)… I would probably be okay with that, unfortunatelyyyyy[280] (Güntan)

More than that, if one recalls his definition of Atatürkism based on "love" and "no disrespect", established in Chapter 4.2.5., Güntan, when presented with a fictional scenario where economic conditions are perfect but the party in power, who provided

---

[277] "Ekonomi düzelmeden siyaset düzelmez bence. Yani sonuçta her şey ekonomiye bağlı, siyasetin nasıl şey yapılacağı da ekonomiden geçiyor… O saydığımız sorunları mesela, işte mülteci şeyi olsun falan, ancak ekonomik kalkınmayla çözeriz gibi geliyor bana" (Nükhet)

[278] "Ya Alevilik Sünnilik değil de konu, daha çok ekonomik şey, sosyal yaşam, yaşam tarzı, yani onlar daha çok ağır basıyor yani. Öyle iyi bir yönetici olsaydı eyvallah. Yani ama kesinlikle öyle değil. Yani görüyoruz ekonomik durumu, gittikçe daha kötüye gidiyor" (Timuçin)

[279] "[Kürt sorunu hakkında kunuşuyor] Bunun ekonomik kalkınmayla çözüleceğine inanıyorum... Tabii bunun kültürel bir tarafı da var tabii ama insanlar temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamadıktan sonra, bu işin kültür, toplum bilinci tarafını düşünmek biraz farazi oluyor. Herkesin temel ihtiyaçlarının karşılandığı, uygun bir ekonomik modele ihtiyaç var" (Ümit)

[280] "Bunları düşüniyim bi... (sessizlik)... Okay olurdum ona yaaaa, maalesefff" (Güntan)

those economic conditions, happen to "hate Atatürk", answered in a way that showed that displacement of the political with the economic, revealing of such a strong *imprint* of the *Post-Political technocratic management*, led even to the trivialization and abolishment of Atatürkism itself. In other words, the *imprint* was observed to be so strong that it even made Güntan "quit" his beloved Atatürkism for "economic comfort":

> So they're not Atatürkists at all… But the economy is good, again? [Yes]
>
> Do they like, swear at Atatürk? [Yes]
>
> And you said there was meritocracy… [Yes]
>
> I would say, I know it sounds selfish but, I would probably be okay with it.
>
> I mean… I would… I would probably accept the fact that not everyone has to like Atatürk… Because I am living in comfort… That's why I could… Be okay with it[281] (Güntan)

Thus, even though, as was established in the first displacement, Civic Atatürkism was found to be the perfect instance, the perfect case of a *hyperpoliticization with an immanent dynamic of Post-Politics*, it is observed that *the Post-Political inscription* itself is, at times, stronger than the allegiance of Civic Atatürkism to itself (hyperpoliticization), overpowering it as observed in the account of Güntan. This reveals the *paradoxical* character of hyperpoliticization perfectly, in the sense that it is not a proper "repoliticization", through its operation within the *overdetermination* of a framework of Post-Politics. In other words, the subjectivity "proves" its Post-Political nature at the end of the day. When faced with a question that pushes the subject towards the poles of *hyperpoliticization* and Post-Politics, the *imprint* of the subject is observed to triump over its (re)politicized characteristics. Thus, without the embracing of a politics proper and the disappearance of the political, hyperpoliticization is observed to *obliterate itself* in the face of a Post-Political, technocratic economic management.

---

[281] "Hiç Atatürkçü değil... Ama ekonomimiz yine çok mu iyi? [Evet]
Atatürk'e küfür falan mı ediyor böyle, yoksa... [Evet]
Liyakat de var... [Evet]
Ben şöyle diyeyim, biraz bencillik olacak ama, ben okay olurdum ona ya.
Ben... Yani... Atatürk'ü sevmiyor da herkese sevdiremeyiz deyip... Çünkü rahat yaşıyorum... Yani o yüzden... Okay olabilirim" (Güntan)

4.4.3. Replacing the Political with the Aesthetic

The final displacement to be handled in Civic Atatürkism is the replacing of *the political* with *the aesthetic.* This displacement concerns very closely the binary between ideology and lifestyle, as explained in detail in Chapters 4.2.5. and 4.3.2.. A strict preference of lifestyle over ideology, as "predicted by" the Civic Atatürkism Literature with its fourth argument, was observed in the *non-organizationed* interviewees. Since this has been established various times in the field study, I will be only presenting some specific characteristics of *the displacement* at hand which were nonetheless not explained in the preceding parts. Therefore, I take for granted here the privileging of lifestyle over ideology, and will talk about further displacements. First, it was observed in the interviews that politics and involvement into politics only took mainstream forms, without the mention of any alternative understandings of politics. The interviewees were seen to imagine politics in the sense of a specific performance:

> You have to be sure of yourself, if you claim that you are going to make politics, or be a political person… You have to have high self-confidence, you have to be a strict kind of person too. I'm talking about Turkish politics here, of course[282] (Güntan)

Being a member of a political organization, a collective or even a university club related to politics, for the *organizationless* interviewees, meant a *distortion,* a *corrosion,* a sense of *spoilage* of their sterile subjectivities. In perfect accord with Serdar's conceptualization of *the individual* against *society,* which was present in all non-organized participants, any kind of "socialization", or any kind of collectivity meant that their individuality, built *against* and *in spite of society*, was *dirtied.* Being part of a collective was always imagined to be a cause of external change, a breakdown of the original equilibrium of *the individual*. Ayşe, for example, explains being part of a collective in terms of "restriction", "adopting a (foreign) mindset", "entering into a (foreign) framework":

> I mean I don't know, but in my age, with this experience… I did not want to feel like I am entering into a framework of something. I mean restricting myself

---

[282] "Kendinden emin olmak zorundasın, eğer siyaset yapacağım veya siyasi bir insan olacağım diyorsan... Özgüvenin yüksek olacak, böyle hay huy bir insan olmak zorundasın yine, Türkiye siyaseti için konuşuyorum" (Güntan)

like that, at this point in my life… I don't think of myself as ripe enough in terms of that. I mean adopting the mindset of something… Maybe I get in like how I am right now, what if my thoughts change… I don't think my ideas are ripe enough yet. That's why I feel like being a member of such clubs and stuff seem inappropriate for me[283] (Ayşe)

Serdar, as an additional example, explains his decision to not become a part of any university club on the grounds of a complaint about the "overpoliticization" of university clubs, in that:

> If the overly political character of the administrative boards of university clubs are going to come between me and science, I think there's a problem here[284] (Serdar)

In conclusion, through the replacing of *the political* with *the aesthetic,* it was observed, just like in the second displacement, that Atatürkism was the means by which politics was deferred. Once again, Serdar's words are exemplary, in that he deems Atatürkism something that is "not political", but "cultural". Serdar's substituton of *politics* and *culture* is the crystallization of the displacement of *the political* with *the aesthetic*:

> Atatürkism is not like that… People understand it in a very political way. This is not politics. This is about human relationships, it's about culture[285] (Serdar)

4.5. Concluding Remarks

Although there could be a wide discussion upon the conclusions of the field study, at this point, I will be discussing only one of those, which seems to be the most important, and which should clarify the answer to the question of how Post-Politics and (Civic) Atatürkism actually relate. Other conclusions will be made in Chapter 5. Tanıl Bora, discussing various features of Atatürkism, suggests:

---

[283] "Çünkü yani bilmiyorum şu an bu yaşımda mı diyeyim, daha bu tecrübemle hani… Çok daha şimdiden böyle bir şeylerin alt yapısına giriyormuş gibi hissetmek istemedim. Yani şimdiden kendimi öyle sınırlamak… Hani şu an daha kendimi pişmiş olarak görmüyorum bu konuda. Hani ve direkt bir şeyin altına girmek hani… Belki de şu anki fikrimle girdim, ve yani değişecek o fikrim... Daha tam oturmadı bence fikirlerim. O yüzden şu an bir şeylerin öyle topluluklarına girmek bir yersiz geliyor bana" (Ayşe)

[284] "Yönetim kurullarının aşırı siyasi olması benim bilim yapmamı engelleyecekse burada bir problem olduğunu görüyorum" (Serdar)

[285] "Ya bu Atatürkçülük şey gibi değil… Çok siyasi bakılıyor. Bu siyaset değil. Bu insan ilişkileriyle alakalı bir konu, bu kültürle alakalı bir konu" (Serdar)

> 'Atatürkist way of thinking', as much as is anti-ideological, is *anti-political*; it understands politics, apart from its 'objective' administration principles, to be either a redundant (if we are to be optimistic), or a separationist/hate-mongering activity (if we are to be pessimistic). This attitude relies on its designation of a homogenous society which criminalizes any kind of difference of opinion (Bora, 2017, p. 175)

It observed in the field study that the most important, most "functional" characteristic of Post-Politics for Civic Atatürkism is its *foreclosing* aspect towards the political. The Civic Atatürkist is observed to be different from the simply *repressive* attitude of the organizationed (mostly Neo-Kemalist), with its *foreclosing* tendency towards politics. In other words, in Civic Atatürkism relies no longer on a Kemalist *anti-politics* that seeks to repress the political, but a *Post-Politics* that is seemingly more tolerant towards the political, as long as it is successfully foreclosed. Upon the *returns* of the political, however, as shown in the signifier of the "education in native language (Kurdish)" and the issue of the "immigrants", the Civic Atatürkists are seen to be *"regressing"* (See Dağı, 2021) towards a more *defensive-reactionary* stance, characteristic of Neo-Kemalism (See Erdoğan, 2001; Erdoğan 2021; İnsel, 2021, p. 25). Thus, although the most important conclusion to be derived from the field study could be that the balance between *repression* and *foreclosure* in the Civic Atatürkist leans more towards the latter, in the form of a very functional adoption of the Post-Political framework, the balance is understood to be quickly reverting to the former upon facing the Real. Therefore, although there could be said to be a transition from Kemalist *anti-politics* towards *Post-Politics* in this new form of Atatürkism, the transition is found to be not necessary-directional but rather malleable.

Ahmet İnsel states that Kemalism lies on an "imagination of a homogenous society" (İnsel, 2021, p. 23), which is shared by Bora as well. The Post-Political *condition,* whereby the political is foreclosed in favor of Consensus, is found to be a good option for Civic Atatürkism in designating the homogeneity of the social. Thus, the homogeneity pertaining to Kemalist *anti-politics* is not abandoned, but *replaced* with *Post-Political,* seemingly-consensual homogeneity. Therefore, although there *could be said to be* a *transition* from one *mode* of Atatürkism/Kemalism to another, the *transition* is not between two radically different frontiers, but between two "easily-fitting" alternatives. Instead of a *repression,* what is opted for is a *foreclosure,* i.e. a

more "invisible" repression. The Post-Political Rationality, technocratic management and foreclosure of antagonisms are observed to fit perfectly in the Kemalist matrix of politics. In fact, this exchange, between Kemalist *repression* and Civic Atatürkist *foreclosure* was *exactly* the one Necmi Erdoğan detected in the Neo-Kemalist discourse:

> In this hegemonic crisis we can say that there has been formulated two different solutions: Kemalism that follows an excluding and repressive framework, and 'post-political' discourse that displays inclusive and absorbant qualities, with its neoliberal or postliberal variations. While the former preaches national unity and solidarity, the latter suggests a 'civilian' unity that depends on tolerance and living in peace and harmony … While Kemalism seeks to repress politics, the neoliberal or postliberal post-political discourse seeks to foreclose politics, more than simply repress it … Both principles of 'preservation of national unity' and 'different identities living in peace' aim for depoliticization in two nonetheless different ways (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 591)

In conclusion, thus, the Civic-ization does not seem to be escaping *the entrapment,* as argued by the literature, explained in Chapter 3.3., but rather *disguises* it in the form of a Universal Rational Consensus. The further implications of the whole study will be discussed below, in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study attempts to converge the two, usually nebulously related, dimensions of politics: Political theory and political "reality". Political theory in this case does not denote a realm of thought that is wholly separate from "reality". While I do contend that it is "above" it, in the sense that it provides the linguistic, phenomenological, thus ontological ground where the said "reality" takes shape (for without a grounding "understanding" of the world, no action, no motivation and no *phenomenon* would be possible; moreover, no *interpretation* of the "reality", which turns the meaningless/dumb reality into a meaningful/intelligible actuality, would be possible), it is strongly *embedded* in it. This very embeddedness is observed to be taken for granted at most times, especially today, where there exists little reflection upon the foundational, theoretical scheme which functions above "reality". The "reality" is seen to be scrutinized in its face value, where the reseracher does not scrutinize their own *mode of understanding, their own mode of transformation of "reality" into actuality,* i.e. their own theoretical arsenal. This results in a poor understanding of the world, where it is assumed that *phenomena* simply exist with a given set of ontico-ontologics and interact in a mechanistically-oriented "reality". However, as Weber states upon the so-called "given" nature of *phenomena*:

> The quality of an event as a 'social-economic' event is not something which it possesses 'objectively'. It is rather conditioned by the orientation of our cognitive interest, as it arises from the specific cultural significance which we attribute to the particular event in a given case (Weber, 1949, p. 64).

Thus, it must be the task of the researcher that the most serious of excursions be made into the *grounding* characteristics of "reality", or actuality. The most important task, therefore, is that the researcher scrutinize not the "reality" itself, with a poorly

developed theory, but the theory itself, in order for "reality" to be transformed into an intelligible actuality. This study endeavors to do exactly that. As observed in the recent youth studies, the scientist is overwhelmed by the *richness of the phenomenon,* and is at a perfect failure concerning its *interpretation.* The language of the scientist is seen to be unable to grasp (make sense of) "reality". As seen in the youth studies conducted in recent years, with their inability to answer what the current mode of politicization of the youth is (See KASF, 2021; KASF, 2023; İEA, 2021; KONDA, 2024; Yaşar et al., 2021), what *dysfunctions* is the language of the researcher, their theoretical reservoir. Therefore, the objective of this study was to no longer rely on a directionless, non-oriented, rough approach that expects "reality" to actualize itself through a quantitative richness (those approaches that seek to find "the answer" in the surplus of that reality, those that aim to widen the scope of observation of "reality" in order to get a better grasp of it at some quantitative final point), but to re-problematize the theory itself, under the tutelage of "reality". I contend that "the answer" does not emerge at some quantitative surplus where the "reality" simply "reveals" itself, but lies in the qualitative scrutiny of the theory with which "reality" is made meaningful, is uncovered (every covering, since it is bound to leave open some parts, is an uncovering; thus, every interpretation by its own peculiar way of "garmenting" "reality", covers it in a peculiar way that what takes place is, actually, an uncovering).

This study attempted, thus, to try to interpret the relationship between the political structure and the agents within in a specific theoretical fashion. By distinguishing between the *symbolic realm* of politics, and the *subjective realm* of politicizations, the study at hand aimed to develop a fruitful understanding of the hegemonic framework of politics and the various modes of politicizations that take place "within" it. The relationship of *overdetermination* aims to explain exactly how the two realms are geometrically separate but are in a necessary relationship. This understanding of politics not only renders intelligible the widespread dynamic of hyperpoliticization in today's world, but also puts an end to the debates about "the end of Post-Politics". With such an understanding, it is observed that the two realms are not, as some claimed, incompatible, but compatible to the extent that the relationship of *overdetermination* is valid. In other words, the study puts forward that *hyperpoliticization* does not "end" the Post-Political *condition* (since the Post-Political

condition is not only made up of subjective politicizations)*,* but is compatible with it in the sense that the whole framework is transformed in today's world.

Civic Atatürkism was seen to be the perfect example for this dualistic understanding of politics. As a subjective mode of (re)politicization that displayed a hyperpoliticized subjectivity, and as a mode that emerged within the Post-Political *condition,* thus carrying the Post-Political *imprint,* Civic Atatürkism is argued to have successfully exemplified both the claims about hyperpoliticization and Post-Political *inscription,* and is believed to have shown the fruitful results of the dualistic scheme of politics itself. The study defined the Post-Political *condition* as one in which the political was no longer simply *repressed* (associated with Kemalism), but one where it was *foreclosed* (associated with Civic Atatürkism). In the *symbolic* dimension, the *foreclosure* lies in the constitution of "politics" itself; however, in the *subjective* dimension, the *foreclosure* lies in the subject's belief in Consensus, desire to foreclose the antagonisms, and lack of radical imagination. Furthermore, it is also observed in the displacements of the political, namely, its substitutions with the rational, the economic and the aesthetic. It is the case here that the political is not violently repressed, but *exchanged* with other categories and deferred at all times. The subject is seen not to be *repressing* the political, but to be "running away from it", "avoiding it", or "evading it". The main difference between Kemalism and Civic Atatürkism was found in exactly this difference between *repression* and *foreclosure.* In the study, Kemalism/Atatürkism was analyzed to be an *empty* and *floating* signifier par excellence. The possibility of Civic Atatürkism, which re-narrates the history of Kemalism around the signifier of *entrapment,* was found in the *empty* and *floating* characteristics of Kemalism/Atatürkism. The arguments of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism were distilled into six, and thus made able to put to the test in the field study.

The most important observation made in the field study was that the results of the interviews was *split* into two, based on the determinant of *organization(lessness).* The arguments of the discourse *on* Civic Atatürkism were found to be applicable, to a certain extent, only to the *non-organized portion* of the sample. It was found that the *organized* members were much closer to what may be deemed a Neo-Kemalist

discourse. With their respective views on, especially, the army, coups and the state, the *split* between *the organized* and the *non-organized* was seen to be functioning in further aspects of the study. The field study was analyzed in three parts, which all showed the *hyperpoliticized Post-Political* characteristics of Civic Atatürkism in different linguistic formations. Hyperpoliticization was mainly observed in the subjective quality of *engaged, but not participating.* The interviewees were *not apolitical*, in that sense; on the contrary, they were quite *engaged* in politics. However, this *engagement* did not translate into *political participation,* and could even be said to be the element that hinders *participation* in the first place. The Post-Political *imprint* was observed in such signifiers like the *level of modern civilizations,* and the displacements of the political with the rational, the economic and the aesthetic.

All results of the field study, and its central conclusions may be found in Chapter 4. Here, I will be presenting some other conclusions that were not discussed prior to this point, and some others that need further attention. First, the analysis must end with a return to the question of the *ontology* of Civic Atatürkism. It must be asked whether the "reality" reflects the theoretical claims, or in other words, whether the theoretical claims about the phenomenon at hand "fit the reality", or "quilt it in the desired sense". It was seen that such a phenomenon called Civic Atatürkism *could be observed* by holding fast to the central arguments of the literature. In other words, insofar as the arguments are concerned, the phenomenon may be said to "fit" those arguments (in the sense that such a thing could be claimed to *exist*, in the first place), but with certain limitations. First and the most important of these limitations is that the so-called Civic-ization only applies to a *portion* of Atatürkists, those who happen to not be organized under an Atatürkist organization (or a vaguely Atatürkist one). In perfect line with the logic of Post-Politics (instead of Kemalist anti-politics, since anti-politics does not necessarily involve the level of organizations), *organizations* are found to be the axis that *enables or disables* Civic Atatürkism. The question whether Civic-ization only takes place through the non-organized, or that it takes place in general but only stops at the level of organizations, is one that cannot be answered here. However, it was seen that the non-organized portion of the Atatürkists interviewed in this thesis does reflect some claims of the so-called Civic-ization. It was never the complete set of Civic-ization as was prophesized in the arguments, but a varying mixture of them in each

case, with different emphases on some signifiers and different quiltings of others. Nonetheless, what must be added to this is a crucial point that "measures" the distance between Neo-Kemalism and Civic Atatürkism. Even though Civic Atatürkism *could be said to be (and i can't emphasize this enough)* an *autonomous* phenomenon, *the new and current mode of Atatürkism*, the distance between it and Neo-Kemalism is observed to be not that far. As explained above, in Chapter 4.4.4., especially regarding the "Kurdish issue" and the topic of refugees, the Civic Atatürkist discourse is observed to be seeking shelter in a *regression*[286] towards Neo-Kemalism (as if in its given form it is a progress from Neo-Kemalism), or in its articulation into a nationalist, and sometimes even chauvinist-racist discourse. Thus, the *sixth argument* of the literature, which has not been discussed until now, and probably the most important one among all of them, the one that assigns Civic Atatürkism an automatic dynamic of democratization and pluralization, is found to be questionable. Having established its general political framework, *I contend that there is no necessary relationship between Civic-ization and democratization/pluralization*. On the contrary, the *Post-Political imprint* in Civic Atatürkism, as was observed, rather seeks an *aggressive consensuality on the premises of Atatürkism,* seen in the examples from the interviewees upon a "required love for Atatürk" or a "politicization necessarily in line with the tenets of Atatürkism". Thus, what might seem like democratization to some is actually found to be a an involuntary consensualization of the rational principles of Atatürkism. The *displacements* in the said discourse that are found to be operational in replacing *the political*, are seen to divert to a *simple repression* at the moment the possibility of Consensus fades, an *anti-political repression*, which is characteristic of Kemalism/Atatürkism (See Bora, 2017, p. 175).

Second, through an analysis of the "civilianization" of Atatürkism in 1998, it was found that Atatürkism/Kemalism has historically functioned as a dynamic of transition from periods of crisis in Turkey. Both 1998 and 2023-on show similar characteristics of crisis, transition and restoration. Thus, Atatürkism, as one developed at the level of *popular identifications*, in popular or Civic forms, is found to be a "safe shelter" (See Medyascope, 2022) for Turkish politics. In its precise dynamic as a "depoliticizing

---

[286] Recall İhsan Dağı's warning of "the regression" in Dağı, 2021.

function that pushes all political currents towards the same center" (İnsel, 2021, p. 27), it functions as the most useful of shelters in times of crisis and restoration. In conclusion, the claim that Civic Atatürkism is the *new mode* could be falsified on the grounds that it could very well be a *transitionary* affiliation. Nonetheless, this could not be resolved at a theoretical level. As the saying goes, "time will tell".

Third, although Civic Atatürkism *does show* some characteristics of civilianization, such complete Civic-ization as claimed in the literature, or a perfectly "Civil" identity could not be possible without a dramatic transformation regarding some fundamental Kemalist principles, such as the relationship between state and sub-society (or a to-come civil society) in Küçükömer's terms, and a democratization in Turkey regarding the "Kurdish issue". Therefore, it is believed that certain characteristics of civilianization *are not enough* to claim a *whole Civic-ization*. Just as certain characteristics of Atatürkism change and transform over time, it is also equally possible for them to re-change and re-position themselves in a so-called *regressive* fashion, or drift to an "undemocratic" option. For example, the points of intersection between the Civic Atatürkist and the "secular nationalist" discourses (what I regarded as two separate discourses, which for some writers are actually the same[287]) must warn the observer that it is quite easy for the Civic Atatürkist discourse to opt for the signifiers of "secular nationalism", some of which are already very much present in it. It is due to my understanding of secular nationalism as being a mirroring effort of a separation at the level of mainstream politics, i.e. an endeavor to distinguish between *two socials* along the lines of *party-differentiations*, which today, whilst writing this conclusion seems a "lost cause", that I opted to define the two discourses as *separate* but as operating on shared nodal points.

Fourth, just like in the 1990s when Kemalism was said to be in an *organic crisis*, facing the Real of the Kurdish and the Islamist movements, unable to *suture* a fissureless symbolic (See Erdoğan, 2001; Erdoğan, 2021; Çelik, 2021), Civic Atatürkism does, too, seem to be a response within Kemalism to its own crisis. One dimension could be said to be involving an "internal" dynamic, the failure of Kemalism to perpetuate itself

---

[287] See Sabuncu, 2023 and Medyascope, 2021b for arguments which suggest that Civic Atatürkism relies on a secular nationalist outlook.

through the discourse of Neo-Kemalism, in need for another, more flexible discourse; and the other could be said to be an "external" dynamic, as observed in the complaints about a so-called "Post-Kemalism". In answering the "external" dynamic, Kemalism is seen to be re-imagining its past once again as a state of *jouissance.* In the so-called "Post-Post-Kemalist" discourse, the critiques of Kemalism are *periodized* (there is nothing necessarily periodical in critiquing Kemalism, as seen in figures like İdris Küçükömer and Şerif Mardin in the academia, and those like İbrahim Kaypakkaya and Hikmet Kıvılcımlı in the popular Left, who provided extensive critiques of Kemalism way before the coup of 1980 -İlker Aytürk claims that the critique began as a response to the coup[288]-) and *homogenized* (Mete Tunçay and Nilüfer Göle's criticisms, for example, are rendered the same through this homogenization, albeit relying on *totally separate frameworks*) into a conditional existence, linked directly to the coup of 1980. Nonetheless, beginning with the 1960s, it is possible to observe criticisms of Kemalism in many fronts. Furthermore, a critique could not be interpreted as an internal moment of history, but are external moments of the very breaking-down of the historical homogeneity. Just as Civic Atatürkism is a hyperpoliticized subjectivity with Post-Political characteristics embedded in it, the so-called "Post-Post-Kemalism" does not go beyond an apologetic re-remembrance of the Kemalist *jouissance.*

Fifth, it is Mouffe's contention that the Post-Political *Zeitgeist* is the result of a unipolar world, where there is no true alternative, no balancing mechanism that can create other routes for a different hegemonic mode of politics and subjective politicization. She contends that "the dangers entailed by the current unipolar order can be avoided only by the implementation of a multipolar world, with an equilibrium among several regional poles allowing for a plurality of hegemonic powers" (Mouffe, 2005a, pp. 6-7). In other words, she suggests that she argues for a "multipolar world and of envisaging the world as a pluriverse" (Oppelt, 2014, p. 264). However, when inspected closely, what will allow this is not "any" multipolarization for her, as she explicitly points to a quite particular pole: Europe. She argues that what may be called a "truly political Europe" that might erect an alternative to the model of neoliberal globalization of the US could provide a balanced multipolar world (Mouffe, pp. 127-

---

[288] See Aytürk, 2015.

130). Today, we live in what seems like a multipolar world, seemingly just the one Mouffe has been looking for. However, the poles of this multipolar world is far from Mouffe's desired ones. The Russian president Vladimir Putin stated in 2022 that we were on the process of the establishment of a multipolar world, arguing: "It is an irreversible process; it is happening before our eyes and is objective in nature" (Teslova, 2022). Nonetheless, against Mouffe's calls and predictions, this one is not at all celebrated by the Left, at least some of them. This new multipolarity led those like Žižek to urge those on the Left to "reject Putin's multipolarity" (Žižek, 2023), and call for a "stronger Nato" (Žižek, 2022). Therefore, the multipolarity which Mouffe thought was the way out of Post-Politics, turned out to be the condition through which Post-Politics lives on today, albeit in a *hyperpoliticized* form.

Sixth, Chantal Mouffe criticizes the discourse of Post-Politics for its rejection of *passion* in the name of *rational* politics, and suggests:

> The mistake of liberal rationalism is to ignore the affective dimension mobilized by collective identifications and to imagine that those supposedly archaic 'passions' are bound to disappear with the advance of individualism and the progress of rationality (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 6)[289].

She contends, even today, that the Left needs to employ passions, going as far to suggest that there is the need for a "left-wing patriotism" (Mouffe, 2021). Today, much to the chagrin of Mouffe, the *hyperpoliticized subject* displays a *passionate engagement* in politics; however, it still preserves the Post-Political characteristics *imprinted* into itself. *Passion* and *repoliticiziation* are understood to be not necessarily related, but compatible to the extent that *passion* can hinder the emergence of *action* within the awkwardly repoliticized (hyperpoliticized) subject. This *passion* works through the *hyperpoliticized* subject so perfectly that it renders the subject *passive,* and makes it the object of *passion (suffering),* within its Post-Political horizon. What is the case here is a *passionate subject*, but one that lacks *action* due to this very passion. The possibility of the emergence of an alternative, truly *radical* mode of politicization that excurses against the *direction of the Post-Political inscription* still seems afar.

---

[289] Even though she acknowledges later that "this mobilization of passions was not acknowledged as such but perceived as the rational reaction of moral human beings wanting to defend universal values" (Mouffe, 2005a, p. 73), she relates the Post-Political *Vision* with the "retreat" of *passion*.

REFERENCES

Aczel, A. D. (2001). *Entanglement: The Greatest Mystery in Physics*. Four Walls Eight Windows.

Akşin, S. (2017, October 27). *Sina Akşin: Türkiye'nin tekrar Atatürkçü-devrimci çizgiye gelmesi lazım* [Interview]. Politikyol. https://www.politikyol.com/dosya-sina-aksin-turkiyenin-tekrar-ataturkcu-devrimci-cizgiye-gelmesi-lazim/

Aktoptak, E. (2017). İzmir Marşı ve şimdi ve sonrası. *Birikim, 335*, 46-51.

Alçı, N. (2023, October 30). 100. Yıl resepsiyonundan notlar.... *Habertürk*. https://www.haberturk.com/ozel-icerikler/nagehan-alci/3633405-100-yil-resepsiyonundan-notlar

Alpman, N. (1998, November 1). Yürüyüş devrimi. *Milliyet Gazete Pazar*. 9

Althusser, L. (2005). *For Marx*. Verso.

Andersen, N. Å. (2003). *Discursive analytical strategies: Understanding Foucault, Koselleck, Laclau, Luhmann.* The Policy Press.

Aslan, A. (1999). *Sömürülen Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük.* Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları.

Aslan. M. (2023, October 3). Hangi Atatürkçülük? - Mahmut ASLAN. *Cumhuriyet*. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/olaylar-ve-gorusler/hangi-ataturkculuk-mahmut-aslan-2125841

Aşın, M. (1998, October 31). Her gün cumhuriyet. *Milliyet*. 15

Ataklı, C. (1998a, October 26). Dün çok güzel bir gündü. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/26/y05.html

Ataklı, C. (1998b, October 29). Korkmuyoruz, güçlüyüz. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/29/y05.html

Ataklı, C. (1998c, October 31). Temizlik özlemi. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/31/y05.html

Atatürk, M. K. (2006). *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III.* Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi.

Atay, F. R. (2012). *Babanız Atatürk.* Pozitif Yayınları.

Ateş, S. (2021). *Türkiye Gençlik Araştırması.* Retrieved February 12, from https://habererkcom.teimg.com/habererk-com/images/upload/GENCYLIYK_ARASYTIRMASI.pdf

Ateş, T. (1998, October 29). 75. Yıl. *Cumhuriyet*. 3

Atılgan, G. (2008). *Yön-Devrim Hareketi: Kemalizm ile Marksizm Arasında Genel Aydınlar.* Yordam.

Aykut, Ş. (1936). *Kamâlizm (C. H. Partisi Programının İzahı).* Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitap Evi.

Aytekin, A. (2013, June 9). 'Beyaz Türk' ve 'Apolitik Gençlik' efsanelerinin çöküşü. *SoL*. https://haber.sol.org.tr/yazarlar/e-attila-aytekin/beyaz-turk-ve-apolitik-genclik-efsanelerinin-cokusu-74402

Aytürk, İ. (2015). Post-post-Kemalizm: Yeni bir paradigmayı beklerken. *Birikim, 319,* 34-47.

Aytürk, İ. (2019). Post-Kemalizm Nedir? Post-Kemalist Kimdir? Bir Tanım Denemesi. *Varlık, 1337,* 4-7.

Aytürk, İ. (2020). Bir defa daha Post-post-Kemalizm: Eleştiriler, cevaplar, düşünceler. *Birikim, 374-375,* 101-120.

Aytürk, İ. & Esen, B. (2023). Önsöz. In İ. Aytürk & B. Esen (Eds.), *Post-Post-Kemalizm: Türkiye Çalışmalarında Yeni Arayışlar* (pp. 7-21). İletişim.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Duke University Press.

Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and Simulation*. The University of Michigan Press.

Baykam, B. (2023, November 2). CHP kurultayı öncesi değerlendirmeler ve delege vicdanı/mantığı. *Cumhuriyet*. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/bedri-baykam/chp-kurultayi-oncesi-degerlendirmeler-ve-delege-vicdanimantigi-2136587

Bayraktar, F. (2023, November 5). 100'üncü yılda 'Parla'mak. *Diken*. https://www.diken.com.tr/100uncu-yilda-parlamak/

Beck, U. (1994). The Reinvention of Politics: Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization. In U. Beck, A. Giddens & S. Lash (Eds.), *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (pp. 1-55). Stanford University Press.

Beck, U. (1997). Subpolitics: Ecology and the Disintegration of Institutional Power. *Organization & Environment, 10*(1), 52-65.

Bektan, A. (1998). *Atatürk'ün Kehanetleri*. Sınır Ötesi Yayınları.

Bell, D. (1999). *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*. Basic Books.

Bila, H. (1998, October 26). Cumhuriyet Haftası. *Milliyet*. 2

Bilgiç, E. E. & Kafkaslı, Z. (2013). *Gencim, Özgürlükçüyüm, Ne İstiyorum?: #direngeziparkı Anketi Sonuç Raporu*. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Birgit, O. (1998, October 30). Yaşayan Atatürk. *Cumhuriyet*. 4

Booth, R. B. (2023). Youth Are Interested in Political Action, but Lack Support and Opportunities. *Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.* https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/youth-are-interested-political-action-lack-support-and-opportunities

Bora, T. (2017). *Cereyanlar: Türkiye'de Siyasi İdeolojiler.* İletişim.

Bora, T. & Kıvanç, Ü. (1996). Yeni Atatürkçülük. In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi: Yüzyıl Biterken Cilt 13* (pp. 777-780). İletişim.

Borovalı, M. & Boyraz, C. (2015). All quiet on the Kemalist front? *Philosophy and Social Criticism, 41*(4-5), 435-444. DOI: 10.1177/0191453714564458

Bozdoğan, S. (2001). *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic.* University of Washington Press.

Braunthal, G. (1993). The 1989 Basic Program of the German Social Democratic Party. *Polity*, *25*(3), 375–399. https://doi.org/10.2307/3234970

Brown, W. (2006). American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-Democratization. *Political Theory, 34*(6), 690-714.

Brown, W. (2019). *In The Ruins of Neoliberalism: The Rise of Antidemocratic Politics in the West.* Columbia University Press.

Brown, W. (2023). *Nihilistic Times: Thinking with Max Weber*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Buller, J., Dönmez, P.E., Standring, A., Wood, M. (2019). Depoliticisation, Post-politics and the Problem of Change. In J. Buller, P. E. Dönmez., A. Strandring, M. Wood (Eds.), *Comparing Strategies of (De)Politicisation in Europe: Governance, Resistance and Anti-politics*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64236-9_1

Butler, J. (2000). Restaging the Universal: Hegemony and the Limits of Formalism. In J. Butler, E. Laclau & S. Žižek (Eds.), *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (pp. 11-43). Verso.

Celikates, R. (2022). De-, Hyper-, or Pseudopoliticization? Undoing and Remaking the Demos in the Age of Right-Wing Authoritarianism. In A. Allen & E. Mendieta (Eds.), *Power, Neoliberalism, and the Reinvention of Politics: The Critical Theory of Wendy Brown* (pp. 141-157). The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Chatterjee, P. (1998). Beyond the Nation? Or within?. *Social Text, 56*, 57-69. https://doi.org/10.2307/466770

CHF. (1927). *Cümhuriyet Halk Fırkası Nizamnamesi.* https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/items/73f80df6-9755-4674-ba6c-cf66f8639bcc

CHF. (1931a). *C.H.F. Nizamnamesi ve Programı.* TBMM Matbaası. https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/items/f6411312-a184-441d-8b06-f6e4a97e52e0

CHF. (1931b). *C.H.F. Üçüncü Büyük Kongre Zabıtları: 10-18 Mayıs 1931.* Devlet Matbaası.

CHP. (1935). *C.H.P. Programı.* Ulus Basımevi. https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/items/0a8a4e77-b927-4b80-b7e6-d7d4181f3245

Clayer, N., Giomi, F. & Szurek, E. (2019). Kemalizmi Uluslaraşırı Bir Bağlama Oturtmak: Dolaylı Bir Yansıtma İlişkisi. In N. Clayer, F. Giomi, E. Szurek (Eds.), *Kemalizm: Osmanlı Sonrası Dünyada Ulusaşırı Siyaset (pp. 13-52).* İletişim.

Coşkun, V. (2021, November 23). Atatürkçülüğün "Sivil" Hali. *Perspektif.* https://www.perspektif.online/ataturkculugun-sivil-hali-2/

Critchley, S. & Marchart, O. (2004). Introduction. In S. Critchley & O. Marchart (Eds.), *Laclau: A critical reader* (pp. 1-13). Routledge.

Crouch, C. (2004). *Post-Democracy.* Polity.

Cumhuriyet. (1998, October 26). Cumhuriyet Coşkusu. *Cumhuriyet.* 6

Cumhuriyet. (2023, October 31). Halk Cumhuriyete sahip çıktı. *Cumhuriyet*. 1

Çayır, K. (2013, August 5). Gezi gençliği üzerine düşünceler.... *Hürriyet*. https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/gezi-gencligi-uzerine-dusunceler-24451986

Çeçen, A. (2020, October 7). Sivil Kemalizm. *Türk Hukuk Kurumu. https://turkhukukkurumu.org.tr/sivil-kemalizm/*

Çelik, N. B. (1998). Kemalist Hegemonya Üzerine. *Birikim, 105-106.* Retrieved March 10, from https://birikimdergisi.com/dergiler/birikim/1/sayi-105-106-ocak-subat-1998/2301/kemalist-hegemonya-uzerine/6280#_ftnref10

Çelik, N. B. (2000). The constitution and dissolution of the Kemalist imaginary. In D. Howarth, A. J. Norval & Y. Stavrakakis (Eds.), *Discourse theory and political analysis: Identities, hegemonies and social change* (pp. 193-204). Manchester University Press.

Çelik, N. B. (2009). Analyzing Kemalism through discourse theory. In N. Carpentier, P. Pruulman-Vengerfeldt, R. Kilborn, T. Olsson, H. Nieminen, E. Sundin & K. Nordenstreng (Eds.), *Communicative approaches to politics and ethics in Europe* (pp. 219-230). Tartu University Press.

Çelik, N. B. (2021). Kemalizm: Hegemonik Bir Söylem. In A. İnsel (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 75-91). İletişim.

Çetin, S. (2023a, October 28). Yaşasın Cumhuriyet; Nice 100 yıllara.... *Çağdaş Kocaeli*. https://www.cagdaskocaeli.com.tr/makale/17371664/sadun-cetin/yasasin-cumhuriyet-nice-100-yillara

Çetin, S. (2023b, November 17). 10 Kasım'ın ardından; Sivil Atatürkçülük. *Çağdaş Kocaeli*. https://www.cagdaskocaeli.com.tr/makale/17669638/sadun-cetin/10-kasimin-ardindan-sivil-ataturkculuk?10

Çevik, S. & Taş, H. (2013). In Between Democracy and Secularism: The Case of Turkish Civil Society. *Middle East Critique*, *22*(2), 129–147. https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2013.783534

Dağı, İ. (2011). *Turkey Between Democracy and Militarism: Post-Kemalist Perspectives.* Orion.

Dağı, İ. (2021, September 4). Atatürkçülük nasıl sivilleşti?. *Diken*. https://www.diken.com.tr/ataturkculuk-nasil-sivillesti/

Dağı, İ. (2024, January 2). Atatürk realitesi ve Atatürkçülük: Yeniden düşünmek mümkün mü?. *Diken*. https://www.diken.com.tr/ataturk-realitesi-ve-ataturkculuk-yeniden-dusunmek-mumkun-mu/

Dean, J. [Jodi]. (2014). After Post-Politics: Occupation and the Return of Communism. In J. Wilson & E. Swyngedouw (Eds.), *The Post-Political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticization, Spectres of Radical Politics* (pp. 261-278). Edinburgh University Press.

Dean, J. [Jonathan]. (2014). Tales of the Apolitical. *Political Studies, 62*, 452–467.

Demirel, A. (1996). Atatürk döneminde Kemalizm. In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi: Yüzyıl Biterken Cilt 13* (pp. 766-770). İletişim.

Derrida, J. (1981). *Positions*. The University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. (1997). *Of Grammatology*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Diken, B. (2009). Radical Critique as the Paradox of Post-Political Society. *Third Text*, *23*(5), 579-586. DOI: 10.1080/09528820903184815.

Diken, B. (2014). Religious Antinomies of Post-Politics. In J. Wilson & E. Swyngedouw (Eds.), *The Post-Political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticization, Spectres of Radical Politics* (pp. 126-145). Edinburgh University Press.

Doğan, Y. (2023, October 29). Örselenen değerlerine rağmen, yer gök Cumhuriyet. *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/yalcin-dogan/orselenen-degerlerine-ragmen-yer-gok-cumhuriyet,42030

Doğru, N. (1998, October 31). Bu coşkuyu ziyan etmeyelim. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/31/y06.html

Dorsay, A. (2023, November 1). Görkemli Atatürk sevgisi, kitap fuarı ve son günler. *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/atilla-dorsay/gorkemli-ataturk-sevgisi-kitap-fuari-ve-son-gunler,42067

DW Türkçe. (2023, October 27). *"Sivil Atatürkçülük" yayılıyor | Cumhuriyet'in 100. yılı* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y90U_6sSRT0

Einstein, A., Podolsky, B. and Rosen, N. (1935) Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete? *Physical Review, 47*, 777-780. http://dx.doi.org/10.1103/PhysRev.47.777

Ekim, S. (1999). *Türkiye'yi Atatürkçülükten Kurtarmak: Atatürk'ten Boşanıyorum.* Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları.

Erdoğan, N. (2001). "Kalpaksız Kuvvacılar": Kemalist Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları. In S. Yerasimos (Ed.), *Türkiye'de Sivil Toplum ve Milliyetçilik* (pp. 235-263). İletişim Yayınları.

Erdoğan, N. (2021). Neo-Kemalizm, Organik Bunalım ve Hegemonya. In A. İnsel (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 584-591). İletişim.

Erkmen, T. D. (2013, June 24). Politik olmak, Apolitik olmak ve Gezi olayları. *Bianet*. https://bianet.org/yazi/politik-olmak-apolitik-olmak-ve-gezi-olaylari-148666

Eroğlu, H. (1981). *Atatürkçülük.* Olgaç Matbaası.

Ertem, R. (1998, October 29). Cumhuriyetin 75. Yılı Yüreklerde Atatürk Sevgisi. *Cumhuriyet*. 20

Esen, B. (2021a, September 21). Sivilleşen Kemalizm neden bazı kesimleri rahatsız ediyor?. *Politikyol*. https://www.politikyol.com/sivillesen-kemalizm-neden-bazi-kesimleri-rahatsiz-ediyor/

Esen, B. (2021b, November 16). Değişen Mustafa Kemal algısı (I). *Politikyol*. https://www.politikyol.com/degisen-mustafa-kemal-algisi-i/

Esen, B. (2021c, November 23). Değişen Mustafa Kemal algısı (II). *Politikyol*. https://www.politikyol.com/degisen-mustafa-kemal-algisi-i/

European Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication (2021). *European Parliament youth survey – Report*. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/60428

Fırat, A. H. (2017, November 13). Ali Haydar Fırat yazdı | Yükselen Atatürkçülük, AKP ve sol. *Politikyol*. https://www.politikyol.com/ali-haydar-firat-yazdi-yukselen-ataturkculuk-akp-ve-sol/

Freud, S. (1999). *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Oxford University Press.

Fukuyama, F. (1989). The End of History?. *The National Interest, 16,* 3-18.

Genelkurmay Başkanlığı. (1984). *Atatürkçülük (Üçüncü Kitap): Atatürkçü Düşünce Sistemi*. Milli Eğitim Basımevi.

Giddens, A. (1998). *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy.* Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (2007). *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics.* Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (2008). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age.* Polity Press.

Glyptis, L. (2008). Living up to the father: The national identity prescriptions of remembering Atatürk; his homes, his grave, his temple. *National Identities, 10*(4), 353-372. DOI: 10.1080/14608940802271647

Göle, N. (2023, October 30). *Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Göle: 20 yıl önce vurgu Kemalizm eleştirisindeydi, bugün Atatürkçülüğün yeniden keşfinde* [Interview]. T24. https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/cansu-camlibel/prof-dr-nilufer-gole-20-yil-once-vurgu-kemalizm-elestirisindeydi-bugun-ataturkculugun-yeniden-kesfinde,42052

Grossberg, L. (1986). On postmodernism and articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall. *Journal of Communication Inquiry, 10*(2), 45-60. DOI: 10.1177/019685998601000204

Gültekin, B. (2023, November 1). Fıkra olacak şey gerçek oldu. *Birgün*. https://www.birgun.net/makale/fikra-olacak-sey-gercek-oldu-480112

Günay, E. (2023, November 3). Yüzüncü yılın ardından. *Politikyol*. https://www.politikyol.com/yuzuncu-yilin-ardindan/

Gürsel, K. (2013, June 6). '90 Kuşağı'na merhaba deyin. *Milliyet*. Retrieved February 12, 2024, from https://everywheretaksim.net/tr/90-kusagina-merhaba-deyin/index.html

Haider, A. (2022). Four Concepts in Depoliticized Politics. In A. Allen & E. Mendieta (Eds.), *Power, Neoliberalism, and the Reinvention of Politics: The Critical Theory of Wendy Brown* (pp. 121-140). The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and Time.* State University of New York Press.

Heper, M. (2012). Kemalism/Atatürkism. In M. Heper & S. Sayarı (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey* (pp. 139-148). Routledge.

Homer, S. (2005). *Jacques Lacan.* Routledge.

Horodecki, R., Horodecki, P., Horodecki, M. and Horodecki, K. (2009) Quantum Entanglement. *Reviews of Modern Physics, 81*, 865. https://doi.org/10.1103/RevModPhys.81.865

Howarth, D. (2015). Introduction. In D. Howarth (Ed.), *Ernesto Laclau: Post-Marxism, populism and critique* (pp. 1-20). Routledge.

Hürriyet. (1998, October 27). Cumhuriyet Konserleri. *Hürriyet*. https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cumhuriyet-konserleri-39044916

Hürriyet. (2001, August 21). Erdoğan: Millet isterse laiklik tabii ki gidecek. *Hürriyet.* https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/erdogan-millet-isterse-laiklik-tabii-ki-gidecek-38260315

İnsel, A. (2021). Giriş. In A. İnsel (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 17-27). İletişim.

İstanbul Ekonomi Araştırma. (2021, November). *Türkiye'nin Geleceğine Genç Bakış 12.11.2021.* https://researchistanbul.com/turkiyenin-gelecegine-genc-bakis-2021/#

Jameson, F. (1994). *The Seeds of Time*. Columbia University Press.

Jäger, A. (2022a). From Post-Politics to Hyper-Politics. *Jacobin*, 44, 78-87.

Jäger, A. (2022b). The illusion of the end. *New Perspectives*, *30*(4), 410-414. https://doi.org/10.1177/2336825X221132933

Jones, O. (2016). Preface, In Í. Errejón & C. Mouffe, *Podemos: In the Name of the People* (pp. 7-13). Lawrence & Wishart.

Jørgensen, M. & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method.* Sage Publications.

Kalkandelen, Z. (2023, November 1). Halk, ümmet yerine yurttaşlık bağını kuran laik Cumhuriyeti kutladı. *Cumhuriyet*. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/zulal-kalkandelen/halk-ummet-yerine-yurttaslik-bagini-kuran-laik-cumhuriyeti-kutladi-2136219

Kamat, S. (2014). The New Development Architecture and the Post- Political in the Global South. In E. Swyngedouw & J. Wilson (Eds.), *The Post-Political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics* (pp. 67–85). Edinburgh University Press.

Karabağ, G. (2022, November 13). Gülçin Karabağ yazdı: Gençler hangi Atatürk'ü, nasıl yeniden keşfediyor?. *Medyascope*. https://medyascope.tv/2022/11/13/gulcin-karabag-yazdi-gencler-hangi-ataturku-nasil-yeniden-kesfediyor/

Karpat, K. H. (1985). The Personality of Ataturk [Review of *The Immortal Atatürk--A Psychobiography*, by V. D. Volkan & N. Itzkowitz]. *The American Historical Review*, *90*(4), 893–899. https://doi.org/10.2307/1858844

Kepenek, Y. (2023, November 5). Cumhuriyet: Mabet ile devlet. *Birgün*. https://www.birgun.net/makale/cumhuriyet-mabet-ile-devlet-481142

Keyman, F. & İçduygu, A. (2003). Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey: Actors, Boundaries and Discourses. *Citizenship Studies, 7*(2), 219-234. DOI: 10.1080/1362102032000065982

KONDA. (2014). *Türkiye'de Gençlerin Katılımı*. İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları. https://konda.com.tr/rapor/181/turkiyede-genclerin-katilimi

KONDA. (2022). Gençlerin İnsan Hakları Algısı: Kamuoyu Araştırması. https://konda.com.tr/rapor/174/genclerin-insan-haklari-algisi-arastirmasi

KONDA. (2024). Gençlerin Politik Tercihleri Araştırması. https://konda.com.tr/rapor/182/genclerin-politik-tercihleri-arastirmasi

Konrad Adenauer Foundation. (1999). *Turkish Youth 1998: Silent Majority Highlited*. https://www.kas.de/tr/web/tuerkei/einzeltitel/-/content/turkish-youth-98

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation. (2017). *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Gençlik Araştırması Raporu: Politika, din, cinsiyet eşitliği ve gelecek hakkında değerlendirmeler*. https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=e6ea7dbf-77a4-1a06-35c1-ba8694cfdefb&groupId=252038

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation. (2021). *Turkish Youth Research 2021*. https://www.kas.de/documents/283907/16886777/Turkish+Youth+2021_KAS.pdf/e430a8e7-a1e1-6b55-4a74-e77c4b2a8652?version=1.3&t=1655125237331

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation. (2023). *Türkiye Gençlik Araştırması 2023*. https://www.kas.de/documents/283907/24685727/T%C3%BCrkiye+Gen%C3%A7lik+Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmas%C4%B1+2023.pdf/8cc42a63-e829-0057-15a5-b03f36ed9a32?version=1.1&t=1685717349843

Koptaş, R. (2013, June 6). Gezi'den geleceğe doğru. *Agos*. https://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/9110/geziden-gelecege-dogru

Köker, L. (1991). Sol, çağdaşlaşma adına Kemalizm'i hep olumladı [Interview]. In R. Çakır & L. Cinemre (Eds.), *Sol Kemalizme Bakıyor* (pp. 25-42). Metis.

Köker, L. (1993). *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*. İletişim.

Köker, L. (2021). Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük: Modernleşme, Devlet ve Demokrasi. In A. İnsel (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 97-112). İletişim.

Küçükömer, İ. (1994). *Halk Demokrasi İstiyor mu?: Bitmemiş Son Eser*. Bağlam.

Küçükömer, İ. (2013). *Sivil Toplum Yazıları*. Profil.

Küçükömer, İ. (2021). *Düzenin Yabancılaşması: Batılaşma*. Kapı.

Kürkçü, E. (2013, June 8). *"Gençler bizim kuşak kadar ciddiye almıyorlar kendilerini"* [Interview]. Milliyet. https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/asu-maro/gencler-bizim-kusak-kadar-ciddiye-almiyorlar-kendilerini-1720407

Lacan, J. (1988). Seminar on "The Purloined Letter". In W. J. Richardson (Ed.), *The Purloined Poe* (pp. 28-54). The John Hopkins University Press.

Lacan, J. (1989). *Écrits: A selection*. Routledge.

Lacan, J. (1991). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Lacan, J. (1997). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Lacan, J. (1998). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Lacan, J. (1999). *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge.* W. W. Norton & Company.

Lacan, J. (2008). *My Teaching.* Verso.

Laclau, E. (1996). *Emancipation(s).* Verso.

Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populist Reason.* Verso.

Laclau, E. (2014). *The Rhetorical Foundations of Society.* Verso.

Laclau, E. (2015). Discourse (1993). In D. Howarth (Ed.), *Ernesto Laclau: Post-Marxism, populism and critique* (pp. 23-29). Routledge.

Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics.* Verso.

Livaneli, Z. (1998a, October 29). Atatürk 117 Yaşında. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/29/y29.html

Livaneli, Z. (1998b, October 30). 75'inci yıl, ulusal milat olmalı. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/30/y29.html

Livaneli, Z. (1998c, October 31). Yaşam ve ölüm. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/31/y29.html

Livaneli, Z. (2023, November 10). Hiçbir kuvvet Atatürk sevgisini, halkın kalbinden söküp atmaya yetmeyecek. *Gazete Oksijen*. https://gazeteoksijen.com/yazarlar/zulfu-livaneli/hicbir-kuvvet-ataturk-sevgisini-halkin-kalbinden-sokup-atmaya-yetmeyecek-194026

Lüküslü, D. (2009). *Türkiye'de Gençlik Miti: 1980 Sonrası Türkiye Gençliği.* İletişim.

Lüküslü, G. D. (2008). Günümüz Türkiye Gençliği: Ne Kayıp Bir Kuşak Ne de Ülkenin Aydınlık Geleceği. In N. Yentürk, Y. Kurtaran & G. Nemutlu (Eds.),

Türkiye'de Gençlik Çalışması ve Politikaları (pp. 287-297). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Mahçupyan, E. (2021, November 25). Siyasi ergenliğin ve çaresizliğin kültü: Atatürkçülük. *Serbestiyet*. https://serbestiyet.com/yazarlar/siyasi-ergenligin-ve-caresizligin-kultu-ataturkculuk-76187/

Medyascope. (2019, November 12). *Ruşen Çakır yorumluyor: Yeni Atatürkçülük* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0txAjOjJraQ

Medyascope. (2021a, August 31). *Nuray Mert ile Soru - Cevap: "Atatürkçülük, Türkiye'nin en başarılı sivil toplum hareketi oldu"* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Owy0Tu0Aa80

Medyascope. (2021b, September 14). *Sivilleşen Atatürkçülük ve endişelenen muhafazakârlar: İhsan Dağı ile söyleşi* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKvHhrq3ofI

Medyascope. (2022, June 15). *Günümüzde Atatürk ve Atatürkçülük* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iydL5bpQWC8

Mengi, G. (1998, October 39). Güzel ve çirkin… *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/30/y02.html

Mert, N. (2023, October 31). Nuray Mert yazdı: Cumhuriyet kutlu oldu. *Medyascope*. https://medyascope.tv/2023/10/31/nuray-mert-yazdi-cumhuriyet-kutlu-oldu/

Meydan, S. (2017). *1923 Kuruluş Ayarlarına Dönmek.* İnkılap.

Meydan, S. (2023, November 1). Bir yeniden doğuş öyküsü olarak Cumhuriyet. *Cumhuriyet*. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/sinan-meydan/bir-yeniden-dogus-oykusu-olarak-cumhuriyet-2136220

Milliyet. (1998, October 30). Cumhuriyet Şöleni. *Milliyet*. 17.

Moğulkoç, Z. G. & Telseren, F. (n.d.). *Atatürkçülük Varken…!.* Şafak Matbaası.

Molinas, İ. (2013, June 12). Gezi'nin fotoğrafı. *Şalom.* https://www.salom.com.tr/arsiv/koseyazisi/87377/gezinin-fotografi-

Mouffe, C. (1993). *The Return of the Political*. Verso.

Mouffe, C. (1999). Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism? *Social Research*, *66*(3), 745–758. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40971349

Mouffe, C. (2005a). *On the Political.* Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (2005b). For an agonistic public sphere. In L. Tønder & L. Thomassen (Eds.), *Radical Democracy: Politics between abundance and lack* (pp. 123-132). Manchester University Press.

Mouffe, C. (2017). *For a Left Populism*. Verso.

Mouffe, C. (2021, August 19). *Interview: Chantal Mouffe on democracy, populism, and why the Left needs to read Spinoza* [Interview]. Tocqueville 21. https://tocqueville21.com/interviews/interview-chantal-mouffe-on-democracy-populism-and-why-the-left-needs-to-read-spinoza/

Nadi, N. (1993). *Ben Atatürkçü Değilim.* Çağdaş Yayınları.

Navaro-Yashin, Y. (1998). Uses and Abuses of "State and Civil Society" in Contemporary Turkey. *New Perspectives on Turkey, 18,* 1-22.

Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2002). *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey.* Princeton University Press.

Oppelt, M. (2014). "Thinking the World Politically": an interview with Chantal Mouffe. *ZPTh - Zeitschrift für Politische Theorie*, *5*(2), 263-277. https://doi.org/10.3224/zpth.v5i2.17126

Oral, Z. (1998, November 1). Cumhuriyet coşkusu…. *Milliyet*. 29

Oral, Z. (2023, November 2). Bir gecelik kutlama değil sahiplenme!. *Cumhuriyet*. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/zeynep-oral/bir-gecelik-kutlama-degil-sahiplenme-2136575

Osborne, P. (1992). Modernity is a qualitative, not a chronological, category. *New Left Review*, *192*, 65-84.

Özbudun, E. (1989). Atatürk ve Demokrasi. *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi, V(*14*),* 285-296.

Özerdim, S. N. (1996). *Atatürkçülüğün El Kitabı.* Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği.

Özkök, E. (1998, October 30). En büyük referandum. *Hürriyet*. https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/en-buyuk-referandum-39045218

Öztan, G. G. (2013, June 4). İsyanın Öngörülmezliği: "Çapulcular" ve Değişim. *Bianet*. https://bianet.org/yazi/isyanin-ongorulmezligi-capulcular-ve-degisim-147197

Öztürk A. & Karakuş Öztürk H. (2019). Türkiye Üzerine Tarihsel Sosyolojik Bir Tartışma: Yapı, Özne Ve Konjonkötürün Diyalektik Birlikteliği. *Turkish Studies - Social Sciences*, 14(5), 2397-2409. 10.29228/TurkishStudies.36963

Öztürk, A. (2016, December 6). Sivil Atatürkçülük. *Politikyol*. Retrieved February 12, 2024, from https://web.archive.org/web/20161214040150/https://www.politikyol.com/armagan-ozturk-yazdi-sivil-ataturkculuk/

Öztürk, A. (2017). Civic Ataturkism in the Dissolving Process of Post-Kemalism. In A. Öztürk & A. Bilgin (Eds.), *The Transformation of Public Sphere: An Interdisciplinary Debate about the Recent Development of Publicity in Turkey* (pp. 87-101). Nomos.

Öztürk, A. (2023a, August 15). Kemalizm'in Sağcılaşması. *Uluslararası Politika Akademisi*. https://politikaakademisi.org/2023/08/15/kemalizmin-sagcilasmasi/

Öztürk, A. (2023b, October 30). Demokrasiyi cumhuriyetle aşmak. *Yeni Arayış*. https://yeniarayis.com/armaganozturk/demokrasiyi-cumhuriyetle-asmak/

Öztürk, A. (2024, January 3). 2024: Kemalizm, İslamcılık ve milliyetçilik. *Yeni Arayış*. https://yeniarayis.com/armaganozturk/2024-kemalizm-islamcilik-ve-milliyetcilik/

Özyürek, E. (2006). *Nostalgia for the Modern*. Duke University Press.

Panagia, D., & Ranciére, J. (2000). Dissenting Words: A Conversation with Jacques Ranciére. *Diacritics 30*(2), 113-126. https://doi.org/10.1353/dia.2000.0016.

Parla, T. (2020). *Ziya Gökalp, Kemalizm ve Türkiye'de Korporatizm.* Metis.

Ranciére, J. (1999). *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy.* University of Minnesota Press.

Ranciére, J., Panagia, D., & Bowlby, R. (2001). Ten Theses on Politics. *Theory & Event 5*(3), https://doi.org/10.1353/tae.2001.0028.

Ranciére, J. (2009). *The Emancipated Spectator*. Verso.

Rosenblum, B. & Kuttner, F. (2006). *Quantum Enigma: Physics Encounters Consciousness.* Oxford University Press.

Sabuncu, M. (2023, October 20). Cumhuriyet'in 100. yılında; iktidardan ve partilerden bağımsız "Sivil Atatürkçülük". *T24*. https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/murat-sabuncu/cumhuriyet-in-100-yilinda-iktidardan-ve-partilerden-bagimsiz-sivil-ataturkculuk,41921

Sağlar, F. (2023, October 31). Vahdettin'in ruhunu kim taşıyor?. *Birgün*. https://www.birgun.net/makale/vahdettinin-ruhunu-kim-tasiyor-479909

Saussure, F. (2011). *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia University Press.

Savran, S. (1993). İkinci Cumhuriyet ya da Post-Kemalizm. *Sınıf Bilinci, 13*, 6-37.

Sayar, V. (1998, October 30). Alkışlar…. *Cumhuriyet*. 13

Saymaz, İ. (2013, June 3). Radikal: Gezi Parkı Eylemi '90 doğumluların 68'i. *Radikal*. Retrieved February 12, 2024, from https://everywheretaksim.net/index.html@p=12601.html

Sazak, D. (1998, October 31). Dersimiz Cumhuriyet. *Milliyet.* 16

Schmitt, C. (2007). *The Concept of the Political.* The University of Chicago Press.

Schrödinger, E. (1935). Discussion of Probability Relations between Separated Systems. *Mathematical Proceedings of the Cambridge Philosophical Society*, *31*(4), 555–563. doi:10.1017/S0305004100013554

Selçuk, İ. (1998a, October 25). El Ele…. *Cumhuriyet*. 2

Selçuk, İ. (1998b, October 29). Cumhuriyetçiler. *Cumhuriyet*. 2

Selçuk, İ. (2019). Gardrop Atatürkçülüğü. Retrieved April 1, from https://www.veryansintv.com/gardrop-ataturkculugu/

Selçuk, S. (1993). Sivil Toplumda Atatürkçülüğün Konumu. *Adam Sanat, 94,* 18-24.

Soner, Ş. (1998, October 29). Cumhuriyet ve Varoşlar. *Cumhuriyet*. 13

Sosyal Ekonomik ve Kültürel Araştırmalar Merkezi. (2016). *Türkiye'de Gençlik: Gençliğin Özellikleri, Sorunları, Kimlikleri ve Beklentileri.* SEKAM Yayınları.

Stavrakakis, Y. (2002). *Lacan and the Political*. Routledge.

Strauss, L. (2007). Notes on Carl Schmitt, The Concept of the Political. In C. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (pp. 97-122)*.* The University of Chicago Press.

"Sunuş". (2021). In A. İnsel (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 13-15). İletişim.

Şahin, A. (2023, November 12). Bitmemişiz. *Evrensel*. https://www.evrensel.net/yazi/93880/bitmemisiz

Tamer, R. (1998a, October 26). Partiler nerde?. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/26/y16.html

Tamer, R. (1998b, October 31). O gece. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/31/y16.html

Tanilli, S. (1998, October 30). Bir Uzun Yürüyüşte Toplaşmak…. *Cumhuriyet*. 4

Tanyaş, B. (2015). Gençler ve Politik Katılım: Gezi Parkı Eylemleri'nde "Apolitik" Nesil. *Eleştirel Psikoloji Bülteni*, *6*, 25-50.

Taşkale, A. R. (2016). *Post-Politics in Context*. Routledge.

Tekinırk, M. (2022). *New Nationalism, 'New Turkey': Populist Nationalism, Democratic Erosion, and National Identity Contestation in Turkey under the Justice and Development Party* [Doctoral Dissertation, Boston University]. https://hdl.handle.net/2144/45269

Teslova, E. (2022, June 30). Putin says formation of multipolar world 'irreversible'. *AA*. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/putin-says-formation-of-multipolar-world-irreversible/2627320

Tılıç, L. D. (2023, October 31). Cumhuriyet: Resmiyet ve Samimiyet. *Birgün*. https://www.birgun.net/makale/cumhuriyet-resmiyet-ve-samimiyet-479889

Toker, M. (1998, October 29). Cumhuriyet 75 yaşında: 2 … ve 75. yıldönümüne ait düşünceler. *Milliyet*. 19

Toker, N. (2013, June 17). *Çaylak Haber: 'Büyük bir söz şu anda kurulmadı henüz, ama büyük bir söz var, itiraz' Nilgün Toker* [Interview]. Çaylak Haber.

Retrieved February 12, 2024, from https://everywheretaksim.net/tr/buyuk-bir-soz-su-anda-kurulmadi-henuz-ama-buyuk-bir-soz-var-itiraz/

Tunçay, M. (1981). *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde TEK-PARTİ YÖNETİMİ'nin Kurulması (1923-1931).* Yurt Yayınları.

Turan, Ö. (2021). Son Dönemde Kemalizme Demokratik Meşruiyet Arayışları. In A. İnsel (Ed.). *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 592-600). İletişim.

Turan, R. (2023, October 30). İkinci Yüzyıla "Merhaba" dedik. *Sözcü.* https://www.sozcu.com.tr/ikinci-yuzyila-merhaba-dedik-wp7846183

Türkiye Gençlik STK'ları Platformu. (2018). *Türkiye'nin Gençleri 2018.* https://tgsp.org.tr/tr/frontend/storage/documents/turkiyenin-gencleri-arastirmasi.pdf

Türkiye Gençlik STK'ları Platformu. (2020). *Türkiye'nin Gençleri 2020.* https://tgsp.org.tr/tr/frontend/storage/documents/FTG5OhwKpwGCSI9iWZCIwUhyYPR0HHhpDaIN8hbN.pdf

Türkiye Raporu (2023b, April). *Gençliğin Gündemi: Sandık.* https://turkiyeraporu.com/arastirma/gencligin-gundemi-sandik-14173/

Türkiye Raporu. (2022). *Kasım 2022- Vol. 1 (Rapor 73).* https://turkiyeraporu.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Rapor-73-TR-Kasim-2022-Vol.-I.pdf [A more limited set of data from the same report is publicly available in https://turkiyeraporu.com/arastirma/yigidim-aslanim-ataturku-nasil-bilirsiniz-11595/]

Türkiye Raporu. (2023a, March). *Türkiye Genç Seçmen Araştırması.* https://turkiyeraporu.com/arastirma/turkiye-genc-secmen-arastirmasi-15768/

Türmen, R. (2023, November 1). Cumhuriyet'in 100. yılı dersleri. *T24.* https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/riza-turmen/cumhuriyet-in-100-yili-dersleri,42076

Ulagay, O. (1998, November 1). 75. yılı kutlarken coşkudan düşünceye. *Milliyet*. 9

Uluç, H. (1998a, October 28). 29 Ekim'de Anıtkabir'de olabilmenin mutluluğu.. *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/28/y08.html

Uluç, H. (1998b, October 30). Bir başka coşkulu Cumhuriyet!... *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/30/y08.html

Uluç, H. (1998c, October 31). İşte böyle.. Her sene böyle… *Sabah*. https://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/31/y08.html

Usumi, S. (1998, October 30). Atatürkçülük Lafla Olmaz…. *Cumhuriyet*. 11

Utkucu, M. (2024, January 2). Sivil Atatürkçülük Mümkün mü?. *Birikim*. https://birikimdergisi.com/guncel/11598/sivil-ataturkculuk-mumkun-mu

Ünder, H. (2021). Atatürk İmgesinin Siyasal Yaşamdaki Rolü. In A. İnsel (Ed.). *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 138-155). İletişim.

Üstüner, F. (2007). Radikal demokrasi: "Liberalizm mi, demokrasi mi ? Evet, lütfen!". *ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi, 34*(2), 313-336.

Valansi, K. (2013, June 5). Apolitik gençlerin kırılma noktası. *Şalom*. https://www.salom.com.tr/arsiv/haber/87351/apolitik-genclerin-kirilma-noktasi-

Velidedeoğlu, H. V. (1963). Gerçek Atatürkçülük Nedir?. *Kemalizm, 7*, 1-8.

Yaşar, İ. H., Demirkol, F., Daşdemir, E., Gür Türkdoğan, T. (2021). 2020 Sosyoekopolitik Gençlik Araştırması: İstanbul İli Örneğinde Gençlerin Ekonomik ve Siyasal Eğilimleri. *International Journal of Social Inquiry, 14*(2), 839-884. DOI: 10.37093/ijsi.997051

Yaşlı, F. (2023, August 30). Tek eksikliğimiz Atatürkçülük mü?. *SoL*. https://haber.sol.org.tr/yazar/tek-eksikligimiz-ataturkculuk-mu-383368

Yıldız, A. (2019). *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene: Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)*. İletişim.

Weber, M. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences.* The Free Press.

Wilson, J., & Swyngedouw, E. (2014). Seeds of Dystopia: Post-Politics and the Return of the Political. In E. Swyngedouw & J. Wilson (Eds.), *The Post-Political and Its Discontents: Spaces of Depoliticisation, Spectres of Radical Politics* (pp. 1–22). Edinburgh University Press.

Zürcher, E. -J. (2012). In the name of the father, the teacher and the hero: the Atatürk personality cult in Turkey. In V. Ibrahim & M. Wunsch (Eds.), *Political Leadership, Nations and Charisma* (pp. 129-142). Routledge.

Zürcher, E. -J. (2021). Kemalist Düşüncenin Osmanlı Kaynakları. In A. İnsel (Ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 2: Kemalizm* (pp. 44-55). İletişim.

Žižek, S. (2000). *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. Verso.

Žižek, S. (2007). *How to Read Lacan.* W. W. Norton & Company.

Žižek, S. (2008). *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Verso.

Žižek, S. (2022, June 21). Pacifism is the wrong response to the war in Ukraine. *Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/21/pacificsm-is-the-wrong-response-to-the-war-in-ukraine

Žižek, S. (2023, April 14). Say No to Putin's 'Multipolarity'. *Compact.* *https://www.compactmag.com/article/say-no-to-putin-s-multipolarity/*

APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY
T: +90 312 210 22 91
F: +90 312 210 79 59
ueam@metu.edu.tr
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

18 OCAK 2024

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Fahriye Özçoban Üstüner

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Özgür Umut BAZ'ın *"Post-Politics as a Form of Hyper-Politics: The Case of "Civic Atatürkism""* başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek **0071-ODTUİAEK-2024** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

Prof.Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye
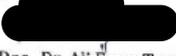
Doç. Dr. Ali Emre Turgut
Üye

Doç. Dr. Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye

Doç.Dr. Murat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

208

B. INTERVIEWEE PROFILE / GÖRÜŞMECİLERİN PROFİLİ

Name	Age	Gender	Uni.	Dept.	Education	Pol. Affil.
Ümit	25	M	METU	Geological Eng.	Grad	-
Sumru	18	W	METU	Poli. Sci.	Undergrad	Türkology Soc.
Güntan	21	M	METU	Poli. Sci.	Undergrad	-
Ayşe	21	W	METU	Poli. Sci.	Undergrad	-
Serdar	20	M	METU	Poli. Sci.	Undergrad	-
Bülent	22	M	METU	Poli. Sci.	Undergrad	-
Zeytin	22	M	METU	Poli. Sci.	Undergrad	ADT
Leylek	23	M	METU	Physics	Undergrad	ADT

Kelebek	20	M	METU	Electron. Eng.	Undergrad	ADT
Zarif	21	M	METU	Architect.	Undergrad	ADT
Roni	21	M	METU	Poli. Sci.	Undergrad	CHP
Tülay	21	W	TED	Econ.	Undergrad	-
Selva	20	W	TED	Sociology	Undergrad	-
Timuçin	25	M	-	-	High School	-
Nükhet	24	W	Hacettepe	Chemistry	Undergrad	-

C. SAMPLE INTERVIEW / ÖRNEK MÜLAKAT

Özgür Umut BAZ: Herhangi bir... Atatürkçülük olduğu için konu, biraz ona yönelik, biraz da dışında da soruyorum aslında. Herhangi bir yerde örgütlü müsünüz? Yani bu bir parti filan... Bir toplulukta, kulüpte filan şey yapıyor musunuz?

Interviewee: [Atatürkçü Düşünce Topluluğu'ndan bahsediyor] Yani bir düşündüm aslında girsem mi girmesem mi. Tam emin olamadım. Büyük ihtimalle girerim ama, şu an değil. Herhangi bir topluluğa gitmiyorum.

Benim iki kriterim var bu mülakatı yapmak için. Purposive iki şey belirledim. Biri, birinin, yani mülakatı yapacağım kişinin, kendini Atatürkçü olarak tanımlaması [İkincisi de 18-25 yaş aralığında olması]. Ben onu şey yapmıyorum, Atatürkçülük budur, siz böyle misiniz demiyorum. Tanımını mülakatı yaptığım kişiden almaya çalışıyorum biraz daha. Self-proclaimed bir Atatürkçü ise nasıl tanımlıyorsun diye soruyorum. Atatürkçüsünüz, bu mülakatı yaptığımıza göre. Nasıl tanımlıyorsunuz Atatürkçülüğü? Ne demek sizin için Atatürkçülük?

Ya Atatürk aslında benim için, bilmiyorum, benim ailemden gelen bir şey olabilir, bir gelenek olabilir. Dedemler, yani her iki ailede de hep Atatürk'ün öğretileriyle büyüdüm aslında. Atatürk'ün yaptığı işler, ülkenin kuruluşu, işte kuvayi milliye ruhu, milliyetçilik bu tarz konseptlerle büyüdüğüm için aslında, ben de bunların üstüne kendim eklemeler yaparak... Kendi tanımım aslında bir tık gerçekten Atatürk'ün iyi yönlerini alıp, işte yıkılmış bir imparatorluğu... Aslında Atatürkçülük de biraz oraya dayanıyor ya... Atatürk Osmanlı'nın devamlı olarak kurmuyor kendisini, Osmanlı'nın kötü yönlerini bir noktada bırakıyor ve iyi yönlerini alarak, yeni bir, yukarıdan aşağı, bir sistem kurmaya çalışıyor. Ben de aslında bu Atatürkçü elitler dediğimiz, işte milliyetçilik, Atatürkçü bir milliyetçilik, benimsiyorum kendi açımdan, böyle bir Atatürkçülük tanımım var aslında. Atatürk'ün ilkeleri, öğretileri, iyi yönleri tabii ki.

Peki kimdir Atatürk sizin için?

Atatürk biraz gerçekten baba figürü gibi. Aslında bence çoğu kişi için öyle. Atatürk benim için gerçekten bir önder, bir fikir babası. Kendisini çok entelektüel bir taraftan zaten de okuyabiliyoruz. Çok, askeri taraftan da okuyabiliyoruz. Benim için gerçekten bir baba figürü gibi aslında Türkiye için.

Atatürkçülüğü bir ideoloji olarak mı tanımlarsınız mesela? Bir şeyini yapmak istesem, hani genel structure'ını sormak istesem. Yoksa bir yaşam biçimi gibi bir şey mi?

Ya bir yaşam biçimi olabilir. İşte fikir bütünü. Tam bilmiyorum Atatürkçülük bende çok daha, nasıl diyeyim... Marksizm gibi bir yerden değil bence, Atatürkçülük benim için… Daha çok yaşam tarzı. Böyle fikirlerin... Hep arka planda onun öğretilerini taşıdığımız bir yerde bence.

Atatürkçü olmanın yanında bir başka şey koyuyor musunuz kendinizi tanımlamak için? Atatürkçüyüm ve... İşte, sosyalistim gibi. Atatürkçüyüm ve... Milliyetçiyim gibi veya hani virgül virgül virgül...

Feministim tarzı bir şey diyebilir miyim?

Tabii. Tam da bunu sormak istiyordum.

Yani bu tarz bir yerden belki.

Başka bir yine benzer şey var mı?

Yani kendime direkt olarak milliyetçi der miyim? Atatürk'ün perspektifinden olan bir milliyetçilik belki.

Nasıl bir milliyetçilik o?

Yani asla şey bir yerden değil. Türkler daha üstündür gibi bir yerden değil asla. Ama milli değerlerimiz ve milli bütünlüğü koruma üzerine bir milliyetçilik aslında söylenebilir. Söyleyebilirim ben kendim için.

Anladım. Yani şu ana kadar Atatürkçülük dedik hep, bir de Kemalizm, Kemalist diye bir sözcük var. Bu sözcüğü tercih eder misiniz? Tercih etmez misiniz?

Ya bu sözcüğün ben biraz öcü gibi gösterildiğini düşünüyorum bazı çevrelerce. Yanlış buluyorum bunu. Yani Atatürkçü ve Kemalist aslında bence iki ayrı kol gibi almıyorum ben onu öyle. Yani ben kendime gayet Kemalist de diyebilirim ve bu Kemalizm şey gibi bir yerden çağrıştıyor bana, işte gerçekten işte Kemal'i takip edenler. Aslında Atatürkçülük dediğimizde yani. Aynı eş anlamlı gibi bir yerden aslında. İşte bu baktığımız zaman, Milli Mücadele zamanlarında da işte... Yanlış bir şey söylemeyeyim ama...

Estağfurullah, ben hiç bunu doğrulayacak veya yanlışlayacak biri filan değilim yani.

Saray tarafında da Kemaller ya da işte Kemalciler tarzı bir söylem var zaten Atatürk için. Halk için bile böyle söylemler var aslında. Öyle bir noktadan çıktığı için ben onun çok ayrı olduğunu düşünmüyorum. O sanki sonradan, biz onu çok ayrı bir noktaya koymuşuz da, ayrı bir yerden yönlendiriyoruz gibi. Sanki bizim algımız. Aslında ikisi de aynı şey gibi.

Anlıyorum. Atatürkçü olmanın birtakım koşulları var mı sizin için? Yani bir kriter... Şunlar şunlar, şunu yapanlar Atatürkçü diyebilir kendine, ama bunlar diyemez gibi.

Ya öyle söylemek istemem insanlara. Ama hepimizin tabii kendimizden farklı herkese karşı bir tedirginlik yani kesinlikle oluyor. Şey bir noktadan değil bu yani işte, aaa bir insan muhafazakârsa Atatürkçü olamaz, gibi bir noktadan değil ama bence kendini bir tık seküler tanımlamak koşulu olabilir gibi düşünüyorum. Yani Atatürk'ün öğretileri içerisinde olan işte daha... Nasıl diyeyim, modern biri sanki, daha Atatürkçü gibi. Tabii ki kararı burada hiçbirimiz vermiyoruz. Herkes kendi istediği gibi tanımlayabilir. Benim algım olarak, daha kendini seküler bir noktada konumlandıran bir insan olabilir bu.

Modern birini nasıl tanımlarsınız? Biraz onu açmanızı istesem, imajı.

Tabii ki. Modern birini tanımlarken şöyle... Tabii ki hiçbir kültürü bence modernite ile bağdaştıramayız. Yani işte baktığımız zaman, atıyorum Arap kültürü. Arap kültürü belki bir açıdan bize modern gelmiş değil. Yeme şekilleri, kıyafet şekilleri. Ama hep böyle bir zaten çağdaşlaşma akımı olduğu için, hani çağdaşlaşmak istediğimiz için, biz

işte kendini Atatürkçü olarak tanımayan insanlar. Bence bu çağdaşlaşmaya katkılı bulunacak şekilde davranmak bence. İşte daha temiz bir Türkçe kullanmak mesela, daha sade bir Türkçe kullanmak olabilir bu. Daha temiz gözükmek gibi geliyor bana. Daha jilet gibi, daha Batılı anlamda bir görünüm gibi geliyor.

Modernliği Batıyla ilişkilendiriyor musunuz? Çağdaş olmayı?

Ya tam anlamıyla tabii ki bağdaştırmıyorum. Ben aslında çağdaşlaşmayı bir tık, yani gerçekten iyi yönlerini almanız gereken ya da kötü yönlerini geride bırakarak işte çağdaş, kendi kültürümüzle, kendi geleneklerimizle o çağdaş noktaya ulaşabileceğimize inanıyorum. Hani illa işte Batı özentisi olmaktansa kendi değerlerimizle... Mesela bırakmamız gereken çok gelenek olduğunu düşünüyorum.

Ne gibi?

Şu an aklıma gelen ilk şey mesela çok cinsiyetçi bir yerden, hep konuşulur ya işte, çarşaf geleneği, gerdek gecesi sonrası. Gerçekten bırakmamız gereken gelenek bence. Ki Türkiye'nin çoğu yerinde de yapılıyor... Ya da nasıl bir şey olabilir? Yani işte daha İslami kültürle bizim taraflara gelen geleneklerden bazılarını işte bırakmamız gerekiyor olabilir. Ya da bazı geleneklerimizi daha fazla hatırlamamız gerekiyor gibi olabilir. Yani o noktada.

Anlıyorum... Bu çağdaşlığa bir hemen sıçrayayım, onu hazır konuşuyoruz. Modernliği, tanımladınız, nitekim çağdaşı da, çağdaşa dair de birtakım şeyler aldım. Muasır Medeniyetler Seviyesi diye bir tabir var, Atatürk'ün tabiri zaten. Muasır Medeniyeti nasıl tanımlarsınız?

Muasır medeniyet deyince aklıma benim, ilk önce kesinlikle böyle daha eğitimli bir profil canlandırıyor. Daha eğitimli, daha eşit. Daha... Nasıl diyeyim? Yani bir şey eşit olmak var işte atıyorum, tüm halkın çok daha alt bir tabakada eşit olması durumu var. Bir de gerçekten bir halkın çok daha üst bir noktada konumlanması ve öyle bir eşitlik durumu var. Ben de o üst konumdaki eşitlikten bahsediyorum...

Mesela bir ülke, bugün, kimdir?
Yani İskandinav ülkelerini konuşuyoruz ya, işte...

Seküler sözcüğünü tercih ettiniz mesela az önce konuşurken. Laik var bir de hani, sözcük olarak. Aynı şey mi sizin için, bir fark var aralarında?

Yani bilmiyorum. Bence var. Ben laik kelimesini daha çok şeyle bağdaşlıyorum işte. Din ve devlet işleriyle bağdaştırıyorum. Ama sekülerliği daha yaşam tarzı açısından kullanıyorum sanırım... Tam olarak ayrımlarını kelime anlamıyla bilmiyorum... Kendi konumumdan böyle.

Türkiye açısından o zaman şöyle sorayım. Türkiye seküler bir ülke mi? Slash. Türkiye laik bir ülke mi? Bugün?

Yani... Türkiye laik bir ülke. Kendi yasasıyla birlikte. Türkiye'nin halkı... (sessizlik)... Yani... herhalde... Umarım öyledir... Bilmiyorum, çok bir araştırmam yok aslında.

Atatürk'ün bir ideolojisi var mıydı sizce? Bugün Atatürkçülüğü, biraz daha yaşam tarzı gibi bir şeye yakın tanımladınız. Atatürk'ün bir ideolojisi peki?

Kesinlikle. Yani Atatürk'ün gerçekten ya işte atıyorum kendisi zaten işte, atıyorum CHP'nin ilk zamanlarında işte kullandığı Kemalist prensipler başlıklı, işte Atatürkçülüğünün ilkelerinin zaten partinin, işte bir düşüncesi, bir başlangıcı olduğu için kesinlikle önce Atatürk de aslında kendisi de Kemalist başlığını kullanıyor. Ve işte dediğimiz gibi yukarıdan aşağı bir... İşte, bir ne denir? Bir toplum mühendisliği gibi bir yerden zaten indiği için demokrasi, fikri, cumhuriyet fikri, laiklik, sekülerlik, kıyafet, o, bu... Aslında şöyle, çok uzun zamandır bir arkası olan konuşmaların, işte atıyorum harf devrimi, işte kıyafetle alakalı değişiklikler, ta Osmanlı'nın son dönemlerinden konuşulan 100 yıllık problemler Atatürk ile birlikte aslında, gerçekten tamam, bu kadar konuşuldu, biz artık bunu yapıyoruz noktasında başladığı için bence zaten, böyle bir kesinlik, o stabil durumu bozmayla alakalı, hani bir devrimci bir noktada. Ama biz bunu şey olarak değil, Fransa'nın devrimiyle de karşılaştıramayız sonuçta. Çünkü yukarıdan, aslında o elit kesimden bahsediyoruz hani. Yani halkta bir şey söz konusu değil aslında, yani Atatürk'ün bir tık halka nüfuz ettiği bir devrim var gibi.

Peki bugün Atatürk'ün halka nüfuz edişi, bugün Atatürkçülük hakkında filan, bugünün Türkiye'sinde yani, Atatürkçü bir ülkede mi yaşıyoruz gibi sorabilirim bunu, böyle bir şekilde.

Ben Atatürkçü bir ülkede yaşadığımızı düşünmüyorum. Tabii ki Atatürk'ün fikirlerini eğitim hayatımız boyunca da kesinlikle öğreniyoruz, öğretiliyor. Kimileri bunun çok taraflı bir yerden öğretildiğini düşünür hatta.

Siz öyle düşünüyor musunuz, katılıyor musunuz?

Ben buna pek katılmıyorum. Ya ben buna şu şekilde katılmıyorum. Yani işte nasıl denir, genelde bazı kendini... Hep muhafazakarlıkla alakalı da konuşmak istemiyorum ama, daha muhafazakar insanlarda gördüğümüz şey olayı vardır ya, işte Atatürk'e destek veren hacı hocayı hiç anlatmadınız. Ya da işte ne bileyim Atatürk tek başına mı kazandı sanki bu savaşı deyip Atatürk'ün değerini bir noktada daha aşağıya çekmeye çalışan insanlar vardı. Ben bunlara asla katılmıyorum. Yani tabii ki, tarihi tam olarak objektif yansıtmışlar mıdır, tarihçi değilim. Ama bence çok da böyle bir ayrı ağızdan anlatılmış gibi bir hikaye de yok baktığımızda, özellikle eğitimde. Yani ben bunun bir tık şeyle, kurbanlıkla, yani kendi kurban göstermekle alakalı olduğunu düşünüyorum.

Anlıyorum. Atatürk... Yani şöyle şey yapayım, bir kesimden bahsettiniz, bunlar işte şöyle bir itirazda bulunuyorlar, haklı bulmadığınızı söylediniz. Yani bu belli kesimleri düşünürsek, mesela Atatürkçü diyebileceğiniz partiler, insanlar, siyasetçi, ünlü, kimdir? Değil diyeceğiniz kesimin mesela böyle bilindik figürleri kimdir diye sorsam?

Ya ben şu an hiçbir partinin tam olarak Atatürkçü olduğunu düşünmüyorum. İşte hani CHP kendini Atatürkçü konumlandırsa da ben çok Atatürkçü olduklarını düşünmüyorum açıkçası. Ya o yüzden Türkiye siyasetinde zaten her şey böyle hallaç pamuğu gibi. Her parti her şey ya, her parti hem muhafazakar, hem Atatürkçü falan. Baktığımızda AKP de Atatürkçü bir yerden zaten... Yani aslında her parti her şey. Her parti milliyetçi, her parti Atatürkçü, her parti muhafazakar. Yani her kitleyi o kadar içlerinde barındırmaya çalışıyor ki bence her parti... Tabii ki bazı söylemlerde ayrışıyorlar birbirlerinden. Ama ben öyle direkt olarak Atatürkçülük parti olduğunu düşünmüyorum Türkiye siyasetinde.

Bazı sol diyebileceğimiz partiler mesela Atatürkçülük iddiasındalar. Bazı sağ diyebileceğimiz partiler de Atatürkçülük iddiasındalar. Sizin için Atatürkçülük veya Atatürk figürü daha sola mı yakın, daha sağa mı yakın?

Daha sola yakın olduğunu düşünüyorum açıkçası.

Niçin?

Eee, çok daha... nasıl diyeyim... Devrimci ve inkılapçı bir noktadan olduğu için aslında, Kemalizm, işte, Atatürkçülüğün bir noktası da o aslında. Daha yenilikçi, daha dogma olmayan, dogmayı takip etmeyen bir noktadan olduğu için daha sola yakın olduğunu düşünüyorum ben Atatürkçü düşüncenin. Tabii ki kendini Atatürkçü tanımlayan sağcılar da olabilir.

Siz kendinizi de daha sola yakın görüyorsunuz...

Evet daha sola yakın görüyorum.

Bugün ünlü figürler, siyasetçi olabilir, sanatçı, sepetçi filan...

Haluk Levent geliyor direkt aklıma.

Haluk Levent. Başka var mı mesela verebileceğiniz, Atatürkçü diye, bir örnek?

Atatürkçü deyince aklıma, ya bilmiyorum benim aklıma direkt Cem Karaca geliyor mesela.

Cem Karaca, ne kadar eski bir referans ya (gülüyoruz).

Evet, ama direkt aklıma böyle hani, işte ben Cumhuriyet'e doğdum, Cumhuriyet çocuğuyum falan... O direkt benim, Atatürkçülük de... Bir de hani Cem Karaca'nın siyah beyaz bir işte ünlü gözlüklü resmi vardır ya. Direkt böyle Atatürk'ün de böyle hani siyah beyaz... Aklımda öyle iki görsel çok benziyor yani. Cem Karaca'yı çok birleştiriyorum aslında.

Anlıyorum, çok ilginçmiş. Bu hani her partinin Atatürkçü, veya her partinin her şey olması hususunda... İsim üzerinde bir farklaşma var gibi, Atatürk hakkında konuşurken. Çünkü bazı partiler veya bazı kesimler diyelim, Mustafa Kemal öbeğini tercih ediyor. Bazı kesimler Atatürk sözcüğünü. Mesela Erdoğan da bu 100. yıl kutlamaları şeyinde, işte 2023'te, Gazi diyor. Bu isim tartışmasına dair ne düşünüyorsunuz? Siz herhangi birini tercih ediyor musunuz bu isimlerden?

Ya açıkçası bana Mustafa Kemal kullanımı, çok daha askeri kimlikle bağlaşıyor gibi hissediyorum ben. Yani işte Mustafa Kemal'in askerleriyiz sözü olsun. Ya da işte... Bilmiyorum ben... Ben daha genel anlamda Atatürk'ü kullanıyorum herhalde. Ama Atatürk de bir noktadan şey gibi geliyor. Çağrışım, kulak olarak hani... Çok daha genel, çok daha Türkiye'ye hitap eden bir kullanım. Ama Mustafa Kemal daha askeri bir noktadan olabilir. İşte ya da Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın öyle kullanmasının sebepleri de olabilir tabii ki. Ne bileyim, Gazilik mertebesinin kutsallığıyla alakalı belki bir kullanımdır o. Yani tabii ben gerçekten bir farklılık olabileceğini düşünüyorum şey olarak, kullanımda.

Mülakatın en başında Atatürk'ün entelektüel kimliğiyle askeri kimliğini ayırma hamlesi yaptınız. Bu askeri kimliğe dair ne düşünüyorsunuz? Yani belki en çok da tartışılan şey o. Yani işte darbeler ilişkilendiriliyor Atatürkçülükle filan. Ne düşünüyorsunuz buna dair?

Darbelerin ilişkilendirilmesiyle mi alakalı?

Askeri kimliğine dair diyelim. Darbeleri de yine yanıtlayabilirsiniz.

Bence bu Türkiye özelinde... Türkiye'de gerçekten asker olmanın, çok saygı duyuluyor bence askerliğe, askeriyeye özellikle. İşte bence bu darbelerin ve askerlerin her seferinde biz buradayız, çok daha ayrı bir yerde aslında kendilerini konumlandırıyorlar. Devlet ve asker gibi aslında. Atatürk'ün askeri kimliğini de zaten işte biliyoruz savaşlardan. Komutanlığı, ileri görüşlülüğü hep anlatılan, işte askeri başarıları, çok sivri bir tip olması, kendi özel hayatında da. İşte hep asker arkadaşlarıyla çok daha böyle... Ya şey bile anlatılır ya, işte rakı masasında bile Türkiye'nin durumunu konuşuyorlarmış silah arkadaşlarıyla falan... Hani çok öyle bir kimlik aslında bir yerden. Yani askerliğin de Türkiye'deki o kutsal görünümüyle alakalı çok daha önemli bir yerde bence askerlik bizler için, Türkiye için.

Peki Atatürkçülüğün veya Kemalizmin, işte militarizmle diyenler var, orduyla filan diyelim, bir ilişkisi olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

Düşünüyorum. Yani şöyle, kendime militarist demem. Ama... Çoğu insanın aklına bence kesinlikle militarizm ilişkisi geliyordur. Çünkü çok büyük bir asker geleneği var ya zaten. Hani askere saygı, işte asker deyince böyle bir herkes bir şey olur. İşte daha

ciddidir askerler. İşte asker çocukları daha disiplinle büyür. Ki Türkiye'deki önceki askeri eğitimler, çok daha donanımlıdır askerler hep gözümüzde. Aldıkları eğitim neticesinde falan. O yüzden askere duyulan saygıyla birlikte zaten Türkiye'nin çok daha militarist bir yerde olduğunu düşünüyorum. Özellikle halkla alakalı. Bu, bilmiyorum artık, cihat geleneğiyle de alakalı olabilir belki bazı kesimler için. İşte bazı kesimler için daha askerin çok saygın bir kimlik olmasından kaynaklı bir askeri özen olabilir. O yüzden halkın gerçekten daha militarist bir noktada olduğunu düşünüyorum Türkiye için. Bir de zaten zaman boyunca hep savaşla haşır neşir bir halk olduğumuz için. Bence öyle.

Harika. Bugün peki, Atatürkçülük diyelim, bir siyasal pozisyon olarak, yani Atatürkçü, tam Atatürkçü bir parti yok. Ya da her parti her şey aynı anda, dediniz. Peki Atatürkçülük nerede siyasette, hayatımızda, neresinde?

Ya aslında Atatürkçülük bence tam olarak... Nasıl diyeyim? Siyasilerin öncelikle ağzında.

Neden?

Yani direkt olarak uygulamalı bir şekilde Atatürkçülüğün ilkelerini çok iyi uyguluyorlar ve çok iyi öğretiyorlar ve yayılıyorlar gibi bir noktadan değil ama, belki sıkıştıklarında Atatürk'ü kullandıkları bir yerde bence Atatürkçülük siyaset içerisinde.

Peki neden Atatürk'ün böyle bir meşrulaştırıcı gücü var?

Çünkü halkta bir karşılığı var aslında. Yani işte Atatürk'ün fikirlerinin ölmemesi halk için. İşte Atatürk'ün sonsuzluğu var. Yani halkta karşılığı bulunduğu için aslında bence siyasilerce çok kullanılıyor. Yani o noktada siyasi hayatta buluyorum ben Atatürk'ü. Normal hayatımızda da işte dediğim gibi derslerde, zaten aşinayız Atatürk'e. Yani işte, ne bileyim, benim zamanımda vardı, hani andımızı okuyorduk. Sonra kaldırıldı ama...

Ne düşünüyorsunuz andımız hikayesine? Yani epey uzun yıllar okutuldu. 2016'da mı, 2014'te mi filan kalktı diye hatırlıyorum. O civarlarda, çok uzak olmayan bir zaman. Ne düşünüyorsunuz kaldırılmasına dair?

Ya kaldırılmasına dair hakkında ne düşünüyorum... Bence yerinde bir karardı. Ben böyle düşünüyorum.

Niçin?

Ya Türk'üm, doğruluğum, çalışkanım, ilkem, işte küçüklerimi korumak, büyüklerimi saymak, yurdumu, işte milletimi özümden çok sevmektir, falan, işte varlığım Türk varlığına armağan olsun... Çok Türklük. Çok Türklüğü baskılıyor bence. Ve küçücük çocuklara bunu yapıyor. Yani aklıma direkt şey geliyor. Eee... Nasıl diyeyim, belki tamam benim için işte ne diyeyim... Bulgaristan göçmeni Trakyalı bir aile çocuğu olarak... Hani benim için sorun değil. Ama belki işte... Daha evinde Kürtçe konuşulan... Ve işte... Okumayı, yazmayı, Türkçeyi daha ilkokulda, okulla birlikte öğrenen bir çocuk için, bence ona biraz sorun yaratabilir ya. Çocuğun kendi benliği ile alakalı da sorun yaratabilir. Ya da işte başka çevrelerce de tabii ki sorun yaratabilir. Ondan dolayı ben yerinde bir karar olduğunu düşünüyorum.

Kürt sorunu, veya Kürt meselesi denen, veya işte adını siz koyun, whatever... Böyle bir şey çok uzun zamandır var Türkiye'de. Ne düşünüyorsunuz buna dair? Bir çözüm filan denendi bir şeyler, olmadı gibi görünüyor. Çözülür mü, çözülmesi gerekir mi, nasıl çözülür bu şey?

Ya açıkçası ben... Nasıl diyeyim? Özellikle kutuplaştırıldığını düşünüyorum bu konunun. Tabii ki yaşanan çok fazla... İşte... Bu konuda ben çok bilgisizken bana bir şeyler anlatan arkadaşım oldu, Kürt olan. Şu an en yakın arkadaşımın sevgilisi Kürt, Diyarbakırlı. Ben aslında hep şey bir noktadan yaklaşıyordum. Bu konuda çok pişmanım, özellikle lise yıllarımda. İşte abartıyorlar. Böyle şeyler olmamıştır. Türk askeri böyle bir şey yapmamıştır. Aslında bunlar, ne bileyim, hep bölücülük falan... Bu yerdeydim ben lisede. Çünkü Ege kasabasında okudum liseyi, işte Dev-Lis falan vardı ama onlar da şey çocuklardı. Yani böyle... Tamam, hıı, Deniz Gezmiş falan... Öyle çocuklardı. Ben çok bilmiyordum açıkçası. Hiç o zaman da öyle bir çevrem yoktu zaten. Ailem de hep kendi Trakya bölgesinde evlendiği için akraba da yok. Çok uzağım aslında da o tarafa. Zaten akrabalarımın çoğu Bulgaristan'da falan. İşte... Çok karşı karşıya gelmedim o insanlarla. Hep kafamda şey vardı... Bir de anlatılmıyor gerçekten. Benim ailem bana hiç gelip de, aa işte Türkiye'de böyle bir Kürt sorunu vardı, işte zamanında dillerini bile konuşamıyorlardı, falan gibi bir anlatımda

bulunmadı bana. Şimdi üniversiteye geçtiğimde, lise bittikten sonra artık çok daha çevrem genişledi ve farklı farklı yerlerden arkadaşlarım oldu. Arkadaşlarım bana artık, saçma sapan konuşma bizim yanımızda, hani salak salak konuşma gerçekten, böyle şeyler yaşadık biz gibi bir yerden anlatınca, ben de çok özür dilerim gerçekten çok pişmanım böyle düşündüğüm için falan olmuştum.

Peki çözümüne dair bir fikriniz, hayaliniz, planınız var mı?

Açıkçası kesinlikle herhangi bir Türk vatandaşının... Kendini Türk olarak tanımamasa bile, Türk olmasa bile, herhangi bir Türkiye vatandaşının kesinlikle eşit haklara, eşit sosyal, ekonomik haklara, kendi dilini konuşabilmesine... Bunlara evet, kesinlikle okeyim. Benim kafamı karıştıran ve emin olmadığım konu, işte şey söylemleri olabilir. İşte eğitimde anadil, tarzı bir şey. Buna katılmıyorum.

Neden?

Buna katılmama sebebim Türkiye'nin bütünlüğüyle alakalı. Yani Türkiye'deki eğitimin aslında devletin resmi dili olan İstanbul Türkçesi ile verilmesi gerektiğine inanıyorum. Böyle olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. O konuda eğitimde anadil gibi bir durumu desteklemiyorum. Ya da herhangi bir devleti, yeni bir devleti desteklemiyorum. Bir ayrılığı desteklemiyorum yani. Sadece kesinlikle yasalar nezdinde, sosyal haklar nezdinde ve toplumda da kesinlikle bu konudaki öngyargıların zamanla belki, belki eğitimlerle, belki bilmiyorum... Çok da ayrı bir noktada konumlandırmak istemiyorum o insanları, çünkü zaten Türkiye yani burası. Hani hepimiz çok ayrı yerlerdeyiz, çok ayrı ne bileyim işte, çok kolektif, çok toplu bir yer, toplama bir yer burası. İşte göçmen sorunları falan.

Tam ona gelecektim ben de. Yani işte... Yine siz adını koyun ama, Suriyeliler diye adlandırılabiliyor, işte mülteci sorunu, göçmen meselesi filan. Buna ve bunun etrafında örülen son yıllarda bir siyaset de var...

Mancınıklar falan var...

Mancınıklar uçuşuyor havada. Bu meseleye ne düşünüyorsunuz? Mülteci sorunuyla mı alakalı?

Evet.

Yani mülteci sorunuyla alakalı şey konusunda ben çok sinirli değilim. Abi işte defolsunlar gitsinler ülkeden de, işte şöyle yaptılar da böyle yaptılar... Şuna tabii ki katılıyorum. Yasal olmayan bir süreçle, işte ne idüğü belirsiz işte orada, atıyorum katil miymiş, neymiş, hırsız mıymış... Herkesin toplu bir şekilde, hiç kontrol edilmeden, kontrolsüz bir şekilde ülkeye saçılması konusu, o çok başka bir konu. O hükümetle, o devletle, devletin işleyişiyle alakalı bir şey. Yani bu konuyu tam olarak iyi halledemediler. Bu kesinlikle bir gerçek yani. Ama işte kafamda da şöyle bir şey var. Yasal kabulde eleme şartları ne olacak o zaman. Sonuçta orada savaş vardı. Çok kötü şartlar vardı. Tam olarak o da benim kafamda tam net oturmuş değil aslında. Hani ne arıyoruz mesela? Neyi alacağız? Neyi seçeceğiz o zaman? Seçmek doğru mu? Yani... Yani şey gibi. Ben az önce katil, hırsız dedim ya mesela... Hırsız bir adamın yaşama hakkı yok mu? Falan yani. Aslında. Bu konuda belki ayrı bir yer yapılabilirdi. Böyle yer, böyle bir bölge yapılabilirdi. Daha orada daha toplanabilirdi. Bilmiyorum o tarz. Ya da en azından daha eşit dağılım sağlanabilirdi. Her şehir için. Mesela işte İstanbul'a gidiyorsunuz, Küçükçekmece tamamen göçmen. Ya da işte Esenyurt keza öyle. Demografik açıdan çok zora soktu bizim ülkemizi bu durum. Kültürlerimiz çok farklı olduğu için, cinsiyete baktığımız farklar çok farklı olduğu için özellikle işte, ben gerçekten ne zaman İstanbul'da ailemi ziyarete gitsem ve metrobüs kullanmam gerekse, bana bakılan, işte bana bakışları... Tipinden anlayabileceğimiz şekilde. O stereotipik bir tip vardır ya işte jöleli saçlar, parlak montlar falan... Hani işte sesli bir şekilde Arapça konuşmak... Gerçekten o tarz bakışları biliyorum. Rahatsız edici bir şekilde. Ya da işte TikTok'ta ya da işte sosyal medyada viral olmuştu, kadınların videoları çekiyorlardı falan. Yani çok daha kontrollü bir yerden olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum kesin. Ama şey gibi düşüncem yok, aaa hepsini gönderelim falan, işte mancınıkla falan. Yok yani.

Anlıyorum. Son birkaç sorum kaldı. Siyaset sözcüğü deyince nasıl bir şey canlanıyor sizin için? Ya olumlu bir sözcük mü, olumsuz mu?

Siyaset benim için daha gündelik bir sözcük aslında. Çünkü siyaset her yerde. Evde de, okulda da, arkadaş çevrenizde, metroda, metrobüste, otobüste, her zaman duyduğunuz şeyler, işte televizyonu açtığınız gibi bir sürü siyasi gönderme ve konuşma. Yani siyaset gerçekten, kıraathane siyaseti vardır ya. Kocaman bir

kıraathane Türkiye gerçekten. Ve siyaset öyle konuşuluyor. Gerçekten artık 5 yaşındaki çocuk bile bir şeyler biliyordur siyasete dair. O yüzden çok korkutucu değil. Çok sıradan bir sözcük benim için siyaset. Çünkü çok siyasetçilerce yapılan ayrı bir şey değil. Çok halk, çok biziz yani.

Peki o 5 yaşındaki çocuğun bilmesi rahatsız ediyor mu sizi? Bilmemeli mi aslında 5 yaşındaki çocuk?

Yani her şeyi biliyorlar artık ya, onu da bilsinler (gülüyoruz). Sürekli telefonda tablette çocuklar zaten. Ama keşke bilmeseler.

Peki bu anaakım siyasetin, hani işte meclis, parti level'ında... Buradan bir beklentiniz var mı diye sorayım önce. Bunun yanı sıra bir değişim getirebilir mi böyle bir anaakım siyaset sizin için?

Ne anlamda değişim, ya da?..

I don't know, any kind of change, yani daha soyut, bir şeylerin değişmesi... Diyelim, işte 10 ay kadar önce bir seçim vardı, işte anaakım siyaset. Bir değişim vaadi vardı, çok büyük bir değişim vaadi vardı.

Baharlar gelecekti...

Baharlar filan geliyordu, mevsimler değişiyordu. Siyasetin böyle bir değişim, büyük bir değişim, anaakım siyasetin, potansiyeli var mıdır sizce? Varsa niye olmuyor?

Kesinlikle bir değişim var ama zaten. Yani baktığımızda ben doğduğumdan beri AKP var zaten. Ben başka bir hükümet görmedim. Ama yine de eski medyayı, eski, nasıl diyeyim, filmleri, şarkıları bile dinlediğimizde aslında, zaten Türkiye'nin o halihazır kültürünün AKP'nin gelmesiyle çok değiştiğini biliyoruz. Yani sansürlerle gerek, gerek Siyasal İslam'ın pikiyle, işte ne bileyim, kıyafet olsun... Bu arada direkt olarak şey bile değişti. Hani baktığımızda, o Şulebaşlar geldi, gelmiş. Şule Yüksel Şenler'in çabalarıyla, işte ekonomideki Siyasal İslam ayrı, çok daha modern bir Müslüman algısı, biz Arap da değiliz, Avrupalı da değiliz, biz Müslümanız ama biz daha Batılı Müslümanlarız falan algısı. Zaten siyasetin kesinlikle gündelik yaşama ve bugün finans açısından da, işte başka noktalarda da, hukuksal anlamda da çok karşılığı var.

Şöyle soruyu update edeyim. AKP niye gitmiyor? Yirmi bilmem kaç yıl.

Bence korkuyor insanlar. Yani ben zaten biliyorum. Bunun en kötü senaryosunu da biliyorum. Ama öbür tarafı bilmiyorum. Belirsizlikten dolayı olabilir. Yani insanlar kendilerini güvende hissetmiyorlar. Ve Recep Tayyip Erdoğan her ne kadar işte, ne bileyim, rezalet söylemlerde de bulunsa, kadınları ofans edebilecek, Atatürkçüleri üzebilecek şeyler söylese bile insanlarda kesinlikle bir şey korkusu var, bu adam giderse ne olacak? Tamam evet kötü, ben bunun en kötü halini de tahmin edebilirim. Ama karşı tarafı tahmin edemiyorum. Ne olacak acaba korkusu var bence.

Anlıyorum. Siz apolitik der misiniz kendinize?

Ih ıh.

Nasıl tanımlarsınız? Neden apolitik değilim dersiniz?

Apolitik değilim çünkü zaten çok... Her şey dedim ya az önce, kocaman bir kıraathane Türkiye yani, ben böyle bir ülkede kendimi nasıl apolitik tanıtabilirim ki? Hani çok fazla fikrimi, zikrimi değiştirip... Yani şeyler bile çok hızlı değişiyor. Haberleri açıyorsunuz, bir bakmışınız ülkede neler olmuş bir gün içinde. Yedide başlıyor ya haberler. Sonraki gün, geçen günün yedisiyle bugünkü yedi o kadar farklı ki. Hani çok fazla düşünce var, çok fazla olay oluyor. Ve bu ortamda apolitik kalmak bence, yani kulaklarınızı tıkamanız lazım. Apolitik kalmak için. Tamam tabii ki şunu tercih edebilirsiniz, ben konuşmak istemiyorum, ben bu konuda fikrimi belirtmek istemiyorum, ben daha apolitiğim. Tamam. Ama işte bu çok... Çok izole yani böyle bir ülke için bence. Hani dedik ya işte, İskandinav ülkelerinde işte apolitik kal istediğin kadar. Kimse sana dokunmuyor ki. Hani burada nasıl öyle kalacaksın? O yüzden illa ki siyasete bir şekilde işte, hani arkadaşlarnla konuşurken bile, yani bir şekilde dahil oluyoruz aslında.

Apolitik değilsiniz tamam, politik veya muhalif bir şeyle belki tasvir edebiliriz sizi. Bir apolitikten farklı olarak, mesela eyleme katılıyor musunuz? Hiç protestolara, bir şeylere, politik şeylere filan?

Yani politik şeylere aslında ben o protestolarda bir tık kendi ailemin tecrübe ettiği konulardan dolayı uzağım. Çünkü bizim ailemizde özellikle 80'ler zamanında çok fazla ölüm yaşanmış, Gezi zamanı işte çok yaralanan, çevremde çok fazla insan vardı.

Ve aslında biraz daha, işte zaten ailelerimiz hep bizi siyasetten uzak tutmaya çalışırlar ya, o noktada biraz kendimi... Kendim korkağım. Yani ne bileyim işte bir eyleme, bir protestoya katılmak... Tweet atmak çok ayrı bir şey, evinizde oturup tweet atıyorsunuz...

Atıyor musunuz tweet?

Hayır, onu da yapmıyorum. Yani kullanmıyorum ben genel olarak sosyal medyayı çok fazla... Ya, tabii ki bir şeyleri değiştirirsiniz, bir protestoya, bir eyleme katılarak. Tabii ki değiştirirsiniz. Ya Gezi'de neler yaptığını gördük işte, ne bileyim. Ama ben bunun biraz daha farklı yollarla da değişebileceğine inanıyorum sanırım.

Ne gibi?

Yani eylem ve protesto... Bunu bu arada neden böyle söylüyorum? Çünkü Türkiye'deki eylem ve protestoya verilen değer belli. Hani nasıl diyeyim, bu hükümet tarafından çok desteklenmiyor, çok sert, atıyorum, ne bileyim LGBT yürüyüşlerine karşı yapılan işte, geçen seneydi galiba, geçen yaz, yapılan şeyler, bu protestolara, o yürüyüşlere... Türkiye'de gerçekten bunun değeri bilinmiyor. Ben de şey gibi düşünüyorum aslında, zaten bir yere ulaşmayacak gibi hissediyorum. Hiçbir zaman desteklenmiyor gerçekten. Ve işte bizim ülkemizde de çok fazla darbe görmüş ve çok fazla siyasetten korkan bir halk olduğu için, özellikle büyük, yaşlı kesimde, çünkü gerçekten insanlar çok baskı aldı, siyasetin çok baskılandığı dönemler görmüşler. Hep böyle kuzum, işte karışma sen, falan. Yani Atatürkçü olsa bile bu arada... Benim yaşadığım sokak, o çevre komple şey böyle, 60-70 yaş ortalamasındaki, işte kısa saçlı, kızıl kısa saçlı CHPli teyzeler benim komşularım. Ve benim apartmanımda da, işte benim iki üstümde emekli bir asker dede yaşıyor falan. Ve ben de işte yalnız yaşıyorum falan, bizim apartmanda da benden başka öğrenci yok. Bana biraz böyle ucubik bir yerden yaklaşmışlardı ilk taşındığımda. İşte hani, yalnız yaşıyor zaten, falan gibi. Ve o insanlarla böyle hani, dede var işte yukarıda, işte öldü mü kaldı mı bilmiyoruz falan böyle, çok gözükmüyor. İkiye böyle çıkıyor, su alıyor falan. Bir kere şey diye karşılaştım ben dedeyle işte. Alışverişten dönerken taşıdım falan böyle. İşte konuştuk sonra ben o dedeyle çok büyük bir bağ kurdum. Garip bir şekilde. Çok tatlı biri çünkü. Bir de çok yalnız yaşıyor adam. Gerçekten bu arada ölü mü kaldım merak ediyorum, arada. İşte benim de yan komşum Melek Hanım. Melek Hanım da çocukluğumdan

beri orada oturuyormuş zaten. Oraya falan evlenmiş. Sonra yani kocasıyla oraya gelmiş. Sonra boşanmışlar. O hala orada falan. O dedeyle de böyleler. Çok yakın komşular, yıllardır falan. Dede de arada kahveye geliyor Melek Hanım'a. Ben de Melek Hanım'ın, işte o zaman geldiğinde, dedeyle falan görüştüm. Oturduk, konuştuk. Adam kesinlikle bir asker, bir Atatürkçü, öyle bir adam. Ama mesela kendini o kadar siyasi konuda içine kapanık ki... Yani işte ne bileyim bir eylem, bir protesto bir şey... Onlar için çok korkutucu şeyler. Hani ben o yüzden de, bu tarz eylemlerin o tarz insanlara da ulaştığını düşünmüyorum. Ya ulaşmıyor çünkü, onlar çok çekimserler.

Peki ne olabilir alternatifi?

Alternatifi ne olabilir... Sosyal medya çok etkili bu arada. Gerçekten. Her yaş için öyle. Her kesim için öyle. Mesela işte Muharrem İnce dansı vardı, hatırlıyor musunuz? En ufak şey bile birden patlıyor, ve gerçekten, herkesi çok etkileyebiliyorsunuz. İşte böyle TikTok'ta şu an, bir açtığınızda işte... Sosyolojik açıdan çok korkunç bir yer bu arada. Çok aşırı yani. Hani şey böyle... Ben sadece bunlar için açmıştım. İşte çok... Köylü dediğimiz işte... Orta yaşlı işte... Ne bileyim, fark etmez işte... Kadınlar böyle altınlarını gösteriyorlar falan. Şey şarkılarla, işte Roman havalarıyla işte kocalarını gösteriyor, kendilerini gösteriyorlar, yaşamlarını gösteriyorlar falan. İşte böyle beş tane kova döküp, yerleri, duvarları fırçalıyorlar, onları çekiyorlar falan. Hani onlara bile ulaşıyoruz. O insanlara bile ulaşıyoruz. O insanların bile hayatlarını görebiliyoruz falan. O yüzden bence sosyal medya çok büyük bir, özellikle TikTok falan, çok büyük bir şey olabilir yani. Bu tarz bir değişim için.

Politik anlamda da bir araç diyorsunuz yani...

Evet. Kesinlikle, kesinlikle... TikTok indirin bu arada.

TikTok, ya evet artık ben de galiba indireceğim mecburen... Geleceğe dair son sorularımı soracağım. Üç soruyu bir arada sorayım, tek celsede şey yapayım. Kendi geleceğinize, ülkenin geleceğine, dünyanın geleceğine dair beklentileriniz, öngörüleriniz, varsa korkularınız?..
Çok korkuyorum.
Neden?

Dünya, kendim ve Türkiye... Ya üçü için de çok korkuyorum bu arada. Ya ben hep kendim çocukluğumdan beri şey insanıyımdır bu arada. Çok kendimi anaç görürüm. Arkadaşlarıma karşı, aileme karşı. Hani hep böyle bir arkadaşımın... İşte... Nasıl diyeyim, çok dinlemeyi severim ben insanları. Çok dinlerim, çok işte... Sevdiğim insanı çok seviyorum. Çok verici oluyorum ona karşı. Ve çocukluğumdan beri kendimi hep şey bir evde hayal ettim açıkçası. İşte orta yirmili yaşlarımda, işte otuzlarımda işte, çok daha sessiz sakin, işte denizi olan, büyük ihtimalle Cunda tarzı, işte Ayvalık tarzı bir yerde, böyle işte, çocuk büyüteyim falan gibi bir yerdeyim ben, çocukluğumdan beri. Bu arada hala biraz böyleyim. Yani işte ne bileyim, kariyer ya da işte... Yazar olmak istiyorum ben aslında. Gerçekten bir yerden böyle hep bir şeyim var. Daha sakin, sessiz bir yerde yazımı yazayım, işte ne bileyim, tavuğum olsun, bir şeyim olsun, deniz işte şu kadar uzaklıkta olsun falan. Biri olsun yanımda, ya da işte bir şeyler falan. Öyle huzurlu bir hayat yaşayayım falan gibiydi daha. Ama çok zor şu an. Şu an böyle bir şey çok zor. Hem maddi açıdan çok zor. Bu tarz bir yerde yaşamak, bir arsa işte, müstakil bir yerde falan. Bu bahsettiğim şey demek, işte zaten bilmem kaç meblağdan başlıyor. Şu an bunu yapabilmek için, zaten maddi bir korkumuz hepimizin var, ekonomiden dolayı işte... Çalışmak zorundayız hepimiz falan. Tavuk falan bakarak olacak şeyler değil artık. Ama isterdim böyle bir şey olmasını, şu an çok korkuyorum, çünkü böyle bir şey olmayacak gibi. Gerçekten çalışmamız gerekiyor, kendinize bakmamız gerekiyor, iki tane kedim var onlara bakmam lazım falan.

Peki ülkeye dair?..

Ülkeye dair umutluyum. Yani korkuyorum tabii ki. Çok belirsiz bir yerde yaşıyoruz çünkü. Ama umutluyum ya. Yani çok karamsar değilim. Tamam evet hepimizin moralleri çok bozuluyor, işte seçim istediğimiz gibi gitmiyor... Şimdi yine seçim var falan. İşte hep şevkimiz kırıldı, umudumuz kırıldı. Çok daha karamsardık hepimiz. İşte Covid de zaten herkesin psikolojisini bozuldu falan. Ama yine de uzun vadede düşünüyorum, 10 yıl sonra daha mı kötüye gider… Daha mı iyiye gider gibi bir soru sorsanız bana, daha iyi derim büyük ihtimalle. Akıllanmıyorum. Umutluyum o konuda.

Peki dünyaya dair?

Dünyaya dair ben teknolojiden çok korkmaya başladım.

Hmm. İlginç.

Çok korkuyorum çünkü şey böyle işte AI'lar çok gelişiyor, saçma sapan şeyler çıkıyor. İşte Taylor Swift hakkında yapılan şeyi biliyor muydunuz? O şeyi... İşte, AI seks kaseti yayınlandı.

Yok, bunu bilmiyorum.

Ya böyle saçma sapan şeyler oluyor. Çok korkutuyor beni. Özellikle yapay zeka o kadar...

Peki, ne... Yani, distopik bir senaryoda, Matrix filmindeki gibi... Robotların bizi ele geçirdiği filan... Bir şey gibi mi olur?

Ya, hayır ama şey gibi yani. Hani, sanki sahtekarlık... İşte... Çok öyle. Bilgilerimiz zaten çalınıyor falan. Tamam da... Böyle, basit bir insan olarak bu belki benim için çok önemli bir şey değil tabii ki. Ama korkunç yine de yani. Yapay zekanın bu kadar gelişiyor olması. İşte bir şey yazıyorsunuz, size senaryo falan yazıyor. Kitap yazıyor, senaryo yazıyor, fotoğraf oluşturuyor. Hiç doğmamış, olmamış insanların fotoğrafları, AI influencer'lar çıktı mesela...

Evet, onlardan gördüm birkaç tane. Hatta ben gerçek sandım yani.

Ondan çok korkutuyor beni dünyanın bu gidişatı yani.

Son, final sorum. Siyaseti bir şeyleri düzeltme, değiştirme mekanizması olarak diyelim tanımlıyoruz. Bir şeyleri değiştirebiliriz siyasetle. Peki siyaseti neyle değiştiririz, neyle düzeltiriz sizce?

Neyle düzeltiriz... Biraz ayıklayarak düzeltiriz. Yani hani siyasete involve olan konuları biraz çekip çıkartarak belki, içini boşaltarak. Ne bileyim, radikal dini düşünceler olabilir belki bir noktadan. Zaten hala, konuştuğumuz durumlar var ya, İslam'ı bir tool olarak kullanmak, halka karşı, Atatürk'ü keza öyle kullanmak falan. Hani siyasete değiştireceğimiz bir şekil bence kesinlikle siyasetin biraz daha kendini

ayrı bir yerde tutması olabilir. Dinle siyaset, hani Siyasal İslam dememeliyiz bence. Olmaması lazım öyle bir şeyin. Falan.

Anlıyorum, teşekkür ederim. Bu kadar benim sorularım. Sizin eklemek istediğiniz bir şey varsa...

Yok, teşekkür ederim.

Bu çalışma, üç adet soru'nun ve bu sorulara tekabül eden üç adet literatürün bir araya getirilmesiyle dizayn edilmiş; günümüzdeki hakim siyaset biçimini, bu siyaset biçimi içerisinde siyasallaşan öznelerin siyasallaşma modalitelerini ve Türkiye'de yakın zamanda ortaya çıkmış, endemik bir siyasallaşma modalitesi olan Sivil Atatürkçülük adlı fenomeni incelemektedir. Bu bağlamda yanıt aradığı sorular, sırasıyla: 1) Post-Politika nedir ve günümüzde hala geçerli midir? 2) Günümüz öznesinin siyasallaşma modalitesi olarak hiperpolitizasyon nedir? 3) Sivil Atatürkçülük gerçekten sivil midir, ve bir hiperpolitizasyon örneği midir? soruları olacaktır. İlk olarak, çalışmanın teorik yapısına dair bazı kavramsallaştırmaların, ayrımların ve tanımların ortaya konması gerekir. Bu çalışma, önemli bir determinant olarak, siyasetin *sembolik* ve *öznel* boyutları arasında ayrım yapar. Sembolik boyut, hakim siyaset modalitesini (Post-Politika) ifade ederken öznel boyut ise sembolik'ten geometrik olarak ayrı ancak onun içinde yer alan ve onun tarafından şekillendirilen (*sembolik üstbelirlenim*) bir boyutu (apolitizasyon, hiperpolitizasyon vb…) kasteder. Çalışmada bu iki boyut arasında bir *üstbelirlenim* ilişkisi olduğu iddia edilir. Bu ilişki, Freud'dan hareketle, sembolik'in her daim öznel'in kurulumunu etkilediğini, öznel süreçlerin sembolik'in etkisinden bağımsız gerçekleşmediğini ortaya koyar. Bu ayrıma göre öznel'in formasyonu ve sembolik'in öznel'e sunduğu siyasal matris arasında bir fark güdülmektedir. Formasyon değişebilir ve dönüşebilir olsa sembolik matris'in etkisi bu dönüşümden bağımsız olabilir. Bir başka deyişle, formal dönüşümün, sembolik'in etki biçimine karşı koymadan gerçekleşebileceği iddia edilir. Günümüzdeki hakim siyaset biçimi, tam da bu kavramsallaştırmadan hareketle, post-politik *koşul* olarak tanımlanmış olup bunun altında gerçekleşen muhtelif siyasallaşma biçimleri Post-Politika tarafınan *koşullandırılmış* şekilde anlaşılmaktadır.

1990'ların sonunda ve 2000'lerin başında ortaya çıkmış ve çokça tartışılmış olan Post-Politika kavramı, sembolik boyutunda toplumsal düzenin iktisadi prensiplerce inşa

edilmesini, toplumun siyasete yönelik müdahale imkanlarının ortadan kaldırılmasını ve siyasetin siyasetten arındırılmasını ifade ederken öznel boyutunda siyasete inancını yitirmiş, siyasetle bağını koparmış, ilgisiz bir özne tarif eder. Post-Politika literatürüne göre siyasetin neoliberal iktisadi prensiplerce yürütüldüğü, toplumsal kararları teknokratik bir elitin aldığı, "geleneksel" siyasal hatlar arasındaki çizginin anlamını yitirdiği mevcut bağlamda siyaset "apolitik" özneler yaratmaktadır. Nitekim, 1990'ların sonlarında yapılan saha çalışmaları, bireylerin siyasetten uzaklaştığını, siyasete ilgisiz olduklarını ve herhangi bir siyasal projeksiyonları olmadığını empirik olarak ortaya koymaktadır. Ne var ki bu çalışma, böyle bir tablonun günümüzde geçerli olmadığını düşünmektedir. Wendy Brown, Anton Jäger, Asad Haider, Robin Celikates gibilerinin belirttiği üzere, günümüzün siyasal öznesi, 1990'ların soğuk, ilgisiz, *blasé* öznesine benzememektedir. Bugün, aksine, ilginç bir şekilde "fazlasıyla siyasallaşmış" görünen bir öznenin var olduğu görülmektedir. Günümüz öznesi, siyasetten uzak durmak bir yana, siyasete fazlasıyla *angaje,* onu yakından takip eden, anaakım siyasete oy vermek gibi yollarla katılan (son beş sene içinde yapılan seçimlerdeki yüksek katılım oranları bunun bir göstergesi olarak kabul edilebilir) bir öznedir. Anton Jäger, bu dönüşümün sembolik boyutta gerçekleştiğini düşünmektedir. Ona göre Post-Politika devri bitmiş, bunun yerine Hiper-Politika adını verdiği bir dönem başlamıştır. Bu çalışma, Jäger'in tahlilinde hatalı olduğu kanısındadır, zira dikkatli bakıldığında görülebileceği üzere Jäger, aslında bahsettiği dönüşümde sorumlu tuttuğu Post-Politika'ya dair bir değişimden söz etmemektedir; yalnızca öznel boyutta, bireylerin siyasete katılım ve angajmanları çerçevesinde bir dönüşüme işaret eder. Post-Politika, Jäger'in tanımını yapmaktan kaçındığı bir şekilde, sadece öznel siyasallaşma modalitelerinden mürekkep bir hakim siyaset biçimi değildir. Toplumsal, iktisadi, siyasal birtakım konfigürasyonlarla meydana gelen, neoliberalizmden ayrılması mümkün olmayan, siyasetin *önlendiği (foreclose)* bir *koşul'*dur. Bu sebeple, yakın zamanda öznel siyasallaşma modalitesinde yaşanan dönüşümler, Post-Politika'yı ortadan kaldırmaktan ziyade, ona yeni bir biçim vermiştir. Haider ve Celikates, mevzubahis dönüşüm konusunda Jäger'e göre daha isabetli birer tahlil yapar. Her ikisi de dönüşümün öznel siyasallaşma modalitelerinde olduğunu görmektedir. Lakin; Haider bu dönüşümü depolitizasyon, Celikates ise pseudopolitizasyon olarak adlandırarak iki farklı yöne savrulur. Haider'in tanımına

göre öznel siyasallaşma modalitesinde, 1990'lardakinin aksine, bir repolitizasyon (yeniden siyasallaşma) olduğu açıktır; ancak bu repolitizasyon, hakiki bir siyasallaşma değildir, zira söz konusu siyasallaşma ona göre aslında depolitizasyon'un (Post-Politika) ilkeleri etrafında gerçekleşmektedir. Bu esansiyel olarak doğru bir iddiadır, zira bu çalışma, günümüz siyasallaşmasının post-politik *koşul* tarafından *koşullandırılmış,* yani onun temel ilkelerinden kopmayan, radikal olmayan bir siyasallaşma olduğunu iddia eder. Fakat Haider'in hatası, öznel boyutta yaşanan dönüşümü tamamiyle sembolik boyut'a indirgemesinden kaynaklanır. Bu indirgeme, günün sonunda mevzubahis repolitizasyonu depolitizasyona hapsederek aslında öznel boyutta bir dönüşüm olmadığını öne sürmüş olur. Celikates'in tahlili Haider'e göre daha sofistike olmakla birlikte benzer bir hatadan kurtulamamaktadır. Celikates de günümüzde bir repolitizasyon görüntüsü olduğunu, ancak bunun aslında bir pseudopolitizasyon olduğunu iddia eder. Fakat Celikates bu tahliliyle, tıpkı Haider gibi, günümüzdeki öznel dönüşümü yok sayma noktasına sürüklenmiştir. Ona göre ortada bir politizasyon vardır, ancak bu depolitizasyon tarafından biçimlendirildiği için "yalancı" bir politizasyondur. Her iki yazar da bu yeniden siyasallaşmanın sembolik tarafından *üstbelirlenmiş* doğasına fazla vurgu yaparak *fenomen*'in kendisini gözden kaçırmaktadır. Bu çalışmaya göre günümüz siyasetinin öznel boyutunda bir dönüşüm gerçekleşmiştir. Bu dönüşüm, öznel kümenin formasyonunda, ya da görüntüsünde, bir dönüşümü ifade etmektedir, fakat bu dönüşüm *sembolik üstbelirlenim*'in doğrultusunda herhangi bir değişikliğe yol açmayan, radikal olmayan bir dönüşümdür. Dönüşen, fakat *üstbelirlenim* ilişkisinin sabit olduğu bu siyasallaşma biçimi, bu çalışmada *hiperpolitizasyon (hipersiyasallaşma)* olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Geçmişte öznel bağlamda apolitiklik ile ilişkilendirilen Post-Politika, bugün öznel anlamda hiperpolitikleşmiş bir Post-Politika olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bir diğer deyişle, apolitiklik ve Post-Politika arasında zorunlu olduğu sanılan bağ kopmuş, Post-Politika yeni bir özneyle, *hiperpolitik* bir özneyle varlığını sürdürme veçhesine geçmiştir. Yani hiperpolitizasyon, politikleşmiş, fakat post-politik *koşul* tarafından *koşullandırılmış,* onun öznel formasyona dayattığı matristen kurtulamayan bir öznel siyasallaşmayı ifade eder. Post-politik *koşul*'un günümüzdeki veçhesi ise, bu bağlamda, *hiperpolitik Post-Politika* olarak adlandırılır.

232

Bu çalışma, Sivil Atatürkçülük adlı fenomenin bir *hiperpolitizasyon* örneği olduğunu iddia etmektedir (hiperpolitizasyon, burada post-politik üstbelirlenim'i barındırdığı anlaşılacak şekilde kullanılmaktadır). Sivil Atatürkçülük, Türkiye'de yakın zamanda ortaya çıkmış, henüz akademide ciddi bir alan bulamamasına karşın popüler medyada ekseriyetle tartışılan bir *kavram* ve bir *fenomendir*. *Kavramın* kökenleri, Esra Özyürek'in 2006 tarihli *Nostalgia for the Modern* kitabına kadar götürülebiliyor olsa da, Sivil Atatürkçülükten bir *fenomen* olarak söz eden ilk çalışmalar, Armağan Öztürk'ün 2016 ve 2017 tarihli gazete yazıları ve kitap bölümleridir. 2020'lere kadar ilgi görmeyen bu kavram, özellikle 2021 ve 2022 sonrası popüler medyanın önemli bir konusu haline gelmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, yakın zamanda yapılan istatistiksel çalışmalar, Atatürkçülüğün özellikle 18-25 yaş aralığındaki gençler arasında yükseldiğini ortaya koyan empirik kaynaklar olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Her ne kadar mevzubahis çalışmalar spesifik olarak bu Atatürkçülüğün "sivilliğine" dair bir şey söylemiyor olsa da buna ilişkin izler çalışmaların birçoğunda bulunabilir. Bu çalışmalar, Atatürkçülüğün yükseldiğinin yanı sıra ilgili gençlerin "apolitik" olmadığını iddia eder. Çalışmaların tamamı, gençlerin apolitik olmadığını ortaya koyuyor olsa da gençlerin "ne tür bir siyasallaşma sergiledikleri" konusunda net bir yanıt vermekte zorlandıkları görülmektedir. Kimi çalışmalar, gençler için "apolitik değil antipolitik", kimileri "apolitik değil ilgili", kimileri ise "apolitik değil depolitik" gibi yanıtlar vermeye çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışma, bunların tamamını sorunlu bulur ve yukarıda söz edilen yaklaşımlar ışığında, gençlerin öznel siyasallaşma modalitelerini açıklamak adına *hiperpolitik/hiperpolitizasyon* kavramını kullanır. Post-Post-Kemalizm literatürüyle tarihsel olarak çakışan ve kısmen ilgili olan Sivil Atatürkçülük kavramı, Atatürkçülük adlı siyasallaşma modalitesinin geçmişte resmi ideolojinin sınırları içine sıkıştığını öne sürer ve bu "sıkışma"nın bugün sonlandığını iddia eder. Atatürkçülük için bu gibi tanımlamalar ve iddialar geçmişte de yapılmıştır. Kavram etrafında şekillenen popüler medya literatürü, Atatürkçülüğün günümüzde sivilleşmiş olduğunu, fakat bu sivilleşmenin önceki sivilleşme iddialarından farklı olarak *topyekün* bir sivilleşme sergilediğini, öyle ki bugünkü Atatürkçülük *moduna* basitçe *Sivil* denilebileceğini iddia etmektedir. Bir başka deyişle, Atatürkçülüğün geçmişteki sivilleşme girişimlerinden farklı olarak, öyle iddia edilir ki, bu sivilleşme

Atatürkçülüğün *içinde* bir sivilleşme değildir, Atatürkçülüğün *kendisinin* sivilleşmesidir.

Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük kavramı, bu çalışmada Ernesto Laclau'dan hareketle bir *boş gösteren (empty signifier)* ve *yüzergezer gösteren (floating signifier)* olarak ele alınır. *Boş gösteren* kavramı, bir gösterenin sembolizasyonunun genişliği ölçüsünde onun "içinin boşaldığını/anlamını yitirdiğini" (emptying out), tam da bu sayede geniş bir gösterenler grubunu *temsil edebildiğini* ortaya koyarken *yüzergezer gösteren* kavramı ise bir gösterenin farklı siyasal cephelere *süzülebileceğini (float)* ortaya koyar. Literatürde görüldüğü üzere Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük kavramı, kimse tarafından net bir şekilde tanımlanamayan, dahası, net bir tanımlamaya direnen bir kavram olarak karşımıza çıkar. Yer yer "sosyalizm" ile, yer yer "korporatizm" ile yer yer "materyalizm" ile ilişkilendirilebilen Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük kavramının, tüm bunları *örebilecek (quilt)* ölçüde *boş* bir niteliğe sahip olduğu görülür. Bir başka deyişle, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük kavramı, birçok farklı gastereni "kapsayabilme", onları kendine eklemleyebilme gücünü *boş* (ve hegemonik) niteliğinden alır. Bunun yanı sıra, "Sağ-Kemalizm", "Sol-Kemalizm", "Liberal Kemalizm" gibi kavramlarda görüldüğü üzere farklı siyasal hatlara, antagonistik cephelere süzülebilen kavram, *yüzergezer/süzülebilen (floating)* karakteristiği nedeniyle "çatışmalı" cephelere eklemlenebilme imkanına sahiptir. Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün tarihi, tam da bu bağlamda, bir *eklemleme pratiği* çerçevesinde ele alınır. Kavramın tarihinde meydana gelen farklı, zaman zaman birbiriyle çatışan, çelişen eklemlemelerin imkanı, tam da bu *boş* ve *yüzergezer* karakteristiklerinden dolayı ortaya çıkar. Bu eklemleme esnekliği, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük üzerine ortaya konmuş literatürde fazlasıyla fark edilmiş bir esnekliktir. Kimileri bunu Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ü tanımlamak için kullanırken kimilerinin bundan rahatsız olduğu görülmektedir. Söz gelimi, Asım Aslan, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün "yiyenin niyetlerine göre tadı değişen bir muz'a benzediğini" ileri sürer. Ona göre herkes kendine istediği şemalde bir Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük dizayn edebilmektedir. Aslan'ın sorun olarak addettiği bu meseleye bulduğu çözüm, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün bilimsel bir tanımını ortaya koymaktır. Ne var ki, her bilimsellik iddiası ideolojik sarmaşıklarla sarılı olduğu için bu çalışma bunun gerçekçi olmadığını düşünmektedir. Bir diğer deyişle, Asım Aslan'ın aradığı *jouissance muzu (tüm eklemlemelerden bağımsız, "hakiki" bir muz,*

muz gibi muz) aslında imkansız bir muzdur. Bu bağlamdaki muz'un muzluğu, zaten tadının yiyenin niyetlerine göre değişiyor olmasında yatar. Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün *boş* ve *yüzergezer* karakteristikleri öylesine kuvvetlidir ki, Nadir Nadi gibilerinin "Ben Atatürkçü Değilim" çıkışı bile Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün kendi varlığını sürdürdüğü yeni bir eklemleme halini alabilmektedir. Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük, tam da bu eklemleyici karakterinden dolayı karşımıza farklı *modlarla* çıkmaktadır. Bunların belki de en önemlisi, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün tarihindeki ilk "sivilleşme" iddiasında olan Neo-Kemalizm'dir. Muhtelif Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları aracılığıyla "sivil toplumda" örgütlenen bir Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük *modu* olarak Neo-Kemalizm, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün sivilleşmesi iddiasında bulunan ilk formudur. Binaenaleyh, literatüre göre bu sivilleşme iddiası sorunludur, zira Neo-Kemalizm, savunmacı-reaksiyoner bir karakter sergiler, sivil olmayan kaynaklara dayanır ve *devlettaparlık* ile ilişkilendirilir. Aşağıda görüleceği üzere, Sivil Atatürkçülüğün varlık imkanlarını sağlayan en temel unsurlar, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün *boş* ve *yüzergezer* bir gösteren olmasına dayanır. Ancak bu karakteristikler aracılığıyla Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük tarihi yeniden hayal edilebilir ve yeniden kurulabilir.

Bu çalışmanın sıklıkla popüler medya kaynaklarını kullanarak inşa ettiği Sivil Atatürkçülük Literatürü, ortaya koyulduğu üzere temel olarak 6 argüman üzerine bina edilmiştir, bunların etrafında şekillenmektedir. Sivil Atatürkçülüğün ismindeki *Sivil* gösteren'i, tam da bu 6 argümanı ören (quilt) bir *nodal nokta (düğüm noktası)* olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Literatürün ilk argümanı, Atatürkçülüğün geçmişte resmi ideoloji içinde *sıkışmış olduğu* iddiasına dayanır. Bu argüman, "eski Atatürkçülükler" ve "yeni Atatürkçülük" arasında yaptığı nitel ayrımı (yani Kemalizm, Atatürkçülük, Neo-Kemalizm gibi modlar ile Sivil Atatürkçülük adlı mod arasındaki farkı) tam da bu *sıkışma* gösteren'i ile kurar. Buna göre eski Atatürkçülükler resmi ideolojiden "kurtulamamıştır"; Sivil Atatürkçülük ise Atatürkçülüğün tarihinde ilk kez bundan sıyrılmış, bundan kurtulmuş, neredeyse "özgürleşmiş" bir Atatürkçülüğü ifade eder. Atatürkçülük ile resmi ideoloji arasında dışsal bir ilişki olduğu iddiasına dayanan bu argümanın, bu dışsallaştırma sebebiyle hata barındırdığı düşünülmektedir. Ne var ki, ilgili literatürün dayandığı en kuvvetli, başat argüman budur. Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün *boş* karakteri, tam da böyle bir *sıkışma* iddiasını mümkün

kılmak noktasında önemli bir husustur. Sivil Atatürkçülük Literatürü'nün ikinci argümanı, bu fenomenin *spontan* bir fenomen olduğu iddiasına dayanır. *Spontan* gösteren'i, ilk argümanla da ilişkili olarak, Atatürkçülüğün artık devlet ya da pseudo-sivil bir aktör tarafından yönlendirilmeyen bir hayat tarzı olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Bu, eski Atatürkçülükleri homojenize ederek karşısına aldığı gibi, aynı zamanda Sivil Atatürkçülüğe bir çeşit *örgütsüzlük* boyutu biçen bir argümandır. Öyle ki, herhangi bir aktörün dahli Sivil Atatürkçülüğün *spontanlığına* halel getireceği için Sivil Atatürkçülük dolaymsız bir *örgütsüzlük* çerçevesinde tanımlanır. Literatürün üçüncü argümanı, Sivil Atatürkçülüğün *protest* bir tavrı olduğu iddiasına dayanır. Literatüre göre Atatürkçülük, günümüzde devletle bağını koparmış olduğu için iktidara karşı *protest* bir tavır alabilmektedir. Bu argüman, yine literatürün ilk argümanıyla yakından ilişkilidir, zira *spontanlık* iddiasının imkanı da, *protestlik* iddiasının imkanı da Atatürkçülüğün devletle bağının kopmasını ifade eden *sıkışma* gösteren'ine bağlıdır. Atatürkçülüğün geçmişi hayal edilirken yapılan *sıkışma* anlatısı, yeni bir Atatürkçülük modu olarak Sivil Atatürkçülüğün varlık imkanlarını yaratmaktadır. Dahası, bu modun *hakim mod* olduğu iddiası da yine bu mantığa, eski Atatürkçülüklerin homojenizasyonuna ve Sivil Atatürkçülükten ayrılmasına dayalıdır. Literatürün dördüncü argümanı, Sivil Atatürkçülüğün bir ideoloji değil, bir *yaşam biçimi* olduğuna dayanır. Bu, ikinci argümanla yakından ilişkilidir, zira *spontanlık* iddiası, tıpkı herhangi bir kurumu ya da aktörü, kısacası *örgütlülüğü* imkansız kıldığı gibi, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülüğün günümüzdeki modunun bir ideoloji olarak eklemlenmesini de imkansız kılar. Sivil Atatürkçülük üzerine yazan yazarların iddiası, Sivil Atatürkçülerin ideolojilere uzak olduğu, kendi siyasi tavırlarını, siyasi tercihlerini ve siyasi görünümlerini *yaşam tarzlarıyla* ortaya koyduğu yönündedir. Literatürün beşinci argümanı, hem Atatürk imgesinin hem de Sivil Atatürkçülüğün *metapolitik (siyaset üstü)* olduğunu öne sürer. İlk olarak, Atatürk imgesi, milli birlik ve milli beraberlik ile ilişkilendirilerek siyasetin "ötesinde" bir pozisyona yerleştirilir. Öyle ki kimi yazarlar, Mustafa Kemal'in siyasetin dışında olduğunu, siyasetin sığınabileceği bir güvenlik alanı teşkil ettiğini düşünmektedir. Bu güvenlik alanı, siyasetin "ötesinde", ya da "dışında", tahayyül edildiği ölçüde bir güvenlik alanı olarak işlev görebilecektir. İkinci olarak, Sivil Atatürkçülük ise siyasal alanı kamplara bölmediği, kutuplaştırıcı olmadığı iddiasına dayanarak *metapolitik* bir *fenomen* olarak

adlandırılır. Ne var ki, bunun yanlış olduğu, Atatürkçülüğün tüm formlarının, bütün siyasi düşünce sistemlerinde, siyasi söylemlerde ve ideolojilerde olduğu gibi, siyaseti farklı alanlara böldüğü, farklı kutuplardan müteşekkil olduğunu tahayyül ettiği olgusu, geçmişte yapılan çalışmalarda olduğu gibi bu çalışmada da ortaya konmuştur. Sivil Atatürkçülük de dahil olmak üzere birçok Atatürkçülük *modunun* dayandığı "Gerçek Atatürkçü" ve "Sahte Atatürkçü" ayrımı, söz gelimi, bu parsellemelerin en basitlerindendir. Sivil Atatürkçülük Literatürü'nün altıncı ve son argümanı, Sivil Atatürkçülüğün geçmişteki Atatürkçülük formlarına göre daha *demokratik/çoğulcu* olduğudur. Bu, literatürün en cesur ve aynı zamanda en sorunlu argümanıdır. Herhangi bir empirik meşruiyete dayandırılmayan bu argüman, kimi yazarlar tarafından "seküler milliyetçi" diskur ile ilişkilendirilirken kimi yazarlar tarafından da bundan ayrıştığı ölçüde *demokratik/çoğulcu* olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Öztürk'ün iddiasına göre İslamcılığa da Kürt Hareketi'ne de karşı olan Sivil Atatürkçülüğün ne ölçüde demokratik ya da çoğulcu olduğu şüphelidir. Aşağıda bahsedileceği üzere, bu çalışmada yer alan saha araştırması, altıncı argüman dahil olmak üzere literatürün tüm argümanlarını teste tabi tutan bir araştırma olarak kurgulanmıştır.

Bu çalışmada yer alan saha araştırması, 15 katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilmiş, yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlara dayanan, nitel bir araştırmadır. Örneklem oluşturma sürecinde iki adet maksatlı kriter belirlenmiştir. Birinci kriter, katılımcının kendini Atatürkçü olarak tanımlaması, ikinci kriter ise katılımcının 18-25 yaş arasında olmasıdır. Saha verilerinin analizinde Laclaucu Diskur Analizi kullanılmıştır. Mülakat soruları, iki temel soru etrafında şekillendirilmiştir: 1) Sivil Atatürkçülük nedir? 2) Sivil Atatürkçülük ne tür bir siyasallaşma modu sergilemektedir? Bu iki soruya yanıt ararken kullanılan *hiperpolitik Post-Politika* kavramsallaştırması, üç farklı determinant etrafında şekillendirilmiştir: i) Siyasal tahlil (katılımcıların söylemlerinin ne tür karakteristikler üzerine kurulu olduğu), ii) siyasal örgütlülük (katılımcıların siyasal katılım ve kolektif edim'den ne anladığı), ve iii) radikal tahayyül (katılımcıların siyasal tahayyüllerinin biçimleri ve sınırları). Sivil Atatürkçülük üzerine sorulan sorular, yukarıdaki determinantlar ışığında 5 farklı başlığa, hiperpolitizasyon ve Post-Politika üzerine sorulan sorular ise 8 farklı başlığa bölünmüştür. Sorular, mülakatların yarı yapılandırılmış niteliği sayesinde farklı vurgularla ve farklı kuvvetlerle sorulmuştur. Her mülakat aynı kategorizasyonlar, aynı

sorular ve aynı başlıklar etrafında gerçekleştirilmiş olsa da katılımcının verdiği yanıtlara göre mülakatın kapsamı genişletilebilmiş ya da daraltılabilmiştir. Mülakatların analizi ise bunlardan ayrı olarak üç farklı başlık altında yapılmıştır, zira mülakatlarda ortaya çıkan farklı dilsel formasyonlar, farklı analiz biçimlerini gerektirmiştir. İlk bölümde, "Eklemlenmeler" (Articulations) başlığı altında katılımcıların söylemlerinde gün yüzüne çıkan muhtelif eklemlenme biçimleri incelenmiş, Sivil Atatürkçülüğe de, hiperpolitizasyona da, Post-Politika'ya da dair tahliller yapılmıştır. İkinci bölümde, "Dolanıklıklar" (Entanglements) başlığı altında katılımcıların söylemlerindeki kısmen daha karmaşık *ikilikler/düaliteler/zıtlıklar* incelenmiştir. Bu, bilhassa bir siyasallaşma modu olarak Sivil Atatürkçülüğün nasıl kurulduğuna, siyasal alanı bölme modalitelerine dair önemli ipuçları içermektedir. Üçüncü bölümde ise, "İkameler" (Substitutions) [Freud'dan hareketle *displacements* olarak da düşünülebilir] başlığı altında spesifik olarak *sembolik üstbelirlenim* ilişkisinin nasıl gerçekleştiği incelenmiştir. Bu, Sivil Atatürkçülük diskurunda Siyasal'ın devreden çıkarılıp ne gibi kategorilerle ikame edildiğini anlamak için (Rasyonel, İktisadi, Estetik) önemli bir tahlil düzlemidir.

Çalışmadaki saha araştırmasının en önemli çıktısı, günümüz Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ünün *örgütlülük/örgütsüzlük* mefhumu etrafında ikiye bölünmesi olmuştur. Mülakat katılımcıları arasında Sivil Atatürkçülük Literatürü'nün iddialarını yansıttığı söylenebilecek grubun, *örgütsüz katılımcılardan* oluştuğu görülmüştür. Nitekim, dikkatli bakıldığında görülebilecektir ki literatürün ikinci argümanı, zaten en baştan *örgütlülüğün* imkanlarını ortadan kaldırmaktadır. Sivil Atatürkçülük, *örgütlülüğün* olduğu yerde mümkünatını yitirmektedir. *Örgütlü katılımcıların* literatürün argümanlarına uyumsuz nitelikler göstermesi sebebiyle Neo-Kemalist bir söyleme daha yakın oldukları görülmüştür. Buradan hareketle belirtmek gerekir ki Sivil Atatürkçü olarak adlandırılabilecek kişiler, literatürün ikinci argümanı gereği zaten *örgütsüz* kişiler olacaktır. Bu durum, mülakatlarda da somut bir biçimde ortaya çıkmıştır. İlk olarak, katılımcıların Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük diskurunun temel niteliklerini yansıtır şekilde Atatürk imgesinin kutsallığına, metapolitikliğine ve Konsensual (Oydaşımsal) karakterine vurgu yaptığı görülmüştür. Atatürk imgesi, kutsallık bağlamında Lacan'ın *Das Ding* adını verdiği *kayıp jouissance* kavramı etrafında incelenmiştir. Her ne kadar ortak bir kutsallık atfı gözlemlenebiliyor olsa da

buna eşlik eden "gerçekçi" (Mustafa Kemal'i eleştiren) bir tutumun da varlığı gözlemlenebilmektedir. Bilhassa *Anıtkabir* gösteren'i devredeyken var olan kutsallık anlatısı, *Anıtkabir* gösteren'i mevzubahis olmaktan çıktığında yerini daha "gerçekçi" bir anlatıya bırakmaktadır. Metapolitik karakteristikler hususunda iki ayrı yorum ortaya çıkmıştır. Her ne kadar iki yorum da Atatürk imgesinin *siyasetin ötesinde* olduğunu iddia etse de, birinci yorum Atatürk imgesinin siyasetin *dışında,* ikinci yorum ise siyasetin *temelinde* olduğu ölçüde ötesinde olduğunu ortaya koyar. Bir başka deyişle, birinci yorum Atatürk imgesini siyasetin bir parçası yapmama eğilimindeyken ikinci yorum ise siyaseti Atatürk imgesi etrafında şekillendirmek eğilimindedir. Atatürk imgesi, bir Konsensus figürü olarak, tıpkı metapolitik iddiada olduğu gibi, siyaset için bir *ortak nokta* olarak tanımlanır, ve siyasetin muhtelif kırılımları bu *ortak nokta* etrafında *homojenize edilir*. Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün *boş* ve *yüzergezer* nitelikleri, mülakatlarda da gözlemlenmiştir. Kimi katılımcılar Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün Sol'a yakın olduğunu öne sürerken kimileri ise Sağ'a yakın olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (yüzergezer). Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük, mülakatlar boyunca "sosyal demokrasi", "feminizm", "cumhuriyetçi sol" gibi gösterenlerle ilişkilendirilmiştir (boş). Her ne kadar bir esneklik gözlenmiş olsa da bazı "göreli olarak daha stabil" gösterenlerin olduğunu görmek de mümkündür. Söz gelimi, "altı ok" (burada altı ok'un içeriği değil, bir söz öbeği olarak altı ok'tan bahsediliyor, zira mülakatlar bunların içeriğine ilişkin bir ihtilaf olduğunu açıkça göstermiştir), "*muasır medeniyetler seviyesi*" gibi gösterenlerin tüm mülakatlarda tekrarlandığı gözlemlenmiştir. Bilhassa *muasır medeniyetler seviyesi* gösteren'i, Sivil Atatürkçülük diskurunda tüm çatışmaların ortadan kalktığı, hiçbir antagonistik ayrılmanın olmadığı, mükemmel, faysız bir toplumsal kurguya işaret etmekte, bu sebeple *Post-Politik üstbelirlenim*'in önemli bir unsuru haline gelmektedir. Bir diğer deyişle, *muasır medeniyetler seviyesi* gösteren'i ile ifade edilen şey; sınıf, etnisite, kimlik gibi meselelere dair tüm çatışmaların ortadan kalktığı, hiçbir antagonizmanın bulunmadığı bir topluma yönelik arzudur. Dolayısıyla bu gösteren, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük'ün günümüzdeki modu ile Post-Politika'nın en saf kesişim noktasıdır. Yukarıda belirtildiği üzere, mülakatlarda ortaya çıkan en büyük ayrım, *örgütlü* ve *örgütsüz* katılımcılar arasında gözlemlenmiştir. Neo-Kemalist bir diskura daha yakın olduğu görülen *örgütlü* katılımcılar, *örgütsüzlerden* ordu, darbeler, milliyetçilik ve ideoloji

gibi konularda ayrılmıştır. *Örgütlü Atatürkçüler* bahsedilen gösterenleri sahiplenme, savunma, övme eğilimleri gösterirken *örgütsüz Atatürkçüler, ki bu noktada onlara Sivil Atatürkçüler (ya da Sivil Atatürkçülük Literatürünün iddialarıyla uyumlu kişiler) diyebiliriz,* bunları sıklıkla reddetmiş, yer yer de nötr bir tavır takınmışlardır. Katılımcıların siyasal modalitelerine dair en önemli çıktı, günümüz siyasal öznesinin hiperpolitik karakterinin *angaje, ancak katılmayan* karakterinde yatıyor olduğunun gözlemlenmesidir. Mülakatlar, yakın dönemde yapılan empirik çalışmaları onaylar biçimde, katılımcıların siyaseti takip ettiğini, siyasete ilgili olduklarını, bu anlamıyla "apolitik" olmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur; bir diğer deyişle, katılımcıların siyasete *tutkulu bir biçimde angaje* oldukları anlaşılmıştır. Ne var ki bu *angajman*, dört başı mamur bir *siyasal katılım*'ı içermeyen; aksine onu reddeden bir *angajmandır.* Bir diğer deyişle bu, siyasetin kendisine kulak vermesini isteyen, sesini duymasını talep eden, fakat bu talebini gerçekleştirmek için herhangi bir adım atmaktan kaçınan bir *angajman.* Buna paralel bir biçimde katılımcıların siyaset konusunda herhangi bir radikal tahayyüllerinin bulunmadığı, söz konusu siyaset olduğunda hayal güçlerinin, kavrayışlarının ve açıklamalarının "doğal/natürel" bir düşünsellik etrafında gerçekleştiği görülmüştür. Söz gelimi, *değişim* gösteren'i, siyasi olmayan hususlarda olağandışı gösterenlerle ilişkilendirilebilirken söz konusu siyaset olduğunda "*doğal akışın bir parçası olarak değişim*" şeklini almaktadır. "Dolanıklıklar" başlığı altında incelendiği üzere Sivil Atatürkçülük diskuru, dört temel dolanıklık etrafında şekillenir: rasyonel/irrasyonel, ideoloji/yaşam tarzı, seküler(modern)/bağnaz(köylü), ve son olarak gerçek Atatürkçülük/sahte Atatürkçülük. Bunların yanı sıra mülakatların bir kısmında anadilde eğitim/milli birlik, ve cumhuriyet/şeriat dolanıklıkları gözlemlenmiştir, ancak bunlar düşük sıklıkları sebebiyle detaylı şekilde incelenmemiştir. Her bir dolanıklık, siyasal alanın ve siyasal öznelerin bir parsellenme biçimine işaret eder. Burada parsellenen alanlar, siyasal öznelerin kendisinden ziyade siyasal pozisyonlardır; buralara tekabül eden özneler bu pozisyonların karşılıklı ilişkileri sebebiyle siyasal değerlendirmeye tabi tutulur. Örneğin, rasyonel/irrasyonel dolanıklığı, Sivil Atatürkçülerin rasyonel, geri kalan kesimlerin irrasyonel olarak addedilmesine yol açar. Burada Sivil Atatürkçülere ya da öteki kesimlere "içkin" bir rasyonellikten ziyade, bunların temsil ettiği düşünülen pozisyonların etiko-politik değerlendirmeleri çerçevesinde atanan bir rasyonellikten söz etmek mümkündür. Sivil

Atatürkçüler, "irrasyonel" addedilebilecek siyasal edimlerini tam da işgal ettikleri pozisyonun sözde "objektif" niteliğine binaen rasyonel olarak meşrulaştırabilmektedir. İdeoloji/yaşam tarzı dolanıklığı, ideoloji kavramının reddini ve siyasal tercihlerin yaşam tarzı olarak eklemlenmesini ifade eder. Seküler/bağnaz dolanıklığı, yine birinci dolanıklıkla ilişkili şekilde, ilgili siyasal pozisyonlara tekabül eden öznelerin seküerliklerine ya da bunun zıttı olarak kurgulanan bağnazlıklarına işaret eder. Son dolanıklık olarak gerçek Atatürkçülük/sahte Atatürkçülük dolanıklığı ise, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük diskurunda sık görülen bir dolanıklık olarak, Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük pozisyonu içerisindeki muhtelif yarılmaları ön plana çıkarır. Muhtelif Atatürkçülükler "sahte" addedilerek "öz" bir Atatürkçülüğün mevcut siyasal mod olarak ortaya konulabilmesi imkanı, tam da bu dolanıklık ile mümkün kılınır. "İkameler" başlığı, Siyasal'ın üç adet farklı kategori ile nasıl ikame edildiğini, bu vesileyle *sembolik üstebelirlenim*'in nasıl gerçekleştiğini analiz eder. Burada Siyasal'ın, ilk olarak Rasyonel'le, ikinci olarak İktisadi ile, üçüncü olarak da Estetik ile nasıl "değiştirildiği" incelenmiştir. İlk başlık altında Siyasal'ın devreden çıkarılıp bunun yerine siyasal süreçleri anlamlandırmak ve kurgulamak için Rasyonel'in nasıl devreye sokulduğu incelenir. Burada siyaset, bir "Akıl" sürecine indirgenerek *ertelenir (defer)*; bunun yerine ise Rasyonel olan'ın hükmettiği bir şema konur. Burada gözlemlenen, siyasetin "siyasetsizleştirilmesi" ve "akılcılaştırılması"dır. İkinci olarak, birinci başlık ile benzer bir şekilde, Siyasal'ın devreden çıkarılması ve bunun İktisadi ile ikame edilmesi incelemeye tabi tutulur. Bu başlık, spesifik olarak siyasi meselelerin iktisadi meselelere indirgenmesini ele alır. Söz gelimi, "Kürt sorunu" bir iktisadi mesele olarak değerlendirilir ve bunun çözüm araçları ekonomik gelişimde ve iktisadi tertibatta aranır. Bu başlık, aynı zamanda Post-Politika'nın önemli bir determinantı olan *teknokratik yönetim* arzusunu bu ikame çerçevesinde ele alır. Son başlık ise Siyasal'ın devreden çıkarılıp siyasallaşmanın, siyasal edimlerin ve siyasal tercihlerin "yaşam tarzı-laştırılmasını", yer yer "kültürelleştirilmesini" tahlil eder. Estetik ikamesi, siyasal süreçlerin kolektif bir bağlamdan koptuğu, bireysel ve birey-ci bir hal aldığı biçimleri inceler.

Çalışma, teorik iddiaları ve empirik gözlemleri sonucunda birden çok sonuca varmıştır. İlk olarak, Sivil Atatürkçülük, Post-Politik bir *fenomen* olması dolayısıyla Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük gibi siyaseti *bastıran (repression)* değil, *önleyen*

(foreclosure) bir karakter sergilemektedir. İkinci olarak, Sivil Atatürkçülüğe dair iddiaların yalnızca *örgütsüz* Atatürkçüler nezdinde doğru olabileceği görülmüştür. *Örgütlülük,* saha çalışmasında ortaya konduğu şekilde, Sivil Atatürkçülüğü imkansız kılan bir boyut olarak karşımıza çıkar. Üçüncü önemli sonuç, Sivil Atatürkçülüğün *doğası gereği* demokratik/çoğulcu olduğu iddiasının yanlış, ya da en azından eksik olduğunu ortaya koyar. Sivil Atatürkçülük diskuru ile Neo-Kemalist diskur arasında aleni bir fark olduğu görülmüştür, ancak bu Sivil Atatürkçülüğün dolayımsız bir biçimde demokratik/çoğulcu olduğunu kanıtlamamaktadır. Sivil Atatürkçülük, demokratik/çoğulcu olabilme imkanına sahip olduğu gibi, *eski* Kemalizm/Atatürkçülük modlarına sürüklenebilme eğilimleri de olan, demokratik olmayan karakteristikleri de barındıran bir siyasallaşma biçimi olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Post-Politika, Chantal Mouffe'un iddia ettiği üzere çok kutuplu bir dünyanın teşkili ve *tutkulu* siyasallaşmaların ortaya çıkmasıyla sona erecektir. Ne var ki, Post-Politika'nın günümüzdeki *modu* olan *hiperpolitik Post-Politika* göstermektedir ki günümüzün çok kutuplu dünyası ve *tutkulu, angaje ama katılmayan* siyasallaşma biçimleri, Post-Politika'yı sonlandırmak yerine yeni bir veçheye taşımıştır. Bu, muhtelif siyasallaşmalar ile Post-Politika'nın uyumlu olabileceğini bir kez daha ortaya koymaktadır. Mouffe'un iddiasının aksine, siyaset bugün hiç olmadığı kadar *tutkulu (passionate)* bir hal almıştır, ancak bu, onun hiç olmadığı kadar da *ızdırap dolu (passion) ve pasif (passive)* olmasına da yol açan bir şekilde sonuçlanmıştır.

E. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

(Please fill out this form on computer. Double click on the boxes to fill them)

<u>ENSTİTÜ /</u> <u>INSTITUTE</u>

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences ☒

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences ☐

<u>YAZARIN /</u> <u>AUTHOR</u>

Soyadı / Surname : BAZ
Adı / Name : Özgür Umut
Bölümü / Department : Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi / Political Science and Public Administration

<u>TEZİN ADI /</u> <u>TITLE OF THE THESIS</u> (**İngilizce** / English): HYPERPOLITICIZED POST-POLITICS: THE CASE OF "CIVIC ATATÜRKISM"

<u>**TEZİN TÜRÜ**</u> / <u>DEGREE:</u>   **Yüksek Lisans** / Master ☒   **Doktora** / PhD ☐

1. **Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. /** Release the entire
    work immediately for access worldwide. ☒

2. **Tez <u>iki yıl</u> süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for
    patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of <u>**two years.**</u> * ☐

3. **Tez <u>altı ay</u> süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for
    period of <u>**six months**</u>. * ☐

*** Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. /
A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library
together with the printed thesis.*

Yazarın imzası / Signature ....   **Tarih** / Date ....
(Kütüphaneye teslim ettiğiniz tarih. Elle doldurulacaktır.)
(Library submission date. Please fill out by hand.)
Tezin son sayfasıdır. / This is the last page of the thesis/dissertation.