EXPOSING A VOID BY FILLING IT: WITNESSING AS A MODE OF
CLAIMING POLITICAL VISIBILITY AND THE CASE OF VOTE AND
BEYOND VOLUNTEERS

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ABSTRACT

EXPOSING A VOID BY FILLING IT: WITNESSING AS A MODE OF CLAIMING POLITICAL VISIBILITY AND THE CASE OF VOTE AND BEYOND VOLUNTEERS

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Election observation and monitoring, which has begun to take effect and spread worldwide since the beginning of the 20th century, gained relevance in Turkey after 2014, with the mobilization of civil citizens organized under the domestic civil society organization Vote and Beyond. Existing literature on election observation and monitoring usually discuss the rapid spread of the practice with reference to the changes in the international normative environment or focus on the impact of it on public opinion, but seldom mention why and how this practice comes to find a place for itself in the political repertoire of the citizens who undertake monitoring and observation duty in their homelands. By deriving from the narratives of thirty respondents who volunteered as part of Vote and Beyond in the 2015 general elections of June 7 and/or November 1; this study tries to understand the monitoring position that has been created with civil initiative; relates this position to the ways through which respondents experience politics, democracy and elections; and discusses the theoretical and conceptual unfoldings of the position with regard to the notions of spectatorship, visibility, appearance and witnessing. Instead of assessing the monitoring position only in technical and legal terms, the study suggests that this position is conceived as a form political experience developed in response to the conditions and possibilities of experiencing politics in contemporary Turkey.

Keywords: Election Observation, Election Monitoring, Vote and Beyond, Political Visibility

ÖZ

BİR POLİTİK GÖRÜNÜRLÜK İDDİASI OLARAK ŞAHİTLİK VE OY VE ÖTESİ MÜŞAHİTLERİ ÖRNEĞİ

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20. yüzyılın başlarından itibaren dünya çapında hızla uygulanmaya ve kurumsallaşmaya başlamış olan seçim gözlem ve denetim pratiği, Türkiye'de 2014 sonrası dönemde, Oy ve Ötesi isimli sivil toplum kuruluşu bünyesinde örgütlenen sivil vatandaşlar vasıtasıyla işlerlik kazanmaya başlamıştır. Seçim gözlem ve denetim pratiğine dair literatür, genellikle pratiğin hızla yaygınlaşmasını uluslararası normatif çerçevede anlamaya çalışmakta veya pratiğin kamuoyundaki karşılığına odaklanmakta; ancak kendi ülkelerinde seçim gözlem ve denetim görevini üstlenen vatandaşların politik repertuarında bu pratiğin nasıl ve neden yer bulduğuna eğilmemektedir. Bu çalışma, 7 Haziran ve 1 Kasım 2015 genel seçimlerinde Oy ve Ötesi bünyesinde müşahitlik yapmış otuz görüşmecinin anlatılarına dayanarak sivil inisiyatifle üretilen müşahitlik pozisyonunu anlamaya çalışmakta, bu pozisyonu gönüllülerin politika, demokrasi ve seçimleri deneyimleme biçimiyle ilişkilendirmekte ve pozisyonun kavramsal ve teorik açılımlarını seyircilik, görünürlük, görünüm ve şahitlik nosyonları üzerinden tartışmaktadır. Çalışma, müşahitliğin kanunen belirlenen teknik bir pozisyondan ziyade, günümüz Türkiye koşullarında politik olanın deneyimlenme biçim, olanak ve koşullarının bir sonucu olarak geliştirilen politik bir deneyim olduğunu önermekte, sivil vatandaşlar nezdinde bulduğu karşılığı da bu izdüşüm üzerinden açıklamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Seçim gözlemi, Oy ve Ötesi, Müşahitlik, Politik Görünürlük

To my father

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.Prologue

A newly emerging electoral practice has started to occupy the electoral agenda of Turkey in recent years. A considerable number of civil citizens, organized through the civic initiative *Vote and Beyond (Oy ve Ötesi)*, have volunteered to attend the elections as observers and took part in the monitoring of the elections in the polling stations during the Election Day along with official polling clerks and party representatives. Embedded in the current election law and integrated with the bureaucratic electoral structures, the activity is often considered and projected by the organization as an extension of the wider and more official project of contributing to the development of participant democracy in Turkey. On the side of the volunteers, a rather latent justification is assumed, one that is related with controversies on ballot box safety and procedural manipulation, which have commonsensically been at issue throughout various electoral occasions. According to a survey entitled "Turkish Public Opinion Dynamics ahead of the June 2015 General Elections"[1] conducted in 2015 by Ali Çarkoğlu and S. Erdem Aytaç with the support of the Open Society Institute, Koç University and the Ohio State University School of Communication, the rate of Turkish citizens who believe that "elections will not be fair" has increased in recent years, reaching up to the figure of 43% from 28% between the years 2007-2015.

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[1] Retrieved May 16, 2017 from
http://home.ku.edu.tr/~saytac/uploads/4/4/6/3/44632775/June2015_presentation.pdf

The aim of this thesis is to understand the possibilities and unfoldings of civil election monitoring within a conceptual framework that draws on the relationship between politics and visibility. The attempt is to present a theoretical and conceptual inquiry into the *experience* of a political event, that of election monitoring, and into the further experiences associated with it at a very particular moment in contemporary Turkey, rather than an analytical inquiry into the political event itself. In that, the more analytical question I pose asks why and how did the practice of election monitoring find a place for itself in the political repertoire of Turkish citizens, with and beyond the immediate explanations of promotion of participation and restoration of public distrust. My claim is that citizens' participation in the monitoring practice should be thought in relation to how they make sense of and experience politics and democracy, and only then the unique characteristics of the monitoring position and the implications of this practice can be discovered in ways that are not yet fully discovered. In order to construct this claim, the fundamental empirical tool that I make us of comprises of the narratives of thirty respondents that have been interviewed in the scope of the study, who volunteered to monitor the 2015 general elections of June 7 and/or November 1; whereas the conceptual tools that I selectively engage with are composed of key perspectives on spectatorship, visibility, appearance and witnessing, as well as their respective unfolding into the notion of politics in the theoretical frameworks of a number of scholars including Green, Foucault, Arendt and Butler.

1.2 Literature Review

Vote and Beyond is the first national comprehensive mission that undertook election monitoring duty in Turkey (İpek & Karpuzcu 2016: 194), proceeding the local project called "Ankara'nın Oyları" (The Votes of Ankara), the monitoring activity of which was limited to the city of Ankara. Even though the relevance of election observation and monitoring to the Turkish context is relatively new, the practice has been commonplace in various countries much before and in gradual effect worldwide on since the early twentieth century, demonstrating a dramatic growth especially in 1990s (Bjornlund 2004; Hyde 2011; Kelley 2008; Ricker 2006). Earliest election monitoring missions were undertaken by trusteeship nations, often with the aid of United Nations

(U.N.) teams, who "observed and maintained some control over their colonies prior to the colonies' obtaining of independence" (Ricker 2006: 1376). With the end of the colonial era, the U.N. started to engage in election monitoring more comprehensively, first in countries in transition to independence and later in independent member states. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall and "the subsequent resurgence of a third wave democracy" (Omotola 2006: 157), the number of organizations involved in monitoring significantly increased, and so did the number of electoral occasions that had been monitored worldwide. Kelley notes that:

> Monitoring increases from an average below 10 percent of elections from 1975 to 1987, to a high of 81.5 percent of elections in 2014. The most dramatic increase occurs between 1988 and 1990" (2008: 222).

"By the mid-to-late 1990s", Ricker complements, "monitoring had become so common that hardly an election occurred without involvement by some type of monitoring organization" (2006: 1376).

Current organizations that participate in election observation and monitoring activities can be divided into five general categories (Ricker 2006): The first major actor is the U.N., whose primary subdivision involved in election monitoring is the Electoral Assistance Division (EAD). The U.N. gets involved in elections only when they meet a specific set of conditions and only when its assistance is requested from the target country in order not to raise questions of sovereignty. Its involvement is mostly limited to transitioning states or countries under the threat of power monopolies and human rights abuses. (UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide, 2007).

The second actor is inter-governmental organizations, which undertake observation and monitoring duty in their own regions. Among the IGOs that play an active role in election monitoring, the most prominent ones are the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Union (EU), the African Union and the Asia Foundation. Unlike the U.N., most IGOs decide to undertake monitoring duty regardless of whether the target country requests their involvement or not. These organizations achieve authorization

for election monitoring either from their founding documents which mandate the practice, or from universal agreements on human rights issues. Ricker notes that since regional organizations have a particular stake in the elections that take place within their region, they "are more than merely observers or providers of technical assistance" and they "may manifest a concrete interest in the outcome of the elections they monitor" (2006: 1380).

The third actor in election monitoring is non-governmental organizations, the most widely known of which are the U.S. based Carter Center, International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). Ricker argues that instead of a direct stake in election outcomes, each NGO "has a stake in its own reputation as a neutral observer and important force in global democratic development, but the concern of the U.N. and IGOs in legitimizing their own identities are not present for these groups" (2006: 1385). In addition, NGOs bear fewer political constraints than IGOs, which enables them to be more openly critical in certain occasions. The smaller and less bureaucratic structures of these organizations, lastly, allow them to be more flexible and responsive to immediate changes and needs. The lack of international legal basis of NGOs, however, bestow them less power to compel compliance or enforce recommendations in target countries. Since these organizations receive funding from individual nations or private sources, they are also vulnerable to bias or stake in election outcomes, as Ricker suggests. (2006: 1385-1386)

The fourth actor that carries out election monitoring duty is domestic organizations. These organizations are composed of citizens and institutions from within the country the elections of which are to be monitored. They might occasionally collaborate with NGOs and IGOs but they typically maintain their independent identity. Ricker notes that while these organizations extract implications for legitimacy from their independent position, since they are primarily composed of in-state actors, "they do not enjoy the same force of international authority as do other monitoring organizations" (2006: 1386). Yet, since these organizations are directly in touch and familiar with the circumstances of the country, they have an advantage in assessing the

particular conditions, standards and implications of elections in the country of concern, which values their evaluations. They are also "less susceptible to the perception of being 'outsiders'" (Ricker 2006: 1386)

The last actor in election monitoring is national organizations from states other than those targeted, implying groups or missions sponsored by other sovereign nations. "This practice is especially common in the context of peacekeeping or other more comprehensive development missions" (Ricker 2006: 1386), the most immediate examples of which are occasions like the elections in Afghanistan and Iraq.

There are various terms in use to describe the involvement of international or domestic actors in elections, including but not limited to observation, monitoring, supervision, administration, verification and mediation, depending on the position of the actor with reference to the target country. The U.N., for instance, refers to its activity in elections as "verification", whereas the Carter Center and certain IGOs alike use the term "mediation" to name their involvement (Bjornlund 2004: 40-41). Terminology becomes a concern especially when international involvement is at stake, for elections are frequently considered as a domestic matter closely linked with national sovereignty. Domestic involvement is often referred to as election monitoring or election observation, and even though these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, their connotations and implications are significantly different. The International Institute for Democracy and Assistance (International IDEA), a multilateral research and standard-setting organization, defines election observation as "gathering information and making informed judgments from that information" (International IDEA 1997: 8), while it refers to election monitoring as "the authority to observe an election process and to intervene in that process if relevant laws or standard procedures are being violated or ignored" (ibid.). Bjornlund differentiates the two terms in two regards: degree of involvement in the process and the period of time (2004: 41). Election observation is limited to reporting and recording, and therefore it is relatively passive and focused mainly on the polling day itself. Election observation, on the other hand, bears the possibility of intervention to correct the deficiencies and

to offer recommendation, implying that it is a more engaged process that focuses on the election process and conditions over time (ibid.).

According to the above-mentioned distinctions, Vote and Beyond would fall under the category of a domestic civil society organization that undertakes a monitoring duty carried out by citizens. The Turkish term used most frequently to refer to the practice, however, both in the election law and in organizational usage, is quite different: those who volunteer to monitor the elections are called "*müşahit*", and the practice is termed as "*müşahitlik*", even though occasional reference is also made to the terms 'observer' and 'volunteer'. The word "müşahit" roughly translates into English as 'observer', but has a slightly different etymological origin in Arabic, corresponding to "the one who testifies, the witness". The translational difference corresponds to a conceptual one as well, and this inquiry is an effort to unravel this difference so as to understand the conditions and possibilities of politics in contemporary Turkey that render the volunteer not only an observer or a monitor, but also the one who testifies, or the witness. As it is signaled, the contribution of the study to the existing literature is its focus on the particular position created within the context of electoral monitoring occasions in Turkey, which is an issue hardly touched upon. There is a quite limited amount of scholarly work dedicated to the case of Vote and Beyond volunteers in Turkey, and their content is rather interested in making an analysis of the organization within the light of the role of civil society in Turkey (İpek & Karpuzcu 2016; Çelebi 2015). How and why the practice itself attained relevance in the political imagination of regular citizens is an issue with slightly different repercussions, which constitutes the fundamental idea of the study.

Scholarly work on the broader notion of election observation and monitoring outside of Turkey runs through two general frameworks, the first of which focuses on the international institutionalization of the practice with regard to democratization. A significant body of literature is composed of case studies and reports that discuss the historical development, effectiveness and impasses of electoral monitoring occasions in non-established democracies and in countries under democratic transitions, aggregated mostly in Africa, Latin America and post-Soviet nations. (Mpangala 2007;

6

Omotola 2006; Baradei 2012; Suryani 2015; Lidauer 2012; Tsegyu 2016; Forbrig and Demes 2007; Anglin 1998). Common to almost all these studies is the direct association of election monitoring with democratization, be it in the form of democracy promotion from abroad via international actors or of domestic democratization through election-related civil society activism. Overlooked by this direct association of the rise of election monitoring with the apotheosis of democratic transition is the normative change in world politics through which the purely domestic and utterly sensitive matter of elections have become international affairs, which is a point particularly invested by Kelley and Hyde. By underscoring that if the spread of election monitoring was eventually linked to democratization, one would have expected it to take place during the third wave of democracy in the mid-1970s and cascade during 1980s, Kelley suggests that the more central change that gave rise to election monitoring was the one in the normative environment that characterized world politics. According to her, "election monitoring initially emerged due to an evolving set of norms related to democracy, elections and human rights" (2008: 225) that grew steadily in the post-World War II period. During 1989-1991, this "normative environment interacted with important shifts in the international system of power" (Kelley 2008: 22), which enabled election monitoring to reach a tipping point. The norms that resisted election monitoring such as sovereignty weakened, and those that supported it, such as human rights, bolstered. Kelley summarizes these interactions as follows:

> Systemic changes accompanying the end of the Cold War bolstered the emerging norms (…) The end of the Cold War allowed the victors to shape prevailing norms. The emerging norms were further bolstered by the collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR), because this revealed the failure of autocratic governments and communist doctrine in particular. Furthermore, because the Cold War partly began with Stalin's prohibition of free elections in Eastern Europe, its end naturally led to a focus on elections there and boosted the emerging democracy and election norms. (2008: 228)

According to Kelley, the driving force in the spread of norms on the side of Western governments was the belief that "democracy promotion would best serve their security interests" (as cited in Flores 2013), while on the side of target countries it was the search for legitimacy. With the end of the Cold War, clean elections became a

prerequisite for the Western states in order to bestow legitimacy on governments. Kelley writes that with the collapse of the patronage system in the Cold War period;

> many governments needed new allies and new sources of funding. Thus the need for legitimacy also had origins in the systemic shift in the global system; because governments no longer could survive just by "picking sides", legitimacy became a more salient criterion for external political and financial support (2008: 230)

The normative and instrumental motivation behind the rise of election monitoring culminated to the point that "refusing monitors forfeited possible benefits of international endorsement" (Kelley 2008: 231), which rationalized inviting monitors even for incumbent governments who tend to cheat, in order to "reap the rewards of appearing legitimate" (Kelley 2008: 230). Appearing legitimate by inviting monitors to the elections, in other words, became the precondition of attaining visibility in world politics, which reinforced the norm even when it was not internalized. Hyde refers to this as "pseudo-democrat's dilemma".

According to Hyde, unlike the diffusion of other costly norms that are frequently explained in international relations as the result of pressure from activists or of incentives for international cooperation, election observation "was initiated by state leaders to signal their government's commitment to democratization" (2011: 367). As the international benefits of inviting monitors rose, governments that are not necessarily committed to democracy also had the incentive to deploy the practice. "This repeated behavior" writes Hyde, "resulted in acceptance of election observation as compatible with respect for state sovereignty, and in the widely shared belief that all true-democrats invite observers and receive their endorsement" (ibid.). Hyde diverges from Kelley in her argument that election monitoring was generated not as an international norm to facilitate cooperation by international institutions, but as a signaling norm by state leaders to signal their commitment to democracy, in order to gain access to the benefits of appearing legitimate internationally.

Even though understanding the growth, spread and strength of election monitoring in contemporary world politics through the change in the normative political

environment de-naturalizes the direct association between election monitoring and democratization, it does not necessarily explain the implications of the practice *within* the target country. Deriving from this point, the second framework focuses on the repercussions of election monitoring and observation – both international and domestic – in the public opinion on election credibility and legitimacy. A general tendency in this expects monitors' assessments to have a uniform impact on citizens, influencing their perception in the direction of the statements. According to this view, positive statements of monitors would lead to the perception of both the elections and the winning party as legitimate by the citizens, whereas negative statements would trigger public unrest, leading to post-election protests and even violence (Daxecker 2012). This perspective, however, overlooks that citizens' experience of democracy is not limited to the electoral occasion, and that their perception of elections might be dependent less on the technical cleanness of elections than on how they feel to be related to democracy in occasions other than that of the elections. The electronically published work of Bernstead, Kao and Lust in which they present the results of the survey experiments they conducted among over 4.561 citizens in Jordon, Libya and Tunisia suggests that the impact of monitoring statements on public opinion depends on attitudes toward the government. They write that "observers' statements have different impacts on respondents, depending on their initial attitudes toward the government and the political context of elections", implying that "in some cases and for some citizens, positive statements may make citizens more skeptical about election quality and negative statements may reinforce elections" (n.d., 35). In countries where anti-Western sentiments are pronounced, they add, the effects of the statements "may be counter-productive, with positive statements leading to more negative views of the elections" (ibid.).

This is not to suggest that observers' statements have no correlative influence over public opinion, but that even when they do, this still does not suffice for putting citizens' mode of relating to and assessment of elections in perspective. As Schedler writes:

> Questions about clean versus fraudulent elections tell us how many people observe or expect the presence of fraud in a given election, but they do not

> tell us how many people think the presence of fraud alters the outcome of the election. They do not tell us about whether fraud matters or not, whether people think it is systematic and decisive or not (1999: 134).

Credibility of elections does not always imply their cleanness, and vice versa. Trust in politics is not only a matter of technical and institutional regularity, but also and at times more importantly a matter of political culture that is historically charged. This is not to suggest that the political culture that comes to characterize a given context is self-sustaining or impenetrable to institutional and administrative developments. In his study analyzing the data from various opinion polls conducted in Mexico during the electoral reforms in 1990s, Schedler reveals that institutional transformation changed mass attitudes and trust in elections increased (1999). Yet, in the face of the critical presidential elections of 2000, he adds as a concluding remark, distrust signaled to be reemerging, which is an unexpected turn of events.

This partly comes to suggest that binary simplifications, such as clean vs. fraudulent; legitimate vs. illegitimate, credible vs. untrustworthy and democratic vs. undemocratic, are not always effective in understanding citizens' experience and perception of elections and democracy, and accordingly of election monitoring. The literature on election monitoring often seems to depart from the basic premise that elections are the most vital and central mechanisms that run democracies, but says little about how they are situated in the political imagination of citizens and what repercussion they have in citizens' experience of democracy and politics. When this is the case, the motivation and rationale of citizens who volunteer to take observation and monitoring duty as part of domestic organizations become even more curious. This is an issue opened up in the literature only under the discussion of the role of civil society in election monitoring, which still says little about why and how elections are valued by the citizens in such a way that leads them to add election-related activity to their political repertoire. My aim in this thesis is to discover this relatively less addressed dimension.

The right to elect and be elected is not only one of the most fundamental rights, but also one of the most observable ones. (İpek & Karpuzcu 2016: 202). In a similar sense,

elections are the most visualized and visualizing form of democratic experience, rendering the rather abstract notion of democracy to attain a certain shape and solidity. The electoral realm is both a spectacle and a stage, it is both watched and played – but not necessarily always in the rehearsed way. Shortly before the 2016 presidential elections in the USA, Trump supporters organized through a website and asked further supporters to participate in what they called "Operation Red". They were encouraging all supporters to wear red to the polls, so people would "have no choice but to acknowledge the visible truth in a sea of red"[2]. The polls, in other words, were invested not only as tools that transformed 'truth' into visible data, but also and more importantly as the very spaces in which 'truth' was granted visibility. The double character of the electoral realm as spectacle and stage and its overlooked aspect of visibility renders election monitoring to be more than a technical procedure. This becomes quite explicit in contexts where notions like observation, visibility and invisibility linger with historically and politically charged connotations. A striking example would be the response of the then-Chief Election Commissioner Jamer Michael Lyndoh in India to the agencies that looked forward to monitor the 2002 elections in Kashmir and Jammu: "In this day and age, there is no question of the white man coming to observe what the native is doing" (Devadevan 2015: 405). What is the relevance of elections' being a spectacle and a stage to the political experience of Turkish citizens? How can election monitoring be further understood in the light of visibility politics, and what does it have to offer?

1.3 Framing the Study

My interest in the issue emerged out of my own experience as a volunteer during the elections of November 1, 2015, which is why I find it befitting to start framing the flow of ideas that will be followed during the study with a personal narrative. I cannot claim to have a particular concern or value judgment affirmative of the electoral process. Neither does it interest me as a political field in which I feel myself

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[2] Source: More poll monitors may mean more trouble. (2016, October 17). Bloomberg Businessweek. Retrieved July 12, 2017 from
http://0-eds.b.ebscohost.com.library.metu.edu.tr/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=ba1ef315-8433-41a2-b5ff-dcdc9b3a242c%40sessionmgr101

additionally eager or comfortable. Especially after my undergraduate years within which I had the chance to attest to various types of political occurrence and forms of political expression as well as different modes of political organization including but not limited to the Gezi Protests, the neighborhood forums that followed, political networks of various kinds, local solidarity campaigns, further public demonstrations and performance happenings; the realm of elections has often resonated as a vague and barren site that has little to do with how I encounter, experience, make sense of and struggle with the political in my everyday life. Yet, when I heard about the activity of Vote and Beyond, I was immediately interested, and couldn't help but decide to take part. Yet, in a similar manner, I couldn't help but expect little of it.

The elections in which I volunteered, November 1, coincides with an ambiguous and complicated conjuncture in Turkey, in which multiple political forces were at work: the results of the previous elections of June 2015, which prevented the formation of government by a political party alone during four months, sparked off a restoration in the established relations of power and provided space for new political agents in the parliament, implying change in the distribution of power in the political arena – a space that hosted minor fluctuations since 2002. The maintenance of the political atmosphere that preceded June 7 elections was an objective for particular sects of the society, but it was being challenged by the political atmosphere that followed. The two suicide bombings that took place in between the two elections, first on July 20, 2015 and second on October 10, 2015 which targeted the gatherings and meetings of left-wing opponents; and the suspension of the Kurdish resolution process that was enacted in 2014 along with the armed conflicts that followed were two of the most decisive instances that altered the course of events in terms of government policies as well as of permeability of politics. It was a personal observation and experience which was then reinforced by the evaluations of the respondents as well that the possibilities of getting involved in political processes were narrowing. The public spaces started to get abandoned due to security threats, which burdened the possibilities of encounter with, experience in and exchange of everyday sociality and politics. The sociopolitical context of November 1 differed in many regards from that of June 7, which was

characterized by more open, inclusive and permeable political processes as the narratives of the respondents also suggest.

In terms of my personal experience, the motivations that led to the decision of taking part in the elections as a volunteer had less to do with concerns about ballot box security than an eagerness to carry out a form of political engagement; in an atmosphere of which I couldn't make clear sense. The point where I started to find this engagement particularly interesting was during the workshops held by Vote and Beyond prior to the elections, in which volunteers were introduced their rights and duties as well as the legal basis of their participation in the electoral process. In response to a question that frequently popped up, which was asking how a volunteer would interfere with the procedure and take action if he/she was to spot an irregularity or violation of rules, the instructor noted the following: The volunteer was not there primarily to interfere or take action. The implication of his/her presence was rather concerned with blocking or restraining the emergence of an irregularity or violation of rules in the first place.

In that, however, the volunteer does not hold any legal authorization. As foreclosed by the Election Law, the volunteer is authorized only to stay in the polling station during the election day, demand an official and signed copy of the final report on vote shares and occasionally file a report in case that he/she spots a violation of procedures, which would still not be an immediate warrant in the sense that a filed report can have repercussions only through a legal and supposedly long process to be followed in the afterwards. Furthermore, in terms of the tasks implemented by him, the volunteer does not carry out an exclusive activity either. In his monitoring duty, he/she is accompanied by an election board composed usually of seven people, including official polling clerks authorized by the state and party representatives assigned to the polling stations by political parties. Implied by this is that the electoral setting is already characterized by a balancing field, in the sense that it is already being monitored by legally-entitled polling clerks and diversely situated party representatives who seek conflicting party interests, which normatively eliminates the probability of outright manipulation in the electoral process. It follows from the

structuring and positioning of the electoral setup that not only the ballot box rhetoric of public distrust falls short maintaining its ground, but also the volunteer falls short of explicitly contributing to the repertoire of electoral practice. Why would, then, the volunteers want to be there, near the polling stations and within the firmly institutional and legal domain of the elections all through the election day, while their presence hardly corresponds de jure to a sort of authority, sanction or power? Suggested by the instructor of the workshop I attended was that through his capacity of blockage by being there, the presence of the volunteer is expected to operate through the production of an effect that is neither prescribed nor necessarily met by the conventional elements of the electoral setting. The inquiry I will be presenting in this study is an attempt to understand and analyze this effect. In doing so, the inquiry will be informed by interviews but follow a conceptual and theoretical line into the conditions of politics that engages selectively with key perspectives on spectatorship, visibility, appearance and witnessing.

One way to approach to the effect in question is to cast particular focus on the creation of the monitoring position through civil initiative. This position is constituted by what can be called as a legal gap, meaning that it was not specifically designated and foreclosed for and by the collective will of the volunteers themselves but enabled by the extent permitted by law; tailored in order to grant access to party members and independent candidates to the polls. However, it is still created, produced and reinvested by the volunteers, in the sense that it was rendered visible by the volunteers, through their high level of interest in filling this gap. In other words, even though this position was already legally visible long before the mobilization of volunteers under the roof of Vote and Beyond, it is only after their filling of this gap did the position achieve political visibility.

The question of political visibility is often discussed with regard to that which is visible, or to put it differently, in terms of one's achievement of visibility as a way to secure political relevancy and significance. To become visible in this sense is the most fundamental premise and condition of political engagement and action. In that, power becomes more than frequently a matter of visibility, in the upfront sense that "to be

14

empowered is to be visible; and to be disempowered is to be rendered invisible" (Oliver 2001: 11). Conceiving political subjectivity as visible, on-stage performance, however, covers only a limited amount of the positions embedded in the politics of visibility. This approach makes only instrumental sense of a position without which the very notion of visibility would be unthinkable: the position with reference to whom the visibles are visible, i.e., the audience, or the spectator.

When was asked in an interview[3] about what triggered the establishment of Vote and Beyond, one of the seven founding members of the organization, Sercan Çelebi mentions that with the spirit inherited from Gezi, they felt the need to do something, and become part of the solution to one of the many acute problems that bothered the society. The answer to the question of what they could do was, he notes, "to go and see for themselves".

The last emphasis on 'seeing for oneself' is the main point of departure of the argument this thesis will attempt to develop. The motive to 'see for oneself', which is also the practical basis of the volunteer's monitoring duty, implies that in its achievement of political visibility, the monitoring position primarily rests on an off-stage state of watchfulness. Yet, by virtue of the practical existence of the volunteer, the monitoring position also rests on an on-stage performance. The position of the volunteer, in other words, before and beyond its particular attributes, is characterized by a desire to see for oneself while being seen at the same time and in that, it operationalizes the double aspect of visibility, by the volunteer's simultaneous becoming of that which is visible and that to which visibles are visible. In that, the monitoring position turns out to interlock with the question of political visibility in ways that are both conventional and not yet fully discovered; to indicate that there are visual trajectories that work through different unfoldings of being visible and being rendered invisible, and to invoke the possibility of approaching to it through an ocular trajectory of political experience. This thesis invests in this possibility.

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[3] Source: We created awareness and mobilized parties on election security. (2015, June 15). *Hürriyet Daily News*. Retrieved April 12, 2017 from http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/vote-and-beyond-we-created-awareness-and-mobilized-parties-on-election-security.aspx?pageID=238&nID=83968&NewsCatID=338

Marquez notes that "a great number of the spaces where what we normally call "politics" take place – such as the mediated spaces where political leaders appear in modern states and the immediate spaces of struggle and confrontation in workplaces and streets, among others" (2011: 2) – are spaces that acquire their political character from persisting in and claiming visibility. My intention in this thesis, in parallel lines, is to make sense of the political character of the space of the volunteer, of its interaction with the further space of the electoral setting and of its relation to the wider space of politics through its persistence in and claim of visibility. The overall inquiry can be evaluated under the larger question of how political demands that cannot appear on the political stage or that are deprived of a political stage on their own develop strategies to maintain and produce politics. In that, however, I am not making a figurative but literal use of the allegory of 'stage', so as to imply by it a space that is constituted by the relationalities of seeing and being seen, of watching and being watched and of appearing and being apparent. In that, this study distances itself from the type of political analysis that operates through the taken-for-grantedness and fixation of the political stage, so as to understand the entry, exit and interaction of various political agents, processes and institutions in it through a cause and effect relationship while making limited and occasional reference on the grounds and conditions of possibility of this stage. In contradistinction with this, my claim will be that far from being materially and normatively determined, the political stage is emergent only through and within relationalities that are fluid, transitive and experiential.

My aim in this study is to elaborate on the position of the volunteer in terms of its capacity to transform not only the one moment votes are casted in the voting booths but also the whole electoral process and setting into a political stage. The capacity in question is one offered by a particular mode of presence and perception carried out by the volunteer, which initially emerges out of his being allowed only to stay in the polling station and to monitor the process. Yet, once emergent, this mode cannot be reduced to these allowances, because it brings along a capacity that is not prescribed by them. This comes to suggest that the particular position of the volunteer within the electoral setup goes beyond its legal context, meaning and definition; and for the purpose of understanding it, not the question of how it is normatively described but

16

the question of how it is experienced gains relevance. In the light of this unfolding, this study has casted particular focus on the experiences of the people who volunteered in the general elections and/or reelections of 2015, and attempted to establish its narrative primarily on the basis of the patterns that emerged out of the interviews conducted with them.

The revealed patterns have been incorporated in the discussion in two regards: first, they helped me understand the multiple ocular trajectories that instantly defined the position of the volunteer in the electoral setup. By ocular trajectories, I mean different relationalities of seeing and being seen, of watching and being watched, of spectating and being spectated, of appearing and rendering apparent. I will be tracing this ocular trajectory in four conceptual sets: spectatorship, visibility, appearance and witnessing. While each trajectory occasionally challenges and complements each other, with the help of them, my aim is to arrive at a compact formulation of the practice witnessing that is characteristic to the *müşahit*. Second, the emergent patterns enabled me to understand the implications and possibilities of this position for the wider sense the respondents made of politics, in terms of expectations, demands, claims and aspiration. By intersecting these two lines, I will try to maintain the transition between the monitoring experience and the more general experience of politics in contemporary Turkey, through a structure of experience that hinges upon an ocular trajectory and with the help of the particular features of the monitoring position that have been mentioned and valued by the respondents. As a result, my assertion will be that the production of the monitoring position in the electoral setup is symptomatic of a wider mode of experiencing politics and democracy – a mode that hinges upon an ocular trajectory of experience – and at the same time indicative of the changing conditions of possibility of political experience in contemporary Turkey, as well as of the changing strategies, potentials and responses that leak into, confuse and instantly transform these conditions; which together correspond to an imagination focused primarily on the politics of visibility.

Along with the central research question of why and how election monitoring found a place in the political repertoire of Turkish citizens, the overall inquiry will search for

17

the possible answers of the following questions: What are the characteristics of the monitoring position? In what terms this position differs from those of the official polling clerks and party representatives? How do these characteristics operate in the volunteer's experience? What is performed by the volunteer in the polling station? What is the political backdrop and unfolding of the production of this position through civil initiative? What does the emergence and experience of this position have to offer for understanding the conditions, possibilities, pursuits and aspirations of political experience in contemporary Turkey? What does the case of Vote and Beyond volunteers contribute to the discussions on politics of visibility? How does it itself convey a politics of visibility?

1.4 A General Description of Vote and Beyond

Vote and Beyond is a voluntary, non-governmental and non-partizan organization established jurisprudentially in April 2014, which officially designates its mission as developing projects that serve for the establishment of an understanding of participant democracy in Turkey. The organization outlines its main concern as providing an active and productive public realm for civil citizens so as to enable them to produce an effect in the political realm.[4] Çelebi defines the organization as "*a civil domestic election monitoring mechanism; a civic movement that uses its constitutional and legal rights to observe elections on the election day*".[5]

The monitoring activity is double-staged: First is the monitoring of the ballot boxes in which civil volunteers undertake the role of observing the electoral process at around the polling stations during the election day, and second is the monitoring of the vote-counting process, in which volunteers collect the ballot box protocols and register the results in an alternative database so as to do cross tabulation with the official results in the government software. Çelebi asserts that the involvement of independent observers who have a sense of the electoral law (via the meetings, workshops and online contents

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[4] Source: Vizyon ve Misyon. Vote and Beyond. Retrieved April 4, 2017 from http://oyveotesi.org/

[5] Ibid.

of Vote and Beyond) in the election day plays a significant role in balancing the playing field of all parties as well as keeping the whole process checked and under control.

Notwithstanding this, Çelebi adds that the overall activity of Vote and Beyond is concerned not only with securing the conduction of elections, but also and even more importantly with promoting the establishment of a more suited atmosphere for the exercise and betterment of democracy, which would eventually serve as a basis for participant politics and restore people's tendency to abstain from their right to vote. This tendency, however, is not significantly explicit in the Turkish context. The official accounts of the Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey (YSK) demonstrate that voter turnout rates for the voting-eligible population between the years 2002-2015 display an increasing trend, reaching up to a figure of 89% by the local elections of March 30, 2014, which was the last electoral occasion before the large-scale involvement of Vote and Beyond in the electoral process. What motivated both the foundation of the organization and the volunteers' will to be part of it, then, seems to relate to an understanding that doesn't necessarily address voter turnout as a privileged outcome and provider of democracy and that suspects the assumed positive correlation between the two.

In terms of feasibility, the activity of the organization is both enabled and restrained by the current election law (Article 25) which states that political parties and independent candidates running in the election have the right to have official observers at the polling stations, who are authorized to object to the counting process if necessary and obtain an official copy of the protocol recorded after the counting. Therefore, while grounding it, the law also restricts the particular activity of Vote and Beyond by rendering it dependent on political parties or independent candidates for access to the process. Volunteers are given the badges of political parties or independent candidates and legally represented as observers associated with them. In official terms, the volunteers are therefore not independent as Çelebi suggests. They hold legal presence through affiliation to particular parties or candidates that are usually peripheral such as Vatan Party, Anadolu Party and Liberal Democrat Party, since mainstream parties

19

already assign their own members as observers. Yet, main opposition parties The Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) as well as the People's Democratic Party (HDP) which was not in the parliament at the time (June 2015) did agree with providing the organization with connections to help its access to polling stations when necessary, usually at the local level. Çelebi states that the official response of the ruling party, The Justice and Development Party (AKP), to this demand was "*we have our own organization, we don't see an added value*"[6].

The emphasis on independence, equidistance and bipartisanship is embedded in the mission of the organization ethically and operationally, if not formally. Çelebi maintains that communication with political parties are keenly kept at a level that does not reach up to the point of collaboration. The overall activity is based on, designed by and implemented through the law and detached from any form of political initiative. Financial independence constitutes a significant part of this attitude as well, and transparency about the source of funding is promoted. Avoiding any sort of institutional funding, the organization uses only crowd-sourcing mechanisms.

The first time that Vote and Beyond was involved in the elections was the local elections of March 2014, deploying 28,000 volunteers on the polling day. The organization was present only in İstanbul at that time. In the 2014 presidential elections the activity spread to five more cities; Ankara, Adana, Bursa, İzmir and Antalya. In the general elections of June 2015, the number of volunteers reached up to a number of 56,000 in 46 out of 81 provinces. Çelebi asserts that they were able to cover third and a half of the electoral base. In the November 2015 general reelections the participation remained steady, with 57,000 volunteers in 43 provinces and 168 counties.[7]

The evaluation report published in the official website of the organization in October 2015 which was based on the feedbacks the organization received from approximately

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Source: Geçmiş Seçimler. Vote and Beyond. Retrieved April 4, 2017 from http://oyveotesi.org/gecmis-secimler

10.700 volunteers that participated in the general elections of June 7 suggests particular findings upon the profile of the volunteers: according to the report, the gender distribution of the volunteers were 51% female and 49% male at the time. In terms of age distribution, the most crowded age interval was 31-45 which constituted 40% of the volunteers, and it was followed by the interval 18-30, corresponding to 37% of the volunteers. 21% of the volunteers were between the ages 46-60 and only 2% of them were above 60. The level of education among the volunteers demonstrates particularly high trends, with 65% holding undergraduate, %18 masters and 5% graduate degrees. Whereas 11% of the volunteers were high school graduates and 1% were middle school graduates, none was primary school graduate. (Oy ve Ötesi 2015: 22) The regional analyses suggest that 53% of the volunteers took part in the monitoring of the elections in Marmara Region, followed by 14% in Central Anatolia, 13% in Aegean Region, 10% in Mediterranean Region, 5% in Southeastern Anatolia, %3 in Black Sea Region and 2% in Eastern Anatolia. 66% of the volunteers aggregated in the three major cities of Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir, whereas 29% were in other metropolises and 5% were in the remaining cities. (Oy ve Ötesi 2015: 20) 66% of the volunteers monitored the ballot boxes in city centers, 32% undertook monitoring duty in nearby cities and only 2% were present in villages. (Oy ve Ötesi 2015: 23)

The survey was repeated for the volunteers of the reelections of November 1, and little difference was observed in terms of demographic profile. Compared to June 7, participation of women increased, reaching up to a ratio of 59% of the total participants, while that of men corresponded to 41%. Age distribution remained almost steady, and so did the distribution in terms of level of education. One diverging trait was the scarce and yet emerging participation of primary school graduates, which constituted 0.4% of the overall participants. In terms of location, even though %3 of the volunteers who previously monitored the elections in city centers shifted to nearby cities, attendance in villages remained the same. (Oy ve Ötesi 2015a: 21-22)

The findings suggest that the average volunteer profile of Vote and Beyond is highly-educated, urban dweller and close to middle ages. They also indicate that even though

the activity is able to reach the majority of the locations where electorate population is intense, it fails to achieve presence outside of cities.

1.5 Methodology

Since the study is concerned with understanding how the particular experiences of volunteers reconstruct the monitoring position so as to include it to their political repertoire, personal narratives on the issue are needed in order to make up the data from which the analysis will be extracted. This need oriented the study towards the employment of qualitative methodologies that mainly draw on semi-structured in-depth interviews during data collection. Within the scope of the study, 30 in-depth interviews have been conducted with people who volunteered for the 2015 general elections and/or reelections as part of Vote and Beyond. Only volunteers who have taken part in the 2015 general re/elections have been addressed, because the contrast between the contextual backdrops of the two elections are apt to display diverging traits in terms of the perception and performance of the activity by the volunteers, and in that sense, to diversify the findings of the study. They are also the two elections in which participation as observers was the highest, since before the organization was hardly settled and known. In the process that followed 2015, the only electoral occasion was that of the referendum in April 2017, in which Vote and Beyond decided not to conduct monitoring activity with civil witnesses but encourage the volunteers to subscribe to an official party and take part directly in the election board[8]. While explaining why they decided to do so, the president of Vote and Beyond, Gözde Elif Soytürk noted the following in an interview[9]:

> When we first started this, civil observation (müşahitlik) was little known. This is actually the duty of political parties. Our volunteers no longer feel the need to tell then "Let's do it that way". Everybody can individually apply to political parties and undertake monitoring duty with their badges. Instead

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[8] Source: Oy ve Ötesi Referandumda Müşahitlik Yapmayacak. (2016, February 12). *Diken*. Retrieved March 25, 2017 from http://www.diken.com.tr/oy-ve-otesi-musahitligi-16-nisandaki-referandumda-olmayacak/

[9] Source: Oy ve Ötesi Sandık Güvenliği için Nasıl Çalışacak. (2017, April 14). *Sözcü*. Retrieved June 14, 2017 from http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2017/dunya/oy-ve-otesi-sandik-guvenligi-icin-nasil-calisacak-1792786/

of obtaining these badges from parties and handing them to the volunteers ourselves, we called everybody to go monitor directly through the parties. And as far as we could keep track, the people who volunteered in the former elections will do so.

Yet, underlying this is also a structural change, in the sense that Supreme Electoral Council (YSK) authorized only ten political parties to assign observers to the polling stations in the referendum[10], while previously there was no such prerequisite and even independent candidates could assign their own observers, and Vote and Beyond was predominantly working with parties and candidates that are peripheral.

Since the study is not concerned with measuring the particular characteristics of volunteers or establishing an analysis based on positing these as independent variables that might relate to a further set of dependent variables; but with operationalizing the patterns that emerge out of the interviews and that are not prescribed, no demographic prerequisite has been set for the selection of respondents apart from their participation in the elections as civil observers. The first cycle of respondents has been reached through the social media platforms of Middle East Technical University due to its benefits in terms of feasibility, and was mainly composed of university students between the ages 18-30. In the aftermath, snowball sampling has been used and through the guidance of former respondents, the second cycle was attempted to involve respondents with different age and occupation profiles, not so as to posit demographic prerequisites, but in order to enrich the narratives and accordingly increase the possibility of encounter with more unique takes on the matter. The questions directed to the respondents have been designed to include not only the process of their involvement in the activity carried out by Vote and Beyond but also the particular ways they consider to be related with politics. The questions of how and why they decided to undertake the role of civil witnesses in the elections were opened up through primarily discussing their definition and idea of the political, the ways through which they experience politics and their evaluation of themselves as political subjects, as well as their political histories. Transition to the case of monitoring the elections was

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[10] Source: Referandumda Sandık Kurullarına Üye Verebilecek 10 Parti. (2017, February 11). *Yeni Şafak*. Retrieved March 25, 2017 from http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/referandumda-sandik-kurullarina-uye-verebilecek-10-parti-2611492

managed in the light of this narrative on political experience. This was a particularly important choice, in the sense that in order to sketch the contemporary political context of Turkey, the study has relied solely on how respondents perceived, interpreted and made sense of the socio-political processes that characterize *their* encounter and relation with political figures, policies, social tensions and so forth; rather than formulating a political analysis on its own. The interviews then concentrated particularly on the monitoring experience of the respondents, and touched upon instances like how they introduced themselves to the state officials and party representatives at around the ballot boxes, how they got along with them, what duty they carried out during the elections day, how they managed to intervene with the procedure when they spotted an irregularity, how they interacted with the electorate and what kind of observations they made about the officials, party representatives, the electorate and the election process in total; which simultaneously yielded to the discussion of the overall experience in terms of sentiments, opinions, expected or unexpected encounters and evaluations of political effectiveness or insufficiency on smaller and larger scales.

Within a range of 30 respondents, 16 of them were female whereas 14 were male. The majority of the respondents (24 in total) aggregated in the age interval 18-30 whereas 5 were in the interval 31-45 and 1 in 46-60. All of the respondents resided in Ankara, but not all of them monitored the elections in Ankara. Among them, 24 undertook monitoring duty in Ankara, 3 in İstanbul, 1 in Bursa, 1 in Zonguldak and 1 in Samsun. Whereas the majority of the respondents (20) were students of all degrees, 4 were academicians, 3 were civil servants, 2 were private sector employees and 1 was a retiree.

The profile of the respondents, in that sense, is slightly younger than the profile of volunteers extracted by the organization through feedback surveys, while the other demographic features were more or less parallel. This is a consequence of beginning data collection within a setting that bears a particular demographic character: It was mainly and inevitably students that I was able to reach through the social media platforms of Middle East Technical university, and even though I made an effort to

look for more diverse profiles in the second cycle of respondents by particularly asking the respondents whether their acquaintances who would agree to interview were in a different age interval or not, this was seldom the case. Not only the age interval but also the political alignment of the respondents was somewhat similar. All of the respondents were either critical or opponents of the government in varying regards and degrees, and would consider themselves to be standing on the left or central left of the political spectrum. Due to the same challenges that emerge out of snowball sampling and the fact that the practice already appealed to a specific profile, I was not able to reach out to people with more diverse profiles.

The conclusion borne in the study is therefore reflective of the ways through which a relatively young group of citizens, who dwell in urban areas; who are in some way uncomfortable with the political environment in Turkey; and the majority of which are students, relates to visibility politics and generates political experiences in response.

1.6 Limitations

A major drawback that was frequently encountered during the interviews and their latter analysis was the hardship both the respondents and myself bore while trying to put together the experiences of 2015 within the sociopolitical conjuncture of 2017. The two time periods seemed to be unbridgeable not only because in between them immense sociopolitical transformations took place in Turkey, such as: the suspension of the Kurdish resolution process shortly after the June 7 elections and the criminalization of all sorts of pro-Kurdish movements, culminating in the detention of a vast number of pro-Kurdish politicians including the co-chairs and parliament members of the political party HDP who constitutes 10% of the parliament; the routinization of suicide bombings in multiple cities of Turkey starting from July 2015; a coup attempt in July 2016 and the concurrent declaration of state of emergency which has been extended three times and is still in force, followed by the dismissal of hundreds of thousands of people including a vast number of opponents by statutory degrees which all together implied the explicit and profound narrowing of political sites and imaginations especially for the opponents; but also because they are

analytically incompatible in the sense that while the study was initially designed with the attempt of understanding experiences of democracy and democratic experiences, the contemporary condition is characterized by the suspension of democracy, not only figuratively or de facto but also officially and de jure, by the existing state of emergency. I can't help but consider these as factors that might affect the accurateness and scope of the findings of this study, and act as a limitation.

Yet, this complication also bears a certain function in terms of foreshadowing the contextual and circumstantial embeddedness of visibility politics with regard to changing environments of democracy, and even though this does not completely fall into the designated scope and concern of the study, it provides space for further elaboration and reflexivity.

1.7 A Brief Roadmap

The inquiry I will be presenting will employ a number of empirical, theoretical and conceptual tools simultaneously and investigate how they relate to each another at particular instances. In that, it will be structured in a way that does not separate but bridges the empirical material at hand with the theoretical and conceptual framework that is considered most relevant. In developing the central argument of the thesis, two guiding questions will be at work: My initial concern will be to understand how the practice of election monitoring relates to people's mode of experiencing politics prior to the actual undertaking of the monitoring duty. Deriving from this point, in Chapter II, I will start the discussion by elaborating on how the respondents themselves define their relationship and experience of what they understand from politics. The patterns revealed by the interviews, as I will try to demonstrate, will lead me towards an ocular trajectory of experience that characterizes respondents' relation to politics in the everyday context, in the electoral context and partly in the monitoring context. The primary conceptual tool that I will make use of so as to understand this predominant ocular trajectory will be the notion of spectatorship, and by referring to the theoretical framework offered by Jeffrey Edward Green in which he suggests an understanding of contemporary democracy within an "ocular paradigm" in contradistinction with the

conventional approaches that work through a vocal one, I will argue that spectatorship is inscribed in various sorts of political experience and political encounter in the present-day, including electoral processes.

The second guiding question that complements this point will ask what the volunteer performs in his/her monitoring activity so as to complement or add to this mode of experiencing politics, which will constitute the main body of my inquiry. In order to be able to answer this question, I will on the one hand carry out a rather abstract discussion that is concerned with how to locate the civil monitor in the relationalities of seeing and being seen, and on the other hand detect, sort and relate the particular features of the monitoring position to which the respondents attached importance. In other words, while trying to understand how the monitoring activity both reproduces and transforms the spectatorship inscribed in everyday political experience, I will communicate the empirical findings of the interviews with the bodies of thought that propose modalities of seeing and being seen including but not limited to spectatorship. Empirical findings include (1) the most valued features of the monitoring position according to the respondents, such as impartiality, volunteerism and lawfulness, which seemed to urge the respondents to define monitoring as a 'sterile' way of maintaining politics; (2) the evaluations of the respondents of the political atmosphere that characterizes contemporary Turkey such as social polarization and political narrowing; and (3) how respondents make sense of the encounters and interactions they were involved in during their monitoring duty, such as address and response and laying of claim to the electoral space. I will argue that the degree of relevance of these elements to the monitoring experience of the respondents are occasional, implying that they are operational in particular instances of their position in the electoral setup as a monitor, and that these instances can be sorted in terms of the volunteer's mode of seeing and being seen with reference to what he/she sees and how he/she is seen. It is in this sense that I will introduce the theoretical tools I will be making use of throughout the thesis, such as the framework of theatre studies, the framework of Green on the politics of candor, the Foucauldian framework on visibility and politics, the Arendtian framework on appearance and politics, the framework of Butler on the bodily dimension of appearance, and a compiled framework on witnessing. These frameworks are chosen

for the conceptual tools they offer which bear explanatory relevance in understanding the empirical findings through a lens that connects politics and the experience of politics in ocular terms; and even though their implications are not always compatible, they are capable of informing each other, and I will invest my inquiry in the possibilities they offer.

In the light of these insights, in the second half of Chapter II, I will try to understand how the monitor as spectator resembles to and yet differs from the citizen as spectator. In that, to have a better sense of the term, I will trace the application and employment of spectatorship in its natural habitat, that of theatre. The discussion on theatrical spectator will equip me with the concept of aesthetic distance, which simultaneously constitutes both the spectator and the actor, and renders the very emergence of the theatrical act. In my inquiry, the concept of aesthetic distance will imply being free of constraining and constrained identities, and be used to demonstrate why the position of the civil monitor differs from those of the official polling clerks and party representatives. I will then move on with portraying how Green operationalizes the spectatorship inscribed in daily political action as a source of empowerment and develops a political project of candor, whose essential idea is to deprive political leaders and elites of control over their public visibility. I will be making use of his framework so as to cover one aspect of the monitoring position: its entry in and intervention with a space whose visibility is controlled, managed and already predesignated. In that, as I will argue, the monitoring position shares common grounds with the implications of candor, and I will try to sketch these commonalities through the findings of the interviews. Spectatorship, both in the theatrical sense and in the sense Green makes us of the term, is of descriptive relevance with the volunteer's position only in a limited extent, for while it provides a ground on which his activity of seeing can be elaborated, it falls short of meeting the further activity he carries out: that of being seen.

Deriving from this point, in Chapter III, I will have a closer look in the notion of visibility, particularly through its employment in the works of Michel Foucault. My aim in this chapter is to demonstrate the interlock of visibility with the fundamental

tools of social theory, such as power, subjectivity and politics. In that, I am interested in addressing visibility not as an attribute but an achievement, implying that visibility is already always a field of struggle that is both governing and governed. The insights provided by this discussion will enable me to identify the visibility of the volunteer in the electoral setup with regard to the regime of visibility according to which he achieves this visibility, once again through the findings of the interviews. I will then incorporate the two particular concepts informed and laid out by the Foucauldian conception of visibility, those of surveillance and sousveillance. This will provide the basis of not only conceiving the looking of the volunteer as a gaze but also understanding the instant transformation of the electoral setting into a space of surveillance and one of sousveillance. The material from which I will trace these instances will be the patterns extracted from the narratives of the respondents, particularly those upon the relationships borne by them with the rest of the polling clerks as well as with the electorate. While the conception of visibility as such will cover yet another dimension of the *performance* of the monitoring position, it will fall short of describing how it is *performatively* acted upon. The Foucauldian framework will help me understand how the monitoring activity and monitoring position interact with the normative fiats and hegemonic discourse that characterizes citizens' relation to politics in contemporary Turkey, but will say little about how it resonates intersubjectively, in the micro level of the polling station and between the people who actually meet the monitors during the election day, which is a resonation, as I will argue, with consequences not necessarily covered by the insights provided by Foucault. In other words, the volunteer, as I will argue, not only becomes visible but also appears, and appearance have repercussions that are slightly different than those of visibility, which will be my point of departure in Chapter IV.

In Chapter IV, I will be dwelling on the notion of appearance by tracing it mainly in the works of Hannah Arendt. What Arendt proposes is an understanding of power and politics that utterly diverges from that of Foucault, but visibility is equally a central concern in it. In understanding visibility, however, Arendt invests in a capacity to appear along with an achievement to be visible, and this capacity underpins the essence of her envisagement of politics. Arendt's framework will be of particular importance

in outlining that the volunteer in the electoral setup not only addressed but also was responded, and I will be communicating this by reinvesting the electoral space as a 'space of appearance' in the sense Arendt makes of term, in which people could appear to each other as equal citizens. This public character was quite emergent in the narratives of the respondents, and foreclosed that at stake was not only a matter of achieving visibility with regard to a regime of appearance but an aspiration to appear with regard to fellow citizens, before and beyond private and social identities. Later in the same chapter, I will be opening up the notion of appearance by incorporating in it a bodily dimension through the framework of Judith Butler. Butler's contribution to the discussion will be providing an occasion in which the rather abstract notion of appearance can be put in more informed terms and in which the claim that 'the body – even when devoid of speech and action – is a political signifier' can be made. In that, I am interested in addressing the presence of the volunteer within the electoral setting not merely as a legal and structural allowance but more importantly as a political medium that signifies and articulates the right and freedom to appear. On the matter, Butler writes:

> The freedom to appear is central to any democratic struggle, which means that a critique of the political forms of appearance, including forms of constraint and mediation, through which any such freedom can appear, is crucial to understanding what that freedom can be and what interventions are required (2015: 55).

In that, an additional contribution of Butler is the readdress of space of appearance as a space of constraint, mediation and contestation no less than a space of plurality, equality and address and response. Body's appearance therefore acquires a performative character, in the sense Butler makes use of the term 'performativity', because by appearing, it lays claim on the public space and reinvests its public character. The reinvestment is a relevant theme for the volunteer as well, first because his position was created through civil initiative when there was no such position that appeared, and second because it is through his watching and being watched that the electoral setting becomes a spectatorial stage. As grounding as it is, Butler's appreciation of body's political signification is highly tied to the contentious character of the space to which relates. In trying to understand what the body performs, she

usually focuses on the body in the backdrop of a space over which a hegemonic struggle takes place. This is a limitation to the case of the volunteer, in the sense that the space wherein his body rests is one that is suspended in terms of hegemonic struggle, at least in normative sense. This is not to suggest that I overlook the constitutive hegemonic struggle that resonates with the idea of elections, but that in its operationalization, the electoral setting is one in which all political forces, identities and relations of power are hypothetically and legally put on hold, leaving room for contention only in a latent backdrop. The question of what the body can perform when contention is ruled out becomes relevant at this point, which will bring me to the final ocular trajectory within I will eventually locate the position of the volunteer.

What I will try to attempt until this point will be to operationalize an ocular trajectory in understanding the monitoring position that bears instances of spectatorship, surveillance, sousveillance and (bodily) appearance. In doing so, I will incorporate in the discussion the various principles, justifications, features and repercussions of the monitoring position such as impartiality, lawfulness, re-presentation, public opposition, public space, address and response, solidarity, civil initiative and citizenship; all of which are extracted from the narratives of the respondents. As such, my inquiry will bear both a theoretical and an analytical endeavor, in the sense that while on the one hand I will make use of a handful of theoretical tools in the establishment of my narrative, on the other I will try to connect them with the material at hand whose unfoldings are not limited with the context of elections and which occasionally provides instances through the experience of politics in contemporary Turkey can be channeled towards the inclinations and tendencies that make up the political experience it yields to in return. In that, the inquiry will at times not help but find itself in a mode of narration that is intricate and tangled. In the last chapter, my aim will be to wrap up the arguments that precede, in positing the monitoring position as a witnessing one.

In Chapter V, I will try to demonstrate how witnessing bears instances of spectatorship, surveillance, sousveillance and appearance by concurrently adding to them. In that, I will be mainly drawing on the witness's presence as an exclusive force: What

distinguishes witnessing from further modes of coming to perceive things, I will assert, is the witness's presence: the witness not only sees, he is also seen. His visibility is just as much at stake as the visibility he attests to. It is not only that he is subject to spectate, view and see that which is made visible before his eyes, but also and more importantly that he appears, i.e., his presence occupies a space within the grid of visibility. This presence is a moral engagement to the world, and in that, witnessing's centrality in the monitoring position is more than a derivative strategy to be passed over. It is rather an unfolding that provides space for the elaboration of an alternative mode of relating to politics via visibility and of claiming visibility via politics.

Lastly, in Conclusion, I will put in perspective the implications of the monitoring position that are extracted from the narratives of the respondents, of which I will make occasional and argumentative use in the previous chapters, so as to reveal that the particular activity of monitoring the polling stations is apt to incite a political imagination that offers more than an official democratic project of bureaucratic alliance between civil society and state apparatuses, or a reactionary civil response to the ballot box rhetoric that dominates public discourse. These implications are indicative of what comes to be understood from politics in the contemporary moment in Turkey and of the aspirations and pursuits saturated in it. The patterns I will discuss in this regard are sterile politics, impartiality and anonymity in politics, re-presentation, responsibility and participation without involvement. Second, I will try to give a more complete picture of how I relate the various concepts and theoretical frameworks of which I make use to each other and to my questions. Lastly, I will discuss whether what I propose in this inquiry as a way of approaching to politics is a feasible way of maintaining politics in contemporary Turkey, given the sociopolitical transformations that took place within two years which brought about substantial changes in citizens' access to and assessment of politics.

CHAPTER II

SPECTATORSHIP AND POLITICS

This thesis adopts the view that in order to understand a political manifestation of some sort, that is, to understand the ways through which people articulate, maintain and produce politics within a given context, one might need to look at how they make sense of and *experience* politics in the first place. This is an analytically and theoretically preferable approach, because it helps one discover the relationalities that render and that are embedded in not only the political experience of concern but also the very notions of politics and experience. As long as the brackets imposed on politics by the "damagingly narrow and poverty-stricken view", as put by Scott (1986), are lifted; it becomes more than accurate to claim that beyond immediate connotations like governmental processes, state affairs, bureaucratic structures, public policies, competing or allying group interests and collective occurrences; politics comes to refer in the most fundamental sense to the question of how people relate and want to relate to the world and to other people. And this question is necessarily interwoven with how people experience the world and their togetherness with other people, which informs what they are capable of experiencing in return, for in order for an experience to be identified as an experience and not as a coincidental encounter with flowing stimuli, it needs to be made sense of in the light of former experiences. In order for an experience to assume a form of experience, it should reiterate the unity of experiences. And an imaginable disunity opened up by experience can achieve this only because it disunites what was previously united through experience, that is, because it takes reference and derives from the unity of experiences moulded in one's personal history. In their connection with how people relate and desire to relate to the world and to other people, experience is political, and politics is experiential.

Suggested by this rather abstract discussion is nothing new to social and political thought. It is what underlies various thinkers' effort to make sense of politics through particular modes and categories of experience, be it in the form of meanings, of norms or of material reproduction of life through labour. My point in conveying it is not to claim a novel perspective, but rather to underscore its embeddedness in everyday context, so as to justify why while trying to make sense of the particular position produced within the context of elections by Vote and Beyond volunteers and to understand how they experienced it, I found it relevant to incorporate the discussion of how they felt themselves to be related to politics in everyday life in contemporary Turkey. In other words, it is what motivated me in my attempt to understand the 'müşahit' not solely as an identity permitted by law but more importantly as a position that works through and reinvests a particular political imagination that interacts with the limits and possibilities of relating to politics in everyday experience. It is also the reason why during the interviews, before getting to discuss their monitoring experience, I first asked the respondents to reflect on how they felt to be related to politics, what they understood from politics and how they perceived their engagement with politics. It was striking to find out that the dominant way through which the respondents chose to describe their daily experience of politics would later on underpin and open up how they perceived the monitoring position they overtook in the electoral context. A pattern that repetitively emerged out of the responses given to the above mentioned questions manifested a practice that underscores the transition between experience and politics, and revealed that a particular mode of experiencing politics in daily life, quite apt to go unnoticed or be found irrelevant, is also a primary element that characterizes the position of the volunteer in the electoral setup; in a designated occasion that is not so 'daily'. The pattern in question is spectatorship.

Among the respondents to whom I addressed questions about how they related to politics and how they perceived their political activeness, only one defined herself as politically disengaged. All the rest, though with changing degrees, considered themselves to be politically active and engaged. When I followed up by asking through what kinds of activities or involvements they defined this engagement, apart from the

two who mentioned their affiliation to political organizations or networks and defined themselves as activists, the majority responded as follows:

> I keep my ear open. I always follow how it goes with social situations and what's up with politics.
>
> Well, if you mean political activism, I am not an activist. But of course, I am politically active. I mean, I look at things from a certain perspective, see them in a certain way.
>
> I would define myself as politically active, especially when compared with my generation. I always watch what happens.
>
> Well, I study Political Science and Public Administration, so yes, I am engaged with politics. Not in the sense of party affiliation or activism, but I keep a close watch of what happens in the country, I follow at least 4-5 different media channels a day.
>
> I am not politically active in the conventional sense, but I can claim to be politically active, because I define it as the ability or effort to see things from a wider perspective.
>
> To me, politics is less about setting my mind on an issue and going hard on it than a state of seeing, the ability of seeing things clearly. I think the latter is lost in conventional modes of relating to politics.
>
> I was once affiliated to an organization, but now I don't have a such connection. I wanted to step aside, distance myself and see the picture through a broader perspective. Now I rather watch and keep track of what happens, and try to understand.

In almost all responses, a general tendency to identify political engagement with a particular openness in terms of perception manifested itself. These responses were almost always accompanied with the introductory phrase of "*I am not a member of any organization or a network of some sort, or I am not an activist, but –* " in the beginning. The "but" in between divides an assumption and a justification, and yet bridges them simultaneously by implicitly signaling the ways through which politics is experienced in everyday life. The immediate need to justify the disengagement with any political organization or network, or form of activism and the urge to compensate it with a formulation of politics defined primarily in terms of watchfulness are symptomatic of particular conceptions on democracy, politics and citizenship: First, the majority of respondents attribute meaningful political experience to affiliation with or involvement in political organizations, networks, initiatives and activism that are

either secondary to or at odds with the conventional mechanisms, institutions or processes of democracy. Even in the explicit context of the interview, none of them mentioned voting, for instance, and its ties with representative democracy as a mechanism through which they felt involved in the political life, or made sense of their citizenship as a source of empowerment embodying the ability to author the laws under which they live, as conventional wisdom would suggest. Second, the repetition of the first phrase before the "but" and its complementation with the "but" on many occasions were indicative of a particular guilt borne by the respondent due to being unable to realize the 'meaningful' ways of prevailing in the political life. Yet, this didn't necessarily mean withdrawal from it. What compensated the guilt was what followed the "but": the state of watchfulness, of having an eye on, of keeping track, of following, of keeping the ear open, of being aware and as an inclusive term of them all, of spectatorship. The spectating position did not prevent them from identifying themselves as individuals inside of the political life. On the contrary, it justified why they are still engaged, active and involved. Betokened in this is the conclusion that spectatorship underpinned the majority of the modes through which volunteers related to politics, and itself emerged as a particular form of political experience. Put in more concrete terms, this is also the particular inference of Green when he asserts that:

> The vast majority of our political experience, whether voter or non-voter, is not spent engaged in such action and decision-making, but rather watching and listening to others who are themselves actively engaged. Such spectatorship is inscribed in the very nature of political action itself (2010: 4).

When the conversation was shifted towards the context of elections and questions were focused rather on the electoral experiences of respondents as electorate as well as on their perception of elections, none of them seemed to attribute exclusive meaning or value to elections or defined it as a decisive instance in which they felt particularly empowered. They did not, however, discarded the elections either. To almost all, even to those who excluded elections from the political imagination they embraced and who considered it as incompatible with the political methods of which they were fond to pursue, elections were a political space from which withdrawal is hardly meaningful, at least in the contemporary circumstances of Turkey. How they related to this political

space, however, did not necessarily hinge upon the one moment in which they casted their vote. While the respondents were recalling the elections in which they took part only as electorate, the majority of their narratives turned out to deliberate not on the exercise of voting, but on the latter instance of watching the results on TV. To many, the significance of elections emerged out of their capacity to 'display', that is, to demonstrate, manifest and visualize the political positioning in the society. What seemed to occur to them on the matter was not their capacity to appear in the electoral realm – even when they regularly voted – but elections' capacity to render people's tendencies visible. A respondent put this as follows:

> I can't really say whether elections matter to me or not. To some extent they do and to some, they do not. What strikes me most in electoral processes is the ability they provide in terms of seeing the general inclinations of the people. There is data at hand, just by sitting in your living room you can see how people are politically aligned. I really like opening up the map and looking at the distribution of votes one by one. The data is rapidly and well visualized. Seeing the simultaneous change in results, watching them shift, these are by themselves quite dramatic events, regardless of whether I trust them or not.

It seemed that for the respondents, spectatorship, the practical manifestation of relating to politics in everyday circumstances, continued to be effective in making sense of and envisaging electoral occasions as well. Spectatorship is also what fundamentally underpins the principle on which the position of the volunteer in the electoral setup is based, both legally and experientially. While article 25 of the election law describes the assignment of the müşahit as 'monitoring the ballot box procedures', when I first asked the respondents what their duty was as a volunteer, and what they particularly carried out in the polling stations during the election day, after a brief attempt to name a few assignments such as checking the seals of the ballots, keeping a record during the vote count and collecting the signed final reports, many of them would give up and say: "Well, what I did was basically to watch the whole process". Watching the process, however, is not an assignment exclusively reserved for the volunteer. In this, he is accompanied by a board usually composed of seven people, including state officials and party representatives. Why would, then, a practice that adds nothing to the political repertoire of the volunteer; and a position that practically adds nothing to the functioning of the electoral setup find a place for itself in it and strike interest?

37

Why would the volunteers want to be there to carry out an activity that is already being taken care of by officials and representatives who hold authorization? What is the particular motivation of the volunteer in his desire to be there?

"I wanted to see it myself." This phrase was one that frequently popped up during most interviews as a response. The question of what there was to see often led to an instant pause. After all, the firmly architectured, systematized and routine realm of elections didn't offer much to the eye. A respondent reflected for a few seconds, and replied:

> Because we have seen many other things before, you know. Especially in the latest local elections in Ankara, we have seen sudden and bizarre changes in the results. So this time I wanted to see it myself.

It seems like for the respondent, the experiences of two temporally and contextually distinct moments in which she was diversely situated are bridgeable through a narrative of sight. In this narrative, both employments of the verb "to see" is in virtual sense: the respondent is not talking about anything she literally saw during the local elections, and neither was it the literal, objective space of the classroom and its elements such as the ballot box, the voting booth or the ballot that she wanted to see herself. Yet, by repeating the same verb to describe the experience of two distinguishable moments, the respondent implies a difference between them; a difference emerging out of the diversification not of what is performed but of how it is performed. When the question of what was there to see was directed to another respondent, in a similar fashion but with a different choice of words, he noted the following:

> The previous elections were the local ones, and we heard that it was problematic in many ways, especially in Ankara. So, this time I wanted to go and stand there all day, see what happens, watch the people. Maybe to relieve myself, I am not sure.

It unfolded from each response that even though the one distinctive moment of democratic experience, that of the elections, has in most theories come to be appreciated as a decisive occasion of people raising their voice, the majority of the

respondents I had the chance to interview with were inclined to define the various electoral occasions they attended, both as electorate and volunteer, primarily in terms of metaphors other than voice, such as those of eye and ear. Suggested in this is that the elements of spectatorship that characterize the volunteer's position in the electoral setup act in many ways in tune with the spectatorship inscribed in his daily political experience and his involvement in elections as electorate. In certain other ways, however, they also modify and expand it. The employment of the verb "to see" in the description of everyday political experience and its employment in the narration of the monitoring experience diverge from each other in terms of how they convey sight: in the former, the activity of seeing is realized from a spectating position and in the latter, it is realized through 'standing there all day', still from a spectating position but through appearing, i.e., through bodily presence in the same space with that which is seen.

One thing suggested by the double treatment of spectatorship in respondents' everyday political experience and their monitoring experience is that spectatorship, as a notion, has more to offer than its conventional attributes, and resonates with not only entitlements, but also possibilities. Nowhere is the pursuit of understanding these possibilities more relevant and insightful than in the notion's natural habitat, that of theatre. Reference to the notion's application in theatrical practice and theory is therefore informative for the attempt to extract the ways through which the volunteer's spectatorship holds the ability to modify and expand everyday political spectatorship while paralleling it.

2.1. The Paradox of Spectatorship

Reference to the domain of theatre in order to have a better sense of the notion of spectatorship would serve primarily for the purpose of understanding the spectator not descriptively as the one who watches, but relationally, as the one whose position and watching is reproduced with respect to his/her relationship with the further elements of theatre, such as the stage and the actors. One way of doing so is to contrast the classical theatrical understanding with the contemporary one in terms of how they

conceive and situate the spectator. This would help me understand the instances of spectatorship embedded in the volunteer's monitoring experience, and equip me with the concept of aesthetic distance, which would gain relevance in positioning the volunteer in the electoral setup.

In the *classical* theatrical understanding, the position of the spectator is a tricky one, because while he is that which renders theatre in the first place, once he does so, he is disembodied from the theatrical act. This is not to suggest that the theatrical act ignores the spectator, for in that it would be ignoring its own self, but to point out that the spectator should always be positioned in distance in order to let the theatrical act emerge. This distance is a central theme frequently worked on and at times corroded by theatrical and dramatic theory, but one that nevertheless prevails by virtue of the fact that it is less a matter of technicality than an issue of relationality. The distance in question is constitutive of both the theatrical act and the spectator who spectates it; and indicative of a force that separates, qualifies and disqualifies them.

The spectator is not distanced from the stage only in physical terms. The activity he carries out is also incompatible with the one taking place on stage: while the on-stage is characterized by action, the spectator is characterized by inaction, meaning that he visits the stage only as a viewer, he does not have a say in what he views and apart from turning the event into a theatrical one by being present, he does not hold any power to affect, guide and transform it. The only choice he bears would be walking out of the hall, but in that he would already step out of the space of the theatrical act, meaning that what he would achieve is not intervention with or influence over the power relation that characterizes this space but only getting out of the field of its effects, into a space he is not a spectator anymore. Immediately after the play starts, a fourth wall between the stage and the spectator emerges, producing a shield in between them that is permeable only to spectating eyes. It is in this sense that the position of the spectator defined through its distance from the stage has come to be recognized as immobile, passive and incapacitated. The spectator lacks both the knowledge and the power to be part of the play, rendering it subject to the hegemony of what he views. The distance in question, therefore, comes along with a vector of power that

subordinates the spectator to the actor and to the playing field to which he belongs. Ranciere puts this as follows:

> The paradox of the spectator is easily formulated: there is no theatre without a spectator. But according to the accusers, being a spectator is a bad thing for two reasons. First, viewing is the opposite of knowing: the spectator is held before an appearance in a state of ignorance about the process of production of this appearance and about the reality it conceals. Second, it is the opposite of acting: the spectator remains immobile in her seat, passive. To be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act (2009:2).

The classical position of the spectator is profoundly problematized by *contemporary* theatrical thought, and the question of how to situate and relate to the spectator has come to characterize its pursuits since the 1960s onwards. Underlying this is the concern of reformulating theatre as an occurrence that comes in contact with the spectator, rather than a performance laid before his eyes. The attempt to reconfigure the distance between the spectator and the playing field, i.e., the stage has manifested itself primarily in terms of rearrangements in the architecture of theatre. Conventional theatre boxes, confronting order of the seats and the idea of the fourth wall that hypothetically surrounds the open front of the stage, separating it from the spectating space have started to be abandoned, and design has been oriented rather towards the effort to render the spectator a part of the play. Polish director Jerzy Grotowski is among the outstanding figures who deserve particular address in the matter. Grotowski's plays could take place in bare yards, on dining tables or within desolated buildings that resemble a mental hospital; and in each occasion the spectator found himself situated in the corresponding position, sometimes as the guest dining on the same table, or the mentally ill sitting on his bunk bed. Along with this, Grotowski paid attention to situate the spectators in such a way to render them to see each other as well, so as to transform spectatorship into an intersubjective experience to emerge not only between the actor and the spectator but also among the spectators. As a consequence, theatrical act in Grotowski's plays became one that *lived*: the interpenetration of spectators and actors necessitated spontaneous improvisations that could not be rehearsed, pre-planned or orchestrated, implying that theatrical act *emerged* and was not merely performed; moving from a passive tense to an active one.

41

Grotowski's intervention, therefore, is directed not only towards the foundations of theatre, but towards the very position and quality of spectatorship. Şener asserts that this is an intervention that transforms the spectator into a witness (1991)[11].

Underscored in this is the reinvestment of the stage rather as a relationship; as a space that emerges in between the actor and the spectator and among the spectators, and the assertion that theatrical act is not that which takes place on a physically embedded stage, but that which comes into being in the immediate relationship between the actor and the spectator. Reconfiguration of the material supports of theatrical action and reforms over the design and architecture of theatre are relevant only insofar that they derive from this particular understanding. It is not that the technical shift is expected to bring about the emergence of theatrical action as such, it is the otherwise. The stage is not that which hosts theatrical action, but that which is constituted by theatrical action. A leading scholar of contemporary theatrical thought, Peter Brook, puts this as follows:

> I can take an empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged (1996: 7).

In that, Brook addresses the spectator not as a receiver but as the co-producer of theatre. The spectator helps the activity become a theatrical one, for without his watching, a man's walking across an empty space would be a mere walk that lacks significance. The spectator assists the elevation of the activity of walking to a dramatic incident, and only when watched by him can the man walk theatrically. Without the assistance of the spectator, the actor cannot act. Brook traces this from the French term of spectatorship, and writes:

> In the French language amongst the different terms for those who watch, for public, for spectator; one word stands out, is different in quality from the rests. *Assistance* – I watch a play: *j'assiste à une pièce*. To assist – the word is simple: it is the key (1996: 173).

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[11] The term witness here is not identical with the witnessing I will propose later. Yet, Şener's choice of this word to describe the spectator of Grotowski's theatre marks how the spectator is not always a witness, and reveals that he/she becomes one only under certain relationalities.

Recognizing the central 'role' of the spectator, however, does not necessarily imply the overcoming of the constitutive distance between him and the actor. This is a problematization particularly carried out by the Brazilian director Augusto Boal, whose theatre was utterly unsatisfied with the reformulation of spectatorship. According to Boal, spectatorship, by definition, came with connotations that cannot be transcended by conceptual, technical and spatial interventions, because inscribed in it is a type of victimhood. Boal writes:

> 'Spectator' is a bad word! The spectator is less than a man and it is necessary to humanize him, to restore to him his capacity of action in all its fullness. He too must be a subject, an actor on an equal plane with those generally accepted as actors, who must also be spectators. All these experiments of a people's theatre have the same objective – the liberation of the spectator, on whom the theatre has imposed finished visions of the world. (…) The spectators in the people's theatre (i.e., the people themselves) cannot go on being the passive victims of those images (Boal 2000: 154-5).

Boal's quarrel with the notion of spectatorship invokes his theoretical and practical effort to mobilize the spectator by providing him with the warrant of interruption. One of the most widely known forms of his methodology, that of *forum theatre* operates through this particular principle. Forum theatre is characterized by a structure in which a scene is run thoroughly once and in the end, the spectator is asked to reflect on what they saw, and on whether they agree with the state of affairs articulated in the meanwhile or not. If any of them disagrees, the scene is run once more, but this time the spectator is asked to replace the actor and allowed to guide the play as he wishes. When the spectator passes the role back to the actor, the actor is obligated to continue the play by taking up where the spectator left off, and until consensus on the narrative of the play is attained, the process is repeated for several times. Boal's theatre, therefore, works on the production of a space in which the spectator becomes the actor as well and vice versa, and underpins the emergence of a further hybrid position, a position Boal calls the "spect-actor". Boal's plays usually deploy political matters that are controversial in character, implying that his insertion of the spect-actor is an issue of expanding not only theatrical but also political possibilities. What the spect-actor of Boal watches is not mere aesthetic representation but a political argumentative discussion, and when the spectator replaces the actor, expected from him is not the

43

maintenance of theatrical performance but the ability to guide the discussion in alternative ways and expose their own point of view for further deliberation. The deliberative and dialogical nature of the relationship established between the spectator and the stage 'humanizes' the spectator, and 'restores his capacity of action'. Boal's theatre has often been addressed as 'the democratization of theatre' and as a way of using performance to make politics.

In resemblance with the volunteer in the electoral setup, Boal's spectator doesn't simply watch, but monitors the scene thoroughly; implying that even when he does not step in, he is never in a state of inaction. One of the major contributions of his thought is therefore the politicization of presence. The resulting effect of his theatre is a subjectifying one, and Boal considers both the Aristotelian catharsis and Brechtian alienation insufficient for the conduct of this task, asserting that identification with the actors followed by relief through catharsis in the former leaves the audience with an ultimate inertia; whereas the suspension of identification with the actors through alienation in the latter creates an objectifying distance between the audience and the actors, rendering the former in the mere state of watching (Boal 2000). Boal's audience is invited to establish a somewhat different relationality with what it views, and only then theatre achieves to become more than the 'imposition of the finished visions of the world'.

None of these attempts, however, while intervening with the vector of power embodied in it, are able to overcome the constitutive distance between the actor and the spectator adequately enough, due to the fact that the distance in question, as its description suggests, is not a byproduct, an unintended consequence or a misguided tradition that haunts theatre, but its constituting element. This distance is the reason why Plato discards mimesis, i.e., the imitative character of artworks including theatre, by asserting that the relationship between artistic images and reality renders art as a mere copy of the real. According to him, in a world already covered by untruthful objects, art forms which try to represent truth by bringing it into image are condemned to reproduce that which is untruthful, by virtue of the fact that what they imitate is already an imitation (Potolsky 2006). To put the assertion as such is particular to the thought

of Plato, but even without a Platonic worldview of ideas, it remains equally true that the theatrical act is not reality. A further and more fundamental aspect that distances the spectator is, therefore, the knowledge of theatre's non-reality quality. The spectator is distanced from the playing field, because he knows that what he views is not reality but a derivative of it, no matter how intensely efforts are made to bring it closer to a real occurrence.

The distance emerging out of the non-reality quality of the theatrical act, however, is not a negative but a positive force. Referred in the literature as 'the aesthetic distance', this distance not only separates theatre from reality, but also binds them together, for a distance, i.e., the extent or amount of space *between* two things, is always a parting and a uniting one. According to Şener (1991), aesthetic distance is needed in order for the spectator to distinguish real life from the artwork, and only then the artwork can leave a real effect on the spectator. If it makes a claim to reality, theatrical act loses its very essence, because this essence is characterized not by its ability to overlap with reality but by its power to create another reality while maintaining a non-reality character. Without the distance in question, the possibility of the spectator to believe in what he views is ruled out, because a theatrical act that does not aesthetically distance itself from reality is one that is either not theatrically qualified or lying.

A corresponding example to this can be extracted from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in which Gabriel Garcia Marquez tells the story of the first encounter of the people of Macondo with cinema: Dazzled by the images flowing in front of their eyes at first, in time the people get increasingly uncomfortable with spending time watching them, because they cannot help but interiorize what they attest to as the reality. Feeling frustrated, fooled and deceived, in the end they decide to stop going to see the movies, complaining that they already have enough to deal with and cannot add to it by feeling sorry for other people who instantly appear and disappear on the screen. Marquez beautifully narrates this as follows:

> They became indignant over the living images that the prosperous merchant Bruno Crespi projected in the theater with the lion-head ticket windows, for the character who had died and was buried in one film and for whose misfortune tears of affliction had been shed would reappear alive and

transformed into an Arab in the next one. The audience, who paid two cents apiece to share the difficulties of the actors, would not tolerate that outlandish fraud and they broke up the seats. The mayor, at the urging of Bruno Crespi, explained in a proclamation that the cinema was a machine of illusions that did not merit the emotional outbursts of the audience. With that discouraging explanation, many felt that they had been the victims of some new and showy gypsy business and they decided not to return to the movies, considering that they already had too many troubles of their own to weep over the acted-out misfortunes of imaginary beings (1970: 112).

The aesthetic distance is that which renders the experience of spectatorship, and only with it can the spectacle become something to relate to without immediate reactionary impulse, be it in the form of resentment or embracement. This is also the particular pursuit of Brecht in conceiving epic theatre, which is based on the employment of alienating techniques in order to constantly remind the spectator that what he is spectating is not reality. Assumed in this is that only through the aesthetic distance can the spectator engage with meaningful reflection and response generation that do not derive from or make reference to the reality at hand, and be capacitated to imagine an alternative reality that can speak differently while sharing the vocabulary of the present one. The distance, in short, while operating through a vector of power, also functions as the particular force that keeps the spectator in his seat and that empowers him, even when he is posited a passive identity devoid of action and knowledge.

2.2. The Volunteer as Spectator

The spectatorship inscribed in daily political experience and in involvement in the elections as electorate resembles the classical theatrical approach to spectatorship that revolves around the sense of 'being held before an appearance in a state of ignorance'. While making sense of political activeness in terms of watchfulness and through the aforementioned "-but" that separates this watchfulness from meaningful political action; and while appreciating elections for their capacity to display, the respondents speak from a position that distances itself from the space of action and knowledge. This space, much like a stage, is one to which they can relate only through spectating. According to the interviews, to a certain extent, so was the polling stations when they first decided to enter them as volunteers. It was more than once the case that especially

46

while speaking about the first electoral occasion in which they volunteered, the respondents were making reference to a motivation purely concerned with the desire to watch what happens in the polling stations during the election day. To some, the curiosity to watch how the voting and counting processes were performed and to see whether there really were occasions or instances open to manipulation was primarily effective in their decision to undertake this role. Two respondents put this as follows:

> I wanted to go and see it, I asked myself why I wouldn't to do that. I just wanted to stand by the polling station, look around, watch those who come and go and see what happens there.

> In deciding to volunteer, I rather wanted to see what happens in the polling stations. I wasn't really driven by the idea that 'I would do this and it would lead to somewhere'. But it is useful in this sense: it produces documents and they are recorded in history. Therefore, you get the chance to see what's going on there.

The interest in watching what happens was not only in procedural terms and the spectacle was not limited to the performance of duties. To certain respondents, not only board executives but also the electorate was a material to the eye, and the polling station was a stage hosting a circulation of actors that made instant appearances. A respondent notes this as follows:

> I like watching the people. I could not have been able watch so many people with diverse profiles in any other part of Turkey. Because, think about it, everyone in that region comes to cast their vote. It is the perfect opportunity to write a novel. They are all lined up, you look at them, at what they are doing. It was a great experience for me in that sense.

The correspondence of the volunteer with the classical spectator, however, is interrupted as much as it is maintained, particularly because he prevails within the same stage with that which he spectates. In parallel rather with the contemporary conception of the spectator in theatre, the volunteer overcomes the constitutive distance in physical terms when he steps into the polling station and stays there for the rest of the day, but overcoming this distance does not render his position identical with the ones to which action and knowledge are attributed, that is, with the positions of the official election board and the electorate who respectively hold the procedural and

applied knowledge of elections, and their materialized power in the casted vote. While it is clear that the volunteer is not in the same position with the electorate, he is not in the same position with state officials and party representatives either, even when he engages with somewhat similar and at times identical activities with them, as all of the respondents in some way put it. In the divergence of the volunteer from the remaining polling clerks, two central motivations seem to be at work: impartiality and volunteerism.

Firstly, the interviews suggest that the volunteer was not there, in the polling station, with his individual identity but as a member of a larger group towards whose principles he bore certain responsibilities. The respondents often mentioned that they were keen on getting along well with the polling clerks and maintaining their dignity all through the Election Day, particularly because beyond their individual interests or concerns, they felt to be representing there the founding value of Vote and Beyond: impartiality. All of them believed that they could leave aside their own political alignments and personal interests the moment they stepped in the polling station, and in that, their position diverged from those of the official polling clerks and party representatives. Implied by impartiality was not the same for every respondent: in conceiving it, while some were directly addressing an inclination to refrain from abiding by a political agenda of one's own; some considered it as being detached from constraints that are not directly related to party affiliation. According to some, representing a party-identity in the electoral context acted as an impediment that prevented the fair conduction of elections. Party affiliation brought about party interests, and it was possibly inevitable for them to surpass the collective and sublime interest of sustaining the fairness, equity and righteousness of elections. Many respondents expressed that they decided to volunteer in the elections because they did not have confidence in part representatives' ability to suspend their party-identities during the electoral process. Among them, one put this as follows:

> Actually, what we did there was already being done by the representatives of the political parties, even way before. But party affiliation causes problems. It's a little like give-and-take, like 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'. In some occasions, they can shut their eyes to what is going on. I doubt that party representatives are 100% independent.

48

The impartiality of their monitoring position, on the other hand, held a balancing value that countered the drawbacks of partisanship. A respondent, for instance, put this as follows:

> It is important that Vote and Beyond is an independent platform. The polarization in the society is at the highest level and when a political party enters the play the people immediately become skeptical. You assume that there might be a manipulation, because they are sided, they are partisan. No matter how objective they claim to be, you can never know how they would position themselves. Vote and Beyond was running counter to that. When I went to the workshops before the election day, there were people with all kinds of political alignment. It was an independent platform that didn't pursue political goals, at least not directly. And protecting and observing something without a political agenda was beautiful.

Some respondents, on the other hand, discarded the official polling clerks and party representatives not because they believed that their identities would constrain the proper conduct of elections, but because they believed that their identities were already constrained. To them, being assigned to a polling station by the state or a political party was not sufficient for the making of a truthful motivation to be there, because it lacked will and aspiration. While the official polling clerks were paid for their service during the election day, the party representatives were obliged to be there as part of their party duty. Neither of them, therefore, had enough of a reason to internalize their position and the value embedded in it. The volunteer, in contrast, *chooses* to be there, implying that he spends his entire day in the polling station without expecting any sort of benefit in return, apart from the satisfaction of contributing to the security and dignity of elections. The contrast between the volunteer and the remaining polling clerks were accordingly quite explicit during the election day. Many respondents asserted that the polling clerks seemed to be completely unaware of the electoral procedures and their legal implications, and thus lacking the necessary equipment to monitor the process and take initiative when needed; and more importantly, nor did they have an interest in doing so. According to the respondents, the polling clerks failed to fulfill their task adequately because they were unconcerned, uninformed and indifferent; and this was a direct result of the motivation that dragged them to the polling station. The volunteer, on the other hand, *volunteers*; which by definition means that he/she willingly undertakes the requirements and burdens of his position, and therefore invests in his

activity a certain authenticity. A respondent, for instance, narrated this briefly as follows:

> In the end, the others go there either as part of their duty in the party or for the purpose of getting paid, they have to go even when they don't want to. It becomes clear that they don't want to be there. It was common that they arrived late in the morning, they occasionally left the polling station and hung around, they counted the hours so that their job is done. They seemed uninvolved. There, in contrast, it was only us, the volunteers, who felt that spirit.

It follows that even when they do not pursue a party-oriented political agenda, the polling clerks are not impartial, because the mode through which they relate to their duty is not devoid of immediacy, that is, of the immediacy of their identity outside of the polling station. In either case, the polling clerk is unable to sustain an aesthetic distance within his position in the electoral setup, implying that he depends on and takes reference from the bondages of the reality that is already at hand, which in turn deprives the stage of the polling station of the capacity of to generate a reality of its own. The volunteer, on the other hand, through his voluntary and impartial involvement in the occasion, conceives both his spectatorship and the spectacle he spectates in terms of a reality in excess, a reality that can speak differently while sharing the vocabulary of the given one.

To conclude, the volunteer's spectatorship, while overcoming the physical distance that has come to characterize citizens' relation to the electoral setup in conventional terms, operates through an aesthetic distance that rests in between the volunteer and the electoral executives. Involvement in the electoral setup as such interferes with its conventional configuration as an explicit setting established through politically bounded identities and elements, and reinvests it as a space to emerge *between* the actor and the spectator and *among* the spectators. While the material supports of this space remains to be hardly open to modification, its meaning and power dynamics turn out to be contested. Suggested by this capacity to contest and by the effect produced through the particular position of the volunteer is that spectatorship is a notion worthy of attention in not only understanding, but also and more importantly renewing the political experience of democracy. This is an unfolding particularly valued by Jeffrey

Edward Green, who develops a political analysis and project out of the dominance of the theme of spectatorship in democracy and politics. In the following section, I will briefly sketch his analysis of democracy which he reconstructs through an ocular paradigm and portray his proposition of a model that is based on the possibilities opened up by this paradigm, in order to point out the relevance of the case of this study to the discussions of democracy and politics in a more explicit way.

2.3. Jeffrey Edward Green and Democracy as Spectatorship

In his book "Eyes of the People: Democracy in the Age of Spectatorship", Green departs from a problematization of the widely-accepted paradigm that conceives democracy as an empowerment of people's voice in most theories. In response to this tendency, which he calls 'the vocal paradigm of democracy', he argues that the everyday experience of politics and democracy is less related with people's voice than their eyes, implying that most citizens engage with politics as spectators with their eyes instead of as decision-makers with their voice. Underlying this assertion is an argument that attaches criticality to the rise of mass communication technologies, especially of television, in the sense that they "fundamentally altered the conduct of political life by cementing spectatorship into the very structure of daily political experience" (Green 2010: 4). A consequence of this characteristic to modern democracies is the prevention of rotation between actor and spectator and the rendering of a rather semi-permanent spectating class that watches a much smaller group of political elites. Green notes that while in more ancient forms of democracy, particularly in Athens, the spectating citizen could easily step forward and become a political actor; today's political spectators "are addressed in ways that make it impossible to respond directly and extremely difficult to respond at all" (ibid). For Green, political spectatorship "is not simply the normal correlate of political action, but a problem that indicates the distinctive difficulties besetting democratic life at the dawn of twenty-first century" (ibid). Among them is the consequence that the current form of the relationship between actor and spectator "threatens the political equality prized by democracy" (ibid).

51

2.3.1 The Ocular Paradigm of Democracy

Notwithstanding this, Green posits the ocular model of democracy underlying in our daily political experience not as a deviation to be overcome but a description to be worked through. His political project, in other words, is based not on pathologizing spectatorship but on diagnosing it, so as to render it possible to approach "to the collective concept of the People from an ocular rather than a vocal perspective" (ibid. 5). Embedded in this is the recognition that the vocal perspective falls short of manifesting itself in the experience of the politics by everyday citizens, and the premise that despite the impasses and complications borne by the current ocular perspective, "there are empowered and unempowered forms of looking, and it is possible to seek empowerment in ocular terms" (ibid. 10). According to Green, the distance between the actor and the spectator, i.e., the political leader and the citizen, in other words, is an aesthetic one that bears potentials for meaningful political activity. His concern is therefore not dissolving the distance, but modifying the vector of power attached to it.

There are three fundamental variables with regard to which Green contrasts the conventional vocal model with the ocular model he proposes: object of popular power, organ of popular power and the embodied critical ideal. According to Green, in the vocal model, the object of popular power is law, in the form of statues and norms that shape public life; whereas the organ of popular power is the decision, by which Green means instances of expressive determination, such as voting and public opinion. The critical ideal of democracy in its vocal model, lastly, is autonomy, driven from people's ability to live under the laws of whose authoring they are part. (2010: 8)

Green argues that the citizen of the contemporary forms of democracy, however, do not relate to politics and democratic processes in the manner foreclosed by the vocal model, rendering its premises rather tentative and presumptive. In daily political practice, the citizen remains rather in the position of a spectator than a decision-maker, in the sense that his word is in question only in occasional instances like elections and public opinion polls. Spectatorial engagement with politics renders citizenship to be a

form of political entity allowed to achieve "involvement without participation" (Green 2010:34). Green maintains that the majority of the frameworks that constitute the contemporary study on democracy, however diverse they might be, overlook this fundamental divergence. The three models which he discusses in this regard, those of deliberative democracy, pluralism and aggregationism, all fall short of complying with the ocular paradigm of political experience while basing their approach on the vocal one. Deliberative democracy is interested in sorting the ways through which politicians, advocates, jurists and further public figures can communicate with and talk to each other in the form of deliberations and operationalizing them to refine and enlarge People's voice; whereas pluralism is mainly concerned with the recognition that there is no single sovereign voice but the multiplicity of voices that relate to and cooperate with each other in order to attain the harmony within which stable democratic systems can be established. Aggregationists, lastly, by concentrating on the mechanics of voting, choose to urge upon a single moment when the people (or the majority of people who vote) express themselves by voicing a preference among options that are already established and sorted (ibid. 3).

What needs to be acknowledged, however, is that "it is in the ocular realm of public appearances by leader, rather than in the vocal realm of legislative and electoral decisions, that progressive demands for greater popular empowerment are most properly, most favorably and most constructively sought" (ibid. 13). According to Green, visibility and the effect to be produced out of it are attributes not of the citizen or his voice but of the political leader and elite, and a political project of popular empowerment must first recognize this paradigm in order to reverse its established patterns of power. Green's proposal to acknowledge and reconfigure the ocular model of democracy is an articulation of this purpose. The variables with regard to which the ocular model of democracy is conceived are therefore divergent from those that conceive the vocal one. In the ocular model, in Green's formulation, the object of popular empowerment is the leaders that are watched, implying that at odds with the understanding in the vocal model that posits leaders only as a means and not the ultimate end of legislation, "under the ocular paradigm it is the leaders who function as the ultimate site on which democracy is realized" (ibid. 8). The organ of popular

53

power is therefore not the assumed decision, but the gaze of the people, by which Green means the "hierarchical form of visualization that inspects, observes and achieves surveillance" (ibid. 9), that is, an empowered form of looking. Lastly, the critical ideal in the ocular paradigm of democracy is not autonomy, but candor. The idea of candor is the climax of the thought Green attempts to develop. It acts as both the condition and objective of the popular empowerment he seeks. Green defines candor as "the institutional requirement that leaders not be in control of the conditions of their publicity" (ibid. 16). Implied in this is an intervention not in visibility *per se* or its beholder, but in the conditions that manage visibility, i.e., the way is it structured. In other words, the fundamental problem for Green is not that visibility in contemporary democracies is always the visibility of political leaders, but that the control, management and maintenance of this visibility is also held by the political leaders themselves. The appropriation of these by the people can lead to popular power, and a politics of candor, which posits that public appearance of leaders are "not to be rehearsed, preplanned, managed from above but to contain risk and uncertainty", can serve for the purpose of popular empowerment.

The emergence of the volunteer in the electoral setup shares certain aspects of the politics of candor proposed by Green. Even though in the case of elections at stake is not the an occasion that works through the visibility of political leaders per se, they are the one occasion in which politics is most visualized and rendered visible. By inserting himself to this visualization, the volunteer interferes with the management and assumption of visibility in the elections, and comes to impose a space of risk and uncertainty that was not previously visible. The risk and uncertainty emerges out of the fact that the volunteer does not perform his/her rehearsed role as the electorate, and in this vein, the implications of candor as foreclosed by Green also correspond to those of the volunteer in the polling station, which I will discuss in length in the following section.

2.3.2. The Politics of Candor and its Unfolding in the Monitoring position

Green attaches political and theoretical significance to the politics of candor and praises its implications in four regards, which in certain ways coincide with the ramifications of the monitoring position as well.

First, the politics of candor contests the rubric of representation that characterizes (representative) democracy and is capable of proposing a post-representational theory of democratic experience. In this, problematized by Green is not the malfunctioning or distortion of representation interlocked with the preoccupation with whether people are being accurately represented or not. His concern is rather with how the normative rubric of representation itself conducts the idea of democratic communication without necessarily performing it, by relying on a subject-object dichotomy which it produces as its effect. The point made by Green on representation is in tandem with the notion's employment by Mitchell. In *Questions of Modernity*, Mitchell argues that representation not only refers to the making of images and meanings that imply and call that which is not representation, i.e., the truth; but the making of "the forms of social practice that set up in the social architecture and lived experience of the world what seems an absolute distinction between image and reality" (2000: 17). The effect of representation does not emerge out of its being non-reality, but out of its positing of a distinctive imagination of the real, or a prior reference point in the form of an unmediated, complete and self-sustained reality, which always presupposes a certain singular truth. The issue with representation is therefore not how representation misrepresents, but how it "involves creating an effect we recognize as reality, by organizing the world endlessly to represent it." (ibid). In a similar manner, the complexity with democratic representation is not only that it separates the represented from the representative in a such way to distinguish them in the forms of a "subjectivity (a coherent, unified, selfsame subject, such as an expressive People looming behind government) and objectivity (the capacity of government to reflect the represented faithfully and without distortion" (Green 2010: 18), but also that it posits a distinctive imagination of the people capable of performing self-legislation through their choice of representatives in the elections along with conveying that the ideal of democracy is

"a regime in which government supposedly carries out the aims, policies, and interests of the electorate through the central vehicle of period elections for leadership" (Green 2010: 18). According to Green, the politics of candor breaks free from the hegemony and mediation of representation, which brings about a profound difficulty in imagining the rule of the people, by interfering with the boundaries of the space in which representation takes place and by focusing "on the behavioral constraints placed upon *leaders* rather than *laws*" (Green 2010: 19), and therefore rendering the rule of the people to be rather concrete, sensible and felt.

The potential Green attaches to candor in terms of its capability of proposing a post-representational democratic experience is at times overstated, for candor does not necessarily offer a structural alternative to the rubric of representation that distinguishes the represented and the representative in forms of subjectivity and objectivity. Furthermore, while challenging the distinctive imagination of the people as capable of performing self-legislation through their choice of representatives in elections, it replaces it with the distinctive imagination of the people as capable of auditing a broader range of political leaders and elites (including those who they do not support) in the midst of everyday routine. Lastly, while arguing that candor renders the rule of the people to be concrete and felt, Green says little about how this ocular power is manifest, or how it operates. It is not clear how a collective gaze of the people is maintained in the dispersion of everyday, or how this collective gaze factually reaches out to the political leaders so as to hold them accountable. The structural mechanism that would reciprocally relate the citizens with political leaders seems to be missing in the ocular model. In the vocal model, this mechanism is elections, and they stand less for an indirect moment of self-legislation than for a direct moment of holding political leaders accountable, of showing them the consequences of their actions and policies. Yet, Green's project of overcoming the binaries of democratic representation through candor is still worthy of attention, particularly in terms of his effort in re-presenting people rather than representing them, that is, in reconstructing their participation in social and political processes through a shared form of experience and in presenting them as people who are not imagined but who exist. This last point combined with the need of a structural back-up to ocular power provides a space on

which the implication of candor in terms of representation can be associated with the unfolding of the monitoring experience of the volunteers.

The matter of representation was an issue touched upon by the respondents as well, and democratic representation seemed to be a concern they both criticized and operationalized. A respondent, for instance, associated her disbelief in the parliamentary system directly with its dependence on an understanding of politics executed through representation, and added that:

> What lacks in the logic of representation is participation. What the majority accepts may not always be representative of a certain group, and the issue of majority is often a deadlock. This is a concern for me.

Integration to the electoral mechanism as a volunteer seems to contradict with this understanding at first, since it is the elections that works through the fundamental idea of democratic representation, and a legal position embedded in it which makes an effort to contribute to its well-functioning does not seem to contest but affirm, maintain, reproduce and reinforce its representative logic. However, the interviews revealed that despite its formal interlock with the conventional conception of representation, the position of the volunteer is also apt to provide space for an alternative imagination of representation, one based on re-presenting the people rather than representing them. The narratives of the respondents communicate that the monitoring activity elevated them from a status to which access was possible only through the mediation of representation, be it in the form of being represented by the political parties they support or being subsumed under the larger representation of 'the People', to a status with which direct contact was enabled. Suggested in this is that by bringing himself to the immediacy of experience within the assigned context of democratic experience, i.e., the electoral setting, by concretizing the assumed imagination of 'the people' in it and by re-presenting himself as a citizen corporeally, the volunteer modifies the democratic rubric of representation through his spectatorship and appearance. Embedded in this is the re-addressing of the question of who the people are through the overcoming of the mediation of representation that is characteristic to normative democracy. In addition to this, according to the interviews,

materialized by the respondent was not only his own presence as a citizen, but were also certain values he held and struggled for, which usually do not find a place for themselves in the representative logic of democratic experience. Respondents seemed to perceive their position as a space on which further values that do not necessarily stem from the formal position of the volunteer itself but from the volunteer's own political repertoire can be presented. A respondent's narrative would clarify what is suggested by this:

> Party representatives and state officials were representing there a political stance, but we represented something else, something devoid of partisanship. We were representing a value, a value on which all of us could agree. It was like representing peace. Together with us, our values were there, and it was an occasion to represent those values. For example, in June 7 elections an LGBT individual came in the polling station to which I was assigned and everyone suddenly got a bit weird. They looked at her ID carefully, and started to murmur about whether she was male or female. It was probably her first time as an electorate, she was an adolescent. I could say that she got nervous, she was aware of the talks and manners of the officials. When she casted her vote and left the voting booth, I smiled at her and said "your hair looks really good on you." It was one of the moments I felt the warmest in my entire life. That person felt comfortable about voting, and this happened because of me. At stake is the right of equal citizenship. It is absolutely basic, but it is not realized the way it is supposed to. This was a moment where I felt that my being there really made a difference, I felt very happy. She seemed relaxed too. She took back her ID with confidence.

The second implication of candor suggested by Green is that it "injects eventfulness into a political culture inundated by 'pseudo-events'" (ibid. 17). In formulating this point, Green derives from the premise that not all happenings qualify for being called an event, and by borrowing the term from Boorstin, defines pseudo-events as routine, automatic happenings that are orchestrated productions managed from above, lacking spontaneity as well as meaning (ibid. 19). As opposed to the contemporary political culture characterized by the domination of pseudo-events which are hardly authentic and which "extract loyalty from onlookers rather than subject what is being presented to critique" (ibid.20), the politics of candor celebrates genuine events, that is, events that are spontaneous, unpredictable, uncontrolled and unmanageable from the top. Politics of candor praises the democratic value of eventfulness, and aspires for the "maximization of eventfulness in everyday political life and discourse". Green writes that eventfulness is a democratic aspiration because "it seeks a political life that will

not satisfy only the few who enjoy the fame and responsibility of self-disclosure on the public space but the many who routinely watch such figures as they appear" (ibid. 21). In this, Green is motivated particularly by Arendt's understanding of political action. According to him, Arendt celebrates political life "for its capacity to break free from the automatic and repetitive processes of nature, to generate new and historical events in a world otherwise inundated by cyclicality and as a result to make the extraordinary occurrence of everyday life" (ibid). The authentic, event-generating action capable of setting forth new beginnings transforms the political world into one that not only elevates the potentialities of the political actor, but one that is "accessible to and appreciated by the political spectator as well" (ibid). Green writes:

> In addition to the traditional value of turning to politics to achieve freedom – whether defined broadly as any kind of collective action or more specifically as self-authorship of the laws – there is a value, probably lesser but for his no less real, of seeing freedom: witnessing political events that are spontaneous, unscripted and genuine portrayals of historical individuals under conditions of pressure and intensity (ibid. 21).

The effect candor generates by taking the control of their publicity from the leaders is that it subjects their appearance to critique and contestation, and hence subjects them to responsibility. It is a responsibility from which escape is not an option, because when public appearance becomes a criterion of judgement, non-appearance becomes undemocratic, and in that sense, unjustifiable.

Eventfulness, however, can fall short of implying what is intended to imply in Green's thought without structural and contextual definition, because without a point of reference with regard to which events and public appearances of leaders are considered to be genuine or not, all events may become pseudo-events and their genuine character of leaders' appearances may turn out to be constructed only discursively. As Schwartzberg argues, what makes an appearance eventful for a political leader is the possibility that "the information revealed therein will constitute the basis on which he/she will be sanctioned"[12].

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[12] Symposium Paper. Retrieved July 27, 2017 from
https://www.sas.upenn.edu/polisci/sites/www.sas.upenn.edu.polisci/files/Symposium-EyesofthePeople-including%20my%20ReplytoCritics_1.pdf

An alternative approach, then, can be concerned with contesting the pseudo-eventfulness of everyday through eventful interventions in them, in a way that does not separate but confronts events and pseudo-events. The monitoring activity parallels this alternative take on eventfulness by virtue of the fact that within the 'pseudo-eventful' context of the elections (in the sense Green makes of the term) which is characterized by predetermined and fixed positions and elements, there takes place the production of a novel and unpredictable position through civil initiative. In many interviews the respondents mentioned that they most of the time felt like a journalist in the polling station, and this term alone imprints that to them, the occasion was a newsworthy one communicated through their immediate presence. In that, the monitoring activity seems to not only add to the automatic and repetitive process of the electoral setup a certain eventfulness, but also linger as a political event itself, in the sense that it sets forth an unpredictable position in it, intervenable only by law and not from the top. The political character of both the elections and the volunteer is therefore expanded. A respondent put this briefly as follows:

> Since this [electoral] space is one defined through concrete boundaries into which you can step only for the mere purpose of casting your vote, being and prevailing there with an alternative positioning becomes utterly political.

In terms of its third implication, according to Green, the politics of candor promotes an egalitarian value, because by confiscating the control of leaders over their appearance it locates them under conditions of uncertainty and pressure; and as such, it "imposes risks and obligations on political elites as a form of compensation for their disproportionate, never fully legitimate hierarchical authority" (Green 2010: 17). The implied egalitarianism is not one that bestows equal opportunities of political action for the citizens and uplifts their possibilities but one that withdraws the possibilities of the already privileged group of leaders, and in that, it is an egalitarianism of a "corrective, remedial and negative type" (ibid. 23). Nevertheless, it serves for the mobilization and destabilization of the maintenance of power in the established terms, and therefore leads to the emergence of a balancing field.

The remedial egalitarian value of candor manifests itself in the monitoring experience of respondents in terms of the relationship they bore with the election board. Their narratives suggest that the legal and objective character of the monitoring position provided it the capacity to act as a particular force within the polling station, one that is no less effective and compelling than that of the state officials and party representatives. This force would sometimes be negotiated or conflicted, but in every case it was addressed. The possibility of mutual address emerges out of the fact that within an electoral setting, all the elements and identities of the polling station – be it the state official, the party representative, the volunteer or the electorate – are defined as legal statuses, and involve little room for differences that might disturb the balancing field enabled by law. The volunteer, in this regard, even when he is negatively treated, emerges as a figure capacitated to impose risks and obligations on a bracketed authority – that of the state officials and party representatives – and becomes a central aspect of the legitimacy of elections. A respondent puts this as follows:

> On the one hand I was respected, even by the presiding officer. But on the other, I was clearly not wanted. I could see the looks on their faces, questioning what I was doing there, what I was after and why this was necessary. This was so, because I was like an inspector there, reminding that they are accountable for what they were doing.

The empowerment of the volunteer is clearly restrained by the borders of the polling station, outside of which he would immediately fall short of bearing its effects, but so are the positions of state officials and party representatives. As a response to the bracketed authority of the latter, the position of the volunteer was also bracketed, in the sense that it was circumstantial, secured only to a limited extent and granted by law, that is, it was not earned. Th respondents seemed well aware of that. Notwithstanding this, it also became evident during the interviews that what the respondents felt to be interacting with was not the holders of this bracketed authority *per se* but the authority itself. What they understood from this authority diverged, and came to correspond to a variety of issues such as state power, government policies or the impasses of democratic processes; but what turned out to be shared by all respondents in one way or another was the perception of this authority as a force that

61

segregates, binds and disavows their desired relation to and experience of politics. Countered by the citizen's emergence in the unexpected context of elections with an unconventional identity are therefore not the particular figures of state officials or party representatives, but the segregation, binding and disavowal that manifest the authority in question, whatever it might be. The narratives of respondents suggest that even though in the beginning of the election day they assumed these figures to be representing the authority in question, towards the end they were able to establish relationships with them that overcame this representation. The polling station then turned out to be a space in which not only the volunteers but also the executive officials broke free from what they socio-politically represented. In that, it became a ground of commons and achieved a public character. The egalitarian value underpinned in the monitoring activity is therefore one that emerges out of the direct encounter and address between the elements of the polling station, regardless of the consideration of what they represent and stand for. This was an unfolding praised and appreciated by many respondents, one of whom reflected on it as follows:

> There is already a very unfair race, there is already an incredible inequality between parties. Sometimes you could see this even in the supposedly 'objective' realm of the polling station. The representative of the party that was expected to win would walk around like a bully. When this is the case in every field, fanning this flame doesn't seem very meaningful. What is meaningful instead is trying to find values on which we all can commonize. Yes, we'll have different opinions, parties and color preferences, whatever. But let's not violate some values and let's all be together on this. Not just my party x, not just your party y, but let's look after that value all together. This is a value that's beyond parties, in my opinion.

In terms of its fourth implication, lastly, politics of candor underpins a solidarity value because by empowering the shared spectatorship of citizens in such a way to grant them the possibility of burdening, constraining, addressing and holding accountable the political leaders, it enables citizens "to understand themselves as members of a meaningful and effective collective" (ibid. 17).

Solidarity appeared in the accounts of the respondents in two ways: First, to some, deciding to volunteer as part of Vote and Beyond itself was an act of solidarity. The meaning of the monitoring activity for them lied in the mutual support prevailing in

between the volunteers, and in that, it reinforced an active togetherness instead of passive isolation. What motivated certain respondents in their decision to be there, near the polling stations was a sense of doing something for people with whom they shared similar concerns and aspirations, and of not leaving them alone. A respondent put this as follows:

> I have volunteered for Vote and Beyond since its very establishment. There was no problem or anything illegal in any of the ballot boxes I monitored, so in time I got skeptical about whether this helped anything, or whether the problem was really there. I lost my belief in the meanwhile, but still continued to volunteer in order not to leave other people alone. I didn't want to leave my friends alone there, I wanted to be by their side in case that something unpleasant happens.

To certain others, on the other hand, volunteering maintained solidarity not only among the volunteers but also and more importantly among the further elements of the polling station, that of the executive board and the electorate, in the form of an alliance. Many respondents mentioned that during the day, the polling station transformed into a setting of togetherness that enabled encounter and accordingly, communication between people with diverse backgrounds, even those who would held conflicting interests and prejudices against each other outside of it. A respondent commented on this as follows:

> I saw that this position stirred trust there and this is, by itself, a progress. And it is something that transcends the people, something that surpasses who they are and how they identify themselves. People in Turkey are no longer open to communication, but in that environment, everybody actively communicated with each other. There was a dynamism. There was a certain public character.

According to the interviews, the bipartisan position generated an effect that claimed, asked for and restored trust, and once this was maintained, people found themselves on a common and sustainable ground which they shared, rather than in a setting to which they were assigned. This is not to suggest that the monitoring experience of all the respondents with whom I interviewed proceeded smoothly, without any conflict or tension of some sort. As a matter of fact, many of them were exposed to explicit or implicit pressure in the meanwhile. Yet, tension is also a productive state of

relationality, for it implies both address and recognition, and sets a ground for alliances to be generated in response. Emergent in this is, once again, a public character that was produced within the specific context of elections, manifested through the creation of a certain community characterized by solidarity and counter-solidarity. A respondent briefly covers this as follows:

> You spend all day together and develop a really different acquaintance. People exchanged their phone numbers, brought food, and shared cell phone charges with each other. It was like we were brothers in arms.

It is crucial that while the case of the volunteer maintains contact with the effects of candor described by Green, in doing so it is first dependent on the structure and context of the monitoring position and second, it incorporates a mode of spectatorship that diverges from that of Green. The divergence emerges fundamentally from the difference that while political spectatorship in Green's understanding of the term works through an implied presence, the one operationalized through Vote and Beyond volunteers rests on a mode of actual presence intertwined with spectatorship. The volunteer does not only spectate, but does so through corporeal presence with the ones he spectates. In that, he overcomes the physical distance that separates him from the playing field and intervenes with the vector of power maintained in it, by operationalizing certain elements of representation, eventfulness, egalitarianism and solidarity; but maintains the aesthetic distance that connects him to it by virtue of the fact that his participation in elections and his mode of relating to it is enabled, defined and constituted through his recognition of it as well as of his own boundaries. Volunteer's presence in the playing field renders him an element to be spectated as well, and brought by this reciprocity is the necessity to discuss the theoretical and practical outcomes of not only spectating, but also being spectated.

In other words, Green's account is of importance for pointing out the political force of the ocular processes of democracy and for foreshadowing that citizens' seeing and hearing are constitutive in conceiving contemporary democratic experience. His argument introduces the central role of political visibility vis-à-vis the spectator and in that, he mobilizes a novel perspective. However, as insightful as it is in terms of

transcending the instrumental sense of spectatorship and conceiving visibility rather in dual terms, conditioned by both that which is visible and that to which visibles are visible; Green's discussion still works through the visibility of political elites and leaders, rendering the visibility of citizens often a secondary concern or an indirect implication, if not a matter totally unattended. His concern with empowering the popular gaze and producing an effect out of the implied presence of citizens leaves little room for the otherwise relationship between visibility and power on the side of citizens, that of being looked at. Citizens' relationship to visibility, either in the form of laying claim to or avoiding it, is as integral as that of political elites in constructing the ocular paradigm of power and politics, and since the volunteer is a spectator that prevails in the grid of visibility, that is, since his presence is not implied or veiled beneath watchfulness but is actually performed through appearing, this becomes a particularly relevant point for the case at hand.

The interviews reveal that in the electoral context, the volunteer engages with the double act of looking and being looked at. His position works through and operationalizes the elements of spectatorship while simultaneously modifying them through the incorporation of further ocular trajectories such as visibility, appearance and bodily presence. In what follows, while maintaining contact with the empirical material emergent in the interviews, I will try to understand how these notions are operationalized with regard to certain conceptions of democracy, power and politics in the existing literature, so as to reveal whether they have explanatory significance in understanding the conditions, unfoldings, possibilities and limitations of the particular position produced and maintained by the volunteers in the electoral context. In that, I will be particularly interested in reviewing the works of Foucault, Arendt and Butler, and approaching to a conceptual understanding of visibility, appearance and bodily presence through the overlapping and diverging insights they provide.

CHAPTER III

VISIBILITY AND POLITICS

3.1. Prologue to Visibility

When its connotations are stratched, the term visibility immediately gives away particular assumptions upon the asymmetries, capacities and possibilities of power it bears. Visibility is always the ability of a particular vision. It is the capacity of vision to apply its abilities and enable its applications. That which is visible can attain this status only insofar as it relates to the range of vision. The vision in question, however, is hardly a coverage zone stretching from a fixed point of view but a set of relationships in constant mobility and relationality. In *Parables for the Virtual*, Brian Massumi tells about a vision experiment that struck attention in the scientific circles from late 1920s to mid-1960s. The experiment was concerned with revealing the 'total field' of vision, and held the idea that

> if you could experimentally isolate the physical and physiological conditions
> of vision at their purest – at their simplest and at the same time their fullest
> – you would discover the elementary nature of visual perception (Massumi
> 2002: 144).

The conditions of vision were therefore modified through ingenious devices in a such way to push the limits of vision. These modifications included exposing the entire retina to white light – for its simultaneous presentation of the full spectrum of color; or the elimination of inhomogeneities such as the nose, which casted shadows in the eye and added an outside edge to monocular vision. The experiments went on for a while but were eventually dropped, because "the pure field of vision, far from providing a "primitive", a clean slate or elementary building block that could be used as a solid foundation for understanding, kept leading to the most anomalous of results"

(Massumi 2002: 144-145). The subjects in whom pure vision was produced were finding it difficult to express what they saw "in terms usually associated with visual phenomena"; and "after prolonged exposure (ten to twenty minutes), subjects would even report difficulty sensing whether their eyes were open or closed" (Massumi 2002: 145). The results of the experiment fell outside of phenomena, and suggested that pure vision – the simplest, fullest empirical conditions of vision – is visual chaos.

The conclusion to be drawn was that vision and visibility should always assume a grid constituted by the relationalities of visibility, outside of which vision is not possible. Even theatre, an occasion specifically defined to be watched, i.e., designated to be visible already, rests in the grip of visibility and is constrained by it, in the sense that before a play is actually performed in front of the eyes of the spectator; it is prepared and rehearsed with reference to what is intended to be rendered visible, that is, with reference to a grid of visibility in which what is shown on stage meets with what is seen by the spectator. Dramaturges work on the establishment of the play as a visually readable narrative, actors act in a such way to disclose their mimics and gestures as explicitly as possible, directors organize the elements of stage as and build the dramatic action with the effort to demonstrate and communicate what they want to manifest and accentuate. Even during the selection of the play, its conditions of visibility are in question: regardless of the principle that guides it, be it art for the sake of art or art for the sake of society, in order for a play to attain artistic or social attention, it needs to conform to the visible agenda that governs artistic circles or social dynamics. If one is to attest to a group chat that takes place in the aftermath of a play, for instance, he will hear a question that is immediately posed: why this play, why now? Implied by this is a rather latent questioning: why should this play be granted visibility; why does it deserve to be seen?

This brief discussion comes to suggest that the visibility of a certain entity is not merely an attribute of it, but more importantly its constituting force. Visibility is never already at hand, that is, entities, events or activities are not already visible by themselves but visible insofar that they achieve this visibility, and to the extent that they conform to the relationalities that constitute the grid of visibility. When visibility

67

is conceived as not an attribute but an achievement; not only a result but equally an effect; and not only a possibility that subjectifies but a condition of possibility that both governs and is governed, it becomes a space of struggle. In this, its political character is explicit and relevant.

The attempt to understand the case of Vote and Beyond volunteers within the framework of political visibility therefore requires dismantling what is to be understood from visibility in the first place, without hinging upon its taken-for-grantedness. In that, a primary reference is the thought of Foucault, in which he makes explicit use of visibility with regard to his conception of power; and of power with regard to his conception of visibility. Foucauldian insights on the matter of power and visibility would enable me first to discuss in length the interaction of visibility with power and its unfolding into politics, and second to locate the emergence of the monitoring position with regard to the conditions and possibilities of attaining political visibility in Turkey.

3.2 Foucault on Power and Visibility

Visibility is considered to undertake a central role in the thought of Foucault vis-a-vis control and is interwoven with particular emphasis on surveillance, which he addresses as one of the most efficacious controlling techniques within disciplinary society (Gordon 2002; Marquez 2011). The visibility in question, however, is inclusive of not only the visibility of persons but also that of discursive practices, implying that beyond its instrumentality in terms of surveillance and disciplinary techniques, visibility is also essential to the overall conception of power in the thought of Foucault. Visibility is not only put to use by power in order to control people, but more importantly, "it is power's condition of possibility", as Gordon suggests. (2002: 132). A brief portrayal of Foucault's conception of power is necessary to arrive at what is implied by this assertion.

3.2.1 Foucauldian Power

Foucault's contribution to and reformulation of the mainstream conceptions of political science derives from his rejection of the underlying assumptions of the liberal imaginary, the most immediate two of which are those of the subject as a pre-existing entity capable of making decisions freely; and the narrow and negative conception of power in the form of repression (Gordon 2002). Foucault considers repression as a narrow conception of power, because it underestimates the power of power by seeking it in the negative force of power, rather than in its positive force and productive aspect. The negative conception of power embedded in its conventional attributions; which Deleuze epitomizes in six postulates that posit power as (1) a property won by class; (2) localized in the machinery of State; (3) subordinate to a mode of production or infrastructure; (4) an essence or attribute qualifying and defining those who hold or lack it either as the dominators or the dominated; (5) a modality acting through the use of violence or ideology; or (6) interlinked with legality (2006); fall short of manifesting how power traverses and produces things, and how it acts as "a productive network which runs through the whole social body" (Foucault 1995: 61). In response to these postulates, Foucault's conception of power notes that power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the privilege of a particular group but the overall effect of its strategic positions; it has no essence, it is rather operational; beyond being an attribute, it is a relation; it is not a commodity to be possessed by an individual in a crystallized form; it cannot be located on an identifiable site; it cannot be produced by a subject. To put it in positive terms; power is an issue of circulation in dialectic process; it is a relation between multiple forces; it nonsubjectively operates via mechanisms that shape and constitute individuals, and inclusive of them all, it is ubiquitous (Deleuze 2006; Foucault 1980; Gordon 2002). Power therefore becomes the producer rather than the product in the thought of Foucault, implying that everything is the operation of power, and that "all modes of thinking, critique and action are effects of power" (Gordon 2002: 126). So is the individual. This capacity to constitute is precisely the positive and productive force of power, and it posits that the pre-existing, calculating, intentional and choosing subjectivity of the liberal imaginary too is produced and enabled by power.

Through the absence of a historical essence that can be repressed or liberated, the meaning of repression dramatically changes (Gordon 2002: 134), but this does not yield to an understanding of the subject as a completely passive element that does not relate to power in any way other than being constituted by it. What is equally important in Foucault's thought is that the individual is not only an effect of power, or "its point of application" but also "the medium of its articulation" and its vehicle. (Gordon 2002: 133). By abolishing the possibility of tracing mechanisms of control back to particular social agents, Foucault renders all individuals to be included in these mechanisms not solely in the form of being subject to them but also in terms of bearing, carrying and reproducing them; that is, being subjectified by them.

In bridging power and visibility, Foucault's notion of discourse is of central importance, which is why I find it important to mention what it stands for in his thought. Before arriving at discourse, Foucault starts with locating the production of knowledge onto the very social space that he calls power. "Power and knowledge directly imply one another" he writes; "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations." (Foucault 1995: 27) In this, his notion of discourse is of central importance, for it not only produces knowledge but also generates the truth effects that are recognized, interiorized and normalized as truth. By bringing truth from outside of power to the inside, analyzing "how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (Foucault 1995: 60) and defining truth not as that which is true but as "the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power are attached to the true" (Foucault 1995: 74) in the form of a regime, Foucault asserts that "there is no identifiable site (of power) outside of language from which discursive practices are disseminated and controlled" (Gordon 2002: 128) and that "there is no pre-given true and natural object or reality behind the discursively constituted one" (Gordon 2002: 129). Discourse produces effects in terms of positive and negative control: on the one hand, "it produces and constitutes objects, identities, interests, thus influencing and shaping behavior"; and on the other, "by identifying objects, spheres of inquiry and fields of research, discourse sets limits,

creating a system of exclusion, interdiction and prohibition" (Gordon 2002: 127). By constituting the abnormal, it maintains the normal and through this double process, it naturalizes and normalizes social relation is ways that manufacture consent and internalization.

3.2.2. Power, Visibility and Civil Election Monitoring in Turkey

The position of visibility in Foucault's understanding of power and control opens up to a two-fold process including both the visibility of the individuals and the visibility of discursive practices. His concern with the former is manifest in his interest in the discursive practices, physical apparatuses and disciplinary techniques that manage the visibility of individuals in such a way to control and discipline them, to which he refers as surveillance. This will be discussed in length in the section to come. The latter, on the other hand, while going unnoticed from time to time, is a crucial component of Foucault's overall conception of power as well as of his discussion of other forms of power, for it renders the power that produces visibility to be "concomitantly dependent on it" (Gordon 2002: 126). This is to suggest that discursive practices maintain their meaning and power only insofar as they are visible. While constituting the grid of visibility, discursive practices should also reinvest themselves in it by constant articulation and repetition in order to continue to appear. Judith Butler's gender performativity is of explanatory relevance in this, through which she maintains that processes of signification occur "through the constant performative reiteration of norms, and this reiteration actually materializes a set of effects on the matter of bodies" (Butler cited in Gordon 2002: 132). To put it differently, discursive practices are "created, reproduced and upheld through visible citation and repetition of normative fiats" (Gordon 2002: 132). In order for the subject to be rendered docile through his/her potential visibility, the visibility of normative fiats is necessary in order to maintain their power over the individual. Visibility therefore functions as a way of control in two ways: First, "the subject's potential visibility facilitates control only because a set of normative fiats is already visibly circulating in society and the subject must in some way relate to these fiats"; and along the same lines, "the visibility of normative fiats necessarily affects the subject only because he/she is always potentially visible" (Gordon 2002: 132).

71

While Foucault's conception of power is informative in challenging the above-politics character of the elections and reinvesting it rather as a space of struggle; his double treatment of visibility in terms of the visibility of the subject and of the normative fiats provides insight in locating the emergence of the activity of Vote and Beyond within a framework that transcends the rhetoric of ballot box safety, and in conceiving it rather in terms of a struggle for political visibility. This is not to suggest that the latter is more relevant than the former, or that the official project of contributing to election security and the public concern emerging out of distrust in the conduction of elections were of secondary importance for the volunteers. During the interviews, all of the respondents, without exception, asserted that their decision to be involved in the elections in a monitoring position was driven from their belief that elections were not held fairly and were in some way subject to manipulation. The crisis of trust was descriptive of the many aspects of their experience of the political, and informative in terms of the political experience they designated through volunteering in response. A respondent put this as follows:

> There's a crisis of confidence in the country. I mean apart from one person trusting the other, the people don't even trust their own selves. No one feels safe personally or in terms of the societal environment they're in. I think the positions that are thought to be self-imposing are not feeling safe either. Therefore, that crisis is getting deeper and deeper. As a legitimate initiative, Vote and Beyond became a tool in establishing trust. That's why people could join it with all their heart. It attracted attention because it referred to a central crisis, the crisis of trust.

Denying the central and surface role of public distrust in the mobilization of the interest in becoming a volunteer as part of Vote and Beyond would therefore be fallacious and misguiding. However, this rhetoric alone does not necessarily explain why people wanted to be part of the electoral process the way they did. When I asked the respondents whether they considered volunteering in the elections as a good way of articulating the demands and concerns that informed their decision to undertake it, one phrase seemed to crosscut all responses: "It was the best way, because it was all that we could do at the time". Revealed by this response is that the elections were perceived as not only the object of contestation, but also the only possible material context of it. This revelation posits that at stake is not only the demand for fair and secure elections

but a struggle to render this demand visible, which seemed possible for the respondents only within the very context that generates the lack to give rise to this demand in the first place. The demand, in other words, was made the way it was, because only then it would be visible. The production of an additional position in the electoral setup was therefore not only a reactionary response to assumed manipulation, fraud and deceit in the elections. It was also a constructed response to a political narrowing that has come to characterize the recent dynamics of the political sphere: a narrowing in which reactionary responses could not maintain their visibility, and which therefore required strategical ones. A respondent put this as follows:

> My participation in this activity was strategical, it was related with my feeling that our political space is getting more and more narrowed every day. What I mean by this narrowing is the taking away of rights that were earned with struggle. It is being unable to imagine the political world you always imagined and struggled for. It is being constantly exposed to another agenda instead of presenting your own. It is having a counter word to what is said and done by the state and realizing that at the end of the day, you can never produce your own agenda while making politics only upon the agenda that is imposed on you.

Elections are among the principal mechanisms through which this agenda is discursively imposed. Many respondents, in different parts of the interviews, would critically recall a statement that characterized the hegemonic discourse in Turkey in recent years, uttered frequently in diverse occasions not only by the officials of the government such as the prime minister (of the time) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, but also by those of opposition parties such as the chairperson of CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and a party member of MHP, Necdet Çamaş; as well as by public figures outside of the normative political field, such as the chairperson of Turkey Youth Confederation, Ferudun Cevahiroğlu: "Show your reaction through the ballot box"[13]. One thing

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[13] Source: Erdoğan'dan halka açık rest: Topçu kışlası yapılacak, tepkinizi sandıkta gösterin. (2013, June 1). *Hport*. Retrieved May 13, 2017 from http://www.hport.com.tr/politika/erdogan-dan-halka-acik-rest-topcu-kislasi-yapilacak-tepkinizi-sandikta-gosterin
Source: Kılıçdaroğlu: Tepkinizi sandıkta gösterin. (2015, June 2). *Ajanshaber*. Retrieved May 13, 2017 from http://www.ajanshaber.com/kilicdaroglu-tepkinizi-sandikta-gosterin-haberi/19627
Source: Çamaş: Tepkinizi sandıkta gösterin. (2014, March 14). *Akasyam Haber*. Retrieved May 13, 2017 from http://www.akasyam.com/camas-tepkinizi-sandikta-gosterin-12460/
Source: Gençliğe tepkinizi sandıkta gösterin çağrısı. (2014, March 13). *İHA*. Retrieved May 13, 2017 from http://www.iha.com.tr/istanbul-haberleri/genclige-tepkinizi-sandikta-gosterin-cagrisi-istanbul-705484/

implied by the perpetual employment of this statement is that the elections, before and beyond its conventional attributes, is allocated as the only and ultimate ground of political visibility in the hegemonic discourse, outside of which no reactionary articulation is authorized to be visible. The feasibility of the activity of Vote and Beyond was strongly attached to its correspondence with this allocation, and volunteering was 'all that one could do at the time' because only within the grid of visibility enabled by the elections could the demands of the volunteer become visible. Suggested by this whole argument was concretized in the neat utterance of a respondent: "Well, I showed my reaction through the ballot box".

The narratives of the interviews, in this regard, suggest that before the volunteer's visibility in the polling station, the production of a monitoring position in the electoral setup through civil initiative itself corresponds to a discursive intervention with political visibility. While the character of this intervention was contested by certain respondents, it was praised by the rest. Some seemed to arrive at the conclusion that in contrast with the course of events that predated the emergence of Vote and Beyond – which introduced occurrences including but not limited to the Gezi Protests, the neighborhood forums that followed and the production of a cynical political language that started to occupy public walls and surfaces of any sort – and in contrast with the political imagination that corresponded to them which occasionally held the ability to present one's own agenda instead of reproducing the agenda imposed on him/her, the activity of volunteering in the elections was a retreat in terms of public opposition. In the end, the organizational occasion that incorporated the broadest participation since the Gezi Protests onwards was the organization around Vote and Beyond, and in that, for the context that it chose for itself, public opposition seems to be reproducing the hegemonic rhetoric that allocates the elections as the only legitimate ground of political articulation. Monitoring activity therefore becomes yet another extension of the political narrowing in question, because instead of making an effort to be visible in its own terms, that is, to contest this narrowing through modes that are not necessarily approved or preset by it; the monitoring position operated through conforming to the intelligibility that predetermined the acceptable modes of relating to politics. Public opposition in this form maintains, reproduces and surrenders to that

which it objects. This point was particularly relevant to the understanding of certain respondents, one of whom put it as follows:

> There's a mentality that tells you: "Your right is to go and vote in every four years. You have nothing to do on the street. All that stuff you do there is illegal." Public opposition was pulled there. They accepted what this mentality was saying.

Notwithstanding this, it was also the case that this trajectory was read the otherwise: Certain respondents seemed to be making sense the monitoring activity as part of Vote and Beyond and their participation in it not as a retreat, but as the continuation of an unfolding provided by the political imagination of the time. To them, at stake was the opening up of the political space as well as the closure of it. While political narrowing was utterly concrete and felt, so were the responses generated to it in return, which led to the imagination of the political in diverse ways, crystallized in the forms of street demonstrations, local deliberation settings and a newly emerging political repertoire, as was mentioned above. According to the respondents, the monitoring activity was the continuation of this imagination in a different context, and corresponded not to a state of being trapped in the hegemonic discourse but to an initiative that attempted to invade it. It coincided with a social momentum characterized by pursuits and openings that are just as explicit and palpable as the narrowing. A respondent, for instance, asserted that her deciding to volunteer was nothing more than a matter of checking her agenda, and continued:

> Because it was a time when we were already looking for such a space. It was a time when we believed that creating such a space was possible. It was not an additionally big or an additionally small step. Now, for example, volunteering would be something I would think over more.

The volunteer's shift from a plural narrative to a singular one towards the end symbolizes what distinguishes the experience of the time from that of the current state of affairs, and supports the further finding that what rendered the perception of the activity of Vote and Beyond as a leakage to or invasion of the ultimate political field was a particular bestowment of the political conjuncture of the time: collectivity. The political atmosphere back then was referred to by almost every respondent as one in

which they felt to be together with people who had similar aspirations with them, as one in which they "promised to each other that they will be by each other's side" as a respondent put it, and the political narrowing in question seemed to bring them even closer and more in touch while simultaneously constraining them. Two respondents' perspectives on the matter can be of explanatory relevance here:

> I don't think that what Vote and Beyond did is a retreat or pacification, on the contrary, it is something that shows you how you can take on active role in a system in which you are passivized. The origin on Vote and Beyond lies on something very fundamental: Some things are being done in this electoral platform that has been imposed on us, these are catching our attention, we always talk about these but we don't do anything and we don't know what we can do either. In this sense, Vote and Beyond provides a method. A method that says: "You're imposing it on me like this but I'm not going to do it like that". By volunteering in the elections, you say: "Okay, I have to stay within the rules, I can't go outside this game but I'm not going to play it the way you expect me to.

> Elections was not a political field in which I was particularly interested in participating through beyond-electorate identities before. In volunteering, what excited me was the sense that "we are taking over here too". It was yet another instance in which embedded was the magic of collectivity, the spirit of being together. What motivated me was doing it together. I cannot set myself in motion and take action on any other feeling, I have to believe in it in some way, I need to have hope. Yes, I might be pushed into this mere realm of elections, I might be cornered, but I wouldn't have been there as a volunteer and undertaken this duty if I hadn't had the belief that this place was one where I could create a difference. I wouldn't just say 'okay, they have let me be here, so I will just play around in this field' (…). To me, being there in the polling stations, being right in front of it, seeing it was to say "This is not a space exclusive to you. Even when you are sure that you are the winner of the elections, this space is not only yours.

The differentiation in making sense of the organization around Vote and Beyond either as surrender or take-over in terms of public opposition; and either as reproduction or operationalization of the normative fiats in terms political visibility reveals that the respondents have diverse takes on the matter, but it is essential that in understanding it, one should also note the retrospectivity of reflection, that is, the fact that the respondents do not and cannot extract the specific experience of the time interval framed in this study from the unity of their experience that is equally informed by the periods and political events that followed it. It is, in other words, hard to remember for the respondents how the activity resonated *before* its unfolding in the changing

political context of the recent years. How the respondents *perceived* the possibilities of this activity would therefore be irrelevant for a political analysis, for it would rather be interested in the effects and shortcomings of the activity in question through a larger lens of causality. It is in this sense that this study distances itself from a political analysis, because rather than reaching to a conclusion upon whether the particular activity of Vote and Beyond was a retreat or a take-over in terms of public opposition, it is interested in operationalizing this duality to claim that the monitoring position produced in the context of elections bears implications that transcend the official concern for ballot box safety, implications that to a considerable extent linger on the claim to and the possibilities of visibility.

When the discussion zooms in the practical context of the activity so as to take a closer glance at these implications, how the volunteer operationalizes visibility within the framework of the polling station becomes a relevant question. Both the legal definition of the position and the narratives of the respondents suggest that this operationalization is not open to be read in technical terms, by virtue of the fact that the volunteer does not hold any official authorization apart from being allowed to stay in the polling station during the day and filing a report in case that he spots an irregularity that is not responded by the official polling clerks. While being allowed in the polling station is hardly an empowerment in itself, filing a report is barely a sanction, in the sense that a filed report addresses not the immediacy of the situation but a long-term legal process to be concluded in the aftermath. Yet, almost every respondent with whom I interviewed stated that they felt to be empowered in the polling station in a certain way, even when they lacked official authorization and perlocution. The source of this empowerment was embodies for many in the very practice they carried out; that of watching and observing the whole process. A respondent, for instance, put this as follows:

> When an outsider who is not officially employed by the state or a political party is there, even when the only power he has is to file a report – polling clerks develop a sense of self-control. I think the reason why I didn't see any problems is partly this. Being watched prevented them from engaging with any type of irregularity. The self-control of being watched, I think this is crucial. No one wants to be thought of as someone who cheats, they really pay attention.

The mode of observation underpinned in the volunteer's activity, however, is not a random one. This was especially manifest while a respondent was talking about another project she participated before, under the roof of Association of Monitoring Equal Rights (AMER)[14], and when she contrasted what she did there with what she did as a volunteer of Vote and Beyond as follows:

> I was observing for the Association of Monitoring Equal Rights in the previous elections. It was the Turkey part of an international research. We went to eight or so polling stations as a team. What we did there was simple observation of whether the setting is prepared and designed for the aim of providing equal access to everyone while they voted. We checked instances like whether the voting booth had a curtain, whether there were police inside and outside, whether security was provided or whether there were ramps for people with disabilities. We only observed, really. We only marked what we saw. It was not the same with observing as a *müşahit*.

In both occasions, the volunteer seems to define the activity she carried out as observation, and in neither of them she holds statutory power while doing so. And yet, she differentiates her respective positions in them, implying that the effect to be generated out of her monitoring as a volunteer of Vote and Beyond diverged from her observation as part of AMER. The divergence is most fundamentally a matter of relating to that which is being observed, which dramatically alters the mode of observation employed in the two occasions. While in the case of AMER the volunteer is a disembodied observer with an eye that solely pursues to describe what it materially sees in the form of a report, in her monitoring activity as part of Vote and Beyond, the volunteer is embodied in the very scene she observes, which she can never see from a distance. What she sees should therefore always assume a relationality composed not only by the act of observing but also by the possibility of being observed. In that, she relates with what she observes, and the mode of relating through observation comes with implications for both sides.

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[14] AMER is a non-governmental organization established in 2010. It defines its mission as carrying out monitoring and reporting duty for the purpose of ensuring that the exercise of human rights and freedoms are recognized and accessible to all under equal opportunities.
Source: About Us. Association of Monitoring Equal Rights. Retrieved June 4, 2017 from http://www.esithaklar.org/

During the interviews, many respondents tended to reflect on their activity not as the mere engagement with electoral technicality or the follow-up of procedure, but rather as an engagement with 'a psychological war', as some of them put it with precisely the same choice of words. The tension in question is primarily the result of the very emergence of the monitoring position. By being present and rendering himself visible, the volunteer brings the whole electoral setup under suspicion, in the sense that it challenges its competence, that is, it implies a void in it that needs to be filled. According to the interviews, this tension was practically manifested in their relationship with official polling clerks and party representatives. All of the respondents mentioned that at least in the first few hours of the election day, the polling clerks would signal their discomfort with volunteers' presence there, for it made them feel that their authority was contested. A respondent, for instance, maintained that she couldn't help but feel that through their manners, the polling clerks secretly said "you are here as an observer, we are the polling officers. We say what happens, do you not trust us?". Another respondent, in a complementary manner, reflected on the matter as follows, through her particular experience:

> I think it was a different experience for the polling clerks too. Let's think about it, who are assigned to the stations as polling clerks? Teachers, officers, public workers, that is, public servants. And in this country, public servants are not used to a citizen seeking his citizenship rights. This is something we learn starting from the primary school: to obey what the teacher says, to accept it right away, not to oppose. The people in this country, especially the bureaucratic part, don't have the knowledge that people can demand their citizenship rights, they themselves don't demand it at all. When I first arrived the polling station, for example, the polling clerk immediately warned me that I couldn't stay there, and he told me to wait outside the classroom. I asked why, and on what grounds he could tell me so. He said "it is forbidden", and I showed him in response the circular, that I had a written right to be there. We called the lawyer, the representative of Vote and Beyond in charge of the building and objected together. With great difficulty, at the end, they accepted me in. This isn't necessarily because of people's political identities, they just really don't know, they don't know that we can do something like this because they haven't experienced this before. People must have come across with reactions more severe than this in other places.

'The psychological war' – as put by the respondent –, then, took place primarily between the eyes of the polling clerks and the volunteer, out of their looking at him. In his state of being looked at, however, the volunteer is not merely an object to the

eye, subjugated by its vision but rather a force that meets it, much like a light that traverses. Implied by this is in the following account of a respondent:

> Being exposed to disturbing glances by the other people in the room makes you uneasy on one hand but on the other, it also makes you feel that they feel concerned and even threatened by your presence there. This made me feel that I had some sort of a power there. This is also why I thought that my presence had a meaning.

The volunteer, therefore, acts as a force primarily in its being the spectacle. His spectacle character is in force both corporeally in the polling station through the actual presence of the volunteers, and figuratively in the emergence of the monitoring position on the electoral stage out of civil initiative. Immediately after he stays in the polling station, however, the vector of tension is readjusted, because the psychological war turns out to take place between the eyes of the volunteer and the polling clerks, out of his looking at them. The tension in question, in other words, is not only the result of the presence of the volunteer alone but of the mode of observation he conveyed. The majority of the respondents seemed to agree that not only their presence, but also their active observation produced an effect on the polling clerks and exposed them to a certain pressure. A respondent, for instance, described this effect as "intimidating", and added: "there is always someone observing and watching, and in that there is an unbearable pressure".

Revealed by this is that not only the visibility of the volunteer but also that of the polling clerk is a central aspect of the tension in question, because the volunteer renders himself visible for the primary purpose of coming in contact with the visibility of the polling clerk, and of gaining access to that which is projected as visible by him. This diversifies the observation of the volunteer in this specific context from his observation and reporting in another one, like that of AMER, because unlike the latter, in the former the volunteer produces a position to be addressed. 'The unbearable pressure' of the eye transforms the volunteer's observation into an empowered form of looking, that is, into a gaze. But why and how the act of looking undertakes an empowered character? What renders a form of looking to be a gaze?

The idea of gaze is put forth and operationalized in a variety of historical contexts and theoretical frameworks, from which particular insights can be extracted in order to describe its correspondence with the case of the volunteer. Deist theology, for instance, whose deist God "does not speak – does not communicate to humankind via scripture, prophecy, or miracles – but watches", runs through the idea of divine gaze; in the sense that its most important ethical consequence derives from the judgment of faith upon "this-worldly internalization of the divine gaze in the form of one's gaze of oneself, or conscience, rather than any fear of future retribution" (Green 2010: 10). Kubbealtı (The Imperial Council) of the Ottoman, a wooden structure built in the Topkapı Palace in the 15th century and used as the council hall in which the secret meetings and proceedings of the Divan – the central advisory group to the Sultan and the highest court of the land – took place, is the architectural manifestation of the sovereign gaze; in the sense that Ottoman Sultans would not participate in those meetings but follow the caucus and deliberations of the Council in a room called Kasr-ı Adl (Tower of Justice) *"from behind a grilled window overlooking the council chamber"* and intervened with the decisions if he disagreed by closing the window curtain as a signal.[15] The Council would never know whether the Sultan was actually behind the window or not, but the treatment of his gaze was always present. The constituting power and treatment of the gaze as such is similarly in effect in the inner architecture of psychic life, as the psychoanalytic tradition driven particularly from Freud and Lacan suggests: the distinction between ideal ego (the person one wishes to become) and ego ideal (the person whose gaze function as the imagined audience before whom the events of one's life are hypothetically performed) brings about the conclusion that with the concept of the gaze of the ego ideal,

> not only are we usually seeing ourselves from the perspective of some other, but who this other is tends to be relatively stable – so that it becomes quite meaningful for an individual to identify just whose hypothetical spectatorship has been empowered to play this disciplinary role (cited in Green 2010: 10).

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[15] Source: Imperial Council - Dîvan-i Hümâyûn/Kubbealtı, Topkapı Palace Museum Official Website. Retrieved May 7, 2017 from http://topkapisarayi.gov.tr/en/content/kubbealt%C4%B1-divan-%C4%B1-h%C3%BCmayun

From within the philosophical tradition, an important figure to address on the matter is Sartre, who asserts in his notion of 'the existential gaze', or 'le regard', that the spectator as the holder of the gaze is not a merely passive figure but someone with the power to undermine the agency of the other: He writes: "The sense that being watched turns the individual from a subject to an object, generating shame, pride, or a sense of danger – all three of which dislodge a free being from his or her authentic path" (ibid). In a similar fashion, lastly, Bourdieu makes reference to the notion while conceiving the female 'as perceived', and maintains that masculine domination constitutes women as symbolic objects that "exist first and through for the gaze of others" (2001: 66).

Despite their differences, embedded in all accounts is the conception of gaze as the holder of a symbolic and yet constitutive power, whose efficacy "depends on the relative position of the perceiver and the perceived and on the degree to which the schemes of perception and appreciation that are brought into play are known and recognized by the person to whom they are applied" (Bourdieu 2001: 65). The constitutive power of gaze is a significant element of Foucault's operationalization of the relationship between power and visibility as well. The gaze and its instrumentalization, according to Foucault, underlies the fundamental technique that maintains regulation and control in disciplinary society. The technique in question, or the instrumentalization of the gaze in disciplinary society, is surveillance.

3.2.3. Surveillance

> There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising surveillance over, and against himself. (Foucault 1980: 155)

Foucault historicizes the relationship between visibility and power, and addresses surveillance within the particularity of disciplinary society, implying that different forms of power have related to changing employments of visibility over time. In traditional power, for instance, visibility was achieved solely by the sovereign power whereas the subject remained hidden: only in the occasions of public accusation and torture through which sovereign power was reflected on the individual that the individual was "positioned under limelight" (Gordon 2002: 131). According to

Foucault this strategy was inverted through disciplinary power, because disciplinary techniques reversed the visibility of power. Foucault writes:

> Traditionally, power was what was seen, what was shown and what was manifested, and paradoxically, found the principle of its force in the movement by which it deployed that force. Those on whom it was exercised could remain in shade; they received light only from that portion of power that was conceded on them, or from the reflection of it that for a moment they carried. Disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of power that is exercised over them (1995: 187).

Foucault makes explicit use of the notion of surveillance in his study of the modern prison and particularly of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a system of observation in which people can be placed under the possibility of surveillance without knowing whether they are actually being watched or not (Mann, Nolan and Wellman 2003). Essential in this is the power attributed to the gaze itself, not to its holder, implying that Foucault is once more interested in a nonsubjective, relational operation of power. At stake is therefore not an identifiable site of control in the conventional sense that actually inspects, watches over and scrutinizes but the compulsoriness of visibility, the "fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection" (Foucault 1995: 187). The power of the gaze is not inherent in itself but dependent on the rendering visible of those who are seen:

> The major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers (Foucault 1995: 201).

Visibility vis-à-vis surveillance in these terms is attained not only through architectural devices as exemplified by the model of Panopticon, but through a whole range of discursive practices, physical apparatuses and disciplinary techniques. A striking analysis Foucault provides in this regard is that of the ritualization of examination,

which functions as a form of control in the two-fold sense combining "the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement" (Foucault 1995: 184). By arguing that examination sifts the students through making them visible so as to categorize and evaluate them according to established criteria, and that students in turn are obligated to make themselves visible in order to meet and adopt that which is required from them; Foucault asserts that the examination enables the teacher to establish " a visibility through which one differentiates [the students] and judges them" (ibid) and to "transform his pupils into a whole field of knowledge" (ibid. 186).

Surveillance therefore covers both the deployment of specific techniques to govern visibility and render visible, and the constitution of spaces where the visibility of their participants produces norms of control and normalization. These spaces are characterized by isolation emerging out of permanent visibility, and dependency on and reproduction of vertical relationships of inequality, in the sense that the invisible gaze cannot be gazed back, controlled or disabled. Furthermore, reinforcement of normalizing roles and rules interlock with the production of conformity to them, implying that "the visibility in spaces of surveillance always involves the comparison of the individual against non-individual norms, and hence the potential for making the individual conform, "creating" particular kinds of individuals" (Marquez 2012: 26-27).

The contemporary circumstance characterized by the ubiquitousness of power in the form of technology reiterates and expands the conception of visibility and surveillance as such.[16] The parallel ubiquitousness of surveillance with power, however, opens up a space in which operations of surveillance can be occasionally contested and even

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[16] The rise of information technologies and their disappearance into the fabric of buildings, objects and bodies via CCTVs, wearable computing fits and social networks have brought about new opportunities for visibility and sparked off the pervasion of surveillance, manifesting itself in the organization of urban space. The computerization and recording of everyday life through such technologies rendered the city to become a surveillance context in which public life is primarily defined by clear-cut visibility on the side of citizens, uncertainty of identity on the side of watchers and unverifiability on the side of the information given and taken away. The mode of relating with and within the public is therefore characterized by the moral normative order constituted by surveillance, implying that the vast majority of our experience with others is based on the performance of surveilling, being surveilled and more importantly, of self-surveilling. (Mann, Nolan and Wellman 2003)

reversed, by virtue of the fact that through its being the enabled condition and the condition of possibility of power, visibility also becomes the condition of possibility of resistance. A striking and exemplary unfolding in the contemporary functioning of surveillance in the form of what a number of scholars refer to as "sousveillance" is worthy of consideration at this point.

3.2.4 Sousveillance

Deriving from the French words "sous" (below) and "veiller" to watch, sousveillance implies the employment of tools of control in such a way to alter the orientation of their use and turn them into potential sources of resistance against those in charge of them. If surveillance is to be framed briefly as "organizations observing people"; sousveillance is a way "to challenge and problematize both surveillance and acquiescence to resituate these technologies of control on individuals, offering panoptic technologies that help them observe those in authority (ibid. 332).

Sousveillance is a form of 'reflectionism', a philosophy of using technology to mirror and confront bureaucratic organizations, and "a technique for inquiry-in-performance that is directed toward (1) uncovering the panopticon and undercutting its primacy and privilege, and (2) relocating the relationship of surveillance society within a more traditional commons notion of observability" (ibid. 333). It not only appropriates the tools of social controllers but also uses them against the organization by holding a mirror up and asking, "Do you like what you see?" With the application of reflectionism to individuals using tools to observe the organizational observer and the enhancement of the ability of people to access and collect data about their surveillance, reflectionism becomes sousveillance: a force to neutralize surveillance (ibid).

The logic of sousveillance is "to increase the equality between surveiller and surveillee, and to enable the surveillee to surveil the surveiller." (ibid. 333) Sousveillance is therefore a mode of participation from bottom-up, the conceiving of the individual as an enactment of resistance to hierarchical forms of monitoring and surveillance and the overthrow of the established norms of authority, watchfulness and

security, in the sense that living in the eye of the camera or the tape of the recorders means that "a person, people, institutions and organizations are no longer insular and immune. Everyone now has to watch their back, literally, as people can learn how to play at being their own witness" (Dennis 2008: 2-3).

The underlying attempt of formulating the counter-technique of surveillance as such is to provide space for the realization of reciprocity of traceability and accountability, as well as of balancing the field of power. "For the sousveillance movement" writes Cascio "if the question is 'Who watches the watchmen?'; the answer is: 'All of us'" (Cascio 2005).[17]

3.3 Volunteer as Surveiller and Sousveiller

In his monitoring activity, the volunteer is both in a surveilling and sousveilling position. In other words, depending on his positioning vis-à-vis that which he gazes over, his gaze operates through both surveillance and sousveillance. Decisive in this is the way he conceives himself in relation to the way he conceives the polling station and its embedded elements. This particular way is characterized by the two attributes of the monitoring position: impartiality and lawfulness.

As was revealed before while discussing the maintenance of the aesthetic distance in the spectatorship of the volunteer, the monitoring position in the electoral setup is one that is not individually based. The volunteer, in other words, while conceiving his particular position, does not reiterate the individual identity he holds outside of the polling station but reinvests himself as a being intelligible only within the electoral

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[17] An emergent field that attracts growing interest in this regard is that of citizen journalism, which is characterized by the transformation of people into their own journalists, collecting and sharing information simultaneously through their mobile phones and social network accounts. The launching of various national and international social projects and campaigns can be incorporated in the discussion through this line, such as 'The Witness Project' initiated with the slogan "See it, Film It, Change It" in 1992; the organization 'Not On Our Watch' founded in 2008 and the citizens' communication and news portal 'Seyr-i Sokak' (a rough translation can be 'the watch of the street') in Turkey, which began broadcasting shortly after the first days of the Gezi Protests in 2013; just to mention a few. What these initiatives and further ones alike bear in common is the purpose of exposing, through video footage news coverage, human rights abuses around the world and at home, and making these public and available to the people as well as to appropriate authorities.

setup, conditioned by the central motivation of impartiality in the sense of being devoid of constraining and constrained identities. In that, as was suggested before, he conveys a more devoted and authentic presence than the polling clerks, which elevates him from an impotent status to an influential one even when he lacks the official authority and warrant they hold. The volunteer's capacity to influence, in this regard, is initially reinforced by the inner motivation of impartiality.

The second and complementary source of his empowerment is the law. According to the interviews, the legally-entitled status of the volunteer braced up the respondents in many regards, and provided them the courage to appear in the polling station together with and despite the official polling clerks. Law was the particular force that grounded the potency of the volunteer in the electoral setup and in that, it yielded him a power that cannot be contested or objected to by individual persons, be it the remaining polling clerks or the electorate. This is not to suggest that the position of the volunteer is more lawful than that of the latter. The essential implication of lawfulness is to prevent the ranking of any position within the electoral setup, and equalizing individual differences on a terrain in which nobody is capable of standing out with privileges or handicaps. Law, in that sense, renders the volunteer to become more than an individual person. A respondent puts what is implied in this as follows:

> You stand in a position from where you can address every party, that's where your power comes from. When a party observer raises an objection that's the same as yours, even when he is right, the other one can object to him for no reason and there might occur tension. Also, the observers from all positions, the officials, they all turned to me and waited for me to say yes, they waited for me to approve any process. Because you're independent, you have credibility. You have no interest either, you've dedicated your time. Therefore, your position carries some weight.

Immediately revealed by this is the conclusion that the volunteer's legal presence not only capacitates him to address, but also renders him an agent to be addressed. The activity he carries out, observation, therefore does not go unnoticed but bears implications to be reciprocated, the most manifest of which was the rendering of polling clerks more attentive and accountable. Almost every respondent in some way mentioned that it turned out to be an important thing for the polling clerks to have the

volunteers confirm that which was being executed, even when they did not completely make sense of what the volunteer stood for. A respondent, for instance, communicates her impression as follows:

> The local party representatives felt like they were being audited, as if the central office had sent an inspector. They were showing us every step they took, they wanted to ensure our approval. One of them even said: "Make sure that you stop by the other polling station as well, we have a representative there too".

Revealed by the polling clerks' effort be seen by the volunteer is that lawfulness not only renders the volunteer visible, but also enables him to intervene with that which is visible and accordingly, empowers him to claim and renew the authenticity of the governed visibility. In that, he ceases to be an individual person and becomes an effect of a rather intangible force, a force that many respondents referred to as 'justice'. A delicately put statement of a respondent, for instance, reads as follows:

> The state of acting within law invokes a sense of caution: everybody becomes more attentive and careful. Perhaps being present there as legal presence bears implications that exceed those of a particular form of authority or sanction. Because you are independent, impartial and lawful; you feel like you are the sword of justice.

It is in this sense that the observation of the volunteer approximates to a mode of surveillance, because his presence in the polling station functions as the materialization of the gaze of law. The influence of the volunteer over the polling clerks did not derive from the eyes of the volunteer themselves, but emerged out of a gaze whose location couldn't be grasped by the polling clerks; for if one sees the eye, he cannot see the gaze, as Sartre argues (as cited in Olin 1995: 218). The gaze of law embedded in the volunteer's position operationalizes the visibility of the polling clerks so as to reinforce normalizing rules and roles on them, and in that, the volunteer produces a disciplinary effect. The surveilling character the volunteer's position, however, is concurrently suspended, by virtue of the fact his eyes are also seen, that is, his gaze is materially gazed back, and that, it is not invisible. This is the particular point where sousveillance gains relevancy in understanding the effect of the volunteer in the electoral setup.

Implications of sousveillance emerge not out of the immediacy of the relationship between the volunteer and the polling clerks as in the case of surveillance, but in a rather abstract sense, out of the very creation of the monitoring position. The production of a such position through civil initiative confronts and mirrors the conception of and bureaucratic organization around elections, and exposes the deficits in it by filling an overlooked void – the void left behind the citizen. When the citizen chooses to appear in the electoral setup as a volunteer, that is, with an identity other than the electorate identity, he implicitly communicates that his appearance in the political realm as electorate is not sufficiently visible. In other words, within the one distinct setting (that of elections) in which the citizen is assumingly the most empowered (through his decisive vote), he prefers to undertake an unsubscribed and unconventional role and in that, he challenges the assumed empowerment and capacity of the political visibility granted to him through elections. By appropriating the ultimate tool of maintenance of political visibility, the monitoring position uses it in a way slightly different than how it is foreclosed by the established norms of authority, and asks "don't you see the void?". In making his claim, the volunteer uses the very medium through which the reasons behind the claim are fabricated. The employment of a counter-technique for the purpose leaking into, interfering with, cracking and unfolding the conditions of political visibility through appropriating its primary bearer is what constitutes the sousveilling aspect of the volunteer's position. Complementary to its surveillance aspect that hinges upon the generation of pressure and discipline through the volunteer's carriage of the gaze of law, its sousveillance aspect runs through the strategical confiscation of the electoral setup in order to demand traceability and accountability.

Despite the obvious direction they add to the perspective of this study, the notions of surveillance and sousveillance meet only a limited extent of what lacked in the unfolding of the notion of spectatorship: the visibility of the people. Surveillance does bring the visibility of the citizen into the play, but subjects it to power and covers it only in negative terms, implying that the visibility in question is not managed and governed by the citizen. Sousveillance, on the other hand, while interfering with the unbalanced power relationship characteristic to the asymmetrical nature of

surveillance (Mann, Nolan and Wellman 2003) and challenging the visibility of those who render themselves invisible, still says little about the citizen who is already always visible and has no control over being so. Surveillee's deployment of techniques to surveil the surveiller does not necessarily neutralize his own condition of being surveilled, meaning that through sousveillance, citizen does not acquire the capacity to manage his visibility but to achieve instances and occasions of intervention with the grid of visibility.

In parallel with this, while surveillance and sousveillance turn out to be of relevance for the case of the volunteer in terms of explaining the conditions, possibilities and relationalities underlying his visibility, they fall short of providing a ground on which the capacity of the volunteer to be visible in a way that occasionally exceeds the implications of the grid of visibility in which he is rendered visible, that is, his capacity to *appear* can be discussed. The findings of the interviews suggest that the volunteer is not only visible but also apparent, that is, he not only conforms to the grid of visibility but also makes an appearance there that does not necessarily reiterate and cite its constitutive logic. Implied by this is neatly put by a respondent as follows:

> This position has been created with civil initiative when there was no such position. It seems to obey, it seems like it is something aimed at obedience, but if it succeeds in opening that position there, then there is a counter labour behind it. Therefore it is aimed at moving the mechanism or at re-shaping it. Like adding one more piece to chess. It is not exactly civil obedience, for civil obedience is negative. Here it is the opposite, it is productive, it is an effort to create. It does not only say that "I do not accept this"; it also says "I accept that instead".

This point adds a further ocular trajectory to be incorporated in the narrative of this thesis, that of appearance. In the following section, after briefly distinguishing appearance from visibility, I will trace the implications of it predominantly through the thought of Arendt, so as to concurrently reveal why it is of relevance for the attempt to understand yet another dimension of the monitoring position.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS AND APPEARANCE

4.1 Prologue to Appearance

To appear, according to Oxford Dictionary of English, is defined as "to come into sight, to become visible or noticeable, especially without apparent cause". The connotations of the term are at odds with those of visibility, in the sense that it *comes* into sight, not *resides* in it; or *becomes* visible, instead of coming to be, or *being* visible already. It is not devoid of the obligation to reiterate the grid of vision in order to be visually intelligible, i.e., to be visible; but it *enters* into vision 'without apparent cause', instead of being rendered by it through apparent relations of causality.

Appearance is of performative nature, and in making that claim Butler's conception of performativity can be addressed. In her description of gender performativity, Butler defines gender not as a being but doing, and performativity as both the processes of being acted on and the conditions and possibilities of acting. This is to suggest that in order for one to make sense of his gender, he has to make reference to and reiterate the regulatory regimes of the heterosexual matrix and the grid of cultural intelligibility, within whose borders sex, gender and desire are maintained (Butler 1993). It is important to distinguish that in performativity, it is not the agent who reiterates but the process of reiteration that makes one an agent. In this, gender performativity is enactment; it is concerned not with the subject but its creation and it assumes an ongoing subjectivity. The actor of performativity, in other words, is in the process of being established, it is not preexistent and this is precisely what opens up the possibilities of acting through non-iteration. This is not to suggest that performativity resists reiteration, but that it conducts reiteration in a way that generates both silence and voice. Butler writes:

> The performativity of gender presumes a field of appearance in which gender appears, and a scheme of recognizability within which gender shows up in the ways that it does; and since the field of appearance is regulated by norms of recognition that are themselves hierarchical and exclusionary, the performativity of gender is thus bound up with the differential ways in which subjects become eligible for recognition. Recognizing a gender depends fundamentally on whether there is a mode of presentation for that gender (…). As much as that is true, it is also true that gender can sometimes appear in ways that draw upon, rework or even break with established conditions of appearance, breaking with existing norms or importing norms from unanticipated cultural legacies. Even as norms seem to determine which genders can appear and which cannot, they also fail to control the sphere of appearance, operating more like absent or fallible police than effective totalitarian powers (2015: 39).

Positing the performative character of appearance is to suggest that appearance as a notion 'appears' with possibilities while being grounded in visibility, which is an unfolding particularly valued by Arendt. Through a differently-oriented conception of power and with her notion of space of appearance, Arendt argues that visibility not only subjects to but also generates power. Arendt's contribution to the particular focus of this study will be uncovering a further dimension of the monitoring position, Butler would then complement the points made by Arendt, by investing in appearance a bodily dimension. While Foucault's framework is of relevance in understanding the discursive correspondence of the monitoring position with regard to political visibility and in analyzing the relationship between the volunteers and the polling clerks in terms of the surveillance and sousveillance moments embedded in the monitoring activity; Arendt's framework will provide a basis on which the public character emergent in the polls out of the relationship between the volunteers, the polling clerks and the electorate can be discussed. This public character is the result of the emergence of a space of appearance within the polls in which people could appear to each other as equal citizens.

4.2. Arendt on Visibility and Appearance

The thought of Arendt and the conceptual vocabulary she deploys in order to convey her understanding of politics is highly transitive and interreferential, implying that before the particular discussion on visibility which she allocates considerable

emphasis in her works, one needs to figure out what she means when she articulates notions like power, freedom and action. Arendt's configuration of visibility and its culmination in the notion of space of appearance is of primary relevance in terms of understanding the public character emergent in the polling stations due to the opening up of the space of appearance by the volunteer, which is why at the expense of diving somewhat deep in her thought and instantly diverging from the original scope of this study, I find it necessary to portray how she establishes her overall political thought.

4.1.1. Arendtian Power

Arendt's definition of power and the particularity of choice of words in its establishment foreshadow and give away the essentials of her political thought, and therefore stands out as a yielding starting point. In similar lines with Foucault, while conceiving power Arendt rejects the liberal imaginary that posits power as a property to be possessed; and understands it rather in relational terms. Notwithstanding this, in contrast to Foucault's definition of power that conceives it as a relation among multiple forces out of which the subject emerges as a consequence, Arendt incorporates the subject in the discussion in a slightly different and central way, and thinks of relationality primarily in terms of the subject's relating to others. Arendt defines power as "the human capacity not just to act but to act in concert with others in order to create something new" (1970: 44), implying that "a group of people joining together in order to advance a certain issue is a manifestation of power" (Gordon 2002: 134). The adoption of the word 'group' is not to suggest an analytical unit, in the sense that it does not correspond to a category constituted by the sum of preexisting individuals. It is rather a mode of relating emergent only in action in concert with others, leading to that acting in concert "is what keeps the public realm" (Arendt 1958: 200). Concurrently, the emphasis on 'not just to act but to act in concert' in the definition of power implies that the group, or to put it in rather informed terms, the public rendered by the group is also what renders power emergent: "Power is never the property of an individual. It belongs to a group and remains in existence only in so long as the group keeps together" (Arendt 1970: 44). The recognition that "power can only appear in the public space and its appearance creates the public domain" (Gordon 2002: 134) would

gain essential relevancy in her conception of the public space, which will be discussed in length in the sections to come.

Another term employed in the definition of power is equally worthy of reflection, that of *capacity*, in the sense that Arendt keenly formulates power not as 'action in concert' but as 'the capacity to act in concert', and that this difference is indicative of her divergence from Foucault. While prioritizing relationality, Arendt's conception of power still lingers in association with the subject due to her insistence on the notion of capacity, for capacity is always a capacity *of* something. The capacity in question, however, is not one that enables, conditions, configures and frames action in entirety by itself, but one defined in terms of an openness, of the possibility of unfolding inherent in all humans. What capacitates it is not the subject *per se*, but rather the mode of relating, the state of being in concert with others; meaning that this capacity is not predesignated by the possibilities of the subject but it is itself a possibility to emerge and be realized only when the subject is in concert with others, in the shared realm of humanness. The subject gains relevancy in the Arendtian conception of power by virtue of not governing but owning this capacity. The capacity in question is not opened up *by* the subject, but opens up the subject in such a way to signal and disclose an underlying potentiality in him; a potentiality which Arendt traces through what she calls 'the human condition'. It is this line of thought that enables Arendt to celebrate the power made possible by collective action, for it derives from and invests in a capacity of human beings that has the opportunity "to break away and disrupt the hold of Foucauldian power" (Gordon 2002: 134).

This is not to suggest that Arendt advocates humans' possibility of straightforward exit from power's web simply because they are "intrinsically autonomous, self-legislating beings" (Isaac cited in Gordon 2002: 135) capable of making any decision they will to make, as liberal idealists would argue. Neither does it posit that the human condition only enables and liberates: Arendt is well aware that it at the same time constraints and delimits, in the sense that "one cannot conceive of an action outside the human condition" (Gordon 2002: 135). Yet, she insists that the conditions of human existence never entirely exhaust the above-mentioned capacity that opens up the subject and

"can never 'explain' what we are or answer the question of who we are, for the simple reason that they never condition us absolutely" (1958: 11) Arendt can make this claim because she derives from "an ontological understanding of human as both free and having the propensity to act" (Gordon 2002: 135). While doing so, what she means by freedom is informed by Heidegger's ontology.

4.1.1.1. Freedom

According to Heidegger, the essence of freedom is defined not in connection with human will or causality of human will in some sort (Heidegger 1993: 330); but as the possibility of engaging in the disclosure of being. In 'On the Essence of Truth', Heidegger writes:

> Freedom is not merely what common sense is content to let pass under this name: the caprice, turning up occasionally in our choosing, of inclining in this or that direction. Freedom is not mere absence of constraint with respect to what we can and cannot do. Nor is it on the other hand mere readiness for what is required and necessary (and so somehow a being). Prior to all this ('negative' and 'positive' freedom), freedom is engagement in the disclosure of beings as such (1993a: 216).

> Man does not "possess" freedom as a property. At best, the converse holds: freedom (…) possesses man – so originally that only it secures for humanity that distinctive relatedness to being as a whole as such which first founds all history (ibid).

In maintaining this, Heidegger sets forth his ontological understanding of Being in contrast with the ontic conception of being-as-presence, and urges upon the conception that Being "can never be fully defined or captured, since it always withdraws, remaining partially concealed" (Gordon 2002: 135). Being, on the other hand, also reveals itself, because it is in itself a clearing (Lichtung); and it is this clearing that capacitates humans to engage in the disclosure of Being, for humans are "the site which being requires in order to disclose itself". Freedom, situated in the clearing, "receives its own essence from the more original essence of uniquely essential truth" (Heidegger 1993a: 215), bringing about that "to be human and to be free are one and the same" (Heidegger cited in Gordon 2002: 136). Arendt's designation of freedom as a state of being subscribes to the Heideggerian conception of the term, and is

considered to enable humans to transcend life's necessities, which would be gaining essential relevance in her conceptualization of the public domain.

In asserting that freedom leads to action in a such way to generate resistance as well, Arendt makes use of two additional notions, those of plurality and natality, which she considers as ontological attributes that act as the conditions of possibility of power.

4.1.1.2. Plurality and Natality

The notion of plurality corresponds to a particular conception of togetherness, of being in the world with others on which power depends, in the sense that power "springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse" (Arendt 1958: 200). With reference to Heidegger's "being-with-others" which posits that "the world is never just the world around one, it is always also the world we share with others" (cited in Gordon 2002: 136), Arendt asserts that "human plurality is the basic condition of both action and speech" (1958: 107), and accordingly of power, because the realization of power in the form of action in concert necessitates "the presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear" (Arendt 1977: 183). However, while implying togetherness, plurality manifests itself in a two-fold character of equality and distinction (Arendt 1958: 175), or to put it differently, of sameness and uniqueness. What Arendt implies by this is that "we are all the same, that is, human in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who lives, lived or live" (Arendt 1957: 108).

The second notion of natality comes into play so as to parallel this duality of human condition and disclose why within this togetherness of sameness and equality there still prevails an individuating effect, a uniqueness and distinction that enable people to perform differently. Natality refers to "the human capacity to create something new, a capacity that enables humans to sustain their uniqueness throughout their lives" (Gordon 2002: 138). Arendt traces the roots of this capacity in the fact of birth, and asserts that "the new beginning in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting" (Arendt 1958: 9). The capacity of beginning something anew is one shared by all

humans, because human itself is a beginning. The beginning inherent in birth derives from humans' ontological condition of being the site of disclosure of Being. As Being never completely reveals itself but also conceals and withdraws in a way that always maintains a difference, the beginning inherent in birth and the capacity to begin something anew, i.e., natality is situated in this difference:

> Birth of individual men, being new beginning, re-affirms the original character of man in such a way that origin can never become entirely a thing of the past; the very fact of the memorable continuity of these beginnings in the sequence of generations guarantees a history which can never end because it is the history of beings whose essence is beginning (Arendt 1994: 321).

As a wrap-up, natality corresponds to the fact of birth which signifies the human essence of beginning, and plurality corresponds to "living as a distinct and unique human being among equals" (Gordon 2002: 138). As such, both attributes but plurality in particular is intrinsically related to the connection between visibility and power in the thought of Arendt.

The human condition of plurality can be best understood in tandem with intersubjectivity. In order to be-in-the-world-with-others, one needs to be *for* the others as well as *because of* the others, in a world they together agree to be *with* each other. One's reality and experience of the world is dependent "upon the recognition and confirmation of others" (Parekh cited in Gordon 2002: 136), for without those *who see what we see and hear what we hear,* the world's reality cannot be assured. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt writes:

> The great forces of intimate life – the passions of the heart, the thought of the mind, the delights of senses – lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless they are transformed, deprivatized and deinvidiualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance (1958: 50).

Through emphasis on the intersubjective generation of reality and meaning and its underpinning of the human condition of plurality, Arendt makes reference to the condition that individuals need to be visible to each other, and that only within a shared visibility can the togetherness of the individuals which defines their being in the world

can be attained. In return, only through being with others and togetherness can visibility be intersubjectively generated, not in isolation. Visibility therefore becomes the condition of possibility of plurality and vice versa, and since plurality is what underlies power, power is inevitably dependent on visibility. In this, Arendt doesn't drift apart from Foucault, in the sense that they both agree on the function of visibility vis-à-vis power. In terms of designating the source of visibility, however, while Foucault seeks it in its circular, dialectical relationship with power in which power both produces and depends on visibility; Arendt traces it in the human condition of plurality (Gordon 2002: 137).

4.1.2. Being and Appearance

In 'The Life of the Mind' (1977) Arendt asserts that the world is of phenomenal nature; it is a phenomenal space created by men, meaning that "the world, the real of which the human condition is a part, is described in terms of space of appearance" (1958: 199). In positing a phenomenal nature to the world, Arendt counters the metaphysical dichotomy of true Being and mere Appearance, and challenges "the age-old theoretical supremacy of Being and Truth over mere appearance, that is, the supremacy of the *ground* that does not appear over the *surface*" (1977: 25). Arendt addresses this as a metaphysical fallacy, in the sense that by separating Being from Appearance, it overlooks an essential attribute of Appearance that connects it to Being: that "not only do appearances never reveal what lies beneath them of their own accord but also, generally speaking, they never just reveal; they also conceal" (1977: 25). Appearance always implies that which does not appear, and the possibility of this implication is dependent on appearance, meaning that this implication can be extracted from nowhere if it is not from appearance. The surface does not only cover, hide or conceal the ground, but also presupposes the existence of it and in that sense, reveals it. The ground-ness of the ground can emerge only through the surface-ness of the surface. In this Arendt once more parallels the ontological understanding of Heidegger that considers Being to always conceal and withdraw but at the same time to reveal and clear itself. As Being is itself a clearing, so is Appearance itself Being. Hence "in this world which we enter, appearing from a nowhere, and from which we disappear into

a nowhere, Being and Appearance coincide" (1977: 19). For instance, this is a conception explicit in the Greek culture prior to Plato, which regarded the image as "an actualization or 'presentification' of what it represents", as Potolsky argues. With reference to Vernant, he maintains that "archaic statues of gods were understood not simply as illusionistic depictions of a deity but as an actual revelation of a divinity that would otherwise be invisible" (2006: 16). [18]

Dismantling the theoretical fallacy of distinguishing Being from Appearance is of importance for Arendt not merely for the sake of theory, but for its recognition of our relationship to the world as humans, a relationship characterized by being not *in* the world, but *of* the world; in the sense that the otherwise would assume us to be "godlike creatures thrown into the world to look after it or enjoy it and be entertained by it, but still in possession of some other region as our natural habitat" (1977: 22). We are, however:

> of the world and not merely in it, we, too, are appearances by virtue of arriving and departing, of appearing and disappearing; and while we come from a nowhere, we arrive well equipped to deal with whatever appears to us and to take part in the play of the world" (ibid).

With reference to Merlau-Ponty's "I can flee being only into being", Arendt writes: "I can flee appearance only into appearance" (ibid. 23).

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[18] Though in utterly different manners and yet a somewhat similar way, this is also what happens in a theatrical experience: to the spectator, that which appears on stage is truthful, even when it is obviously not reality. The spectator doesn't need to remind himself that those who appear on stage are actually not Hamlet or Richard III, neither does he criticize and judge them for representing themselves as Hamlet or Richard III. The world of the play can be established and the aesthetic distance can be kept only insofar as the spectator does not seek anything behind the appearance of actors on stage; and the spectator can manage to do so only insofar as the actors maintain their appearance in consistency, without leaving room for any further appearance that might complicate this unity. Instant flaws during the play – when actors forget their lines or combat with technical problems, for instance – bother the spectator not because he expects perfection from the performance he views, but because they add a secondary layer of appearance behind the apparent one; that is, because they bring the actor who personifies Hamlet next to Hamlet and because they make the two incompatible appearances linger together; thus cracking the truth established in the moment of the theatrical act. Theatrical experience, in other words, can be achieved only when the spectacle is treated not as the surface but as the ground under which no secondary truth exists. The overlap of being and appearance, in this regard, is the prerogative of performance arts.

Political implications of the separation of being and appearing are severe, particularly because in the most fundamental sense it detaches the political from the human being as well as from the truth. Tavani discusses these implications in two regards: first, according to Tavani, the separation brings about a neutralization of the political character of history. With reference to Arendt, she writes;

> If we admit an 'logic of history' behind us", that is, a logic of history embedded in a logic of truth that guides the events of history devoid of how things come to appear politically, "we deprive 'the political nature of history' of any power, turning it into a theatre of forces or ideas, rather than of actions and initiatives" (2013: 468).

By virtue of this, the following implication is the idea that "absolute truth has no relation with human existences, and, so, still less with politics" (ibid).

The political project of Arendt is informed by and directed towards the predicaments of the misguided employment of appearance in politics. The need, for her, is

> to discover the premises and assert the truth of opinion, seizing the truth that is in each doxa and 'speaking in a such way' that the truth contained in each person's opinion 'is revealed to him and to others'" (Arendt cited in Tavani 2013: 468-469).

Almost every notion made use of by Arendt, including but not limited to power, action, speech, plurality and natality, act as the conceptual leverages of her political project of rendering each person's opinion revealed to him and others; and interlock in her effort to conceive of the space of appearance in the form of public space as the ultimate space of politics in which the possibility of human integrity can be invested. In the next section, I will focus more precisely on Arendt's conceptualization of space of appearance vis-à-vis public space along with the political postulates it elevates.

4.1.2.1. Space of Appearance

The "space of appearance" is for Arendt "the space where I appear to others as others appear to me" (1958: 198-199), and in that, it is the most fundamental dimension of the world. Arendt considers the appearance of human beings in performative terms, because performance embodies perception, in the sense that "there is no such thing as

a performance without being watched and interaction" (Borren 2010: 164). "Men as citizens make their appearance in the human world", writes Arendt, "through acting and speaking" (1958: 179). Action and speech, the two modes through which human beings appear to each other and insert themselves into the world, are what renders a space of appearance:

> The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized (Arendt 1958: 199).

Even though the notion of space of appearance resonates with that of public space in many regards, Arendt refrains from directly employing the latter term for two reasons: First, a straightforward address to the notion of public space presumes that public space is given, is recognized as such and that it is already public. The notion of public space, by itself, says little about what renders its public character, and easily lends itself to the 'formal constitution of the public realm' in the form of arrangements and institutions. In relation to this, secondly, Arendt's particular effort is to rethink public space not as a location to which action and speech are tied, but as an emergence brought about by action and speech. This is not to suggest that action does not occur in spaces, but that "these spaces may not be 'physical' spaces in any obvious sense" (Marquez 2011: 6) and even when they are, physical spaces achieve to be public only through plural action. Space of appearance as a notion is operationalized for the purpose of restoring and maintaining this public character.

Accordingly, political praxis for Arendt is not that which takes place on stage but that which is 'spectacular': it lies between the people who appear to each other through action and speech. In turn, "action and speech are politically relevant to the extent that they are visible to all" (Borren 2010: 165); when they take place in the plurality of others, when they presuppose an audience and when they participate in a shared visibility in the form of publicity. This constant rotation that renders public appearance is disclosive for Arendt, for it reveals not *what one is*, i.e., "innate qualities and social identity markers" (ibid) but *who one is,* i.e., "the life-long process of individuation;

one's unique and distinct identity" (ibid): "Although human beings are appearances by virtue of being born into a body, that is, a what, or natural man, they need a space of appearance in order to appear as citizens or who they are" (Arendt 1958: 176). As a consequence of all the aforementioned points, public space emerges in Arendt's thought as the space presupposed by disclosive appearance and participatory visibility, and therefore, it is the true realm of the political.

4.1.2.2. Public Sphere

Public sphere has an exclusive role in the thought of Arendt vis-à-vis politics, and is therefore distinguished from private and social spheres, which are also distinguished between themselves. This is a separation Arendt traces from Ancient Greece, and one that she favors theoretically as well as practically, for it also characterizes her political project. According to Arendt, private sphere is associated with what is "given as part of our existence" (Hammer 1997: 322) and what one is, such as one's upbringing or the immediate necessities of life and in that sense, it is one's own. Social sphere corresponds to "groupings of people who see themselves as sharing what had once been considered private characteristics" (ibid). Economic class, social status, race, ethnicity, gender and the like are therefore attributes of the social realm. Public sphere, lastly, is concerned with "characteristics common to all" (ibid), and in that, it determines *who one is*. Essentials of the public realm are therefore visibility, participation, recognition and publicity. Arendt attributes politically relevant appearance only to the public realm, and insists that we cannot appear in private and social spheres. The reason of this non-appearance is that in those spheres, the physical identity of natural man (not man as citizen) appears without any activity of his own" (Arendt 1958: 179), implying that the modes through which appearance can be attained, those of action and speech, lack in private and social spheres. Moreover, the non-appearing quality of private and social spheres is not barely a consequence or insufficiency to be wrested and overcome, it is also and more importantly a requirement. Natural man not only is invisible, but also should be invisible, and in order to appear in a politically significant way one has to leave behind the private sphere and enter the public sphere, that is, seek visibility not in the private or social but the public sphere. Public sphere should be protected from the incursion of private

and social interest, and so should the private sphere from public and social ones, and the social sphere from the private and the public. The exclusive distinction of these spheres and their embodied possibilities of visibility do not situate them within a mere hierarchy. Arendt frequently mentions the indispensability of these realms for each other, and situates them not in contradiction but in harmony.

4.1.2.3. Private Sphere

According to Arendt, private sphere existed as a separate entity from public sphere until the rise of ancient city-state. The reason behind this separation is that, defined primarily in terms of household to which belong "the nurturance of children, the care for our physical necessities, (…), and our emotional and psychic lives" (Borren 2010: 168), private sphere is prepolitical; because its driving force is the maintenance of life itself and in it "men live together because they are driven by their wants and needs (Arendt 1958: 30)". The natural community in the household is "born of necessity, and necessity rules over all activities performed in it" (ibid). According to Arendt, the prepolitical character of private sphere is overlooked in our contemporary understanding and the dividing line between public and private spheres "is entirely blurred because we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping" (Arendt 1958: 28). In contradistinction with this, what is needed is to keep private sphere apart from public sphere, and there are two fundamental reasons of this necessity: first, since the activities and identities of private sphere concern life itself, they "need protection from the public eye" (Borren 2010: 168); from the potential risks borne by public visibility. Second, since private sphere is driven by the force of immediate necessity and since necessity is "primarily a prepolitical phenomenon" for Arendt, one cannot conceive of neither politics nor freedom in private sphere.

The public sphere, on the other hand, which Arendt traces from the *polls* of ancient Greece and conceives as the space of appearance rendered by the collective, participant action and speech of men, is the space of freedom and politics, because underlying it is a principle of equality in which citizens relate to each other freely, as citizens:

The polls were distinguished from the household in that it knew only "equals", whereas the household was the center of strictest inequality. To be free meant both not to be subject to the necessity of life or to the command of another and not to be in command oneself. It means neither to rule nor to be ruled. Thus, within the realm of the household, freedom did not exist, for the household head, its ruler, was considered to be free only in so far as he had the power to leave the household and enter the political realm, where all were equals. To be sure, this equality of the political realm has very little in common with our concept of equality: it meant to live among and to have to deal only with one's peers (…). Equality, therefore, far from being connected with justice, as in modern times, was the very essence of freedom: to be free meant to be free from the inequality present in rulership and to move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed" (1958: 32-33).

Invisibility of the private sphere is therefore favored by Arendt, because private sphere has nothing to offer to the political, for it "operates by the principles of exclusiveness in which we are guided by personal principles that cannot be articulated publicly or necessarily rationally" (Hammer 1997: 323), which belies the very meaning of the political in terms of disclosure, performance, interaction, participation and recognition in her understanding. Just as visibility belongs to the public sphere, invisibility belongs to the private; its function is nowhere less valued or taken for granted, but only in the private sphere can it realize its prerogative. And more importantly, only when invisibility of the private sphere is attained can visibility be achieved in the public sphere. Arendt elaborates on the dual relationship of private and public spheres in terms of invisibility and visibility with the metaphorical pair of light and darkness. As light is not the absence of darkness but on the contrary, is possible only *with* and *because of* darkness, so is visibility in the public sphere relevant and possible only with and because of the invisibility of the private. And in order for the darkness to disperse, it needs light: the darkness of the private sphere, in which "without the presence of others, the solitary individual gets absorbed in the shadowy realm and gets 'caught in contradictions and equivocalities, and 'deadly conflicts'" (Borren 2010: 169), can be illuminated only with the public sphere, with the light it sheds through the presence of others.

Arendt has frequently been criticized for maintaining and mobilizing an eventually liberal idea in her distinction between private and public spheres, in the sense that certain liberal thinkers also celebrate "the value of protecting privacy and individual

freedom, thought as autonomy, against politics, thought as state interference" (Borren 2016: 170). The two positions, however, are fundamentally divergent. In liberal thinking, pursued is an eventual liberation from politics which is understood as a source of bondage, whereas for Arendt the ultimate aim is to achieve and engage with politics, which is to her a source of freedom rather than a constraint on it.

4.1.2.4. Social Sphere

The motives of the liberal imaginary to separate public and private spheres and the features of this separation correspond rather to what social sphere stands for in the thought of Arendt. While disavowing the political character of the social sphere as well, she maintains an utterly radical understanding of the social sphere. Arendt considers the social sphere as "a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its political form in the nation-state" (1958: 28). To her, social sphere, or what she also refers as 'society', is "the enrichment of private sphere through modern individualism", driven by the function of sheltering the intimate (ibid. 38). It corresponds to the "emergence of society – rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems and organizational devices – from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere" (ibid. 38) and in that, it not only blurs the boundaries of the public and private spheres but also changes their meaning beyond recognition. Social sphere, as an extension of private sphere and a claim to public sphere, however, not only falls short of meeting the requirements of public sphere but also undermines, twists and distorts it very elements. Social sphere excludes the possibility of action, because it replaces action with behavior as "the foremost mode of human relationship" (ibid. 41), in the sense that "society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to "normalize" its member, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (ibid. 40). A social identity dwelling in the social sphere is one focused solely on particular aspects of life, it allows particular interests and opinions, and in that sense, it occludes the human condition of plurality out of which action and speech emerge. The equality it presumes implies a barren state of belonging to "few equals", in the sense that "the victory of equality in the modern world is only the political and legal recognition of the fact that society has

conquered the public realm, and that distinction and difference have become private matters of the individual" (ibid. 41). In that, social sphere vastly drifts apart from the spirit of public sphere, which is "reserved for individuality" as "the only place where man can show who they really interchangeably are" (ibid. 41), because in the social sphere "what matters is not personal distinction but the differences by which people belong to certain groups whose very identifiability demands that they discriminate against other groups in the same domain" (Hammer 1997: 323). The social sphere is characterized by the conformism that emerges out of the narrowly defined state of equality in which men do not act with respect to each other but only behave, i.e., unanimously follow certain patterns of behavior. According to Arendt, this understanding lies at the root not only of the modern science of economy, whose birth coincides with the rise of society, but also of statistics, which concurrently became the social science par excellence (1958: 42). The social sphere, in that sense, can suggest only the *progress* of mankind, rather than the *achievements* of men (Arendt 1958: 49).

Arendt's understanding of social sphere and her disavowal of its political character might appear to be problematic primarily in two regards, which have also been mentioned by her critiques: first, in her search for plural action she undermines the "difference emerging out of cultural situatedness" and second, she underestimates how "our identities are themselves shaped by political relations of power" (Hammer 1997: 321). Yet, as Hammer argues, what Arendt maintains is not a formulation of politics devoid of identity, but the reformulation of the relationship between politics and identity in a such way to render identity politically relevant. What Arendt suggests is not the dismissal of social and accordingly, private identities, for they make possible our visibility in public life at least in two fundamental ways: first, they are "a crucial aspect of our being at 'home in the world': a belongingness that makes possible our appearance in and discussion about a common world" (Hammer 1997: 322) – a belongingness, Arendt exemplifies, that lacked for the Jews during the Holocaust. Second, "private and social identities of others become important in the formation of political judgment, as we form our judgments out of not only what is contingent but what is shared, by 'visiting' other perspectives" (ibid). Arendt is cautious about not social identity per se, but its usage as a category of thinking, i.e., when it is

"ideological" (ibid); because identity as such does not arise out of human experience and therefore cannot fold into political action, implying that it cannot give us visibility in the space of appearance. Arendt explains this point with the following passage:

> If a Negro in a white community is considered a Negro and nothing else, he loses along with his right to equality that freedom of action which is specifically human; all his deeds are now explained as "necessary" consequences of some "Negro" qualities; he has become some specimen of an animal species, called man (cited in ibid. 323).

Underlying this is the understanding that issues of identity are givens of our existence and therefore cannot form the basis of our appearance in the world as distinct individuals. Identity politics is problematic insofar that it "applies group categories to the plurality of human experience" (ibid. 329). What is necessary, however, is conceiving a notion of identity "that is situated without being 'self-authorizing'" (ibid. 322). In order to remain politically relevant, identity must recognize its relationship to the plurality of the world. Only then the struggle for identity relates to the larger struggle to appear as oneself in the world (ibid. 329-330); and only then the larger struggle to appear as oneself in the world already maintains the struggle for identity. According to Arendt, neither the denial nor the promotion of identity, implying that neither assimilation nor identity politics can serve for the goal of emancipation, because "the point of emancipation is to provide for one's freedom as a citizen, a freedom that allows one to be publicly visible" (Hammer 1997: 330). What follows is the conclusion that for Arendt, at stake is not the denial of that the personal is political; but the warning that the political is not personal.

The foregrounding of public space in the thought of Arendt in contradistinction with private and social spheres underpins her fundamental project of conceiving politics primarily in terms of participant visibility, within the space of appearance rendered by men's shared visibility to each other. The disclosure of the "who", and not the "what" of individuals rests upon their appearance through action and speech among others to whom they relate as equal citizens; and since being and appearance coincide, implying that prior to our appearance among others there is no unitary self to be conscious of,

the self cannot be discovered in private. To make an appearance in the world, therefore, is the foremost condition and objective of politics.

4.2. Elections as a Space of Appearance

Arendt's train of thought and the particular perspective she offers upon visibility provides a theoretical vocabulary through which the implications of the monitoring position can be further complicated.

First, the patterns extracted out of the interviews suggest that along with occasionally becoming a spectactatorial stage, a space of surveillance and a space of sousveillance, the electoral setting was a space of appearance par excellence, by virtue of that in it the volunteers not only pursued to be granted visibility by a certain authority, but also found an occasion to appear to their fellow citizens: an occasion increasingly jeopardized by both the aforementioned political narrowing and its parallel process of polarization. It was in one way or another mentioned in each interview that the respondents defined the current governing force of the society primarily in terms of an irreconcilable polarization. The polarization, however, not merely corresponded to the segregation of the society into two distinct ends. It was rather produced out of the capacity of one end to define the other always in relation to its own self, that is, as its counterpart. As was stressed by a respondent in the previous chapter, embedded in this is the unfolding of politics not as a productive force able to set in motion the interaction and conflict of diverse agendas but as a repetitive and imposing process that lingers upon only a particular and seemingly authoritative agenda with reference to whose terms and vocabulary all the remaining demands, claims and stances are delineated. Politics as such becomes a dark room within which nothing and nobody but the room itself is visible, that is, it assumes a form of tension that lacks address and response. While a consequence of this for certain respondents was aloofness from politics, of one of whom it reminded only "parliamentary discussion, fighting people and flying chairs", for certain others who aspired to somehow maintain their relationship to it, it became nothing more than a reiterative practice that lacks "new beginnings" in Arendt's sense of the term. A respondent puts this as follows:

> Why did people grow sensitive about politics, why do we object to everything and say no? Because lately, everything that's been done in the last 10-20 years reflect on our daily lives as if our previous rights are being taken away. Everything that is being done is a bad version of what used to be going good. Therefore, people are getting more conservative, not in the religious sense, but in terms of holding what they have tightly, more status quoist.

The more severe implication of this unfolding is the inability of opposing inclinations to conceive themselves in their own terms, that is, to make sense of not only their activity but also their position without being the correlative of that which is being opposed. In other words, at stake becomes not only a strategical referentiality in terms of practice but a constitutive one in terms of positioning; implying that while 'what and who they are not' is unequivocal for the opponents, 'who and what they are' remains rather blurred. A respondent describes this with clarity as follows:

> Under contemporary circumstances, everybody or everything falls under the category of 'opponent' or 'critic'. This leads to a certain polarization that separates people as 'them' and 'those who are not them'; not as 'them' and 'us'.

In that, the social dynamic of contemporary Turkey seems to lack every aspect of Arendt's definition of power, for not only the possibility of *acting in concert*, but also *the capacity to create something new* disappear when polarization as such destroys the possibility of achieving plurality, that is, *living as distinct and unique human beings among equals*; in the sense that in an environment where 'us' transforms into 'those who are not them', neither equality nor distinction is intelligible. It follows that political visibility is jeopardized not only by top-down processes that govern the grid of visibility through discourse, but more importantly because of the demolition of the human condition of plurality, in the sense that within the severely polarized and narrowed experience of politics in contemporary Turkey, meaning and reality turn out to be generated not *for* and *because of* but *despite* the presence of others. Politics, that is, *the insertion of people into the world through action and speech* therefore loses its force, because as Arendt reminds, *action and speech are politically relevant to the extent that they are visible to all*, and visibility is possible only in the human condition of plurality.

It leads to the conclusion that before any definite political project, issue, demand or claim, the effort to produce and maintain politics under contemporary circumstances needs to orient itself towards the pursuit of a space in which people can appear to each other. Hinted by this brief discussion is that in addition to the immediate concern for ballot-box safety and the implicit demand to be granted visibility by the authority – however it might be conceived –; the sociopolitical backdrop of the production of a monitoring position through civil initiative is characterized by a pursuit of public, that is, a public sphere in which citizens can appear to each other without the burdens and domination of the concrete political narrowing and polarization.

The loss of the public space, the interruption of the human condition of plurality, and the urge to appear to fellow citizens in a shared realm of togetherness were emergent patterns in the narratives of the respondents as well, three of which put it as follows:

> As far as I could observe, we don't come together on the same values anymore. Ethical and moral value mechanisms are differentiated. Both sides have a system that produces moral values, we need to look at how we can commonize this. There may be momentary closeness but as long as the values are not commonized, it's difficult to merge on a cultural basis.

> There is a general public in Turkey that doesn't know what democracy is. And also, there is a section of society that is more or less educated that knows what democracy is. And because their lifestyles are so different, they don't even talk to one another. This can be seen even in terms of economic activity: people are laying personal embargos on brands, banks etc. This scares me. Because you can, maybe, change a person with deliberation or persuasion; but changing a culture is not an easy thing. It is very difficult and it's not something that can be done by force. Therefore, the cultural differences in Turkey need to accepted and doing something together with these differences needs to be learned. I considered Vote and Beyond as a good step in this direction because I prefer to continue on subjects on which these separated people can somehow agree.

> I think this [separation, loss of public] accelerated gradually after Gezi, regardless of the momentum it brought in. The disappointment it created all of sudden was so big that, with the terrorist attacks and everything, people were pulled away from the streets, they abandoned hope. You are seeing that everywhere is being overtaken, that all the ideological tools are being gathered in one hand, that people are completely separated from one another. You can't believe in something, you can't trust in something, you can't come together, you can't go out on the street. In an environment where all this is happening, you're only given the right to vote.

Bestowed together with the mere right to vote was a space of address and response that could be invested, and the emergence of the monitoring position is very the manifestation of this investment. The electoral setup becomes a space of appearance *par excellence* under the contemporary circumstances of Turkey, because only in it does a principle of equality operate in a such way to enable citizens to relate to each other freely, as citizens whose private and social identities, that is, *innate qualities and social identity markers* are irrelevant. More importantly, it is the only space in which citizens mandatorily appear to each other, along with making an inclination, a projection and a choice apparent. In that, the electoral setting emerges through an inevitably public character, in Arendt's sense of the term. It was interesting to find out that this point was explicitly recognized by the respondents as well. In appreciation of this public character, a respondent notes the following while reflecting on the significance of elections:

> It creates an opportunity for a conversation to take place, a conversation that starts one month before the elections and that still lasts after one month. It gives room for discussing the very character and content of elections, as well as asking questions like "What is elections?", "Is it important?", "Is it really reflective of the society?" and so forth. At least within a two-months period of time, people get to address and recognize each other, and I think even for this, elections is a good opportunity. It provides space for the articulation of political opinions, you express your take on the matter of how should the country be ruled. At least you make an effort to do so. In my opinion, it is an occasion in which you can construct an imagination in your head upon how you want to live. You think about what should and what should not be done, you experience a sort of affectivity. I think there exists no other opportunity to do all these.

The monitoring position is a force that mobilizes this potential public character, through operationalizing the elements of participant visibility, disclosive appearance and recognition embedded in the idea of an electoral setup. The civil effort to convey an alternative, voluntary and impartial presence devoid of immediate interests in the electoral setting, that is, the initiative to undertake not a mandatory but a participant visibility, a self-conceived appearance and a legally framed process of address and response reinvests elections a shared realm of action and speech – however limited the form of them might be – because it introduces a new mode of relating to it. By appearing there 'without no apparent cause' (as would the polling clerks assume,

111

according to the interviews), the volunteer not only sets forth his law-mediated, disciplining gaze but also discloses his own vulnerability, and in that, his presence becomes not only a response to the party representatives, the official polling clerks and the electorate which together represented an authority to be contested, but also an address to the fellow citizens beneath these representations, who are no less equal and yet distinct and unique than the volunteer himself. In that, the physical space of the classroom in the form of a polling station is transformed into a public space of recognition and communication; and elections is made into an event that operates through a principle of not majoritarianism, but collectivity. In a complementary manner, while discussing the effect of the overall activity of Vote and Beyond, a volunteer asserts the following:

> Counter to the commonsensical connotations of elections as an utterly serious event, it made elections linger rather as something that is directed towards life, that is part of life; as something we share on the basis of being human beings.

The emerging public character of the electoral setup was manifest in the accounts of the respondents particularly while they were speaking about their encounters during the election day. A revealed pattern by almost every interview was that being present in the polling stations all through the election day transformed it for the respondents into an occasion in which they could meet and speak with people that they normally wouldn't come side by side. In that, according to the interviews, they found an opportunity to grasp not only the before but also the beneath of the representation through which they came to make sense of these people. On the one hand, the coming in contact revealed that before the attributes of political alignment and stance in the spectrum of polarization, that is, before the elements of their private and social identities; the people – be it the electorate, the party representatives or the official polling clerks – resided in a shared realm of experience, in a plurality that attributed a sense of equality both to them and to the volunteer. A respondent, for instance, narrates her impression on the matter as follows:

> When you move far from the city center, you see that the person who you expect to vote for the same party as you, or the woman who votes for the same party as your mother is not that different from the fanatical woman

112

who votes for the complete opposite in terms of how they look or what they live in the daily. It is not like "us and them" as you would think, and that's actually encouraging.

On the other hand, the encounter revealed what was after the private and social identities as well. Many respondents seemed to be surprised to find out that a private or social identity, or a political alignment that has direct correspondences and connotations for them, could be maintained and articulated by its holder in ways they wouldn't imagine. Direct interaction with the people themselves enabled the respondents to attest to the distinctive and unique ways through which they made sense of who they are, and in that, the respondents were baffled to realize that beneath the social and political identity markers, there is a whole dimension of self-conception of which they formerly and misguidedly expected little. Brought about by this to the volunteer was an opportunity to *understand*, even when that which to be understood was critiqued and remained to be unacceptable and inconsistent. Two respondents narrate a relevant experience of theirs as follows:

> The whole experience made me think about the electorate of the ruling party in a completely different way. Yes, he feels that he is a winner, but he is a recent winner. He is an oppressed winner. Usually from the lower class. He rightfully feels the pride of having a voice. I formerly overlooked that, I expected a rather arrogant profile. I mean, I could understand. That man heard his voice, he became an individual there. Even from the way he spoke, you could understand that. He feels to belong to this place. This is something I now got used to, but back then it was something I came across for the first time.

> I saw that the party representative or the electorate might not always be that stereotypical. The representative of a political party for instance, in a way that I would hardly expect, had neat conversations with me, bantered with me, made jokes. When he learned that I was from Mersin, he even said: "The wine of this region is pretty fine, please fetch me some!". I saw that even if he is the representative of that party, he doesn't live in its foreclosed lifestyle – at least in the lifestyle that the party's policies and premises bring to mind. It made me think that the political polarization in effect for 4-5 years now can be cracked. People are not that divided from each other. Yes, some stand on the extreme ends of the spectrum, but the rest, which corresponds to a considerable number, stand in-between. These are people open to change, they are open to the opinions of other people, they are open to listening to other people, they are open to welcoming them as they are; and therefore they can serve for breaking the polarization. I realized that the polarization was top-down, that it was the consequence of the discourse and deeds of those who produce macro politics. The people themselves are open to dialogue. That representative of the conservative party, for instance, most

probably was not in Gezi, but he was there in the polling station, and there he established a dialogue with me.

This was not the first time that the monitoring experience was compared with the political experience of a different sort, particularly with that of the Gezi Protests. Almost every respondent mentioned that in some way they experienced Gezi, and to all the two experiences were hardly compatible in terms of the mode through which they related to them. While such a comparison is neither analytically feasible (at least in terms of the theoretical tools of this study at hand) nor necessarily relevant for the scope of this thesis, it can still be touched upon that in all accounts, though in different regards, the experience of Gezi was conceived as a more promising one in which the respondents felt more comfortable, more involved and more daring. In order to bridge this to the following point to be made, the narratives of two respondents can be addressed:

> Here (as a volunteer) you are bounded by the terms of your duty, you define yourself within a framework and relate to the event through it. I suppose street demonstrations work rater through your own individuality. They are both modes of producing politics, but one is defined by the law itself while the other is defined as illegal. The latter promotes a sense of freedom, and you go there as an individual. You go to the polling station as an individual as well, but the framework burdens you. You feel the weight of an institutional identity, you feel like you represent Vote and Beyond and that you can't do certain things on individual purposes. You feel more responsible, more organized. On the street, all that you do, you do it yourself and for yourself. There, being organized was rather intuitional: you gather there as people who are frustrated due to similar reasons but nobody addresses the other, nobody forces the other, there is neither a need nor an initiative for that. Here (as a volunteer) it is not this way. You are in a space constrained by law.

> Volunteering is of course a more barren experience. What you dare for in volunteering is a little and limited portion of your political imagination. In terms of the experience of Gezi, you dare more. I think it is more inspiring. When you look at the extent of dare undertaken by the people, you become mesmerized. Daring to volunteer does not excite me as much, everyone can do it if they can spare their time. There is an intersecting set between the two events, there are a certain number of people who wanted to be involved in both, this is interesting. What it shows is that there are a considerable number of people who make an effort to participate, to have a voice.

The final emphasis of the second respondent on the inclusive character of the monitoring experience, that "everyone can do it if they can spare their time", was an

unfolding that didn't go unnoticed by many respondents, and was addressed as an aspect that rendered the potential of the occasion. "There were many people around me" said a respondent; "people that are far from politics, who refrain from talking about politics who don't want to get involved in it or even who get bored about of it; and even these people joined Vote and Beyond". However bounded, legally entitled and unauthentic it might be in terms of working through established terms and frameworks, the monitoring position operationalized a space to which access by every citizen was granted. In that, it urged not upon a collectivity to be formed by and for itself, in its own terms as in street demonstrations, but upon a given state of togetherness concretized in the shared possession of citizenship. Mobilized by the position of the volunteer, therefore, though through a somewhat prefigured methodology, is the human condition of plurality. A respondent notes:

> Vote and Beyond granted an opportunity for people to come together on certain points. It said "here you stand in the same place, you can join together, you can do something together, you can own this place".

The monitoring position therefore addresses not only the people who undertook volunteering duty, but all the people who in some way came in contact with it, be it as a party representative, a polling clerk or the electorate. Its openness to everyone comes to imply that it is open to be not only undertaken but also understood by everyone, by virtue of the aesthetic distance provided by impartiality and lawfulness upon which it urges. It addresses the people with all sorts of private and social identities, and joins them in a common practice that is dependent on their public identities. In that, it also maintains an insight in conceiving a political line based on commons. A respondent, for instance, comments on the matter as follows:

> If we believe in democratic struggle, if we believe in democracy and if we want a democratic view to be in power, we need to take these people along. These people definitely need to be gained in a common practice. I think Vote and Beyond was a means for this too.

According to certain respondents, this political line based on address and response lacks and needs to be incorporated in street demonstrations. While reflecting on Gezi, a respondent for instance, asserted the following:

Activist struggle in Gezi and the political practices that followed generated discomfort in conservative people, because they couldn't draw a political line through a mechanism as such. If there had been a spokesperson to be presented at the time – this was something I back then firmly contested, but now I think the otherwise – and if that spokesperson could address the people with a proper wording and mode of communication, I think the whole process would have proceeded differently.

This is not to suggest that the presumed political line of address and response to be drawn through commons, that is, through a public identity devoid of private and social interests was similarly and adequately in effect for every respondent in their monitoring experience. As a matter of fact, for each respondent it was the case that private and social identities were utterly reflected and used by the polling clerks and the electorate for the purpose of attaining a certain type of hegemony and authority over the polling station. With this, many respondents struggled. A corresponding example, for instance, can be extracted out of the narrative of one:

There was a janitor and a woman who probably lives in the same building, she is most probably the building manager. When the man was going in to vote, the woman put her hand on his shoulder and said: "I know you, you'll make the correct choice, right?". She threatened the man right in front of our eyes. The man was embarrassed, he didn't know what to do. His wife was next to him, he didn't know what to say to her. He was perplexed, and I couldn't do anything. I was shocked, I couldn't say anything. I don't think she changed the guy's vote with that one move, at least I want to believe so, but still, it took place inside the classroom, of all places. It's forbidden even to utter a party's name in the classroom. When someone does something like that, as a volunteer, I can file a report saying "this person made propaganda for a political party". Yet, I couldn't do anything. I really was shocked, and the whole thing passed away just like that. I don't know what I could have done, if I really could have done something. I can't say for sure, for example, whether I could have insisted if the other polling clerks had said "let it go, we can't deal with this now". This incident made me realize that it doesn't end with conveying a legal presence, it's also necessary to communicate with everyone there. The biggest meaning of my being there was stepping in something like this, and I couldn't. This haunted me for weeks in the aftermath.

In similar lines, another respondent told about how she was rejected by the political party for which she asked the badge of in order to enter the classroom as a volunteer. Using the badge of a political party so as to volunteer in the elections as an observer neither requires nor implies affiliation and membership to that party. Moreover, in regular terms, having observers in the polling station regardless of whether they are

their members or not is for the benefit every party, for the fair conduct of elections means the fair reflection and securing of their voting shares as well. Yet, when the respondent asked a political party for a badge before she decided to volunteer as part of Vote and Beyond, what she had in response was: "How can we know that you are our supporter, and not that of the other party?" The respondent reflects on this as follows:

> This little incident showed me the following: People care too much for taking a position in Turkey. There are not that many people who say "I am independent, I want to see things from a perspective outside of this mechanism". And in response, a certain effect of exclusion and isolation is created against them, not only by power mechanisms on a larger scale or the police, but also and more importantly by the people themselves who are citizens just like me, or citizens that diverge from me only in terms of having party affiliations. While polarization is beyond clear, the ends of this polarization unite in the creation of this effect. In that, they are utterly similar.

"Therefore, I find it significant that some people go and try to produce an impartial and independent position there in practice", she added. It is in this sense that the volunteer mobilizes the potential public character of the electoral setting: because his appearance makes apparent that there is an alternative, sustainable and in certain regards, plausible way of maintaining politics, through a political line which hinges upon the equality, distinction and uniqueness, that is, the plurality the human condition. The effect created by the volunteer in terms of disclosing the possibility of conveying an understanding of the public without the impositions of group categories and life's needs, that is, without the elements of social and private identities, was one that lingered not only in metaphorical or abstract terms, but also in concrete manifestations. In this, a particular pattern that interestingly emerged in the majority of the interviews would be of explanatory relevance.

While telling about their impressions of the relationships in the polling stations, the majority of the respondents seemed to be astonished by the usage of a detail: meal. "The parties were bringing food to their representatives and to the polling clerks" said one; "and it was as if the food they were bringing was competing with each other. That was bizarre, it happened in both of the elections I monitored". In that, food seems to

become a medium of restoring hegemony, and a marker of superiority. It is being used as a political signifier, and yet, its political force is not recognized but found bizarre by the respondent. The same detail, on the other hand, was at work while the respondents were describing how they acted in solidarity with the polling clerks and party representatives once they could establish a relationship. In almost every account, a significant catalyzer that enabled the volunteer to relate to the remaining polling clerks before and beyond social identities turned out to be the instance of sharing of food. Among them, one put it as: "In time, they got used to us, they talked to us, they appreciated that we dedicated time for monitoring the elections: they even shared their food with us". The same detail of food is this time the signifier of mutual recognition, of address and response, of solidarity, and in that, its political force is not only recognized but also appreciated. Embedded in this is once again the insight of Arendt upon the political character of private and public identities: the elements of the private sphere, that is, of the givens of our existence such as the detail of food in the case of the volunteer, are politically relevant in so far that they act as a medium in our mutual appearance to each other. In themselves, they not only lack political value but more importantly bear a politically destructive character, in the sense that they add a secondary layer of appearance to the one at hand, implies a 'beneath' of the surface and more importantly, prioritizes the beneath. When the food competes, when the brought food is used as a marker of status and of superiority, it creates a space incompatible with the space of appearance in the electoral setup, in which people cannot mutually appear to each other as equal citizens. In that, it destroys their capacity to act in concert, because it suggests that it is not the public appearances in concert but the social and private identities which demarcate the implied grounds of these appearances that matter. On the other hand, when it is related as a medium of sustaining plurality, that is, of address and response, food becomes politically relevant and turns into a means of appreciating and recognizing the appearance of people to each other without assuming a secondary layer of appearance beneath them that is more authentic and truthful, as was manifest in its unfolding into communication and solidarity in the case of the volunteer in the polling station.

In achieving reciprocal public appearance, there is a further and utterly fundamental political signifier at work: the body. Body, though not always in a physical sense, is the only viable mechanism through which one makes his appearance in the world, and therefore needs to be addressed in constructing the relationship between appearance and politics. It is a bridging notion for the particular case of the study as well, in the sense that it situates and settles what is meant by the presence of the volunteer in the polling station in more concrete terms. In the following chapter, I will be sketching the ways through which the notion of body becomes a relevant and contributing aspect of the direction of the study, particularly in relation to Butler's employment and operationalization of the term.

4.3. Appearance and the Body

One thing, among others, informed and inspired by Arendt's enduring emphasis on the indispensability of men's coming together and creation of a space of appearance through action and speech for the political to occur is the emergence of body as a political signifier, or a space of mediation that conveys politically relevant appearance.

The conception of the body as a political signifier and medium of visibility is more than frequently addressed in terms of its appearance in spaces of contention, specifically in the context of public demonstrations. Even though this body is often one in action – in the conventional sense – and motion, projecting itself more than usually in particular forms such as collective gatherings, marches, vocalization of demands and frustrations in the form of slogans and graffitis or conflict with the police; and even though these series of actions function as the ways through which political visibility is articulated, they are not constitutive of it. Body detached from explicit, readable and manifest action, or body assumingly in inaction is also a political one, achieving political signification through interaction with the space wherein it is embedded. The silent and still body, devoid of any 'action' other than presence, can also act as a political force, primarily through exposing the voids in the concerned space by filling them. Its relationship with visibility is therefore fairly complex.

On June 17, 2013, during the Gezi Uprising in Turkey, performance artist Erdem Gündüz stood still and silently and with his hands in his pocket for eight hours in Taksim Square, facing the Atatürk Cultural Center until he was taken into custody by police officers. Referred to as 'the Standing Man' (Duran Adam) until then, Gündüz's performance has frequently been addressed and praised as an act of passive resistance. But what differentiates the position of Erdem Gündüz from that of someone waiting for the bus to arrive, standing still and steadily and with hands in his/her pocket? The difference firstly emerges out of the physical, social and political context of the event. Gündüz stood "right at the center of a coercive and socially contested space" (Verstraete 2014: 125); in the Taksim Square which is the particular area in which the Gezi Park is located and the initial protests as well as the first instances of police brutality took place; and he was facing the Atatürk Cultural Center, an empty carcass which used to be İstanbul's main State Theatre, Opera and Ballet Venue and had become one of the main reasons of tension between the government and its opponents by the time, due to the government's plans of demolishing it as part of urban transformation. The building also bore the name and image of the substantial political figure of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who had been increasingly embraced by the opponents as a privileged symbol of secularism against the conservative policies of the ruling party. Gündüz also mentions why the particular spot at which he stood was significant. "I stood in Taksim..." he says in an interview; "…which the media watched constantly so that I may be seen." (cited in Verstraete 2013: 3)

Gündüz's effort to be seen is in fact an effort to make something else visible. Through the spatial and socio-political context chosen for his act, what Gündüz performs is to give "the necessary serenity and breathing space for reflection in an otherwise exhausting an intoxicating cycle of events and police brutality, opening a window for personal resistance and revolt" (Verstraete 2014: 125). Through the form of his act, that of standing, Gündüz takes this 'breathing space for reflection' further than a transitory or preparatory stage of action and transforms it into the political message itself. Just by being there, Gündüz claims the right to use public space and exist in it, to freedom of expression and to political representation all at the same time. His bodily presence is capable of asking the questions that couldn't be discursively asked in the

circumstances of the time, and interestingly enough, it answers them too: Gündüz's being taken into custody reveals that one doesn't need to be involved in provocative activity, violent protest or illegal demonstration to be targeted by the authorities and functions as the counter-discourse of what has been propagated by the government since the heydays of the Gezi Uprising onwards. As an "irritation to the authorities and a challenge to the boundaries of law" (Verstraete 2014: 126), the standing man also demonstrates that there is no normatively legal or illegal form of political expression, and that such definitions are eventually relational.

The standing man is a fair instance of "the use of the body in the absence of speech" (Verstraete 2013: 7) and of how "non-active forms of protest can be active" (Verstraete 2014: 124). As a non-act in the most literal and legal sense, it not only activated hundreds of other people to follow the lead of Erdem Gündüz, but also dragged the authorities and the hegemonic discourse into its own rhetoric. On June 21, 2013, prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan posted on his official Twitter account the following as a response to the standing man (whose more accurate translation from Turkish would be 'the stopping man'): "What do we say: There is no stopping, we continue on our path. What do they say: Standing man!" (Verstraete 2014: 123).

As the standing man shows, a silenced body can still speak against repression (Verstraete 2013: 6) and that bodily presence lacking manifest articulations can become a vivid political experience. Body, on the other hand, can also transcend the boundedness to physical occupation of space and time. On April 10, 2015; after the passing of Law of Citizen Security (also known as *Ley Mordaza* or *the Gag Law*) by the conservative government of Spain which introduced a series of proscriptions and penalties for gatherings in front of government buildings without prior permission in the name of public order; *No Somos Delito*, a platform of over 100 groups, staged world's first ever virtual political demonstration in Madrid, which came to be known as 'hologram protests'.[19] The event took place in front of the parliament and involved

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[19] Source: The world's first hologram protests: Thousands join virtual march against law banning demonstrations outside government buildings in Spain. (2015, April 14). Dailymail. Retrieved March 14, 2017 from http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3038317/The-world-s-HOLOGRAM-protest-

the screening of a previously filmed holographic protest. Apart from the virtual bodies of the protestors, no one was there except for the spokespeople of No Somos Delito and the media. In an interview[20] Andrea Teti conducted with Christina Flesher Fominaya, a No Somos Delito spokesperson, Fominaya epitomizes the message of the campaign as follows:

> The campaign sends a message to Spain's citizens that soon the only way to protest freely will be as holograms. It sends a message to the government that we will not be silenced and will continue to stand up for our democratic rights. And it sends a message to the world that the right to protest must be protected in any democracy and that those rights are being taken away, not only in Spain but around the world. (…) The government wants to close down the space available for protest by making certain forms of protest illegal and imposing disproportionate fines in order to criminalize protest. We are not criminals. We are citizens who have the right to be heard.

Even though the phantom-like image of protestors marching on the streets was conceived as a warning to other people about the tightening of the political space available for political expression and demand, and the essential aim was to encourage people to take back the streets by actually 'being on the streets' as Fominaya argues (ibid), hologram protests also function as the crackers of the hegemonic discourse on the proper forms of democratic activity by exposing the gaps in it. They act as a cynic form of saying '*we are here, even when we are* not'. Bodily presence is therefore conveyed in a manner that transcends physical time and space, and is made to linger rather discursively. Its effect of exposing the void by filling it, however, is quite concrete and tangible.

The capacity of bodily presence for political signification is incorporated in the discussion as a counter to Arendt's argument that in order to achieve political relevance, one needs to engage with speech and action. In order to demonstrate why

Thousands-join-virtual-march-Spain-against-law-banning-demonstrations-outside-government-buildings.html

[20] Source: Spain's hologtam protests. (2015, April 22). *Opendemocracy*. Retrieved March 14, 2017 from https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/cristina-flesher-fominaya-andrea-teti/spain%E2%80%99s-hologram-protests

the monitoring position is a political signifier even when the volunteer does not engage with Arendtian speech and action, I will make reference to Butler's take on the matter.

4.3.1. Butler and Bodily Appearance

> Embodied actions of various kinds signify in ways that are neither discursive or prediscursive (…) Forms of assembly already signify prior to, and apart from, any particular demand they make (Butler 2015: 8).

Among others, Butler's discussion on political assemblies and the politics of the street is a significant one in which communication with and setting in motion of Arendtian insights on politics, appearance and public space particularly stand out. Butler relates to the Arendtian body of thought sometimes in a critical but frequently enough in a complementary manner, and sheds light over the implications of her theory in more concrete terms. Her emphasis on the bodily dimension of space of appearance in the context of street demonstrations in particular is a contribution both to the development of the notion itself and to the direction of interest of this study.

Butler starts her discussion by postulating that demonstrations on street, no matter how diverse they are in terms of their motivations and purposes, share the common concern of laying claim to a certain space as public space (ibid: 70). While determining the terms through which she understands public space, Butler parallels Arendt, and rather than presuming it as already given, she maintains that "collective actions collect the space itself" (ibid. 71), implying that space is created through plural action, and that "assembly and speech reconfigure the materiality of public space, and produce, or reproduce, the public character of that material environment" (ibid. 71). Notwithstanding this, what is equally important to Butler is the recognition that action, even in its virtual forms, is always supported, and the most crucial material support of action is invariably bodily. Butler writes:

> To rethink the space of appearance in order to understand the power and effect of public demonstrations of our time, we will need to understand the bodily dimensions of action, what the body requires and what the body can do, especially when we must think about bodies together, what holds them there, their conditions of persistence and of power (2015: 73).

Body, for Butler, is what mobilizes the space of appearance. Latent in this is her critique that the space of appearance as conceived in Arendt's thought is an immobile one, about whose constitution there has been said little. Even though Arendt's conception of the space of appearance as intertwined with plural action is appreciated by Butler, she maintains that Arendt is not entirely specific about "who enters this plurality and who does not, and about how such matters are decided" (ibid. 77). In this sense, Butler immediately notes that not everyone can be part of a plurality, as was the case for the slave, the foreigner and the woman in the classical polis, and that the space of appearance is already divided and appointed. The division and appointment in question do not necessarily emerge with the emergence of the plurality in the form of appearance, but also imply that "one must already be in the space in order to bring the space of appearance into being: a power operates prior to any performative power exercised by a plurality" (Butler 2011: 3) Butler's particular effort in this objection is that while situating the space of appearance as that which is being acted upon, it is equally important to recognize that space of appearance also acts upon us; and that the political force persistent in this tension is what characterizes our experience of politics, as well as body's particular position in it. At stake is therefore a "regime of appearance" that regulates and polices the space of appearance. Butler notes:

> In acting, we bring the space of appearance into being, understood as the space of appearance. But established architecture and topographies of action also act upon us and enter into our very action, sometimes foreclosing our entry into the political sphere, or making us differentially apparent within that sphere (ibid. 6)

It follows that only the acknowledgement that "the existing political sphere is seized by those who have an existing right to gather there" (ibid. 4) politicizes one's entry in it and his appearance: "only through an insistent form of appearing precisely when and where we are effaced does the sphere of appearance break and open in new ways" (Butler 2015: 37). The reformulation of space of appearance as such upgrades the potentialities of the bodies on the street regardless of their actual performance of speech and action, and posits the prerogative that in order for politics to take place, the body must appear. Body's appearance on the street cracks the seizure of space of appearance by those who have an existing right to gather there by laying claim to it,

and "opens up time and space outside and against the temporality and established architecture of the regime; lays claim to its materiality; leans into its supports in order to rework their functions" (ibid. 75). As part of that, demonstrations on the street become "moments or passages when the legitimacy of a regime is called into question, but when no new regime has yet come to take its place" (ibid). Body's political signification occurs precisely due to its rendering of this suspension, and the body achieves to do so "by way of appearing in public", by exercising "a right that is no right"; "a right that is being actively contested and destroyed" (ibid.83). The signification of the body is therefore not necessarily a mode of speaking in vocal or written language; it is rather a performativity that "crosses language without ever quite reducing to language" (Butler 2015: 83), because they vocalize opposition by virtue occupying the space and persisting in its occupation, i.e., by posing a challenge in corporeal terms. Butler writes:

> Political claims are made by bodies as they appear and act, as they refuse and as they persist under conditions in which that fact alone threatens the state with delegitimation. It is not that bodies are simply mute life forces that encounter existing modalities of power. Rather they are themselves modalities of power, embodied interpretations, engaging in allied action (2011: 5).

It is important that the body in question is one always in alliance with others. In that, Butler remains faithful to the Arendtian understanding that action and accordingly appearance are to take place always 'in-between'. Political assemblies are defined not by the aggregation of bodies, but through their alliances, i.e., the sudden coming together of groups in large numbers. This alliance prescribes the public character of the public space, but can do so only with the material support of body, because the body's corporeal appearance concretizes a fundamental right: "the right to appear". At stake is therefore not only the emergence of space of appearance, but also and more importantly the struggle for it; and embedded in this struggle is the will to transform the space of appearance from 'the space in which one can appear' into 'a space constituted by appearance'. The reason why at stake is not solely insertion into the world (as it is for Arendtian appearance) but also an active participation in the form of a claim to it is because the space of appearance is at the same time the field on which constraining power lays its effects, and is at the same time part of the spatial

organization of power, i.e., the existing state apparatus also "depends upon the public space of appearance for its theatrical self-constitution" (ibid. 85). Bodies on the street mobilize the space of appearance, because they intervene with and contest "the allocation and restriction of spatial locations in which and by which any population may appear, which implies a spatial regulation of when and how the "popular will" may appear" (ibid. 85-86); and once mobilized, the public space along with its material supports are forever changed. Butler writes:

> The bodies on the street redeploy the space of appearance in order to contest and negate the existing forms of political legitimacy – and just as they sometimes fill or take over public space, the material history of those structures also work on them, and become part of their action, remaking a history in the midst of its most concrete and sedimented artifices (ibid. 85).

The body is therefore already a political signifier, even without explicit action and speech; and this is rendered by its being a primary medium of appearance. According to Butler, this is precisely why freedom of assembly is separate from freedom of expression:

> …because the power that people have to gather together is itself an important political prerogative, quite distinct from the right to say whatever they have to say once people have gathered. The gathering signifies in excess of what is said, and that mode of signification is a concerted bodily enactment, a plural form of performativity (2015: 8).

In positing body's integrality to appearance, Butler both parallels and counters Arendt. The first counter-argument she makes is attaching signification to body even when it lacks action and speech. According to her, solely appearing corporeally, amassed in public together in order to be seen and heard is "a political presence and force" (2015: 24), because to that appearance, the "demand to be recognized, to be valued and the exercise of the right to appear" (ibid.) are attached. In instances, only one body appearing on the street can generate the same effect as well. Butler gives the example of a transgendered person walking on the streets of Ankara or into McDonald's in Baltimore. In walking on the street alone, the person individually exercises the right to walk on the street without harassment, without the need to ask for company in order to feel safe. According to Butler, the exercise of this right can be achieved only because

126

the person is never alone, because there are many others who support that right even when they are not exercising it at the time and because "each "I" brings the "we" along" (Butler 2015: 51). This is not to suggest Butler is interested in distorting the notion of plurality in a such way to derive a particular form of virtual plurality out of singularities, but to assert that while

> it is a singular person who walks there, who takes the risk of walking there; it is also the social category that traverses that particular gait and walk, that singular movement in the world; and if there is an attack, it targets the individual and the social category at once" (Butler 2015: 51-52).

Only one body walking on the street, without speech, without action, and without power in the Arendtian sense, is a political signification that reinvests the material environment by appearing in it. Butler writes:

> To walk is to say that this is a public space in which transgendered people walk, that this is a public space where people with various forms of clothing, no matter how they are gendered or what religion they signify, are free to move without threat of violence (2015: 52).

In parallel with this, the second point through which Butler counters Arendt is her assertion that the politically appearing body cannot be conceived separately from the social and private body, whose very needs, aspirations, desires and possibilities act as the fundamental material support of the public body. As Butler writes in the context of precarization:

> It is *this* body, and *these* bodies, that require employment, shelter, health care, and food, as well as a sense of a future that is not the future of unpayable debt; it is *this* body, or *these* bodies, or bodies *like* this body or these bodies, that live the condition of an imperiled livelihood, decimated infrastructure accelerating precarity (2015: 10).

The body that appears in the midst of the political field and that demands more liveable social, economic and political conditions can do so only by taking reference from the body that does not publicly appear but struggle in the darkness of the private sphere. Private needs and demands, 'immediate' in Arendt's sense of the word but nowhere politically irrelevant, are that which enable body's appearance in public, and in turn,

127

what body articulates in public always refers to and addresses these private needs and demands. Butler gives the example of the protestors who sleep on the street, and maintains that:

> Sleeping on that pavement is not only a way to lay claim to the public, to contest the legitimacy of the state, but also, quite clearly, a way to put the body on the line in its insistence, obduracy, and precarity, overcoming the distinction between public and private sphere for the time of revolution (2015: 98).

The public body that takes its force and even its form from the private one posits both its vulnerability – in the sense that "to be shorn of protection is a form of political exposure, at once concretely vulnerable, even breakable and potentially and actively defiant, even revolutionary" as Gambetti argues (2014: 97) – and its insistence as a medium to lay claim on the public space, and is performative in the sense that it incorporates both the names it is called and the names it calls itself; and through its transition between its public and private aspects, it mobilizes the space of appearance and contests the very public character of it. It says: '*I am still here, I am still there, I persist and my situation is shared*' (Butler 2015: 25).

4.3.2. The Body of the Volunteer as a Political Signifier

Butler's framework on appearance and politics is one in which all the before-mentioned aspects and unfoldings of the monitoring position can be put in perspective in more informed terms, for it provides a ground on which what this position communicates can be situated beyond what it communicates in the immediacy of the encounter in the polling stations. The relevance of her argument to the implications of the monitoring position can be discussed through two fundamental lines.

First, the volunteer can seize the electoral setting because he has an existing right to be there, that is, he can bring into being a space of appearance there because he is already in the space; his presence is already recognized and validated, primarily by law. This is what urged a number of respondents to define monitoring as a "sterile" way of maintaining politics, interestingly with the same choice of word. Sterility on

the one hand has negative connotations, for it implies that few risks are taken in the decision to monitor the elections, few consequences are expected and accordingly, little influence and power is attributed the monitoring position because the volunteer has an existing right to be there. Moreover, although being there is dependent normatively only on the possession of citizenship, it is a fact demonstrated by the profile of the respondents as well that not every citizen but a particular group of citizens appears in the electoral setting as monitors, in the sense that this activity requires an awareness of the Election Law, a particular opinion on what democracy is and how it should work, and an education to operationalize and integrate into the bureaucratic process of elections with an identity other than electorate. In that, election monitoring is a sterile way of relating to politics, because it works through the taken-for-granted premises, assumptions and possibilities of the dominant political culture and of the political apparatuses that are in force.

Yet, with his/her entry into the electoral setting, the volunteer mobilizes this setting, because through appearing there with an identity other than that which was designated for him/her by the political culture and apparatuses that are in force, he/she lays a claim to it that diverges from the claim laid by the electorate. With the presence of the volunteer, elections become the setting in which not only the right to vote is exercised, but also the right to appear is articulated. By being there, the volunteer does not corrode or bend the ballot box rhetoric that increasingly comes to imply the appropriate way of producing politics, neither does he/she raise a solid alternative to the appropriation of politics as such by countering it; but he/she reveals that this void that he/she fills is a void, and not the regular shape. Once he/she fills the void, not only the void but also himself/herself is apparent, and sterility becomes a political claim and need with possibilities.

In doing that, what the volunteer operationalizes is not action and speech – at least in the sense Arendt makes of the terms, for all that he acts and speaks is already legally and normatively predetermined, implying that it lacks 'a new beginning' – but solely his corporeal presence, that is, his body. Yet, as foreclosed by Butler, his body acts as a political force even with this lack, because by persisting to appear during the whole

129

day in a setting where he was meant to appear only for fifteen minutes to cast his vote, he intervenes with its spatial regulation. In doing that, the volunteer demands to be recognized not only as electorate, but as a force to be paid regard beyond the grid of visibility imposed on him. It follows that the monitoring position calls into question the legitimacy of the regime of visibility, and it is able to do so primarily by operationalizing the material supports his appearance; the objective space of the classroom along with its constituting principles, and his very body.

The secondary and complementary leverage that helps the volunteer produce this effect is the fact and premise that he is never alone. Fact, because the volunteer literally is not alone. He knows that in the other polling stations there are other volunteers, in the building there are volunteers in charge of school-based organization, in the district there are volunteers that supervise the schools, in the city there are centers that constantly communicate with the volunteers and on all levels, there are lawyers from whom they can ask for help. Premise, because in his exercise of the right to monitor the elections he is backed up both by the law and by the public support that aligning political demands willingly and lawfulness mandatorily bring about. The majority of the respondents asserted they felt empowered in their volunteering duty particularly because they felt a collectivity that rested behind him, on which in each step he depended. This was also manifest in almost every respondent's usage of the first person plural pronoun in their accounts, even when I tried to orient the discussion to their specific experience. A respondent's narrative would exemplify the above-conducted argument:

> You can achieve a resistance there you normally wouldn't be able to achieve by yourself. You achieve it by forming some sort of a bloc through your presence, which implies the presence of lawyers, of the whole organization of Vote and Beyond. You can break the hegemony there by coming together at one point in a general framework. I think it showed this to the polling clerks as well. It said: "We are seeking our right and it is a very fundamental right, a citizenship right, it's not a right that will cease when you say no".

The force of this 'general framework' or 'bloc' emerges out of the non-identifiable quality of the bodies. Reflected by the volunteer in the polling station is only his volunteer identity, an identity that is already defined and recognized as visible by the

130

state. In that, it not only shuts down the possibility of being unrecognized or contested, but also leads to a confusion if an attempt to intervene with it turns out to be at stake. The challenge to spot an overarching identity in the monitoring position, that is, a ground beneath the surface appearance of the volunteers does lead to a frustration, as was occasionally manifest in the attitudes of the official polling clerks towards the volunteers, since "what the state cannot tolerate in any way is that singularities form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without any representable conditions of belonging" (Agamben 1993: 84-85). Yet, this frustration is not answered, for if the monitoring position is contested, the whole electoral setup, its legal embeddedness and the very principle of democracy come under question. The monitoring position threatens the electoral setting with delegitimation by and through the tools and apparatuses that constitute its legitimacy.

Along with appearing, the volunteer makes something else, particularly a demand, apparent: the demand not only for the fair conduct of elections and election security, but also for a political culture in which citizens are addressed and responded. In the sole realm that he is addressed, the volunteer comes up with an additional response that addresses in return, and according to the respondents, addressed by the volunteer was not only the state or the government, but more importantly the whole political culture itself and its elements that fell short of responding to the needs, claims and vulnerabilities of the citizens. Many respondents believed that the monitoring activity by reconfiguring the materiality of the electoral setting, reproduced the public character of it and cracked the political culture centered around the rhetoric of elections in new ways. In a critical manner, a respondent makes a parallel comment as follows:

> I think only recently the political parties have started to keep track of their vote shares, to report and record their statistics. Before, it was rather managed hypothetically. I think this culture developed with and due to Vote and Beyond. I even think that political parties who claimed the results of the previous elections to be manipulated before were themselves manipulative. I mean, you don't have it recorded, you don't have a document, you didn't carry out such a monitoring duty, how can you know and claim that? I have come to think that the ballot box rhetoric was in some way used to compensate for their failure.

Another respondent, in a complementary manner, asserted that just like it was hard to foresee or imagine before the Gezi Protests that a public outbreak could emerge out of the concern for preventing a number of trees in a park from being cut off, that is, just like that one instance which changed and reconfigured our relation to politics, this instance will too reinvest in our political culture an unfolding whose dimensions are perhaps not fully foreseeable for the time being. She notes:

> Why do we oppose the cutting down of a tree now? Because we lived Gezi. And now that we have an experience of volunteering in the elections, electoral processes will continue to be a public concern, and evolve in parallel with this public concern.

The bodily presence of the volunteer, in short, is a political signifier that mobilizes the space of appearance by appearing in it and making it apparent. Its political force unfolds in ways that resemble the foreclosures of Butler, particularly through the demand and realization of address and response. Similar to Butler's body on the street who performatively says "I am here", volunteer's bodily presence reinvests him in the governed grid of visibility in a such way to appear in it, and enables him to articulate somewhat similar phrases, as was exemplified by the utterances of two respondents:

> Yes, I have limited power, but I am here, we're here. And it really is important to be here. Because it is like putting the whole setting in its place, resetting it, and adjusting it all over again.

> By volunteering, the people said "we exist too, we are here, we follow". It made me feel happy to see that. I thought that in the end, there is hope.

As grounding as it is, body's ability in the account of Butler of political signification and visibility is highly tied to the contentious character of the space to which it relates, because according to her, in order for the body to contest and claim appearance, "there has to be a hegemonic struggle over what we are calling the space of appearance" (Butler 2015: 92.) Dependency of body's possibility to act as a political signifier on contestation comes at odds with the particular case of the volunteer, for his activity is obliged to assume not a contestation but a conformity to the space in which it appears. What happens when contestation lingers rather implicitly or doesn't linger at all? What happens if the space of appearance isn't necessarily claimed but rather borrowed to lay

claim to a rather virtual space? What happens when bodies do exercise a right; a right that is not 'no right', a right that is agreed, sustained and maintained? What can bodies perform when contention is missing? This point bridges the narrative of this study to the final ocular trajectory through which the monitoring position can be further understood and sophisticated: witnessing.

CHAPTER V

WITNESSING

The accounts covered until now urge upon different modes of engagement and interference with visibility, in the forms of spectatorship, surveillance, sousveillance and appearance. These are the different dimensions embedded in the same practice; and are some of the ways through which the practice can be conceived. Each form, through its capacity to elevate questions of power and politics, has something to offer to the effort to understand the particular activity of monitoring the elections by Vote and Beyond volunteers. Yet, beyond the extent to which the setting in motion of these notions is of explanatory relevance for this case, there still remains a space on which a different operationalization of power and visibility can be maintained, one that is informed but not fully covered by the possibilities offered by the aforementioned ocular trajectories. My attempt will be to invest in this space the particular position of the witness.

5.1. Witness as Visible and Apparent

In descriptive terms, the notion of witnessing comes to imply a three-fold correspondence: the agent who bears witness; the speech-act, that is, the utterance or text itself; and the audience who witnesses: "A witness can be an actor (one who bears witness), an act (the making of a special sort of statement), the semiotic residue of that act (the statement as text) or the inward experience that authorizes the statement (the witnessing of an event)" (Peters 2001: 709). In that, witnessing is an experience that communicates that which is spectated to a further group of spectators. It operationalizes spectatorship in such a way to reconceive it as an embodied and active form of action, and rests initially upon the overcoming of the physical distance that conventionally passivizes the spectator, in the sense that the witness has to be

physically present at the event which he witnesses. Followed by this is that, in almost all accounts that in some way engage with operationalizing witnessing, however diversely situated they might be in terms of their fields of inquiry[21], one thing seems to be clear: witnessing is a distinct mode of perception. Underlying this distinction is the definition of witnessing as a movement from experience to discourse, in the sense that "to be a witness is to be physically present at an event and report it to those who are absent (Frosh 2006: 265). It therefore embodies an aspect of both physicality and discursivity, and in the words of Ashuri and Pinchevski, it "constitutes a practice midway between experience and agency" (2009: 127). In that, however, witness is not merely that which translates sensory experience into verbal narration, but rather he is that which is constituted by these two instances and their unfolding. A witness never knows that he is a witness by the time that he is having the personal experience, for "the present is blind to what the future will value" (Peters 2001: 722). It is only when his personal experience is deemed worthy of becoming a public statement in the futurethat he would qualify for being a witness. But at the same time, in order for his experience to be authorized to be spoken in public, he must have been present at the occurrence in question, regardless of its possibility to unfold into witnessing. Witnessing can therefore be neither subjectively nor publicly predetermined: it is rather conceived through their relation, within an inter-temporality that cannot be retrospectively or prospectively designated. A witness never is a witness; he becomes one. He is concealed to the extent that he is revealed. The uncertainness embedded in witnessing renders presence itself "a form of moral engagement with the world" (Richards: 2010: 8). This moral engagement bears a particular force, which can perhaps be best understood in Agamben's citation from Langbein of the narrative of an Auschwitz survivor:

> In the camp, one of the reasons that can drive a prisoner to survive is the idea of becoming witness: 'I firmly decided that despite everything that might happen to me, I would not take my own life, since I did not want to suppress the witness that I could become (1999: 15).

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[21] Including but not limited to media studies, theology, accounts of atrocity, law.

This moral engagement implies that the spectatorship of the witness is one that edges upon an aesthetic distance. The witness is not *the passive victim of the finished visions of the world*: he is a witness precisely because he is not the victim of them, that is, because his capacity to know and power to act are not taken away from him, in the sense that without them he would not be able to perform the speech-act of witnessing. The maintenance of the aesthetic distance between him and that which he witnesses is not the result of the latter's non-reality quality as in the case of theatre. Quite the contrary, witness's witnessing setting has to be nothing but reality, and when the reality character of it ceases, so does the witnessing character of the witness. Witness achieves to act through an aesthetic distance in a different sense, by virtue of his filling a void in the reality through his presence. In that, however, while depending on, being bounded to and eventually arriving at the reality at hand, he has a capacity to readdress it, perhaps like a patch that instantly alters the pattern of a fabric while maintaining its unity. Once he fills this void, not only the material supports of the reality are forever changed, but also the imposing character of it is challenged because it becomes a unity that is prone to be disunited, or at best intervened with, even when its burdens are heavily felt as in the case of the Auschwitz survivor mentioned above.

In its rendering presence a form of moral engagement with the world, witnessing crosscuts and raises a variety of questions concerning truth, experience, presence, perception, absence, seeing, saying, trustworthiness and responsibility; and underpin the majority of practices through which we relate to and insert ourselves into the world. Lipton, for instance, stresses how knowledge production is also a testimony-laden, collective enterprise which can progress only through its dependence not simply on proof, but on the word of others who transmit their scientific experience into scientific discourse in the form of testimony (1998). In most of the legal systems, witness is an integral element of justice procedures by virtue of not only his seeing of an event with his own eyes but his presence's being a moral engagement with the world. Embedded in this is the understanding of "witness as a privileged source of information for judicial decisions" (Peters 2001: 708), whose projection of his personal experience is accepted to be informed by not personal opinions, but personal facts. In religion, witnessing is granted an exclusive significance in terms of testifying to that which is

not seen. American theologian Yoder grounds his overall attempt to conceive an alternative Christian ethics on the designation of witnessing as a method of ethics. In response to the conventional perspectives that accuse quietist sectarians of Christianism of withdrawing from the public realm and of lacking social engagement with the wider world, Yoder asserts that performed by these minorities is not a detachment from the world but bearing witness to it, which is a mode of responsible participation, in the sense that "withdrawal itself communicates dissent" (Richards 2010: 17). Bearing witness, according to Yoder, is the ultimate practice of the Christian ethics, and the ultimate witness is the church, which works as a "pulpit" of the ultimate truth of God, communicating it to the world through her practices. Witnessing is in grounding effect in history-writing as well, not only in terms of its bindingness in the extraction of historical narratives out of the speech-act of witnesses who corporeally experienced the concerned event, but also in terms of its capacity to intervene in the hegemonic construction of history and reinvest imaginative ways in "events that often are under erasure, silenced or only partially known" (Cutter 2009: 10). In that, witnessing is apt to act as a force "to transform, renovate and revise past versions of history and enable new ones" (ibid. 11).

Embedded in all these instances, to which many more can be added, is the unfolding of witnessing as a truthful act that prompts the making and realization of truth. The truthfulness of the witness is enabled and conveyed primarily in terms of his corporeal presence. The corporeal presence of witness is a signifier of truth, because only in the case that his appearance in the witnessing setting overlaps with the very being of this setting can he qualify for being a witness. False witness, for instance, "is not the same thing as simple lying" (Peters 2001: 711), because while lying implies the distortedness of only the utterance and the holder of the utterance; false witnessing irreversibly distorts the reality and its assumed truthfulness. The volunteer's body as a surface implies the ground of truth, rendering his activity not as a mere but a moral engagement to the world. The witness can produce such an effect, secondly, not only because at stake in his witnessing is not only his corporeal presence but the vulnerability of his body. The word for witness in Greek is *martis*, that is, martyr (Agamben 1999: 26). In Turkish as well, the word for witness (*şahit*) and martyr (*şehit*)

137

derive from the same Arabic root. Embedded in their connection is the idea that the body of the martyr attests to the truth at the expense of martyrdom. "To bear witness", in other words, "is to put one's body on the line. Within every witness, perhaps, stands a martyr; the will to corroborate words with something beyond them, pain and death being the last resorts" (Peters 2001: 713). The correspondence of truth-telling with the body is not exclusive to witnessing and martyrdom. Peters traces the same pattern in the ancient Greek word for torture, *basanos*, which originally meant "a touchstone against which you could rub golden artifacts to test if they were genuine: if so, a bit would rub off and leave a mark" (2001: 711). Torture, when traced through this line of thought, comes to mean the process of extracting truth out of one's body, from which truth and authenticity would rub off just like the touchstone. Body's inextricability with truth by virtue of its vulnerability, it follows, renders bodily presence a political signifier, and bestows it a particular force. This comes to suggest that witnessing is a performative act not because it contests a particular context, but because it *appears* in a grid of visibility by bringing into question the governed and governing truth in it, and by modifying it with his corporeal presence and vulnerable body.

Truth, however, does not necessarily imply factuality. In *Testimony*, Dori Laub tells about an instance that took place during the conduction of interviews with the survivors of the Holocaust as part of the project 'Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale' by a group of historians and psychoanalysts. While watching the taped testimony of a woman who was eyewitness to an uprising in Auschwitz in which the prisoners set fire to the camp, the historians argued that hers was an incorrect testimony in the sense that she reported the explosion of four chimneys that went in flames but the records showed the blow-up of only one chimney. While historians insisted that she needed to be taken as an unreliable witness, they, the psychoanalysts responded that the woman was testifying to something more radical and crucial than the number of chimneys that blew up. Laub writes:

> She was testifying not simply to empirical historical facts, but to the very secret of survival and of resistance to extermination. The historians could not hear the way in which her silence was itself part of her testimony, an essential part of the historical truth she was precisely baring witness to. She

saw four chimneys blowing up in Auschwitz: she saw, in other words, the unimaginable taking place right in front of her eyes. And she came to testify to the unbelievability, precisely, of what she had eyewitnesses – this bursting open of the very frame of Auschwitz. The historians' testifying to the fact that only one chimney was blown up in Auschwitz does not break this frame. (1992: 62).

The loosening of the connection between truthfulness and factuality renders witnessing as contingent on the specific parameters of the event. This is a point particularly operationalized by Ashuri and Pinchevski in their conception of witnessing as a field, in the sense Bourdieu makes of the term. In that, they are interested in pointing out that witnessing is subject to contest and struggle, and hence is a genuine political arena (2009: 129) Positing witnessing as a field comes to imply that witnessing is conditioned by and contingent upon the event witnessed. Modalities of witnessing are promoted and restricted by the event, meaning that "witnessing is always ad-hoc and case specific" (Ashuri and Pinchevski 2009: 130). One consequence of designating a field of witnessing is understanding witnessing "as the power-knowledge projection of an event", implying an "epistemological map emerging from its specific arrangement" (ibid. 131). In that, the field of witnessing is not only discursively constructed, but also populated by various agents who are not necessarily themselves witnesses. Ashuri and Pinchevski go on to exemplify their point as follows:

> In a legal context, the field of witnessing is inhabited by lawyers, judges, juries, defendants, plaintiffs and witnesses. In a historical context, the field is occupied by professional historians, agents and agencies of collective memory (official and unofficial), archives, and witnesses. Even when one acts as a corroborating witness in an official procedure (for example, co-signer on a contract or a witness at a wedding), one operates within a field that designates her or him by virtue of one's qualities, affiliation or availability as a bona fide witness (ibid. 131).

The witness too, in other words, requires a space of appearance to appear and make apparent. Ashuri and Pinchevski argue that what operates as the currency of appearance in the witnessing field is trust. They write:

> The game being played in the witnessing field is a game of trust in which agents compete to gain the trust of their designated audiences. Trust, however, is a tricky business: when someone gains trust, another might lose

it. Agents utilize the capital available to them, as well as their habitual schemas, in order to operate within the field of witnessing with the aim of gaining the trust of those whom they seek to address. A preliminary condition for playing this game is, of course, being admitted into the field. One corollary to this condition is that there will always be those who a priory remain – or are kept – outside the field, but their exclusion is no less a political act, for in such cases someone is divested of the means to bear witness. Being outside the field of witnessing means being relegated to silence (ibid. 131)

Immediately brought about by trust, no less than by truth, is responsibility.

5.2. Responsibility

The aspect of responsibility seems to be indicative of the witnessing field that comes to be increasingly inclusive in the contemporary moment due to the rise of media technologies. With the borrowed eyes and ears of media, such as photography, film and television, and with the actual or implied presence that attends them, domestic witnessing divided in space and yet united in time seems to be what characterizes the fate of the 20th century onwards, as Ellis argues (2009). And so is the sense of responsibility. By virtue of being witnesses to that which takes place somewhere else, however mediated, we are somehow responsible; because "one's responsibility to bear witness cannot be delegated": and "witnessing suggests a morally justified individual who speaks out against unjust power" (Peters 2001: 713) for the sake of truth. If delegated, one is no longer a witness. "If audiences refuse to take responsibility, then they are morally culpable. And we are all audiences now" (Silverstone cited in Ashuri and Pinchevski 2009: 127).

Witnessing's unfolding into responsibility is a deriving point for Kelly Oliver, which she conceives as the ability to address and response, and through which she reinvests witnessing grounded in response ethics as a supplement to recognition models of political and ethical subjectivity. According to Oliver, while the understanding of subjectivity based on the Hegelian notion of recognition, which conceives subjectivity as an intersubjective and dialogic process through which the subject is constituted in response to and address from an other, is insightful in its rejection of the idea of an

autonomous and self-contained subjectivity; it is still in need of further sophistication, by virtue of the fact that "recognition is experienced as conferred by the very groups and institutions responsible for withholding it in the first place and thus, it is distributed according to an axis of power that is part and parcel of systems of dominance and oppression. (2015: 474). In other words, the problem is that recognition is always bounded to the political and social context and never attains the ideal of mutual recognition, for the oppressed individuals or groups seek recognition from the very people or institutions that are responsible for their oppression in the first place. Even when the political recognition is attained, the power structure that renders some as the authorities of recognition and others as applicants of it still remains.

One way to overcome the burdens of recognition, according to Oliver, is to conceive the structure of subjectivity as one of witnessing. In doing so, she invokes the double meaning of witnessing in its juridical and religious connotations: seeing with one's own eyes on the one hand, and testifying to that which cannot be seen (2001: 16). This double meaning of witnessing for Oliver lies at the heart of subjectivity, for it characterizes the tension embedded in our experience of ourselves as subjects: a tension that rests between our subject positions and our subjectivity. In that, Oliver defines subject positions as that which are constituted in our social interactions and our positions within our culture and context, determined by history and circumstance:

> Subject positions are our relations to the finite world or human history and relations – what we might call politics. Subjectivity, on the other hand, is experienced as the sense of agency and response-ability that are constituted in the infinite encounter with otherness, which is fundamentally ethical. And although subjectivity is logically prior to any possible subject position, there are always profoundly interconnected in our experience (2015: 483).

In the case of the Auschwitz survivor interviewed at Yale, it is principally the subject position that renders her testimony particularly significant, independent of its accuracy: Her being a Jew, a prisoner in a concentration camp, a woman in the mid-20th century and so on all have a decisive impact on the accuracy of her testimony, for the testimony of an eyewitness to the same event might slightly differ according to his/her own subject position. Her bearing witness to what cannot be seen in the camp, on the other hand, such as the blowing up of four chimneys, is a movement from her

identifiable subject position to an infinite realm of address and response, through which she produced the effect or response of survival:

> The notion of witnessing brings together the historical context and finite situation of particular subject, on the one hand, with the witnessing structure that makes subjectivity an infinite open system of response, on the other. By so doing, it both politicizes the subject vis-à-vis subject position and insists on a fundamental ethical obligation at the heart of subjectivity itself (2015: 482-483).

Subjectivity rather comes to be rooted in address-ability and response-ability. In maintaining that, at stake for Oliver is to offer a politics that is also ethical, which can never be insured by intellectual, epistemological or political recognition. She asserts that if politics is about general principles and universal laws for the good of the whole, ethics is about the singularity of each being; and the question for politics today is how to bring the ethical concern for the singularity of each living being into politics. (2015: 475) Witnessing is what she proposes for this question:

> What the process of witnessing testifies to is not the existence of facts but a commitment to the truth of subjectivity as addressability and response-ability. Witnessing is addressed to another and to a community; and witnessing – in both senses as addressing and responding, testifying and listening – is a commitment to embracing the responsibility of constituting communities, the responsibility inherent in subjectivity itself. In this sense, witnessing is always bearing witness to the necessity of the process of witnessing itself, the process of address and response (2015: 485).

Oliver's effort in reconceiving subjectivity as response-ability and address-ability in relation to other people is a simultaneous effort to lay the ground on which ethical and social responsibility to others can be realized. She writes:

> We are by virtue of others. If subjectivity is the process of witnessing sustained through response-ability, then we have a responsibility to response-ability, to the ability to respond. We have an obligation not only to respond but also to respond in a way that opens up rather than closes off the possibility of response by others. This is what I take Levinas to mean when he says that we are responsible for the other's responsibility, that we always have one more responsibility. We are responsible for the other's ability to respond. To serve subjectivity, and therefore humanity, we must be vigilant in our attempts to continually open and reopen the possibility of response. We have a responsibility to open ourselves to the responses that constitute us as subjects (2001: 18-19).

Provided by this abstract discussion that occasionally comes at odds with the scope of this study is the possibility to conceive of witnessing as not only the politics (as in Arendt) but also the ethics of address and response. In that, witnessing bestows a space on which the final emergent pattern of the interviews can be framed: responsibility.

5.3. Volunteer as Witness

As has been explicitly signaled, witnessing is a notion inclusive of the before-discussed instances of surveillance, sousveillance and bodily appearance. In certain occasions, the witness's looking functions as a gaze that subjects and disciplines, as in the cases of church's being a witness in the account of Yoder or the centrality of eyewitnesses for judicial processes. In certain others, it acts upon hegemonic constructions through their own methodologies, as in instances like knowledge production and history writing. On the one hand, in its being a field, the witness too has to assume a grid of visibility in which he can qualify for being a witness but on the other, he appears despite this grid of visibility, despite its regime of truth and in the voids of it, which bears implications that are not always foreseen and prefigured.

In that, the witnessing character of the volunteer is of important relevance. First, the monitoring activity consists of all three dimensions of witnessing, that is, the agent who bears witness; the speech-act (the utterance or text itself); and the audience who witnesses, in the sense that it posits as the witness the volunteer in the polling station; the signed final report to be collected and registered in the alternative database of T3; and the overall public opinion to be formed both by those who encountered the volunteers in the polling stations and those who were then informed about their activities as well as the compared results of elections. Second, monitoring activity is a movement from experience to discourse, in the sense that it holds the founding idea of reporting the electoral event at which the volunteers were present to those who were not there. It is, in addition, also a movement from discourse to experience in a different regard, because the volunteer's interest in it – as I have discussed before – frequently informed by the urge to be present at an event about which the volunteers only heard from those who were supposedly there, as was manifested by one of the repetitive

phrases uttered by the respondent: *I wanted to see it myself.* Third, what differentiates the volunteer from the observer of AMER is his presence's being a form of moral engagement that leans towards not only factuality but also truthfulness, which is embedded in his activity's inhabitation in address and response. Fourth, the operational features of the monitoring position, the most important of which are impartiality and anonymity, are not values in themselves but valuable in so far that they produce the effect of relieving subject positions and reinforcing a subjectivity grounded in a shared sense of responsibility as response-ability and address-ability; rendering this position eventually a witnessing one. While the implications of the first three points were previously traced through the interviews in the former chapters, that of responsibility was not touched upon, implying that how responsibility empirically manifested itself in the experiences of the respondents needs to be demonstrated.

Responsibility was a theme consistently touched upon during the interviews. It was a motivation that, however interrupted and disappointed, seemed to sustain its effect for almost every respondent. While for some it lingered in rather abstract and intuitive terms, for some it was practically manifested in their monitoring experience. Among them, one put it as follows:

> The polling station in which I was supposed to cast my vote and the one in which I volunteered were far from each other. I had to leave the latter for an hour, in order to go and cast my vote. Having to leave made me feel nervous, I couldn't help but feel an uneasiness for getting out when I was supposed to be there. I was overwhelmed by this responsibility.

In that, the respondent seems to prioritize the responsibility she bears as a volunteer – a responsibility that she can't be held accountable – over a responsibility to which she is entitled with as electorate: the responsibility to cast a vote. The divergence between them lies in the former's being a responsibility for others, and, in the latter's being an instance of responsibility defined primarily in terms of one's personal state of being answerable and accountable.

Another respondent, who has come to think that that there is no longer a point in carrying out a monitoring duty in the polling station, explained why she would still volunteer in the next elections as follow:

> In the next elections, I would volunteer yet again. It is as if things would get a lot worse if I didn't. Now, at least I don't feel myself to be responsible, because I would know that what happened this time, didn't happen because of us. I would do it in order not to leave the others alone. I would do it in order not to accuse myself when an unpleasant thing takes place. I would do it to minimize regret.

In this account as well, a double sense of responsibility is implied: On the one hand, responsibility is what persuades the respondent to undertake volunteering duty again, and on the other, by volunteering yet again, she says that she won't feel herself responsible anymore.

In both accounts, the responsibility embedded in the monitoring position seems to be something that transcends individual motives and justifications. Or else, the monitoring position itself seems to be embedded in an understanding of responsibility, a responsibility, as a respondent put it, "towards the environment you live in, and towards that which you aspire for".

The responsibility that characterizes the monitoring position dramatically diverges from the neoliberal appropriation of the term, which posit individuals as "only responsible for their lives, and not for others, and that responsibility is first and foremost a responsibility to become economically self-sufficient under conditions when self-sufficiency is structurally undermined" (Butler 2015: 25). It is a responsibility that counters self-sufficiency and even the self, for as the above quoted response of the respondent shows, even when self-motive lacks, the responsibility to be there remains. The responsibility embedded in the urge to be present is what adds to the monitoring position a witnessing aspect.

Volunteer's witnessing is the response to the left-out question of what the body can perform when it does not enter into a hegemonic struggle over the space of appearance. Even though it lacks explicit contestation, the body of the volunteer is a political

signifier, because as one of the respondents also asserted, by "being there it conducts a political responsibility": the responsibility to address and respond.

Elements of the ocular trajectories that has been operationalized so far for the purpose of understanding the particular effect produced out of volunteer's position in the electoral setup interlock in witnessing's being a mode of presence in moral engagement with the world, and its being a perception based on address-ability and response-ability. Witnessing, in turn, emerges as a notion capable of incorporating these trajectories: witnessing is a mode of spectatorship that works through an aesthetic distance, in the sense that it is not full immersion into the witnessed world but "an imaginative act of experiential construction that nevertheless remains in the here and now of discourse (Frosh 2006: 273). Through his corporeal presence, on the other hand, the witness overcomes the physical distance, implying that he is equally visible. While witnessing is also bounded to a field of visibility through which he qualifies or disqualifies for becoming visible, it is on the other hand of performative nature, implying in ways that crack and reinvest the grid of visibility, he holds the potential to appear.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The attempt of this study has been to channel the experience of politics in contemporary Turkey towards the political experiences it yields to in return in order to understand the production of a monitoring position in the electoral setup by civil initiative, through the case of Vote and Beyond volunteers. My claim has been that beyond the ballot box rhetoric that has come to characterize the volunteers' activity of monitoring the polling stations, this activity and the position it embeds can be further understood as a response and address to the predominant mode of relating to politics, that is, spectatorship and as a claim to a different take on the matter of political visibility. The argument I have tried to develop concludes that election monitoring found a place for itself in the political repertoire of citizens, because it is a strategy of producing and maintaining politics for political demands that cannot appear on the political stage or that are deprived of a political stage on their own: First, it worked through a form of experience compatible with the dominant ocular mode of experiencing and making sense of politics, and yet diversified it. The ocular trajectories covered in this thesis are what enable this diversification. The instances of spectatorship, surveillance, sousveillance, bodily appearance and witnessing all together suggest that in the room they gave to the volunteer in his/her relationship with the remaining polling clerks, the electorate and the total bureaucratic structure, they qualify election monitoring as an experience that transcend the conventional and everyday mode of relating to and being part of politics. The theoretical frameworks I make use of in the inquiry are expected to have demonstrated how.

Each theoretical tool and its associated conceptual tool referred to in this thesis was attempted to help construct this narrative. In order to establish why the position of the civil monitor was different than that of the official polling clerk or the party

representative even when they all carry out the single duty of spectating, I made reference to theatre studies and argued that the aesthetic distance that enabled dramatic act is also what enables the unique position of the volunteer, in his/her being free of constraining and constrained identities. The political implication of the volunteer's spectating activity was associated with Green's idea of candor, in order to suggest that not only by stepping into the political stage but also through a particular mode of watching it in its unrehearsed and thus vulnerable instances public visibility and its governance can be interfered with. Even though Green's idea of candor does not entirely meet the particular case of the civil monitor and even though the implications he attaches to it are not necessarily agreed, its premise of ocular empowerment is in line with the capacity of the civil monitor to produce an effect out of his/her watching. Green, however, does not offer much when it comes to the relationalities of being seen and watched, which is a state of being held by the civil monitor in the electoral setup. It is in this sense that Foucauldian insights on not only the relationalities of seeing but also being seen are referred. Foucauldian framework on the one hand helped me locate the emergence of the civil monitoring position as a discursive strategy to the political narrowing in effect and to the hegemonic discourse limits political life with the elections. On the other hand, as a possible answer to the question of how the civil monitor has a disciplining effect on the remaining polling clerks, it equipped me with the concepts of surveillance and sousveillance. Combined, what Foucault offers to this study is the possibility it bestows to read the political event of election monitoring both as a way through which power operates and as an operation of power. In that, however, little is said upon whether there is the possibility of an unfolding that is not prescribed without exiting power's web. In the particular case of this study, there apparently was, which is why Arendt were particularly brought into the discussion.

In her understanding of visibility, Arendt is partly in line with Foucault, in suggesting that visibility is primarily the visibility of 'the social' that make it into a form of control (Gordon 2001), rendering itself by constant articulation, repetition and reiteration of normative fiats in a way that constitutes a grid of visibility according to whose intelligibility visibility is achieved. In that, however, Arendt sees a possibility that lacks in Foucault and implies that "while one cannot exit power's web, resistance to

or subversion to the hegemonic order remains a possibility due to the human capacity to perform differently" (Butler cited in Gordon 2002: 138). This possibility has ontological roots for Arendt, and these roots are not necessarily the particular concern of this study; but even when rooted in ontology, for Arendt as well this possibility can be realized only intersubjectively. The significance Arendt attaches to intersubjectivity gains relevance in understanding how civil monitoring opens up possibilities in the encounters between volunteers, the remaining polling clerks and the electorate, that is, among the citizens. My claim in moving from Foucault to Arendt is that even though there is no "prediscursive actor", that is, no "stable existence prior to the cultural field that it negotiates" (Butler cited in Gordon 2002: 139); this cultural field does not always have a uniform effect on all its participants and it is negotiated in different extents, implying that intersubjectivity still bears potentials. These potentials were explicit for the respondents I interviewed with, who seemed to be quite surprised with the the people they met in the polling stations and with the level of relationship they established with them in the meanwhile. In understanding this unexpected public character emergent in the polling stations, Arendtian framework is a theoretical leverage, because it helps one understand the electoral setting not only as a site of application of power but also as a space of appearance in which citizens could appear to each other as equal and yet distinct beings. The narratives of the respondents in which they explain how they changed their mind upon the political atmosphere in Turkey after meeting the people they met in the polling stations – people they normally would not have an occasion to meet – suggest that such encounters are informative in the making of popular opinion, and a change in popular opinion has the power to influence the tensions, conflicts and constraints of the society; because it influences how people feel to be related to them. The transformative power Arendt bestows to intersubjectivity is precisely why her framework is relevant for the case at hand and constructive for a different understanding of politics based on address and response and on the possibility of spaces where these two are feasible.

Butler adds to the discussion by pointing out how space of appearance is always governed by a regime of appearance, and how body as a political signifier can interact and crack this regime in particular instances. Body's centrality in answering the

question of what the volunteer performs in his/her monitoring activity bridges the previous trajectories with the final notion of witnessing, which is the eventual answer I give to the above-mentioned question. The inclusiveness of witnessing of the previous notions of aesthetic distance, ocular empowerment in spectatorship (candor), surveillance, sousveillance, appearance and bodily signification and the additional aspect of responsibility it covers qualify it as an alternative way of approaching to, producing and maintaining politics.

Second, election monitoring found a place for itself in the political repertoire of Turkish citizens because the features and implications of civil monitoring position were compatible with the contextual demands, aspirations and strategies of citizens. While the emergent empirical patterns of this study bear explanatory relevance in understanding the motivations and inclinations that led to the production of a monitoring position in the electoral setting through civil initiative, they also, to a certain extent, harbor insights upon the conditions, possibilities and aspirations that ground the ways through which politics is experienced and maintained in contemporary Turkey by citizens. In that, the study can communicate with and contribute to further inquiries that concern themselves with citizens' understanding of and relation to politics in the contemporary moment. Even though occasional reference was made to these patterns, they can be put together once again as a concluding remark, so as to concretize the supports and implications of the monitoring position and the mode of political experience it unfolds. These patterns suggest that the political demands and claims that cannot appear on the political stage or that are deprived of a stage on their own maintain and produce politics primarily in conceiving politics in sterile terms (understood in terms of impartiality and anonymity); through seeking participation without involvement; with the inclination of achieving re-presentation and by getting motivated by a certain understanding of responsibility.

Election monitoring found a place for itself in the political repertoire of Turkish citizens because: (1) it worked through and yet diversified a form of experience compatible with the dominant mode of experiencing and making sense of politics and democracy in contemporary Turkey; (2) the features and implications of this position

were compatible with the contextual demands, aspiration and strategies of citizens, the most emergent of which can be discussed as in the following.

Promised by the monitoring position was, as was mentioned before, was a *sterile* space of politics, and its sterility was positively as much as negatively charged. While its sterility emerges primarily out of its recognition and even promotion by law, it seemed to be elevated by two additional aspects upon which the monitoring position depended: impartiality and anonymity.

Impartiality gains relevance, as was discussed before, in terms of the volunteer's positioning vis-à-vis the remaining polling clerks. The respondents differentiated themselves from the polling clerks in terms of being devoid of both a political agenda and an identity informed by private and social interests in the polling stations. Impartiality, it follows, comes to imply being free of constraining and constrained characteristics that prevent people's appearance to each other as equal citizens. In that, however, its political character does not cease. According to the findings of the interviews, adoption of impartiality as a grounding attribute of the monitoring position is ultimately political, for it is a necessity brought about by a political context in which the citizen cannot appear under other circumstances. Impartiality then becomes a strategical address to ensure response, implying that it involves an inevitably political character. A respondent reflects on this as follows:

> This needs to be said; the system we're in right now is not a democratic one. It hasn't been for a while. Therefore, defending democracy in a non-democratic system, defending impartiality and independence against partiality and partisanship is itself becoming a party. I was not a partisan, but I was there as a party to this.

Inherent in the conception of impartiality is therefore not disembodiment, but the embodiment of a latently critical attitude. In a complementary manner, when I asked a respondent about what she understood from impartiality, she responded as follows:

> Not being affiliated, maintaining a critical attitude. I may be impartial but I can say "okay" to everything. I may not be affiliated with anything, but I can say upfront that "this doesn't concern me". I may not care. No, it is keeping

your criticism in order for something to be done properly. And if there is something improper to come up, it saying it; it is standing behind your wards. In that, you really shouldn't be bounded materially or politically. If you are, then you need to put that on hold; you need to be there in order to look at it objectively, so that you can understand what kind of a field it is.

Impartiality, then, is a means to clear and modify the conditions that twist, blur and distort vision, that is, it is the ruling out of vocabularies and lexicons that prevent one from understanding what kind of a field he is in. In that, however, respondents seemed to be well aware of the unfolding that pure vision is visual chaos, and conceived impartiality not as detachment but rather as the maintenance of an aesthetic distance that qualified both the vision in question and its holders. It concludes that the impartiality of the monitoring position does not conceive it as above-politics: it is that which renders it a political claim that proposes an alternative envisagement of politics, one on which partial interests can be negotiated through the shared realm of citizenship. A respondent puts this in quite informed terms as follows:

> Vote and Beyond acts on the principle of not being the representative of a party or a political view. But if you think about it, in a country where the rule of law is in effect and where democracy works, there is no need for an entity like Vote and Beyond. In a country like that, you should be able to solve these problems through law. This entity exists in our context because we can't solve it through law. And even though it is discursively constituted as above-politics, in the end it is utterly political. It is the manifestation that what we live under is not a democracy ruled by law. In that sense, it has a political stance. It is not ideological but a political. When you take part in Vote and Beyond you don't really feel yourself to be doing something political. But it creates this political character through citizenship consciousness, through claiming your rights. It implies that when people come together over these fundamental rights – and not over ideological stances – they can meet halfway, they can be convinced.

The second aspect of sterility, anonymity in politics, comes into play in a complementary manner. According to the respondents, in order for the aesthetic distance in the form of impartiality to be maintained, the social and political identity markers needed to be eliminated. Anonymity was on the one hand a safety-valve. It brought about protection from the impositions and interventions of the immanent polarization in society. Even though the volunteer's identity in the polling station is not literally anonymous, in the sense that they gain access to the polling station by virtue of holding the badge of a political party, and thus a marker, it is a marker that

does not bring along immediate connotations, for the parties that provided badges for volunteers were rather peripheral to the contemporary distribution of the political sphere. The anonymous character of volunteer's identity therefore emerged out of its unintelligibility.

The dependence of volunteering duty on a form of presence that is corporeal and yet unidentifiable was among the primary reasons why the majority of respondents agreed to undertake it. Disruption of anonymity, accordingly, was a deal-breaker. A respondent, for instance, mentioned that she couldn't help but feel uncomfortable when she saw that she was added to a Whatsapp group with other volunteers before the election day, even though it was done for the purposes of organization and planning. During the interview, she put this as follows:

> I saw that I was added to Whatsapp group. It made me feel a bit uneasy, like "why would someone else have my cell phone number?" Because we weren't informed about this issue. I mean, we select the building we want to be in, but I didn't read any information that said "your information will be passed on to the building manager". Maybe I missed it, maybe it really wasn't conveyed, I can't say for sure but someone else having my number in Whatsapp and being added to a group all of sudden, these made me a bit nervous. I rather wanted to participate like "the person x", I wanted to anonymous.

Notwithstanding this, anonymity was also a force that facilitated communication, for it abolished the possibility of volunteer's appearance to be assumed as a surface concealing what he really is. There in the polling station, who the volunteer is and how he appears couldn't help but coincide, rendering the rest of the polling clerks and the electorate incapable of treating him with a reactive vocabulary at hand, that is, through a representation. An anonymous identity, in other words, is what maintained the aesthetic distance assumed and operationalized by impartiality.

One thing indicated by the centrality of sterility in the making sense of the monitoring position is the inclination of not being involved but participating in politics. Involvement analytically implies a totality, a larger set of which in order to be part, one has to conform to its terms, references and modalities. Participation, on the other hand, is the negotiation of terms. It is itself the enlargement. While involvement might

153

not always be a choice, participation is more than frequently a matter of decision and preference. Involvement is binding, for it renders one visible with reference to a grid of visibility into which once he is located, he no longer holds the possibility of becoming invisible, that is, unidentifiable. Participation, on the other hand, is appearance. It too reiterates the grid of visibility, it is too constrained by the burdens of visibility, but it nevertheless bears a performative character that can instantly appear and disappear.

The urge to participate without being involved suggests that a political aspiration characteristic to contemporary Turkey is the claim of citizens to control and maintain their visibility against the governance of the grid of visibility with reference to which they can instantly become visible and invisible; and the possibility of appearing to each other beyond this grid of visibility, in instances where they can relate to each other as equal citizens who are yet distinct and unique.

Sterility, to conclude, through its aspects of impartiality and anonymity, and its emergent pattern of participation without involvement is a political aspiration that characterizes the experience of politics in contemporary Turkey. Under the circumstances of intense polarization, political narrowing and visibility politics, sterility acts as the prerogative of a possible space of appearance in which citizens can appear to each other without the immediacies of their private and social identities and in which the driving motive of their doing so is underpinned by a sense of responsibility that is always directed towards their togetherness.

A further unfolding of impartiality is the re-presentation of people, in contrast to their representation. A respondent's narrative would bridge what is meant by this:

> I think what stood out for me was the principle of impartiality. Normally I am not a believer in impartiality, but it is acceptable for this kind of an organization. The image of "independent, impartial and ordinary people who want the best for them, who own their rights, who seek no other goal". It is like in order for a population to count as the people, they need to be impartial. There are party representatives there, well, they are not the people then.

One thing, among others, invoked by the sterility of the monitoring position is the question of who the real people is. According to Butler, this question is the essence of democratic struggle, for it is the means that joins or keeps apart the political form of democracy and popular sovereignty. The conjunction or disjunction of the two is critical "if we are to understand how expressions of the popular will can call into question a particular political form, especially one that calls itself democratic even as its citizens question that claim" (Butler 2015: 2). In that criticality, the people is never a given population, but a category discursively constituted "by the lines of demarcation" that are explicitly or implicitly drawn somewhere, "either traced along the lines of existing nation-states, racial or linguistic communities, or political affiliation" (Butler 2015: 4). In an attempt to establish who the people are, as Butler argues, one would immediately come up with four different categories:

> (1) those who seek to define the people (a group much smaller than the people they seek to define); (2) the people defined (and demarcated); (3) the people who are not "the people"; and (4) those who are trying to establish that last group as part of the people (2015: 4).

The emergence of the monitoring position is a strategical answer to the question of who the people are. Strategical, because it says "here we are" in the one moment (the electoral occasion) when the lines of demarcation are relatively suspended. In that, the volunteer appears as an unidentifiable presence to be mandatorily addressed and responded. His/her appearance not only cracks open the governing grid of visibility in the electoral setting, but also adds a secondary layer of appearance to the scene, complicating the surface-ness and ground-ness of elections. By rendering himself/herself present in the very context of representation, the volunteer fills the void that is treated as irrelevant – much like a patch which instantly alters the pattern of a fabric while maintaining its continuity, and which nevertheless exposes that the fabric was missing this very part.

The political force that acts upon and that acts through the monitoring position should be thought of in its own terms, without attributing to it a significance that cannot be met. However, this position, along with its implications, is worthy of attention because it is indicative of the ways through which alternative spaces can be invested against

155

the constraints and burdens of what comes to be understood as politics. This space, in its own terms, is important and should be recognized. Even the organization Vote and Beyond seems to be underscoring this point, as was manifest in their decision to refrain from undertaking civil monitoring duty in the referendum by justifying it with the capacity of people to individually apply to political parties to undertake monitoring duty, which was according to all of the respondents with whom I interviewed after February 2017 (when the decision was announced) a disappointment. These spaces are needed not only for restoring people's relation to politics, but also and more importantly for renewing how we understand the notions on which these relations are established and maintained in the first place, such as those of participation, democracy and citizenship.

As much as they are needed, however, they are not always feasible. The shifting political context of the last two years of Turkey demonstrates why the possibility of an ocular politics as such is contextually bounded. On April 16, 2017, during the referendum in which transition to presidential government was voted and ten minutes after the ballot boxes were closed at 5.00 p.m., the Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey announced that unsealed ballots would also be counted, even though it is explicitly forbidden in the election law[22]. The decision was comprehensively opposed and yet it was not unmade. Revealed strikingly by this is that integration with the political life through modalities like witnessing requires consensus on a grid that is assumed to be underlying and organizing political experiences, such as the grid of visibility, the grid of responsibility and most importantly, the grid of legitimacy. Only then can a void be exposed by being filled and if not, even a deformation can be taken for granted as a regular shape of what we recognize as politics.

The political event that I portray in this study and the possibilities it opens up are therefore no longer – or not for the time being – relevant in understanding the political life that characterizes the present-day of Turkey, implying that it might be hard to present a direct output that can be put into use so as to contribute to civil election

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[22] Source: YSK Açıkladı: Mühürsüz Oylar da Sayılacak (2017, April 16). *CNN Turk.* Retrieved September 2, 2017 from https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/son-dakika-ysk-acikladi-muhursuz-oylar-da-sayilacak

monitoring in Turkey or its expected influence on contemporary politics. However, by virtue of its own way of approaching to the issue in question and its concurrent employment of a variety of empirical, theoretical and conceptual tools, the contribution of this study to the literature might be the sociological possibilities it presents in reading politics and understanding how diversely it can be experienced.

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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL LETTER FROM METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

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02 OCAK 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç. Dr. Erdoğan YILDIRIM;

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız yüksek lisans öğrencisi Gamze KARACA' nın *"Mevcudiyetin Politikası: Politik Bir Deneyim Olarak Şahitlik ve Oy ve Ötesi Müşahitleri Örneği"* başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2016-SOS-188** protokol numarası ile **02.01.2017 – 30.04.2017** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER
İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanı

Prof. Dr. Mehmet UTKU
İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL
İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR (Y.)
İAEK Üyesi

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI
İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK
İAEK Üyesi

166

ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu araştırma, Sosyoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi Gamze Karaca tarafından ve ODTÜ öğretim elemanlarından Doç. Dr. Erdoğan Yıldırım'ın danışmanlığıyla yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, 2015 yılındaki genel seçimlerde (7 Haziran veya 1 Kasım) Oy ve Ötesi bünyesinde sandık başlarında müşahitlik yapmış kişilerin deneyimlerine dair bilgi toplamaktır.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul etmeniz durumunda, araştırmacı ile derinlemesine mülakat için görüşmeniz beklenmektedir. Yaklaşık olarak bir saat sürmesi beklenen bu mülakatta sizlere Oy ve Ötesi bünyesinde gerçekleştirdiğiniz müşahitlik faaliyetine ilişkin deneyimleriniz, düşünceleriniz, eleştirileriniz, motivasyonlarınız ve değerlendirmeleriniz hakkında sorular yöneltilecektir. Sorulara verilen yanıtlar araştırmacı tarafından not alınacak, sizin tarafınızdan da uygun görülürse görüşme ses kaydına alınacaktır.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Görüşmede sizden kimlik veya çalıştığınız kurum/bölüm/birim belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak, sadece araştırmacı tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler araştırmacı ve danışmanı tarafından değerlendirilecek ve araştırmacının yüksek lisans tezinde kullanılacaktır. Sağladığınız veriler gönüllü katılım formlarında toplanan kimlik bilgileri ile eşleştirilmeyecektir.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Görüşme, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda görüşmeyi uygulayan kişiye, görüşmeyi bırakmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için ODTÜ yüksek lisans öğrencisi Gamze Karaca (E-posta: e1790658@metu.edu.tr) veya öğretim üyelerinden Doç. Dr. Erdoğan Yıldırım (E-posta: erdo@metu.edu.tr)) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

Adı Soyadı   Tarih   İmza

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C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Araştırmanın Amacı

Son yıllarda yeni bir seçim pratiği Türkiye'nin seçim gündeminde kendine yer bulmaya başlamıştır. Oy ve Ötesi isimli sivil inisiyatif çatısı altında örgütlenen sivil vatandaşlar, seçim günü sandık başlarında resmi sandık yetkilileri ve parti müşahitleriyle birlikte seçimi izlemekte; günün sonunda resmi oy sayım tutanağının bir kopyasını edinerek ve sonuçları alternatif bir veri tabanına işleyerek resmi sonuçlarla karşılaştırmakta; seçim sürecine sivil bir denetim mekanizması olarak dahil olmaktadır. Müşahitlik faaliyeti Oy ve Ötesi sivil toplum örgütü tarafından Türkiye'de katılımcı demokrasinin gelişmesine katkı sağlama amacının bir uzantısı olarak değerlendirilirken, müşahitlik görevi üstlenen vatandaşlar açısından bu faaliyete olan ilginin sandık güvenliği ve olası usulsüzlükler gibi daha örtülü sebeplerle ilişkili olduğu varsayılmaktadır. Aytaç ve Çarkoğlu'nun 2015'te gerçekleştirdikleri bir kamuoyu yoklamasına göre "seçimlerin adil olmadığını" düşünen vatandaşların sayısı 2007-2015 yılları arasında artış göstermiş; oranı ise %28'den %43'e çıkmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, sivil seçim gözleminin olanak ve açılımlarını, katılımcı demokrasinin gelişimi ve sandık güvenliğine ilişkin endişelerin ötesinde, politika ve görünürlük ilişkileri üzerinden kavramsal bir çerçeve içinde tartışmaktadır. Bu anlamda çalışma, politik bir vakanın (sivil seçim gözlemi) kendisine dair bir tahlilden ziyade bu vakanın deneyimine dair teorik ve kavramsal bir araştırma yürütmekte; politik bir deneyim olarak seçim gözleminin günümüz Türkiye'sinde politikanın deneyimleniş biçimiyle olan ilişkisini incelemektedir. Çalışmanın ana örüntüsünü oluşturan araştırma sorusu, şu şekilde kurgulanmıştır:

Sivil seçim gözlemi pratiği, Türkiye'deki vatandaşların politik repertuarında neden ve nasıl kendine yer bulmuştur?

Literatür Taraması

Tüzel bir kişilik altında 2014 yılında kurulan Oy ve Ötesi, "Ankara'nın Oyları" gibi daha yerel projelerin dışında, Türkiye'de yurt çapında seçim gözlem misyonunu üstlenen ilk sivil toplum örgütüdür (İpek & Karpuzcu 2016). Seçim gözlem ve denetim pratiği Türkiye bağlamında oldukça yeni olsa da, dünyada ulusal ve uluslararası çapta 20. yüzyılın başından itibaren yayılmaya başlamış, özellikle 1990'larda dramatik bir artış göstermiştir (Bjornlund 2004; Hyde 2011; Kelley 2008; Ricker 2006). Seçim gözlem ve denetim faaliyeti, sömürge döneminin bitmesiyle beraber öncelikli olarak bağımsızlığa geçiş sürecindeki ülkelerde, daha sonra ise bağımsız üye ülkelerde Birleşmiş Milletler tarafından üstlenilmiş; Berlin Duvarı'nın yıkılmasının ardından vuku bulan üçüncü demokratikleşme dalgasıyla birlikte seçim gözlem ve denetim örgütlerinin ve gözlemlenen seçimlerin sayısı dünya çapında artmıştır.

Günümüzde seçim gözlem ve denetim faaliyeti yürütmekte olan aktörler beş farklı kategoride incelenebilmektedir: (1) Yalnızca belli koşullarda (otoriterleşme tehdidi, insan hakları ihlali, vb.) ve söz konusu ülkenin talebi doğrultusunda seçim gözlem komisyonlarını görevlendiren Birleşmiş Milletler; (2) söz konusu ülkenin talebine bağlı kalmaksızın, ülkelerin imzaladığı anlaşma ve protokollerdeki bağlayıcı maddelerin yetkisiyle belli bir bölge içerisindeki seçimleri gözlemleyen Avrupa Güvenlik ve İşbirliği Teşkilatı, Afrika Birliği, Avrupa Birliği, Amerikan Devletleri Örgütü gibi hükümetler arası örgütler; (3) görece daha az karışık bir bürokratik yapıyla işleyen, meşruiyetini bağımsız konumlarından alan ve yasal yetkisiyle beraber yaptırım gücü kısıtlı olan uluslararası sivil toplum kuruluşları; (4) söz konusu ülkenin kendi vatandaş ve kurumlarının işbirliğiyle seçim gözlem misyonunu üstlenen bağımsız domestik örgütler; (5) özellikle barış koruma süreçlerinde, diğer ülkelerin belli bir ülkedeki seçimleri gözlemlemek için kurduğu (Afganistan ve Irak örnekleri gibi) komisyonlar (Ricker 2006).

Uluslararası ve domestik aktörlerin konumlarına göre seçimlere katılımını tarif etmek için "gözlem", "denetim", "gözetim", "yönetim", "doğrulama" ve "arabuluculuk" gibi birçok terim kullanılmaktadır. Bunlar arasında "seçim gözlemi" ve "seçim denetimi",

domestik aktörlerin seçimlerdeki faaliyetini tanımlamada en sık başvurulan terimlerdir. Uluslararası Demokrasi ve Yardım Enstitüsü (International IDEA) "seçim gözlemi" için seçim sürecine dair "bilinçli bir yargıya varabilmek için bilgi toplamak" tanımını yaparken, "seçim denetimi" terimini "bir seçim sürecini izleme ve ilgili yasa ile standartların ihlali durumunda sürece müdahale etme yetkisi" olarak açıklamaktadır (International IDEA 1997). Bu anlamda seçim gözlemi görece daha pasif ve yalnızca seçim gününe odaklanan bir raporlama sürecine denk düşerken, seçim denetimi tüm seçim sürecinde varlık gösteren daha kapsamlı bir faaliyeti ima etmektedir.

Yukarıda belirtilen kategori ve tanımlara göre Oy ve Ötesi, seçim denetim faaliyeti yürüten domestik bir sivil toplum örgütü olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Buna karşın hem seçim kanununda hem de örgütün kendi kullanımında Oy ve Ötesi gönüllülerinin faaliyeti, doğrudan "denetim" kavramını karşılamayan, farklı açılım ve anlamları olan "müşahitlik" terimiyle adlandırılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, söz konusu farklılığın yalnızca terimsel olmadığı ve ampirik, kavramsal ve teorik araçlarla bu farkın derinlemesine araştırılabileceği öngörüsünden hareket etmekte; Türkiye bağlamında sivil inisiyatifle üretilen müşahitlik pozisyonunu bu perspektifle ele almaktadır.

Türkiye sosyal bilimler literatüründe seçim gözlem pratiği ve daha özel olarak da Oy ve Ötesi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar oldukça sınırlıdır. Var olan çalışmalar konuyu genellikle sivil toplum başlığı altında incelerken, pratiğin kendisinin neden ve nasıl vatandaşların politik hayal gücünde kendine yer bulabildiği sorusunu sormamaktadır. Daha geniş anlamda seçim gözlem ve denetimi üzerine Türkiye dışında yapılan akademik çalışmalarda ise konu üç temel çerçevede ele alınmaktadır. İlk çerçeve, seçim gözlem pratiğinin kurumsallaşmasını demokratikleşme süreçleriyle ilişkilendirerek ele almaktadır. İkinci çerçeve bu doğrudan bağlantıya şüpheci yaklaşarak, seçimler gibi bir ülkenin iç işleri olarak değerlendirilen ve egemenlik haklarıyla ilişkilendirilen oldukça hassas bir konunun nasıl olup da uluslararası bir meseleye dönüştüğü sorusunu sormaktadır. Kelley ve Hyde'ın çalışmalarının yön verdiği bu çerçeveye göre seçim gözlem ve denetim pratiğinin bu denli yaygınlaşması, uluslararası normatif çevrede gerçekleşen değişimlerle açıklanmalıdır. Bu görüşe göre seçim gözlem ve denetimi, seçimler, demokrasi ve insan haklarına dair uluslararası

normların 20. Yüzyılda geçirdiği dönüşümün bir sonucu olarak bugünkü işlerliğine kavuşmuştur. Bu dönüşüm İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası normatif atmosferin Soğuk Savaş sonrası gerçekleşen uluslararası güç dengelerindeki kaymalarla etkileşime girmesi sonucunda ortaya çıkmıştır (Kelley 2008). Demokratikleşme, bir norm olarak Batılı ülkelerin güvenlik çıkarlarına hizmet ederken, uluslararası arenada kendini var etmeye çalışan ülkelerin meşruiyetlerini sağlamada bir araç haline gelmiş; bu ülkelerdeki seçimlerin uluslararası komisyonlarca gözlemlenip denetlenmesi ise meşruiyet tesisinin en kolay ve somut yollarından biri olarak görünürlük kazanmıştır. Bu anlamda demokratikleşme içselleştirilmese dahi seçim gözlemi bir norm haline gelmiş; gözlemlenmeyen seçimler meşruiyet tartışmalarına yol açtığından seçimlerinde usulsüzlüğe karışan hükümetler bile uluslararası komisyonları gözlemci olarak ülkelerine davet etmekten geri durmamışlardır (Hyde 2011).

Seçim gözlem ve denetimine dair son akademik çerçeve, pratiğin hedef ülkelerdeki kamuoyunda bulduğu karşılığı araştırmaktadır. Bu kapsamda yapılan çalışmaların bir kısmı gözlemci raporlarının seçimlerin kamuoyundaki güvenilirliği pozitif etkilere odaklanırken, diğer çalışmalar bu raporların vatandaşlar üzerindeki etkisinin vatandaşların hükümete ve seçimlerin politik bağlamına dair tutumlarına bağlı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Kayda değer bir diğer bakış açısı, temiz seçimlerin her zaman güvenilir seçimler olarak algılanmadığını, siyasette güvenin teknik ve kurumsal intizamın ötesinde tarihsel ve politik olarak koşullanmış bulunduğunu tartışmaktadır. Bu anlamda seçimlerin adil ve usulüne uygun yürütüp yürütülmediği kadar önemli olan bir diğer soru, usulsüzlüğün kamuoyunda yankı bulup bulmadığıdır.

Son tartışmadan da anlaşılacağı üzere, temiz ve hileli; meşru ve gayrimeşru; güvenilir ve güvenilmez gibi ikilikler vatandaşların demokrasi ve seçimleri nasıl deneyimlediğine dair açıklayıcı olamayabilmektedir. Seçim gözlem ve denetimi üzerine gelişen literatür, seçimleri demokrasinin işleyişini sağlamadaki en önemli ve merkezi mekanizma olarak addederken, seçimlerin vatandaşların politik hayal gücünde nasıl bir yeri olduğuna dair yeterince veri sunmamaktadır. Hal buyken, sivil gözlem ve denetim rolü üstlenen vatandaşların bu faaliyeti ne gibi motivasyon ve

kurgularla yürüttükleri araştırılmaya değer bir başka soru olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu çalışma, bu misyonu üstlenmektedir.

Seçme ve seçilme hakkı yalnızca en temel değil, aynı zamanda en gözlemlenebilir haklardan biridir. Seçimler ise demokrasi deneyiminin en görsel ve görselleştirici formlarından biridir; öyle ki soyut karşılıkları olan demokrasi kavramına getirilen en somut çağrışım hem içerik hem de biçim olarak çoğunlukla seçimler olmuştur. Bu anlamda seçimlerin tahsis ettiği alan, hem vatandaşların rol üstlendikleri bir sahne, hem de demokrasinin vuku bulduğu bir gösteri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu açılım, seçimlere ve seçimler vasıtasıyla ortaya çıkan politik alana dair alışılagelmemiş bir yaklaşım geliştirmeye imkan tanımaktadır. Bu çalışmada da, seçim gözlem ve denetim pratiğini anlamak için bu imkanın olanakları araştırılacak, vatandaşların demokrasi, seçimler ve seçim gözlemine dair deneyimleri görsel ve görselleştirici deneyimleme biçimleri üzerinden ele alınacak; politika ve görsellik üzerinden kavramsal bir tartışma yürütülecektir.

Metodoloji

Bu çalışma, seçim gözlem ve denetim pratiğinin neden ve nasıl Türkiye'deki sivil vatandaşların politik repertuarında kendine yer bulabildiğini anlamak için çeşitli ampirik, kavramsal ve teorik araçları eş zamanlı olarak kullanmaktadır.

Çalışma boyunca işletilen ampirik unsurlar, çalışma kapsamında gerçekleştirilen saha araştırmasından edinilmiştir. Çalışmanın ana eksenini oluşturan demokrasi, seçim ve seçim gözleminin nasıl deneyime düştüğü sorusu, metodolojik olarak nitel tekniklerin kullanımını gerektirmiştir. Çalışmanın sahası, 2015 yılındaki Haziran veya Kasım genel seçimlerinde Oy ve Ötesi bünyesinde müşahitlik görevi üstlenen otuz gönüllü ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakatlardan oluşmaktadır. 2015 seçimleri hem Oy ve Ötesi'nin en çok duyulduğu ve faaliyet gösterdiği döneme denk gelmesi açısından, hem de bu dönemden sonra Nisan 2017 referandumuna kadar herhangi bir seçim gerçekleşmediği için özellikle seçilmiştir. 2015 genel seçimleri ve yinelenen genel seçimleri iki farklı politik atmosferin de işaretleyicileri olduğundan,

bu seçimlerin müşahit olarak deneyimleri karşılaştırmalı analizlere de imkan tanımaktadır.

Çalışma, gönüllülerin herhangi bir demografik özelliğine odaklanmadığından veya belli bir bağımsız değişkenin bir bağımlı değişken üzerindeki etkilerini incelemediğinden, mülakat yapılan görüşmecilerin belirlenmesinde 2015 seçimlerinde müşahitlik yapmış olmaları dışında herhangi bir önkoşul aranmamıştır. Çalışma kapsamında mülakat yapılan ilk görüşmecilere, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi'nin sosyal medya ağlarından ulaşılmış; ikinci ve üçüncü çemberdeki görüşmecilere erişmek içinse kartopu örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Farklı perspektifleri tartışmaya dahil etmek adına görüşmeci profili zenginleştirilmeye çalışılsa da, hem kartopu örnekleme yönteminin bu anlamdaki sınırlılığı, hem de müşahitlik görevinin halihazırda toplumun belli bir kesimine hitap etmesi bunu zorlaştırmıştır.

Çalışma kapsamında mülakat yapılan otuz görüşmecinin cinsiyet dağılımı – 16 kadın ve 14 erkek olmak üzere – dengelidir. Görüşmecilerin çoğu (24 kişi) 18-20 yaşları arasındayken, 5', 31-35 ve 1'i 46-60 yaşları arasındadır. Görüşmecilerin 24'ü müşahitlik görevini Ankara'da, 3'ü İstanbul'da, 1'i Bursa'da, 1'i Zonguldak'ta ve 1'i Samsun'da yapmıştır. 20 görüşmeci farklı seviyelerde öğrenciyken, geri kalan görüşmecilerden 4'ü akademisyen, 3'ü memur, 2'si özel sektör çalışanı ve 1'i emeklidir. Bu anlamda çalışma, görece genç, büyükşehirde yaşayan, çoğunlukla öğrenci olan ve Türkiye'deki politik atmosferden bir şekilde rahatsızlık duyan bir sivil vatandaş profilinin anlatılarına dayanmaktadır.

Mülakat boyunca görüşmecilere gündelik hayatta politikayla nasıl ilişkilendikleri, müşahitlik yapmaya nasıl karar verdikleri, müşahitlik deneyiminde karşılaştıkları zorluklar, seçmen ve diğer seçim görevlileriyle ilişkileri, müşahitliği nasıl bir politik eylemlilik olarak değerlendirdikleri gibi çeşitli sorular yöneltilmiş ve bu çeşitli deneyimler arasındaki ilişkiler çözümlenmeye çalışılmıştır.

Görüşmeler sonucunda elde edilen anlatılar, çalışmayı politikanın görme, görünme ve görünürlük ilişkileri üzerinden gelişen deneyimselliğine dair bir örüntüye doğru itmiş; bu örüntüyü incelemek içinse söz konusu nosyonlar belli başlı teorik çerçevelerle

etkileşime girerek tartışılmıştır. Çalışma boyunca, sırasıyla Augusto Boal, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski gibi teatral kuramcıların; Jeffrey Edward Green, Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler gibi düşünürlerin ve şahitlik nosyonu üzerine farklı disiplinlerde araştırma yapan figürlerin kavramlarına başvurulmuştur. Çalışmada bu çerçevelerden ödünç alınarak kullanılan başlıca kavramsal araçlar ise estetik mesafe, açıklık (candor), görünürlük, gözetleme, görünme, politik bir gösteren olarak beden ve şahitlik nosyonlarını içermektedir.

Argüman

Bu çalışmada, araştırma sorusunu açımlamak için iki temel soru üzerinden gidilmiştir. İlk soru, seçim gözlem pratiğinin sivil vatandaşların seçimler bağlamı dışında ve daha genel anlamıyla politikayı deneyimleme biçimiyle nasıl ilişkilendiğini sormaktadır. Bu anlamda görüşmecilere politikayla nasıl ilişkilendiklerine yönelik sorular sorulmuş, politik eylemliliklerini nasıl tarif ettikleri incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda görüşmelerden çıkan bir örüntü, çalışmanın ana hattını oluşturmuştur: Görüşmecilerin önemli bir kısmı, anlamlı politik eylemliliği aktivizm ya da örgütlülükle ilişkilendirmiş ve birkaçı dışında kendilerinin böylesi bir ilişkilenme içinde olmadığını belirtmiştir. Ancak bu, kendilerini politik eylemsizlikle tanımlamalarına da yol açmamıştır. Politik eylemlilik, görüşmecilerin anlatılarında bir örüntü oluşturacak kadar fazla tekrarla olup biteni izlemek, duymak, görebilmek ve daha genel anlamıyla bir tür seyircilik haliyle tarif edilmiştir. Görüşmecilerden seçmen olarak katıldıkları seçimlere dair deneyimlerini paylaşmaları ve bir politik hadise olarak seçimleri değerlendirmeleri istendiğinde, bu tarife paralel sonuçların ortaya çıktığı gözlemlenmiştir. Her ne kadar görüşmecilerin hemen hiçbiri seçimlere fazladan bir değer atfetmese de, hemen hepsi mevcut koşullar içinde seçimlerin savunulması gereken bir alan olduğu konusunda mutabık kalmışlardır. Öte yandan, seçmenlik deneyimlerinden söz ederken, ilginç bir şekilde görüşmecilerin üzerinde durduğu temel nokta bir vatandaş olarak karar mekanizmasına dahil oldukları oy kullanma anı değil, sandıklar kapandıktan sonra seçim sonuçlarını televizyondan izledikleri an olmuştur. Görüşmecilerin anlatılarından çıkan örüntü göstermektedir ki seçimler, toplumdaki konumlanmayı gösterme ve görselleştirme için etkili bir araç olarak algılanmakta ve bu özelliğiyle vatandaşlar

175

nezdinde önem kazanmaktadır. Bu iki tartışmadan çıkarılan sonuç, seyirciliğin görüşmecilerin politikayı deneyimleme biçimlerinin önemli bir kısmını oluşturduğu ve kendisinin de politik bir deneyim olarak ortaya çıktığıdır. Bu ampirik bulguyu desteklemek için, teorik bir araç olarak Green'in öne sürdüğü "demokrasinin oküler paradigması" fikri tartışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Green, özellikle kitlesel iletişim araçlarının yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte seyirciliğin gündelik politik deneyime derinlemesine işlediğini; modern demokrasilerin gittikçe daha küçük bir politik elit grubunu izleyen geniş seyirci kitleleri modeline döndüğünü ve bu modeldeki oyuncu ve seyirciler arasında rotasyonun büyük ölçüde engellendiğini öne sürmektedir. Ancak Green'e göre politik deneyimimize bu denli sirayet etmiş bulunan seyircilik, bir patoloji değil bir bulgu olarak ele alınmalıdır. Bu tespitten hareketle Green, demokrasi teorilerinde hakim olagelmiş ses metaforunun (örneğin demokrasinin "halkın sesini yükselttiği" bir yönetim biçimi olarak ifade edilmesi) işlerliğini sorgulamakta; bu vokal paradigmanın yerine vatandaşların gündelik politik deneyimini tarif etmede daha açıklayıcı olan oküler demokrasi paradigmasını önermektedir. Bu aşamadan sonra çalışma, Green'in verdiği ilhamla, politikanın deneyimlenme biçimini ve seçim gözleminin bu bağlamda oturduğu birbirinden ayrışan ve birbiriyle kesişen çeşitli oküler pratiklerde araştırmaya girişecektir.

Çalışmada sorulan ikinci yönlendirici soru, gönüllülerin müşahit olarak gerçekleştirdiği performansın politikanın gündelik deneyimiyle ne yönleriyle uyuştuğu ve ne yönleriyle bunu aştığıdır. Bu kapsamda görüşmecilerin müşahitlik deneyimlerine odaklanılmış; sandık başlarında kendi konumlarını nasıl değerlendirdikleri, kendilerini diğer seçim görevlilerinden nasıl ayrıştırdıkları, onlarla ne gibi ilişkiler kurdukları, seçmenle olan karşılaşmalarının onlara ne düşündürdükleri gibi sorular üzerinden çıkan örüntüler takip edilmiştir. Bu örüntülerin analizi ve kavramsal açılımları, çalışmanın temel gövdesini oluşturmaktadır.

Müşahitlik, pek çok görüşmecinin de söz ettiği üzere, öncelikli olarak bir seyir faaliyetidir. Ancak bu seyircilik, ne yönleriyle sivil vatandaşın gündelik politik deneyimindeki ve seçmenlik deneyimindeki seyircilikle benzeşmekte ve ondan ayrışmaktadır? Üç farklı deneyimin (gündelik politikayla ilişkilenme, seçmenlik,

müşahitlik) aynı kavram üzerinden (seyircilik) açımlanabilmesi, bu kavramın birden fazla boyutu olabileceğine işaret etmektedir. Buradan hareketle seyircilik kavramını daha iyi anlayabilmek için kavramın tiyatrodaki işlerliğine göz atılmıştır.

Klasik teatral kuramda sahnenin bilgisinden ve eylem kapasitesinden yoksun, pasif bir figür olarak ortaya çıkan seyirci, çağdaş teatral kuramda yeniden ele alınmış ve oyun alanını mümkün kılan temel bir unsur olarak tasavvur edilmeye başlamıştır. Sahne, artık fiziksel bir alan değil, oyuncu ve seyirci arasındaki bir ilişki biçimidir. Bu anlamıyla seyirci, teatral eyleme maruz kalan değil, onu var eden iki temel öğeden biri olarak düşünülmelidir. Teatral kuram tartışmasının bu çalışmaya en önemli katkısı, seyircinin seyrettiği şeyle arasında yatan, seyrettiği şeyin gerçeklik olmadığı bilgisinden ortaya çıkan ve bu yönüyle de seyrettiği şeyi teatral bir olay haline getiren "estetik mesafe" kavramıdır. Tiyatro, ancak gerçeklik olmadığı gerçeğini tanıyarak teatral niteliğini koruyabilir. Tiyatronun gücü, gerçeklik olmadığı ayan beyan ortadayken ve kabul edilmişken, kendi gerçekliğini yaratabilme kapasitesinden gelmektedir. Ancak o zaman seyirci seyrettiği teatral eyleme doğrudan gerçekliğin repertuarından kaynaklanmayan bir karşılıkla yaklaşabilir ve bu yönüyle de gerçekliğin halihazırdaki repertuarını aşabilir. Bu estetik mesafe yok olduğunda ve tiyatro gerçeklik iddiasında bulunduğunda, tiyatronun yeni bir duygulanım yaratma potansiyeli de ortadan kalkmış olur.

Estetik mesafe, bu çalışmanın bağlamında özellikle müşahitler ile resmi seçim görevlileri ve parti temsilcileri arasındaki farkı anlamada işlevsel olmuştur. Mülakatlarda ortaya çıkan örüntüler göstermiştir ki görüşmecilerin hemen hepsi kendi konumlarını diğer seçim görevlileri ve parti temsilcilerinin konumlarından ayırmakta; bu ayrımı da temel olarak tarafsızlık ve gönüllülük gibi kendi kimliklerini belirleyen özellikler üzerinden yapmaktalardır. Öte yandan diğer seçim görevlileri, kısıtlanmış ve kısıtlayıcı bir kimlik üzerinden hareket etmektedir: Resmi seçim yetkilileri sandık başlarındaki görevlerini ücret karşılığında yaparken, parti görevlileri parti içi atamalarla sandık başlarında zorunlu olarak ve belirli bir kimlikle görevlendirilmiştir. Tarafsız ve gönüllü olarak orada bulunan müşahit ise, seçimlerin usulüne uygun ve adil yürütülmesine dair diğer seçim görevlilerinden daha hakiki bir motivasyona

177

sahiptir. Görüşmeciler bu ayrımı yaparken seçim görevlilerini zan altında bırakmak istemediklerini özellikle belirtmiş, ayrımın daha ziyade kategorik ve kavramsal bir nitelikte olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Bir diğer deyişler müşahit, seyrettiği olaya karşı estetik mesafesini oradaki konumunun tarafsızlık ve gönüllülük nitelikleriyle koruyabilirken, diğer seçim görevlileri bu mesafeyi tahsis edememişlerdir. Bu nedenle sivil müşahidin seyrettiği şeyle kurduğu ilişki, gerçeklikten beslenip onun dağarcığı içinde hareket ederken, aynı zamanda onu aşmaktadır da. O halde seyirciliğin estetik mesafe ile gelen potansiyeli, politik tahayyülde nereye denk düşmektedir?

Green'in politik bir proje önerdiği "açıklık politikası" (politics of candor), bu soruya verebilecek yanıtlardan biridir. Green'e göre görünürlük, günümüz demokrasilerinde politik elitlerin sahip olduğu bir imkandır ve sivil vatandaşlar bu tasavvurda yalnızca seyirci olarak, bir diğer deyişler görünür kılanı gören ama kendini görünür kılamayan özneler olarak var olabilmektedir. Green, bu kurgunun ürettiği etkileri değiştirmek için seyircilik pozisyonunun potansiyellerini açımlamayı önerecektir. Ona göre görmenin etken ve edilgen formları vardır ve vatandaşlar görünürlük imkanına sahip olmadan da, seyircilik faaliyetlerinin etki alanının genişletilmesiyle toplumsal ve politik yaşamda daha yetkili bir konuma yükseltilebilir. Green'in "açıklık politikası" olarak önerdiği tasavvur, politik elitlerin görünürlüklerinin kontrolünü ellerinde bulundurmamaları temel prensibine dayanmaktadır. Bu anlamda görünürlüğün ya da görünürlük imkanına sahip olanın kendisine değil; politik görünürlüğün yapısına, onu yöneten koşullara müdahale edilmektedir. Liderler ve politik elitler kendi görünürlüklerinin kontrolünü ellerinde tutmaz; kamusal alanda ancak yukarıdan yönetilmeyen, önceden planlanmayan ve prova edilmeyen biçimlerde görünürlük kazanabilirlerse, politik yaşamda risk ve belirsizlik faktörü önem kazanacak; bu da politik elitleri sürekli olarak hesap verme zorunluluğuna iterken kitlelerin seyirciliğine daha etken ve aktif bir anlam katacaktır. Böylelikle "halk" temsili bir kurgu olmaktan çıkacak, vatandaşların politik yaşamdaki varlıkları hissedilir hale gelecek, politik yaşam önceden prova edilmiş statik bir gösteri olmaktan çıkıp daha dinamik ve yenilikler yaratma potansiyeline sahip bir alana dönüşecek, liderler ve politik elitlere yüklenen sorumluluk ve hesap verme zorunluluğu sayesinde sivil vatandaşlar ile aralarındaki ilişki daha eşitlikçi bir nitelik kazanacak ve vatandaşlar, paylaştıkları

seyircilik konumunun getirdiği olanak ve yetkilerle kendilerini anlamlı ve etkin bir kolektifin üyesi olarak görecek, bu da toplumsal dayanışmaya katkı sağlayacaktır.

Green'in politik bir proje olarak öne sürdüğü "açıklık" bu çalışmanın doğrudan konusu değildir; ancak bu politik tasavvurun temelde sunduğu fikirle sivil müşahitlik faaliyetinin benzeştiği yönler bulunmaktadır. Sivil müşahit, seçim alanına kendisine biçilen rolden (seçmenlik) farklı bir rolle dahil olmaktadır. Her ne kadar sandık başında müşahit olarak bulunmak seçim yasasınca tanımlanmış bir hak olsa da ve müşahidin tutanak tutmak dışında yasal bir yetkisi bulunmasa da seçimlerin alışılagelmiş rol dağılımı ve mekanizması, sivil bir unsurun varlığıyla artık değişmiştir. Seçimler, demokrasinin hala en görünür ve görsel alanıdır; ancak bu görünürlük ve görselliğin koşulları sivil müşahidin seyriyle bir dönüşüme uğrar. Green'in açıklık politikası üzerinden öngördüğü sonuçlar da görüşmecilerin anlatılarıyla paralellik taşımaktadır. Mülakatlar göstermiştir ki görüşmecilere göre sivil müşahitlik, alışılagelmiş demokrasi fikrinin getirdiği ve egemen diskurun siyasetten ayırarak yansıttığı halk temsilini kırmaktadır. Artık ortaya çıkmakta olan başka bir temsil alanı vardır. Sivil vatandaşın oyunu kullandığı on beş dakikanın dışında da sandık başlarında varlık göstermesi, seçimlerin prova edilmiş kurgusunu değiştirmekte, yalnızca sonuçların televizyonlarda takip edildiği akşam saatlerini değil seçim gününün kendisini bir hadise haline getirmektedir. Sivil müşahit, politik kimliklerin ve bürokratik yetkilerin nispeten kısıtlandığı seçim günü boyunca, seçmenler ve diğer seçim görevlileri ile paylaştığı alanda sembolik olarak bir eşitlik yakalamış, bu alana tesir edebilme imkanına sahip olmuştur. Ve son olarak, ilerleyen bölümlerde daha derinlemesine ortaya koyulacağı gibi, burada farklı tip bir dayanışmanın vesilesi ve tanığı olmuştur.

Green ve ortaya koyduğu politik model müşahitlik deneyiminin seyircilik üzerinden ortaya çıkan açılımlarını anlamada bir araç olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Ancak seyircilik, müşahitlik performansının yalnızca bir boyutudur; çünkü müşahit sandık başında varlık gösterirken yalnızca izleyici değil, aynı zamanda izlenilen konumundadır. Bu eş zamanlılık, müşahitlik deneyiminde seyirciliğin ötesine geçen

ve daha karmaşık olarak tanımlanabilecek görme ve görülme ilişkilerinin varlığına işaret eder. Foucault ve Arendt'in tartışmaya dahli, bu ilişkileri anlamaya yöneliktir. Foucault'nun kuramsal çerçevesi bu çalışmaya iki yönden hizmet etmiştir. İlk olarak, Foucault'nun ortaya koyduğu iktidar-diskur-görünürlük ilişkileri, müşahitlik faaliyetinin ortaya çıkışını ve vatandaşlarda uyandırdığı ilgiyi, bir diğer deyişle de kazandığı politik görünürlüğü hakim politik söylemle olan etkileşimi üzerinden açıklamaya olanak sağlamıştır. Foucault, üretici bir güç olarak tasvir ettiği iktidarın söylem ile kazandığı görünürlük sayesinde devamlı, etkili ve özneleştirici olduğundan söz eder. Döngüsel bir şekilde özenin potansiyel görünürlüğü, yalnızca söylemsel normativitenin halihazırdaki görünürlüğü üzerinden kontrol edilebilir ve uysallaştırılabilir bir nitelik kazanır. Bu çerçevenin çalışma bağlamında bulduğu karşılık, açıklayıcı olacaktır.

Önemli sayıda görüşmeci, mülakatın çeşitli yerlerinde son yıllarda dolaşımda olan ve birçok farklı ve hatta zıt politik figürün zikrettiği bir ifadeden bahsetmiştir: "Tepkinizi sandıkta gösterin". Bu ifadenin farklı bağlamlarda yinelenen kullanımının işaret ettiği, seçimlerin hakim söylemde nasıl politik görünürlüğünün tek ve en makbul uzamı olarak üretildiğidir. Bu anlamda müşahitlik faaliyeti yalnızca seçim pratiğine değil, politik görünürlüğe dair üretilen kısıtlayıcı ve dışlayıcı söyleme de bir müdahaledir. Bir örgütlenme alanı olarak seçimlerin seçilmesi, sandığa güvensizlik gibi doğrudan sebeplerin yanı sıra, aynı zamanda stratejiktir; çünkü ancak bu alanda hakim politik sahnede kendine yer bulamayan talep ve iddialar görünürlük kazanabilecektir. Bir görüşmeci, bu durumu şu cümleyle özetlemiştir: "Evet, tepkimi sandıkta gösterdim". Burada söz konusu olan, hakim söylemin kurgusuna entegre oluş kadar, bu kurguya sinsice yerleşen bir karşı çıkıştır. Foucault'nun sunduğu perspektif, bu anlamda çalışmanın temel meselesini politika ve görünürlük ilişkilerine oldukça kritik bir yönden bağlamaya imkan tanımaktadır.

Foucault'nun çalışma için kritik öneme sahip bir diğer nosyonu ise, sivil müşahidin sandık başında içinde bulunduğu karmaşık görme ve görülme ilişkilerinin bir diğer uzantısı olarak, "gözetim"dir. Foucault'nun modern toplumda bireyi disipline etmenin en etkin araçlarından biri olarak değerlendirdiği gözetim, çalışma bağlamında sivil

müşahidin diğer sandık yetkilileri ile kurduğu ilişkilerde tezahür etmektedir. Görüşmecilerin anlatılarına göre seçim gününün ilk saatlerinde müşahitler ve diğer sandık görevlileri arasında gizli bir gerilim baş göstermiş, müşahitlerden duyulan rahatsızlık kimi zaman dile getirilmiştir. Müşahit, yalnızca seyrederek; ancak kendini seyredilebilir kılarak seyrederek, nasıl bu etkiyi yaratabilmiştir? Benzer şekilde görüşmecilerin önemli bir kısmı, sınıftaki varlıklarının seçim yetkilileri üzerinde disipline edici bir etkisi olduğundan, onları yaptıkları işi daha ciddiye almaya teşvik ettiğinden bahsetmiştir. Müşahit, yalnızca izleme faaliyetini gerçekleştirerek bu etkileri yaratabilmiştir, çünkü müşahit, konumunun hukuki ve tarafsız niteliğinden hareketle, kanunun vücut bulmuş gözü olarak sandık başında varlık göstermektedir. Çalışmada, Foucault'nun gözetim kavramı, izleme faaliyetinin ürettiği bu etkiyi açıklamada başlıca bir araç olarak kullanılmıştır.

Sivil müşahitler ve diğer seçim görevlilerinin etkileşimlerinin görüşmecilerin anlatıları üzerinden ortaya çıkan bir başka açılımı ise, daha önce sözü edilen gerilimin çözülmesiyle birlikte ortaya çıkan karşılıklılık olmuştur. Pek çok görüşmeci, müşahitlik deneyimlerinin en değerli kazanımlarından biri olarak gündelik hayatta kendi çevrelerinde karşılaşmayacakları insanlarla karşılaşmayı ve bu insanları belli başlı temsillerden azade bir biçimde tanıyabilme olanağını öne sürmüştür. Bir başka deyişle, politik görünürlük kazanmanın ötesinde, vatandaşların birbirlerine görünebilme imkanı bulması müşahitlik deneyiminin önemli bir parçası olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Arendt'in "yurttaşların birbirlerine denk yurttaşlar olarak görünebileceği alanlar" olarak ifade ettiği ve ilişkide kurulan kamusallığa en üst değeri atfettiği "görünme alanı" kavramı, bu noktada çalışmaya önemli bir katkı sağlamıştır. Seçim günü resmi sandık yetkilileri, parti temsilcileri, müşahitler ve seçmenin bir arada bulunduğu sınıf, bir görünme alanına dönüşür; çünkü her ne kadar bu unsurların görev ve yetkileri farklılık göstere de, en temel vatandaşlık haklarından birinin egzersiz edildiği bu sınırlı anda bütün bireysel farklar ve grup kimlikleri geçici olarak askıya alınır. Vatandaşlar, özel ve toplumsal kimliklerinin ötesinde birbirlerine görünebilecekleri kamusal bir alanın içerisinde birbirleriyle eşit ve aynı zamanda biricik varlıklar olarak ortaya çıkarlar ve Arendt'e göre bu görünme hali, insanların eylem ve söz ile kendilerini dünyaya eklemledikleri, yeni bir şey üretme kapasitesine

181

sahip ve salt insanların bir aradalığı ile mümkün olan hakiki politiklik biçiminin ta kendisidir.

Bu noktada Butler, bedenin eylem ve sözün yokluğunda bile politik bir işaretleyen olmayı sürdürüğünü, Arendt'çi anlamda bir "görünme"nin bedensel temellerinin göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiğini söyleyecektir. Politik bir işaretleyici olarak beden, görünme alanını harekete geçirir ve kamusal alanın kamusallığına meydan okunur. Butler, bedene bu kapasiteyi genellikle sokak protestoları gibi münakaşanın olduğu bağlamlarda atfeder. Peki münakaşa gözle görülmez ve hatta uzlaşı olarak tezahür ederse, beden neyi performe edebilir?

Şahitlik kavramı, çalışmada bu soruya potansiyel bir cevap olarak ve bundan önce tartışmanın ana hattını oluşturan diğer kavramları içeren toparlayıcı bir nosyon olarak önerilmektedir. Seyircilik, görünürlük, gözetim, görünüm ve bedensem görünme gibi farklı yaptırımlarla gelen tüm bu oküler çerçeveler, şahitlik kavramında kendine bir yer bulur. Mülakatlarda ortaya çıkan son örüntü olan "sorumluluk", şahitlik üzerinden kavramsal bir bağlama oturur. Görünme kavramının bir gereği olan karşılık arama ve karşılık verme (address and response) alternatif bir sorumluluk kurgusunun temelini oluşturur ve ortaklığa dayanan bu sorumluluk, daima bir başkasına dairdir. Görüşmecilerin anlatılarında "kutuplaşma" ve "politik alanın daralması" ifadeleriyle tasvir ettiği günümüz Türkiye'sinin hakim politik atmosferinde müşahitlik pozisyonu, kendine bir alan açmakta ve harekete geçirdiği ilişkiselliklerle mevcut koşullarda kırılımlar yaratabilmektedir.

Sonuç

Sonuç olarak, müşahitlik Türkiye'deki vatandaşların politik repertuarında kendine yer bulmuştur; çünkü müşahitlik politik sahnede kendine yer bulamayan veya kendi politik sahnesinden mahrum taleplerin politika üretmeye devam etmesi için alan tanımaktadır. Burada kullanılan "sahne" terimi, tesadüfi değildir ve politik deneyimde görme ve görülme ilişkilerinin merkeziliğine vurgu yapmak için özellikle seçilmiştir. Müşahitlik pozisyonu, gündelik politik deneyimi büyük oranda niteleyen seyircilik

faaliyeti üzerinden, bu faaliyeti farklı bir bağlamda yeniden üreterek, onu aşarak ve vatandaşları seyredebilen seyirciler konumunda çok yönlü görünürlük, gözetim, görünüm ve görünme ilişkiselliklerine sokarak dönemin politik arayışlarına soyut bir karşılık sunabilmektedir.

Türkiye'nin son dönemde geçirdiği dönüşümler seçim gözleminin ve müşahitlik faaliyetinin bu çalışmada sözü edilen açılımlarını gözlemlemeye engel olmuştur. Öyle ki Oy ve Ötesi bile Nisan 2017 referandumunda gönüllülerin artık gerekli donanıma sahip olduğunu ve kendi başlarına siyasi partiler aracılığıyla müşahitlik yapabileceklerini söyleyerek sivil müşahitlik faaliyetini uygulamaya koymamıştır. Bu çalışma, iki yönden gündelik politik çerçeveye ve literatüre katkı sağlayabilir: Öncelikle, müşahitlik faaliyetinin Oy ve Ötesi'nin bile farkında olmayabileceği işlerliğini ve açılımlarını ortaya koyarak bu faaliyete yeniden ve daha geniş bir perspektifle yönelmeye vesile olabilir.

Çalışmanın sunduğu daha temel katkı ise, politikaya ve politikanın olası deneyimlenme biçimlerine dair sunduğu sosyolojik okumadır.

D. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

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