SPATIALIZATION OF ANTAGONISM:

HEGEMONIC STRUGGLES OVER TAKSİM SQUARE

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Spatialization of Antagonism: Hegemonic Struggles Over Taksim Square

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

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ABSTRACT

Spatialization of Antagonism: Hegemonic Struggles Over Taksim Square

This thesis explores the construction of antagonistic political subjectivities through the past and ongoing hegemonic struggles over Taksim Square. Taksim Square is a political space which can help us understand how collective identities and meanings in Turkey have been constructed through the hegemonic struggles and the spatial practices. This thesis analyzes the intricate relations between collective identity, space and collective memory, specifically in the case of transformation of Taksim Square, to get a better grasp of the central role of the production of space in the constitution of antagonistic political identities. This thesis will contribute to the scholarship on the constitution of political subjectivity by showing how Taksim Square functions as a political space through which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic imaginaries and subjectivities are brought into being.

ÖZET

Antagonizmin Uzamsallaştırılması:
Taksim Meydanı Üzerine Hegemonik Mücadeleler

Bu tez, Taksim Meydanı ile ilgili geçmişte yürüyen ve hala devam eden hegemonik mücadeleler üzerinden antagonistik siyasal öznelliklerin inşasını incelemektedir. Taksim Meydanı, Türkiye'deki kollektif kimliklerin hegemonik mücadeleler ve uzamsal uygulamalar yoluyla nasıl oluştuğunu anlamamıza yardımcı olabilecek siyasi bir alandır. Özellikle Taksim Meydanı'nın dönüştürülmesi kapsamında, kolektif kimlik, uzam ve kolektif bellek arasındaki karmaşık ilişkileri, antagonistik siyasi kimliklerin oluşumunda uzamın üretiminin merkezi rolünü daha iyi kavramak için analiz eder. Tez, Taksim Meydanı'nın hegemonik ve karşı-hegemonik tahayyüllerin ve öznelliklerin ortaya çıktığı siyasal bir alan olarak işlev gösterdiğini göstererek siyasal öznelliğin kurulması konusunda literatüre katkıda bulunacaktır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On January 25, 2019, before the 31 March local elections, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came up with an explanation about Taksim Square in his press statement. Erdoğan told about the changes that the Justice and Development Party (JDP) governments made in the architectural texture of Taksim Square. And he gave the signals that he would not give up the reconstruction of the Taksim Artillery Barracks:

> We renewed the Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall next to Harbiye Congress Center. When we were demolishing it they made a fuss. We said, we are building a better, bigger one, be patient. Turkey was no opera-building. [...] They raised hell when I proposed the AKM issue for the agenda. We said we will build an opera house here. They freaked out. Now we are laying the foundation for the new opera house. A larger and functional opera house. Likewise, the barracks in Taksim to which they ran counter. If you could see the original Artillery Barracks, you would say: Shame on those who demolished the barracks. It was so magnificent architectural work. I have its original architectural designs made. We will revive it. We are building Taksim Mosque across the barracks. It is almost completed. What will all this bring? Istanbul did not have a proper square. We moved traffic underground in Taksim. Taksim is getting a square. On the one hand, the historical barracks will emerge; on the other, the opera-house is coming in view as a magnificent work; and on the other, the Taksim Mosque is emerging as a great work. (Appendix, 1)

Indeed, Erdoğan had attempted to re-build the old barracks in 2013, but he had met with a strong opposition. He involuntarily shelved the project after the Gezi Park resistance and the country-wide anti-government protests. However, Erdoğan confirms to be determined to reconstruct the old barracks at Gezi Park in Taksim, one of the symbolic spaces of modern Istanbul and the secular Turkish Republic.

The Taksim Artillery Barracks had been at Turkey's agenda in 2010. An exhibition entitled "History and Demolition in Istanbul: Ghost Buildings"[1] was organized, sponsored by Istanbul European Capital of Culture 2010 Agency, to display an alternative history of Istanbul. In the exhibition, twelve historic buildings[2], which had been destroyed by urban planning decisions, political events or natural disasters, were virtually revitalized. The original name of the exhibition (Hayal-et Binalar) was written to evoke two different meanings that went back and forth between "hayalet" (ghost) and "hayal et" (imagine) (Saner, 2011, p. 11). Architect Turgut Soner, emphasizes the double meaning of its name, and claims that forgetting a building completely is worse than a building to become a ghost, therefore this exhibition tried to recall the ghosts of twelve buildings by imagining them (p. 11). Architect Cem Kozar explains that the origin of this exhibition is the question "what would have happened if these destructions never took place?" (2011, p. 114). According to Kozar, city is a collection of stories and each story has a particular importance, so in the exhibition, historical researches and possible scenarios were created as if the buildings were still existent. The exhibition, for Kozar, had no intention of promoting the reconstruction of these historical buildings in a nostalgic approach; it aimed to re-tell their existence and to remember them. For them, to build an actual replica of this destroyed building would be nonsensical, the stuff of caricature.

After a short time, the exhibition diverted from its original aims. Rather than staying as an imaginary scenario of a demolished building, the Taksim Artillery

[1] İstanbul'da Tarih ve Yıkım: Hayal-et Yapılar.

[2] Antiochos Palace, Polyeuktos Church, city walls of Galata, Çandarlı Bath, İncili Köşk, Direklerarası, Sadabad Palace, Taksim Artillery Barracks, Old Çırağan Palace, Darülfünun, Monument of Ayastefanos, Squibb Building.

Barracks has gained a chance to be real. Before 2011 General Elections, Prime Minister Erdoğan, at that time, announced his decision to rebuild the old military barracks that had been replaced by a park in the 1940s. As Jacques Derrida says, everything began by the apparition of the ghost of the old barracks.

Derrida, in his book *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, conceptualizes hauntology "as a concept capable of presenting new ways of thinking about the past, present and future, rather than just the 'end' of history and of the twentieth century" (Shaw, 2018, p.5). Derrida claims that the essence of hauntology is related with being and time, yet being turns into "beyond being" and time becomes "out of joint" (Derrida, 2012, p. 28). Derrida responses "the end of history" that Fukuyama declared, and refutes it through the concept of hauntology that is related with "disjointed" time. Historian Berber Bevernage (2008) claims that through hauntology Derrida deconstructs the "metaphysical time and presence" and explains ghosts as "out of joint". In this regard, *The Specters of Marx* startes with Hamlet's famous words: "Time is out of joint." Ernesto Laclau (1995) explains that "out of joint" does not refer to an end or a new start, it indicates the possibility that a ghost can appear any time. In short, hauntology concept arises as a refusal of the "end" declaring that even death is not the end (Sim, 1999).

According to Derrida a ghost may travel in between times, and can appear any time. He also states that there is no definition of ghosts such as specter of past or specter of future, and if a ghost cannot be labeled with a specified time range, "specterality" cannot be considered with any border of time as present, past or future (2012, p. 42). A spectral moment does not fit with synchronization of time. Derrida

underlines that: “A spectral asymmetry interrupts here all ‘specularity’. It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony” (2012, p. 42). On this sense, Ernesto Laclau (1996a) summarizes that anachronism is crucial to hauntology, and “spectrality” “desynchnizes” the time, the specter is nor in present neither is absent, but it is still existent in past, present and the future all at the same time, and as Derrida’s words put: “[I]t begins by coming back”. And when the ghost comes back, time becomes “out of joint”.

As Avery Gordon puts it, in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, “haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future” (2008, p. xvi). In other words, “to be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects” (p. 190). She states that “ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view” (ibid.). Gordon underlines that

> Haunting is not the same as being exploited, traumatized, or oppressed, although it usually involves these experiences or is produced by them. What’s distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely. [...] Haunting is a frightening experience. It always registers the harm inflicted or the loss sustained by a social violence done in the past or in the present. But haunting, unlike trauma, is distinctive for producing a something-to-be-done (p. xvi).

Following Derrida and Gordon, I suggest that when the ghost of the Taksim Artillery Barracks came back, time became “out of joint”. This ghost has altered “the way we separate between the past, the present, and the future” by way of moving the 31 March Incident, one of the most controversial issues in the modern history of Turkey, into the midst of current debates. The return of the ghost poses a question about the present: what does the 31 March Incident mean in the present? Since, when the ghost comes back, it does not matter what really happened in the past. It leads to

a struggle over the meaning of the past that gives rise to a contestation over the meaning of the present. In this context, not history but collective memory occupies a central place in the construction of the truth of the past.

The ghost of the barracks is a historical entity which has haunted both the contemporary secular subjects and the Islamist-conservative subjects. Memories of the 31 March incident are still alive and active. However, these two groups remember the 31 March Incident differently, and their remembering refers to a reconstruction of the past in the present. The Kemalist secular and national collective memory was based on forgetting and erasing the memories of the immediate past of the Ottoman Empire (Özyürek, 2007). It should be noted that the act of forgetting is a necessary component in the constitution of collective memory. In this context, the Kemalist regime demolished the Taksim Artillery Barracks, which was considered as the symbol of irtica, in 1939. In 2013, the ghost of the old barracks started to haunt the secular and nationalist subjects. The Taksim Artillery Barracks has served as a constant reminder of the danger of Islamic fundamentalism to the supporters of Kemalist secular and national system in Turkey. For them, the barracks symbolize the return of irtica. They have believed that the reconstruction of the old barracks would resurrect the still-existing danger of irtica. The fear of irtica has mobilized the secular and national subjects into support of secularism against the JDP.

On the other hand, the Islamist-conservative counter-collective memories claim another way of narrating the past of the 31 March Incident. They consider the incident as a conspiracy against the Islamist Sultan Abdülhamid. The Taksim Artillary Barracks was the place where the pious soldiers defended Sultan Abdülhamid against these conspiratorial gangs at the expense of their lives. Thus, the

old barracks is a symbol of the dethroning of Sultan Abdülhamid and beginning of the history of victimhood for the conservative and fundamentalist Islamic subjects. Both the secularist and the conservative-Islamists groups try to keep affectively alive the 31 March Incident in their collective memories.

Following Derrida and Gordon, I suggest that the Taksim Artillery Barracks, in the form of a ghost which has haunted 'our time,' opens a way to rethink the constitution of antagonistic collective subjectivities which are imagined through the imaginary and real (re)constructions of Taksim Square. I try to question how the competing collective memories that are inscribed in the Taksim Square govern the present and designate the possibilities of the future. One of the main questions is the political and social importance of Taksim Square in regard to its historical background. I try to follow the imaginations of Taksim Square in the discourses of both the Kemalists and Islamists. I aim to understand how antagonistic collective identities are constructed, manifested and maintained via the transformations of the square.

1.1. Aim of the study

This thesis is an attempt to understand the Justice and Development Party's (JDP) spatial strategies over Taksim Square and the way in which the JDP articulates a conservative popular identity and advances its hegemonic project through such spatial strategies. I aim at analyzing the intricate relations between space and collective identity, specifically in the case of the transformation of Taksim Square, to get a better grasp of the central role of the JDP's spatial strategies in the constitution

of conservative identity. This thesis might also give us a clearer picture of the ongoing process of re-defining the collective identities and re-establishing the political frontiers through the hegemonic struggles over Taksim Square, especially of what we have witnessed since the mid-1990s that manifests itself in diverse discourses. This thesis aims to respond to the question of how Taksim Square as a political space as well as the collective memories about the square have played a central role in the constitution of antagonistic collective identities.

In the thesis, I will draw on Ernesto Laclau's sophisticated and compelling discourse theory of hegemony to analyze the constitution of antagonistic collective subjectivities through the hegemonic struggles over Taksim Square. Laclau's conceptualization of the social in a non-objectivist way, and his radical constructivist theory offer a very useful theoretical framework to understand the dynamics in the constitution of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic subjectivities in Turkey. He rejects all types of essentialist and foundationalist perspectives grounded on "the idea that a society, the human subject, or the objects that we encounter in social life, have fixed essences that exhaust *what* these entities are [; and] theoretical and empirical practices then operate on the basis of these given forms and objects" (Howarth, 2010, p. 311). For Laclau, the social world involves not the objective structures but the possibility of a radical reconstruction of them. This is because the social has an open and indeterminate character in which it is not possible to fix meanings and identities for once and all.

For Laclau objectivity is constituted in the terrain of discourse. He emphasizes the radical contingency and historicity of social objectivity and the primacy of politics and power in its formation (Howarth, 2010, p. 311). Laclau

emphasizes the contingent construction of all social meanings and identities within a discourse. In the absence of any substantive or positive quality, all meanings of objects and identities of social are relationally constructed as differences from the others within the structural system or social totality, through political struggles. Laclau says "If social relations are contingent, it means they can be radically transformed through struggle, instead of that transformation being conceived as a self-transformation of an objective nature" (1990, p. 35). Briefly, according to Laclau, history is the result of contingent power relations between forces. Every power relation is contingent and depends on conditions which are contingent as well.

It must be added that Laclau's concept of history is not only based on contingent conditions but on antagonistic forces. According to Laclau, the dichotomization of the political space, and thereby the social space, through the creation of an antagonistic frontier is the precondition of the constitution of identities and meanings. In this context, antagonism as an ontological category is the very condition of politics. In other words, the logic of antagonism is the political rationality.

Following Laclau, I define the political field in Turkey as a site of hegemonic struggles in which the Kemalist hegemonic order and counter-hegemonic movements try to preserve or improve their positions. The discourse theory of hegemony enables us to analyze position-takings of the antagonistic forces relationally and without focusing on the forces themselves. In other words, it offers us to construct a social topology between the positions of the antagonistic forces in their competition for power. Laclau's conceptualization of hegemony allows us to analyze the antagonistic relations between the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces and their political

subjectivities in the same domain of power, without assuming a distinction between power and resistance.

However, Laclau's theoretical framework remains incapable to understand how political subjectivities are forged through the production of space, and the spatial strategies and practices. Relatedly, Laclau does not mention the role of space in the construction of political identities. In this regard, the thesis aims to to contribute to the existing scholarly works by rethinking the relation between the constitution of political identities and the production of space. Space is "the locus of collective memory—a site where identity is created through the constructton of memories linking a group of people into the past" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 61). It must be noted that Taksim Square is a monumental space. My central concern is the role of the monumental space in relation to collective memory in the constitution of the political subjectivities. My purpose is also to offer some reflections on Taksim Square as a monumental space which is being recoded in the contemporary context of ever-expanding Islamist-conservative collective memory. In this context, this thesis claims that the monumental space and collective memory have played a central role in the constitution of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic subjectivities in Turkey. Thus, Taksim Square serves as an important and pertinent object of study in order to understand how the antagonistic subjectivities are constructed in the political space of Turkey.

1.2 The production of space

> Is it conceivable that the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched? Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations, the

> milieu in which the combination takes on body, or the aggregate of procedures employed in their removal (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 11)?

The French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre duly gives a negative answer to his rhetorical question from the opening pages of *The Production of Space*. Indeed, this rhetorical question is "an invitation to urbanize Gramsci's theory of hegemony thoroughly" (Kipfer, 2008, p.194). Lefebvre extends Marxism and explicitly links the Gramsci's theory of hegemony to the production of space. The essence of Lefebvre's argument in *The Production of Space* is the claim that "(social) space is a (social) product ... the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (1991, p.26). His argument is an attack "to break with the widespread understanding of space imagined as an independent material reality existing "in itself"" (Schmid, 2008, p. 28). Briefly, space does not exist "in itself"; it is produced" (p. 28). Lefebvre considers physical space as a source which disappears and changes into a social product by power relations: "Nature is now seen as merely the raw material out of which the productive forces of a variety of social systems have forged their particular spaces" (1991, p. 31). Andy Merrifield, making a reference to Marx's *Grundrisse* introduction, touchily summarizes this point as follows:

> Now, space is no more a passive surface, a *tabula rasa* that enables things to "take place" and action to ground itself somewhere; space, like other commodities, is *itself actively produced*: it isn't merely the staging of the theater of life as a paid-up member of the cast. Indeed, it's an "active moment" in social reality, something produced before it is reproduced, created according to definite laws, conditioned by "a definite stage of social development" (2006, p. 107).

Lefebvre constructs his understanding of the complex and contradictory nature of space on Marxist assumption of production. Production in Lefebvre's sense

is not limited to "the economic production of the things and includes the production of society, knowledge and institutions" (Elden, 2004, p. 184). Production, for Lefebvre, includes both a material and a mental process: "We have passed from the production of things in space .. . to the production of space itself" (as cited in Elden, 2004, p.184). According to Lefebvre, "if space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production. The 'object' of interest must be expected to shift from *things in space* to the actual *production of space* itself" (1991, pp. 36-7). Put in a nutshell, what he is interested is not the space itself, rather the construction process of space: "We are not speaking of a science of space but of a knowledge (a theory) of the production of space" (Lefebvre, 1976, p.18).

Lefebvre conceptualizes space as "both a material product of social relations and a manifestation of relations, a relation itself" (Gottdiener, 1993, p.130). Concurrently, space is considered as much a part of social relations as is time. Lefebvre's theory of production derives from "a relational concept of space and time. *Space* stands for simultaneity, the synchronic order of social reality; *time,* on the other hand, denotes the diachronic order and thus the historic process of social production" (Schmid, 2008, p. 29). He theorizes the category of space "in the context of the mode of production of a particular epoch" (Elden, 2004, p.184). According to Lefebvre, "every society -and hence every mode of production with its subvariants- produces a space, its own space" (1991, p. 31). Mark Gottdiener considers Lefebvre's argument as follows:

> Every mode of social organisation produces an environment that is a consequence of the social relations it possesses. In addition, by producing a space according to its own nature, a society not only materializes into distinctive built forms, but also reproduces itself. The concept "production of

> space" means what Giddens calls the "duality of structure". That is, space is both a medium of social relations and a material product that can affect social relations. Each society that has its own spatial practice builds its own space with its specific relations of production that can include significant variant forms (1993, p. 132).

According to Lefebvre, what is needed for a study of space is to apprehend it "in its genesis and its form, with its own specific time or times (the rhythm of daily life), and its particular centres and polycentrism" (1991, p. 31). In other words, every city can be apprehended by contextualizing it into its own specific time and historical conditions. In this regard, Lefebvre is interested in how every society produces its own space. How is space produced socially? In Lefebvre's theory of space, production is "broader than the economic production of things (stressed by Marx) and includes the production of society, knowledge and institutions. ... Production in Lefebvre's sense—deriving from Marx, Hegel, and Nietzsche's notion of creation—needs to be grasped as both a material and mental process" (Elden, 2004, p.184). According to Lefebvre, every society produces its own space on practical, discursive and symbolic levels. In this framework, Lefebvre divides the production processes of space into three dialectically interconnected dimensions: "material social practice (Marx); language and thought (Hegel); and the creative, poetic act (Nietzsche) " (Schmid, 2008, p.33). In other words, he develops "a conceptual triad", namely, spatial practices, representations of space and representational space, to display the processes through which space is socially produced. He calls them moments of the production of space, that refer to perceived space, conceived space and lived space, respectively. "This parallel series points to a twofold approach to space: one phenomenological and the other linguistic or semiotic" (Schmid 2008, p. 29). By bringing these three moments together, Lefebvre proposes unitary theory of space. Lefebvre defines those moments as follows

> 1 *Spatial practice*, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relation to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*.
>
> 2 *Representations of space*, which are tied to the relations of production and the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations.
>
> 3 *Representational spaces*, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces) (1991, p. 33).

Spatial practice as the material dimension of social activity and interaction embraces (re)production, conception and execution that are expressed and practised in the routines of everyday life (Schmid 2008, p. 36). Spatial practice refers to "space as physical form, *real* space, space that is generated and used" (Elden, 2004, p.190). According to Lefebvre, "The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space" (1991, p. 38).

Representations of space point to "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent- all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). "Representations of space emerge at the level of discourse, of speech as such, and therefore comprise verbalized forms such as descriptions, definitions, and especially (scientific) theories of space" (Schmid, p. 37). Conceived space comprises "the various arcane signs and jargon, objectified plans and paradigms used by these agents and institutions"

(Merrifield, p.109). As Stuart Elden says, it is "a mental construct, *imagined* space" (2004, p. 190). According to Lefebvre, it is space of ideology, power and knowledge. Representations of space combine "ideology and knowledge within a social-spatial practice" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 45).

Representational space is the space "as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). Representational space refers to "the symbolic dimension of space." It does not refer to the space itself "but to something else: a divine power, the logos, the state, masculine or feminine principle, and so on. This dimension of the production of space refers to the process of signification that links itself to a (material) symbol" (Schmid, p. 37). Representational space is "space as produced and modified over time and through its use, spaces invested with symbolism and meaning, the space of *connaissance*, space as *real-and-imagined*" (Elden, 2004, p.190). By uniting of spatial practices, representations of space and representational space Lefebvre proposes unitary theory of space. While these categories constitute a unity, they do not necessarily constitute coherence. Furthermore, they are all deeply controversial and thus deeply political. Lefebvre locates his theory production of place into power relations; and space, which is ceaselessly in relation with society, is political. Lefebvre states:

> [S]pace is political. Space is not a *scientific object* removed from ideology or politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be "purely" formal, the essence of rational abstraction, it is precisely because this space has already been occupied and planned, already the focus of past strategies, of which we cannot always find traces. Space has been fashioned

> and molded from historical and natural elements, but in a political way. Space is political and ideological. (2009, pp.170-1).

Lefebvre defines the space as a social and political product that literally occupied by ideologies. He asserts that "what we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and by thus taking on body therein" (1991, p. 44). He explicitly establishes a strong link between ideology and space. Moreover, he defines a "spatial ideology as a system of meanings of spatial reality" (Busquet, 2012, p.4). In this way, Lefebvre situates the space "at the centre of an ideological struggle" (p.4). However, space is not "simple reflection of ideology", space is "produced by and producing ideology" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 17).

Lefebvre conceives the space as an abstract entity, including social process. Space as a social product is contested and imbued with tension. Lefebvre defines the urban as "a place where conflicts are expressed" (2003, p.175). Lefebvre claims that space is intrinsically open to politics and its identity and meaning are also open to conflicts. Every force participated in hegemonic struggle for power tries to redefine its meaning. Space is a site of political struggle. In this sense, for Lefebvre, space is political and strategic. In Lefebvre's understanding of spatial politics, the state represents the main power that manages and produces space. Space is not only a product of state powers or dominant groups designed to maintain and organize social and economic relations but is also the site of conflict. In this sense, space is a political element used by hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces in order to subvert or maintain relations of power. Lefebvre intrinsically links social production of space to production of hegemony. On the condition that space cannot be considered as "the passive locus of social relations," the production of space serves

hegemony. In this context, Lefebvre claims hegemony is practised by virtue of space. Most importantly, he underlines the importance of the production of space for analyses of hegemony.

According to Lefebvre space is a historical product and the production of space is a historical process. His main point is that space is a social product. Lefebvre uses the production of space concept in order to posit "a theory that understands *space* as fundamentally bound up with social reality" (Schmid, 2008, p. 28). He also conceives the space as a social abstraction besides a concrete entity. He suggests that conceptualizing space is not thought separately from conceptualizing the social. According to this understanding, "Society and social space are about each other; they contain each other. A spatial theory is a social theory and vice versa" (Swyngedouw, 1992, p. 317). Lefebvre asserts that "space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations" (1991, p. 286).

In my thesis, Lefebvre's two arguments are fundamental in understanding the specific nature of Taksim Square: "space is social product" and "space is political". His claims bring me to another problematic: conceptualization of the social and the political. Laclau's conceptualization of the political and the social can be regarded as a supplement to Lefebvre's theory of space. It is necessary at the beginning to clarify the distinction between the political and politics. Following Heidegger, Laclau assumes that the political refers to the ontological level whereas politics refers to the ontic one. In *The Democratic Paradox*, Laclau's long-time collaborator Chantal Mouffe clarifies the distinction between politics and the political as follows:

> By the 'political', I refer to the dimension of antagonism that is inherent in human relations, antagonism that can take many forms and emerge in different types of social relations. 'Politics', on the other side, indicates the ensemble of practices, discourses and institutions which seek to establish a certain order and organize human coexistence in conditions that are always potentially conflictual because they are affected by the dimension of 'the political'. I consider that it is only when we acknowledge the dimension of 'the political' and understand that 'politics' consists in domesticating hostility and in trying to defuse the potential antagonism that exists in human relations, that we can pose what I take to be the central question for democratic politics This question, pace the rationalists, is not how to arrive at a consensus without exclusion, since this would imply the eradication of the political. Politics aims at the creation of unity in a context of conflict and diversity; it is always concerned with the creation of an 'us' by the determination of a 'them'(2000, p. 101).

In a similar way, by the political Laclau means the dimension of antagonism which he takes to be constitutive of identities and meanings (Laclau, 1990, p. 35). For Laclau, the political is the name of different terrains where the struggle for hegemony takes place. In other words, the political as an ontological concept refers to the terrain in which articulation take place. Politics as an ontic concept refers to the structuring of articulation. In other words, politics is the ontic part of the political. Put it clearly, by politics he means the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, in the context of conflictuality provided by the political. Furthermore, for Laclau, the political as ontological logic can only occur in relation to the social. He reconceptualizes the relation between the political and the social and reverses the order of priority between them. Laclau states the relationship between them as follows

> any advance in the understanding of present-day social struggles depends on inverting the relations of priority which the last century and a half's social thought had established between the social and the political. This tendency had been characterized, in general terms, by what we may term the systematic absorption of the political by the social. The political became either a superstructure, or a regional sector of the social, dominated and explained according to the objective laws of the latter. Nowadays, we have started to move in the opposite direction: towards a growing understanding of the eminently political character of any social identity (1990, p. 160).

Put in a nutshell, Laclau conceives the political "as having the status of an *ontology of the social*" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. xiv). In other words, the political does not express the nature of social but constitute it. In Mouffe's words,

> the political cannot be restricted to a certain type of institution, or envisaged as constituting a specific sphere or level of society. It must be conceived as a dimension that is inherent to every human society and that determines our very ontological condition (1993, p. 3).

Such being the case, for Laclau, the political becomes primary since the social is constructed only through the practice of politics. Put in a nutshell, the political is constitutive of all social identity and meaning, and the social is contingent in and of itself. According to Laclau, the primacy of the political refers to the absent ground of the social, because each hegemonic articulation leads to 'sedimentation' or the 'sedimented forms of objectivity' (Marchart, 2007, p. 139). In this context, Laclau's re-conceptualization of the social and the political is based on Husserl's distinction between sedimentation and reactivation (1990, pp. 33-4). Husserl calls "the routinization and forgetting of origins 'sedimentation', and the recovery of the 'constitutive' activity of thought 'reactivation'" (Laclau, 1990, p. 34).

For Laclau, sedimentation as a name for the routinization and forgetting of origins occurs when a particular agent achieves to constitute hegemonic articulatory discourse. In Laclau's terminology, sedimentation refers to "the successful fixation of meaning into solid topographies that need to be conceptualized as sedimentations of power" (Marchart, 2007, p. 139). Laclau conceives "these sediments as space, they spatialize the temporal moment of pure dislocation into a choreography" (p. 139). Laclau defines sedimentation as follows

> a 'forgetting of the origins' tends to occur; the system of possible alternatives tends to vanish and the traces of the original contingency to fade. In this way,

> the instituted tends to assume the form of a mere objective presence. This is the moment of sedimentation (1990, p. 34).

In this sense, Laclau suggests "to think of the social as the terrain of sedimented discursive practices", whereas he defines the political "as the moment of the institution of the social as well as the moment of the reactivation of the contingent nature of every institution" (Marchart, 2007, p. 138). In 'Hegemony and the Future of Democracy: Ernesto Laclau's Political Philosophy', Laclau says that

> The way I am presenting the argument is that we live in a world of sedimented social practices. The moment of reactivation consists not in going to an original founding moment, as in Husserl, but to an original contingent decision through which the social was instituted. This moment of the institution of the social through contingent decisions is what I call 'the political' (1999, p. 146).

As a result, according to Laclau, the dichotomization of the political space, and thereby the social space, through the creation of an internal antagonistic frontier is the precondition of the constitution of identities and meanings. In this context, antagonism as an ontological category is the very condition of politics. In other words, the logic of antagonism is the political rationality. For Laclau, every social order is political and all social relations are potentially antagonistic. This means that the political is likely to be found in all spheres of social life. In this context, Laclau's category of antagonism seems to be compatible with Lefebvre's theory of the production of space. Lefebvre asserts that "Space is political," that is, "not a scientific object removed from ideology or politics," but "always . . . political and strategic". Laclau's conceptualization of antagonism can be regarded as a supplement to Lefebvre's definition of the urban as a place of conflicts. Following Laclau and Lefebvre, I define Taksim Square as political space where hegemonic and counter-hegemonic subjectivities have been constructed and represented.

Taksim Square is a symbolic space and a space of political representation for both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic movements to construct and represent their social and political subjectivities in Turkey. Needless to say, Taksim Square was produced to signify the symbolic power of Kemalist national-secular hegemony in the early period of republic. However, with the rise of political Islam, Taksim Square became a battlefield between the Kemalist hegemonic order and the Islamist Welfare Party in the 1990s. It should be noted that those who fought for Taksim Square were not only the Kemalists and Islamists. Taksim Square also became a space of mass politics of the socialist and communist groups in the 1960s and 1970s.

Taksim Square started to serve as a stage on which leftist circles expressed their demands in public demonstrations during the 1960s. Especially the May 1 Labor Day demonstrations were usually organized in Taksim Square. In those years, Taksim Square witnessed two bloody events. The first serious violent event was Bloody Sunday in 1969. On February 16, the leftist youth organizations gathered in Taksim Square to protest the visit of the Sixth Fleet of the United States to Turkey. A big crowd of rightist attacked the leftist protestors. Eight years later, the second bloody event occurred in the May 1 demonstration (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010). The May 1, 1977 demonstration is considered as the first bloody Labor Day of Turkey. These two bloody events added the political violence into the semiological archive of Taksim Square. However, the leftist groups and social movements have transformed Taksim Square into a space of resistance against the state authority. For example, the Saturday Mothers have gathered every saturday in Taksim to ask the fate of their disappeared relatives who had been arrested by the security forces on political charges since May 27, 1995. LGBTIQ rights groups and activists have organized an annual pride parade in Taksim. Women rights associations have gathered every

Woman Day in Taksim against the patriarchal social and political order. Almost all governments did their best to close Taksim Square to the demonstrations of leftist groups and social movements. For example, on May 1, 2007, police responded the leftist demonstrators who were marking the thirtieth anniversary of the bloody labor day of 1977 in Taksim Square (Baykan & Hatuka, 2010). Today, mass demonstrations of leftist circles in Taksim Square are not allowed.

However, this thesis does not aim to examine how the leftist groups performed and represented their identities in Taksim Square through the public demonstrations. Rather, I focus on the competing subjectivities of the Kemalist secular ideology and the Welfare Party's Islamist imaginaries and the JDP's conservative discourse through the production and transformation of Taksim Square. In other words, this study concentrates on the question of how the antagonistic subjectivities has been unceasingly (re)produced through hegemonic struggles between the Kemalist order and Islamists over Taksim Square's morphology and symbolism.

1.3 Collective memory

I use the French historian Pierre Nora's conceptualization of "lieux de mémoire" in order to highlight the role of the Taksim Square as a monumental space in the constitution of collective memories and collective political identities in Turkey. I consider Taksim Square as a site of memory, or "lieux de mémoire", "where memory crystallizes and secrets itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that

memory has been torn" (Nora, 1989, p. 7). Sites of memory are places or objects such as "museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders" (p. 12). According to Nora, these sites of memory are "fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it" (p. 12). Nora claims that every political actor who wants to construct a collective identity creates *lieux de mémoire* that depends on a will to remember. According to Nora, "the most fundamental purpose of the *lieux de mémoire* is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial […] in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs" (p. 19).

The imagination or the construction of nation consists of radically transforming not only the political, social, economic and cultural structures, but also the space in order to create a new collective subjectivity. As Benedict Anderson (1991) points out, the construction of "imagined community" requires giving its members a sense of belonging to the nation, a long history of national idenity, and territory or homeland. Anthony D. Smith argues that "if nations exist in space, they are equally anchored in time" (2003, p. 166). All of these depend on the formation of a national collective memory which involves the constiution of a collective identity shaping the form that memory takes for the members of nation. As David Lowenthal points out,"remembering our past is crucial for our sense of identity […], to know who we were confirms that we are" (1985, 197). The French sociologist Maurice Halbwach's conceptualization of collective memory is dependent on the idea of how a constructed, or an imagined identity invents a past which is in compliance with that imagined identity.

As Halbwachs says, “remembering is shaped by participation in collective life and that different groups generate different accounts of the past” (1992, p. 39). For Halbwachs, “there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in a society” (p. 22). Of course, those who remember are not groups or institutions, but individuals as group members: “While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember” (1980, p. 48). He underlines that “the collective memory is not simply the sum of the individual memories, nor is it independent from them. Memory does not exist outside of individuals, but it is never completely individual in its character” (p. 34). He adds that “individuals always use social frameworks when they remember”; “the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group”; and “the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories” (p. 40). Thus, Halbwachs claims that all individual and collective memories are socially constructed.

Halbwachs distinguishes collective memory from history and historiography. He claims that “so long as remembrance continues to exist, it is useless to set down in writing or otherwise fix it in memory” (1982, p. 79). Collective memory, for Halbwachs, is “a-historical, even anti-historical” (Novick, 1999, p.3). Peter Novick, American historian, explains the difference between collective memory and history as follows:

> To understand something historically is to be aware of its complexity, to have sufficient detachment to see it from multiple perspectives, to accept the ambiguities, including moral ambiguities, of protagonists’ motives and behavior. Collective memory simplifies; sees events from a single, committed perspective; is impatient with ambiguities of any kind; reduces events to mythic archetypes. Historical consciousness, by its nature, focuses on the historicity of events that they took place then and not now, that they grew out of circumstances different from those that now obtain. Memory, by contrast,

> has no sense of the passage of time; it denies the "pastness" of its objects and insists on their continuing presence. Typically, a collective memory, at least a significant collective memory, is understood to express some eternal or essential truth about the group usually tragic. A memory, once established, comes to define that eternal truth, and, along with it, an eternal identity, for the members of the group (1999, p. 4).

Thus, we are dealing with memory in a group not the question of what actually happened in the past. In other words, collective memory is not the historical knowledge of the past but a representation of the past that is governed by the social group and belonging that in turn draws its source from this very representation. Similarly, Nora states that "memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past" (1989, p. 8). Following Halbwachs, historian Yael Zerubavel defines collective memory as follows: "Every group develops the memory of its own past that highlights its unique identity vis-a-vis other groups. These reconstructed images provide the group with an account of its origin and development and thus allow it to recognize itself through time" (1995, p. 4). The construction of memory requires the act of remembering and forgetting that is governed by needs of the present and concerns of the collectivity.

Memory and space are necessarily intertwined. Collective memory is inscribed in space. The spatialization of collective memory is essential in the preservation and transmission of collective memory from one generation to another. Monuments, museums, the protection of historical buildings, and the preservation of heritage zones are all examples of the spatialization of collective memory (Cresswell, 2004, p. 85). Collective memory is materialized through the production of symbollic spaces but this production of collective memory in space is perpetuation of a new social order that seeks to inscribe a particular collective memory at the expense of

others (p. 62). Thus, space becomes “the contested terrain of competing definitions” (As cited in Cresswell, 2004, p. 60).

Like in every nation state project, the Kemalist modernizers introduced a politics of space and conducted new spatial strategies and arrangements in order to dissolve the spatial hegemony of the old imperial regime. They aimed to create “lieux de mémoire”—museum, monuments, parks, calender, archive, city squares and boulevards—to construct new meanings and national identity around them. The Kemalist hegemonic movement inscribed its secularist and nationalist ideology on space. Taksim was officially chosen to be the square of the Kemalist Republic in Istanbul. In other words, Taksim Square was produced as a site of memory, or a “lieux de mémoire”. The square became an effective tool in the transmission of the secular and national values and traditions in line with the Kemalist discourse. At the same time, it has turned into a terrain of competing memories. Different political actors such as Islamists and leftis groups have experienced and engaged with Taksim as a site of memory in different ways with different collective memories. They have tried to impose their imaginaries on the square. Taksim Square have become “a focus of contention over meanings of history” (Khalili, 2007, p.82). Since the mid-1990s, the counter-hegemonic forces has started to articulate an alternative Islamist collective identity by trying to create a counter-memory that would be inscribed in the Taksim Square.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is composed of four main chapters. The second chapter aims to sketch Ernesto Laclau's post-Marxist theory of hegemony as a possible framework for the constitution of political identities. The centrality of the political in Laclau provides a promising discourse-theoretical starting point to rethink the relation between the constitution of political identities and the production of space in light of poststructuralist foundations. Laclau's poststructuralist theoretical approach might be productive to analyze the production of secular and Islamist collective identities through the hegemonic struggles over the Taksim Square.

In the third chapter, I offer a historical context to the emergence of the Kemalist spatial discourse that is a part of the Kemalist secular nation state project in Turkey. I will discuss in the early Republican period how the Kemalist hegemonic movement inscribed its political discourse on space, especially on Taksim Square, as a part of the constitution process of secular and national collective identity. I try to show how Taksim Square has become the grounds for the Kemalist collective memory. I reconsider the literature on the building of Taksim Republican Square and its relation with the Kemalist hegemonic project in light of Lefebvre's discussion of "the production of social space" and Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony and antagonism. This chapter is essential in understanding the emergence of the Islamist and conservative counter-hegemonic subjectivities in the Turkish complex social and political context since the mid-1990s.

In the fourth chapter, I focus on the rise of an alternative Islamist collective identity within the hegemonic struggle between the Kemalist order and the Islamist Welfare Party which was shaped in flesh and bones in Taksim Square during the

1990s. I will examine the Islamist challenge to the official sacredness of the square by its construction plan of mosque in Taksim Square, and its demand to re-define the identity of the square. I do not focus on a detailed narrative of events, but on how an Islamist collective identity comes into being through a reading of the contestation over Taksim Square.

I will also describe the conditions of the emergence of the Welfare Party as a counter-hegemonic political force. I will argue that the Welfare Party's Islamist imaginary is partly an outcome of the failure of the Kemalist hegemonic project. My aim is not to provide a more detailed history of the 1990s but to discuss the national context of the rise of Islamic challenge based on the discourse analytical approach to politics, in which hegemony is the central category. And, understanding the rise and fall of the Welfare Party is essential for understanding the ideological background of the Justice and Development Party's hegemonic project. I suggest that the JDP and its conservative democratic discourse contingently emerged as an outcome of ongoing hegemonic struggle between the pro-Islamist Welfare Party and the guardians of the Kemalist state.

In the fifth chapter, I will trace the relationships between the JDP's popular conservative identity and its spatial strategies and arrangements in Taksim Square that have been taking place since the 2011 general election. I try to show how the Taksim Square is rearticulated by Erdoğan-led JDP and suggest looking at its spatial strategies as an intrinsic part of the JDP's conservative democratic discourse. Following Laclau's theory of hegemony, I identify the JDP's re-construction project of Taksim Artillery Barracks, construction project of a mosque, and the demolition of the AKM as a form of spatialisation against the sedimented order of Kemalist

hegemony. The JDP's conservative-democratic ideology has tried to make its appearance in the new Taksim Square and banish the Kemalist tradition and the military-bureaucratic elite from such a symbolic place. In order to showcase the distinctive ways Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his regime have focused on recreating or reimaging Turkey's Ottoman past, especially Sultan Abdülhamid reign, I will outline the power dynamics specific to the discourse of the leader, Erdoğan on Taksim Square. To sum up, the last chapter revolves around Erdoğan's projects to restore the Islamic and imperial iconography in Taksim Square.

CHAPTER 2

LACLAU'S THEORY OF POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY

This chapter aims to discuss a theoretical approach that will be productive to analyze the construction of political subjectivities through the production of Taksim Square. The proposed theoretical approach is draws significantly from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's conceptualization of the political subject, and especially from Laclau's later solo works. In the first part, I try to outline the discursive constitution of the subjects focusing on the centrality of the concepts of the impossibility of society, antagonism, dislocation, empty signifier, and hegemony. In the second part, I examine Laclau's populist logic of the construction of the 'people', involving the affective dimension.

2.1 The discursive construction of the political subject

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* in 1985 has opened the way towards Post-Marxism. In their collaborative work, Laclau and Mouffe have offered a sophisticated and compelling discourse theory of hegemony for analyzing the constitution of the social through the political struggles. They have re-elaborated and re-formulated Gramscian category of hegemony, which has been the constant leitmotif of Laclau's works such as New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time (1990), Emancipation(s) (1996), and On Populist Reason (2005). In Laclau's works, "'hegemony' is the central category for a theorization of politics" (Laclau, 1996b, p. 49). Above and beyond any essential foundational assumption, Laclau defines hegemony as "a *type of political relation* and not a topographical

concept" (Laclau, 2001, p. 141) or "the very terrain in which a political relation is actually constituted" (Laclau, 2000, p. 44). What Laclau's definition implies is that hegemony is the terrain of the political in which a contingent articulation of relations, identities and interest takes place (Norval, 2005). There is no doubt that the notion of contingent articulation has gradually and steadily shaped every dimension of Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony under the influence of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis.

Laclau considers hegemony not an ontic but an ontological category. The category of hegemony no longer refers to the class domination, but to political logic that is articulatory in character. Laclau introduces the understanding of the social as a discursive space that is an ontological principle. For Laclau, hegemonic articulation can be understood only on the terrain of discourse since it is the very terrain of objectivity. Laclau and Mouffe conceptualize the category of the social as a discursive space. Following Michel Foucault's definition of discourse, they define discourse as a "structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 105). It should be noted that his category of discourse not only refers to linguistic elements but to any relation of signification. Although Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1974), makes a distinction between discursive formations and non-discursive practices, Laclau and Mouffe assume that the nature of all social phenomena is discursive. They put it as follows:

> The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God', depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion

> that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence (2001, p. 108).

Unlike Foucault, for Laclau and Mouffe, it is not possible to maintain the dichotomy between the discursive and non-discursive regimes since all social practices and objects are contingent discursive constructs (Howarth, 2000, p. 112). As I mentioned above, they theorize 'the social' as a terrain of discursive articulations. And, all social meanings and identities are contingently constituted within a discourse. Their conceptualization of the social is a rhetorical model. Laclau and Mouffe claim that the rhetorical operations play a central role in the constitution of political identities (Norval, 2004, p. 95). They put it as follows:

> Synonymy, metonymy, metaphor are not forms of thought that add a second sense to a primary, constitutive literality of social relations; instead, they are part of the primary terrain itself in which the social is constituted (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001, p. 110).

They place rhetorical operations at the center of politics. In this sense, Laclau and Mouffe state that "hegemony is basically metonymical: its effects always emerge from a surplus of meaning which results from an operation of displacement" (2001, p. 141). They theorize the category of hegemony as giving a name of the impossible fullness. Thus, the category of hegemony revolves around the void of the impossibility of society and leads to their conceptualization of the possibility of the partial closure of the social. I now turn to the impossibility of society to grasp the constitution of political subjects. In what follows, I will examine the possibility of partially closed society which is in need of further clarification and elaboration.

2.1.1 Impossibility of the social

Laclau's assumption of the impossibility of social closure and ultimate fixation of meanings is one of the main assumptions that characterize Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony. Here, what must be stressed is that the impossibility of society is a productive one. Laclau explains the impossibility of society as follows

> … the *infinitude of the social*, that is, the fact that any structural system is limited, that it is always surrounded by an 'excess of meaning' which it is unable to master and that, consequently, 'society' as a unitary and intelligible object which grounds its own partial processes is an impossibility (1990, p. 90).

Laclau conceptualizes the social in a non-objectivist way, and he develops radically constructivist theory. He rejects all types of essentialist and foundationalist perspectives: "the idea that a society, the human subject, or the objects that we encounter in social life, have fixed essences that exhaust *what* these entities are [; and] theoretical and empirical practices then operate on the basis of these given forms and objects" (Howarth, 2010, p. 311). Laclau calls this kind of totality as "*founding totality* which presents itself as an intelligible object of 'knowledge'" (1990, p. 90). By contrast, drawing on post-structuralist discourse theorists, Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan, he assumes that there is no permanent category or essence, which would serve as the fixed grounds of knowledge in understanding the historical and political phenomena. Such being the case, for him, society itself does not serve as the ground of social processes. Thus, it does not constitute a founding totality. In this sense, his theoretical framework differs from the understanding of *objectivity* that grounds the mainstream political approaches. For Laclau, the social world does not involve the objective structures but involves the possibility of a radical reconstruction of them. This is because the social has an open and indeterminate

character in which it is not possible to fix meanings and identities for once and all. For Laclau objectivity is constituted in the terrain of discourse. Let us quote the paragraph in which Laclau defines the relation between discourse and objectivity:

> Discourse is the primary terrain of the constitution of objectivity as such. By discourse, as I have attempted to make clear several times, I do not mean something that is essentially restricted to the areas of speech and writing, but any complex of elements in which relations play the constitutive role. This means that elements do not pre-exist the relational complex but are constituted through it. Thus 'relation' and 'objectivity' are synonymous (2005a, p. 68).

Assuming a mutually inclusive relationship among discourse, relation and objectivity, Laclau emphasizes the radical contingency and historicity of social objectivity, and the primacy of politics and power in its formation (Howarth, 2010, p. 311). Laclau emphasizes the contingent construction of all social meanings and identities within a discourse. In the absence of any substantive or positive quality, all meanings of objects and identities of social are relationally constructed as differences from the others within the structural system or social totality, through political struggles. Laclau says "If social relations are contingent, it means they can be radically transformed through struggle, instead of that transformation being conceived as a self-transformation of an objective nature" (1990, p. 35).

Although, in Laclau's political theory, the impossibility of society implies the impossibility of fixing meaning, and the social consists of an "infinite play of differences" in an open, incomplete, and indeterminate system; each existing structural system is the outcome of the attempt of limiting that infinite play through temporarily fixing the meanings and identities within a system. Laclau writes that "The social is not only the infinite play of differences. It is also the attempt to limit

that play, to domesticate infinitude, to embrace it within the finitude of an order" (1990, p. 91).

Put in a nutshell, it is possible to fix meaning and identities partially and temporarily within a relatively closed system. It should be added to avoid misunderstanding that these attempts will never result in a total fixity of meanings within a closed system. It is not possible for the objective structures to exhaust all the meanings and possibilities in the social because of the terrain of surplus of meaning, namely the field of discursivity. Moreover, the existence of that field of discursivity opens up possibilities for challenging the established and hegemonic discourses through the constitution of new ones.

As a result of the impossibility of the full closure of the structures, the 'fullness' of society, as a totally closed system, becomes an object which is impossible to achieve. For Laclau, the fullness of society should have access to the field of representation. Furthermore, because of the impossibility of fullness, the representation is always particular and distorted. Put it clearly, the representation of the impossible fullness by a particular means that it imposes itself to the social field. This is what Laclau calls hegemony. Hegemony simply refers to the ability of a political project to fix the meanings imposing its own definitions, or in other words, to fix "the relation between signifier and signified" (Laclau, 1993, p.435). The construction of the social in this way is realized through hegemonic articulation. The outcome of the partial fixation of the meaning through the relative closure of the social is discourse.

Laclau and Mouffe consider the discursive "as a theoretical horizon within which the being of objects is constituted" (Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000, p. 3). What

these arguments imply is that the constitution of the identities and meanings is the result of the contingent articulation of elements in the discursive terrain. In doing so, they define discourse as a system of signification constructed through hegemonic struggles. Laclau suggests that "the very possibility of perception, thought, and action depends on the structuration of a certain meaningful field which pre-exists any factual immediacy" (1993, p. 431). The structuration of a certain meaningful field is what discourse performs. Laclau and Mouffe define discourse as the structured totality that result from the articulatory practice:

> In the context of this discussion, we will call *articulation* any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call *discourse*. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call *moments*. By contrast, we will call *element* any difference that is not discursively articulated (2001, p. 105).

In this definition, Laclau and Mouffe define four important concepts: Articulation, discourse, moments and element. In a nutshell, discourse can be defined as the fixation of meaning within a particular domain. Articulation plays a pivotal role in the formation of structured totality or discourse. For Laclau, articulation is "the primary ontological level of the constitution of the real" (1990, p. 184). Howarth and Stavrakakis states that all identities of subjects and objects, for Laclau and Mouffe, emerge through the articulation and re-articulation of signifying elements (2000, p.7). Elements here refer to "any difference that is not discursively articulated" (p. 7) because of the floating character they acquire in periods of social crisis and dislocation. "The differential positions [that] appear articulated within a discourse" are called moments. In other words, all signs in a discourse are moments, and their meaning being partially fixed through their differences from one another. Because of the open character of the social, thus, of meanings and identities, the

"transition from elements to moments is never entirely fulfilled" (2001, p. 105). Laclau and Mouffe assume the new meaning that elements acquire by being articulated in a discourse is contingent. More precisely, all social forms are contingent.

Up until this point, I have tried to examine Laclau's theoretical conceptualization of the social and the discourse theory. With these theoretical debates in mind, I now turn to Laclau's conceptualization of antagonism, dislocation and empty signifier.

2.1.2 Antagonism

In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, the concept of subject refers to the subject positions within a discourse. Laclau and Mouffe assume that there are various subject positions whose identities are constituted in relation to others within a discursive structure (2001, p. 115). The meanings of the subject positions are built by the differential relationality among divergent subject positions within a particular discourse. In Laclau and Mouffe's words:

> Whenever we use the category of 'subject' in this text, we will do so in the sense of 'subject positions' within a discursive structure. Subjects cannot, therefore, be the origin of social relations - not even in the limited sense of being endowed with powers that render an experience possible - as all 'experience' depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility. ... From the discursive character of all subject positions, nothing follows concerning the type of relation that could exist among them. As every subject position is a discursive position, it partakes of the open character of every discourse; consequently, the various positions cannot be totally fixed in a closed system of differences (p. 115).

Their account of subject positions is based on the concept of antagonism as the condition and limit of identities and meanings. In Laclau's words, "antagonism

and exclusion are constitutive of all identity" (1996, p. 52). Laclau and Mouffe conceive the category of antagonism as the limit of all objectivity. Laclau suggests that any social identity and meaning is relational and arbitrary in character. When any objective structure is absent, all meanings of objects and identities of social are relationally constructed as differences from the others within the structural system or social totality, through political struggles. Laclau says "If social relations are contingent, it means they can be radically transformed through struggle, instead of that transformation being conceived as a self-transformation of an objective nature" (1990, p. 35). Briefly, according to Laclau, history is the outcome of contingent power relations between antagonistic forces.

Laclau and Mouffe assume that "a discourse consists of a system of signifiers without positive terms, in which the identity of each element depends on its differences with others" (Howarth, 2010, p. 311). In their theoretical framework, concepts of relationality and differences have an essential role in the construction of meanings and identities. Laclau locates the category of 'relation' into the center of his analysis. Laclau writes that

> There is no beyond the play of differences, no ground which would a priori privilege some elements of the whole over the others. Whatever centrality an element acquires, it has to be explained by the play of differences as such (2005a, p. 69).

Laclau states that social system does not refer to a closed totality. In this regard, Laclau assumes that it consists of an "infinite play of differences" (1990, p. 90). This implies that meanings and identities are constructed 'relationally' through their differences from other within a partially closed system which is an outcome of the attempt of limiting the infinite play of differences. All meanings and identities

are relational and differential within a particular discursive totality, the constitution of a discursive totality requires differentiating it from the others. As Laclau says,

> Without limits through which a (non-dialectical) negativity is constructed, we would have an indefinite dispersion of differences whose absence of systematic limits would make any differential identity impossible (1996a, p. 52).

In order to constitute a system, the limits of a discourse should radically separate the inside from the outside. However, this limit cannot be neutral. The true limit of a discourse is always exclusionary. A system can only be constituted through the exclusion of the big Other. For Laclau, "the actualization of what is beyond the limit of exclusion would involve the impossibility of what is this side of the limit" (1996a, p. 37). Hence, antagonism is the true "limit of all objectivity" (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001, p. 125). Their conceptualization of antagonism is derived from Deridian concept of constitutive outside, or radical otherness, which both challenges and constitutes the inside. Derrida claims that any structure needs an outside, an externality in order to be constituted. In a nutshell, the supplement is essential to the constitution of any identity and meaning themselves (Lucy, 2004, p. 137). Drawing on Derrida, Laclau assumes that the "*constitutive outside* is inherent to *any* antagonistic relationship" (1990, p. 9). According to Laclau, antagonism refers "to an exterior with no common measure with the interior, not to something emerging from the internal paradoxes or contradictions of the interior- it involves, in that sense, a negativity which is not dialectizable" (1999, p. 103). The relationship between the interior and exterior is an antagonistic relation because the being of one depends on the non-being of the other. In other words, the constitution of the interior is based on the exclusion of the exterior. The constitutive outside prevents any subject from

being fully constituted. In other words, antagonism is responsible for the impossibility of society. Laclau and Mouffe say:

> Antagonism, far from being an objective relation, is a relation wherein the limits of every objectivity are *shown*—in the sense in which Wittgenstein used to say that what cannot be *said* can be *shown*. But if, as we have demonstrated, the social only exists as a partial effort for constructing society –that is, an objective and closed system of differences—antagonism, as a witness of the impossibility of a final suture, is the 'experience' of the limit of the social. Strictly speaking, antagonisms are not *internal* but *external* to society; or rather, they constitute the limits of society, the latter's impossibility of fully constituting itself (p. 125).

As I have mentioned before, Laclau and Mouffe conceive the category of antagonism as the limit of all objectivity. Thus, Laclau suggests that antagonism is constitutive of all identities and meanings. However, Laclau reformulates their conceptualization of antagonism and constitution of subject following Lacan's idea of the real as impossible. In his article, 'Beyond Discourse Analysis' (1990), Zizek emphasizes Laclau and Mouffe's reformulation of Lacan's idea of the real as antagonism:

> It is not an accident that the basic proposition of *Hegemony*—'society does not exist'—evokes the Lacanian postulate 'la Femme n'existe pas' ('Woman does not exist'). The real achievement of *Hegemony* is crystallized in the concept of social antagonism: far from reducing all reality to a kind of language-game, the socio-symbolic field is conceived as structured around a certain traumatic impossibility, around a certain fissure that *cannot* be symbolized. In short, Laclau and Mouffe have, so to speak, reinvented the Lacanian notion of the Real as impossible; they have made it useful as a tool for social and ideological analysis (1990, p. 249).

On the other hand, Zizek criticizes Laclau and Mouffe's argument:

> But in the case of antagonism, we are confronted with a different situation: the presence of the 'Other' prevents me from being totally myself. The relation arises not from full totalities, but from the impossibility of their constitution (Zizek, 2001, p. 125).

Zizek points out that the blockage of the full constitution of any identity does not stem from particular and defined antagonisms because every identity is always intrinsically blocked:

> It is not the external enemy who is preventing me from achieving identity with myself, but every identity is already in self blocked, marked by an impossibility, and the external enemy is simply the small piece, the rest of reality upon which we 'project' or 'externalize' this intrinsic, immanent impossibility (1990, pp. 251-2).

That is to say that regardless of the emergence of antagonisms every identity is always already in itself blocked. For Zizek, the force of negativity that is prior to antagonism is the Lacanian real (1990, p. 253). However, the emergence of an antagonism, which is responsible for the impossibility of achieving to a full identity, permits externalization of our constitutive lack. Zizek states "the negativity of the other which is preventing me from achieving my full identity with myself is just an externalization of my own auto-negativity, of my self-hindering" (pp. 252-3).

After Zizek's criticism of the concept of antagonism that represented in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau reformulated the concept of antagonism as "a discursive response to the dislocation of the social order" (Torfing, 1999, p. 129). Dislocation establishes a ground for the construction of antagonism since it sheds light the immanent impossibility of identity or the blockage of the identity. Put it in a nutshell, antagonism is "a discursive inscription of dislocation" (Laclau, 1999, p. 96). For Laclau, antagonism no longer refers to a radical exclusion; it refers to a dichotomization of a social space. Both sides of this dichotomous social space are necessary to create a single space of representation. Laclau defines the concept of dislocation as the "disruption of a structure by forces operating outside it" (1990, p. 50). Dislocation is constitutive in the sense that it paves the way for the construction

of new discourses and within it new meanings and identities. In this sense, dislocation is "an experience more primary than antagonism" (Torfing, 1999, p. 129).

Laclau's formulation of dislocation radicalizes the concept of antagonism and leads to the abandonment of the notion of subject-positions and the emergence of the subject of the lack. This shift from the concept of antagonism to dislocation shows that it is not possible to understand the subject through only focusing on the antagonistic subject positions within a discursive totality. A discursive structure can organize the social field and determine the subject positions when it is not dislocated. But, when it is dislocated it becomes unable to constitute itself and determine the subject positions. Dislocation disrupts both the social orders and the subject positions; thus, subject emerges as the subject of a lack of being and attempts to reconstruct both the social world and itself. In this context, Laclau defines the subject as the distance between the undecidable structure and the decision. In doing so, Laclau constructs the subject as a part of the hegemonic struggle in the process of the constitution of new discursive totality. In Laclau's new theorization of the subject, the lack refers to the subject; and identity to objectivity or structure. In this regard, Laclau firmly believes that the relation between subject and structure is established through the mechanisms of identification. Furthermore, Laclau suggests that "the location of the subject is that of dislocation" (Laclau, 1990, p. 41). He adds that "the subject exists because of dislocations in the structure" (p. 60). What these two assumptions imply is that the dislocated terrain where there is no structural determination is a source of freedom for the subject. But, we should add, to avoid any misunderstanding, that the subject is partially self-determined. In such a dislocated structure the subject who has no positive identity could only construct itself through identification. In Laclau's words,

> Dislocation is the source of freedom. But this is not the freedom of a subject with a *positive* identity—in which case it would just be a structural locus- rather it is a freedom of a structural fault which can only construct an identity through acts of *identification* (p. 60).

2.1.3 Dislocation

What is more radical in Laclau's theory of hegemony is that by drawing on Derridean infrastructure of undecidability and the Lacanian notion of lack, Laclau defines hegemony as a decision taken in an undecidable terrain (Norval, 2004, p. 142). Thinking hegemony through the category of the decision means:

> a) that the subject is nothing but this distance between the undecidable structure and the decision; b) that ontologically speaking, the decision has the character of a ground which is as primary as the structure on which it is based, since it is not determined by the latter; and c) that if the decision is one between structural undecidables, taking a decision can only mean repressing possible alternatives that are not carried out. In other words, that the 'objectivity' arising from a decision is formed, in its most fundamental sense, as a power relationship (Laclau, 1990, p. 30).

Here Laclau's argument revolves around the three interrelated areas: "the nature of the undecidable terrain, the decision taken in this terrain, and the nature of the subject of the decision" (Norval, 2004, p. 143). For Laclau the undecidable terrain refers to a de-structured social field, or namely dislocation; the subject of the decision to the 'people'; and the decision to the hegemonic articulation.

Dislocation is "the primary ontological level of constitution of the social" (1990, p. 44). In other words, dislocation is a prerequisite for the emergence of hegemonic articulation. Dislocation is not "a result of an empirical imperfection but of something which is inscribed in the very logic of any structure" (p. 44). According to Laclau, identities within a system that cannot be fully protected because of the undecidability of its frontiers will be "constitutively dislocated and that this

dislocation will show their radical contingency" (p. 44). In a nutshell, for Laclau "dislocation is the trace of contingency within the structure" (1996b, p. 56).

When dislocations take place, the existing structural systems cannot provide a stable and meaningful framework for social reproduction. The discursive totality that organizes and constructs the structure begins to melt in the undecidable terrain. Dislocation leads to the temporalization of space; and it widens the field of the possible. For Laclau, a hegemonic structure is established through eliminating its temporality. This means that in the logic of sedimentation, any objectivity ignores the fact that it is based on exclusion of equally possible alternatives. However, dislocation opens up these possibilities for the constitution of new and different meaning systems through political struggle. As I have mentioned before, within a particular discursive totality, the link between signifier and signified is not totally fixed because of the impossibility of the ultimate closure. Therefore, the identities and meanings are open to changes. When structural dislocations take place, it becomes not possible even to partially fix that connection. Dislocation leads to the proliferation of floating signifiers through which the general form of fullness shows itself, and thereby the emergence of new mythical spaces (Laclau, 1996a, p. 94).

We briefly say that dislocation of structures opens up new possibilities for reconstructing the social. Laclau suggests that there is no specific content that is *predetermined* to fill the structural gap (1996a, p. 92). When the dominant structural order is dislocated, different mythical spaces are offered by different political actors. Different political actors engage in a power struggle to hegemonize the social field through transforming their mythical spaces into imaginary horizons. In other words, different mythical spaces compete for turning into social imaginaries. This crisis can

only be resolved by hegemonic struggles because the dislocated structure "does not have in itself the conditions for its possible future re-articulation" (Laclau, 1996a, p. 92). This conflict between various contents in their attempt to fill the structural gap shows the contingency of the structure.

When structures become dislocated, there would be more space for action since there would arise a need for the reconstitution of structures, and this would lead to an increase in the function that subject takes. Within the hegemonic battlefield between a plurality of possible decisions the chooser is the subject (Laclau, 1996b, p. 59). The subject is the decision maker. In this regard, Laclau identifies four dimensions of the relationship between the subject as the chooser and the undecidable structure in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*.

The first dimension is that "any subject is a mythical subject" (p. 61). For Laclau, myth is "a space of representation which bears no relation of continuity with the dominant 'structural objectivity'; and it is "a principle of reading of a given situation, whose terms are external to what is representable in the objective spatiality constituted by the given structure" (p. 61). Myth works "to suture that dislocated space through the constitution of a new space of representation", and to form "a new objectivity by means of the rearticulation of the dislocated elements" (p. 61). For Laclau, any objectivity is merely crystallized myth. When a myth achieves to constitute a new objectivity rearticulating the dislocated elements, it becomes successful in hegemonizing the social field, and the subject becomes reabsorbed by the new structure and turns into subject positions within a relatively stable structure. Myth is constitutive of social spaces; it constitutes the subject and being of objects. In fact, myth is both constitutive of the subject and is constituted by subject. For the

subject, it proposes the “forms of identification”, through which the subject is given “its only discursive presence possible” (Laclau, 1990, p. 63). In this regard, we conclude that the ‘people’ is “a mythical subject” (p. 61). This means that the ‘people’ emerges within a myth that can be defined as a new discursive space that is formed in hegemonic struggles to replace the dislocated structures.

The second dimension is that the “subject is constitutively metaphor” (p. 61). Laclau says that “the mythical space is presented as an alternative to the logical form of the dominant structural discourse” (p. 62). Moreover, it is constituted “as a critique of the lack of structuration accompanying the dominant order” (p. 62). When a mythical space tries to substitute the dominant structure, it does not only offer a new order that commits to a fullness, which is absent in the dominant order. In this context, the mythical space has a metaphorical nature that stems from the fact that it represents something, which is different from its concrete or literal content. In other words, myth “only springs forth as a metaphor on a ground dominated by this peculiar absence/presence dialectic” (p. 63). This is also the space of the subject: “[t]he subject (lack within the structure) only takes on its specific form of representation as the metaphor of an absent structure” (p. 63). This means that the subject, being lack in the dislocated structure, identifies with fullness represented by the myth. As a result, the subject emerges as the metaphor of an absent fullness. So, the ‘people’ is constitutively metaphor.

The third one is the “subject’s forms of identification function as surfaces of inscription” (p. 63). Laclau claims that “if the subject is the metaphor of an absent fullness, it means that the concrete content of its forms of identification will function as the very representation of fullness, of all possible fullness” (p. 63). When a “myth

has achieved a certain socially acceptance, it will be used as an inverted from of representation of all possible kinds of structural dislocation" (p. 63). This means that any popular demand will be compensated by the myth of an achieved fullness. In a nutshell, "myth functions as a surface on which dislocation and social demands can be inscribed" (p. 63). This is as an outcome of its metaphorical nature. This function of myth derives from not its content but the space of representation of an unachieved fullness. "The main feature of a surface and the inscription is its incomplete nature" (p. 63). Moreover, "social myths are essentially incomplete: their content is constantly reconstituted and displayed" (p. 63).

The last one is that the "incomplete character of the mythical surfaces of inscription is the condition of possibility for the constitution of social imaginaries" (p. 63). Myth is incomplete in the sense that its content is constantly reconstituted through particularities. This incompleteness leads to an unstable relation between the surface of inscription and what is inscribed on it. For Laclau, this unstable relation can be shaped in two opposite ways. The first is that the surface of inscription is completely hegemonized by what is inscribed on them. In this situation, "the moment of inscription is eliminated in favor of the literality of what is inscribed." (pp. 63-4). The other possibility is that "the moment of representation of the very form of fullness dominates to such an extent that it becomes the unlimited horizon of inscription of *any* social demand and *any* possible dislocation" (p. 64). In this way myth turns into an imaginary. Laclau defines the imaginary as a horizon which is not "one among other objects but an absolute limit which structures a field of intelligibility and is thus the condition of possibility for the emergence of any object" (p. 64).

In the mythical space, the new political actors propose a new order with the aim of replacing the existing one, by criticizing the lack of structuration in the existing system (Laclau, 1990, p. 62). In opposition to the lack of structurality in the dominant structural discourse they try to hegemonize the social field by proposing a 'fullness' and representing the very principle of structurality. At this point, it is necessary to note that the concrete contents of the discourses are less important than their functions of representation of a fullness, or an order. As Laclau states,

> the discourse of a 'new order' is often accepted by several sectors, not because they particularly like its content but because it is the discourse of *an* order, of something that is presented as a credible alternative to a crisis and a generalized dislocation. (1990, p. 66).

Accepting the discourse of a new order by the subjects refers to the establishment of representational relation between the subjects and a singular through and through the hegemonic political logic. Laclau defines the representation as "the process by which somebody else—the representative—'substitutes for' and at the same time 'embodies' the represented" (1996a, p. 97). According to Laclau, a perfect representation is apparently possible as soon as the representative can transparently transmit the will of those whom he represents (Laclau, 1996b, p. 50). This means that a perfect representation would be in only one direction from the represented to the representative. Laclau notes that "from neither the side of the representative nor that of the represented do the conditions of a perfect representation obtain" (Laclau, 1996a, p. 97). The identity of the represented "is an incomplete identity, and the relation of representation is a *supplement* necessary for the constitution of that identity" (p. 98). In this sense, a pure relation of representation is not obtainable "because it is of the essence of the process of representation that the representative has to contribute to the identity of what is represented" (p. 87). In

other words, “the role of the representative cannot be neutral, and that he will contribute something to the identities of those he represents” (Laclau, 1996b, p. 51). Since this supplement is an entirely new, “the identity of the represented is transformed and enlarged through the process of representation” (Laclau, 1996a, p. 98). The representation of the interests of the represented on the terrain of national politics requires “processes of negotiation and articulation with a whole series of forces and problems that far exceeds what is thinkable and deducible from [the terrain of the represented]” (p. 98). This means that the representation requires the inscription of a particular interest in a complex reality different from; and, in doing so; the representative constructs and transforms that interest, and therefore the identity of the represented.

Although “a perfect representation involves a logical impossibility”, the represented needs the nontransparent relation of representation, “it is because their identities are incomplete and have to be supplemented by the representative” (p. 98). Laclau says that “the movement from represented to representative will necessarily have to be supplemented by a movement in the opposite direction” (Laclau, 1996b, p. 51). In this context, the representative brings not only its own particular content but also a failed totality as the name of absent fullness of the subject.

Laclau asserts that “in a hegemonic relation, one particular difference assumes the representation of a totality that exceeds it” (Laclau, 2005a, 72). Put it in other terms, a hegemonic relation is one in which a certain particularity signifies an unachievable universality (p. 111). For the representative the fullness of society becomes an object of the political which is impossible to achieve. Laclau states that “the impossibility of an object does not eliminate its need: it continues, as it were,

haunting the structure as the presence of its absence" (Laclau, 1996b, p. 58). He adds that this object shows "itself through the impossibility of its adequate representation" (p. 58).

To achieve the impossible fullness of society by a nontransparent relation of representation requires a hegemonic intervention that takes place in an undecidable terrain (Laclau, 1996a, 89). The absent fullness of the society has to be represented, or misrepresented by one of its particular contents. Laclau calls this relation by which a particular element assumes the impossible task of a universal representation as hegemonic relation (Laclau, 1996b, p. 61). Politics is possible because of this constitutive split between singularity and universality. The particularity of the decision undertakes the function of an imaginary closure; and thus there is the never ending and never totally convincing impersonation of the universal by the singular (p. 62). Different singulars, which stand for impersonating the universal, provide different myths to the subjects to reconstitute its own political identity and political will.

2.1.4 Empty signifier

If every identities and meanings is a result of the play of differences in the domain of radical contingency, this infinite play requires a fixation to produce meanings. In the contrary case, the signification is impossible since there is a constant dispersion of meanings within a constant displacement of elements. At this point, Laclau and Mouffe introduce the concept of empty signifier that functions as Lacan's concept of *point de capiton* or *nodal point*. It must be underlined that the empty signifier as a

particular element has a structurally universal function within a discursive field. In addition, what must be stressed here is that Lacan's argument of the autonomy of the signifier/the name has become very influential in Laclau's formulation of discourse theory of hegemony. According to Laclau, the autonomy of the signifier is "the very precondition of hegemony" since hegemony "structures the social from its very ground and is not the epiphenomenal expression of the transcendental signified." (Laclau, 2000, p. 66).

Lacan conceptualizes "the existence of an order of 'pure signifiers', where signifiers exist prior to signifieds" (Evans, 1996, p. 186). A pure signifier is the signifier without the signified. In this sense, Lacan conceives a language not as a whole of signs but of signifiers. For Lacan, unlike Saussure, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is unstable and fluid. He uses the verb 'slip' to describe the unstable and fluid relationship between two (Evans, 1996). The signified continuously slips and slides in the signifying chain. This continuous movement is only temporarily detained by the *point de capiton*. According to Zizek, Lacan's the point de capiton does not have a positive constituency of its own "because it is just an objectification of a void, of a discontinuity opened in reality by the emergence of the signifier" (2008, p. 104). Zizek underlines that this quilting function of the points de capiton is fulfilled due to the presence of a pure signifier. In Zizek's words,

> If we maintain that the *point de capiton* is a 'nodal point', a kind of knot of meanings, this does not imply that it is simply the 'richest' word, the word in which is condensed all the richness of meaning of the field it 'quilts': the *point de capiton* is rather the word which, *as a word*, on the level of the signifier itself, unifies a given field, constitutes its identity: it is, so to speak, the word to which 'things' themselves refer to recognize themselves in their unity (2008, p. 105).

It is fact that Laclau is strongly inspired by the Lacanian logic of the signifier and by Zizek's theory of naming. Laclau states that "without nodal points, there would be no configuration at all." (2005a, p. 105). In Laclau's theory of hegemony, the empty signifier functions as a point de capiton, or nodal point. A signifier has to emancipate from its specific content, or becomes empty, in order to function as a name for a wider set of the signifieds (Marchart, 2005a, p. 8). Laclau states that

> the identity and unity of the object result from the very operation of naming. This, however, is possible only if naming is not subordinated either to description or to a preceding designation. In order to perform this role, the signifier has to become, not only contingent, but empty as well (2005a, p. 104).

For Laclau, "the name becomes the ground of the thing," if and only if the name becomes empty (p. 105). So, it can safely be suggested that Laclau conceptualizes his theory of hegemony under the logic of the empty signifier. He has elaborated the concept of empty signifier in an important earlier work, "Why Do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?". In the conceptualization of empty signifier Laclau takes a different route from Lacan. His concept of empty signifier does not refer to a 'pure signifier' or 'signifier without signified' in the Lacanian sense. For Laclau it is not possible either to reduce a particular pure signifier to its mere particularistic identity or to eliminate it totally in the name of its quilting role (2005a, p. 107). Laclau adds that "if that total elimination were possible we would, indeed, have a signifier without a signified" (p. 107). In this context, Laclau claims that the notion of pure signifier is self-defeating, since it is outside of the signification system. A signifier without any signified could only produce noise and it breaks down the process of signification completely. For Laclau, the empty signifier is "a place, within the system of signification which is constitutively irrepresentable; in

that sense it remains empty, but this is an emptiness which I can signify, because we are dealing with a void *within* signification" (p. 105).

Following Derrida's argument of 'decentring of the structure' in *Writing and Difference* (1978), Laclau and Mouffe argue that the representation of the social as a totality which is closed and complete is impossible because of an ineradicable excess. This means that the ultimate fixation of any identity and meaning is impossible; and, in turn, the partial fixation requires an act of hegemonization (Norval, 2004). A hegemonic act articulates the differences through an element which will become an empty signifier that assumes the representation of the totality.

There is no doubt that the concept of empty signifier is at the center of Laclau's the problem of naming, and thereby discourse theory of hegemony. An empty signifier as a name constitutes identities and the meanings of the objects "in a situation where heterogeneous elements are only held together by a chain of equivalences, whose unity itself depends on the exclusion of a designated other" (Howarth & Griggs, 2006, p. 33). For Laclau, the structural impossibility in signification, or namely the impossibility of society, leads to the emergence of an empty signifier (1996a). Within Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony, what must be stressed is a spurious relationship between the exclusive fullness and the emptiness alternative in terms of the construction of the popular identities as empty signifiers. The popular identity represents the fullness of the community which is impossible to be achieved (Laclau, 2005a, p. 106). In other words, it expresses an empty fullness. In Laclau's words,

> my earlier analysis of popular identities as empty signifiers allows me to show that the exclusive fullness/emptiness alternative is a spurious one: ... the popular identity expresses/constitutes -through the equivalence of a plurality

> of unfulfilled demands- the fullness of the community as that which is denied and, as such, remains unachieved – an empty fullness, if you like. If we are not dealing with the signifier of emptiness as a particular location, but with one that is not attached to *any* signified while nevertheless remaining within signification, that could only mean that it is the name of a *fully achieved* totality which, as such, would have no structural fails (p. 106).

According to Laclau, the empty fullness, or failed totality, can take place only if a particular popular demand "takes up the representation of a universality with which it is incommensurable" (p. 106). If this is the case, the representation of empty fullness becomes possible via a hegemonic operation because it is not possible either to reduce a particular unfulfilled demand to its mere particularistic identity or to eliminate it totally in the name of its quilting role. When we take into consideration this role of hegemonic operation in the constitution of the empty fullness, we can suggest that Laclau theorizes the category of hegemony as giving a name of the impossible fullness. The naming of the impossible fullness refers to the contingent relationship between the empty signifier and differences or the elements of the totality. Naming this relation is an attempt to constitute the totality.

In this sense, the category of hegemony as giving a name of the impossible fullness refers to the relation of representation between a particular popular demand which takes up the representation of a universality and the other popular demands which enter into solidarity with the former via the chain of equivalence. Empty signifiers play an important role in the representation of unachievable universality by a certain particularity. In short, empty signifier is zero point of hegemonic intervention; and it is the precondition for any signifying process. For Laclau, the empty signifier arises from the need to name the fullness of society as an object of the political which is both impossible and necessary. Regarding the function of

empty signifiers, we can conclude that a hegemonic articulation is the only possibility to create a partial and incomplete order where there is not fullness.

Up until this point, I have tried to examine Laclau's conceptualization of the constitution of the subject within the framework of discourse theory of hegemony. With these theoretical debates in mind, I now turn to Laclau's category of populism and the constitution of the 'people' as the name of collective political subject.

2.2 Populism

In *On Populist Reason* (2005a), Ernesto Laclau's opening line is that the "main issue addressed in this book is the nature and logics of the formation of collective identities" (p. ix). Simply put, the name of this collective subject is the 'people', and the very logic of the formation of the 'people' is populism. It is no doubt that Laclau considers populism a particular social logic, which is necessary dimension of all politics. What seems to be the most interesting point is that Laclau uses the category of the 'people' both as a name for the political subject and as an actor of politics (Marchart, 2005a, p. 7). The people as a signifier must be empty in order to become the name for the political subject. In *On Populist Reason*, Laclau has talked "about the *name* becoming the ground of the thing" (2005a, p. 101). And he develops a theory of *naming*. Laclau considers the name of the political as ontological ground of the social. When considered the issue from the point of Laclau's theory of naming, the "people" as the name for the political subject simultaneously becomes "the name of the *political* as ontological "ground" of the social and of society" (Marchart 2005a, p. 3).

According to Laclau, "there is no political intervention which is not populistic to some extent" (2005a, p. 154). Any discourse is "most or less populistic depending on the degree to which its contents are articulated by equivalential logics" (Laclau 2005b, p. 47). There is no political movement which is entirely exempt from populism; they "interpellate to some extent the 'people' against an enemy, through the construction of a social frontier" (ibid.). Within the populist political logic Laclau explains construction of the 'people' as the name of the political subject around six steps:

> (1) When a series of social demands cannot be absorbed differentially by institutional channels, they become (2) unsatisfied demands that enter into a relationship of solidarity or equivalence with one another and (3) crystallize around common symbols that (4) can be capitalized by leaders who interpellate the frustrated masses and thus begin to incarnate a process of popular identification that (5) constructs "the people" as a collective actor to confront the existing regime with the purpose of (6) demanding regime change (Arditi, 2010, p. 489).

In *On Populist Reason* and in his article, 'Populism: What's in a Name?', Laclau claims that the preconditions of the emergence of the 'people' as a political subject are "the dichotomisation of the social space through the creation of an internal frontier and the construction of an equivalential chain between unfulfilled demands" (Laclau, 2005b, p. 38). The emergence of a series of social demands is the starting point to construct the 'people' as the name of political subjectivity. Laclau claims that "to think the specificity of populism requires starting the analysis from units smaller than the group" (Laclau 2005b: 34). He defines two types of social demand:

> We will call a demand which, satisfied or not, remains isolated a *democratic demand*. A plurality of demands which, through their equivalential articulation, constitute a broader social subjectivity we will call *popular demands* - they start, at a very incipient level, to constitute the 'people' as a potential historical actor (Laclau, 2005a, p. 74).

Here, it should be kept in mind that the ambiguity of meaning of 'demand' in English is of great significance in Laclau's analyzing of populism. Demand has two connotations: the meaning of request and the more active meaning of imposing a request, a claim (Laclau, 2005b, p. 35). The frustration leads to the transformation of a request into a claim. For Laclau, "the transition from request to claim" is "one of the first defining features of populism" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 73). Laclau suggests a narrative for the construction of a populist discourse that starts with the moment when certain social demands are not met by the established system. For Laclau, "the frustration of a series of social demands makes possible the movement from isolated democratic demands to equivalential popular ones" (p. 85). Thus, we can conclude that popular demands are the embryo of constitution of the 'people' as the name of the political subjectivity.

He claims that "demands, isolated at the beginning, emerge at different points of the social fabric and the transition to a popular subjectivity consists in establishing an equivalential bond between them" (Lalcau, 2005a, p. 86). If this is the case, an equivalential chain and an internal frontier are two the sine qua non dimensions of populism (p. 93). Whereas the formation of an internal antagonistic frontier separates the 'people' from the other or institutionalized power; an equivalential articulation of demands makes the emergence of the 'people' possible (p. 74). It should be noted that these are not two different conditions "but two aspects of the same condition, for the internal frontier can only result from the operation of the equivalential chain" (Laclau, 2005b, p. 38). In other word, the logic of internal frontier is dictated "by the creation of an equivalential chain between a series of social demands in which the equivalential moment prevails over the differential nature of the demands" (Laclau, 2005b, pp. 43-4).

In Laclau's populist mode of articulation, this process is governed by two differential social logics: logic of equivalence and logic of difference (Laclau, 2005b, p. 36). For Laclau, although "equivalence and difference are ultimately incompatible with each other; … they require each other as necessary conditions for the construction of the social [that is] nothing but the locus of this irreducible tension" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 80). For Laclau, "*all* social (that is discursive) identity is constituted at the meeting point of difference and equivalence" (p. 80). Furthermore, the precondition for the populist constitution of the 'people' is the expansion of the logic of equivalence at the expense of the logic of difference that are the modes of constructing the social (p. 78). Laclau states that

> there is no totalization without exclusion, and that such an exclusion presupposes the split of all identity between its differential nature, which links/separates it from other identities, and its equivalential bond with all the others *vis-a-vis* the excluded element (p. 78).

Furthermore, he says that

> The subversion of difference by an equivalential logic does not take the form of a total elimination of the former through the latter. A relation of equivalence is not one in which all differences collapse into identity but one in which differences are still very active. The equivalence eliminates the *separation* between the demands, but not the demands themselves (2005b, p. 46).

Laclau assumes that each individual demand is constitutively split between its own particularized self and the totality of the other demands through equivalential links (Laclau, 2005b, p. 37). Each individual demand is, actually, "the tip of an iceberg because although it only shows itself in its own particularity, it present its own manifest claim as only one among a larger set of social claims" (p. 37). If each individual demand is purely differential identities, how is it possible to constitute a whole, namely the people as the name of the political subjectivity? At this point,

Laclau brings his theoretical concepts of hegemony and empty signifier into scene. The construction of a popular subjectivity is only possible on the basis of discursively producing empty signifiers (Laclau, 2005b, p. 40). The different claims can enter into an equivalential chain and eventually cluster around common signifiers. One of these demands can become hegemonic through a process of articulation and come to stand for all the rest. At this moment, popular identification takes place. This is the moment of emergence of the 'people' as the name of the political subjectivity.

It could be safely suggested that Laclau deals with the question of essence of the political rather than the empirical field of politics in the development of his theory of populism. Laclau's populist account of politics is based on the logic of articulation that is "the primary ontological level of the constitution of the real." (Laclau, 1990, p. 184). Briefly, the populist political logic is articulatory in character. Within the populist logic, the constitution of the social and the 'people' as the name of collective political subject results from the contingent articulation of elements with no prior and necessary connection. In a nutshell, populism is the very logic of the political. Laclau writes that "by 'populism' we do not understand a type of movement - identifiable with either a special social base or a particular ideological orientation - but a *political logic*" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 117). In 'Populism: What's in a Name?', Laclau enlarges upon this point:

> populism is an ontological and not an ontic category—i.e. its meaning is not to be found in any political or ideological content entering into the description of the practices of any particular group, but in a particular *mode of articulation* of whatever social, political or ideological contents (2005b, p. 34).

In this sense, Laclau assumes that the articulation of the 'people' as a collective political subject is a political task and not a *datum* of the social structure (2005a, p. 224). Furthermore, he claims that "the political operation *par excellence* is always going to be the construction of a 'people'" or to put it in reverse, "the construction of a 'people' is the political act *par excellence*" (p. 153). Populism "is, quite simply, a way of constructing the political" (p. xi). Laclau suggests that "we only have populism if there is a series of politico-discursive practices constructing a popular subject" (Laclau, 2005b, p. 43). He takes his theoretical argument a step further by claiming that "there is no political intervention which is not populistic to some extent." (Laclau, 2005a, p. 154). Any discourse is "most or less populistic depending on the degree to which its contents are articulated by equivalential logics." (Laclau, 2005b, p. 47). According to Laclau, there is no political movement which is entirely exempt from populism; they "interpellate to some extent the 'people' against an enemy, through the construction of a social frontier" (p. 47).

We conclude that if populism is a component of all politics, or every politics is populist to some degree and is the very logic of the construction of people, "populist reason … amounts … to *political* reason *tout court*" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 225). Such being the case, populism becomes "the royal road to understanding something about the ontological constitution of the political as such" (p. 67). At this point populism morphs into politics proper, rather than being a way of constructing the political (Arditi, 2005, p. 492), since populism take over the task of representing the *ontological* nature of the *political*" (Marchart 2005a, p. 10), i.e., populism becomes synonymous with politics tout court, thus it is "the name for politics *tout court*" (p. 6). Here the basic question is what is politics? "The hegemonic struggle over the expansion of a chain of equivalence at the expense of the field of difference,

and concomitantly over the emptying of the signifier, is exactly what politics is about" (p. 9).

It is necessary at this point to underline the ambiguity between populism and hegemony. In Laclau's theoretical framework, the frontiers among hegemony, populism and politics are very fuzzy (Arditi, 2010, p. 491). Laclau develops the category of antagonism and the empty signifier, which result from the dichotomization of the social into chains of equivalence, under the name of his general political theory of hegemony (Marchart, 2005a, p. 5). Laclau's category of populism as the political logic depends on the categories of his post-Gramscian theory of hegemony that make use of concepts such as articulation, logic of difference, logic of equivalence, antagonism, nodal point and so on. Furthermore, whereas Laclau and Mouffe equate hegemony with politics in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau equates populism with politics in *On Populist Reason*. In this sense, I think Laclau uses the category of populism in a very similar and identical way with the category of hegemony.

As Laclau states, we are dealing with a partial totality that embraces all differences which are equivalent to each other in their common rejection of the excluded identity. Moreover, the outside that allows us to constitute the totality would be internal, not external. For Laclau this means that all identity is constructed within this tension between the differential and the equivalential logics. Such being the case, in the locus of the totality we find only the tension between two. Put it clearly, what we have, ultimately, is a failed totality, the place of an irretrievable fullness. This totality is an object which is both impossible and necessary. It is impossible, because the

tension between equivalence and difference is ultimately insurmountable; it is necessary, because without some kind of closure there would be no signification and no identity.

It is not possible to grasp this failed totality conceptually. The category of totality cannot be eradicated because it is a failed totality; it is a horizon and not a ground. Society cannot be unified by a determinate ontic content; thus, it is not possible to represent the totality directly at the strictly conceptual level. Grasping totality conceptually means that we have to grasp its limits. But representation is wider than conceptual grasping. Laclau claims that "the 'people' can only be constituted in the terrain of the relations of representation" (Laclau, 2005b, p. 48). The representation is "not a secondary level reflecting a primary social reality constituted elsewhere; it is, on the contrary, the primary terrain within which the social is constituted" (p. 48) and "representation is only possible if a particular demand, without entirely abandoning its own particularity, starts also functioning as a signifier representing the chain as a totality" (p. 39). To sum up, one difference, without ceasing to be a particular difference, assumes the representation of an incommensurable totality. In that way, its body is split between the particularity which it still is and the more universal signification of which it is the bearer. This operation of taking up, by a particularity, of an incommensurable universal signification refers to hegemony (p. 39).

If "this embodied totality or universality is an impossible object, the hegemonic identity becomes something of the order of an empty signifier, its own particularity embodying an unachievable fullness" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 71). Laclau states that "an empty signifier can, consequently, only emerge if there is a structural

impossibility in signification as such, and only if this impossibility can signify itself as an interruption (subversion, distortion, etcetera) of the structure of the sign" (Laclau, 1996a, p. 37). In other words, "only an empty signifier can represent the promise of this impossible fullness" (Stavrakakis, 1999, p. 150). Here, the presence of an empty signifier refers not to a 'signifier without a signified' but to the moment when a partial demand will stand for the totality of the demands in an equivalential chain. This is a metonymical operation in which a particular demand stands for others. But, empty signifiers are metaphorical in which a particular demand represent others. As Laclau says, "metaphor establishes a relation of substitution between terms on the basis of the principle of *analogy*" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 19). Metaphors operate as empty signifiers that name the absent fullness. However, "all empty signifiers are metaphorical … because they substitute a particular name or signifier for the absent unity of the demands or identities through the principle of analogy" (Howarth and Griggs 2006: 31). In doing so, an empty signifier as a name becomes the ground of the thing. This thing in the case of populist discourses is the 'people'. Within the logic of hegemony such empty signifiers can emerge if and only if a particular political actor achieves to fix and empty the meanings of floating signifiers by establishing equivalences between competing demands, and "by constructing a common enemy that can cover over the differences between the particular demands that constitute it" (p. 31). In all in, we can conclude that empty signifiers are means of representation.

If this is the case, the hegemonic operation is catachrestical through and through (Laclau, 2005a, p. 72). By drawing on the key role of the logic of equivalence and difference, and the empty signifier, Laclau claims that the rhetorical operations play a central role in the constitution of political identities. After the

publication of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,* Laclau has increasingly used rhetoric explicitly as the theoretical model for the theory of hegemony in his singular works such as *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time* (1990), and *Emancipation(s)* (1996a). However, it should be noted that whereas his interest in and reliance on rhetoric have grown steadily, Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony has undergone a series of significant modifications over the past two decades. For Laclau a hegemonic totalization requires a radical investment and engagement in signifying games that are very different from purely conceptual apprehension. In assuming a collective identity on the basis of the order of affective libidinal bonds, Laclau has the crucial Freudian insight (see Laclau, 2005a, pp. 52-61). By drawing on Freud's *Group Psychology,* Laclau claims that the constitution of a collective subject and a hegemonic totality requires not only the rhetorical displacement but also the affective libidinal investment.

He seems to achieve his most fully elaborated formulation of discourse theory of hegemony in *On Populist Reason* by bringing the psychoanalytic concept of *affect* into the scene. Although Laclau places rhetorical operations at the center of politics, he suggests that a hegemonic totalization requires a radical investment. It refers to the affective dimension of Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony. Let us quote the paragraph in which Laclau defines the relation between rhetoric and affect:

> [W]hat rhetoric can explain is the *form* that an overdetermining investment takes, but not the *force* that explains the investment as such and its perdurability. Here something else has to be brought into the picture. Any overdetermination requires not only metaphorical condensations but also cathectic investments. That is, something belonging to the order of *affect* has a primary role in discursively constructing the social. Freud already knew it: the social link is a libidinal link. And affect … is not something *added* to signification, but something consubstantial with it. So if I see rhetoric as ontologically primary in explaining the operations inhering in and the forms taken by the hegemonic construction of society, I see psychoanalysis as the

> only valid road to explain the drives behind such construction—I see it, indeed, as the only fruitful approach to the understanding of human reality. (2008, p. 326).

Although Laclau places rhetorical operations at the center of politics, in *On Populist Reason*, he deepens and takes his discourse theory of hegemony a step further by arguing the role of affect. For Laclau, "the emergence of the 'people' requires the passage- via equivalences- from isolated, heterogeneous demands to a 'global' demand which involves the formation of political frontiers and the discursive construction of power as an antagonistic force" (2005a, p. 110). In this passage, "there is no logical, dialectical or semiotic transition from one level to the other" (p.110). The retroactive effect of 'naming' has to intervene into this passage. Laclau calls this qualitatively differentiated and irreducible moment as 'radical investment'. He claims that the signification can explain the forms the investment takes, but not the force in which the investment consists. He suggests that a hegemonic totalization requires a radical investment. According to Laclau, "'discursive or hegemonic formations', which articulate differential and equivalential logics, would be unintelligible without the affective component" (p. 111).

In assuming a collective identity on the basis of the order of affective libidinal bonds, Laclau has the crucial Freudian insight (see Laclau, 2005a, pp. 52-61). By drawing on Freud's *Group Psychology*, Laclau claims that the constitution of a collective subject and a hegemonic totality requires not only the rhetorical displacement but also the affective libidinal investment. In *Group Psychology* (1985) Freud emphasizes "the libidinal organization of groups": "a group is clearly held together by a power of some kind: and to what power could this feat be better ascribed than to Eros, which holds together everything in the world?" (p. 140). Freud, focusing on the church and the army, claims that: "It is to be noticed that in

these two groups each individual is bound by libidinal ties on the one hand to the leader (Christ, the Commander-in-Chief) and on the other hand to the other members of the group" (pp. 124-125). In *Civilization And Its Discontents* (1989), Freud explains libidinally invested shared identification as follows: "It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness" (p. 44). According to Freud, the dimension of affective attachment, or libidinal investment, points to "the mobilization of the energetics of the body, of libido" (Stavrakakis, 2007, p. 195). Similarly, Laclau states that "if an entity becomes the object of an investment—as in being in love, or in hatred—the investment belongs necessarily to the order of affect" (2005a, p. 110).

Following Lacanian theory as further developed by Joan Copjec, Laclau emphasizes that "lack" is the essential component that is the drive for any populist desire. The moment of entry into the symbolic order is defined by the loss of a mythical fullness. This loss introduces an unfulfillable lack that the subject constantly strives to fulfill throughout her life. The impossibility to fill this lack leaves the subject with partial objects. One of them comes to signify the whole by a hegemonic operation. Copjec names this function of the partial object as "the breast value" which depends on the object becoming the object of satisfaction (as cited in Laclau, 2005a, p. 114). In Laclau's theory of populism, a similar dynamic is at play with partial democratic demands becoming popular ones. A democratic demand will become a popular demand, standing for the desire of fullness. At this point, Laclau brings 'radical investment' into scene:

> radical investment means: an object the embodiment of a mythical fullness. Affect is the very essence of investment, while its contingent character accounts for the 'radical' component of the formula (2005a, p. 115).

Put it clearly, for Laclau, "[n]o social fullness is achievable except through hegemony; and hegemony is nothing more than the investment, in a partial object, of a fullness which will always evade us because it is purely mythical" (p. 116). Laclau claims that what makes ontologically possible such a relationship is Lacan's objet petit a. Furthermore, he claims that "[t]he logic of the *objet petit a* and the hegemonic logic are not just similar: they are simply identical" (p. 116). The objet petit a is the object of desire. In other words, the objet petit a is any object which sets desire in motion (Evans, 1996, p. 128).

Laclau adds Freud's notion of the Thing and the irretrievable fullness to his discussion in order to show the constitutive role of the objet petit a in the constitution of a people. The Thing is the secret center of human desire; and it is called the "lost object," acts as the cause of desire and a sign of longing for an impossible reunion with the object. For Copjec, in Lacanian terminology, the lost Thing is a void of Being: and it is that the jouissance that attached one to mother has been lost, and this loss depletes the whole of one's being. Following Copjec, Laclau claims that "jouissance is completely not lost, this is because traces of jouissance remain in the partial objects, or *objects petit a*" (2005a, p. 112). Copjec argues that the partial object is not a part of a whole but a part which is the whole. The partial object becomes itself a totality; it becomes the structuring principle of the whole scene. In Laclau's theory of populism, hegemony is exactly the investment in a partial object where the object is elevated to the level of the Thing; where one demand becomes an empty signifier and the name of the people. For Laclau, partial object becomes the name of impossible social totality.

To sum up, for Laclau, "[n]o social fullness is achievable except through hegemony; and hegemony is nothing more than the investment, in a partial object, of a fullness which will always evade us because it is purely mythical" (2005a, p. 116). Laclau claims that this mythical social whole derives from "an indissociable articulation between signifying and affective dimensions" (p. 116). In a nutshell, "there is no populism wthout affective investment in a partial object" (p. 116).

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND: THE PRODUCTION OF TAKSIM SQUARE

This chapter focuses on the relationship between the Kemalist hegemonic configuration and configuration of space through the process of the construction of Taksim Square between 1928 and 1940. In other words, the chapter is about the relation between the production of space and the ways in which Kemalist hegemony tried to articulate a new secular-national subject and order. Kemalism as a founding official ideology aimed to constitute a new social formation and political identities which were implemented through the production of space. In this regard, I examine the production of Taksim Square, which came into being and took on the material form that it did as a result of the central concern of constituting and institutionalizing the Kemalist hegemony and establishing the state as the agent of modernity inscribing the nation into space. Taking Taksim Square as the locus of analysis, this chapter addresses how the making of public space lies at the center of the constitution of secular and national subjects in the Kemalist one-party state.

3.1 The Kemalist secular-nationalist myth and the production of space

Following a war of national liberation against the post-World War occupational forces, Mustafa Kemal and his cadre pointedly declared the death of the Ottoman imperial system and launched a "nation building and a daring modernization project" (Zürcher , 2014, p.136). In other words, when Ottoman society faced with the dislocation of the imperial hegemonic order, the Kemalist elite emerged as one of the new political actors that proposed a new order with the aim of replacing the old.

Doubtless, there were other competing discourses[3] in the nineteenth and the early twentieth-century Ottoman political sphere. All sought an answer to the question of how the Ottoman Empire could have been saved. All they aimed to save the Ottoman Empire from collapse and to restore it. In the dislocated space, the new political actors propose a new order with the aim of replacing the existing one, by criticizing the lack of structuration in the existing system (Laclau, 1990, p. 62). In other words, in opposition to the lack of structurality in the dominant structural discourse, they try to hegemonize the social field by proposing a 'fullness' representing the very principle of structurality. At this point, it is necessary to note that the concrete contents of their discourses are less important than their functions of representation of fullness, or an order.

All competing discourses including Kemalism were heirs to the ideology of the nineteenth and the early twentieth-century Ottoman reformers and Westernist Young Turks (Azak, 2010, p. 4). They were in favor of modernization. Also, they were more or less related to nationalism. Kemalist discourse achieved to hegemonize the idea of modernization and nationalism and to suppress the other competing discourses. Kemalists rhetoric introduced itself as a revolutionist who was in favor of a "radical change executed with order and method", and aimed "complete transformation of society" (p. 4). While Kemalist discourse was gradually but steadily hegemonizing the idea of modernization by means of its radical and top-down secular-nationalist discourse, it recreated the dichotomy of Islam versus modernity, and continuously kept it on the agenda. The new ruling elite under the

[3] Pan-Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism, and Occidentalism (see Kaya & Tecmen, 2011).

guidance of Mustafa Kemal started to put a series of reforms into practice in order to modernize and secularize both the state and society.

The Kemalist myth as "a metaphor of fullness" has aimed to generate a new order and thus a modern, secular and homogeneous society. Kemalist elite was determined to transform "the state from an Islamic empire to a national state, and its legitimizing ideology from Islam to nationalism" (Gülalp, 2002, p. 28). In other words, the Republican cadre was decisive in turning the ethnically mixed but predominantly Muslim population of the imperial system into a nation and "to make society 'modern' (*muasir*) and 'civilized' (*medeni*)" under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal in the dislocated space of the Ottoman Empire (Zürcher, 2014, p. 136). In this context, Kemalist hegemony was an attempt to redefine and rebuild the state and society by partial fixation of meaning around nodal points modernization, secularism, and nationalism. The Kemalist ruling elite imagined a homogeneous and harmonious society that composed of "secular and urbanized citizens who were Turks before anything else and who downplayed their economic and other differences through their common allegiance to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (the founder of the republic) and his legacy" (Tuğal, 2009, p. 36). In this context, the Kemalist regime followed the Turkification policies[4] that aimed to assimilate the non-Muslims into Turkishness. "The term "Turkification" means the Turkish Republic's project to create a state of citizens enjoying equal rights, who will define themselves first and foremost as Turks, their religion being a private matter" (Bali, 2006, p. 43).

[4] Such as Turkifing non-Muslims' names , speaking Turkish in public, praying in Turkish in religious ceremonies, Turkifing curriculums of non-Muslims' schools, sending non-Muslim children to state schools, the capital tax. See Aktar, A. (2000). Varlık Vergisi ve "Türkleştirme" politikaları (The Capital Tax and the "Turkification" Policies). Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

According to the Kemalist discourse, the life of modern subject "was not deeply marked by religion," and being modern subject meant being like the Europeans who occupied the most advanced positions in the rank of civilization (Zürcher, 2014, p. 39). They saw modernization not as a matter of technique but as a total project of civilization. By internalizing the paradigm of European modernity at both ideological and symbolic levels, the Kemalist elite equated modernization with westernization. The Kemalists firmly believed that "being modern meant being like the Europeans" (Sayyid, 1997, p.67). In his speech, Mustafa Kemal put the central pillar of the Turkish Revolution more explicitly as bringing "the people of the Turkish Republic into a state of society entirely modern and completely civilized in spirit and form" (Lewis, 1961, p. 410). Successful modernization for the Kemalists hinged upon their potential to create "the conditions that had made European modernization possible" (Sayyid, 1997, p. 68). Turkish modernizers did not find enough to adopt Western technology; they supported to adopt "Western political, economic, judicial, and social structures as well as Western culture" (Eligür, 2010, p. 42). They were all of one mind about that "modernization could not be acquired without a social and cultural transformation" (Sayyid, 1997, p. 98). The Kemalist modernizers aimed to fully convert Turkey into a more Western looking country, adopting their dressing style, script, political and judiciary system, and their taste of art (Sayyid, 1997). The construction process of modern nation state and secular society entailed a process of spatial construction.

In the early years of the republic, the Kemalist elite started to apply a new urban planning strategy and architectural style to change the daily habits of the imperial population through producing national and secular spaces. According to Sibel Bozdoğan, in Turkey where modernization was not an experience resulting

from the development of industrial, urban and market-oriented order, the Kemalist modernizers gave a high priority to "architecture and urbanism as a form of 'visible politics'" (2001, p.9). Modern architecture and spatial design have functioned as "a *representation* of modernity without its real material and social basis" (p.10). Bozdoğan clarifies this point as follows

> The architectural culture of the early Turkish republic amply illustrates how high modernism as an ideology appealed particularly to "planners, engineers, architects, scientists and technicians" who "wanted to use state power to bring about huge, utopian changes in people's work habits, living patterns, moral conduct and worldview. Modern architecture was imported as both a visible symbol and an effective instrument of this radical program to create a thoroughly Westernized, modern, and secular new nation dissociated from the country's own Ottoman and Islamic past. In this respect, architecture in early republican Turkey can be looked at as a literally "concrete" manifestation of the high modernist vision (2001, p. 6).

The Kemalist regime sought to redesign the cities "to initiate a political revolution, through the transformation of its inhabitants' daily practices and social relations" (Houston, 2014, p. 61). The nationalist and secular ruling elites considered urban planning, urban design, and architecture as the key visual indicators and components of Kemalist modernization. The aim of Kemalist elite was to produce new secular and national subjects by initiating an extensive urban planning and architecture. The major actor of the Kemalist modernization firmly believed that the construction of "new forms of social experience" would eventually transform the society (Holston,1989, p. 52). This means that the Kemalist modern urban forms would create the Kemalist modern and secular individuals and thus a new society as well. They canalized a substantial part of their efforts into remolding the urban space in order to simulate modern European cities. According to Reşat Kasaba, "The underlying assumption was that once the environment was altered, the behavior of individuals would be easily molded and made to fit the requirements of the newly

created circumstances" (1997, p. 24). According to Lefebvre, the production of the social relations within the space inevitably depends on two tendencies: "the dissolution of old relations on the one hand and the generation of new relations on the other" (1991, p. 52).

3.1.1 The construction of the Kemalist city

The Kemalist secular regime, for Christopher Houston was a great city-builder (2014, p. 59). The foremost feature of Kemalist urban planning, design, and architecture was a negation of traditional social and urban conditions. They tried to set an essential break with the imperial past in modern urban planning and design. James Holston calls this break as *total decontextualization* leading to antagonism between the old and the new parts of the city. According to Holston, total decontextualization "consists of the attempt to impose a new urban order through a set of transformations that negate previous expectations about urban life" (1989, pp. 53-4). Institutional and architectural transformations underpin a new urban order. The first refers to a displacement of traditional social institutions in urban space. The second transformation consists in transforming the nature of the old city through building types, urban forms, and architectural conventions.

In order to put the Kemalist imagining of nations and secular-national identities into material form, the ruling elite sought two interrelated strategies: the de-Ottomanization or de-Islamization of urban sites and "creation of new spaces as places of [nationalist] memory" (As cited in Houston, 2014, p. 59). The targets of the Kemalist spatial redesign were de-Ottomanization and constitution of a new urban

form “through its antagonistic re-ordering of the infrastructure and iconography of discredited predecessor regime” (p. 59). According to the imperial production of space, Islam was the central organizing force through which “a sense of community took shape and public life was organized” (Çınar, 2005, p.110). The typical Ottoman town was designated “around a central public square marked by the main mosque, which would be surrounded by the marketplace, shops, inns, and lodges” (p. 110).

In *Colonising Egypt*, Timothy Mitchell discusses how the new city needs to maintain the antagonistic limit that keeps the other out, in order to represent and defined itself as modern:

> The identity of the modern city is created by what is kept out. Its modernity is something contingent upon the exclusion of its own opposite. In order to determine itself as the place of order, reason, propriety, cleanliness, civilisation and power, it must represent outside itself what is irrational, disordered, dirty, libidinous, barbarian and cowed. The city requires this ‘outside’ in order to present itself, in order to constitute its singular, uncorrupted identity (1991, p. 165).

Mitchell analyses the establishing of Cairo’s modern identity in terms of the other within Edward Said’s conceptualization of Orientalism. In this larger intellectual and political context, for him, “the native town ‘must be Oriental’” (Mithcell, 1991, p.165). Space as a system of meaning is constituted through an external limit. In the post-Ottoman political space, power has been established by declaring the secularist and nationalist ruling elite as the natural political authority through establishing a new myth and rejection of the imperial history. The Kemalist ruling elite internalized Eurocentric Orientalist discourse by appropriating its basic assumption of hierarchical dichotomy between the East and the West. The Kemalist regime considered Islam as a barrier towards progress whereas they idealized the West as the universal standard of modernity (Gülalp, 2005). In other words, Kemalist

discourse constructed the new Turkish national identity by othering "the East" or "Islam". The Kemalist modernizing elite had faith in that they had to become western; but "one could not be western and at the same time be oriental" (Sayyid, 1997, p.68). New Kemalist subjects "had to stop being orientals and to start being Europeans; they had to eradicate any association with the Orient, and define themselves as being part of the west" (p. 68). Kemalists refused "the Orient in the name of the West and articulated the Orient as 'the Orient'" (p. 69). In the Kemalist discourse, de-orientalization meant de-Islamization which was considered "as the epitome of the Orient" (p. 69). During the early decades of the Republic, the Kemalist elite kept a distance from religion.

Şerif Mardin also points out how the Kemalist elite turned the Ottoman imperial system into a target: "The Turkish Revolution was not the instrument of a discontented *bourgeoisie*, it did not ride on a wave of peasant dissatisfaction with the social order, and it did not have as target the sweeping away of feudal privileges, but it did take as a target the values of the Ottoman *ancién regime*" (2006, p. 196). In the Kemalist discourse, Islam, thus the Ottoman Empire, was constructed "as the antagonistic other of Kemalism" (Sayyid, 1997, p. 65). The Kemalist discourse constantly defined Islam as "the symbol of obscurantism," "a purified corpse which poisons our lives," and "the enemy of civilization and science" (Gilsenan, 2001, p. 261).

The Kemalist city was generally built in an antagonistic relation to the Ottoman Islamic city, through the closing down of the Islamic local organizations such as lodges and tombs or reusing of the imperial public buildings, and the inscribing of signs of the Kemalist reform on existing imperial urban structures

(Houston, 2014). The foremost feature of Kemalist urban planning and architecture was a negation of traditional social and urban conditions. Bozdoğan discusses in detail how spatial uniformity of Turkish towns was constructed around a city center with standard administrative and public buildings; and how this newly constructed city center with an Atatürk monument served the onset of official ceremonies and commemorations.

The New Kemalist architecture and its architects as cultural leaders or agents of civilization undertook "to dissociate the republic from an Ottoman and Islamic past" (Bozdoğan, 1997, p.138). They justified the Kemalist "spatial regime by asserting that intervention in the built environment was necessary in order for inhabitants to perceive a new, so as to transform inculcated schemes of cognition that were themselves reproduced in and by the existing organization of [Islamic] space" (Houston, 2014, p.61). Bozdoğan clarifies the "propaganda function of the Kemalist city", "a function that carried with it a 'phenomenological' theory about how things appear to human consciousness and how that perception might be transformed" (1997, p. 138). In this context, architecture was defined as an effective tool to advance Kemalist ideology and mark spaces with the republican iconography.

3.1.2 Ankara versus Istanbul

For the modernizing elites of Turkey, the city of Ankara became the focal point of "visible politics" of Kemalist hegemony. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu defines the capital city of Ankara as the display window of the Kemalist regime (1990, p.200). Ankara as the master city and symbol of Turkish Republic not only would display the Kemalist

city but also would present secular and urbanized citizens that would be a model for other subjects of the republic. In the Kemalist imagination of space, Ankara was the most suitable place for such a symbolic task because it represented "the 'ground zero' of the nation, at an equal and necessary symbolic distance from both the West and the imperial past" (Ahıska, 2010, p.18). As architect Afife Batur says, "Ankara provided a *tabula rasa* upon which a new order could be constructed" (1984, p. 71). Ankara, a small Ottoman town of commerce and agriculture, did not carry "any significant marks of Islam and had not played an important role in either Ottoman or Islamic history" (Çınar, 2005, p. 104). For the founders of the Kemalist republic, no other place than Ankara could better serve as space at which to build a new secular and nation-state totally dissociated from the Islamic Ottoman empire (Çınar, 2005). Ankara, had no visible Islamic-Ottoman mark, provided an empty space for the construction of the secular nation, and inscription of the Kemalist national ideas and practices on it, as opposed to the highly contested Islamic history of Istanbul (Ahıska, 2010, p.18-9).

After becoming the capital city, Ankara turned out to be a visible symbol of the Kemalist modernity both as a space and way of life. In Ankara, "visible symbols of modernity were actively deployed to publicize the image of the new nation as a radical break from its Islamic Ottoman past" (Baydar, 2002, p. 229). Ankara, was the symbol of the modern in every aspect of life, including boulevards, city squares, cafes, balls, modern houses, clothing, etiquette rules etc. It is no doubt that the Kemalist claim of newness was an antagonistic challenge to the old imperial system. To display this antagonistic challenge, the newness of Ankara was compared with the dirt and dust of imperial Istanbul in many respects. As Bozdoğan states, "Istanbul, the city that had been the seat of imperial power and religious authority for five

centuries, was delegated to serve as Ankara's 'other' in every respect" (2001, p. 67). The "old versus new" construct was effectively used in the visual and literary representation of Ankara. While Ankara was the city of the superior morality and nationalist sentiments, Istanbul was the place of corruption, minorities, cosmopolitanism and dynastic tradition. In the Kemalist discourse, Ankara was imagined as "the city of the future", Istanbul as "the city of the past" (p. 67). In this context, the old was declared as backward and disqualified, and the new was naturally progressive and desired.

The founder cadre of the Kemalist republic by imitating Ankara as the model city started to design other towns and transform them into national cities. However, articulation of Istanbul to the Kemalist secular-national imaginary had to wait for many years. For the Kemalist regime, Istanbul was the most difficult location to be representative of the regime. It was because Istanbul was the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, and also because its people had a minor role in the Independence War in comparison to the people of Anatolia.

3.2 Taksim Square in the making

When it was time for the Kemalist regime to be visible in Istanbul in the late 1920s, Taksim was a more rational choice than the old squares of the imperial city. Sultanahmet and Beyazit Squares were the two most known and visited public places in Istanbul. Being the center of social and political life until 19th century, Sultanahmet square played a more crucial role compared to Beyazit square. According to the Kemalist discourse, they were the spatial representations of the

Ottoman imperial system that anchored in Islam. These old squares were so full of significant signs of Islam and Ottoman times, “that it was impossible for them to be hidden or underemphasized in any way” (Çınar, 2005, p. 111). Streets and corners around these imperial squares were laden with “grand mosques standing tall as reigning monuments of Islam”, “glorious palaces and mansions testifying to the imperial authority of the Ottoman state”, small mosques, water fountains, tombs, lodges, and monuments with marks of the Ottoman imperial system and Islam (p. 111). The symbols and signs of the Ottoman-Islamic regime caused the articulation of the secular and national Turkish collective identity in these squares to be difficult.

The Kemalist elite decided to replace the Ottoman city centre with an alternative one that could represent its national and secular character and power. Locating a national monument of the Kemalist republic in the new centre of the old imperial city was to indicate the radical break with Ottoman past. As Çınar (2005) states, the Kemalist Republic did not want to start fighting to overtake or overshadow these monumental squares of Ottoman and Islamic traditional system. They rather wanted to start with a clean slate by relocating the city center to a relatively neutral space and inscribe the symbols of the new republic on a blank page. In this vein, the ruling cadre considered Taksim a very suitable space for the visual representation of the Kemalist secular and national regime and collective identity.

The urban history of Taksim started in 1732 when Sultan Mahmud I initiated the construction of a water distribution building which was of no religious significance. The Artillery Barracks was constructed in 1806 and renovated several times during the 19th century. Then, other large-scale military buildings, namely Mecidiye and Gümüşsuyu Barracks and Gümüşsuyu Military Hospital, were

constructed in Taksim in the 19th century. Many other noteworthy buildings were built in Taksim area at the beginning of the 20th century so that it could make use of the transportation connections which became available with the arrival of the electric tram in 1914. But, until the early 20th century Istanbul, Taksim remained as a politically undefined space because "there were no significant marks of Islam or Ottoman political power in the area" (Çınar, 2005, p. 111). It was yet to hold a political or social recognition.

Furthermore, Taksim, located on the northern hills of the Golden Horn, was adjacent to the part of Istanbul that was most Europeanized in the 19th Century (Gül, 2012). Pera, or Beyoğlu began to be visited by more and more Westerners residing in the city. It became the center of diplomatic envoys with its various western style entertainment venues. Taksim was surrounded by districts where non-Muslims intensively lived and by "Istanbul's main churches and synagogues, which were signs of non-Muslim cultures and European influences rather than mosques and signs of an Ottoman presence" (Çınar, 2005, pp.111-2). Put in a nutshell, Taksim was in "sufficient distance to be set between the new city center and the Ottoman-Islamic center both in geographic terms and in cultural terms" (p.112.).

Taksim Square has been produced as a new city centre of the old capital, which has incorporated spatial representations of the Kemalist ideology. The spatial representations refer to the architectural texture such as public buildings, a park, and an Atatürk monument located around the Taksim Square. It should be noted that the spatial practices have also played an important role in the production of the Taksim Square, which refer to political, social and cultural practices such as national

ceremonies that have held in the square and modern secular life-style that has been experienced in its surroundings.

3.2.1 Atatürk monument as a "point de capiton"

Articulation of Istanbul to the national imaginary would be marked when a national monument was erected in Taksim in 1928. The building of Atatürk statues would indicate the participation of Istanbul in the Turkish nation. Kemalist political elite started the monumental propaganda immediately after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Monuments play a crucial role "in identity formation, national heritage, and the topographical landscape of the contemporary nation-state" (Kavuri-Bauer, 2011, p.3). Monumental spaces "materialize power relations, influence the social ordering of a nation, produce us as subjects, and finally, and more positively, provide us with a critical space to create, resist, and endure in our everyday lives" (p. 2). In *the Production of Space*, Lefebvre also focuses on monumental space. Lefebvre defines the relation between monumental space and power as follows

> Monumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage. It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one. Such a 'recognition effect' has far greater import than the 'mirror effect' of the psychoanalysis. Of this social space, which embraced all the above-mentioned aspects while still according each its proper place, everyone partook, and partook fully - albeit, naturally, under the conditions of a generally accepted Power and a generally accepted Wisdom. The monument thus effected a 'consensus', and this in the strongest sense of the term, rendering it practical and concrete. (1991, p. 220).

Following Lefebvre, I suggest that Taksim Square as a monumental space has been a site of consensus. The Atatürk monument has aimed to link each member of the society to the Kemalist myth. In other words, Taksim Square as a monumental

space has constituted a collective mirror that offers each member of the society an image of membership of the national and secular Turkish society. The erection of his statues has been "a pedagogic device used by the dominant political ideologies to win over the inhabitants, helping to create an imagined community" (Cohen, 1989, p. 491) in the lands left over from the Ottoman Empire. Atatürk monuments were "an immediate and apparently unmediated way of communicating political values to a people who might be wavering in political loyalties" (p. 495). These statues linked locale with large and historically significant events of Turkey and helped to create an imagined community. Atatürk symbolism made it possible for ordinary people to imagine themselves as a member of harmonious and united Turkish society.

Ruling elite used erecting of Atatürk monuments as a "way of constructing and communicating a political culture" (Cohen, 1989, p. 512). The spread of Atatürk statues implied the advance of the Kemalist regime throughout the country. As Cohen states, "[t]he placing of statues in a village, town, or city indicated an attempt to establish hegemony for the ideas represented by the monument" (1989, p.495). The erection of the monument in a city was a clear, unambiguous and powerful sign to celebrate the new Turkish Republic and spread the Kemalist ideology. As Çınar says, "[t]here is not one city in Turkey that does not have at least one square with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's statue at its centre" (2005, pp.99-100).

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz observes that "though a king could not, like God, quite be everywhere at once, he could try, at least, to give the impression that he was" (p. 125). He adds that "they mark it, like some wolf or tiger spreading his scent through his territories, as almost physically part of them" (p. 125). In this context, Atatürk monuments physically marked the conquest of old cities of the

Ottoman Empire. Atatürk monument as the national figure of the founding father served to celebrate and propagate the Kemalist ideology over the city's residents. The eighteenth-century French thinker Diderot asserted that material representations are more robust than the word:

> The sort of exhortation which appeals to the heart by means of the senses, aside from permanence, is more within reach of the common man. The people make better use of their sight than of their understanding. Images preach without ceasing, and do so without wounding our vanity (as cited in Cohen, 1989, p.492).

In this context, the ruling elite "mobilized the limited resources of the new state to create and disseminate the Atatürk cult as the new symbol to unify the nation" (Özyürek, 2006, p. 95). The design of the monuments excluded other political figures of the national liberation war, and only included figures of Mustafa Kemal and ordinary people in order to constitute the political perception of people. The construction of Atatürk monuments that started in the late 1920s was a fundamental characteristic of Turkish nationalism. The image of Atatürk became holly and eternal thanks to these monuments. Meltem Ahıska considers "the building of Atatürk monuments as a way of visualizing and immortalizing the new Turkish state" (2011, p. 11). According to Navaro-Yashin, "the Turkish state materializes in peoples' (semi)consciousness in the figure of the person (man) of Atatürk in the objectified form of statue, bust, portrait, or badge" (2002, p. 198). The Kemalist state is personified in the monuments of Atatürk that "is paramount as a marker of Turkish statehood" (p. 198). Although the construction of Atatürk monuments started when Atatürk himself was still alive, he never joined the inauguration ceremonies of these monuments in person. This strategy made easier to perceive the construction of his statues as independent even from Atatürk, even as a gift to him. At the same time, thanks to this strategy of distancing himself from his own monumental

representations, his monuments replaced Atatürk. Greeting the people by his monuments instead of himself proliferated the sacred images of the regime (Tekiner, 2010, pp.98-9).

I consider Atatürk monuments that stand at the centre of the squares as spatial signifier of the Kemalist discourse. Following Laclau, I suggest that in every city, Atatürk's statue has become an empty signifier, or point de capiton. In Laclau's account of naming, the empty signifier functions as a point de capiton, or nodal point. A signifier has to emancipate from its specific content, or becomes empty, in order to function as a name for a wider set of the signifieds. Within the Ottoman imperial system, a public space or square was organized around a grand mosque. All other buildings and social and political relations were built around the mosque. Furthermore, all identities and meanings were constructed in a relation to the mosque in Ottoman traditional city texture. However, the Kemalist regime tried to dissolute old representational space and spatial practices in order to generate new space and social relations. New elite considered public spaces as representative of European modernity. Modern squares, boulevards and parks were organized not around a mosque but an Atatürk monument. All modern buildings, spatial practices and social relations were reconstructed by the Kemalist discourse.

Atatürk monuments as empty signifiers have interpellated each member of the society to articulate them into the nationalist-secularist myth. They become an ideological subject of the monument, and then retroactively signify themselves and their society by way of the Kemalist ideology. Following Laclau, I suggest that the Atatürk monuments have served the purpose of symbolic identification of the subjects with the founding father of the republic.

3.2.2 Taksim Republican Monument

The Kemalist regime was intended on replacing the Islamic-Ottoman identity of Istanbul with a secular and national one. Erection of a national monument at Taksim was a top priority on the agenda of the Kemalist government, that would be first move to nationalize and secularize the imperial city. The Italian sculptor Pietro Canonica sculpted a new monument for Taksim under the guidance of Mustafa Kemal. At first, the monument was planned to consist of a statue representing Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the republic. Later, it was decided that the monument should exhibit a composition that narrated the emergence of the Kemalist Republic from the Independence War organized and guided by Mustafa Kemal (Baykal, 2000). Such a monument was supposed to be the best one for Taksim Square because Taksim was committed to collective memory as a symbol of the military occupation by the allied powers after the First World War. While Istanbul was under occupation the allied powers maintained their military presence on this square that was the site of barracks. French soldiers, for example, inhabited the Artillery Barracks at Taksim. Foreign commanders were frequently inspecting their troops at Talimhane, the training ground, opposite of the Artillery Barracks. Such visitors were generally staying at the ambassadors' mansions, all of which were located in the district of Pera (Baykal, 2000). So, such a national monument at Taksim Square would not only mark the Kemalist power over the city but also symbolize the liberation of Istanbul, which would be celebrated around the monument every year:

> ' The Republican monument of Taksim is a work of art telling our rebirth, our struggle for death or glory and the revolutions our Republic brought us. In this city, where the enemies' flag undulated and which is in pain under the enemies' boat, the Great Conqueror buried the Middle age to the history. And this city is ornamented with the eternal artistic works of Turkish civilization. After the First World War, they wanted to erase the Turkish people from the

> history and destroy their glorious honour in history. In this period between existence and of non-existence, Turkish people needed second Conqueror. The Republican Monument at Taksim is the vivacious expression of this. This Monument is propped as a symbol of our Republic and our independence and of the second conqueror of Istanbul, Atatürk (as cited in Baykal, 2000, p. 33).

Canonica sculpted the monument in Taksim to represent the emergence of the Republic from the Independence War, which was represented on four sides of the monument. While the war of national independence is figured on the northern side of the monument, the composition on the southern side describes the declaration of the Republic. A Turkish soldier who is carrying a flag is depicted on each of the two narrow sides of the monument. The report continues with the description of the four-sided monument:

> This monument is decorated with the statues around an arch with four fronts. One of these fronts narrates how the Turkish revolution started and how our leader guided our nation with his friends. Here it is necessary to submit to historical realities and to identify the original clothes as well as the social situation of that period. Gazi is represented with his famous posture at Dumlupınar and with his famous uniform at Kocatepe, and the soldiers are represented with the conventional uniforms of those days. The other front portrays the declaration of the Republic. Here Gazi Hazretleri is with his friends wearing civilian clothes and without hats. But at left only the great commander, Fevzi Paşa Hazretleri, and the other lower-rank soldiers are in military attire. The soldiers at the other two fronts are carrying flags; one is in uniforms of today and the other has a ferrous helmet on his head. Our commission accepted the proposal of the artist and made the order since it represents the historical situation successfully (Baykal, 2000, p. 38).

Firstly, the main parts of the monument represent two founding moments in the history of the Kemalist republic: Dumlupınar Battle as the triumphal symbol of the national struggle, and declaration of the republic as the official date of subversion of Ottoman Empire. The monument offers the Kemalist myth of the historic rupture or separation from the Ottoman past. Furthermore, the design gives the impression of the emergence of the Republic as the natural cessation to the Independence War. Secondly, the design of the monument illustrates us, from the point of Kemalist

view, the liberation story of Turkish nation under the incontestable leadership of Mustafa Kemal, by eliminating the other important figures of the national struggle, except İsmet İnönü and Fevzi Çakmak, from the official history. The Taksim monument as a well-designed instrument of the collective memory-making process of the Kemalist state was erected there to remind this Kemalist myth every day to the inhabitants of Istanbul, and to determine what to remember about the past or not (Baykal, 2000).

The Kemalist regime officially named the monument as Abide-i Cumhuriyet (Monument of the Republic) in Ottoman Turkish. The new Turkish Republic and its official ideology of Kemalism were immortalized in the monument that would stay forever. This was the pivotal moment in the re-designating of the square. This monumental propaganda was completed when the new square was officially called Taksim Republican Square after its opening on August 8, 1928. "The Grand Rue de Pera, leading from Beyoglu to Taksim, known previously as Cadde-i Kebir, became İstiklal Caddesi (Liberty Street) while the street by the water reservoir and the barracks leading to Pangaltı, which used to be 'Barracks Street' became Cumhuriyet Caddesi (the Avenue of the Republic)" (Baykan & Hatukab 2010, p.55). Perhaps renaming cannot delete memory entirely, but it does introduce a new language whereby the new generations relearn the new meaning of the square.

3.2.3 Shaping a modern city square in the old imperial capital: Henri Prost's plan

Istanbul that had been neglected by the Kemalist regime for a long while became a part of intensive national urban planning in the 1930s and the development of the

city affected the spatial form of the Taksim Square (Akpınar, 2014). Henri Prost, who was a French urban designer, was appointed as the Chief Planner for the city in the mid-1930s and designed a master plan for Istanbul in 1939. Prost's objective was "to modernise the historical city, a goal which was mainly determined by the socio-political circumstances and the revolutionary atmosphere of the period in Turkey" (Bilsel, 2001, p.105). In this context, the 'representations of space' have a practical impact on the production of Taksim Square and its surroundings. Lefebvre states that

> representations of space have a practical impact, that they intervene in and modify spatial textures which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology. Representations of space must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction—in other words, by way of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure, palace or monument, but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture which call for 'representations' that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms (1991, p. 42).

The Kemalist elite gave priority to construct a new public space in the imperial capital in which modern life style could be exhibited and performed. The aims of his master plan for Istanbul can be classified into five categories: "conservation of monuments; enlargement and adaptation of existing roads to the topographic geography; development, improvement, and maintenance of unhygienic old buildings and neighborhoods without sun or air circulation by public open spaces; implementation of zoning for economic and hygienic purposes; and preservation and development of the urban characteristics of İstanbul" (Akpınar, 2014, pp. 80-1). His plans that also proposed a reorganization of Taksim Square for Beyoğlu were put into operation in 1939. It proposed to extend the Taksim Square that was constructed around the Monument of the Republic, by demolishing the old barracks and constructing modern public buildings, exhibition halls, and immense boulevards. Also, the fact that the Kemalist ruling elite wanted to use the Taksim

Square as a broad celebration area would necessarily affect Prost's Taksim Square plans.

Prost set out to first demolish the Artillery Barracks in Taksim to make room for a public promenade. Prost's espaces libres or public open spaces were the most revolutionary acts of the historical urban pattern. As Akpınar says, "Prost's espaces libres mean more than a physical visualization of squares, esplanades, play-grounds, and recreational areas, and signify both "public sphere" (the public having a place in politics) and "public space" (the visualization of the administrative and legislative term of public in the urban arena)" (2014, p. 82). The park at Taksim was designed as the largest one on the European side of the city. It covered an area of 62,000 sqm and consisted of "tree-lined walking routes, grassed areas, seating benches and kiosks for recitals of the Municipality's Philharmonic Orchestra" (Gül, Dee & Cünük, 2014, p. 66). This modern park was named as İnönü Promenade in honour of İsmet İnönü who became the president of the Turkish Republic after Atatürk's death in 1938. By constructing a modern park, Prost indeed proposed a modern lifestyle along the new cultural space from Taksim towards Nişantaşı. In the wake of the demolition of the Artillery Barracks, this green area, Taksim Square and its surroundings were entitled as a new settlement region to signify the modern aspect of the Kemalist Republic's new lifestyle. Prost states his mission as follow: "The urbanist is responsible for expressing a political idea, a social idea, with the help of monuments, parks, gardens […] The urbaniste, the powerful man, is responsible of this transmission" (Akpınar, 2014, p. 83). Prost's spaces libres were an ideological platform bringing men and women together in public life, and, thus, direct visualizations of the secular reforms of the state. In this context, it directly marked

the transition from an Ottoman/Islamic social life in which men and women were separated into the mixed society of the Kemalist secular imaginary (Akpınar, 2014).

The park was considered as the core of the new modern settlement zone. Therefore, Prost added some public buildings, new parks, and playfield to his plan to represent the modern cultural practices. A number of new constructions were built around İnönü Promenade such as Maçka Park, a football stadium in Dolmabahçe, open-air theatre, the State Radio Hall, Sports and Exhibition Hall and modern apartment buildings along the Republican Avenue connecting Taksim Square to Nişantaşı district (Gül, 2012).

3.2.4 Demolition of Taksim Artillery Barracks

The demolition of Taksim Artillery Barracks was one of the most illustrative signs, to the citizens of the old imperial capital, of the collapse of the Ottoman regime. The Kemalist elite destructed the old barracks to achieve forgetting. In *Seven Types of Forgetting*, Paul Connerton lists various pervasive forms of forgetting that allow one to suppress the past. According to Connerton, "repressive erasure", which "appears in its most brutal form, of course, in the history of totalitarian regimes, (...) can be employed to deny the fact of a historical rupture as well as to bring about a historical break" (2008, p. 60). Connerton indicates how totalitarian regimes use memory in power struggle: "The attempt to break definitively with an older social order encounters a kind of historical deposit and threatens to founder upon it. The more total the aspiration of the new regime, the more imperiously will it seek to introduce an era of forced forgetting" (1989, p. 12). He adds that "a particularly extreme case

of such interaction occurs when a state apparatus is used in a systematic way to deprive its citizens of their memory. All totalitarianisms, behave in this way; the mental enslavement of the subjects of a totalitarian regime begins when their memories are taken away. When a large power wants to deprive a small country of its national consciousness it uses the method of organised forgetting" (p. 14). We can think of the Kemalist regime's demolition politics of the barracks as a form of "repressive erasure". I argue that "repressive erasure" is a useful conceptual and theoretical bridge to understand the Kemalist demolition politics in which it erases the imperial collective memory and makes its hegemonic imaginary and memory dominant over Taksim Square.

Taksim Artillary Barracks were built for the requirements of the new modern army, Nizam-ı Cedid army, in the era of Sultan Selim III that was a period of modernization for the Ottoman military system (Cezar, 2002, p. 480). But, tracing back to the history of Ottoman era, the barracks were a symbol of an incident called March 31, a conservative religious counter coup aimed to overthrow the Young Turks and re-establish Sultan Abdülhamit's power. On the eve of April 12,1909, soldiers of the First Corp who demanded the restoration of Islam staged an uprising to overthrow the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and those graduating from the Military Academics, so-called "mektebli" so that the şeriat would be fully implemented (Azak, 2010, p. 15). The Action Army loyal to the CUP marched on the capital from Salonica and suppressed the counterrevolution. The Cup returned to power, executed its leaders and deported Sultan Abdülhamid II to Salonica (Zürcher, 2014).

Even though the uprising was relatively easily taken under control, it still had a huge impact on the reformists. They were shocked to see that such an Islamist revolt could easily pose a threat to the foundations of their regime. The CUP, in its counter-propaganda, identified the rebels as erbab-ı irtica (lords of Islamic reactionism), which endangered constitution and parliament, and from then on the term irtica has become a pejorative epithet used against the opposition. Based on their history of struggle against Sultan Abdülhamid's regime they were in a tendency to see religious conservatism as the main threat to the realization of their positivist ideals (Zürcher, 2014). This was how Islamic reaction took on unique political overtones after irtica was associated with any effort to turn back to the crooked regime of Abdülhamid II (Brockett, 2006, p. 1064).

According to Zürcher, "the 31 March incident seems to have been a genuinely traumatic experience for the Unionists" (2014, p. 82). Nearly all the Kemalists, who played an important role in the foundation of the secular Turkish Republic, had been members of the Committee of Union and Progress. Therefore, the memory of the 31 March incident was theirs, too. The Kemalist elite had perpetuated the Unionist rhetoric of Islamic "reaction" in Turkey (Brockett, 2006). The notion of Islamic "reaction" (irtica) or "reactionary" (mürteci) in the Kemalist discourse gained its current negative meaning at the turn of the twentieth century. The Kemalist ruling elite and the official Turkish historiography have referred to it as an example of Islamic reactionism. İsmet İnönü, in his memoirs, "always recalled the catastrophe of March 31 as the collapse of a big building, a reaction to the young constitutional regime which created an ever-lasting atmosphere of insecurity" (as cited in Azak, 2010, p. 15). For İnönü, the danger did not end because the suppression of the uprising and the execution of rebels had only "swept that stratum under the carpet"

(p.15). They firmly believed that irtica had not been entirely wiped out, had continued its existence, and collaborated with various groups and parties against the modern secular state.

Thus, in the early republican era, the political and intellectual elite used the 31 March Incident as the specter of irtica. The ruling elite perceived the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925 and the Menemen Incident in 1930 as recurrences of March 31 (Azak, 2010, p. 16). The specter of irtica continued to haunt the Kemalist regime after 1930, and they have depicted irtica as the fundamental threat for the secular state, "caused by the deep ignorance (koyu cahillik) of the people, which was abused by the defenders of the old order who betrayed the national ideal of modernization" (p.16) During the history of the Turkish Republic, the Kemalist elite has alleged continuance of threat of irtica that aimed at overthrowing the secular regime and returning to the old imperial order and suggested that the security and stability of the secular state were at risk (Brockett, 2006). The ever-increasing perceived threat of irtica reproduced the memory of the 31 March. The Taksim Artillery Barracks were interpreted as a sign of irtica. In 1938 the government decided to demolish the building and make a park in its place.

Sara Ahmed, in *the Cultural Politics of Emotion*, suggests that fear works as an affective economy. She states that: fear "does not reside positively in a particular object or sign. It is this lack of residence that allows fear to slide across signs and between bodies. This sliding becomes stuck only temporarily, in the very attachment of a sign to a body, an attachment that is taken on by the body, encircling it with a fear that becomes its own" (2004a, p. 64). In other words, fear, which is distributed across various figures that come to embody the threat of loss, "cannot be found "in

one figure, but works to create the very outline of different figures or objects of [fear], a creation that crucially aligns the figures together and constitutes them as a 'common threat'" (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 119). Briefly, fear does not reside in a particular subject, object or sign, it "is economic; it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement" (p. 119).

Sara Ahmed offers "a theory of emotion as economy, as involving relationships of difference and displacement without positive value" (2004a, p. 45). That is, emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity, but is produced only as an effect of its circulation. In such affective economies, emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments. Ahmed's economic model of emotions suggests that while emotions do not positively reside in a subject or figure, they still work to bind subjects together. Ahmed suggests that "emotions are not simply 'within' or 'without' but that they create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds" (Ahmed, 2004b, p. 117). Indeed, to put it more strongly, the nonresidence of emotions is what makes them "binding." Following Ahmed, I suggest that fear of irtica has played "a crucial role in the 'surfacing' of individual and collective bodies through the way in which emotions circulate between bodies and signs" (2004b, p. 117). I suggest that fear of irtica aligns the Kemalist establishment and secularist subjects against Islamists. The Kemalist elite has polarized society into two antagonistic groups, "bad Muslims" versus "good Muslims", on the basis of the fear of *irtica* (Azak, 2010). This fear has often united secularist citizens from all social classes around the legacy of the founder of the Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in order to protect the secular regime against the others, bad Muslims. Official narrative of Republican Turkish

history has been constructed on the basis of this never-ending struggle between secularists and Islamists.

The ghost of irtica still continues to haunt the defenders of Kemalist secularism. Although the ghost of irtica has appeared in different bodies throughout the history of Turkey, it has been always a "remnant of March 31". Even today, whenever the secular system and character of the Turkish state and society are under threat, references to the 31 March incident are frequently made. In the days of the beginning of the Gezi Park Protest in 2013, Kemal Arı, a Kemalist historian, uses the word "irtica" (Islamic reaction), with an extremely negative connotation, to describe the reconstruction project of Taksim Artillery Barracks. In his personal page on Facebook, he wrote that

> Did you say Topçu Barracks? Gezi Park? or Turkish spring? (Or is your purpose to revive the March 31st Incident Event?) Gezi Park is a historical site? What was there? The Prime Minister says: Do you know the history of there? Yeah, we know. It is the center of a reactionary movement, the place where softas[5], who took to the streets with the call for the sharia, [and] the alaylı officers[6], who chanted "Death to Mektepli officers! "[7], deadly advanced upon the modern trained officers and slaughtered them.
>
> Sultan Abdülhamit II was neurotically afraid that a new uprising would begin against his rule. A year ago, the young officers stepped into action; they forced the Sultan to reinstate the Constitution which he had repealed in 1876. It was a period of reform movements when the army should be trained with modern understanding.
>
> Some reactionary people such as Said-i Nursi and Sheykh Vahdeti, who was troubled with these developments, wrote some articles to provoke the people and the alaylı officers against the mektepli officers; they were talking about some women who took off their veils, the loss of morality, the elimination of religion in the public sphere, and calling the sultan for the restoration of the *sharia*. At such a stage, Abdülhamit had placed the alaylı artillery officers and soldiers in the Topçu Barracks and thanks to them he wanted to feel himself safe. But the day came; on April 13, 1909, [the rebellion broke out].

[5] students from the religious schools

[6] military man who had risen through the ranks

[7] military man who had been trained in the military schools and academy

> The alaylı officers from the Topçu Barracks, with the participation of some religious people and groups to them, started to chant "Şeriat Elden Gidiyor", to kill the mektepli officers, to plunder many places. Istanbul, after a while, passed into their hands. The sultan did nothing to quell the continuance of the events.
>
> Finally, the Action Army, headquartered in Thessaloniki, moved to Istanbul. After the bloody clashes in Istanbul, the Action Army controlled the events. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was among the staff of the army. The Action Army, that dominated Istanbul, destroyed the Topçu Barracks, the center of the events, by holding a heavy artillery fire. Topçu Barracks as an object lesson has claimed its place in history has become a pile of rubble after this artillery fire. Over the years, it remained in this state for 30 years. Some of the parts have undergone minor repairs; used for different purposes.
>
> This image remained like this until the 1940s. In the 1940s, it was intended to build a green park where people could travel freely in the reorganized area. Thus, the area, which had been an Armenian cemetery for a long time and was turned into a barracks in 1780, was left to the next generations as a legacy of the Modern Republic in 1940.
>
> Is it over here? No…
>
> Taksim that has witnessed many historical events was seen as an area to be built a mosque by the pro-Islamist politicians in Turkey for a long time, and it became a target for many pro-Islamist politicians, especially Necmettin Erbakan. The idea of the demolition of Taksim Square and the construction of a mosque kept the country's agenda busy for a long time. It is still being represented today. (Appendix, 2)

Needless to say, it is hardly surprising that the standard traces of the irtica paradigm of Republican history are to be found in Arı's text. For Arı, the JDP's project symbolized the return of the specter of irtica. He believed that the reconstruction of the old barracks would fuel the still-existing danger of irtica. The fear of irtica mobilized Kemal Arı into support of secularism against the JDP. Furthermore, he conceptualizes the history of Turkish Republic as "an 'irtica paradigm' which postulates an endless and inevitable conflict between the forces of secular progress and those of reactionary religious conservatism" (Brockett, 2006, p. 1061). He underlined that there is continuity between the JDP and the Islamist Welfare Party which aimed to build a mosque in Taksim Square and erase the secular identity of the square. The JDP has emerged from the ashes of the pro-Islamist

Welfare Party that was considered one of the most dangerous challenges to the Kemalist secular order in the 1990s. In this context, he sees the JDP as the infiltration of irtica into the Kemalist state. The reconstruction of the old barracks symbolizes the victory of irtica over the Kemalist secular hegemony.

CHAPTER 4

OUTLINING THE WELFARE PARTY'S ISLAMIST IMAGINARY THROUGH THE TAKSİM MOSQUE PROJECT

This chapter focuses on how hegemonic struggles between the Kemalist establishment and Islamist Welfare Party and persistency of the hegemonic order that organized around the Kemalist regime are materialized in Taksim Square as a political space during the 1990s. Since the mid-1990s, Turkey has been undergoing a deep and painful process of (re)defining the collective identities and (re)establishing the political frontiers. This process is closely linked to the revival of political Islam and the Kurdish national movement. Islamist and Kurdish opposition against the Kemalist regime has uninterruptedly lasted, with more or less intensity, since the foundation of Turkish Republic. Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party became the most organized and powerful counter-hegemonic project putting forth challenges to the Kemalist hegemonic order through the history of the Turkish Republic. The rise of the Welfare Party started a long and an uphill process in the reproduction and ultimate crisis of the secularist/Kemalist hegemonic project. During the second half of the 1990s, the Kemalist regime had tried to make Islamic threat manageable so as to pursue its hegemonic project of Westernization. Although the state-led Kemalist hegemonic project tried to absorb this Islamist challenge and to consolidate the secularist/nationalist hegemony by means of the post-modern coup of February 28, 1997, hegemonic struggle between the Islamists and the secularists has reestablished political frontiers and collective identities through reproducing public spaces.

Space is a key component of the hegemonic process, in which power and resistance collide with each other. In other words, space is a site of political struggle.

In this regard, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces can either subvert or maintain the already established power relations through (re)producing space as a political entity. Since the mid-1990s, Taksim Square has become a terrain of political practice, or a battlefield between the Islamist counter-hegemonic imaginary and the Kemalist establishments. The Kemalist ruling elite has persistently defined Taksim Square as a political space only for national, secular and urbanized subjects and excluded political, social and cultural symbols and practices of Islamist groups.

In 1994, the Islamist mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, gave a proposal to build a grand mosque in Taksim Square. This mosque project was explicitly an attempt to symbolically occupy Taksim Square. This verbal proposal was the beginning of a long and difficult war between the Kemalist establishment and the Islamists. This keen struggle between the competing representations of the square and the controversial projects centered on its use and meaning since the mid-1990s is of great importance to understand the spatialisation of antagonism. In this context, the current chapter addresses the following question: How are hegemonic political spaces contested by counter hegemonic political practices and how are they reproduced through regulatory interventions, citational practices and performances? In other words, this chapter focuses on how a hegemonic order is challenged by the Islamist party and how the Kemalist order has become hegemonic again in Taksim Square. I use Laclau's understandings of hegemonic struggle to grasp the persisting and changing power relations that characterize Turkish's political history during the 1990s.

4.1 The Taksim mosque as a popular symbol of conservative politics

The constructing project of a mosque in Taksim Square was not brought up to the agenda for the first time by the Welfare Party-ruled city administration of Istanbul; this controversial project dates back to the early 1950s (Baykal Büyüksaraç, 2005). The Kemalist elite did not consider religious constructions as part of the architectural manifestations of nation building process in the first decades of the republic (Batuman, 2016, p. 326). Hence, during the one-party regime, constructing a mosque or any other religious building was not a primary concern for the republican ruling elite. For instance, there were no new mosques built in Ankara, the new capital of the secular Republic (Lewis, 1964). The urban plans did not include any mosques. The assertive secularism of the Kemalist regime had a rigid control of the religious domain and activities in the country during the one-party state between 1925 and 1945. As Nilüfer Göle says, "religious signs and practices have been silenced as the modern public sphere has set itself against the Muslim social imaginary" (2002, p. 176). Cemil Aydın conspicuously decribes this point as follows

> The Republican regime justified a tremendous amount of symbolic violence in the lives of the Muslim population, in changing dress styles, religious rituals, and cultural practices, as a necessity for Turkey to become a modern nation. The regime also legitimized a dictatorial one-party rule and imposed an elitist regime via an occidentalist discourse, as the society had to sacrifice, be silent, and obey until Turkey would reach the imagined status of equality with the superior West (2006, p. 452).

In the Kemalist hegemonic discourse, the people were considered an ignorant large mass that was prone to be deceived by counter-revolutionary ideologies. Believing that the people needed to be guided, enlightened, and ruled the Kemalist ruling party, the Republican People's Party, claimed that they were acting "for the people…in spite of them". Populism was one of the Kemalist principles, but as

Laclau has shown, the ruling elite "was confronted with the paradox of having to construct a 'people' without popular support," and was "unable to follow a populist route" (2005a, pp. 212-213). Laclau claims that Kemalism was "unable to follow a populist route ... because its homogenization of the 'nation' proceeded not through the construction of equivalential chains between actual democratic demands, but through authoritarian imposition" (p. 212). "The Kemalist revolution did not conceive of itself as just a political revolution, but as an attempt drastically to reshape society through political means" (p. 211). The Kemalist hegemonic discourse and practices created tension between rural masses and state. Within the frame of center-periphery cleavage, Şerif Mardin (1973) properly claims that the Kemalist elite has not achieved "to establish contact with the rural masses" and "had little notion of identifying themselves with the peasantry" (p. 183). In this context, Bobby Sayyid defines the Kemalist hegemony as limited, which is never absolute or total: "Kemalism as a hegemonic discourse, we have to be aware that at no time could it be considered as successful in constituting a fully formed Kemalist society" (1997, p. 85).

Following Laclau (2005a), it can be said that during the late 1940s, the Kemalist hegemonic order was confronted with diverse "unfulfilled demands", which were opposed to the repressive politics of the hegemonic order. And there was an increasing inability of the Kemalist single party system to absorb them in a differential way. With the foundation of the Democrat Party under Adnan Menderes and Celal Bayar in 1946, these diverse unfulfilled demands found a new platform to express their claims and opposition to the ruling party. The new party consciously introduced itself as the voice of a number of popular demands: "New industrialists who were critical of statism, landowners who opposed the 1945 Land

Reform Bill, intellectuals who wanted greater freedom of speech, small merchants who resented the patronage of the state enjoyed by leading merchants, Sufi leaders who had been persecuted" and the rural masses (Yavuz, 2003, p. 60).

Apart from being in opposition to the repressive policies of the Kemalist one-party administration, the only common characteristic of these diverse unfulfilled demands was the fact that they advocated the idea of conservatism. Turkey's transition to a multiparty system opened more spaces to articulation of religion and religious activities and practices in the public sphere. In particular, after the national election in 1950, the nationalist-conservative block gradually increased its power and consequently the Kemalist assertive secularist policies started to loosen. The new conservative party accepted the Kemalist principles in the program which did not significantly differ from that of the ruling Republican People Party. The Democrat Party was attentive to "remain loyal to the fundamental principles of the secular state while, on the other hand, demanding greater respect for religion and less government intervention in religious affairs" (Öncü, 2003, p. 317). According to the conservatives, the Kemalist secularizing reforms had damaged the emotional bond between rural population and the state. The Democrat Party's slogan, 'Enough! Now the people have their say', was found considerably attractive by the people against the authoritative structure of the Kemalist regime (Zürcher, 2004, p. 217). In the 1950s, democracy emerged as a new signifier which was antagonistic to the Kemalist myth of homogenious and secular Turkish nation (Çelik, 2000, p. 197).

For many, the 1950s are regarded as a breaking point in the Kemalist secularization project. Its first symbolic reform was to permit the call to prayer in its original Arabic version rather than Turkish. Beside this symbolic move, the Islamic

faculty at Ankara University was reopened, the ban on the reading of the Koran on state radio was lifted, elective religious classes were reintroduced in formal secular education, the Ministry of Education opened Imam-Hatip schools. During the Democrat Party's a decade-long power, 15,000 new mosques were built and a total of 616 historical mosques and tombs were repaired (Atasoy, 2005, p.73). Afife Batur, a professor of architectural history, claims that mostly after the 1950s, the construction of mosques increased radically and mosque as a symbol of Islam became a political tool in the hands of the nationalist-conservative parties. (2005, p. 53).

In such a political and social atmosphere, the Turkish Association of Monuments, a non-governmental organization, submitted the first project that proposed a mosque in the area behind Maksem, the historical water distribution plant, in the beginnings of 1950s (Ekinci, 1997). The second proposal was to make a mosque in Taksim Square for which the municipality provided a site in 1955. These efforts were intervened by the coup that aimed to take down the Democrat Party from power on May 27, 1960. Right-wing parties and groups had continued to work since the 1960s to construct a mosque in Taksim, "an important bastion that represented the secular face of Istanbul" (Gül, 2017, p. 254). During almost all election campaigns, building a mosque in Taksim had been a recurring motif in the speeches of conservative politicians. The project of Taksim mosque had the purpose of gaining the sympathy of the conservative public. Although the leaders of center-right parties promised in electoral periods to build a mosque in Taksim, the project was never implemented until the JDP's period. This conservative attitude never turned into a challenge against the secular and nationalist meaning of the square. They just tried to integrate the mosque as a strong Islamic symbol into the

iconography of the Kemalist square. In this context, the centre-right parties' endless effort to build a mosque on Taksim Square can be considered as a popular symbol of conservative political and social philosophy.

The rise of the center right parties after the smack down of the Republican People's Party in the 1950 elections cannot be read as the beginning of the end of the secularist hegemony at a national level. One the contrary, their inclusive and containing concessions, which "are inevitable for the exercise of hegemony", resulted in the expansion of the Kemalist modernization project (Tuğal, 2009, p. 40). Turkish conservatism has never offered an alternative state model. The conservative center-right parties have been an important ally in order to maintain and expand the authority of the Kemalist state order. As Menderes Çınar (2003) states, "since the fundamental factor in attaining political legitimacy is to be accepted by the state elite, which holds a monopoly over the definition of such key issues as secularism and the nature of national identity, winning a decisive election victory does not necessarily mean more stable politics in Turkey." In this context, the rise of center-right parties did not mean the ending of the centrality of Kemalist hegemonic discourse in the politics of Turkey. By means of its institutional and bureaucratic mechanisms, the Kemalist politics had continued to dominate political developments and activities in Turkey well after the Kemalist Republican People's Party began to lose its domination in 1950.

The centre-right parties were marked by "a combination of Turkish nationalism, sensitivity to traditional and Islamic values, a commitment to technological modernization (developmentalism) while preserving conservative social values" (Hale & Özbudun, 2010, p. 25). According to Tanıl Bora,

conservatism has emerged as a "reactionary" movement that reacted to the dissolving effects of the Kemalist modernization process on the political, social and cultural structures, and proceeded from the desire to preserve the values and meanings attributed to those structures (1998, p. 54). Conservatism, in the face of the top-down modernization of the Kemalist ruling elite, has been a kind of psychological state, posture, perception and style/manner of Turkish Right (p. 8). In this sense, Bora defines conservatism as "the major position in Turkish Right in coping with modernization" (p. 11). This does not mean that the conservatism of the Turkish centre-right has opposed modernization. On the contrary, "Turkish conservatism is based on an acceptance of modernization (and indeed partial Westernization), but it reacts against the top-down modernization of the secular elite" (Tuğal 2013, p. 109). The conservative center-right has supported the idea of "modernization without modernists" against the secular elite's Westernization policies (Taşkin, 2008, p. 55). The conservative centre-right parties have embraced democracy "as the voice of the "real nation" against the allegedly Westernized and "alienated" elite" (Tuğal 2013, p. 109). Against the Republican People's Party's elitist and exclusionist structure, the traditional center right parties' containing, inclusive and flexible policies have been more attractive to the periphery of the Turkish society (Tuğal, 2009).

As Şerif Mardin (1973) says, the traditional center-right parties that have represented the "democratic periphery" have achieved to mobilize the popular classes. The Republican People's Party that has represented the secularist "bureaucratic center" and has been the executive and defender of the Kemalist discourse has not always been successful in mobilizing people on its side. Conservative centre-right parties have used the signifier of democracy to rearticulate the dislocated elements (Çelik, 2000). Conservative voters have indirectly approved

the Kemalist hegemony because center-right parties have done politics within the framework of the constitutive ideology and institutions of the Republic. While symbiotic relations between the Turkish center-left and center-right seem like antagonistic relations, indeed "they express the internal divisions within the 'power bloc'" (Tuğal, 2009, p. 36).

As in the Taksim mosque project, the Democrat Party and the subsequent center-right parties pursued a balanced policy and played very carefully in the fragmented politic arena between the popular masses and the Kemalist hegemonic bureaucracy and institutions, just like an acrobat trying to walk on a rope stretched between two unstable columns. Although they had little to do with Atatürk's six arrows, the center-right parties had never aimed to constitute a counter-hegemonic movement against the Kemalist hegemony. Rather, they had preferred to stay in the Kemalist discourse. They used Islam and religious symbols "for national cohesion, the struggle against communism, the making of compliance among the masses, and the glorification of capitalism and modernization" (Tuğal, 2009, p. 40).

On 13 May 1977, just twelve days after the 'Bloody Labor Day', the first official mosque project was proposed by the coalition government of the Nationalist Front Government, under the presidency of Süleyman Demirel (Ekinci, 1997). The government applied to the Supreme Council of Monuments under the Ministry of Culture for the approval of the project called the Taksim Mosque Complex. The proposal included a mosque and a bazaar complex next to the historical water distributor, Maksem. The timing of the proposal was a strategic move. The proposal aimed both to change the heated political agenda that was busy with the discussion of the Bloody Sunday tragedy and remove leftist imagination of Taksim Square as a

space of resistance against the rightists. Two months after the application, the Council of Monuments approved the government's proposal. In three years, zoning and construction plans were revised and all the legal obstacles including the property issue were resolved. However, these endeavors were frustrated by the military coup of 1980 and the project had to be postponed (Ekinci, 1997).

After the general elections in 1983 with the end of the military period, the Motherland Party, which included the coalition of liberal center-right, religious and nationalist interests, came to power. Bedrettin Dalan, the new mayor of the city, reawakened the mosque project with a more comprehensive bazaar complex. In 1987, the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul announced the urban design competition of redesigning Taksim Square (Ekinci, 1997). The purpose of the competition was the rearrangement of the places that disturb the world city image of Istanbul. Leftist circles criticized that the mayor organized the competition to get economic and political advantages. Besides, it was claimed that the redesigning initiative was a way to hide the real aim behind the project which was to build a mosque in Taksim. Nevertheless, none of the winning projects contained a mosque proposal, as the jury's negative view on the idea of a mosque at Taksim Square was obvious. The competition was mostly discussed in public under the topic of Taksim Mosque, as the agenda of the country was highly occupied by religious-secular polarization. In the project of Vedat Dalokay, who won the competition, although the construction of the mosque was not included, Mayor Dalan emphasized that a mosque could be built in accordance with the new project (Ekinci, 1997). However, the winning project was never implemented.

After the competition, the Taksim Mosque fell from the political agenda until the new elections. Although Dalan waited for the election period to take up the issue of the reconstruction of Taksim in the direction of the result of the competition, he could not win the elections. The social democratic mayor Nurettin Sözen, who was elected in 1989 local elections, decided to start the Istanbul metro project. Taksim Square was one of the most important central stations of this project. The new urban design project blocked the Taksim Mosque project (Ekinci, 1997). The mosque project was off the political agenda until the next election period.

4.2 The Taksim mosque as a symbol of Islamic counter-hegemony

Since 1990s, Turkey has witnessed the rise of political Islam. The assertive secularist policies of the Kemalist single-party regime "politicized Islam and turned it into a vehicle for opposition" (Zürcher, 2004, p. 192). Until the 1970s, Islamist ideology maintained its continuity just as a fraction within the conservative parties. At the end of 1960s, the Turkish Islamic movement, National View[8] (Milli Görüş), established a particular political party under the leadership of Necmattin Erbakan (Rabasa & Larabee, 2008, p. 32).

Islamist challenge posed by the National View against the Kemalist hegemonic order reached its apogee in the mid-1990. The political circle around

[8] The National Vision refers to the Islamic political movement that started in the late 1960s and the political parties under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan in Turkey. Erbakan's parties -the National Order Party (1969–71), the National Salvation Party (1972–81), the Welfare Party (1981–97), and the Virtue Party (1997–2001) were closed by the Kemalist establishment on account of the fact that its overt use of Islamic sentiments in politics and violating the secular principles of the constitution. The Felicity Party, which is accepted as the official representative of the National Vision Movement, has been continuing its political activities since 2002.

Erbakan founded the Welfare Party in 1983. The Welfare Party showed its first major political achievement in the municipal elections of March 1994. The local elections ended with the victory of Welfare Party by getting 19.1 percent of the national vote, which gradually enlarged its electoral base since the 1984 local elections. In comparison to the previous local elections in 1989, the Welfare Party more than doubled its percentage of votes nationally. Its voting rate was almost equal to the roughly 20 percent won by each of the two main center-right parties, namely the True Path Party and the Motherland Party (Gülalp, 1999, p. 22). This meant that with this local election, the Islamic oriented party became a significant force in Turkish politics. Furthermore, the Islamist party stunned the Kemalist establishment and secularists by taking control of twenty-nine larger cities, including Istanbul and Ankara. The party crowned its electoral success in the local elections with the national elections in 1995.

The 1994 local election was a turning point in Turkish history in terms of both secularists and Islamists. While secularists experienced the local election of 1994 "as one of the most shockingly disastrous moments in Turkish history" and evaluated the Islamist city administration of Istanbul "as an omen of an approaching Islamist coup d'état", Islamists celebrated this result as "the victory of the 'other' Turkey" (Çınar, 2005, p. 114). Hegemonic positions of the Kemalist civil-military bureaucracy and the big bourgeoisie based in Istanbul and Ankara felt threatened. For them, it was the fulfillment of their worst nightmare. After the victory of the Welfare Party, "an atmosphere of uncertainty, sometimes ridden by panic and serious anxiety" had spread over the country. The Kemalist establishment and secularists had the same question on their mind: "What would happen to life in Turkey now that an Islamist political party had obtain the municipality?" (Navaro-Yashin, 2002, p. 23).

The Islamist party made its first move only three months after he came to power. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan promoted the project of a new mosque in Taksim Square, which would be one of the tallest and largest mosques in the Middle East. The municipal council approved the plan for the construction of the mosque and the bazaar adjacent to Maksem. Erdoğan made a statement to the press stating that they would give the license to the mosque and the foundation of the mosque would be laid by the President Süleyman Demirel (Ekinci, 1997). The Council of Protecting Culture and Natural Resources did not approve the project due to the fact that the area was a historical site. The Council announced the area next to Maksem as an archeological site. That meant any type of construction in the area was forbidden. In line with the new decision, the search for a new place for the construction of the Taksim Mosque began. Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan pointed out to a new place for the mosque: Gezi Park. The Islamist party started to imagine a larger mosque. Supporting this view, Minister of Culture İsmail Kahraman said that they would build a very large mosque in Taksim (Ekinci, 1997).

The secular media started "an aggressive campaign against the project, condemning it as 'unfeasible,' 'ideologically motivated,' 'destructive to the environment,' 'aesthetically repulsive,' and 'damaging for tourism' " (Çınar, 2005, p. 115). In spite of the objections of the secularist groups and the media, the mayor Erdoğan explained why they were so insistent on the Taksim mosque project as follows,

> Tourists who came to Taksim don't even realize that they are in a Muslim country. ... Symbols allow you to make a statement to the observers. For example, the cathedral in Köln or the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin are such symbols... Nations manifest their identity through their art. A tourist who comes to Taksim should be able to see what the art of a foreign country looks like (as cited in Çınar, 1997, p. 32).

The mayor ostensibly approached the mosque to be built in Taksim in terms of global audiences. The mayor explicitly states that "the building of a mosque in Taksim Square was about the articulation of the Islamist version of the Turkish national identity, to be placed on display for tourists" (Çınar, 2005, p. 116). In other words, the mosque was imagined as a symbol of the new collective political identity primarily as Islamic rather than ethnic-Turkish and secular. Regardless of whatever his apparent intention was, secularist audiences considered the Welfare Party's move as a strategy that sought to insert a provocative symbol of Islam into Taksim Square that was imbued with symbols of the Kemalist secular and national order.

The Kemalist establishment and secularists claimed that they were not against the idea of a new mosque in itself but that of where to build it. Although a great number of mosques had been built in Istanbul, and none of these had become controversial, the Welfare Party's building project of a colossal mosque at Taksim was considered as a very symbolic act against the Kemalist secularism. For secularists, Taksim Square was not just any place; it was the symbolic space of the Kemalist modernity and secular nationalism. According to Ayfer Bartu, "the choice of this square and specific location of the mosque were not coincidental" (1999, p. 41). The Taksim mosque would be competing with the Republic Monument and the Atatürk Cultural Centre that were lieux de mémoire of the Kemalist nationalist ideology (p. 41). Secularists firmly believed that "it was unthinkable for the Republic Monument, with the figure of Atatürk at the fore and standing right at the center of the square, to be overshadowed by a huge mosque" (Çınar, 2005, p. 115). The Islamist Welfare Party's desire to re-build city square was a direct challenge to Kemalist hegemonic project, namely to the institutional legacy of Kemalist secularism (White, 2008, p. 393). Islamic representation of the square was an attempt

to transgress the official iconography accumulated on the square and to change its public character.

On the other hand, the mosque project was popularly supported by the Islamist media. Especially Islamist intelligentsia insisted that a mosque in Taksim was needed. They claimed that there were not enough mosques but many churches and synagogues in the district. Furthermore, they maintained that Taksim was occupied by minorities, thus Muslims had to get it. Hence, the mosque to be built in Taksim would be the symbol of re-conquering the region. The project turned into an open war of power between the Welfare Party and the Kemalist establishment. The Islamist circle considered the absence of a mosque in Taksim Square as a hostility to the Islamic city (Istanbul), to the Islamic world, and to Islam. On the other hand, secularists interpreted the construction of mosque on the square as an irtica, or reactionary and destructive movement to the secular Republic. The presence or absence of the mosque in the square would be the indicator of which one of politic actors seized Taksim. The Taksim mosque has become as a nodal point of resistance against the Kemalist hegemonic order in the Islamist discourse. The mosque has been a symbolic expression of the Ismalic national identity.

I suggest that the Welfare Party's mosque project and the secular reaction to it should be thought in the context of the heated political struggle between pro-Islamist Welfare Party and state-led Kemalist hegemonic order on the definitions of collective identities and the political frontiers during the 1990s. The conjuncture of the 1990s had a unique and specific character in Turkish political life due to the fact that the collective identities and the political frontiers disintegrated and reproduced in a running battle between Kemalist guardians of the state and the pro-Islamist party. In

a sense, it was a historic turning point. These antagonistic political forces had competed to fix meaning and identity of Taksim Square through imposing their own definitions during the 1990s.

4.3 The re-conquest of Istanbul or subversion of the Kemalist hegemony?

Tanıl Bora underlines that the re-conquest of Istanbul has been one of the key narratives in both Islamic and nationalist-conservative political rhetoric and literature since the 1950s (1999, p. 48). Bora observes that this theme was put on the agenda with the conquest of Istanbul in 1953 when the rightist intellects, which established the Association for the Conquest of Istanbul in 1950, introduced a completely nostalgic discourse. This was how they paved the way for an internal irredentist movement towards re-conquest. In Bora's own words, "The theme of waiting for the generation that will conquer Istanbul was on the agenda, and a right-wing student march of the time exhorted the youth, reminding them they were the same age as Fatih when he conquered the city" (1999, p. 48). During the local elections campaign in March 1994, the Welfare Party's strategy presented Recep Tayyip Erdogan as "the new conqueror of Istanbul" and their anticipated victory as the "re-conquest of Istanbul" (Çınar, 1997, p. 382). Two days before the March 27, 1994 local elections, the Welfare Party organized a rally in Sultanahmet Square, which had served as the political and social center for 500 years, was surrounded by the Topkapı Palace, the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia as a symbol of Islam's victory over Christianity. On the day of Istanbul meeting in Sultanahmet Square, Milli Gazete, the Welfare Party's unofficial newspaper, ran the headline "Erbakan is coming to conquer Istanbul" (as cited in Erken, 2013, p. 176). The newspaper made a striking claim: "The new

[mayor] … will be announced soon. This ascension which will start from Sultanahmet is the final struggle of Byzantium" (p. 176). In the Sultanahmet meeting Recep Tayyip Erdoğan clearly explained this vision:

> You and us, standing in front of sad Hagia Sophia, just opposite of Sultanahmet, will accomplish the second conquest of Istanbul … 27 March will be a day for closing an era, and opening a new era (p.177).

Following the 1994 local elections, the National Youth Foundation and Istanbul Municipality organized the celebrations of the conquest in Ali Sami Yen Stadium under the name of the Conquest and Youth Day. The ceremony turned into a celebration of the victory of the Welfare Party in local elections. In his speech at the celebration, Erbakan said that the second conquest of Istanbul took place in the local elections and he would complete the conquest as the prime minister after the general elections in the following years.

Bora (1999), Bartu (1999) and Çınar (1997, 2005) all emphasize that the Welfare Party used the rhetoric of the re-conquest of Istanbul in the 1994 local elections. They also refer to its historical roots in the nationalist and conservative intelligentsia. However, neither Bora, nor Bartu, or Çınar address the emergence of this rhetoric in the National View movement and its political and social connotations. The popular theme of conquest had been already expressed in a much harsher, and with a more Islamic tone by Necmettin Erbakan in the Konya meeting under the motto of "Emancipating Jerusalem" just a week before the coup in 1980:

> We should take as our guide the industry, determination and love of *jihad* [that resulted]in the conquest of Istanbul. May you, the new army of Sultan Fatih Mehmet, be victorious and your holy struggle be blessed. Be prepared, we shall sharpen our swords (Jenkins, 2008, p.138).

In his address to the rally, Necmettin Erbakan made a clear call to the Turkish Muslims to join him in a jihad, or holy war against the Kemalist order and its allies,

which invaded their country. The crowd gave a positive reply to his call. Radical Islamic slogans were chanted such as "the atheist state will be destroyed" and "Islam is the *Shari'a,* the *Qur'an* the constitution" and the demonstrators carried placards, proclaiming "*Shari'a* or death" and "one caliphate, one state" (p.138). It is clear that in the discourse of the National View, the rhetoric of conquest has a much broader political and social meaning than the re-conquest of Istanbul. The National View Movement's discourse of conquest aimed directly at the Kemalist hegemonic order. Mehmed Zahid Kotku, the leader of the *İskenderpaşa* Congregation, explained his support to the Islamist party as follows,

> In the aftermath of the deposition of the Sultan Abdülhamid II, the country's governance has been taken over by masons, who are imitating the west. They are a minority. They cannot represent our nation. It is a historical duty to give the governance of the country to the real representatives of our nation by establishing a political party. Join this already belated endeavor (as cited in Eligür, 2010, p. 66).

Erbakan-led National View movement openly challenged not only the Kemalist secular state, but also the values and norms of the West, which had been tried to be deployed since the Tanzimat period. They considered "the Kemalist attempt to replace the Islamic-Ottoman state and culture with a Western model as a historic mistake and the source of all the ills in Turkish society" (Rabasa & Larabee, 2008, p.40). The National View desired a return to traditional values and institutions. In his public statements, Erbakan expressed his sentimentality for the Ottoman Empire plainly: "The immorality in the country will disappear when [the National View] comes to the power and establishes an honorable, moral Muslim Turkish state just like it used to be in the past" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 131). According to them, "the strength of the Ottoman Empire had been based on its moral and intellectual superiority and that its decline was a direct consequence of its attempts to imitate the

West" (p. 132). They aimed to establish a "national (Islamic) order" and bring an end to the Kemalist process of Westernization. The term milli in the title of the movement did not simply mean "national" but also connoted the "religiously defined community" (Yavuz, 2003, p. 208). They redefined and reused the same term to subvert the secular character of the Kemalist state. They saw a stronger link between national identity and Turkey's future with the Muslim world than with the West or the communist East. Their motto was "Neither the East nor the West" (Tuğal, 2016, p. 68). The Islamist movement, which came out with the motto of "A Great Turkey Once Again", proposed that returning to Islam's teachings and a "Muslim way of life" could solve the common problems of Turkey and compensate for the social fragmentation caused by the Westernization process (Rabasa & Larabee, pp. 40-1).

This Islamist discourse cannot be considered as merely the return of the repressed, which has been silenced by the Kemalist secular hegemony. It was indeed a clear response to the crisis of the Kemalist hegemony in the period after 1980. Following Laclau (1990), we can say that the National View offered a new myth which functioned as a surface on which the Kemalist dislocation and unfulfilled social demands could be inscribed. In other words, the Islamist movement constituted a new representational space to rearticulate dislocated elements within the Kemalist hegemonic order.

Regardless, according to Reşat Kasaba (1997), the Kemalist hegemonic order had continued its leading position that dominated the Turkish politics until the 1980s. The 1980s marks a critical moment for Turkey that begun to experience a number of radical economical, cultural and political changes. The neoliberal economic and social policies in the 1980s have given rise to a full-scale crisis of Kemalist

hegemony in the 1990s. Keyman and Öniş depicts Turkey in the 1990s as a country marked by a protracted crisis of the Kemalist hegemony.

> During the 1990's ... there emerged a simultaneous existence of transformation and crisis, mainly felt in the realms of politics, economics and culture. In this period, while there were societal calls for the necessary democratization of state-society relations, the development of civil society and sustainable economic development, the state and political parties faced a serious legitimacy and representation crisis, the economic realm has experienced a serious financial and governing crisis, the cultural realm was confronted by the religious and ethnic-based conflict. In fact, it was the identity-based conflicts, which have given rise to the process of the resurgence of Islam and the Kurdish question, marked the crisis-ridden nature of Turkish modernity and Turkish politics during the 1990s (2007, pp. 16-7).

Organic crisis of the Kemalist hegemony became more visible particularly in the 1990s. The 1990s were marked by recurrent political, economic and social crises. Antonio Gramsci's category of 'organic crisis' offers a useful point of departure for analyzing the period after 1980 in Turkey. Following Gramsci, the post-1980 era can be defined as a moment of organic crisis of Kemalist hegemony in which "the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (1992, p. 276). By locating the notion of crisis of authority into the center of the category of organic crises, Gramsci has defined it as follows:

> In every country the process is different, although the content is the same. And the content is the crisis of the ruling class's hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of the broad masses (war, for example), or because huge masses (especially of peasants and petit-bourgeois intellectuals) have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. A "crisis of authority" is spoken of: this is precisely the crisis of hegemony, or general crisis of the State (1992, p. 210).

He has defined it as a 'crisis of the ruling class's hegemony', 'crisis of authority' or 'general crisis of the State' that derives from the failure of a major political undertaking of the hegemonic power bloc in a society. Building on Laclau's

theoretical framework of hegemony, the organic crisis of Kemalism refers to the reactivation of the sedimented forms of Kemalist objectivity. Within this theoretical framework, firstly, the organic crisis of Kemalism is "a crisis in and of ideology" (Hall, 1988, p. 35). What this claim implies is that the organic crisis of Kemalism is the crisis of state-led modernization ideology. The Kemalist modernizers set "catching up with the level of modern civilisation' as the ultimate target for Turkey. Within the unilinear view of history, this is very ambivalent target that keeps moving away and away. The pro-Westernist Kemalist discourse desired to completely mimic western culture and civilization. Here, I do not use term adoption deliberately because it is a more neutral word to describe the Kemalist modernization project. I prefer word mimicry, which generally refers to the imitation of one species by another, in order to describe the ambivalent relationship between the Kemalists and western civilizations. The Kemalist project referred fairly to what Homi Bhabha calls "mimicry" in his pioneering article "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse". In postcolonial theory, mimicry refers to unsettling imitations that are characteristic of postcolonial cultures. Bhabha has defined colonial mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable 'Other', as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (1994, p.122). In other words, "mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as almost the same, but not 'quite'" (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 125). Although the colonized subjects mimic the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is not a simple reproduction of those traits, but a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer (ibid.). Although the Kemalist project mimicked the Western cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result was not the same. It turned out that Turkey was

merely a “blurred copy” of the Western civilizations, not a modern industrial economy.

In this vein, the Kemalist organic crisis is also a crisis of and for nationalist developmentalism, which is “an implicit expression of the desire to ‘catch up’” (Gülalp, 1997, p. 54). Until the end of 1970s, national developmentalism had fulfilled its economic and social promises to a certain extent. It sustained high rates of industrial growth with a significant increase in the level of welfare and urbanization (Keyder, 1997). As Tuğal states, the Kemalist corporatist model of capital accumulation hit a wall with the global economic crisis in the 1970s (2009, p. 41). Turkey witnessed the rise of the neoliberal discourse and free-market rationality during the 1980s. The military intervention of 1980 transformed the strategy for industrialization from import-orientation lines to export-orientation ones. The export-oriented industrialization created a strong change in the Kemalist vision of society and state relation.

In this regard, the Kemalist organic crisis was “a crisis of the state” (Hall, 1983, p. 31). Since the beginning of the Turkish Republic, the state in the Kemalist modernity had played a major role in the production of political, social and economic affairs as a whole (Keyman & İçduygu, 2013, p. 6). The state had an absolute capacity to define the boundaries of political, social and economic fields, and decide who can or cannot participate in it. The Kemalist national developmentalism positioned the state as the dominant economic actor. Transition to a neoliberal development model in the 1980s put an end to the dominant regulatory role of the state in the economy. The idea of market rationality has been placed at the center of the relations between the state and the economy (p. 23). Turgut Özal, the prominent

figure in Turkey's transition to an export-oriented development model had a tendency to ignore the urge to develop a strong legal and institutional infrastructure and underestimate the importance of the rule of law for a well-functioning market-oriented economy (Öniş, 2004, p. 114). He preferred to shut his eyes to the abuse of export subsidies during the mid-1980s. He tried to rule economy by passing legal procedures and constraints. His approach resulted in serious weakening of the state apparatus, arguably with dire consequences. During the course of the 1990s, the Turkish neoliberal development model had turned into a corruption economy, which was the co-production of politicians, bureaucrats and capital (Öniş, 2004). The neoliberal economy also created winners and losers. The main winners were exporters, rentiers, financial capital, and big family holdings. Economically disadvantaged groups in the peripheries of the big cities and the working class were the losers of the neoliberal system.

Under these economic conditions, the Kemalist hegemonic discourse and its ideological apparatuses failed in making the people willing to sacrifice themselves for "enlightened and prosperous tomorrows" (Kasaba, 1997, p. 16). The Kemalist hegemony was clearly inadequate in offering articulating mechanisms to the losers of Turkey (Keyder, 1997). The inability of traditional center parties to organize and mobilize masses opened a political space for the political Islam to rise in Turkey. As I have mentioned before, the Kemalist order that has determined the national subject became no longer able to constitute itself because it was dislocated. The Kemalist order failed to constitute the subject. This structural indetermination led to the emergence of a lack in the national subject. It led to a higher awareness of historicity of being of objects. In order to eliminate that lack the subject attempts to determine itself through the acts of identification. Such being the case, the role of the subject

increased as a result of dislocation. When the Kemalist hegemonic order became dislocated, there was more space for the action of the subject since there arose a need for the reconstitution of structures, and this led to an increase in the role subject takes.

The National View Movement's discourse of conquest served as a lever for the periphery against the Kemalist order. The Welfare Party appealed to the losers in the periphery of Istanbul, more than any other parties it competed with (Bora, 1999, p. 52). The theme of re-conquest, reshaped around a religious and nationalist rhetoric, had become one of the most important elements of the Welfare Party's election campaign. The Welfare Party strengthened the communication with the immigrants of the city who had strong religious and nationalist affiliation with the narrative of re-conquest. Conquest celebrations almost turned into a show of force of the Islamist municipalities. In this way, the party both established a link with religious voters and consolidated the mass who opposed the hegemonic order.

After its election victory in the municipal elections of March 1994, and the national elections of December 1995 the Welfare Party's image among the public transformed from a "radical" or "extreme right" political party into a nationally recognized mass political party. "This showed that the party had achieved a breakthrough. It was no longer predominantly a party of small businessmen, but had become the voice of the poorest sections of the population in the enormous conurbations as well" (Zürcher, 2004, p. 295). The pro-Islamist Welfare Party which was regularly on the rise since 1983 became a significant force in Turkish politics and began to reshape the Turkish political scene both challenging and accommodating official state secularism. Eventually, in the mid-1996, the Welfare

Party formed a coalition government with the center-right True Path Party and Necmettin Erbakan became the first Islamist prime minister of the Kemalist Republic. From the mid-1996 untill its dismissal in the mid-1997, the secular Turkish Republic was run by an Islamist party and prime minister since its founding in 1923. The coalition government remained in force till it was removed from power in the mid1997 through the process known as the February 28.

4.4 The construction of an Islamic national identity through commemorating May 29

Alev Çınar claims that the Welfare Party "formulated and promoted an alternative nationalist ideology that defined the Turkish nation as an Ottoman-Islamic civilization in contrast to official Turkish-secular national ideology" (2005, p. 102). In this direction, after its victory in the 1994 local elections, the Islamist Welfare Party, through local governments, started to organize alternative celebrations to commemorate the conquest of Istanbul. The conquest, which was not emphasized in the early Republican period, gained importance in the 1950 under the rule of Democrat Party. Notably, in 1953 an association was established by the Council of Ministers to officially celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of the conquest. With a few adjustments, the celebration rearticulated the Kemalist conceptualization of the nation and history. As Alev Çınar puts it, the official Kemalist historiography has recognized the conquest of Istanbul as a significant event in world history and has depicted it as a part of Turkish history:

> The seizure of Istanbul by the Turks brought an end to the East Roman Empire that had lasted around 1000 years. At that time, Istanbul's seizure by the Turks became a worldwide incident. It was acknowledged as an historical landmark ending the Middle Ages and bringing about a new era for

> civilization and humanity. ... The conquest of Istanbul by the Turks was, at that time, understood as the defeat of all of Europe and the Christian world by the Ottoman Empire (as cited in Çınar, 2001, p. 380).

In this account, the Turkish identity of Sultan Mehmet II is highlighted in the narrative of the conquest. In other words, the determining element of the conquest is Turkishness and the conquest is evaluated within the framework of Turkish consciousness. In the Democratic Party period, thanks to the celebrations of the conquest, the interest in Istanbul and the Ottoman past has increased, but it should not be considered as a break from the founding ideology. It should be noted that the official celebrations until the 1990s reflected the official ideology.

In the five hundredth anniversary of the conquest, Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, the mayor and governor of Istanbul, considered the conquest of Istanbul as a part of Turkish national identity in his following statements: "... Turkish flag, Turkish banner was waving in the hands of the Turkish hero" (as cited in Bölükbaşı, p. 73). On the other hand, he implied that there was continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. The religious elements were also included in his speech. However, he was aware that the Turkish nation could not be imagined by excluding the founding father of the republic. The mayor stated that "Sultan Mehmet conquered Istanbul and Mustafa Kemal rescued Istanbul from enemy occupation. In this way, one was called as Fatih and the other as Atatürk" (p. 74). In this regard, the compromise with the Ottoman past through the celebration of conquest did not point to a rupture in the Kemalist historiography. Consequently, the celebrations should be understood as a way in which some of the elements that were ignored by the Kemalist elite were mounted into the official ideology rather than pointing to an alternative narrative of history and national identity. In this period, an alternative

national history and collective political identity were not imagined, but small steps were taken towards reconciliation with the Ottoman past (Bölükbaşı, p. 74).

However, with the rise of political Islam in the 1990s, the Welfare Party's municipalities mobilized these celebrations for their own political ends against the Kemalist hegemonic order. The conquest of Istanbul acquired an oppositional character that brought the re-formulation of the Turkish national identity into question. Islamists have featured Istanbul against Ankara, the Ottoman Empire against the Republic, and an Islamized national identity against the secular Turkish identity. As Alev Çınar (2001) puts it, Islamist accounts of the conquest do not mention the "Turk". They regard it as an Islamist victory and attribute it to the Ottomans. The following quote from Sezai Karakoç, a prominent Islamic intellect, constructs a different subject:

> When Fatih Sultan Mehmet conquered Istanbul, the city of Kaisers, he connected his time, his community and his army both to the message of the Great Prophet [Mohammed, who] prophesized during the Battle of the Ditch [that Istanbul will be conquered one day] on the one hand, and to the bearer of hopes for which future generations will be in dire need, on the other. ... Fatih brought a new time to Istanbul, whose time had corroded. He brought the time of Islam (as cited in Çınar, 2001, p. 380).

The Welfare Party also presents the conquest as an Islamist victory in their discourse. The city administration stated on their website that "the conquest of Istanbul is the beginning point of the supremacy of Muslims over Europe, which will last for a long duration in subsequent years" (p. 381). The "beginning point" refers to the starting point of an alternative national time, a founding moment. That the Islamist party combines the Ottoman past, Islam and Istanbul into one single entity makes the party seem like "the bearer of hopes for current generations" (p. 381). This carefully established link turned out to be effective in winning the mayoralty of

Istanbul in 1994 for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who was the party's candidate at the time and was presented as the new conqueror of the city.

May 29 celebrations include symbolic representations that "concertedly construct a national subject performed as Ottoman, Islamic and male" (p. 376). One of these representations is that the Turkish flag is raised rather than an Ottoman banner while commemorating a moment in Ottoman times. Another symbolic representation is the slogan "Biz-Biz-Biz, Fatihin Nesliyiz!" meaning "we are the generation of the Conqueror." "This is an interpellation of a national subject, invoked as the communal-self ("we"), in which Fatih Sultan Mehmet and the present chanters of the slogan are connected not only temporally (across the linear time of the nation) and spatially (as conquering the same city), but also through blood ties" (pp. 376-7). Finally, Islam is represented in the collective prayers during the commemoration in the stadium in terms of constituting the subject under an Islamic identity. While this Islamic act of praying brings together people from various social rankings, women are segregated, seated separately and they pray in designated rooms.

It should be kept in mind that the perception of national time of the public was disrupted with the celebration of May 29. The celebration of May 29 has changed the notion regarding the beginning of the modern nation's history, which has always been taught that it began in the 1920s with Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Linking Turkish national identity to a date belonging to Ottoman experience has made it credible that several founding moments can comprise multiple histories (Çınar, 2001).

4.5 Restoration of the Kemalist hegemony

According to Sayyid, "all hegemonies are confronted by dissenting elements; the ability of a hegemonic bloc to remain in power depends on its preventing these dissenting elements from coalescing into a counter-hegemonic force" (1997, p. 86). The Kemalist hegemonic order brought about opposition and dissent from the very first days of the Republic. The discursive constructs, or the myth of Kemalist hegemonic culture has been "continuously undermined and actively renegotiated within the contours of lived experience and practices of everyday life", and within the contours of oppositional movements (Öncü, 1999, p. 96). Hegemony is not only an organization of consent for domination and inequality but also "a continuous struggle for power in which different groups participate albeit unequally" (Phillips, 1998, p. 847). As Stuart Hall has noted, the first fact of hegemony is "struggle":

> 'Hegemony' implies: the struggle to contest and disorganize an existing political formation; the taking of the 'leading position' ... over a number of different spheres of society at once-economy, civil society, intellectual and moral life, culture; the conduct of a wide and differentiated type of struggle; the winning of a strategic measure of popular consent; and, thus, the securing of a social authority sufficiently deep to conform society into a new historic project. It should never be mistaken for a finished or settled project. It is always contested, always trying to secure itself, always 'in process' (Hall, 1988, p. 7).

Following Hall, Kemalism can be defines as a "hegemonic project" which "is always contested, always trying to secure itself, always 'in process,'" and which is still trying to dominate the political imagination of Turkey (1988, p.7). In a similar way, Laclau has defined hegemony as follows: "class hegemony consists not only in an ability to impose a 'conception of the world' upon other classes, but also, and especially, in an ability to articulate different 'conceptions of the world' in such a way as to neutralize their potential antagonism" (1977, p. 177). What Laclau's

definition implies is that hegemony depends on an ability to *struggle* with potential antagonisms. In this thesis, I mention not an absolute and complete Kemalist hegemony, but the Kemalist hegemonic discourse and its strategies in a continuous struggle with its possible antagonisms. Kemalist hegemony, always incomplete and partially fixed, has been in the endless and continuous struggle for trying to secure itself against especially the pro-Islamist parties and Kurdish demands for recognition.

Islamist challenge against the Kemalist establishment reached its apogee in the mid-1996 when the Welfare Party forged a coalition government with the centre-right True Path Party. This rising threat became more evident in the statements of the Islamist mayor of Kayseri on November 10 at a commemoration ceremony of Atatürk's death: "Having to attend this ceremony makes me weep blood. This system should change. We have waited. We will wait a little longer. And let Muslims keep alive the resentment, rancor, and hatred they feel in their hearts" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 161). The first open and direct challenges to the secular establishment came during Ramadan in early 1997. Erbakan invited several tariqah (religious) leaders to a fast-breaking dinner at the official residence of the Prime Minister although the Sufi brotherhoods were banned in 1925. This event received the secularist reaction because Erbakan's act showed his disregard for the formerly illegal status of these religious groups (Jenkins, 2008). The Islamist Mayor of Sincan organized "Kudus Gecesi" (Jerusalem Night) to protest against Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and to show solidarity with the Palestinian Muslims. At the rally, the Iranian ambassador gave a speech in support of *Shari'a* law and pro-Hamas and Hizbullah slogans were chanted (Yavuz, 2003, p.243).

These events galvanized the Turkish military. A few days later, a long column of tanks slowly drove through the streets of Sincan to make a direct warning to the Islamists and to restore the Kemalist status quo. Shortly after, a special body entitled 'Task Force West' (Batı Çalışma Grubu) was formed within the Turkish General Staff to monitor Islamist activity and to gather evidence of the Islamist threats to the secular state (Zücher 2004, p.300). Uneasiness between the military and Erbakan-led government reached its peak at the National Security Council meeting on February 28, 1997. The military warned the government to take precautions against the rising Islamist threat, ranging from the shutdowns of private Qur'an courses to the restrictions on the Islamist media (Jenkins, 2008, p. 162). The most conspicuous measures were a proposal about the introduction of compulsory eight-year primary education and thus the closure of the İmam Hatip schools at the middle school level.

Although Erbakan was one of the most prominent figures who supported the Imam-Hatip schools, he felt obliged to accept to abide by the measures proposed by the military. As a result, on 14 March 1997, the proposal was approved by parliament. Nevertheless, the cabinet was not willing to do much about them. After six weeks, the military warned the government more seriously at the National Security Council. This was a clear sign of an arduous war between the Welfare Party and the army (Zürcher 2004, p.300).

The February 28 process as a postmodern coup has its own mechanisms of hegemony building, at which consensual and coercive methods merge. Gramsci formulated the concept of hegemony in his *Prison Notebooks* in terms of the relation between political society and civil society as two constitutive moments of the

"integral state". In this respect, Gramsci defined hegemony, "in the form of 'public opinion', as 'the point of contact' between 'civil society' and 'political society', between consent and force" (p. 167). Political hegemony, for Gramsci, is reinforced in the realm of two major superstructural levels, political society and civil society, and particularly in civil society. So, Gramsci conceived consent essential to the achievement and maintenance of class power. He also emphasized that hegemony was protected through the armour of coercion (Gramsci, 2002). Such hegemony is guaranteed, however, 'in the last instance', by the capture of the legal monopoly of violence embodied in the institutions of political society" (p. 137). Furthermore, Gramsci uses political society as equivalent with the state. I think, what Gramsci describes as the political society actually corresponds to the sum of what Louis Althusser (1971) calls the repressive apparatuses of the state and ideological state apparatuses. Althusser emphasizes that ideological state apparatuses must not be confused with the repressive apparatuses of the state. I suggest that the distinction between state and political society can be thought via Althusser's distinction.

At this point, Tuğal's comprehensive definition of hegemony which is very useful for my analysis. He defined the category of hegemony as "the organization of consent for domination and inequality through a specific articulation of everyday life, space, and the economy with certain patterns of authority under a certain leadership, which forges unity out of disparity" (2009, p. 24). Tuğal claims that "hegemony operates by linking society and state" (p. 24). And he calls "the domain that links civil society and state 'political society'" (p. 24). "Political society links civil society to the state through political leadership, authority structures, and the imagination and exercise of a political unity" (p. 26). Tuğal defines political society as

> the set of organizations (mainly political parties and other sociopolitical movement organizations) that form, control. and regulate (1) local and extra-local leadership and authority figures and (2) imagined political bodies. belongings. and collectivities, which together constitute people's experience and contact with the political. Political society is what integrates people into the state and makes them citizens. Without political society, the state is an abstract entity, a body of armed men (and occasionally women) accompanied by some people in robes (judges, professors, bureaucrats). It is through the work of political society that these people at the top become actual 'rulers' rather than pillagers, thieves, and imposters. How does political society perform this magic of turning a gang into legitimate rulers? Its magic rod is the leadership it offers civil society. This leadership articulates various experiences of society into a hegemonic project (p. 25).

Within this theoretical framework, Gramscian concept of the "integral state" should be considered as an attempt "to analyze the mutual interpenetration and reinforcement of 'political society' and 'civil society' (to be distinguished from each other methodologically, not organically) within a unified (and indivisible) state-form" (Thomas, 2009, p. 137). In the words of Peter Thomas, "civil society is the terrain upon which social classes compete for social and political leadership or hegemony over other social classes. In his influential article "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci", Perry Anderson claimed that the state is the final juridical arbiter of social, political, and economic relations. This means that it is the only institution that exercises legitimate force. According to Anderson, this fundamental principle designates the relation between coercion and consent, or civil society and political society:

> There is always a structural asymmetry in the distribution of the consensual and coercive functions of this power. Ideology is shared between civil society and the state: violence pertains to the State alone. In other words, the State enters twice over into any equation between the two (p. 32).

Following Anderson and Thomas, I assume that coercion, in the Kemalist hegemony, has been the ultimate guarantee for consent. For most of the republic's history, the state had the strongest influence on the organization of consent by means

of coercion. The Kemalist hegemonic project has included coercion as one of its necessary moments, without which it has rapidly entered into a crisis that has threatened its very existence. Consent and coercion as moments operating with each other have been major moments of the Kemalist political hegemonic project. As Thomas puts it, "Consent is one of the means of forging the 'composite body' of a class alliance, while coercion is deployed against the excluded other" (p. 163). In the Turkish context, the Kemalist hegemonic project's ability to lead and secure the consent of allies has relied upon its capacity to regulate domination over the Islamists and Kurdish movement. The Kemalist hegemonic formation's capacity to exert coercive force has depended upon its securing the consent of its supporters.

In his article on Kemalism and hegemony, Mesut Yeğen started with a question: "Is Kemalism a hegemonic ideology?" (2001: 56). Then he asked the same question by revising: "Is there any period in the Turkish political history in which Kemalism put in performance of hegemonic ideology?" He asserted that "it is not possible to define Kemalism of the 1930s as a hegemonic ideology because of its lack of acceptance by civil society, its indifference to organizing social consent and, more importantly its inability to build a moral and intellectual leadership who would organize a social totality that would correspond to a national-popular imagination" (2001: 62). However, Kemalism, which has not been "equally and evenly hegemonic" in Turkey, "spread unevenly throughout social relations" (Sayyid, 1997, p.85). Some institutions within political and civil society such as the army, the judicial units and bureaucracy were heavily involved in the hegemonic operation while others were excluded from hegemony. At this point, I would suggest that during the 1990s, the Kemalist hegemony has been ultimately determined and generated by the threat of coercion via the institutional apparatus of the state. The

Turkish General Staff mobilized different sections of the society against the government. The military declared political Islam as the most serious security threat to the existence of the secular Turkish Republic and cited several incidents around the country as proof of anti-secular activity of the Welfare Party (Eligür, 2010, p. 221). During spring and early summer 1997, the army held a series of briefings, conferences, and regular public announcements for the media, judiciary, and business community to inform about the existential threat to the secular and national state posed by the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (Jenkins, 2008, p.162). On April 29, General Çetin Doğan, at his briefing to the press, declared the new National Military Strategic Concept and "Islamic reaction (*irtica*), rather than Kurdish separatism or external threats of interstate war, as the number-one threat to Turkey" (Eligür, 2010, p. 222).

Since the Turkey's transition to multi-party democracy in 1950, the Kemalist establishment has depended on the center-right parties in penetrating the popular masses. However, when Tansu Çiller formed a coalition with the Islamist Welfare Party, the guardian of the Kemalist state recognized that it could no more co-operate effectively with the center-right parties. They chose to come into direct contact with the society. The war against the Erbakan-led government had several civil players, such as the judiciary, the mass media, the academy, the non-governmental organizations, and the trade unions. Necmi Erdoğan defines this attitude of civil societies as neo-Kemalism:

> Neo-Kemalism views itself as 'national forces without uniforms' that would save the land from the internal enemies, following the 'national forces in uniforms' The civil aspect of neo-Kemalism is evident in its emphasis on 'civic consciousness' and political participation of citizens. Central to the development of neo-Kemalism and the Kemalist NGOs is the sense of the lack of a civil society capable of protecting the system (2000, p. 267).

On January 15, 1997, trade unions under the leadership of TİSK initiated a great public rally in Ankara, at which 200 thousand people attended. At the time, it was called as the biggest rally in the Republican history. All the opposition parties except for the Nationalist Movement Party attended the rally. The anti-Shariah slogans, posters of Atatürk and Turkish flags came forth during the rally on February 1, 1997, marking a different form of civil protest. Many Turks switched their home lights on and off for a minute every night at nine o'clock. The campaign called "one minute of darkness for a bright future" was first initiated to protest the state-mafia relations revealed at the Susurluk scandal[9], but later turned into a massive demonstration against the government. The rally and the following demonstrations provided legitimation for the anti-governmental directives at the National Security Council meeting held on February 28 (Jenkins, 2008).

On May 21, 1997, the secularist chief public prosecutor, Vural Savaş, applied to the Constitutional Court for the closure of the Welfare Party because "it was a 'center' (*mihrak*) of activities contrary to the principles of secularism" (Eligür, 2010, p. 226). As a result of the pressures from the military high command, Erbakan resigned from his post. Center-right and left parties formed a coalition government under the guidance of the Kemalist establishment to restore hegemonic order. Thus, February 28 process, which was called the first postmodern coup, had reached its

[9] The Susurluk scandal had erupted on November 3, 1996. A luxury black Mercedes ran into a truck in Susurluk, a small town in northwest Turkey. There were four people in the crashed car: Sedat Bucak, a deputy of the True Path Party and a Kurdish tribal leader; Hüseyin Kocadağ a former senior police officer of İstanbul; Abdullah Çatlı, a ultra-nationalist criminal who wanted both by Interpol and the Turkish security apparatus; and Gonca Us, an ex-beauty queen and Çatlı's girlfriend. The Susurluk incident brought out dirty links between organized-crime figures, politicians and state-security agencies. The deep state's dirty and lawless war against the Kurds in the southeast was at the heart of Susurluk scandal. During the 1990s, the tens of thousands of people lost their lives and many more were injured. Hundreds of Kurdish intellectuals, activists and PKK sympathizers were tortured and killed, allegedly by members of the deep state (Öktem, 2011).

goal (Zürcher 2004, p.301). On January 16, 1998, the Welfare Party was closed and its leadership was outlawed from politics. Cizre and Çınar point out that:

> the phrase 'February 28 process' was coined to indicate not only the far-reaching implications of the NSC [the National Security Council] decisions, but also the suspension of normal politics until the secular correction was completed. This process has profoundly altered the formulation of public policy and the relationship between state and society. No major element of Turkish politics at present can be understood without reference to the February 28 process (2003, p. 310).

According to Cizre and Çınar, the February 28 process redefined politics "as needing a dose of moral injection in terms of framing public interest as the triumph of the 'good' forces against 'evil,' the victory of secularism against the creeping threat of the Islamization/ feudalization of life" (p. 319). The February 28 process forced the main political actors to "comply with the need to both stabilize the rule of the original Kemalist project and revive the myth of a homogenous nation and society" (p. 312). On the other hand, it lead to an alteration in the relations between state and society. The Turkish society gave response to the rise of Islamic threat from different sites of the Kemalist nationalist discourse, which they performed in the Republic Day holidays in Taksim Square. The main theme of the February 28 process was a return to Kemalism with the help of civil society organizations. In the immediate aftermath of the February 28 process, with the support and participation of the civil society organizations the Republic Day holiday celebrations were organized as a way of return to Kemalism.

4.6 Re-production of Taksim Square: performing antagonism in Republic Day

The celebrations of Republic Day holiday, a tool of the Kemalist hegemonic discourse, have been on the agenda since the early republican period. However,

Republic Day celebrations have been limited to poorly attended military and student parades in stadiums or schoolyards. Arzu Öztürkmen argues that "the formalism and the overemphasized nationalism of the celebrations, repeated over and over for years, eventually created a sense of alienation" (2001, p. 47). After the rise of the Islamist party during the 1990s, there has been a remarkable revival of the national holiday celebrations. As Öztürkmen notes, "thus began a new approach to celebrating national holidays, with rock concerts, extensive TV coverage and public interviews" (p. 47). After the Welfare Party's victory in the 1994 local elections, the celebration of national holidays was organized to show the support for the Kemalist reforms and secularism, against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism (Öztürkmen, 2001).

In the mid-1990s, civil society organizations coordinated participatory celebrations as a way to oppose not only Islamist but also Kurdish separatists and demonstrate popular support for the nationalist and secularist ideals of the Kemalist Republic (Özyürek, 2006, p. 125). After the Islamist Welfare party came into power by winning the municipalities of Istanbul and Ankara in 1994 the secular bureaucrats started to orchestrate big events by incorporating civil society organizations into celebrations. In reaction to Welfarist mayors, who rejected ceremonies for the republic's anniversary, some governors, who felt a need to challenge the power of the Welfare Party, decided to organize Republican Day celebrations (Navaro-Yashin, 2002).

The governor of Istanbul, Hayri Kozakçıoğlu, orchestrated the big event to defend the Kemalist state order against two significant "threats to the ideal of the longevity, integrity, and unity of the Turkish republic", the Islamist Welfare Party and the PKK (Navaro-Yashin, 2002, p. 147). The governor knew that it would not be

sufficient simply to replicate old genres of authoritarian and hierarchic state ceremonies which put a distance between the formal ceremony and their participants. In order to generate vast public enthusiasm and support, the holidays began to be celebrated as "a holiday of society" not as "a holiday of the state" (p. 147). For these celebrations, a big public concert was organized in Taksim by the governor with the sponsorship of several large corporations.

Taksim Square was chosen as the location for this orchestrated celebration of secularism. As Pierre Nora says, "Memory is rooted in the concrete: in space, gesture, image, and object" (1996, p. 3). The celebration in Taksim Square makes a community remember the founding moment and liberation day of their nation collectively. The Taksim Square was carefully designed in a way to reflect the proper look of Kemalist modernity, for the big celebration. Taksim Square was cleaned and dressed in Turkish flags and Ataturk's posters. On October 29, people from all ages crowded the square with flags in their hands. It is important to note that there were almost no veiled women in sight. Navaro Yael-Yashin describes in detail how the crowd performed their secular and national identities as follows:

> The program began with a speaker on a large stage proclaiming, "For the first time the people are taking possession of their holiday with their organizations of civil society!" And then, in a condescending tone, "From now on, let us take charge of all of our holidays, promise?" "Promise!" cried hundreds of people, in response. The speaker was of course not referring to religious holidays, but to national holidays. "For what? For the republic!" the speaker cried again, and "How happy is the one who declares himself a Turk!" he exclaimed, repeating a saying of Ataturk, in an attempt to thrill the audience. "We have gathered in this square, which holds symbolic meaning for residents of Istanbul, around the monument of Atatürk. Below me, men and women from every walk of life are waving flags!" The band of the Turkish Armed Forces totted its way through İstiklal street, and then, in a circle around the Monument for the Republic where a place for the soldiers had been reseved. A helicopter flew over the square as many waved their Turkish flags up in the air. The band of the Kuleli military high school marched in as well, to be met with hearty clapping. A moment of silence was

> observed for Atatürk and "for soldiers who have died for our state's indivisible unity." The national anthem was sung (pp. 149-50).

The 1994 celebration can be considered as the starting point of a change in the way the people started to experience and perceive the Republic Day holiday. In this vein, the protection of the Taksim Square against the Islamists has become a matter of existence for the secularists because it has been imagined as the most important secular ideological showcase of the Kemalist hegemony since the 1930s. Celebrations in the Taksim Square can be considered as performative articulations of the Kemalist hegemony that reconstituted antagonism as a result of considerable discursive practices. These performative celebrations (re)produced not only secular and national subjects but also Taksim Square as a symbolic space of Kemalist hegemony through the repetitious enactment of the Kemalist discourse.

The spatialities of antagonism are re-produced and contested through different discursive practices. Collective political identities and spaces are performatively constituted. The performative practices at celebrations imagined the Turkish national and secular identity as 'natural' through the repeated performance of the Kemalist rhetoric. The Kemalist rhetoric turned into the "natural" political language to express their loyalties to the state in the Taksim Square. The nationalist and secularist rhetoric served to normalize and naturalize the Kemalists as hegemonic political subjects even after the Islamist threat. Hence, Taksim Square became again a mirror of the Kemalist imaginary of the political subjects as Turkish and secular. The hegemonic subjectivity's superiority was naturalized by dividing the Kemalist political order into two antagonistic camps: modern and reactionarist. In this context, the celebrations were the expression of a hegemonic order in which the Kemalist identity, or natural identity (?), of Taksim Square was produced.

Similary, in 1998, which was the date of the seventy-fifth anniversary of republic, a big celebration of the Republican Day was organized in Taksim by an independent nongovernmental organization, the History Foundation (Özyürek, 2006, p. 136). The foundation's chair, İlhan Tekeli, introduced the idea of a festival-like celebration or participatory celebration which substituted for hierarchically organized ceremonies that did not allow citizens to express their joy and enthusiasm. Tekeli explains the reason of the change in the nature of celebrations: "Recent threats against the Turkish Republic in terms of its unity and modernization added significance to the celebration of the Republic ... Developing innovative celebrations is an urgent necessity in Turkey in order to meet these desires and to provide that celebrations fulfill their social functions" (pp. 136-7). Festival-like celebrations would prove a powerful protest against not only to the Islamist party but also to the Kurdish nationalist movement and it would be a symbol of loyalty to the Kemalist discourse of national homogeneity and secularism.

CHAPTER 5

RETHINKING THE JDP'S HEGEMONY THROUGH THE RESTORATIVE APPROPRIATION OF TAKSIM SQUARE

On the eve of the 2011 elections, the Justice and Development Party (JDP) produced a series of projects that would both be a visible indicator of economic growth and development. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan started to explain his "crazy" Istanbul projects in the scope of his election campaigns. On April 27, 2011, Erdoğan explained his first crazy project, canal Istanbul, that aimed to construct an artificial canal which would be an alternative to Bosporus. Then, he announced the second crazy project, Taksim Pedestrianization Project, on June 1. According to this plan, the main roads leading to the square would be moved underground and Taksim Square was to be turned into a pedestrian zone. And, the old Ottoman military barracks, Taksim Artillery Barracks, would be re-constructed in the place of the Gezi Park. After the election, on February 4, 2012, Erdoğan re-announced the project as "New Taksim Project", which now involved virtually a broader transformation of the Taksim Square including an Ottoman-style grand mosque and a huge opera building at the current site of the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM). The JDP's project aimed to transform the secular and national identity of the Taksim Square, its past and its potential futures.

The chapter claims that the JDP's spatial strategies over Taksim Square have aimed to erase the Kemalist collective memory and the Republican past. The Artillery Barracks as a symbol of Islamic domination is essentially revealing the JDP's desire for sovereignty over Taksim Square against the national and secular culture of the Kemalist republic. The JDP's reconstruction plan of Taksim Artillery

Barrack at Gezi Park, construction of a grand mosque, and demolition of the AKM have challenged the official sacredness of the square and expressed its demand to re-define the identity of the square. The JDP's attempt to reconstruction of the square should be considered as a part of the ongoing struggle between the Kemalist establishment and the Islamist counter-hegemonic movement.

This chapter claims that the new Taksim Square that the JDP has in mind is the representational space of a new political vision, informed by the conservative-democratic myth, that combines historical continuities and ruptures in order to replace the old Kemalist Turkey. The JDP has tried to make conservative-democratic ideology apparent in the new Taksim Square and remove the Kemalist architectural symbols from the square. This chapter's aim is to trace the development of the JDP's spatial strategies about Taksim Square as a way in which the ruling party articulates a conservative-democratic popular identity and advances its hegemonic project. I try to show how Ottoman memory has been re-politicized and re-employed by Erdoğan and the JDP through the transformation of Taksim Square. By looking at the JDP's urban renewal project I examine how the ruling party tries to consolidate a conservative-democratic identity through the changing use of Taksim Square and its signs.

5.1 The Taksim Artillery Barracks

> We will change Taksim [Square]'s status. My brothers and sisters, do you know what the green area was before? It was Topçu Barracks[10]. And then they demolished the Topçu Barracks. Lütfi Kırdar, the RPP's[11] mayor and

[10] Taksim Artillery Barracks.

[11] The Republican People's Party.

> governor, demolished it. [...] We are going to re-build it. It will be an amazing work of art. If god permits, we will use it for residences, hotels and shopping malls. We will construct a parking area under [Topçu Barracks]; we will rescue Taksim from this [parking] problem. In addition, there will no longer be vehicle traffic in Taksim [...] Taksim will be a pedestrian zone. We do this, the JDP does this. The RPP demolishes and we rebuild it. The RPP demolished Topçu Barracks, but we will rebuild it. (Appendix, 3).

On June 5, 2011, before general elections, Erdoğan announced his decision to rebuild the old military barracks in a public meeting. Erdoğan explicitly blamed the RPP for the demolition of the Taksim Artillery Barracks. Erdoğan and some the JDP government have frequently criticized the Kemalist regime for disregarding the Ottoman imperial heritage. As I mentioned in the third chapter, the barracks was razed by the Kemalist regime in 1940 as part of the urban planning, which was prepared by Henri Prost. In its stead, the Gezi Park was built as a secular space of a modern life. Erdoğan stated that the JDP would rebuild the barracks in order to claim the Ottoman past. Erdoğan has addressed the Ottoman-Islamist heritage in order to mobilize an alternative collective memory and articulate a conservative popular identity. However, the demolition of the Gezi Park and the reconstruction of Taksim Artillery Barracks, which is loaded with negative connotations in the Kemalist historiography and collective memory, is not considered to be simply as an attempt to reintroduce the Ottoman architecture. Beyond the JDP's neo-Ottomanist discourse, it is a nostalgic desire for the Ottoman past. Following Svetlana Boym (2001), I suggest that the JDP's reconstruction project of the old barracks, and thus its total transformation project of Taksim Square, can be understood as a restorative nostalgia. In *The Future of Nostalgia*, Boym identifies restorative and reflective nostalgia:

> Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on nostos [home] and proposes to build the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in algia [painful longing], in longing and loss, the imperfect process of

> remembrance. The first category of nostalgic do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe that their project is about truth. This kind of nostalgia characterizes national and nationalist revivals all over the world, which engage in the anti-modern myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths and, occasionally, through swapping conspiracy theories. Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruin, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time (2001, p. 41).

Boym underlines the centrality of space for the concept of nostalgia. She defines restorative nostalgia as "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed" (p. xiii). She claims that the aim of restorative nostalgia is the reconstruction of the lost home. "Restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time" (p. 49). For Boym, restorative nostalgia, in this context, is often in association with religious and nationalist revivalist movements. Following Boym, I suggest that the JDP's resconstruction project of the old barracks has been an attempt to reconstruct the lost home, or the Ottoman imperial order. It is no doubt that the resconstruction project has increased the circulation of conservative-Islamist interpretations of the past of modern Turkey. Moreover, it has aimed to glorify the Ottoman past ideologically. The Taksim Artillery Barracks was the place where the March 31 Incident was started by the alaylı officiers[12] who defended the Abdülhamid regime against the Committee of Union and Progress. In this context, the reconstruction of the old barracks can be considered as an expression of the nostalgia for the period of Abdülhamid who advocated the Islamist ideology. The JDP's reconstruction project is a wish to experience the Ottoman past, especially Sultan Abdülhamid reign, in the same form. The JDP's restorative nostalgia refers to an idealizing process of the Abdülhamid reign that characterized by development,

[12] military man who had risen through the ranks.

harmony, challenge the imperialist powers and virtuousness. President Erdoğan, in his speech on understanding Sultan Abdülhamid in the 100th anniversary of his death, stated that to understand Sultan Abdülhamid, who reigned for 33 years and witnessed the most difficult and painful years of the Ottoman Empire, is to understand everything. He claimed that Abdülhamid's reign is a truly dazzling treasure:

> we consider Sultan Abdülhamid as one of the most important, visionary and most strategic minds that have set his seal on the last 150 years of our state. We all know that his vision, dreams and projects are far beyond the walls of Yıldız Palace. The struggle of Abdülhamid Khan's struggle against the colonial powers' intentions to bury the Ottoman Empire alive, which was labeled as the sick man by them, is really admirable. For this reason, despite all the campaigns against him, Sultan Abdülhamid has been always known as "Ulu Hakan" in the deep memory of our nation. The Turkish people has remembered him with his statement that "We are not sick, we are like a river overflowing from his bed, we need to gather the river's scattered reaches back in its bed, the only force that would keep us fit is Islam." This nation has remembered him with his statement, it is very important, especially during this period, at this time, that "I do not sell land, because this country belongs to my nation not to me. Our nation gives this land only at the price it receives, these lands are taken with blood, they are given with blood." (Appendix, 4)

Sultan Abdülhamid came to the throne in 1876, which corresponded to the period of decline of the Ottoman Empire. Abdülhamid is a highly ideological historical figure who is stuck in the discussions of whether he is Ulu Hakan or Kızıl Sultan. His period is generally characterized as despotism by the founding cadres of the Republic. However, in the conservative and Islamist circles, he is perceived as a hero who has been able to close the gap between the decline of the empire and the collapse of the empire for 33 years.

In his speech on understanding Sultan Abdülhamid in the 100th anniversary of his death, Erdoğan claims that Sultan Abdülhamid has been ignored for many years in our country, neglected and even tried to be defamed by the official

historiography which has looked upon the sultan from the window of his sworn enemies and notorious rivals. He stated that Sultan Abdülhamid is one of the true victims of solid ideological polarization that has captured Turkish thought life. He added that the sultan has been called as Kızıl Sultan in the textbooks, and in the eyes of most intellectuals of the country, he was the head of the 33-years-authoritarian regime. Erdoğan claimed that this fanatical view to the Sultan continues to exist in marginal groups and they insistently start the country's history from 1923. He emphasized that the Republic of Turkey is a continuation of the Ottoman Empire even though the boundaries, the forms of government, laws and regulations have changed. He claimed that the essence, the spirit, even many of the institutions are the same. In this context, according to Erdoğan, everyone must give up looking upon Sultan Abdülhamid from the eyes of his enemies, accept the historical facts, and approach the sultan and his legacy in a neutral, unbiased and moral manner.

As seen in Erdoğan's discourse about Abdülhamid, the JDP has not seen itself as nostalgic since restorative nostalgia is not a conscious process of the idealization of the Ottoman past, especially Abdülhamid reign. Rather, the JDP has seen its imagination of the Ottoman past and Sultan Abdülhamid as a truth. It depends on a feeling of superiority, due to the comparison in favor of the more valuable imperial past against the inadequate of the Kemalist order. Reconstructing of the old barracks, Erdoğan aimed to show the Kemalists the resurrection of Abdülhamid and the reinstallation of Ottoman Empire.

Boym considers restorative nostalgia as a response to the trauma of loss. In Boym's work, restorative nostalgia and trauma are linked. Trauma refers to the inability to deal with a past distressing event. Boym's concept of nostalgia indicates

a positive attachment to an imaginary home, or a past. In this sense, the 31 March Incident is a traumatic event for the Islamist-conservative subjects. The Taksim Artillery Barracks and the 31 March Incident symbolize the betrayal of Sultan Abdülhamid, for the JDP and the Turkish Islamist movement. Ebubekir Sofuoğlu, a professor in the Department of History at Sakarya University, describes the Taksim Artillery Barracks as symbol of support for Sultan Abdülhamid and resistance against the coup:

> Together with Bulgarian, Macedonian and Armenian mobs, thousands of Ottomans were killed in the Union Action Army who attempted a coup with March 31 plot. The Artillery Barracks protecting Sultan Abdülhamid were bombarded. So as to cover up this shameful past of the barracks, they were demolished by İsmet İnönü with such hilarious reasons as 'expensive to restore' and they wanted to build a statue of him, instead. Just like how Haghia Sophia represents the Conquest, the Artillery Barracks represent the resistance against the coup done against Sultan Abdülhamid with March 31 Incident and the betrayal of the Unionists to the country. (Appendix, 5)

Sofuoğlu represents Sultan Abdülhamid as true victim of a nation state building process in Turkey. He makes an analogy between the Hagia Sophia and the Taksim Artillery Barracks. He considers Hagia Sophia as a symbol of conquest, thus the transformation of Istanbul into an Islamic city. The Artillery Barracks symbolizes injustice against Abdülhamid. Moreover, the abolition of Abdülhamid represents the end of Islam's sovereignty over Ottoman lands. The old barracks has allegedly become a symbol of lost home, the loss of Sultan Abdülhamid, and thus the loss of Ottoman Empire, for the conservative and fundamentalist Islamic groups.

The myth of Abdülhamid in the Islamic imaginary derives from the writings of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, which are greatly admired by President Erdoğan. In *Son Devrin Din Mazlumları* (The Previous Era's Oppressions of Religion), Necip Fazıl claims that the 31 March Incident was the first step against the Islamic mission's

politics (Dava), which aimed to incriminate Abdülhamid by distorting historical facts. For Necip Fazıl, the 31 March Incident was a mise-en-scene that organized by the Committe of Union and Progress (CUP) with the suggestion of Jews, converts and masons. The secret intention of CUP, according to Necip Fazıl, was defeating the Sharia and then overthrowing Abdülhamid, who was bound to the Sharia, and who was the protector of the Sharia (1997, p. 12). For him, the 31 March Incident has started a new era in which people were persecuted for their allegiance to religion in Turkey, and this persecution of religious people would continue in the Republican period. He states that

> The March 31 Incident brought the first preparatory and accelerating atmosphere of the oppression to be later exerted against religion within a generic plan that did not involve a particular name or figure. Those who dethroned Ulu Hakan Abdülhamid Khan enthroned him to the throne of victimhood. (Kısakürek, 1997, p. 35). (Appendix, 6)

Kısakürek builds his narrative of the modern Turkey history almost entirely around the theme of victimhood of devout Muslims. He claims that the era of victimhood was started by dethrone of Sultan Abdülhamid. He claims that Islam and pious people have been repressed by the modernization movement. “These reform processes led steadily to the reduction of the Turkish people’s authentically Islamist self and injected crude Western mimicry/copying into Turkish society” (Yılmaz, 2017, p. 487). Furthermore, he depicts Sultan Abdülhamid as a symbol of unity and just society. And he sees Islam as the foundation of unity of society. The modernizers have stolen the enjoyment of Turkish society by the deposition of Sultan Abdülhamid. Thus Abdülhamid has become the symbol of both impossible enjoyment and victimhood in Turkey.

In this sense, the invocation of Abdülhamid's soul by reconstructing the Taksim Artillery Barracks can be considered as a means of the restoration of the degraded pride of both Abdülhamid and the empire. It can be claimed that the project aimed to restore the honor of pious subjects, thus, they would be proud of their imperial past and gain self-confidence. However, I suggest that the JDP's reconstruction project of the old barracks is related to the inability to mourn. In "Mourning and Melancholia", Sigmund Freud writes that "mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on" (1957, p. 243). According to Freud, "mourning involves grave departures from the normal attitude to life" (p. 243). Mourning is an obligatory response to go on one's lives. In the end of a successful mourning, the mourner accepts the loss, engages with interest the world outside, and moves on to invest in new objects. But, the JDP's reconstruction project of the Taksim Artillery Barracks has not intended to heal the suffering of conservative subjects.

The 31 March Incident, or the dethroning of Sultan Abdülhamid is a "chosen trauma" which has been passed on from generation to generation in the Turkish Islamic movement and affectively kept alive. "Chosen trauma," is defined by Vamik Volkan as "the shared mental representation of an event in a large group's history in which the group suffered a catastrophic loss, humiliation, and helplessness at the hands of its enemies" (2009. pp.211-2). It must be noted that the word "chosen" does not mean that the group volunteered for the trauma, but rather it "fittingly reflects a larger group's unconsciously defining its identity by transgenerational transmission of injured selves infused with the memory of the ancestors' trauma" (Volkan, 1998a, p.48). A chosen trauma is "more than a simple recollection; it is a shared mental

representation of the event, which includes realistic information, fantasized expectations, intense feelings, and defenses against unacceptable thoughts" (p. 48). "Once a trauma becomes a chosen trauma, the historical truth about it does not really matter. What does matter is the mental representation of the event, which is fused with emotions and is included in one's group identity and, in turn, in one's individual identity" (Volkan, 1998b, p.52). Moreover, chosen trauma is connected with the group's inability to mourn, the group does not allow this suffering experience to heal and is unable to properly mourn it. The inability to mourn nourishes affective bond of the group and the desire for ressentiment. The JDP has wanted to reconstruct this ghost building in order to articulate conservative-Islamist subjects around this chosen trauma. The replica of the barracks is not the exact copy of the original structures but it serves to continue the history and memory of the original buildings and Sultan Abdülhamid.

5.1.1 The conservative-democratic identity

The November 2002 parliamentary election[13] ended with a landslide victory of Erdoğan-led Justice and Development Party. The JDP, which was established only 15 months before the national election, received 34.3 percent of the popular votes translating into 363 of 550 seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly by the help of the undemocratic 10 percent electoral threshold (Baran, 2010). The JDP's predicted but still impressive electoral victory created an earthquake in the Turkish

[13] For a detailed and comprehensive account of this election, see Ali Çarkoğlu "Turkey's November 2002 Elections: A New Beginning?" Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 6, No. 4 (December 2002); and Sabri Sayarı, "Towards a New Turkish Party System?" Turkish Studies Vol. 8, No. 2, 197–210, (June 2007).

political order. All the center right and center left parties had been major constituent parts of the Turkish party system and politics during the 1990s lost their popular support.[14] The results of the November 3 elections brought the unexpected new composition of the parliament composed of two parties. Besides the JDP, only the center-left Republican People's Party managed to win 19.3 percent of the popular votes and gained 178 parliamentary seats (Baran, 2010).

The JDP's landslide victory in 2002 national election triggered the anxiety of the guardians of the Turkish Republic, as well as an inextricable debate about the true nature of recently established JDP both in Turkey and the West. The Kemalist military and bureaucratic elite was suspicious about Erdoğan-led JDP's motives. The Kemalist establishment has firmly believed that the JDP emerged from the ashes of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party, considered as one of the most dangerous challenges to the Kemalist secular order in the 1990s. Political roots of the founders of the JDP, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül and Bülent Arınç, went back to Necmettin Erbakan, the founder the National Outlook Movement. These figures entered politics under Erbakan in the 1970s and defended the core political ideas of the National Outlook Movement until the founding of the JDP in 2001. The supporters of the dominant secularist regime called it a pro-Islamist party that intended to transform the secular state of Turkey into an Islamic one. In the face of this criticism and suspicion, party leader Erdoğan and other high profile members of the party used all their strength to try to detach the JDP from former Islamist parties and its

[14] The three governing parties (the center-left Democratic Left Party, the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party and the centre-right Motherland Party) that had formed coalition government after the 1999 parliamentary election and the two opposition parties (the True Path Party and the pro-Islamist Felicity Party) failed to pass the national electoral threshold and get into the Turkish parliament. (Keyman & Gümüşçü, p. 33).

predecessors. Although Erdoğan-led JDP came from the established Islamist movement in Turkey, it rejected its affiliation with the pro-Islamist National Outlook Movement and any continuity with its parties.

In May 2003, Erdoğan asserted that: "We have taken off the National Outlook's shirt. We are a conservative-democratic mass party."[15] He added that "the people gave us the mission of establishing democracy for the first time since Menderes. Ours is the second Menderes era." On the one hand, by identifying the party as a conservative democratic mass party Erdoğan tried to distance the JDP from Islamism as a political project (Axiarlis, 2014). On the one hand, Erdoğan was in a struggle for filling the void of the center-right by claiming to maintain the mission of Adnan Menderes-led Democratic Party which set the precedent for the successive center-right victories from the 1950s onwards. Erdoğan strongly underlined that the JDP was not a pro-Islamist party, but was strictly a "conservative democratic party" that corroborated "gradualist approach to change; an understanding of politics as an art of compromise rather than conflict; recognition of the national will as the source of political legitimacy; a conception of the state as arbitrator; and support for pluralism and the rule of law" (Yıldız, 2008, p. 44). I suggest that the JDP cannot be considered as a center-right party but a 'post-Islamist' one. I*n Islam and Democracy: What is the Real Question?* (2007), Asef Bayat states that

> post-Islamism represents both a *condition* and a *project*, which may be embodied in a master (or multi-dimensional) movement. In the first instance, post-Islamism refers to a political and social condition, in which after a phase of experimentation, the appeal, energy, and sources of legitimacy of Islamism get exhausted even among its once-ardent supporters. Islamists become aware of their system's anomalies and inadequacies as they attempt to normalize

[15] T. Erdoğan, "Milli Görüş'ün değil Demokrat Parti'nin Devamıyız" [We Are the Successor of the Democrat Party, not the National Outlook], Zaman, May 17, 2003.

> and institutionalize their rule. The continuous trial and error makes the system susceptible to questions and criticisms. Eventually, pragmatic attempts to maintain the system reinforce abandoning certain of its underlying principles. Islamism becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself, but does so at the cost of a qualitative shift (pp. 18-19).

Further, according to Bayat,

> Not only a condition, post-Islamism is also a project, a conscious attempt to conceptualize and strategize the rationale and modalities of transcending Islamism in social, political, and intellectual domains. Yet, post-Islamism is neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular. Rather it represents an endeavor to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty. It is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on its head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scriptures, and the future instead of the past. It wants to marry Islam with individual choice and freedom, with democracy and modernity, to achieve what some have called an "alternative modernity." (p. 19).

Following Bayat, in this thesis, I claim that Turkey's ruling JDP as a post-Islamist movement, differently from the previous center-right parties, tried to offer an alternative modernity and articulate a new popular identity with their efficient use of political discourse in the beginning of the milennium. Although the JDP appeared to be a post-Islamist party during its foundation and early years, the Kemalist establishment claimed that Erdoğan and the JDP have been "engaged in the well-known Islamic practice of dissimulation (takiyye) all along, that is, hiding one's true intentions until the time is appropriate for them to be disclosed" (Heper & Toktaş, 2003, p. 160). That is, they allegedly hide their true intentions until they have enough power to turn Turkey into an Islamic republic. In other words, the Kemalist establishment believed that Erdoğan-led JDP was the Trojan horse of political Islam in the democratic and secular republic. The JDP, for them, had a serious risk to violate secularist principles of the Turkish Republic.

Erdoğan, in his keynote speech at the International Symposium on Conservatism and Democracy on 10 January 2004, represented the JDP, thus its conservative democratic identity, as a clean alternative to the failure of the Kemalist state during the 1990s, marked by the structurally unstable social, political and economic crises and tensions. Erdoğan claimed that they were constructing a new understanding of politics based on universal values. He posed their concept of conservative democracy as universal for all people of Turkey and not merely particular articulating the demands of some groups. In other words, he offered the conservative democracy as an alternative political understanding that would meet the democratic expectations of the Turkish society.

I suggest that the JDP's conservative democracy is a counter-hegemonic formation of post-Islamists that constructed through an equivalential articulation of various demands challenging an antagonistic frontier of the Kemalist power bloc. The JDP aimed to articulate a 'people' by establishing "conservative democracy" as the name of a people whose boundaries go beyond the Islamist limits of the National View's constituency. I consider conservative democracy as a counter hegemonic discourse to the Kemalist hegemony in the name of social diversity and dispersing concentrations of power. Following the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe where politics is conceptualized as a process of hegemonic struggle in the realm of meaning and signifiers, I define the JDP's conservative democracy as a discourse, which is "an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre." (2001, p. 112). In other words, conservative democratic discourse is "a horizon of multiplicity of practices, meanings and conventions through which a certain sense of reality and understanding of society can be constructed" (Çelik, 2009, p. 224).

The JDP's conservative democratic discourse has aimed to fix the meanings and identities within the conservative domain. The JDP has constructed the concept of conservatism as a nodal point in the Turkish political space in the beginning of new millennium that has been marked by a crisis of identity formation and an increasing instability of the Kemalist political frontiers. In other words, the conservative democratic discourse has tried to fix webs of meaning through the constitution of conservatism as a nodal point. The signifier conservatism as a nodal point binds together floating signifiers such as 'democracy', 'secularism', and 'nationalism', rearticulating them into new meanings different from those used in the Kemalist discourse.

Within the JDP's hegemonic struggle against the Kemalist power block since 2002, democracy has intrinsically become the most vital nodal point in the JDP's conservative democratic discourse. In addition, human rights, rule of law, civil society and the process of joining the European Union have become the critical nodal points in the "new" conservative-democratic discourse, especially in the process of dislocating the crisis-ridden Kemalist hegemony until 2010. The JDP has underlined the lack of democracy in the Turkish social and political space under the rule of the Kemalist hegemonic power structure. It has rearticulated democracy by grounding on conservatism in order to produce a new order and society. Through the efficient use of the democratic discourse, the JDP has tried to form a logic of equivalence, which has divided the socio-political space into two antagonistic camps, democratic and Kemalist authoritarian identities.

Erdoğan posed the conservative democracy as a universal political understanding that met the expectations of the Turkish society. In the 2002 elections,

a new political articulation has emerged around the Erdoğan-led JDP by incorporating the reformist components of National View movement with the unfulfilled demands in the Kemalist hegemonic order. Erdoğan-led JDP has tried to form a counter-hegemonic bloc composed of the conservative and economically disadvantaged sections of society, the Islamist bourgeois, the Kurds, and the liberal intellectuals against the Kemalist ruling elite by presenting itself as the "true" representative of the people. The inability of traditional center-parties to organize and mobilize the people, and their inability to reproduce the Kemalist hegemonic order gave rise to a new space of articulation.

The JDP's counter-hegemonic movement depended on populist politics to some extent in the early 2000s. The JDP has introduced the discourse of conservative democracy as an expression of unfulfilled demands in the Kemalist hegemonic order. In other words, the JDP has tried to absorb the unsatisfied demands within the Kemalist hegemonic order by establishing conservative democracy as a new space of representation for equivalential relations between political actors—the Islamists, the conservatives, economically disadvantaged periphery, the secular-democratic liberals, the Kurds, the ethnic and religious minorities. It has tried to establish an equivalential chain of unfulfilled demands through the formation of an antagonistic frontier and a dichotomization of the political space. The JDP as a particular actor, without entirely ceasing to be particular, has tried to become hegemonic power by assuming the function of representing the incommensurable universality of the community. Briefly, conservative democracy is a hegemonic discourse that aimed to give a name to the impossible fullness and refers to the relation of representation between the particular Islamist demand, which takes up the representation of a universality, and other popular demands which enter into solidarity with the former

via the chain of equivalence. The JDP tried to establish a logic of equivalence among different social demands in order to consolidate a "conservative-democratic bloc" against the Kemalist establishment and its supporters. The JDP aimed to construct a politics of conservative democratic populism by articulating the democratic demands of different marginalized section of the population while identifying the antagonistic frontier of the Kemalist regime as root causes of most pressing problems for the Turkish people. Furthermore, the JDP as particular agent represented itself as "universal liberator".

Laclau defines populism as an "attempt to constitute the people as a historical actor out of a plurality of antagonistic situations" (Laclau, 2005a, p. 122). Erdoğan-led JDP is a populist-hegemonic political movement that has interpellated the right and weak, or victims, against the strong and unfair, or the Kemalist regime and its guardians, through the construction of a new social frontier. The political subject addressed and invoked in the JDP's discourse is not the whole nation, or a particular class but "the people" as a tool to distinguish the ordinary folk from the ruling elites. Laclau points out that "reference to 'the people' occupies a central place in populism" (2005a, p. 165). Erdoğan has directly addressed "the people" as a collective political actor and a subject of politics to confront the Kemalist regime and its guardians with the purpose of demanding change.

Following Laclau (2005a), I claim that the constitution of conservative democratic identity as the new name of the 'people,' and the JDP's hegemonic totalization have required a radical investment. The concept of affect is at the heart of Laclau's theory populism as an identification with a name. The construction of conservative popular identity is only possible through an affective identification with

Erdoğan. In Turkey, Erdoğan has become the name that has kept heterogeneous elements and popular demands together. For Laclau, "the equivalential logic leads to singularity, and singularity to the identification of the unity of the group with the name of the leader" (2005a: 100). Although democracy, freedom, justice and equality are floating signifiers in the JDP's conservative-democratic discourse, I claim that the politics of pain is of great importance to establish a chain of equivalence in order to bring together a plurality of social demands, and for the affective identification. Erdoğan has presented himself as a victim of the Kemalist order. There has been a fetishisation of the wound in Erdoğan's rhetoric. Erdoğan has continuously invested both in his own wound and the wounds of the people. He has insistently put people in the mind of how their bodies and souls have come to be wounded by the Kemalist hegemonic order. The fetishisation of the wound crystallized in the public speaking of Erdoğan in Diyarbakır on September 3, 2010:

> I was put in prison as I read a poem in Siirt in 1997. I did not get hopeless. During my days in prison, I better understood the need for democracy. I understood the value of freedom. We know very well what exclusion is due to one's belief, prayers, and headscarf. We know what poverty means. We know very well what the prohibitions are. We know very well the pain of unsolved murders, those who got killed with a bullet in their necks at midnight on the street. We know very well what it means to be disarrayed and to have their houses raided. We know the violence used against the peasants in the village square. We know very well the pain of a mother who went to visit her son in prison and could not speak with him in her mother-tongue. We know the pain of the priest [imam] who was attacked and died after reciting the morning azan in Hakkari. The tears of the mother from Çorum whose son martyrized pour into our lungs. The tears of a mother who gave her son rein to the terror organization pour into our lungs. We cannot forget Ape Musa's pain and Orhan Miroğlu's pain. We cannot ignore Şivan Perver's homesickness. We cannot forget Ahmet Kaya's death in the foreign land. Because we are the children of these lands. Because we are one day from Edirne, İstanbul, Yozgat, Hakkari, Diyarbakır; we are the sons of Diyarbakır. We all are walking for the same future. (Appendix, 7)

Erdoğan gave some examples from different victimhood narratives that came from different political and social traditions in order to create a chain of equivalence

on the basis of pain, namely being a victim of the Kemalisr order. Pain was the common dominator to link those different kinds of popular demands that remain to that day unfulfilled. In this context, I suggest that the JDP's conservative-democratic popular identity has been constructed around a discourse of victimhood, which has a deep and long historical background in Turkey. Turkish-Islamist narratives have been highly efficacious in presenting themselves as the true 'victim' of the Kemalist hegemonic order in Turkey. Since the beginning of the modernization movement, pious subjects have traditionally built their identities on pain. Throughout the history of the Republic, the Kemalist hegemonic order had created other victims: Kurds, ethnic and religious minorities, Alevis and leftist groups. However, by the end of the 1990s, the ordinary citizens of Turkey had shared a sense of victimization. In the second half of 1999, there was an event that would widen the gap between the state and society and deepen the feeling of victimhood: the İzmit earthquake.[16] The government's slow response in organizing search and rescue efforts and providing relief services clearly showed its incapability. In the weeks following the quake, neither the government nor the local administrations succeeded to establish a mechanism to coordinate rescue efforts and aid. Citizens were shocked by the

[16] In the early-morning hours of 17 August 1999, Turkey was hit by a massive earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale. It extensively damaged the Marmara region, where approximately 23 per cent of Turkey's total population lives and is Turkey's industrial heartland. Nearly a quarter of million people was left homeless, and thousands lost their source of income. The earthquake revealed the inadequacy of the state. In the hours after the earthquake, the government and the state apparatuses found themselves in a circle of confusion. The government, the Turkish Red Crescent, the Turkish Army, and local administrators were the targets of public anger for a slow response in the aftermath of a disaster.

inability of the state in organizing rescue and relief efforts. Individuals and families struggled on their own to deal with the calamity.

As Kerem Öktem (2011) notes, the people of Turkey in the beginning of the 21th century became an "angry nation". In the early 2000s, the worsening economic conditions increased a sense of victimhood and public anger. The confidence in the state was deeply shaken. The February 2001 financial crisis gave rise to Turkey's "deepest economic crisis, causing a tragic level of human suffering in the form of poverty, insecurity and unemployment" (Keyman & Öniş, 2007, p. 29). It should be noted that victimhood has come to signify different things for different groups. However, Erdoğan has hegemonized victimhood at least in the last decade. Erdoğan as a true victim of the Kemalist order has become the "Thing" that has kept heterogeneous elements and popular demands equivalentially together through the acts of affective identification.

5.1.2 Discourse of collective victimhood

> My story is not an individual story anymore. My story is the story of this people. Can the people be stopped? Now, the election of November 3 has become crucial. Either the people will win and come to power, or the oppressive and imposing minority who looks down on the people and is an alien to the reality of Anatolia will continue to reign. The power of decision belongs to the people. Enough! Decision belongs to the people! (Appendix, 8)

In his public speech during the election campaign of November 2002, Erdoğan adopted an antagonistic attitude and divided the Turkish political space into two separate groups, the people and the Kemalist elite. He clearly defined the secular-nationalist Kemalist elite as the enemy, who has been an oppressive minority, living apart from the people and isolated from the reality of Anatolia. On the other

hand, he described the people as victim. Furthermore, Erdoğan presented himself as the true representative of the people by drawing a close analogy between his own life story and the story of the people of Turkey. Erdoğan assumed that he was one of the ordinary people who did not have the authority and was not qualified to rule.

In 1994, Erdoğan became the mayor of Istanbul and served in this post until 1998. That year, he was sentenced to prison for four and a half months and was banned from active politics. The State Security Court of the city of Diyarbakir in southeastern Turkey found him guilty of inciting people to hatred on the basis of religion and trying to set up an Islamic state. Consequently, Erdoğan could not be prime minister even though his party came to power in November 2002. He was barred from standing in elections or holding political office because he had publicly read an Islamic poem. Erdoğan saw himself as the true victim of the Kemalist regime. Erdoğan claimed that the established power-holders who prevented him to be prime minister have stopped the people to come to power in Turkey since the foundation of the republic. So, there was no division between Erdoğan and the people.

Erdoğan sought to mobilize the people as victim against the privileged political elites by reiterating the Democratic Party's slogan "Enough! Decision belongs to the people," which was the motto of the popular hostility against the Kemalist regime since the second half of the 1940s. In other words, he appealed to the people as the ultimate source of political authority against the established power structures. Erdoğan considered the election a historic moment in Turkish politics in which the rule of power elites would end and the people's power would begin. In this election, for Erdoğan, the people of Turkey would choose to come to power or to

remain silent and obeying. Within this context, the people refers to the political subject who would make a decision in the undecidable structure of Turkish politics. As I have mentioned before, in the result of dislocation, the structure that determines the subject becomes no longer able to constitute itself because it is dislocated by an outside. The structure fails to constitute the subject. This structural indetermination leads to the emergence of a lack in the subject. It leads to a higher awareness of historicity of being of objects. In order to eliminate that lack the subject attempts to determine itself through the acts of identification. In other words, as a result of dislocations which lead to the disruption of social orders and together with them subject positions, subject emerges as the subject of a lack of being and attempts to reconstruct both the social world and itself. Such being the case, the role of the subject increases as a result of dislocation. When structures become dislocated, there would be more space for the action of the subject since there would arise a need for the reconstitution of structures, and this would lead to an increase in the role subject takes.

In his speech, Erdoğan defined the people as an actor of politics who exists beyond the field of passive subject positions. Moreover, popular sovereignty would have control over the country if the true representatives of the people came into power. To sum up, Erdoğan claimed that he spoke for "the silent majority of ordinary people", who was systematically ignored by arrogant Kemalist elite. The conservative-democratic identity is based on victimhood, a discourse of social suffering, and an accompanying unyielding will to power. Erdoğan's rhetoric of victimhood refers to a collective victimhood, as a timeless ontological condition. It is a shared belief system. Daniel Bar-Tal and his colleagues have introduced the concept of self-perceived collective victimhood as a social construct. They claim that

> Groups can suffer from collective victimization which, similarly to individual victimization, is not based only on an objective experience but also on the social construction of it. It means that at the collective level of victimization, members of a collective hold shared beliefs about ingroup victimization, i.e. of the social group to which they belong. Sharing these beliefs reflects a sense of collective victimhood. In this case the inflicted harm has to be perceived as intentionally directed towards the group, or towards the group members because of their membership in that group (2009, p. 234).

And they define collective victimhood as follows

> a sense of self-perceived collective victimhood as a mindset shared by group members that results from a perceived intentional harm with severe and lasting consequences inflicted on a collective by another group or groups, a harm that is viewed as undeserved, unjust and immoral, and one that the group was not able to prevent. This mindset emerges as a result of cognitive construction of the situation in which such harm is inflicted. The perceived harm can be done in the present or fairly recent past, or well remembered in the collective memory as harm done in the distant past. It can be real or partly imagined, but usually is based on experienced events (p. 238).

Bar-Tal and his colleagues claim that collectives may experience the sense of victimhood "even if not all the group members experience the harm directly" (2009, p. 234). They also claim that "a collective may experience this sense in the present as a result of harm done even in the distant past" (p. 236). Each collective, according to Bar-Tal, encodes historical experiences, especially extensive suffering, that become symbolic events, in its collective memory, "which can maintain a sense of woundedness and past injustice through generations" (2013, p. 146).

The conservative-democratic identity is constructed around a discourse of collective victimhood, which has a deep and long historical background in Turkey (Yılmaz, 2017). Following Bar-Tal and his colleagues' concept of collective victimhood and Wendy Brown's concept of wounded attachment, it can be said that woundedness of the Islamist national identity does not indicate a situation of being literally wounded, but instead an investment in a history of pain as essential to self-identification. As I mentioned before, the discourse of collective victimhood derives

from the writings of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek. Acording to Necip Fazıl, the history of victimhood in Turkey started with the dethroning of Sultan Abdülhamid after the 31 March Incident. Following Necip Fazıl, Turkish-Islamist narratives have been highly efficacious in presenting themselves as the true victim of the Kemalist hegemonic order in Turkey (Yılmaz, 2017). The JDP and its organic intellectuals have produced the image of 'victim' in order to consolidate and enlarge their own hegemony in line with their own pragmatic interests. Collective victimhood in relation to the rising secularist Western world and Kemalist elites is a constitutive element of the hegemonic imaginary of the Turkish Islamist movement. Erdoğan defined conservative subjects as victims of the Kemalist modernization process:

> Dear brothers and sisters, some issues have not been freely, confidently and courageously handled for almost 200 years from the Tanzimat reform era to today. The subject of religion, which has somehow been the subject and the focus of almost every issue in Turkey, has not yet been discussed in an objective, unbiased way, free from fear and peer pressure. Let alone freely discussing religious issues, religion and religious people have been systematically exposed to every kind of criticism, humiliation and scorn for almost 200 years. (Appendix, 9)

In the JDP's discourse, the one-party period that was identified with the Republican People's Party and especially the Kemalist ruling elites are considered as responsible for this collective victimhood. In his public speeches, Erdoğan has constantly put emphasis on how the assertive secularist policies of one-party regime or the RPP oppressed the pious Muslims:

> During the 1940s, in Turkey, a public war was carried out against the nation, and the nation's values and sacreds in Turkey. In this country, the doors of the mosques were locked. Mosques were converted into barns, warehouses and museums. It was banned to learn, read and teach the Quran. The Azan was translated into an unsuitable form [in Turkish]. All kinds of freedoms of people were restricted. A standard human type from beard to clothing style, and a standard mind structure was requested. While some citizens were accepted as persona grata, some were stigmatized as precarious. (Appendix, 10)

Erdoğan asserts that the RPP mentality in collaboration with the military continued to oppress the Muslims in the 1990s and 2000s. That the female students who covered their heads with a headscarf were not accepted into the universities and in public sector was presented as the ultimate evidence of this oppression. This allowed Erdoğan to generate a victimhood narrative of pious Muslims, in which RPP was the vicious actor suppressing the people's daily culture and practice of the religion. "In his public speeches, [Erdoğan] constantly refers to Adnan Menderes, Said-i Nursi, and Turgut Özal to revive and construct a vivid collective memory of victimhood, knotted around these key figures" (Yılmaz, 2017, p. 489).

After 2007, the JDP's rhetoric of victimhood has intensified and expanded as never before. The period from April 2007 to July 2008 was a breaking point for the JDP. During this period, the Islamist party encountered the most powerful challenges since its establishment in 2001. The crisis emerged with the presidential election in the spring of 2007. The Kemalist establishment perceived the nomination of Abdullah Gül to the presidency as a threat to the traditional power balances in Turkey. However, the Kemalist establishment could not prevent Gül, and he finally became the new president of Turkey. Approximately eight months after the crisis of presidential election, the JDP faced the risk of closure. On March 14, 2008, Turkey's chief prosecutor, Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, asked the Turkish Constitutional Court to close the JDP and to ban president Gül, prime minister Erdoğan and other 69 members of the JDP from politics on account of the fact that the JDP became a focus of anti-secular activities. The court made a decision of not closing the party but cutting back on its treasury grants.

Erdoğan has represented himself and his party self as the victim in their encounters with the guardians of the Kemalist order. Victimhood at the hand of the JDP has re-emerged in Turkey as a hegemonic discourse, which refers to an ontological condition. Victimhood is the ontological underpinning of the JDP's conservative identity and politics. The discourse of victimhood is a key for the appreciation of the JDP's authoritative power in contemporary Turkey. Its victimhood discourse does not constitute a cure for the collective pains of pious Sunni Turks but has helped to defeat the JDP's opponents. The JDP has outwardly and inwardly used the discourse of victimhood against its rivalries who dare to criticize and challenge it. In the hands of the JDP, the politics of victimhood has turned into an effective means of suppressing political, social, economic, and ethnic opponents.

In this context, the JDP's discourse of collective victimhood has given rise to a sense of ressentiment. According to Michael Ure, collective and systematic injustices have "the potential to trigger or galvanize ontological ressentiment." Collective "grievances can transform into a radical envy and a 'deep hatred of existence' that identifies virtue with victimhood." "Ontological ressentiment gives rise to different kinds of totalitarian or perfectionist politics" (2015, p. 600). In this context, ontological ressentiment is the constitutive element of the JDP's collective identity based on victimization.

The JDP and Erdoğan have arisen from these encounters with the Kemalist establishment as more powerful affective bodies. Erdoğan recognized the judicial and military bureaucracy as the biggest obstacle before the JDP's hegemonic project and sought to limit the Kemalist active forces, imposed restrictions upon them by

means of the Ergenekon case and its extensions, the Balyoz case, the reforms of Supreme Court and State Council, and the constitutional referendum in 2010. The established relations in the military and civil bureaucracy were radically deterritorialized. A new network of relations was established in the legal and military bureaucracy under the control of the JDP.

5.1.3 The Gezi Park protests

After 2011 election, Taksim Pedestrianization project was put on the agenda. In September 16, 2011, the Council of Metropolitan Municipality accepted the 'Taksim Pedestrianisation Project'. The "Association of Turkish Architects and Engineers", the "Chamber of City Planners" and other opponent groups established the Taksim Solidarity Platform both to launch legal proceedings against the project and to expand awareness through public activities in Gezi Park. The JDP's plan, for the Taksim Solidarity Platform, aimed to de-humanize, de-identify and concretize Taksim Square.

In February 2013, construction work began to pedestrianise Taksim Square. The reconstruction of the barracks was a debated and contested issue since Taksim Square and Gezi Park were officially declared as protected urban areas in 1999. Based on the decision of 1999, the Regional Commissions of Preservation for Cultural and Natural refused the JDP's reconstruction plan of the barracks in November 2012. Erdoğan reacted strongly to this decision: "We will rebuild the Topçu Barracks. The Commission rejected the plan. We will invalidate its rejection."

In the midnight of May 27, 2013, the bulldozers entered Gezi Park and started to cut the trees without any legal permission. A certain number of activists camped in the park to prevent the entry of the bulldozers and protested against the destruction of the park. The JDP that felt threatened alerted the police. They entered the park in the early morning to break the resistance of activists. The police responded promptly to the activists and burned their tents. Police brutality intensified the social anger and many urban residents swept into Taksim. Other cities also expressed their support for the Gezi demonstrators. The popular slogan of "Everywhere Taksim" was the mirror of their supports.

The protest grew suddenly turned into a massive social movement of democratic demands against the JDP's Islamic moral interventions that threatened their secular lifestyle. The popular slogan, "the matter is not only about trees", directly referred to the JDP's authoritarian exercising of power. Starting from 2010, by dominating the state apparatuses of the Kemalist secular order, the JDP has began to institutionalize the Sunni-Islamic conservatism. The conservative character of the JDP's hegemony became more explicit. Democratization began to lose its hegemonic capacity, thus its significance, within the JDP's discourse. They introduced new policies with Islamic references in the public sphere and adopted them into everyday life. While they aimed to marginalize the secular life-style of "White Turks" (the debates over abortion and regulations against the alcohol consumption), they revised the curricula with increasing references to religion in order to create a pious generation, and lifted the ban of wearing headscarf for women who are public servants. The reconstruction of old barracks, which was identified with Sultan Abdülhamid, who was remembered as an authoritarian figure by the secular and

urbanized subjects, made these groups more anxious about the JDP's authoritarian policies.

The Taksim Artillery Barracks that were demolished in 1939 did not hold any affirmative space in the secular and national collective memory. However, Taksim Square and Gezi Park as symbolic spaces of secular lifestyle had a long history in their collective memories. They considered the JDP's reconstruction plan of the old barracks as a reactionary attempt to wipe out their lived experiences in and around Taksim Square and Gezi Park. The Gezi Park protests put left-wing liberals, democrat liberals, Kurds, Alevis, feminists, women with headscarves, queer groups, socialists, Kemalist nationalists, football fans and anti-capitalist Muslims together against Erdoğan's authoritarian policies. These groups with different unsatisfied demands established an equivalential link.

The Gezi protests have led to drastic consequences on the JDP's politics and its conservative-democratic bloc. The Gezi Protest has reactivated the "psychological DNA of Islamist" and awakened the traumatized self-image of the Islamist national identity. The conservative-Islamists bloc, reminded of the abandonment of Sultan Abdülhamid, expressed their determination that they would never again allow such a defeat to occur. In this context, Sofuoğlu points out the aim of the Gezi Park protest by making an analogy between Sultan Abdülhamid and Erdoğan:

> Sultan Abdülhamid II was deposed from the throne in 1908 with the 31 March Incident. Year 2016 and now the Topçu Barracks has been discussed again. They want to make a coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan through the Gezi Park events. (Appendix, 11)

It is, of course, not coincidental to propose Erdoğan's identification with Sultan Abdülhamid after the Gezi Park protests. The dramatic end of Abdülhamid

was a threat that followed Erdoğan and his supporters almost like a shadow over the years when he tried to consolidate power. On the other hand, Erdoğan's identification with Abdülhamid was also reinforced by the perception of threat. For, the discourse of external enemies and cooperative betrayers, who were said to play a role in the deposition of Abdülhamid, shaped in flesh and bones in the Gezi Park protest against Erdoğan's rule. Erdoğan explained this betrayal in a furious way:

> Unfortunately, you, the youth, each of you has been used as a soldier in a game you couldn't realize. Unfortunately, you have been deceived, sacrificed in such a game. They set out by saying "We are Mustafa Kemal's soldiers", they have become voluntary soldiers of the interest rate lobby. Was it like that or was Mustafa Kemal also a soldier of the interest rate lobby? This is who they are. They are inconsistent. They set out as nationalists, remained indifferent to the burning of the Turkish flag. The same game is being played in Brazil. Symbols are the same, banners are the same, Twitter, Facebook is the same, international media is the same. They are managed from the same center. (Appendix, 12)

Erdoğan clearly points out that the Gezi Park protests was organized by the internal enemies who collaborated with the external ones that aimed to prevent the rise of Turkey. Millions all over the country directly target Erdoğan, while Prime Minister's chief advisor Yalçın Akdoğan states that "we do not allow Tayyip Erdoğan to be wasted. Neither we nor those who vote for us allow it."[17] Referring the analogy between the 31 March Incident and the Gezi Protest, Bilal Erdoğan similarly voiced that "they wasted Abdülhamid Khan, we will not allow Tayyip Erdoğan to be wasted."[18] As I said before Abdülhamid has been the symbol of impossible enjoymen in the Islamist imaginary. During the Gezi Protests, Erdoğan has become the symbol

[17] "Tayyip Erdoğan'ı kimseye yedirmeyiz. Biz de yedirmeyiz önderimiz olarak, bize oy verenler de yedirmez." https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/849702-tayyip-erdogani-kimseye-yedirmeyiz

[18] "Abdülhamid'i yediler, biz Tayyip Erdoğan'ı yedirmeyeceğiz" https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/bilal-erdogan-abdulhamidi-yediler-tayyip-erdogani-yedirmeyecegiz

of mythical fullness on the part of the Islamist-conservative subjects. Erdoğan has been situated as the objet petit a that posed the opportunity of reaching a developed and harmonious Turkish society.

It is the resentment of Abdulhamid's dethronement by the Unionists and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Gezi protests further increased Erdoğan's sense of ressentiment. He continued to express his insistence on the Taksim Artillery Barracks with his angry attitude, which is a demonstration of Erdoğan's ontological ressentiment. The Gezi Park Resistance revealed the JDP's century-old ontological ressentiment. Although the JDP had to postpone the construction of the Taksim Artillery Barracks, it would not give up on this project. The fact that Erdoğan expressed that the Taksim Artillery Barracks would be regardless done was a clear expression of his determination to take Abdülhamid's revenge:

> We are doing the pedestrianization project of Taksim and will do it. It will be finalized. Second, RPP mentality transformed the artillery barracks built in 1780 in Selim III era into a stadium by dazing it. We will build the historical barracks there just as we have been backing the original one there. Excuse us, it is very clear. We cannot be indifferent to a few looters coming to the area and provoking our people. Because while this society gave us their votes, they wanted us to protect our past. Should we now stop the construction of the bridge just because 300-500 people went there? They also opposed to the tunnels, sub-sea tunnels. It is not in their character to build anything. It is this RPP mentality that supports these terrorizers. It is in their nature. We are now building three nested projects. [In this project], there is green area, history and culture. AKM will hopefully be dazed. We will rebuild it as a fabulous culture center, opera building. Yes, we will also build a mosque. I am not going to get the permission from the president of RPP or from a few looters. Those who voted for us already gave us the authorization. (Appendix, 13)

5.2 The JDP's ressentiment: The destruction of the AKM

The active demolition of the AKM was begun on February 2018. The JDP firstly put the destruction of the AKM on the agenda in 2005. The Minister of Culture and

Tourism, Atilla Koç, announced that the AKM would be demolished and rebuilt on the grounds that it completed its economic life. His statement was also the beginning of a new debate which has been going on until today. The AKM could not have been an arbitrary choice for the JDP government. The AKM, which is located on the edge of the Taksim Square, has aimed to sustain the image of the Kemalist republic over the square and help the construction of secular and urbanized Turkish society through its name and function.

It took more than a decade to start to demolish the AKM. The AKM, which was previously registered by the Istanbul Regional Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Council 1 in 1999, was designated as the first group building to be protected in 2007 by the Istanbul Regional Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Council 2. While the debate on the future of the building was continuing, in May 2008, the AKM was closed down on the grounds of renewal. In February 2012, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Sabancı Holding agreed on the financing of the repair and renovation works of the AKM. Tabanlıoğlu Architecture, commissioned in accordance with the agreement, prepared a second renovation project for the AKM.

Despite this step taken towards the restoration of the AKM, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism canceled the permission of the Tabanlıoğlu Architects in the following period and stated that the repair works were to stop on May 24, 2013. With no concrete step announced about the future of the building, a new process began in 2008 which the AKM was left waiting at the edge of Taksim Square with many gossips about its future. The AKM was abandoned to its own destiny by the JDP government that has aimed make sovereign its Ottomanist/Islamist counter-

hegemonic imaginary over the Taksim Square. The abandoned AKM was painful for people who carried positive images in their memory. The decay and aging in the building continued in the interior. Suspended ceilings, lighting fixtures, large lounge chairs and round staircases in the foyer, which were carefully designed in order to enrich the interior decoration, were removed.

The AKM remained inactive and stayed for the restoration when the Gezi Park protests started on May 28, 2013. The Gezi protests can be considered as the most important turning point in the demolition process of the AKM. The protests intensified Erdoğan's devoutness to destroy the AKM. The AKM is an unintentional monument, which gained historical value through the events it has witnessed. The AKM is the witness of many historical events that concern the city or the whole country. The facade of the AKM has used as the backdrop and billboards of social events. For example, on Bloody May 1, the banner on which workers was chained to their hands was on the facade of the AKM. Although its cultural function was interrupted since 2007, the facade of the AKM continued to be the backdrop and billboard of the Gezi protests.

During the resistance, the AKM became one of the symbols of Gezi Park protest because of the posters and banners that hung on its facade. It was possible to read the 2013 Gezi Park solidarity in the banners hanging on the building. The prime minister Erdoğan reacted to the protestors: "The AKM hopefully will be demolished." A slogan of "Shut up Tayyip!" was seen on one of the banners that hung on the AKM. Within the scope of the 14th International Venice Biennale in June 2014, Architect Murat Tabanlıoğlu, son of Hayati Tabanlıoğlu who was the architect of the AKM, organized an exhibition titled "Memory Spaces". A

photograph of the AKM covered in banners was on display in the exhibition. However, the banner of "Shut up Tayyip!" was censored and covered by extending the image of a tree in the photograph. Journalist Aslı Uluşahin states that "this was a black memoir in the past of the building that has become synonymous with the name Tabanlıoğlu" (November 6, 2017, bianet.org). During the Gezi Park protests, Prime Minister Erdoğan, at that time, expressed his ressentiment by supporting to pull down the AKM:

> The AKM is currently a cultural center without earthquake resistance. Years ago, we said that this building would pose a problem for us. I know from the artists that the building is not useful. Let's build a giant opera house here that is in tune with the baroque architecture. We have no opera house in Turkey. We want to take the first step. Members of vandalism say they don't allow destruction. We made such a demolition decision before the election. Then the majority of my people gave us his support. We want a more beautiful Taksim. We are getting traffic under the ground. I want my citizens to come and walk around comfortably. (Appendix, 14)

The Erdoğan's iconoclastic attitude to the AKM was closely related to the erasing of the Kemalist collective memory. The JDP has aimed to remove from the Kemalist collective memory through physical obliteration of the AKM. Maurice Halbwachs (1992) describes urban artefacts as timeless bearers of collective memory. At the same time, they are reservoirs of social imagination. Urban artefacts, the founding elements of the city and the bearer of the spatial image, are the indestructible parts of the city. Halbwachs, who touches on the relationship of urban communities with urban space and collective memory, states that the stones or other materials cannot resist the destruction and construction activities that will change the appearance of the city, but the communities will resist. In this context, Halbwachs's conceptualization sheds light on the situation faced by the AKM today.

According to historian Jonathan Boyarin (1994), “memory is neither something preexistent and dormant in the past nor a projection from the present, but a potential collaboration between present consciousness and the experience and expression of the past” (p. 22). Boyarin claims that “identity and memory are virtually the same concept” (p. 23). The construction of national identity and collective memory are inseparable since collevtive identity is constituted through the collective memory. Collective memory wich is socially constructed link people together, reanimating their commonality by reference to shared identity. Collective identities are perpetually reconstituted through the process of remembering since “memory is not only constantly disintegrating and disappearing but constantly being created and elaborated.” As Jacques Le Goff indicates that “memory is a stake in the power game” (Le Goff, 1992, p.114).

It should be noted that the AKM is a concrete expression of the Kemalist modernization project in the Taksim Square, which reflects the collective memory and the Kemalist national consciousness. The AKM is a sign of the Kemalist republic that has turned its face into the West. In this sense, the AKM is one of the founding elements of Taksim Square. But, the AKM is not a masterpiece. It is not one of the most important works of Turkish architectural history. In “the Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin” (1982), Alois Riegl distinguished between intentional monument, those erected with the purpose of commemoration, and unintentional monuments, those artifacts that gained historical value over time. According to Riegl, some artifacts were not originally designed as monuments but gained art and historical value as a result of their ability to register the past. The AKM is an unintentional monument, which gained historical value through the

events it has witnessed. The AKM is the witness of many historical events that concern the city or the whole country.

The idea of making an opera house in Taksim Square appears for the first time in Henri Prost's plan. Although the first step in the construction was taken in 1939, the building was completed at the beginning of 1969 and opened on April 12, 1969 under the name of Istanbul Culture Palace (Akcan, 2019). Aldo Rossi speaks of la fabbrica della citta. Fabbrica means "building" in the old Latin and Renaissance sense of man's construction as it continues over time (1982). Still today, the Milanese call their cathedral "la fabbrica del dom," and understand by this expression both the size and the difficulty of the church's construction, the idea of a single building whose process goes on over time" (p.12). AKM is the equivalent of the term fabbrica in Istanbul with its size and importance as well as the construction process which lasted from 1937 to 1970s.

The building was assigned to the use of general directorates of the State Opera and Ballet and the State Theaters. The building was criticized by some circles due to the choice of name. For example, Muhsin Ertuğrul, who is considered to be the founder of the Western Turkish theater, complains shortly after the opening of the building, in his article in the Cumhuriyet newspaper, the word "palace" in its name. He claims that instead of the word "palace", which reminds the Ottoman Empire, it can be chosen as a name suitable for the world view of the republic (as cited in Uluşahin, 2017, n.p.). The Istanbul Culture Palace was burnt down on the evening of November 27, 1970. After the renovation started in 1973, the building was re-opened on October 6, 1978, this time as Atatürk Culture Center. This

situation is important in terms of transferring the values of the republic to the city square and the city.

In *the Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch emphasizes the naming problem of elements in urban space. For him, names and meanings are "non-physical characteristics which may enhance the imageability of an element. Names [...] are important in crystallizing identity" (1960, p. 108). Names and meanings constitute an entire realm lying beyond the physical qualities and strongly reinforce their identities. For Laclau, "the identity and the unity of the object result from the very operation of naming" (2005a, p. 104). In other words, objects and subjects are created through the process of naming that is a performative act. In Laclau's conceptualization, the naming as a performative act has a retroactive effect on the object that will be named. The name retroactively unifies the object that it designates, by referencing itself. Drawing on Derrida's notion of "the radical contingency of naming", Laclau underlines the constitutive function of naming. (Howarth & Griggs, 2006, p. 33). Furthermore, he adds an important twist to Derrida's account about the name: "the name becomes the ground of the thing" (2005a, p. 101). In this context, Atatürk's "images, busts, portraits, signatures and street names [...] are ubiquitous in the Turkish urban landscape, working to present—that is, to re-present—Atatürk in his absence and maintain the concepts of Turkish collective identity and memory that goes along with these images" (Wilson, 2016, p. 9). The Atatürk Cultural Center, which is located on the edge of the Taksim Square, has aimed to sustain the image of the Kemalist republic over the square and help the construction of national collective memory through its name and function.

After its re-opening in 1978, AKM as the center of the city's cultural life becomes an integral part of social memory. Since 1978, AKM has been well-articulated in the city's daily life and has been the center of many artistic activities until 2008, when it was closed down on the grounds that it would be repaired. In the last season before its closure, the AKM hosted about one million viewers in 855 events in the fields of ballet, concert, opera and theater (Baykam, 2015, n.p.). In this context, the AKM is the sign of modern, secular and urbanized collective identity of the Kemalist Republic in Taksim Square. It has played a decisive role both in the formation of collective memory and secular and national identity.

Within the politics of collective memory and identity, the AKM symbolizes the conflict between Fatih and Harbiye in Peyami Safa's novel. "Fatih is a Muslim neighborhood where traditional culture survives, whereas Harbiye symbolizes all those districts that are in the thrones of modernization/westernization" (Bora, 1999, p. 52). The AKM has emerged as an indicator of the Westernization program of the Kemalist Republic in Taksim Square. In Islamist imaginary, the AKM is considered a place where the western lifestyle of a secular and urban minority is performed. The JDP's demolition politics can be considered as a way in which has aimed to erase the western lifestyle and the Kemalist hegemonic collective memory from Taksim Square and make its conservative-democratic imaginary and memory dominant over the square. In this sense, the demolition of the AKM represents the victory of Fatih over Harbiye, thus the victory of the JDP's new conservative hegemonic order over the Kemalist imaginary. Moreover, it represents Erdoğan's ontological ressentiment against the Kemalist regime. Erdoğan announced his victory and ressentiment as follows

> We are building Atatürk Culture Center as Turkey's top opera building. Gezi protestors cried out a lot. Cry out as much as you want, eat your heart out. Look, we have razed it. [İstediğiniz kadar bağırın, çatlayın, patlayın. Bak, yıktık.] Hopefully, we will build a special, spectacular, multi-purpose opera building there soon. The project is already over. The tender, everything is complete. We have ended the tyranny of those who have seen here as their backyard and dominated the culture and art field. Hey! Build a single artwork throughout the history of Republic. Build a single physical construction. Here we are accomplishing all these works. We will accomplish them in our 81 provinces. (Appendix, 15)

At the time writing this thesis, the demolition works of the Atatürk Cultural Center, has been almost completed. A grand opera building will be constructed at the current site of the AKM that overlooked the square. In the area directly opposite the AKM, the minarets of the Taksim mosque are rising rapidly.

5.3 Erdoğan's dream: The Taksim mosque

In the mid-1990s, Erdoğan as a mayor of Istanbul firstly made public his dream to build an Ottoman-style grand mosque big enough to overshadow Hagia Triada Church, in Taksim Square, traditionally a symbolic space for the secular Kemalist republic and for left politics. Even though Erdoğan has ruled Turkey since 2003, he could not realize his dream. After the election victory of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party in June 2011, the people of Turkey faced a heated public debate: building new mosques in Istanbul. On May 29, 2012, the date of the 559th anniversary of the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire, Prime Minister Erdoğan proposed the idea of building a massive mosque on the top of Istanbul's Çamlıca Hill. He introduced the project as a "national project" that would be supported by a voluntary contribution fund. He emphasized that this giant mosque would be designed so as to be visible from all parts of Istanbul.

Only four months after his explanation about the Çamlıca mosque project, Erdoğan announced that a mosque would be built in Taksim too. He declared that they would confiscate some buildings and plots behind Maksem in order to build a large mosque in Taksim. The JDP's Taksim mosque project put the previous debate on Çamlıca mosque into the shade. Taksim Square is not just anyplace. The main opposition RPP, secularist civil society, and the ordinary subjects of Kemalist myth have strongly objected to the JDP's building project of a mosque in Istanbul's modern window that opens to the West, Taksim. They have firmly believed that this project is an attempt by the JDP in order to symbolize the power of the Islamists over Taksim as well as the whole country. On December 1, 2012, The Economist gave voice to secularists' suspicions as follows:

> Now a successor, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is making his former mentor's [Necmettin Erbakan] dream come true. Secularists have taken to the streets in protest at what they call the Islamists' "revenge" against the republic. Yet the bulldozers have moved in. Hundreds of trees are to be felled to make room for a replica of the Ottoman army barracks demolished by Ataturk's successor, Ismet Inonu. The city's mayor, Kadir Topbaş, who comes from Mr Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development (AK) party, insists that the complex will house art galleries and cafés, but secularists say this is just window-dressing for the new mosque.[19]

Once the religious groups started to enjoy freedom with the rule of the JDP, mosque architecture started to take on more different forms beyond architectural mimicry. New mosques incorporated modernist examples from various cultural contexts and traditional examples from the Ottoman past. Within this context, when Erdoğan brought the issue of building a mosque in Taksim to the agenda in 2012, the architect Ahmet Vefik Alp proposed a mosque design for Taksim. He was not in favor of the "fake replicas of the 500 years old grand architecture of the Master

[19] https://www.economist.com/europe/2012/12/01/under-attack

Architect Sinan and argued that his ‘avant-garde approach’ would ease the [secularists’] opposition to a new mosque in Taksim” (Batuman, 2016, p. 334). In this regard, his proposal was a mosque with worship spaces not only for Muslims but also for Christians and Jews. It would also contain a library in the basement as a museum of religions. The minaret and its cones, the drawings and the position of Y-shaped supports contained elements of Ottoman ensign and the Turkish flag. This proposal could be considered as an attempt to establish a balance between nationalism and religion to resolve the political conflict of mosque construction in Taksim area drawing upon the contemporary mosque architecture that encompasses global heterogeneity. However, Erdoğan rejected the project as it was considered to be too modern.

When the rise of more heterogeneous architectural mosque designs is taken into consideration, the fact that Erdoğan favored even more Ottoman style for these two mosque projects implies that they are not a simple replica of Ottoman architectural mosque design but represent the JPD’s hegemony over the Kemalist order as Bülent Batuman discusses in his following lines: “The replicated Ottoman mosque reconstructs the millet through the interpellation of citizens with the imperial image conjoining nation and Islam” (2016, p. 340).

At the time writing this thesis, the construction of the mosque in Taksim Square, which started on February 17, 2017 in the area of the Regional Directorate for Foundations in Istanbul after the approval of the Cultural Heritage Protection Council II, has been continuing. The silhouette of the mosque, which has been debated for decades, has risen just behind the Taksim Republic Monument. President Erdoğan’s dream of building a grand mosque in Taksim is turning into reality.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have tried to analyze the constitution of the JDP's conservative popular identity with special reference to a discussion of collective memory that has been inscribed in Taksim Square. I have explicitly tried to establish a relation between the constitution of antagonistic political subjectivities, the production of space, and collective memory through the analyzing of historical production process of Taksim square as a political space. Throughout the thesis, I have demonstrated how collective memories constitute antagonistic collective identities which are inscribed in the Taksim Square. I have tried to analyze how collective memory can be a useful category to understand the affective dimension of the collective identities which can be captured through the concepts of pain, victimhood, loss, mourning, and ressentiment. These categories have served me to get a better sense of the JDP's conservative collective subjectivity. In this context, this thesis, by situating the constitution of political identities within the production of space, which is ceaselessly done and undone in relation with collective memory, can be considered as a contribution to the scholarship on Ernesto Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony. Laclau's discourse theory of hegemony and theory of populism as a form of hegemony provide a very useful conceptual framework in order to show the articulatory character of the JDP's conservative democratic discourse and its counter hegemonic role in the post-2000 Turkish politics. I have described the JDP's conservative democracy as a counter-hegemonic discourse that has aimed to articulate different political identities into a new collective popular identity, and to create "a new Turkey" from a variety of dislocated elements.

I have tried to understand how Taksim Square has been (re)produced on the level of political, and how Taksim Square has become a political category in the struggle for hegemony in modern Turkey. I have intrinsically linked the social production of space to the production of hegemony. I have put the production of space at the center of hegemonic struggles. The Kemalist elite has made concrete its power in Taksim Square, an ideological space, which is a system of meanings in the discursive field. Most importantly, I try to underline the importance of the production of space for analyzing the Kemalist hegemony and the Islamist counter-hegemonic party politics, i.e., Erbakan-led Islamist Welfare Party in the 1990s and then Erdoğan-led Justice and Development Party, which have manifested and peresented their alternative collective identities through the attempts to reappropriate the Taksim Square. The square has become a key component of the hegemonic process, in which power and resistance collide with each other. In other words, the square has become a site of political struggle. In this regard, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces can either subvert or maintain the already established power relations through the (re)production and transformation of Taksim Square as a political category.

In the third chapter, I have tried to analyze the formation of secular and national political identity in a historical context through the transformation of the Taksim Square. I have suggested that the JDP's conservative-democratic identity emerged as an alternative collective identity to the Kemalist political subjectivity. When the Ottoman social formation faced with the collapse of the imperial hegemonic order, the Kemalist myth emerged as a new space of representation to fill the structural void through temporarily fixing the meanings and identities around empty signifiers—modernization, secularism and nationalism—which made possible constructing a new secular and national Turkish society (Çelik, 2009, p. 227).

Kemalism as a founding official ideology aimed to constitute a new social formation and political identities which were implemented through the production of space. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, the Kemalist hegemonic configuration aimed to make its power visible over Istanbul through the production of Taksim Square as a representational space. Taksim Square was a result of the central concern of constituting and institutionalizing the Kemalist hegemony. The ruling elite established the Kemalist state as the agent of modernity and inscribed their ideology into the square. Taksim Square and Republic Monument have represented the power of the Kemalist regime over the imperial capital and symbolized the emancipation of the country from invasion and the foundation of republic. The square was a symbol of antagonism between the Kemalist ruling elite and the imperial hegemonic order that was embedded in urban space. The Kemalist ruling elite has persistently defined Taksim Square as a political space only for national, secular and urbanized subjects and excluded political, social and cultural symbols and practices of the imperial order.

I have claimed that the rise of the center right parties after the smack down of the Kemalist party in the 1950 elections cannot be read as the beginning of the end of the secularist hegemony at a national level. On the contrary, the rise of center right parties resulted in the expansion of the Kemalist modernization project. Turkish conservatism has never offered an alternative state model. However, the Islamist Welfare Party challenged the Kemalist hegemonic order in the 1990s. The conjuncture of the 1990s had a unique and specific character in Turkish political life due to the fact that the collective identities and the political frontiers disintegrated and re-consituted in a running battle between Kemalist guardians of the state and the pro-Islamist Welfare Party. In other words, it was a historic turning point since there

was a heated political struggle between the pro-Islamist party and state-led Kemalist hegemonic project on the definitions of collective identities and the political frontiers. The Welfare Party offered an alternative Islamist-nationalist ideology and collective identity in contrast to the Kemalist secular-national ideology. The Kemalist hegemonic project that had tried to dictate the definition of the political identity was under the risk of challenge by the Islamist alternative imagination during the 1990s.

The hegemonic struggle between the Kemalist establishment and the Welfare Party was materialized in the Taksim Square as a political space during the 1990s. The mosque to be built in Taksim would be the symbol of re-conquering Istanbul. The project turned into an open war between the Welfare Party and the Kemalist establishment. The Taksim mosque became the symbol of the Islamist resistance to the Kemalist hegemonic order. The Welfare Party's mosque project turned Taksim Square into a battlefield, or a terrain of political practices in the 1990s. Since the mid-1990s, the Turkish Islamist movement has aimed to re-define the identity of the square, and the versions of the Kemalist establishment has tried to reproduce its hegemonic meaning.

Needless to say, the rise of the Welfare Party started a long and an uphill process in the reproduction and ultimate crisis of the Kemalist hegemonic project. During the second half of the 1990s, the Kemalist regime had tried to make Islamic threat manageable so as to pursue its hegemonic project of Westernization. Although the state-led Kemalist hegemonic project tried to absorb this Islamist challenge and to consolidate the secularist/nationalist hegemony by means of the post-modern coup of February 28, 1997, the hegemonic struggle between the Islamists and the

secularists has re-established the political frontiers, and paved the way for a new political movement.

It is fact that since the 1990's Turkey has witnessed a set of recurrent political, economic and social crisis. Indeterminacy and instability were gradually but steadily affecting every corner of the political, economic and social life of Turkey under the rule of weak coalition governments during the 1990s. The rise of the JDP has absolutely fed on a structurally unstable social, political and economic situation of Turkey during the 1990s. However, focusing on the instabilities and indeterminacies of the 1990s, and their extensions and effects in the early 2000s has masked the JDP's contingent character. I do not mean that the JDP is subject to the organic crisis of Kemalism, or it is a superstructural response to structural crisis. It should be kept in mind that every organic crisis, or dislocation, triggers off a hegemonic struggle (Sayyid 1997: 25). There is no way to know in advance what the outcome of the hegemonic struggle will be since "it is an open-ended process until a new hegemonic order is inaugurated" (p. 25). The JDP's hegemonic project has contingently emerged as an outcome of the ongoing hegemonic struggle between pro-Islamist Welfare Party and the guardians of the Kemalist state during the 1990s, not as a necessary outcome of the organic crisis of the Kemalist hegemonic project. The February 28 process manifested that the Islamists had to adopt a more inclusive and pluralist discourse, organize the mass outside of the Kemalist block, and get the necessary support from international political actors in order to dismantle the Kemalist hegemonic order.

The staff that founded the JDP took the necessary lessons from the political and social crisis of the 1990s. The Welfare Party had tried to draw an antagonistic

frontier between the pious subjects and the Kemalist hegemonic order and its actors, which were regarded as responsible for the problems of political degeneration, corruption, poverty and so on. The party articulated an Islamist new order (Just order) as an answer to the crisis of the existing political structure. However, Erdoğan has claimed that conservative democracy is a universal political understanding. He posed the concept of conservative democracy as a universal for all the people of Turkey and not merely a particular articulating the demands of some groups. In other words, he offered the conservative democracy as an alternative political understanding that met all the unfulfilled expectations of the Turkish society.

The JDP's conservative democracy is a hegemonic discourse to give a name of the impossible fullness refers to the relation of representation between the particular Islamist demand which takes up the representation of universality and the other popular demands which enter into solidarity with the former via the chain of equivalence. The JDP has aimed at articulating a new people by investing in conservative democracy as an empty signifier and establishing new antagonistic boundaries between the Kemalist establishment and the ordinary people of Turkey in the political sphere. I have claimed that the conservative-democratic identity is based on victimhood, a discourse of social suffering. The JDP has highly used the discourse of victimhood in order to politically and socially criticize the Kemalist regime. By 2010, the JDP was able to significantly neutralize the Kemalist civil and military bureaucracy, which was considered as the cause of collective victimhood. The JDP has started to govern the country in almost unrivaled power since 2010. It has desired to visualize its increasing power in the reconfiguarion of the Taksim Square. The JDP has tried to reconstruct the Taksim Square as a way to symbolically maintain its political, social and cultural order, especially after the 2011 general elections. The

JDP has decided to make its conservative-democratic ideology that is based on collective victimhood apparent in the Taksim Square via the reconstruction of the Artillery Barracks.

The re-definition of Taksim Square has been a political and spatial strategy that contributes to the JDP's conservative-democratic discourse and to the construction and maintenance of its articulated identity. Erdoğan has re-politicized and re-employed Ottoman past through the restorative appropriation of Taksim Square in order to construct a new popular identity. The JDP's main aim for insisting on the reconstruction of Taksim Artillery Barracks was to revive the legacy of Sultan Abdülhamid's reign. The main objective of reconstruction of the old barracks that break off from the current urban context and meaning is not only representation of the past but embodying and mobilizing the sense of collective victimhood and ressentiment. In this context, through this ghost building project the JDP has aimed to reconstruct a new national memory by challenging to Kemalist ideology and power behind the demolition of it. At the time of writing this thesis, Erdoğan has not still realized his reconstruction project of the Taksim Artillery Barrack. However, the AKM which has reflected the spirit and ideals of the Kemalist regime was demolished. Furthermore, Erdoğan has realized the 25-year dream of the National View movement: The Taksim mosque is rising just behind the Taksim Republic Monument.

APPENDIX

QUOTATIONS: ORIGINAL TURKISH

1.

"Harbiye Kongre Merkezi'nin yanında Cemal Reşit Rey'i yaptık. Onu biz yıkarken her tarafı ayağa kaldırdılar. Dedik ki "Daha güzelini, daha büyüğünü yapıyoruz, biraz sabırlı olun." Türkiye'nin opera binası yoktu. Harbiye Kongre Merkezi 3 bin kişilik bir yarı opera binasıdır. AKM olayını gündeme getirdim, kıyametler koptu. Burada opera binası yapacağız dedik. Çıldırdılar. Şimdi oranın temelini atıyoruz. Daha büyük ve işlevsel bir opera binası. Ayni şekilde hani çok kızdıkları Taksim'deki Kışla. O Topçu Kışlası'nın aslını bir görseniz, "Yazıklar olsun burayı yıkanlara" dersiniz. O kadar muhteşem bir eser. Onun orijinaline uygun mimari tasarımlarını yaptırıyorum. Orayı ihya edeceğiz. Onun karşısında Maksem'in arkasına Taksim Camii'ni yapıyoruz. O da bitmek üzere. Bütün bu neyi getirecek? İstanbul'da doğru düzgün meydan yoktu. Taksim'de trafiği alta aldık, Taksim meydana kavuşuyor. Bir taraftan o tarihi kışla ortaya çıkacak öbür taraftan opera muhteşem eser olarak geliyor, öbür tarafta Taksim Cami… O da muhteşem eser olarak ortaya çıkıyor."

https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/politika/2019/01/25/erdogan-taksime-topcu-kislasinin-tasarimlarini-yaptiriyorum/

2.

“İSTANBUL Gezi Parkı’nda tarihi bir yermiş. Ne varmış orada? Başbakan söylüyor. Oranın tarihini biliyor musunuz? Evet, biliyoruz. Orasının tarihi, gerici bir kalkışmanın merkezi; 31 Mart Gericilik Ayaklanmasında, şeriat isteriz nidalarıyla sokaklara dökülen softaların, alaylı askerlerin, “Mektepli Subaylara Ölüm!” diye tekbirler atarak, ölümüne üzerlerine yürüdükleri, gördükleri yerde çağdaş eğitimle eğitim görmüş subayları tepeledikleri yer... Sultan İkinci Abdülhamit, hep büyük vehimler içinde, kendi yönetimine karşı yeni bir kalkışmanın başlayacağından korkuyordu. Genç subaylar bir yıl önce büyük bir kalkışmaya yönelmiş; Sultan’a zorla 1876’da kaldırdığı Anayasa’yı yeniden uygulamaya koydurmuşlardı. Ordu, modern eğitimle yetişsin diye reform hareketlerinin yapılmaya çalışıldığı bir dönemdi. Bu gelişmelerden, Said-i Nursi, Derviş Vahdeti gibi dönemin gerici söylemine sahip kişiler; okullu subaylara karşı halkı ve alaylı subayları kışkırtan yazılar yazıyor; kadınların artık açılmaya başladığından, ahlakın bozulduğundan, dinin elden gittiğinden söz ediyor ve sultanı yeniden şeriat hükümlerini uygulamaya çağırıyorlardı. Böyle bir aşamada Abdülhamit, Topçu Kışlası’na Alaylı topçu subaylarını ve askerleri yerleştirmiş, onlar sayesinde kendini güvencede duymak istemişti. Ancak gün geldi; 13 Nisan 190 günü, dananın kuyruğu koptu. Topçu Kışlası’ndan çıkan Alaylı subaylar, kimi dinci kişi ve grupların da katılımıyla “Şeriat Elden Gidiyor” diye bağırmaya, gördükleri mektepli subayları öldürmeye, pek çok yeri yağmalamaya başlamışlardı. İstanbul, bir süre sonra onların eline geçti. Olayları yatıştırmak için Sultan hiçbir şey yapmadı. Sonunda Selanik’te merkezi bulunan Hareket Ordusu İstanbul’a doğru harekete geçti. İstanbul’da kanlı çarpışmalar olduktan sonra, Hareket Ordusu olaylara hâkim oldu. Bu ordunun kurmay heyeti arasında Mustafa Kemal Atatürk de yer almıştı. İstanbul’a hakim olan Hareket

Ordusu, olayların merkezi olan Topçu Kışlası'nı yoğun bir top ateşine tutarak yerle bir etti. Tarihte bir ibret levhası olarak yer almış olan Topçu Kışlası, bu top atışından sonra artık bir moloz yığını haline gelmişti. Yıllar boyunca, tam 30 yıl bu halde kaldı. Kimi yerleri ufak tefek onarımdan geçmiş; değişik amaçlarla kullanılmıştı. Bu görüntü, 1940'lara kadar bu biçimde kaldı. 1940'lı yıllarda, yeniden düzenlenen alanda, halkın rahatça gezebileceği yeşil bir park yapılmak istendi. Böylece, çok eskiden bir Ermeni Mezarlığı olan ve 1780'de kışla haline getirilen alan, 1940'da Modern Cumhuriyetin bir mirası olarak sonraki kuşaklara kaldı. İş burada kaldı mı? Hayır. Pek çok tarihsel olaya tanıklık eden Taksim; uzunca zaman Türkiye'de İslamcı Siyasetçilerin; cami yapılacak bir alan olarak görüldü ve bu bata Necmettin Erbakan olmak üzere pek çok İslamcı siyasetçi için bir hedef haline geldi. Taksim'in yıkılması ve yerine bir cami yapılması düşüncesi; uzunca zaman ülkenin gündemini meşgul etti. Bugün de temsil ediyor. Ne günlere kaldık. Tanrım, Sen Yüce Türk Milleti'ni koru…"

http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cumhuriyet-in-zaman-ayari-ile-oynamak-23418159

3.

"Taksim'i şu andaki konumundan çıkarıyoruz. Kardeşlerim, Taksim Meydanındaki o yeşil alanın olduğu yer nedir biliyor musunuz? Orası eskiden Topçu Kışlasıydı, Topçu Kışlası. Ve bu Topçu Kışlasını daha sonra yıktılar. CHP'nin Belediye Başkanı, Valisi Lütfi Kırdar yıktı. [...]orayı biz inşa ediyoruz, orayı inşa ediyoruz. Fakat muhteşem bir eser ortaya çıkacak. Burayı inşallah rezidans, hotel, altını alışveriş merkezi olarak kullanacağız. Ve tamamen o bölümün altını da otopark yapacağız, Taksim'i bu sıkıntıdan da kurtaracağız. Ayrıca da Taksim'de artık araç

trafiği olmayacak, bütün araçları yerin altına alıyoruz. [...] Ve tamamen Taksim yürüyüş haline geliyor. Bunu biz yaparız, AK PARTi yapar. CHP yıkar, biz yaparız. CHP o Topçu Kışlasını yıktı, biz ise yapacağız, yapıyoruz."

4.

"Sultan Abdülhamid'i de devletimizin son 150 yılına damgasını vuran en önemli, en vizyoner, en stratejik zihne sahip şahsiyetlerden biri olarak görüyoruz. Sultanın ufkunun, hayallerinin ve projelerinin Yıldız Sarayının duvarlarının çok ötesinde olduğunu artık hepimiz de gayet iyi biliyoruz. Dönemin müstekbirlerinin 'hasta adam' olarak ilan ettikleri Osmanlı'yı diri diri gömme niyetlerine karşı Abdülhamid Han'ın nice ince ittifaklarla örülü mücadelesi gerçekten takdire şayandır. Bunun içindir ki aleyhindeki onca kampanyaya rağmen milletimizin derin hafızasında Sultan Abdülhamid, hep 'Ulu Hakan' olarak tanınmıştır. Türk milleti onu, "Hasta değiliz, yatağından taşan bir nehre benziyoruz, yapmamız gereken nehrin dağılmış kollarını tekrar yatağında toplamaktır, bizi zinde tutacak yegâne kuvvet İslamiyet'tir" tespitiyle hatırlıyor. Bu millet onu, burası çok önemli, hele hele bu dönemde, tam bu dönemde, "Ben bir karış dahi olsa vatan toprağını satmam, zira bu vatan bana değil milletime aittir. Milletim de bu toprakları ancak aldığı fiyata verir, bu topraklar kanla alınmıştır, kanla verilir" tespitiyle ve restiyle hatırlıyor."

https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/90385/vefatinin-100-yilinda-sultan-abdulhamidi-anlamak-konulu-konferansta-yaptiklari-konusma

5.

“31 Mart komplosuyla darbe yapan İttihatçıların Hareket Ordusu'nda bulunan Bulgar, Makedon ve Ermeni çeteleriyle binlerce Osmanlı öldürüldü. Sultan Abdülhamit’i koruyan Topçu Kışlası topa tutuldu. Kışlanın bu utanç dolu tarihi unutturulmak için, ‘tadilatı masraflı’ gibi komik gerekçelerle İsmet İnönü tarafından yıktırıldı ve yerine kendi heykeli yaptırılmak istendi. Ayasofya nasıl Fethi simgeliyorsa, Topçu Kışlası da 31 Mart Vakası ile Sultan Abdülhamit'e darbeye direnişi ve İttihatçıların vatana ihanetini simgeliyordu, o yüzden yıktılar.”

https://www.star.com.tr/politika/topcu-kislasi-direnisin-simgesi-haber-1119901/

6.

“31 Mart hâdisesi, ortada fert ve şahsiyet ismi bulunmayan bir umumîlik plânında, ileride dine karşı girişilecek zulmün ilk hazırlayıcı ve geliştirici iklimini getirmiştir. Tahtan indirdiği Ulu Hakan Andulhamid Hanı mazlumluk tahtına çıkarmıştır.”

7.

“1997'de Siirt'te şiir okuduğum için hüküm giyip cezaevinde yattım, umutsuzluğa kapılmadım. Hapisteki günlerimde demokrasiye olan ihtiyacı daha da iyi anladım. Özgürlüğün kıymetini anladım…İnancından dolayı, ibadetinden dolayı, başındaki örtüden dolayı dışlanmanın ne olduğunu biz çok iyi biliriz. Biz yoksulluğu biliriz. Yasakların ne olduğunu çok iyi biliriz. Bir gece yarısı sokak ortasında ensesine kurşun sıkılarak katledilen faili meçhullerin acısını çok iyi biliriz. Evi basılıp tarumar

edilmek nedir çok iyi biliriz. Köy meydanına toplanan köylülere uygulanan şiddeti biliriz. Hapisteki oğlunun yanına gidip kendi diliyle konuşamayan annenin acısını iyi biliriz. Hakkari'de sabah ezanını okuduktan sonra saldırıya uğrayan vefat eden İmamın acısını biz biliriz. Oğlunu şehit veren Çorumlu annenin gözyaşı bizim ciğerimize akar. Oğlunu terör örgütüne kaptırmış annenin göz yaşı bizim ciğerimizi akar. Ape Musa'nın acısını, Orhan Miroğlu'nun acısını biz unutamayız. Şivan Perver'in hasretini görmezden gelemeyiz. Ahmet Kaya'nın gurbette vefatını hatırımızdan çıkaramayız. Çünkü biz bu toprakların çocuklarıyız. Çünkü biz bir gün Edirneli, İstanbullu, Yozgatlıyız, Hakkariliyiz, Diyarbakırlıyız, Diyarbakır'ın evladıyız. Hepimiz aynı gelecek için yürüyoruz."

http://haber.mynet.com/detay/guncel/erdogan-diyarbakirda/530634

8.

"Benim hikayem kişisel hikaye olmaktan çıkmıştır. Artık bu hikaye milletin hikayesidir. Millet durdurulabilir mi? Şimdi 3 Kasım daha da bir önem kazanmış durumda. Ya millet kazanacak, iktidar olacak. Ya da millete tepeden bakan, Anadolu'ya yabancı baskıcı ve dayatmacı azınlık bir grubun saltanatı devam edecek. Karar verme yetkisi milletindir ve 'yeter karar milletindir'."

http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2002/ekim/25/politika.html.

9.

“Değerli kardeşlerim Tanzimat'tan bugüne, yani yaklaşık son 200 yıldır bu ülkede bazı meseleler, özgürce, özgüvenle, ve cesaretle ele alınamamıştır. Türkiye'nin hemen her meselesinde bir şekilde özne olan, bir şekilde odak noktasında bulunan din konusu; objektif, tarafsız, korkulardan uzak, mahalle baskısından uzak şekilde gündeme taşınanamıştır. Bırakınız dine ait meseleleri özgürce tartışabilmeyi, din ve dindarlar yaklaşık 200 yıl boyunca her türlü eleştiriye, tahkire, horlamaya sistematik şekilde maruz kalmıştır.”

10.

“1940’lı yıllar boyunca, Türkiye’de, millete, milletin değerlerine, milletin kutsallarına karşı aleni bir savaş yürütüldü. Bu ülkede camilerin kapılarına kilit vuruldu. Camiler ahıra, depoya, müzeye çevrildi. Kuran-ı Kerim’i öğrenmek de, öğretmek de, okumak da yasaklandı. Ezan aslına mugayir bir şekle çevrildi. İnsanların her türlü özgürlüklerine kısıtlama getirildi. Sakal bıyıktan giyim kuşama kadar standart bir insan tipi, standart bir kafa yapısı oluşturulmak istendi. Bazı vatandaşlar makbul görülürken bazılarına tehdit yaftası yapıştırıldı.”

Erdoğan’ın AKP 4. Olağan Büyük Kongre Konuşması, 30 Eylül 2012.

www.akparti.org.tr

11.

“1908'de 31 Mart Vakası ile Sultan Abdülhamid darbeyle tahttan indirilmişti. Sene 2016 ve şimdi yine Topçu Kışlası tartışması ve Gezi Parkı olayları üzerinden Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'a karşı darbe girişiminde bulunmak isteniyor.”

https://www.star.com.tr/politika/topcu-kislasi-direnisin-simgesi-haber-1119901/

12.

“Farkına varamadığınız bir oyunda maalesef hepiniz birer gönülle nefer olarak kullanıldınız, ey gençler. Maalesef aldatıldınız, böyle bir oyuna kurban edildiniz. Dikkat edin, ‘Mustafa Kemal’in askerleriyiz’ diye yola çıktılar, faiz lobisine parasız neferlik yaptılar. Öyle miydi, yoksa Gazi Mustafa Kemal’de faiz lobisinin neferi miydi, eri miydi İşte bunlar bu, tutarsız bunlar. Ulusalcıyızdiye yola çıktılar, Türk bayrağının yakılmasına seyirci kaldılar. Brezilya’da da aynı oyun oynanıyor. Semboller aynı, afişler aynı, Twitter, Facebook aynı, uluslararası medya aynı. Aynı merkezden idare ediliyorlar. Türkiye’de başaramadıklarını şimdi Brezilya’da başarmak için ellerinden geleni yapıyorlar. Oyun aynı oyun, tuzak aynı tuzak, maksat aynı maksat.”

NTV. (2013). “Erdoğan: They are now soldiers of interest lobby”. NTV News on 22 June 2013. Retrieved 2018, June 17 from https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-faiz-lobisinin-neferioldular, hRBnD9YIYkehfPQCWqTF4g

13.

“Biz Taksim meydanının yayalaştırma projesini yapıyoruz yapacağız. Orası bitecek. İki, 1780 yılında III. Selim döneminde orada yapılmış olan Topçu Kışlası CHP zihniyeti daha sonra yıkarak stada çevirmiştir. Orada da aslına nasıl sahip çıkıyorsak biz de orada tarihi kışlayı yapacağız. Afedersiniz çok açık net.Biz birkaç tane çapulcunun, o insana gelip meydana gelip halkımızı tahrik etmesine seyirci kalmayız. Çünkü bu millet bize reyini verirken tarihimize sahip çık diye verdi. Şimdi biz 300-500 kişi oraya gitti diye köprü inşaatını mı durduralım? Bunlar tünellere tüp geçitlere de karşı çıktılar. Bunların cibilliyetinde bir taş taş üstüne koymak yok.Bu terör estirenlere destek çıkan CHP zihniyetidir. Bunların meşrebinde bu var. Biz şimdi Taksim’de üç projeyi iç içe yapıyoruz. Orada çevre var, orada tarih var kültür var. AKM inşallah yıkılacak. Muhteşem bir opera olarak kültür merkezi olarak onu da yapacağız. Evet cami de yapacağız. Ben bunun iznini gidip de CHP genel başkanından alacak değilim, birkaç çapulcudan alacak değilim. Bize oy verenler bunun yetkisini verdi zaten.”

https://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/147142-erdogan-taksim-e-cami-de-yapacagiz

14.

“AKM diye şu anda depreme dayanıklılığı olmayan bir kültür merkezimiz var. Yıllar önce dedik ki bu yapı bize sıkıntı yaratır. Yapının kullanışlı olmadığını da çalışan sanatçılardan biliyorum. Barok mimariyle bütünlük arz edecek şekilde buraya dev bir opera binası yapalım. Türkiye’de opera binamız yok. Bir ilkin adımını atmak istiyoruz. Vandalizmin mensupları çıkıyorlar, ‘yıktırmayız’. Böyle bir şeyin kararını

vereceksek seçim öncesinde vermişiz. O zaman da halkımın kahir ekseriyeti bize desteğini vermiş. Daha güzel bir Taksim istiyoruz biz. Trafiği yerin altına alıyoruz. Benim vatandaşım gelsin rahatça gezsin diye."

http://www.gazetevatan.com/-akm-yerine--barok--bir-opera-binasi---544347-gundem/

15.

"Atatürk Kültür Merkezi'ni Türkiye'nin bir numaralı opera binası olarak yapıyoruz. Çok bağırdı Geziciler. İstediğiniz kadar bağırın, çatlayın, patlayın. Bak, yıktık. İnşallah kısa zaman da orada dünyada sayılı, muhteşem bir opera binasını, çok amaçlı olarak yapıyoruz. Proje zaten çoktan bitti. İhalesi, her şeyi bitmiş vaziyette. Kültür ve sanat alanına hâkim olan, adeta burayı kendi arka bahçesi olarak gören zümrenin tahakkümüne son verdik. Cumhuriyet tarihi boyunca bir tane eser koyun ya. Bir tane fiziki mekân ortaya koyun be. Biz geldik, bu eserleri biz yapıyoruz. 81 vilayetimizde yapacağız."

http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/catlayin-patlayin-akmyi-yiktik-40790624

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