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# Mapping the Contours of Identity Contestation: Hybridization, Polarization, and Self-Marginalization

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# **MAPPING THE CONTOURS OF IDENTITY CONTESTATION: HYBRIDIZATION, POLARIZATION, AND SELF- MARGINALIZATION**

**Lisel Hintz, Cornell University**

## **Abstract**

This paper is part of a larger project that forays into the murky waters of sub-national identity contestation, understood here as struggles among members of a state's population who support competing various proposals for the content of that state's national identity. The paper attempts to capture these contours, map their shifts, and parse out the mechanisms by which these changes occur in Turkey, a state with multiple, politically salient identity cleavages. To do so, the paper analyzes these three key episodes that each constitute major challenges to the ruling party's pursuit of identity hegemony for its own proposal of Ottoman Islamism. Each of these challenges shaping the contours of Turkey's identity debates over the course of just two years (May 2013 – May 2015) represents a different dynamic of identity contestation: hybridization of opposition demonstrators during the Gezi Protests, polarization among supporters of the AKP and the Gülen Movement, and self-marginalization of the AKP through its increasingly radical rhetoric. Drawing from a wide array of popular culture and social media sources as well as interviews, surveys, and participant observation, the analysis provides new insight into the vernacular politics of identity in contemporary Turkey, while contributing to wider studies of social movements and contentious politics through its examination of various mechanisms of change.

## **About the Author**

Lisel Hintz is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Einaudi Center for International Studies at Cornell University for AY 2015-16. She received her Ph.D. in Political Science from George Washington University, and will be a Visiting Assistant Professor at Barnard College for AY 2016-17. Bridging the subfields of International Relations and Comparative Politics, her research investigates how contestation over various forms of identity (e.g. ethnic, religious, neo-imperial) spills over from domestic politics to shape, and be shaped by, foreign policy. A former Visiting Research Fellow at Bilkent University in Ankara, she specializes in the study of Turkey's politics and society. Using data gathered from a wide array of popular culture and social media sources as well as interviews, surveys, participant observation, and archival documents, her first book will focus an "inside out" theory of identity contestation to account for how the contours of debates over national identity change over time, and the conditions under which these debates spill over into foreign policy. Her research appears in the *European Journal of International Relations*, *The Washington Review of Turkish and Eurasian Affairs*, and *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, as well as in op-ed pieces for *Foreign Policy*, *The Washington Post* (Monkey Cage blog), and *Hürriyet Daily News*.

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# Mapping the Contours of Identity Contestation: Hybridization, Polarization, and Self-Marginalization

## Introduction

This paper is part of a larger project foraying into the murky waters of sub-national identity contestation to map shifts in the contours of identity debates. The paper attempts to capture these contours and the mechanisms by which they shift in contemporary Turkey. Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), for example, has taken dramatic and controversial steps to consolidate not only its power since winning the first of its several parliamentary majorities in 2002, but also its proposed understanding of identity for Turkey's population. What I term elsewhere the AKP's "Ottoman Islamist" proposal for national identity<sup>1</sup> – and particularly its constitutive norms of piety, social conservatism, and respect for a strong leader, as well as Turkey's legitimate role as a great leader in the Islamic world – has been spread throughout the domestic public sphere through multiple conduits such as institutional reforms such as education, dress code, and language reforms. Ironically, these reforms mirror the attempts taken by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to try to Westernize and secularize Turkey's population in the early Republican Era. The AKP also uses news media and popular culture outlets to disseminate its vision of Ottoman Islamism as the appropriate identity for Turkey's citizens. Indeed, the rapid rise of "Ottomania" can best be understood both as a political strategy to spread fascination with and respect for the Ottoman era of Turkey's history, and a societal reflection of the outcome of this strategy.

Until recently, the AKP appeared to have secured the institutional power and legitimacy necessary to be able to shape the rules of society without large-scale objections, nearing what I term identity hegemony by displacing the previously hegemonic "Republican Nationalist" proposal for Turkey's identity. However, significant challenges to this pursuit of hegemony for Ottoman Islamism have recently arisen in both domestic and foreign policy arenas. These challenges indicate that, although AKP leaders and supporters may have believed they were operating under the hegemony of their identity proposal with the exception of a few "marginal" dissenters,<sup>2</sup> the social structures the party

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<sup>1</sup> Lisel Hintz. "Take It Outside! National Identity Contestation in the Foreign Policy Arena," *European Journal of International Relations*, Epub ahead of publication 26 June 2015.

<sup>2</sup> A common theme in speeches by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Davutoğlu is that those opposed to the AKP's continued electoral success and its steps to institutionalize a "New Turkey" (*Yeni Türkiye*) count only as "marginal" groups (*marjinaller*). This rhetorical delegitimization was rife throughout the Gezi Protests, discussed in detail below, but is also a strategy of contestation used to dismiss objections. Erdoğan's usage of the term to "otherize" dissenters is so frequent that it has been mocked on websites such *Zaytung* (a Turkish-based version of *The Onion*) and *Eksi Sözlük* (literally "Sour Dictionary," a platform for anonymously sharing often critical views and gossip). See "Başbakan Erdoğan 'marjinal' kelimesinin koruma altına alınması için TDK Tönetimine Talimat Verdi," posted on <http://www.zaytung.com/sondakikadetay.asp?newsid=208826> and "Tayyip Erdoğan Jargonu," posted on <https://eksisozluk.com/tayyip-erdogan-jargonu--519243?nr=true&rf=tayyip%20erdogan%20jargonu>. The term was also mocked as part of a wider use of humor as a weapon during the Gezi Park protests, discussed below. A sign held by a small girl making fun of some of the many insulting terms Erdoğan used to describe protesters reads "Uncle Tayyip! My dad is a drunk (*ayyaş*), my mom is a hooligan (*çapulcu*), I'm *marjinal*... So what's the problem?" Photo used in *Çapulcu'nun Gezi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Hemen Kitap,

attempted to put in place were by no means met with acquiescence. Further, as this paper demonstrates, the more the AKP pushed to disseminate its Ottoman Islamist proposal for national identity across Turkey's population, and to fulfill the interests the proposal generates both at home and abroad, the more challenges it has created for its own political future. This, again, is somewhat similar to the fate of Republican Nationalism's hegemony bid, in that the insistence by its most militant supporters on crushing those deemed to be in violation of the identity proposal's red lines (Islamists, Kurds, radical leftists) created contestation among Republican Nationalists themselves.

In the AKP's case, from protests against such authoritarian behavior and creeping Islamicization to allegations of corruption by a supposedly "pure" party,<sup>3</sup> from domestic and international backlashes against the increasing animosity toward Israel to a crisis with Syria and war on its borders, the AKP government's unrelenting pursuit of hegemony for Ottoman Islamism during its second and third terms both at home and abroad has generated strong and sustained resistance from supporters of alternative proposals for Turkey's national identity. In the clearest and most widely broadcast example, long-simmering frustrations among those supporting alternative identity proposals, who objected to various identity content components of Ottoman Islamism, exploded with the nation-wide dissemination of the protests that began in Istanbul's Gezi Park in May of 2013, and then developed into an unprecedented and multi-front contestation of Ottoman Islamism. In another notable example exhibiting a different dynamic, Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen and members of his *Hizmet* (service) movement – apparent brothers in the struggle against Republican Nationalists' suppression of religious expression – began to vehemently denounce Erdoğan's sultan-esque governance following a series of identity- and financially-based disputes.<sup>4</sup> A third example, which is not as immediately visible but which has far-reaching implications for the future of the Ottoman Islamist proposal, is manifested in the virulently anti-Semitic rhetoric used and left unsanctioned by AKP supporters. This form of hate speech, perhaps latent among supporters of Ottoman Islamism but becoming glaringly public in response to Israel's attacks on Gaza in 2014, delimits the possibility of Ottoman Islamism being accepted as a proposal those for whom racism and implied support of genocide are a red line.

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2013), p. 172. Fascinating when considered in conjunction with identity hegemony theory's concept of red lines, "*marjinal*" is often used in conjunction with other terms AKP leaders consider as demonizing epithets but with which Western Liberalists are perfectly comfortable. In a recent speech while hosting Kurdish village leaders at the *Ak Saray*, for example, Erdoğan condemned those who objected to the AKP's manner of solving the Kurdish problem (*çözüm süreci*) as "marginal, atheist, non-believing" (*inançsız*) troublemakers. See "*Erdoğan: Marjinaller, Ateistler Bizim Birbirimize Muhabbetimizi Tanımlayamaz*," posted on the Kurdish-friendly website *Evrensel.net*, 23 March 2015, <http://www.evrensel.net/haber/108568/erdogan-marjinaller-ateistler-bizim-birbirimize-muhabbetimizi-tanimlayamaz>.

<sup>3</sup> The chosen moniker by those sympathetic to the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) is *Ak Parti*, rather than AKP. In Turkish, *ak* means "white" or "pure," and is used by members and supporters to differentiate themselves from Turkey's previous history of corrupt political parties.

<sup>4</sup> For a discussion in the cleric's own words printed in the *New York Times* – one part of an overarching strategy of taking its own fight for a newly differentiated proposal of Turkish Islamism to the foreign policy arena – see Fethullah Gülen, "Turkey's Eroding Democracy," *New York Times*, 3 February 2015: [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/04/opinion/fethullah-gulen-turkeys-eroding-democracy.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/04/opinion/fethullah-gulen-turkeys-eroding-democracy.html?_r=0).

This paper analyzes these three key episodes that each constitute major challenges to the AKP's pursuit of identity hegemony for Ottoman Islamism, and all of which shaped the contours of Turkey's identity debates in just the past two years (May 2013 – April 2015). While many such events could be pointed to as posing challenges to Ottoman Islamism, these particular episodes are selected for analysis because they represent three different dynamics related to identity contestation. In their nation-wide demonstration of opposition against the repeatedly electorally successful AKP, the participants in the Gezi Protests constitute an unprecedented joining together in solidarity by supporters of competing proposals and represent the possibility of a hybrid identity forming out of unified opposition. The vitriolic feud between AKP loyalists and those supporting Gülen represents a splitting off of the latter group from the former and the potential development of a new, Turkish Calvinist proposal that combines elements of Ottoman Islamism, Pan-Turkic Nationalism, and Western Liberalism. Finally, the unchecked use of anti-Semitic slurs by AKP supporters in the wake of the Gaza attacks represents a radicalization and self-marginalization of previously rising Ottoman Islamism. My analysis of these three episodes reveals the common ground identified through interactions among supporters of competing proposals over the last two years, particularly those of Western Liberalism and Republican Nationalism.

### **Three Episodes of Contestation**

The following sub-sections analyze episodes representing three thematic changes in the contours of identity debates that can take place as a result of contestation: new interactions among supporters of competing identity proposals that create the potential for a hybrid proposal, a split among supporters of a proposal producing a new proposal, and the self-marginalization of a proposal through radicalization. Each of these developments constitutes a major challenge to Ottoman Islamists' pursuit of identity hegemony. While many of the demands made during the May 2013-May 2015 period in which these developments take place called for the resignation of Erdoğan's and then Davutoğlu's increasingly authoritarian AKP governments, it is important to note here that the focus of this analysis is not challenges to political power alone. Indeed, as I have repeatedly emphasized elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> identity proposals do not map neatly onto political parties and the contestation at stake here involves individual- and group-based ontological needs that cannot be fulfilled solely by unseating an opponent in one's own favor. Nor are positions of power being contested, at the time of writing, by those who have any viable means of attaining those positions.<sup>6</sup> What is being challenged in the episodes analyzed below is

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<sup>5</sup> Lisel Hintz. "'Take It Outside!' National Identity Contestation in the Foreign Policy Arena," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> While the chances of unseating the AKP in the June 2015 general elections are quite slim, there are of course calls for a new party to take power that represents the interests of those supporting alternative identity proposals. Whereas the main opposition CHP repeatedly faces weakness at the polls – due in great part to the identity-based conflicts between *ulusalcılar* (those hardcore Republican Nationalists who remained in the CHP following the *Anadolu Partisi* split), moderated Republican Nationalists, and the party's Western Liberalists – the HDP appears poised to surpass the 10% electoral threshold to enter parliament as a catch-all party of Western Liberalists despite its Kurdish roots. For a discussion of the ways in which this could take place, see Kadri Gürsel, "HDP Nasıl Seçilir?" *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 29 January 2015: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/hdp-baraji-nasil-gecer-/dunya/ydetay/2005488/default.htm>. Further, calls for those supporting the Gezi Protests to form their own party are frequently voiced by disparate segments of

related to, but cannot be reduced to, party politics; it is rather an understanding of a national “Us” that supporters of alternative proposals find is utterly unacceptable to them.

### *Gezi Protests: The Makings of a Hybrid Proposal?*

Electurally speaking, the AKP had faced little in terms of serious political competition throughout its three terms in power, increasing its share of the vote and its seats in parliament in each general election since achieving its first parliamentary majority in 2002 as a newly formed party. Although founded by members of the Necmettin Erbakan’s *Fazilet Partisi* (Virtue Party), the AKP seemed to represent a more progressive wing of the Islamist *Milli Görüş Hareketi* (National Outlook Movement). Its founders proclaimed the AKP was a conservative democratic party, differentiating themselves from the *Saadet Partisi* (Felicity Party), an openly Islamist party founded by the traditionalists of the *Milli Görüş Hareketi*. In its first years in power, the AKP appealed to domestic and international audiences alike as a party that was focused on tangible results for its constituents<sup>7</sup> and pointed to as being a “Turkish model” for its Middle Eastern neighbors.<sup>8</sup>

As electorally successful as the AKP has been, even winning a referendum vote in 2010 that allowed the government to amend the constitution, the events comprising the Gezi Park protests of 2013 screamed the news that its attempts to spread Ottoman Islamism as a proposal for Turkey’s identity had been ultimately unsuccessful. Previously politically apathetic individuals, including huge swathes of Turkey’s youth, turned out in the millions to voice their criticism of the AKP, its increasingly illiberal actions, and its policies

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Turkey’s population. Author’s interviews with a tourism-related business owner, Antalya, July 2013; with two retired civil servants, Ankara, August 2013; and with a lawyer and a civil activist, Istanbul, August 2013. The newly formed Gezi Party (*Gezi Partisi*) is an effort to answer these calls, but is also aware of the various obstructions to navigating the political system as a newcomer. See Fevzi Kızılkoyun, “*Gezi Partisi Kuruldu*,” *Hürriyet Gazetesi*, 24 October 2013. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/24968096.asp>.

<sup>7</sup> The party’s symbol, a shining light bulb, represents the economic development, and particular the spread of electricity to rural areas, that the AKP has achieved. Erdoğan established his electoral credentials by overseeing a major overhaul of public services in Istanbul, an accomplishment respected by even Erdoğan detractors, who view him somewhat of a Rudy Giuliani of Istanbul. In the weeks prior to local and general elections, the number of construction workers repairing roads and sidewalks noticeably increases, commented on enthusiastically by AKP supporters and sardonically by others as “*Seçim geliyor...*” (An election’s coming...). Engaging AKP supporters in conversation about why they vote as they do often produces project-based responses similar to the following given by a taxi driver in Ankara, March 2014: “Look at what Tayyip [Erdoğan] did: the third bridge, the airport... What did the other guys do? Nothing.”

<sup>8</sup> The Western world’s fascination with Turkey as a model of democracy and economic development has dramatically waned as Ottoman Islamism has become increasingly present in the public sphere and institutions of governance. In its heyday, however, numerous academic articles and conferences as well as policy pieces were devoted to the subject. In August 2011, for example, *The Economist* favorably cites “Muslim democracy *alla Turca*” in a discussion of the Arab Spring, stating that “Turkey’s Islamists seem to have got things right.” See *The Economist*, “The Turkish Model: A Hard Act to Follow,” 6 August 2011: <http://www.economist.com/node/21525408>. However, as is often the case when trying to use one example for others (e.g., democracy specialists looking to Latin American as a model for Eastern Europe, and then Eastern Europe as a model for post-Soviet states), not only was the spread of Ottoman Islamism not recognized, but neither were Turkey’s unique secularization under Republican Nationalists, the fact that its legacy is that of an empire rather than an entity subject to the administrative whims of one, or, more recently, the major banking reforms undertaken after the 2000-01 economic crisis that helped Turkey sustain 8% growth rates while the EU and much of the rest of the world floundered.

designed to raise a pious (*dindar*), conservative (*muhafazakar*) generation. The swell of opposition that was catalyzed and spread within hours of camera-phone images showing Turkish police forces beating peaceful demonstrators in Gezi Park and setting tents on fire while others slept in them unleashed a torrent of criticism against the AKP. The events collectively known as “*Gezi*,” which began in May 2013 as an environmental sit-in to protect a park adjacent to Istanbul’s Taksim Square from demolition, evolved rapidly into massive countrywide protests. Demonstrations showing solidarity with the Gezi movement were recorded in all of Turkey’s 81 provinces except for Bayburt, located in Turkey’s Black Sea region, and lasted over three months.<sup>9</sup>

Although initially mobilized by the images of police violence, and then the ensuing media silence resulting from a clamp down by outlets owned by large media conglomerates with financial ties to the AKP,<sup>10</sup> my analysis of the political culture of Gezi reveals that deep-seated issues of identity undergirded much of outrage fueling protesters’ return to the streets each evening after work. Based on this diagnostic evidence (to use the language of process tracing) that I refer to here, I argue that the Gezi Protests represent the first major, sustained contestation of the Ottoman Islamism proposal for national identity in Turkey. Indeed, Gezi’s genesis can be seen as a synecdoche of anti-Ottoman Islamist contestation: the movement’s roots lie in environmentalists attempting to prevent a demolition project that would have made way for a reconstruction of *Topçu Kışlası*, the Ottoman-style military barracks that were destroyed in 1940. In terms of wider grievances, demonstrators referenced Erdoğan’s sultan-esque rule of his own political and media empires; the indiscriminate use of violence against peaceful demonstrators that Erdoğan hailed as acts of heroism by “*my police*” carried the Ottoman Islamist theme of a despot with his forces of oppression at his unchecked disposal.<sup>11</sup> Similar to the AKP’s control of Ottoman imagery evidenced in its censure of the series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* for its racy scenes at portrayal of alcohol consumption by palace notables, the AKP also appears to have tried to prevent one of the last descendants of the sultan’s line from demonstrating at Gezi. Adile Osmanoğlu, the granddaughter of Abdülhamid II, stated in an interview with Bugün TV that a “figure close to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan threatened” her after she was seen visiting the site of the protest.<sup>12</sup> As an important if anecdotal indication that the events of Gezi pose a challenge to the AKP’s Ottoman Islamist project, even the sultan’s relative, who stated that before the events of Gezi “Erdoğan was a person whom I trust and respected,” has lost respect for its identity proposal.

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<sup>9</sup> See Tolga Şardan, “*Gezi’ye Katılmayan Tek İl*,” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 25 November 2013: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/geziye-katilmayan-tek-il/gundem/detay/1797621/default.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> In a post published just a month before Gezi, *Al-Jazeera* rightly and presciently referred to this situation, characterized as indirect censorship – in which the ties of media barons to profitable industries such as construction and the benefits they receive from favorable government contracts lead them to censor their own news outlets – as the Turkish “media muzzle.” See “The Turkish Media Muzzle,” *Al Jazeera*, 2 April 2013: <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/2013/04/201342104340948788.html>.

<sup>11</sup> “*Erdoğan: Polis Kahramanlık Destanı Yazdı*,” posted on *NTVMSNBC.com*, 24 June 2013: <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25450862/>. The title of the article deserves translation: “Erdoğan: The Police Wrote an Epic of Heroism.”

<sup>12</sup> “*Adile Osmanoğlu: Erdoğan’a Yakın bir İsim Beni Tehdit Etti*,” posted on *Bugün.com*, 11 December 2014: <http://www.bugun.com.tr/gundem/tehdit-edildim-haberi/1386513>.

In addition to the Ottoman despot theme, discourse used by protestors throughout the ongoing demonstrations carried many other references to identity as well. Turkish and Ottoman history expert Halil İnalçık summed up all of the events surrounding the Gezi Protests as an “identity issue” (*kimlik meselesi*) that represented the increasing polarization among secular and pious Turks. He noted that today there are “*Selamünaleyküm diyenler*” (“Those who say ‘peace be with you,’” a greeting rooted in Islam) and “*Merhaba diyenler*” (“those who greet you with ‘hello,’” a greeting with no religious connotation in Turkey), recounting a personal experience in which his insistence on using “*merhaba*” displeased colleagues (*pek hoşlanmadılar*) who invited him to a conference in the conservative city of Bursa, and who then treated him with disdain. He then elaborated on this theme by stating that Gezi was a gathering of those who wish to still be able to greet people by saying *merhaba* without being judged negatively or being excluded from a group.<sup>13</sup>

Along these lines, the rejection of Ottoman Islamism’s social purpose of spreading Islam in the public sphere was prominent during Gezi. One of the most popular slogans of Republican Nationalists, “*Türkiye laiktir, laik kalacak!*” (“Turkey is secular and will remain secular!) was chanted hundreds of times over.<sup>14</sup> A slogan spray-painted on a wall during Gezi mocks the questions posed to Islamic scholars during Ramadan, often broadcast live during programs shown before the *iftar* meal breaking the day’s fast. While traditional questions asked during such broadcasts include whether brushing one’s teeth or swearing break one’s fast, the slogan at Gezi reads: “Teacher, does pepper spray break one’s fast?” (“*Hocam biber gazı oruç bozar mı?*”)<sup>15</sup> Another spray-painted slogan reads “You banned alcohol, people sobered up” (“*Alkolü yasakladın millet ayıldı*”),<sup>16</sup> an apt depiction of the many Islam-inspired incursions into daily life that provoked generally apathetic segments of Turkey’s population into rising up against the spread of Ottoman Islamism. The restrictions on the sale of alcohol, including a ban in all university campus facilities, represent one of the many these incursions to which Gezi protesters from many varied backgrounds objected. Alevis, non-Muslims, non-believers, and even Sunni Muslims gathered together to oppose to the steps taken to restrict abortions and increase fertility in general, regulations against co-ed housing, conversion of some middle schools into *imam hatip* (preacher training schools), and other religiously-oriented policies viewed as intolerable by supporters of alternative proposals for national identity in Turkey.

In addition to challenges against Ottoman Islamism’s perceived threats to secular lifestyles, particularly raised by Republican Nationalists but also advocated by Western Liberalists who viewed the imposition of religion as a violation of personal liberties, Ottoman Islamism’s constitutive norms of gender and sexual identity also constituted a wide-spread, unifying challenge by strikingly diverse groups of demonstrators. For Turkey’s LGBT community, Gezi’s concomitant diversity and solidarity represented a unique locus for the expression of sexual identities previously unthinkable in public spaces given the deep-seated prejudices against homosexuality rampant throughout Turkey. Two

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<sup>13</sup> He elaborated on this by saying Gezi represented a “youth issue” (*gençlik meselesi*) in terms of generational boundaries of identity, but also clearly an “issue of religiosity” (*dincilik meselesi*). Author’s interview, Ankara, August 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Author’s observation of protest in Ankara (Kuğulu Park) and Istanbul (Nişantaşı), both June 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Photo of the slogan used in *Çapulcu’nun Gezi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Hemen Kitap, 2013), p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

LGBT activists expressed great hope at the newly created space for LGBTs during the Gezi Protests, stating the supportive atmosphere among those demonstrating provided a safe space to protest Ottoman Islamists' open denunciation of homosexuality for people to whom "solidarity means a lot."<sup>17</sup> The communal spirit of Gezi and the breadth of its mobilizational capacity also facilitated numerous interactions among LGBTs and those with admitted previous prejudices that, in true constructivist fashion, created "transformative contributions" to how actors viewed each other; by standing up against tear gas and water cannons, LGBTs showed they could be "as *delikanlı* (tough guy) as the rest."<sup>18</sup> The activist providing this insight noted that the "LGBT Block's" use of rainbow-colored, LGBT-themed banners, pamphlets, and slogans enabled the group to maintain "visibility in the daily life of the Park, and such attempts opened ways in which new acquaintances became possible." Responding to a question posed on month after the protests began about how Gezi affected the LGBT struggle in Turkey, one trans-activist sums up a change in behavior whose significance cannot be understated:

From now on, individuals who take to the streets in resistance will behave much differently toward LGBT individuals. In the first days many homophobic and sexist slogans were chanted and scrawled on our walls. Once feminist organizations and the LGBT Block began objecting to this together with other groups, representatives from the *Çarşı* group came to us to apologize with a bouquet of flowers in their hands. They said: "We're used to being this way/We were raised this way [*Biz böyle almışız*] but actually we really like you. We don't have a problem with you [*Size bir lafımız yok*]." This was the beginning of a dialogue. People will stop and try to understand each other based on this.<sup>19</sup>

Another activist, commenting on the change in how LGBTs are viewed and treated in Turkey, stated that "Gezi did in three weeks what otherwise would have taken us three years."<sup>20</sup>

High numbers of women participating in the Gezi Protests also posed numerous challenges to Ottoman Islamism's patriarchal view of women's role in society. When Istanbul's AKP mayor Hüseyin Avni Mutlu's demands that mothers come to collect their

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with a lawyer/university professor and an LGBT activist (names withheld), Istanbul, August 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Bade Okçuoğlu, giving a presentation entitled "The LGBT Block," at *Talk Turkey Conference: Rethinking Life since Gezi*, The New School University, 4-5 October 2013. Transcript posted on *Jadaliyya.com*: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15037/rethinking-gezi-through-feminist-and-lgbt-perspect>.

<sup>19</sup> Esmeray, speaking with interviewer Burcu, posted as "*Esmeray Ameliyat Oldu*" on the website of *Türk Eşcinsel Kulübü LGBT Haber Sitesi* on 9 July 2013: <http://news.turkgayclub.com/yasam/4848-esmeray-ameliyat-oldu.html>. *Çarşı* is the group of fans (*tarafدارlar*) supporting the Beşiktaş soccer club, one of Istanbul's three biggest along with Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray, and served as a massive mobilizer of demonstrators during the protests. The rivalry between the three clubs is notorious and long-standing, making the displays of solidarity among supporters of the three with arms around each others' shoulders another image emblematic of the unique, if perhaps temporary, unifying power of Gezi.

<sup>20</sup> See "Homophobic Prejudices Broken by Gezi Incidents in Turkey," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 29 July 2013: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/homophobic-prejudices-broken-by-gezi-incidents-in-turkey.aspx?pageID=238&nID=51567&NewsCatID=339>.

children from Gezi essentially reduced the role of women to that of submissive housewives, mothers turned up in droves to form a human chain around their supposedly “delinquent” children.<sup>21</sup> The spirit of defiance and independence of such women, incompatible with Ottoman Islamism’s constitutive norms of appropriate behavior, also manifested itself in a razor-sharp and immensely creative use of wit to challenge Ottoman Islamism. One female protestor poked fun at Erdoğan’s ardently socially conservative call for women to have three or more children and his aspiration of a new pious generation by spray-painting “Are you sure you want three kids like *us*?”<sup>22</sup> A similarly themed sign, held by a woman standing behind her smiling and head-scarved mother, reads “I’ll have three kids, I promise!” and includes stick-figure drawings of children named ÇapulCan, ÇapulNaz, and ÇapulNur<sup>23</sup> – adding common Turkish names to the insult “*çapulcu*” (hooligan). Protesters began defiantly calling themselves as *çapulcu* after Erdoğan dismissed the Gezi Protests as being the work of “*birkaç çapulcu*” (“a few hooligans”).<sup>24</sup> Another woman, defying those who would characterize all head-scarved women as Ottoman Islamists and providing ample caution to the researcher against inferring quick conclusions, held a sign reading “My head is covered but my eyes are not, *Tayyip be!*”<sup>25</sup>

By ridiculing particular aspects of Ottoman Islamism as promoted by the AKP government, supporters of other proposals engaged in a delegitimization campaign against the push for Ottoman Islamist identity hegemony with the limited tools at their disposal. Using their only real effective access to the foreign policy arena as a strategy of taking their contestation outside, opponents of Ottoman Islamism took to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media sharing sites to internationalize their discontent with the identity proposal being, as they viewed it, forced upon them. International solidarity movements in dozens of countries, inspired by and imitating the resilient wit displayed by Turkey’s protesters in the face of disproportionate violence, put pressure on their respective governments to respond to the AKP’s behavior. While harsh reprimands did come from individual countries and from the EU (in the form of the 2013 annual EU Progress Report on Turkey, whose criticism was deliberately toned down at the request of Turkey’s Ministry for EU Affairs),<sup>26</sup> the potential effects of the boomerang model conceptualized by Keck and Sikkink were not realized,<sup>27</sup> due to many factors

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<sup>21</sup> “Rethinking Gezi through Feminist and LGBT Perspectives,” *Jadaliyya.com* 3 November 2013: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/15037/rethinking-gezi-through-feminist-and-lgbt-perspect>.

<sup>22</sup> Author’s photo taken in Kuğulu Park, Ankara, June 2013. Similar photo used in “*Direnince Çok Eğlenceli Oluyorsun Türkiye!*,” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 9 June 2013. <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/direnince-cok-eglenceli-oluyorsun/pazar/haberdetay/09.06.2013/1720366/default.htm>. Emphasis added.

<sup>23</sup> Photo used in *Çapulcu’nun Gezi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Hemen Kitap, 2013), p. 169.

<sup>24</sup> “*Başbakan Erdoğan: Biz Birkaç Çapulcunun Yaptıklarını Yapmayız*,” *Radikal Gazetesi*, 9 June 2013: [http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/basbakan\\_erdogan\\_biz\\_birkac\\_capulcunun\\_yaptiklarini\\_yapmayiz-1136875](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/basbakan_erdogan_biz_birkac_capulcunun_yaptiklarini_yapmayiz-1136875).

<sup>25</sup> The (in this case intentionally disrespectful) use of Erdoğan’s familiar name Tayyip and the slang-/curse-word “*be*” by the young head-scarved girl here also serves as a direct rebuke his authority and thus a further challenge to his promotion of an Ottoman Islamist identity. Photo in *Çapulcu’nun Gezi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Hemen Kitap, 2013), p. 163.

<sup>26</sup> Author’s interview with EU Ministry official (name withheld), Ankara, November 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Transnational Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

including the AKP's extensive control over numerous media outlets, the obstinacy of the Prime Minister himself, and, crucially, a large proportion of Ottoman Islamist identity supporters who believe that the protesters' behavior was immoral and that their leader should have the authority to exercise complete control when he deems necessary.

In the face of these obstacles to contestation of identity in both the domestic and foreign policy realms, the thousands of creative uses of humor in the easily accessible and relatively anonymous realm of social media that protesters used to challenge the AKP's pursuit of hegemonic power recalls the strategies used by James Scott's subjects in *Weapons of the Weak*.<sup>28</sup> Scott enumerates the many strategies, including prank-pulling and name-calling that those otherwise powerless in the face of repression use to incrementally erode the legitimacy of their repressors. Simultaneously, those engaged in seemingly minor acts of subversion of authority also strengthen their own sense of self-worth and create bonds of solidarity that unite them as a newly recognized "Us," or experientially constituted collectivity, in opposition to a common "Them."

The female protester's use of the word "us" in comically challenging Erdoğan by asking if he wanted three children like "us" noted above underscores well the of Us v. Them discourse that constitutes the recently catalyzed contestation by those challenging Ottoman Islamism and by those defending it. Erdoğan's many responses to the incredibly diverse group categorized all protesters as a monolithic and immoral "Them." Then-EU Minister Egemen Bağış further "other-ized"<sup>29</sup> dissenters by calling them terrorists,<sup>30</sup> and Erdoğan accusing them of engaging in behaviors particularly offensive to supporters of an Ottoman Islamist identity proposal, such as drinking alcohol in a mosque and assaulting and urinating on a head-scarved woman waiting for a ferry with her infant. Erdoğan's language describing the supposed attack on the woman, later proven to be false by camera footage along with the claims about alcohol,<sup>31</sup> is particularly notable from an Us v. Them perspective and even repetitive in its emphasis on the headscarf as a symbol of "us": "Is it now up to you [MHP General Secretary Devlet Bahçeli] to defend the Gezi vandals against our head-scarved girl (*başörtülü kızımız*) who was lynched with her headscarf and her 6-

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<sup>28</sup> James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

<sup>29</sup> See Iver B. Neuman, *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Bağış declared all those going to protest in Taksim Square would be considered terrorists. See "Egemen Bağış: Taksim'e Çıkan Terorist Muamelesi Görür," *Radikal Gazetesi*, 16 June 2013: [http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/egemen\\_bagis\\_taksime\\_cikan\\_terorist\\_muamelesi\\_gorur-1137822](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/egemen_bagis_taksime_cikan_terorist_muamelesi_gorur-1137822). Bağış later referred to demonstrators mourners of the death of Berkin Elvan, a 15-year-old who was shot in the head by a tear gas canister while out to buy bread during the Gezi Protests, as necrophiliacs as part of an election campaign, tweeting that "Our nation (*milletimiz*) will give the necessary response to necrophiliacs on [election day] 30 March. See "Egemen Bağış, 'Nekrofiller' Mesajının Muhatabını Açıkladı," *Radikal Gazetesi*, 13 March 2014: [http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/egemen\\_bagis\\_nekrofiller\\_mesajinin\\_muhatabini\\_acikladi-1181010](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/egemen_bagis_nekrofiller_mesajinin_muhatabini_acikladi-1181010).

<sup>31</sup> See "Recording Shows Erdoğan Refused to Ease Tensions During Gezi Park Protests," *Today's Zaman*, 14 March 2014: <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-342132-recording-shows-erdogan-refused-to-ease-tensions-during-gezi-park-protests.html>.

month child at her side (*başörtüsüyle ve yanında altı aylık çocuğuyla*)?”<sup>32</sup> Conversely, using the language of Ottoman Islamism in an inclusive way, *Yeni Şafak* correspondent Süleyman Gündüz, who was present at the mosque when the supposedly alcohol-consuming protesters sought shelter from the tear gas being used by police stressed that not only was alcohol not consumed but that those entering “took off their shoes” as a sign of respect.<sup>33</sup>

Through the use of other-izing discourse, however, Ottoman Islamists simultaneously delegitimizes the peaceful civil protests in which citizens of Turkey were engaging while making it quite clear that they are excluded from being “our” citizens. Erdoğan even extended his hostile other-izing line of thinking to the international realm, claiming that foreign forces, including a shady “interest lobby” (*faiz lobisi*)<sup>34</sup> were trying to prevent Turkey’s rise as a strong state under his leadership by fuelling the Gezi Protests as a destabilization mechanism. In a speech to party supporters, Erdoğan called CNN International reporter Ivan Watson, who was taken into custody while filming the protests in Taksim despite showing his full press credentials, an intelligence agent (*ajan*) and a flunky (*dalkavuk*), receiving thunderous applause and cheering. Using language consistent with Ottoman Islamism’s anti-Western relational meaning and cognitive worldview of Turkey as the legitimate inheritor of the imperial legacy with its leader in a sultan-esque role, Erdoğan answered his own question of why CNN International would show non-stop footage of the events at Gezi: “To mess with *my* country (*ülkemi karıştırmak için*), to show *my* country differently to the world.”<sup>35</sup>

Ottoman Islamists were not alone in using *Us v. Them* rhetoric during Gezi, however; despite the overall diverse and inclusive atmosphere that characterized Gezi, some exclusionary elements of Pan-Turkic and Republican Nationalist identity content also manifested themselves during the protests. Some protesters displaying Kurdish colors and using Kurdish slogans were jeered at or threatened by those insisting that all those present were Turks. Pan-Turkic Nationalist interviewees stated they were at Gezi to defend the Turkish nation from corruption by an Ottomanist who misunderstands Turks’ true Central Asian legacy, and that Kurdishness had no place there.<sup>36</sup> A warning posted to protesters from Istanbul’s largely Republican Nationalist Fenerbahçe soccer club (Atatürk was a

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<sup>32</sup> “Erdoğan: Kabataş’taki Gezi’cileri Savunmak Sana mı Kaldı ey Bahçeli?” reported on news site *T24.com*, 19 February 2014: <https://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-kabatastaki-gezicileri-savunmak-sana-mi-kaldi-bahceli.251453>. Emphasis added.

<sup>33</sup> “Erdoğan ‘Camiye İçkiyle Girdiler’ İddiasını Tekrarladı,” *Hürriyet Gazetesi*, 10 June 2013: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23468860.asp>.

<sup>34</sup> Erdoğan is generally unspecific in his use of the term, but paints frightening pictures of foreign currency speculators looking to profit from a collapse of the Turkish economy. This resonates very strongly with citizens of Turkey, who experienced a devastating economic crisis in 2000-01. The government-friendly newspaper *Sabah Gazetesi* offers a description for readers supporting Erdoğan’s claims, See Süleyman Yaşar, “Nedir Faiz Lobisi? Erdoğan Niye Lobiyi İşaret Etti?” *Sabah Gazetesi*, 10 June 2013: <http://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/yasar/2013/06/10/nedir-faiz-lobisi-erdogan-niye-lobiyi-isaret-etti>.

<sup>35</sup> *Cumhuriyet.com* embedded a video of the speech, which was broadcast on CNN Turk, along with its report, posted on 3 June 2014: [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/78603/Erdogan\\_dan\\_CNN\\_muhabirine\\_Dalkavuk\\_ajan.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/78603/Erdogan_dan_CNN_muhabirine_Dalkavuk_ajan.html#). Emphasis added.

<sup>36</sup> Author’s interview with three *Ülkü Ocakları* members in Giresun, March 2014.

Fenerbahçe fan)<sup>37</sup> delineated what forms of identity expressions would be tolerated: “Attention please!!! During the march only the Turkish flag, the Fenerbahçe flag, and the flags of friends’ teams we want to see beside us will be carried.”<sup>38</sup> Although the welcoming of teams other than Fenerbahçe is a significant gesture, the message implicit in specifying the Turkish flag is that Kurdish flags must not be displayed. While some groups of Western Liberal protesters openly displayed their embrace of ethnic and racial diversity – a poignant photo shows several children each holding up a sign reading “Greek-rooted (*Rum*) Çapulcu,” “Kurdish Çapulcu,” and “Turk Çapulcu” – such explicit recognition of ethnic difference is intolerable for supporters of Pan-Turkic and Republican Nationalism.<sup>39</sup> One publication documenting the Gezi experience states its exclusionary vision quite clearly in a headline: “The Two Enemies of the Gezi Resistance: The AKP and the [Kurdish] BDP.”<sup>40</sup> The *Barış and Demokrasi Partisi* (Peace and Democracy Party – BDP)<sup>41</sup> is a Kurdish-based party that advocates for increased cultural rights for Kurds, including education in their mother tongue, and that is often referred to as the political wing of the PKK. Another sign alluding negatively to ethnic and religious differences, i.e., that citizens of Turkey are stronger when they are united and weaker when such divides were artificially imposed upon them to separate them, reads: Now do you understand why they separated us as Turk-Kurd and Alevi-Sunni? Because by coming together we become like this – By uniting we will win!” (“*Birleşe birleşe kazanacağız!*”)<sup>42</sup>

Further, while not exclusionary, some of the contestation visible in the course of the Gezi Protests was directed not at Ottoman Islamism but at supporters of Republican Nationalism, suggesting another potential obstacle to the formation of a hybrid identity. Some protesters objected to the chanting of the common slogan “*Mustafa Kemal’in Askerleriyiz*” (We are Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk’s] soldiers) and the militant element of serving at Atatürk’s bidding associated with it. A demonstrator’s sign displayed during the protests read: “We are not anyone’s soldiers” (“*Kimsenin askeri değiliz*”).<sup>43</sup> This attitude may be prevalent among those Kurdish protesters who associate Turkish soldiers with oppression of and violence against their people, but also among other Western Liberalists, who by this dissertation’s definition support ethnic minority and religious group rights that contravene the Republican Nationalist proposal even in its more moderated form.

As different from each other as they are in terms of identity content, supporters of each of the three alternative understandings of national identity discussed here posed significant and widespread challenges to the AKP’s pursuit of hegemony for Ottoman Islamism for the first time during the Gezi Protests. Building on the momentum established,

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<sup>37</sup> See the “*Atatürk ve Fenerbahçe*” post on the soccer club’s website: <http://www.fenerbahce.org/hedef1milyonuye.asp?q=kurumsal/detay.asp?ContentID=10>.

<sup>38</sup> Posted in a summary of the march as “*Fenerbahçeliler Taksim’e Yürüdü*,” on *EverywhereTaksim.net*, 8 June 2013: <http://everywheretaksim.net/tr/t24-taraftarlar-gezi-parki-icin-taksimde/>.

<sup>39</sup> Photo in *Çapulcu’nun Gezi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Hemen Kitap, 2013), p. 121.

<sup>40</sup> *Taksim’de Kutsal İsyân* (Istanbul: İleri Yayınları, 2013), p. 70.

<sup>41</sup> Since the local elections of March 2014, the BDP has been largely supplanted by the *Halkların Demokratik Partisi* (Peoples’ Democratic Party – HDP).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> Photo of the slogan used in *Çapulcu’nun Gezi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Hemen Kitap, 2013), p. 135.

supporters of alternative identity proposals regularly took to the streets to protest both domestic and foreign policy behaviors prescribed by Ottoman Islamism, with the government's treatment of the Syria crisis foremost among grievances related to the latter. As the analysis presented above makes clear, this contestation was not just about the abuse of political power or the use of violence against protesters, but rather the identity content driving the objectionable policies implemented by the AKP and justifying the suppression of dissenters, precisely because "they" are "Them." As united as they were during the heady, often carnival-like atmosphere of Gezi, the above analysis also demonstrates that divisions related to identity persist. If these divisions prove to be red lines whose compromise cannot be tolerated, this may hinder the emergence of a hybrid identity that seemed poised to emerge from the recognition of common ground among groups that previously regarded each other with either apathy or antipathy.

### *Gülenists: A Split from Within*

Although not nearly on the same scale as the Gezi Protests, the rising feud and ultimate split between Ottoman Islamists and their former staunch allies within the Gülenist movement has also demonstrated the potential to reshape the contours of identity debates in Turkey. Supporters of the Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen – who consider themselves to be part of a *Hizmet* (Service) movement rather than any religious group or sect, but whom are often referred to in Turkey as the "cemaat," or "confessional community," – come from a different spiritual-intellectual movement than does much of the AKP's highest ranking members, which were raised in the *Milli Görüş Hareketi* led for many years by Necmettin Erbakan and influenced by the *Nakşibendi* religious order. In contrast, Gülen is part of the *Nurcu* order, deriving his inspiration from the writings of Anatolian religious figure Bediüzzaman Said Nursi that were assembled by his followers into the volume *Risale-i Nur Külliyyatı* (*The Epistles of Light*). Although a Kurdish Sunni Muslim, Nursi was a supporter of the Young Turks and Atatürk's idea of Turkish nationalism.<sup>44</sup> Nursi strongly advocated promoting modernization, especially education and literacy, goals of great significance to Republican Nationalists and themes that continue to influence followers of Nursi (*Nurcular*) today. A Gülen-friendly website emphasizes the role of Nursi in Turkey's modernization, quoting at length a historian who claims "today's modern Turkey isn't just the work of Atatürk, it is also Said Nursi's work."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Although the level and duration of Nursi's support for Atatürk is debated – Nursi resoundingly rejected Atatürk's offer of a position as a state preacher, apparently recognizing it for the effort to co-opt religious support that it was – the importance of the belief in this support is demonstrated by an article published in Gülen-supported *Today's Zaman* claiming civil relations between the two. "Bediüzzaman Said Nursi and Atatürk Never Argued, Says Ensari," *Today's Zaman*, 7 January 2011: [http://www.todayszaman.com/national\\_bediuzzaman-said-nursi-and-aturk-never-argued-says-ensari\\_231734.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/national_bediuzzaman-said-nursi-and-aturk-never-argued-says-ensari_231734.html).

<sup>45</sup> Murat Tokay, "Modern Türkiye, Said Nursi'nin de Eseri," posted on *Aksiyon.com*, 12 December 2011: [http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/kitap/modern-turkiye-said-nursi-nin-de-eseri\\_531228](http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/kitap/modern-turkiye-said-nursi-nin-de-eseri_531228).

Despite these separate traditions and different views of Atatürk, and despite the *Milli Görüş Hareketi* being an explicitly political movement while Gülen vehemently insists his movement is not political,<sup>46</sup> the *cemaat* Gülenists and the non-*cemaat* Islamists shared the constitutive norm of Sunni Islam and the common social purpose of expanding the place of Islam in the public sphere. With their sights set on a similar goal, and with no visible red lines of identity content differentiating them that could pose obstacles to their partnership, supporters of both strands united behind the project of spreading Ottoman Islamism across Turkey's society. During this period of unity among Gülenists and non-*cemaat* AKP leaders,<sup>47</sup> Gülen openly supported the AKP's successful 2010 referendum posed to enable the party to make changes to the 1982 constitution, a very strict document written by the military but amended several times since. Gülen explains his reasoning behind his support of the referendum (and undoubtedly that of his followers) on his website in the following, didactic manner:

I consider it a mission to express the nature of my contemplation (*mülâhazalarım*) on the path to voting "yes" in the referendum, because if I were not to do something that I believe will be useful, I would have to answer to God and would descend into the condition of being ashamed in front our Prophet. I would not remain silent on a topic that I believe will be beneficial in the name of my country, my nation, and my ideals; to be speechless would be to do the devil's work (*şeytanlık*), because the reforms to be undertaken are very important. First and foremost, it is a matter of shedding elements of tutelage (*bazı*

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<sup>46</sup> The official separation from the political realm follows the tradition of Nursi, who refused to comment on politics or encourage his followers to mobilize around issues of political debate. He had also encourage the moderate practice of Islam, stating that fanaticism and the use of violence to influence politics is incompatible with Islam – a red line from this theoretical perspective. See Joshua Hendrick, *Gülen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013), p. 65. Gülen-sponsored *Zaman*, for example, published a statement made by the (also Gülen-connected) Journalists and Writers' Foundation (*Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı*) stating that "The Hizmet Movement [of Gülen] would never be in conflict with a political or social association/circle (*camia*)."<sup>47</sup> A post on Gülen's official website in answer the self-posed question of "Does Fethullah Gülen Have a Political Goal?" quotes Gülen as saying "political movements are things that come and go (*gelip geçicidir*)" but that the legacy of the Koran is "forever" (*daima*), and that "we never dove into politics" (*biz hiçbir zaman siyasete dalmadık*)." See the piece posted 6 March 2012: <http://tr.fgulen.com/content/view/20398/172/>.

<sup>47</sup> Speculation exists that former president Abdullah Gül is part of the *cemaat*, but such speculation, which extends to the point of conspiracy theory, cannot be proven or disproven. A fascinating representation of such conspiracy theory taken to an even further iteration of deceit, the novel *Devşirme* (*The Recruit*) tells the story of Atilla, a young boy adopted and raised within the *cemaat* under the very pious guidance of his mentor Lütfü Bey. Atilla, along with hundreds over other boys, are trained by the *cemaat* to infiltrate the CHP by masking their conservative upbringings – a traditionally Shi'i practice of *takiye*, or deceiving others about one's religion, in which conspiracy theorists believe Gülenists engage. When Atilla slips up in a conversation at a CHP party meeting and defends Islam, he breaks the stunned silence with a joke, stating "Anyway, I'm not a *Nurcu*; I'm a member of a different brotherhood (*tarikat mensubu*)," a possibility his fellow CHP members find so absurd they laugh uproariously. See Cenkut Yıldırım, *Devşirme* (Istanbul: Neden Kitap, 2010), pp. 144-45. In addition to the conspiracy theorists who would comprise the book's enthusiastic readership, non-*cemaat* AKP members also began to accuse Gülen of practicing *takiye* following the split between the two. See, for example, AKP academic Burhanettin Duran's comments in "'Gülen Cemaati Şia'nin Takiye Siyasetine Yaklaşmıştır,'" posted on *T24.com*, 29 December 2013: <http://t24.com.tr/haber/gulen-cemaati-sianin-takiye-siyasetine-yaklasmistir,247145.>

*vesayetlerden sıyrılması*). Shedding this tutelage means that our people can think as themselves and that the path toward being themselves is opened.<sup>48</sup>

Both his support and the language in which Gülen couches it demonstrate commonalities in terms of constitutive norms and social purpose among *cemaat* members and non-*cemaat* AKP members. The explicit reference to religious beliefs as motivating the decision to support the AKP's referendum – to avoid becoming “shamed” in front of the Prophet – indicates a constitutive norm of piety, as does the duty to speak out on the issues at stake so as not to become complicit in the “devil's work.” Gülen's statement that the “very important” reforms will open the path toward Turkey's citizens “being themselves” uses specific identity-based language that criticizes previous attempts to suppress alternative identity proposals. His belief that the referendum will allow Turkey to “shed elements of tutelage” serves as a direct reference to the military tutelage (*askeri vesayet*) non-Republican Nationalists see as having been imposed upon the country following the 12 September 1980 coup through brutal crackdowns and the highly restrictive, military-written 1982 constitution.<sup>49</sup> The reforms of the 12 September 2010 referendum – whose symbolic date represents an act of contestation in itself – included the opening of judgments made by the Supreme Military Council to appeal, the ability to prosecute military officials in civil courts, and the lifting of Article 15 to allow those who carried out the 1980 coup to be prosecuted.<sup>50</sup> In what is perhaps the culmination of the efforts motivating these reforms, former Chief of General Staff and self-designated President Kenan Evren was charged in April 2012 with the leading the military takeover as part of the *Ergenekon* trials, whose prosecution of many high-ranking members of the military the 2010 referendum made possible.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See Gülen's comments posted on his website 6 March 2012: <http://tr.fgulen.com/content/view/20398/172/>.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, the report entitled published by the AKP-friendly SETA Foundation a year prior to the 2010 referendum, which states that “Turkey's system of military jurisdiction came in to being with the 1961 Constitution and the 1982 Constitution preserved this position (*muhavaza etmiştir*).” Fazıl Hüsnü Erdem and Vahap Coşkun, “*Askeri Yargı ve Vesayet* [Military Jurisdiction and Tutelage],” SETA Foundation, 1 July 2009: <http://arsiv.setav.org/public/HaberDetay.aspx?Dil=tr&hid=6752&q=askeri-yargi-ve-vesayet>. Republican Nationalists who defend the military's actions have pointed to the need at the time to pacify society and create a stable, investment-worthy economy, emphasizing that Turkey's military coups “were not carried out to install military tutelage.” See Rifat Oymak, “*Türkiye'de Askeri Vesayet Hiç Olmadı*,” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 9 September 2011: [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=10&ved=0CGkQFjAJ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fblog.milliyet.com.tr%2Fturkiyede-askeri-vesayet-hic-olmadi%2Fblog%2F%3FblogNo%3D324935&ei=\\_s0zVZuvJI\\_HsQTOq4GQAQ&usq=AFQjCNHWv2R MQqVGHAP9Piu-edbbSXsUmg&bvm=bv.91071109,d.cWc](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=10&ved=0CGkQFjAJ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fblog.milliyet.com.tr%2Fturkiyede-askeri-vesayet-hic-olmadi%2Fblog%2F%3FblogNo%3D324935&ei=_s0zVZuvJI_HsQTOq4GQAQ&usq=AFQjCNHWv2R MQqVGHAP9Piu-edbbSXsUmg&bvm=bv.91071109,d.cWc).

<sup>50</sup> An undated post on the website NurWeb, whose domain name references the Nurcu movement of Gülen and his supporters, provided a list of all amendments that would be made if the referendum were to pass and that were “aimed at specifying the will of the people in very important issues” (“*çok önemli meselelerde halkın iradesini belirlemek amacıyla*”). See <http://www.nurweb.biz/referandum-degisiklikleri-nelerdir/>.

<sup>51</sup> Evren was sentenced to life imprisonment along with the other surviving coup architect, former air force chief Ali Tahsin Şahinkaya, on 18 June 2014 under Article 146 of Turkish Criminal Law (*Türk Ceza Kanunu*) No. 765's prohibition of “crimes against the forces of the state” (“*Devlet kuvvetleri aleyhine cürümler*”). See “*Kenan Evren'e Müebbet Hapis Cezası*,” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 18 June 2014: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/kenan-evren-e-muebbet-hapis-cezasi/siyaset/detay/1899002/default.htm>.

As fellow victims of unjust treatment (*mağduriyet*) under the Turkish military's dominance in the political sphere, most Gülenists voted for the AKP up to and including the 2011 general elections, an interesting shift given that Gülen never threw his support behind the *Refah Partisi*, a previous party to develop out of the *Milli Görüş Hareketi*.<sup>52</sup> Gülen-sponsored media such as *Zaman* newspaper and the television networks Samanyolu TV and Mehtap TV broadcast television series that contain themes of piety and frequent references to Islam,<sup>53</sup> and used to provide supportive coverage of the AKP's initiatives. Between 2007 and 2013, *Today's Zaman*, the English-language newspaper of the Gülen-affiliated Feza Media Corporation (*Feza Gazetecilik*), published an average of 1.6 stories a day supportive of the AKP-led *Ergenekon* trials.<sup>54</sup>

However, relations between the brothers in pursuit of expanding Sunni Islam's role in Turkey's politics and society showed public signs of deteriorating rapidly following the AKP's decision to close the thousands of college preparatory schools (*dershaneler*) across Turkey, which served as both immense sources of income and recruitment for Gülen's *Hizmet* movement. Gülen and Erdoğan had differed over issues such as the AKP's approach to solving the Kurdish problem (Gülen's version of Sunni Islam has a Turkish component, discussed below) and the increased animosity displayed toward Israel as part of the realization of Ottoman Islamist interests in foreign policy (Gülen officially supports peace through interfaith dialogue, also discussed below), sending the first signals of the Gülenists' impending split from Ottoman Islamism. However, the move to close the *dershaneler* represented a swipe at one of the lifelines of Gülen's many enterprises, and

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<sup>52</sup> See William Armstrong, "A Temporary Alliance? The AKP, Fethullah Gülen and Religion in Turkish Politics," posted on *OpenDemocracy.net*, 11 May 2012: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/william-armstrong/temporary-alliance-akp-fethullah-g%C3%BClen-and-religion-in-turkish-politics>. In fact, evidence suggests that Gülen criticized Necmettin Erbakan and allegedly lent his support to the 28 February Process that led to Erbakan's removal from power. Gülen denies this charge as a smear on his website; see <http://fgulen.com/tr/fethullah-gulen-hukuk-kosesi/istihbarat-yalanlari-ve-iftiralar/44168-1999-haziran-firtinasi>. However, a critical article cites him as implying in an interview that someone in a position of such responsibility should "realize what he is up against" and "should say to Parliament 'I shall leave and be of help. Whatever kind of administration you want, form that and run the nation'." ("*Meclis'e 'Ben ayrılıyım ve yardımcı olayım. Siz nasıl bir idare istiyorsanız onu teşkil edin ve milleti idare edin' demeli.*") See Yalçın Doğan (believed to be a pen name for columnists writing in favor of the AKP) "*Gülen, Erbakan'ın İstifasını İstedi,*" *Yeni Şafak Gazetesi*, 9 October 2000: <http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2000/ekim/09/dizi.html>. Even if Gülen did directly support Erbakan's resignation, whether this was because the controversial preacher was under duress from the Turkish state cannot be verified with available evidence. What is clear is that he was detained during the 1971 and 1980 coups, spending seven months in prison on charges of leading a secret religious community in the first instance but being released in the second. He emigrated from Turkey to the US shortly before being indicted in absentia in conjunction with a leaked video in which he allegedly instructed his community to "move into the arteries of the system." Hendrick, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> The host of the Samanyolu TV live cooking show *Yeşil Elma* (*Green Apple* – representing the utopian goal of *Turanlı*-oriented Turks) Oktay Usta uses dozens of Islamic phrases such *Allah razı olsun* and *Allah kabul etsin*, both meaning "may God approve/accept" and references to "our Prophet" ("*Peygamberimiz*") that stand out in their frequency when compared to other host-based shows. An episode broadcast during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan (*Ramazan*) in 2014 included a 10-minute segment of a man chanting from the Koran (*Kur'an tilaveti*) while a woman wearing a headscarf rolled out the dough for *börek*, a savory pastry. Author's observation. A video of the broadcast posted on 22 July 2014 can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aX8cFmrFOIE>.

<sup>54</sup> Hendrick, p. 176.

can be interpreted as retaliation for an Istanbul prosecutor calling on Hakan Fidan, the head of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MİT) to testify regarding the handling of the Kurdish problem. Although the AKP quickly passed through a resolution giving Fidan's position immunity from prosecution (*dokunulmazlık*) and declared no conflict existed,<sup>55</sup> a rivalry between the Gülen-influenced security forces and MİT, which has ties to Erdoğan's close circles, evolved into a clear split between the AKP and Gülenists and a back-and-forth exchange of retribution.

In response to legislation closing the *dershaneler*, Gülen issued the following statement: "Don't lose time dealing with *them* (*Onlarla uğraşmakla zaman kaybetmeyin*) ... When *they* close your schools you will open universities. When *they* close your universities, you will open schools."<sup>56</sup> The use of the other-ing "them" and "they," as well as the dismissal of the need to deal with "them," are indicative of a clear identity cleavage of Gülenists from the AKP. Far from not dealing with them, however, the security forces that comprise part of the *Hizmet* movement carried out sweeping raids beginning 17 December 2013 against individuals and enterprises close to the AKP, exposing a massive corruption scandal that reached as far as Erdoğan's son Bilal. In one of the dozens of recorded transcripts (*tapeler*) that were leaked implicating AKP supporters, Erdoğan tells his son that an operation targeting corruption (*yolsuzluk operasyonu*) has been initiated that has so far included searching the homes of the sons of ministers in his cabinet<sup>57</sup> and that Bilal needs to move the money in his house to a safer location.<sup>58</sup> The widespread 17 December corruption scandal, coming on the heels of the Gezi Protests six months earlier, generated a new wave of criticism against the government as each night Turkey's opponents of Ottoman Islamism waited to see what damning new recording would be leaked. The scandal also generated humor on par with that used as a tool of protest at Gezi. A March 2014 cover of the satirical magazine *Penguen* portrayed a caricature of Bilal, who sounds significantly shaken in the leaked recordings, holding a stack of money to his ear as saying "Hello? Hello? I can't hear you Daddy."<sup>59</sup> After the general manager of *Halk Bankası* (ironically meaning "The Bank of the People") was discovered to be hiding 4.5 million dollars in shoeboxes in his house, a cartoon posted on the photo-sharing site Tumblr mocked the AKP's acronym with a logo using the party's signature light bulb but spelling out *Ayakkabı Kutusu Partisi*, meaning Shoe Box Party, and displaying a shoebox overflowing with hundred-dollar US bills.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> "AK Parti-Gülen Çatışması Yok" ("There Is No AK Party-Gülen Conflict"), *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 15 February 2012: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-ak-parti-gulen-catismasi-yok-siyaset/siyasetdetay/15.02.2012/1502491/default.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> "Fethullah Gülen'den Dershane Kapatma Yorumu," posted on *Haber7.com*, 26 November 2012: <http://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/956884-fethullah-gulenden-dershane-kapatma-yorumu>. Emphasis added.

<sup>57</sup> The ministers implicated in the scandal were Economy Minister Zafer Çağlayan, Interior Minister Muammer Güler, Environment and Urban Planning Minister Erdoğan Bayraktar, and EU Minister Egemen Bağış.

<sup>58</sup> For a transcript of that conversation and others, see "İşte Tayyip-Bilal Erdoğan'ın Şok Ses Kayıtları," posted on the Republican Nationalist website *UlusKanal.com*, 24 February 2014: <http://www.uluskanal.com.tr/gundem/iste-tayyip-bilal-erdoganin-sok-ses-kayitlari-h23183.html>.

<sup>59</sup> See "Penguen Bilal Erdoğan'ı Kapak Yaptı," posted on the website *MedyaRadar.com*, 5 March 2014: <http://www.medyaradar.com/penguen-bilal-erdogani-kapak-yapti-haberi-114434>.

<sup>60</sup> See <https://www.tumblr.com/search/ayakkab%C4%B1%20kutusu%20partisi>.

Retaliating in kind, nearly a year to the day later the AKP carried out an equally sweeping operation against numerous entities connected to Gülen including media outlets such as *Zaman* and *Samanyolu* and Turkey's police forces. Worthy of note given this dissertation's claim that popular culture sources both shape and reflect the contours of identity debates, writers from two of television series broadcast on Samanyolu were also detained; Şevkat Tepe (*Compassion Mountain Peak*) and *Tek Türkiye* (*One and Only Turkey*) both portray nationalist struggles Turkey's southeast that strongly resemble the Kurdish PKK, and are thought to serve as critiques against perceived AKP concessions to Kurds.<sup>61</sup> AKP supporters now refer to Gülen as "the leader of the parallel structure" (*paralel yapının lideri*), and accuse him of infiltrating police forces, the judiciary, and other organs of the state in an effort to topple AKP rule.<sup>62</sup> Similar to previous uses of other-izing rhetoric to delegitimize dissenters, as seen above in the use of terms such as *çapulcu* and *terorist* during Gezi, Erdoğan now calls Gülen and his supporters *Pensilvanya*, referring to Gülen's residence/exile in Pennsylvania since 1998. The term serves to both dehumanize the preacher and portray him as a foreign entity seeking to create instability and thus prevent Turkey's rise, much as the *faiz lobisi* (interest lobby) narrative claims. A piece in the pro-AKP daily *Sabah* titled "The Arms of the *Pensilvanya* Octopus" displays an image of Gülen praying to eight pictures of imams scattered across a map of Turkey, and includes details of each of the imams' participation in the *Hizmet* movement.<sup>63</sup> Despite initial claims to the contrary, and a tendency in Turkey for groups at one time in conflict with each other to reconcile (particular around election periods), the split between the Gülenists and the AKP appears to be a significant and perhaps permanent one, suggesting the need to assess any potential change to the landscape of identity proposals in Turkey.

While many of the issues of contention between the two groups involve political power struggles that have played out in the form of financial warfare and exposition of corruption as detailed above, there are differences in identity content between Gülenists and non-*cemaat* AKP supporters that are now becoming much clearer. These differences include a constitutive norm celebrating the cultural elements of Turkishness similar to that of Pan-Turkic Nationalists. As expert on Gülen and his *Hizmet* movement Joshua Hendrick writes, that "many in the GM [Gülen Movement] now assert that the original enemy against which the GM constructed its identity was the Turkish left, whose fusion of Kemalism and

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<sup>61</sup> In an interview, *Tek Türkiye* producer responded to AKP Deputy Secretary Bülent Arınç's criticism that the series was harmful with a phrase common to Republican and Pan-Turkic Nationalists: "*Tek Türkiye, tek devlet, ve tek bayrak' diyoruz*" ("We say 'one and only Turkey, one and only state, one and only flag'"). See "Ajitasyon mu Gerçek mi?" *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 21 December 2014: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ajitasyon-mu-gercek-mi-/pazar/haberdetay/21.12.2014/1987502/default.htm>.

<sup>62</sup> See a report in the pro-AKP *Sabah* newspaper on the day of the AKP's raids on outlets connected to Gülen: "*Gülen'i İlk Kez Açığa Düşüren Operasyon: Tahşiyeciler*," *Sabah Gazetesi*, 14 December 2014: <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2014/12/14/guleni-ilk-kez-aciga-dusuren-operasyon-tashiyeciler>. Like many of Turkey's popular conspiracy theories, there is most likely some truth to some of the claims. The high presence of Gülenists in the police force is almost taken as a given, and extent of the 17 December corruption operation required significant institutional access to carry out the wiretaps.

<sup>63</sup> "*Pensilvanya Ahtapotunun Kolları*" posted on the newspaper's website *Sabah.com*, 26 January 2015: <http://www.sabah.com.tr/fotohaber/gundem/iste-marmara-imamlari>.

Marxism was believed to pose a genuine threat to Turkey's social and cultural fabric."<sup>64</sup> This belief of the dangers of leftism to Turkish culture is a fervently held one among ultra-right Pan-Turkic Nationalists, as demonstrated by rampant left-right violence that played a large part in in provoked the 12 September 1980 military coup and the subsequent implementation of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis.

Gülenists also share a social purpose of promoting pluralism in multiple forms, as found in Western Liberalism. It should be noted that the sincerity of this promotion is debated by the movement's skeptics, who believe that Gülen's call for interfaith dialogue is a proselytizing strategy rather than a genuine step toward the "understanding and respect" that are displayed as the headline on each page of the preacher's English-language official website.<sup>65</sup> The Turkish-language website is organized quite differently,<sup>66</sup> in contrast, with no links to the international conference papers on interfaith dialogue prominent on the English site, and pictures of Gülen wearing an Islamic skullcap (*takke*) that are absent on the English page and that may suggest the use of "strategic ambiguity" to appeal to multiple audiences.<sup>67</sup> However, the sheer number of international conferences and projects dedicated to promoting "a better understanding of civilizational and religious pluralism, a moderate way of practicing Islam, and the coexistence of different ethnic and religious affiliations"<sup>68</sup> indicates at least that Gülen supporters believe such promotion is a social purpose irrespective of the end goal. In contrast, this social purpose of promoting civilizational dialogue and understanding is not at all generated by the Ottoman Islamist proposal.

Finally, the relational meaning common among Gülenists understands Turkey's relations with the West as amicable, and does not prescribe ties with the Arab-populated lands of the Ottoman Empire as Ottoman Islamism does. Whereas a Republican Nationalist proposal would proscribe close relations with Arab countries based on lingering resentment of Arabs' betrayal of and rebellion against the Ottomans during the First World War, as well as the perception that their societies have been held back from modernization by an over-reliance on religion, Gülenists generally view the influence of Arabs as having shaped

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<sup>64</sup> Hendrick, p. 86. Hendrick is a socio-cultural anthropologist who has conducted extensive ethnographic work within the Gülen movement and is recognized among Turkish Studies experts as the one of the top scholars working on this elusive subject.

<sup>65</sup> See <http://en.fgulen.com/>.

<sup>66</sup> See <http://fgulen.com/tr>.

<sup>67</sup> While not questioning the movement's sincerity, Hendrick suggests that Gülenists engage in what he calls "strategic ambiguity" that functions to "allow for the expression of internally divergent group interests, and to persuade outsiders that stated objectives correspond with observable outcomes." Hendrick, p. 56.

<sup>68</sup> Erkan Toğuslu, "Reflections on European Multiculturalism, Islam, and Peaceful Coexistence: Tariq Ramadan and Fethullah Gülen," Abstract of a paper presented at the *International Conference on Peaceful Coexistence: Fethullah Gülen's Initiatives for Peace in the Contemporary World*, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, 22-23 November 2007. Numerous other titles of papers at the Gülenist-sponsored conference reflect the same theme of inter-communal dialogue and understanding, such as Niyazi Öktem, "Necessity and Importance of Interculturalinterreligious [sic] Dialogue and Initiatives of Fethullah Gülen"; Karina Korostelina, "Dialogue as a Source for Peaceful Coexistence Between Muslim [sic] and Orthodox Christians in a Secular State"; and İhsan Yılmaz, "Social Innovation for Peaceful Coexistence: Intercultural Activism from Rumi to Gülen."

Islam to reflect more of their own culture, and that “Turkish is the true Islam.”<sup>69</sup> An academic interview noted that the Gülen movement is “active everywhere but the Arab World,” referring to the establishment of schools and nearly global proliferation of philanthropy projects in a region this dissertation’s analysis shows is of vital importance to Ottoman Islamists.<sup>70</sup>

Gülen supporters’ attitudes toward and presence in the Arab world may be beginning to change, however, perhaps as a result of splitting from the AKP. An article in the Gülenist-sponsored newspaper *Zaman* praised the gathering of academics in Izmir at a symposium organized around the theme of “Academics’ Readings of *Hizmet*” (“*Akademisyelerin Hizmet Okumaları*”), highlighting the presence of Arab scholars (*âlimler*). The article cites the speech made by a Lebanese professor who had spent time studying the movement in Turkey, and who declared that he “felt like I had been reborn with *Hizmet*” (“*Hizmet’le yeniden doğduğumu hissettim*”).<sup>71</sup> A professor from Saudi Arabia quoted in the article speaks in a similar vein, stating: “Thanks to you, we learned how religion should be served, how service can be brought to people, to Muslims. There is much divine light (*nur*) in this service. I believe the front door to the *Hizmet* Movement and *Hocaefendi* (a term of respect for a great teacher) is by discovering one’s heart.”<sup>72</sup> An Iraqi scholar once again echoed praise for the movement in a similarly grateful and awed tone: “I have come to explain you to yourselves (*Size, sizi anlatmak için geldim*). I would guess that you are not aware of what you have done. May God protect this service.”<sup>73</sup> Underscoring the reverent belief expressed by the scholars it quotes that *Hizmet* is superior to the forms of Islam they experienced in their native countries, the title of the article, “Arab Scholars: *Hizmet* Is Saving the Reputation of Islam,”<sup>74</sup> makes clear to its Turkish readers that the *Hizmet* practiced by Gülenists is the better, correct way of being a Muslim than what is practiced by Arabs.

Although it is too early to tell, it is possible that Gülenists are trying to spread their own proposal for identity – if not a national identity but that of a larger *cemaat* – to a region in which the AKP aims to wield great influence and are thus taking a newly distinct proposal outside through the movement’s own foreign policy. In some ways, Gülenists have already begun to take outside what has the potential to cohere as a distinct identity proposal – one that I preliminarily term Turkish Calvinism,<sup>75</sup> based on constitutive norms

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<sup>69</sup> Author’s interview with Kurdish movement expert Ekrem Güzeldere Istanbul, August 2013.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. Gülen-supported schools have opened across much of the Muslim world, including the Turkic states of Central Asia – a clear priority given the importance of Turkish culture to the movement – but also in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Nigeria. See the Gülen-sponsored publication John Esposito and İhsan Yılmaz, *İslam ve Barış İnşası: Gülen Hareketi İnisiyatifleri* (Istanbul: Nil Yayınları, 2014).

<sup>71</sup> Özdemir Özkan and Veysel Engi, “*Arap âlimler: Hizmet, İslam’ın İtibarını Kurtarıyor*,” *Zaman Gazetesi*, 15 March 2015: [http://www.zaman.com.tr/fethullah-gulen-hocaefendi\\_arap-alimler-hizmet-islamini- itibarini-kurtariyor\\_2283320.html](http://www.zaman.com.tr/fethullah-gulen-hocaefendi_arap-alimler-hizmet-islamini- itibarini-kurtariyor_2283320.html).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> A discussion in several journalistic articles of Muslim Calvinism exists, which refer to the entrepreneurial spirit of pious Muslims in conservative Anatolian cities such as Konya and Kayseri who comprise the so-called “Anatolian Tigers” fueling part of Turkey’s impressive economic growth spurt. See,

of piety, service, and Turkish culture; a social purpose of spreading Islam and knowledge of Turkish culture in the domestic and international spheres through advanced education; a relational meaning oriented toward the Turkic world; and a cognitive worldview of Turkey as home to the “true Islam” and a facilitator of peace through inter-civilizational dialogue – through its nearly global establishment of schools and its sponsorship of international events promoting Turkish culture such as the Turkish Language Olympics (*Türkçe Olimpiyatları*).<sup>76</sup>

### *Gaza: Self-Marginalization through Radicalization*

The final challenge to Ottoman Islamism’s pursuit of identity hegemony analyzed here comes, seemingly surprisingly, from the proposal’s supporters themselves. However, recalling the challenge posed to Republican Nationalism by its own supporters, some of whom would emerge from the internal debate as moderated supporters and other of whom would break off to form the basis of a new, Western Liberal proposal, we see that both the content of a particular proposal and the contours of the competition among proposals can be altered through contestation by that proposal’s supporters. In contrast to the moderation of Republican Nationalism over the course of the Republic, the outcome observed as resulting from a process of contestation by Ottoman Islamists is one of radicalization of content. In turn, this radicalization of identity content creates new, at least solidifies existing red lines that may be intolerable for former supporters of the proposal and who thus may re-evaluate their support. The consequent, and somewhat paradoxical, shrinking of support for Ottoman Islamism in its pursuit to dominate the public sphere with its increasingly radical understanding of identity can be considered a process of self-marginalization.

There are many issue areas in which the AKP has demonstrated support for or tolerance of a radicalization of its Ottoman Islamist identity proposal. While not representing a direct action, tolerance of behavior without any condemnation can be considered suggestive of if not equivalent to the behavior itself given that Erdoğan’s demonstrated propensity to speak out, frequently, on acts that he believes deviate from or denigrate the content of Ottoman Islamism<sup>77</sup> and his lack of compunction regarding

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for example, Nicholas Birch, “Turkey: ‘Muslim Calvinists’ in Anatolia Show How Piety Can Blend with Modernity,” posted on *Eurasianet.org*, 23 July 2008:

<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav072408a.shtml>.

<sup>76</sup> A post on the official website of the Gülen schools (as opposed to the many weebly-based website created by those wishing to defame the movement; for example, see:

<http://gulencharterschools.weebly.com/>) states that “Turkish schools are excellent good will [sic] ambassadors for Turkey.” See <http://gulenschools.org/>. The Turkish Language Olympics is an international forum in which 15,000 students up to age 25 from around the world compete to demonstrate their knowledge of Turkish language and culture by writing essays, singing songs, reciting poetry, and performing folk dances. The strong emphasis on education and Turkish culture is illustrative of the constitutive norms of the Turkish Calvinist proposal, while the competition’s aim of spreading knowledge of Turkish culture illustrates one of its social purposes. See the event’s website at: <http://www.turkceolimpiyatları.com.tr/>.

<sup>77</sup> His harsh criticism of the Ottoman-themed but somewhat racy television series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl*, discussed previously, is indicative here. This criticism does not go unheeded; several weeks after the controversy over the popular soap opera erupted, the character of Hürrem Sultan, the concubine Süleyman

criticizing those he has previously praised as loyal supporters.<sup>78</sup> Defining radicalization here as a drastic shift in belief toward the extreme, or an increase in the public expression of that belief, the violence measures used at Gezi and praise of such measures constitutes an example of radicalization in the domestic sphere. Although “extreme” may be as difficult to define as radicalization, it is worth anecdotally noting that several high-level governmental supporters of Ottoman Islamism confidentially noted in interviews that they found the measures used against protesters at Gezi to be “extreme” (“aşırı”) or “disproportionate” (“oransız”).<sup>79</sup> In contrast, another interviewee expressed that the government’s ordering of the use of force was justifiable given the “forces wanting instability” (*istikrarsızlık isteyenler*) in Turkey.<sup>80</sup> Other domestic issues previously discussed that can be considered evidence of radicalization in the same light of comparison include comments that women should not walk around pregnant<sup>81</sup> or laugh in public,<sup>82</sup> that it is in women’s nature to be “slaves,”<sup>83</sup> and that anyone who consumes alcohol is an “alcoholic.”<sup>84</sup> Notably, each of these examples occurred in the last two years, none of them received rebuke from an level of AKP authority, and all but one comment (the comment about pregnant women was made by an Islamic cleric) were made by AKP elected officials or those running for election. While this radicalization by expressing extreme identity-based views may even be a political strategy – AKP Deputy Secretary Bülent Arınc cautioned that women against laughing out loud compromised their modesty when Erdoğan was considering who would fill his slot as prime minister; Uğur Işılak stated it is in man’s nature (*fitrat*) to possess women and in women’s nature to be possessed in April 2015, two months before the June general elections – but these elections may also indicate that the

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loved so deeply he married her, is shown covering her hair and performing *namaz* (Muslim prayer). One Ottoman Islamist tweeted: “Praise be to God! Hürrem Sultan donned the Islamic headscarf (*tesettüre girdi*), prayed on a carpet (*seccadede namaz kıldı*), Hatice Sultan covered her head while in the presence of Matrakçı, and the women covered their cleavage.” See “*Hürrem Namaz Kıldı ve...*” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 21 December 2012: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/hurrem-namaz-kildi-ve-magazin/magazindetay/21.12.2012/1644813/default.htm>.

<sup>78</sup> As part of his delegitimization of the Gülen movement, known to have a large presence in the security forces, Erdoğan called the police “traitors” (“*hain*”) following the raids on supporters’ homes as part of the 17 December anti-corruption operation. Six months earlier, Erdoğan had referred to them as epic-writing heroes (See footnote 526). “*Gezi’nin ‘Kahraman’ Polis Şimdi Hain Oldu,*” *Aydınlık Gazetesi*, date not given: <http://www.aydinlikgazete.com/m/medyanin-halleri/gezinin-kahraman-polisi-simdi-hain-oldu-h34219.html>.

<sup>79</sup> Author’s interview with Ministry of Foreign Affairs official (name withheld), Ankara, July 2013; author’s interview with AKP cabinet official (name withheld), Ankara, August 2013.

<sup>80</sup> Author’s interview with AKP government official (name withheld), Eskişehir, August 2013.

<sup>81</sup> See Meltem Özgenç, “*TRT Ekranlarında Şok Eden Sözler,*” *Hürriyet Gündem*, 25 July 2013: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/24389288.asp>.

<sup>82</sup> “*Arınc’ın ‘Kadınlar Sokakta Kahkaha Atmayacak’ Açıklaması Dış Basında,*” *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, 30 July 2014: [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/100091/Arinc\\_in\\_Kadin\\_sokakta\\_kahkaha\\_atmayacak\\_acikl\\_amaşi\\_dis\\_basinda.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/100091/Arinc_in_Kadin_sokakta_kahkaha_atmayacak_acikl_amaşi_dis_basinda.html#).

<sup>83</sup> For commentary on and a video of the television appearance, see “*AKP’nin Adayı Uğur Işılak: Kadının Fitratında Köle Olmak Var,*” *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, 9 April 2015: [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/248019/AKP\\_nin\\_adiyi\\_Ugur\\_Isilak\\_Kadinin\\_fitratinda\\_kole\\_olmak\\_var.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/video/video/248019/AKP_nin_adiyi_Ugur_Isilak_Kadinin_fitratinda_kole_olmak_var.html#).

<sup>84</sup> See “*Erdogan: İcki İçen Alkoliktir,*” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 2 June 2013: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-icki-icen-alkoliktir/siyaset/detay/1717637/default.htm>.

radicalization of Ottoman Islamist rhetoric and policy since the last election in 2011 have alienated former supporters of the proposal who find such language and action intolerable.

In the foreign policy arena, the policies prescribed by the Ottoman Islamist identity proposal, such as deepened engagement with Syria and Iran, have failed miserably and thus have also been the source of much criticism from those questioning the entire ideological underpinning of the AKP's vision of strategic depth in the region. Erdoğan's efforts to convince one-time personal friend Bashar al-Assad to reform rather than face the consequences of continuing his violent repression of opposition wasted much domestic and international political capital, and ultimately gave way to a war on Turkey's borders and increasing sectarianization of the region.<sup>85</sup> Turkey's attempts to reach a nuclear fuel deal with its "Muslim brother" in Iran<sup>86</sup> dissolved in the face of the US outrage at this overture as well as concerns in Tehran that Turkey was collaborating against Iran with Israel.<sup>87</sup>

Given this charge of collaboration, it is somewhat ironic that perhaps the most prominent and widespread example of radicalized speech was that directed against Israel during its attacks on Gaza in the spring and summer of 2014. Erdoğan has rhetorically wielded his criticism of Israel on visits throughout the Muslim world, a strategy that in turn increases his legitimacy as defender of Turkey's Muslim brothers back home.<sup>88</sup> These dynamics make the radicalization of speech towards Israel an issue in which both domestic and foreign policy dimensions are interwoven. Arguably hoping to benefit from his role as the protector of Muslims and enemy of those who would persecute them, Erdoğan exponentially strengthened his criticism of Israel in response to the large-scale attacks launched on Gaza in July 2014, during the run-up to his bid for Turkey's first popularly elected president the following month. In a sense, Erdoğan had already set the parameters for acceptable delegitimization of Israelis and Jews several months earlier when he assaulted a protester demanding justice for the victims of the mining disaster in Soma by slapping him and then using a curse-word while yelling "Why are you running away, you Israeli sperm?"<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Author's interview with ministerial official, speaking off the record. Ankara, July 2013.

<sup>86</sup> Author's interview with AKP cabinet official, speaking off the record. Ankara, August 2013.

<sup>87</sup> Still articulating the Ottoman Islamist narrative, Davutoğlu stated in his meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammed Cevad Zarif on 1 November 2013 that "not for any reason and at no time at all has the government of the Turkish Republic collaborated with Israel regarding any Muslim country. It wouldn't, and it won't... There are roots and a historical relationship between Turkey and Iran... Turkey and Iran aren't rivals, they are two close friends." "*Hicbir gerekçe ile hiçbir zaman Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükümeti, İsrail ile herhangi bir Müslüman ülkeye donuk olarak işbirliği yapmamıştır. Yapmaz, yapmayacaktır... Türkiye ile İran arasında köklü, tarihi ilişkilerimiz var... Türkiye ile İran rakip değil aksine dost iki ülke.*" Cited in "Davutoğlu: Türkiye İsrail ile Müslüman Ülkelere Dönük İşbirliği Yapmayız," *Radikal Gazetesi*, 1 November 2013: [http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/davutoglu\\_turkiye\\_israil\\_ile\\_musulman\\_ulkelere\\_donuk\\_isbirligi\\_yapmaz-1158603](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/davutoglu_turkiye_israil_ile_musulman_ulkelere_donuk_isbirligi_yapmaz-1158603).

<sup>88</sup> See: "Erdoğan Hailed as New Champion for Arabs Who Hope to Emulate the Turkish Model," *Al Arabiya*, 14 September 2011: <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/09/14/166780.html>.

<sup>89</sup> See "Erdoğan'dan Vatandaş'a İnanılmaz Hakaret," *Sözcü Gazetesi*, 15 May 2014: <http://sozcu.com.tr/2014/gundem/erdogan-iste-boyle-dovdu-510209/>. For the YouTube video of the confrontation see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b48rj-EUOXM>.

While anti-Semitism is not new to Turkey,<sup>90</sup> its expression appears to have become newly acceptable and more frequently cited in the public sphere by some supporters of Ottoman Islamism following the onset of the 2014 Israel-Gaza War. A Facebook group page with the name “We are Ottoman Grandchildren for Stubbornness’ Sake”<sup>91</sup> includes a photo of a dog urinating on an Israeli flag posted 11 July 2014. The page also displays a photo of a *Daily Telegraph* headline stating “The Turkish Empire Is Coming,” with a comment posted underneath that reads “God willing, with God’s permission we will be liberated from rule by the Jews and we will advance on the path of my ancestor!”<sup>92</sup> Moving to the more formal realm of publications, the pro-AKP newspaper *Yeni Akit*’s 19 July 2014 crossword puzzle included a photograph of Hitler with the written clue “We are searching for you.”<sup>93</sup> Further, after singer Yıldız Tilbe tweeted multiple anti-Semitic statements including “May God be pleased with Hitler, he even did little to [Jews]” and “Muslims will bring about these Jews’ end,”<sup>94</sup> AKP Mayor of Ankara Melih Gökçek retweeted several of Tilbe’s tweets. One of Gökçek’s retweets included the comment: “a query full of intelligence from Tilbe,” leaving no question as to his approval of the singer’s support for Hitler.<sup>95</sup> His support, in turn, was reported positively by pro-AKP newspaper *Yeni Şafak*, which cited the number of Palestinian deaths and was framed around the question of why the world was keeping silent with no criticism of the reference to Hitler.<sup>96</sup> Gökçek was not the only AKP official to openly express racist remarks against Jews, who after many waves of emigration, including one inspired by rising anti-Semitism in conjunction with Turkey’s

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<sup>90</sup> Before the outbreak of the conflict but still within the AKP’s third term, the Turkish Jewish Community made repeated requests in 2012 for a Biomen Shampoo advertisement depicting Hitler shouting at men not to use women’s shampoo. See the second open letter posted on the website of the Turkish Jewish Community (*Türk Musevi Cemaatı*) (date not given but references the first letter written 23 March 2012): <http://www.turkyahudileri.com/content/view/1856/279/lang,en/>. The lack of governmental response is indicative of For a discussion that outlines the nature of anti-Semitism half-way in to the AKP’s second term in power, see Rifat Bali, “Present-Day Anti-Semitism in Turkey,” Article published by the *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, 23 July 2009: <http://jcpa.org/article/present-day-anti-semitism-in-turkey/>.

<sup>91</sup> “*İnadına Osmanlı Torunlarıyız*”: <https://www.facebook.com/InadinaOsmanliTorunlariyiz?fref=photo>. The phrase “İnadına” could be translated in numerous ways, including “out of spite” and “by the irony of fate,” but the intent to deliberately promote Ottoman Islamism with no holds barred is clear.

<sup>92</sup> The comment was posted 5 June 2014 by a user with a Turkish name, but identities cannot be verified. See <https://www.facebook.com/InadinaOsmanliTorunlariyiz/photos/a.468520779901317.1073741826.468516019901793/651055291647864/?type=1&theater>.

<sup>93</sup> “*Yeni Akit Hitler’i Arıyor!*” *Radikal Gazetesi*, 19 July 2014: [http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/yeni\\_akit\\_hitleri\\_ariyor-1202754](http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/yeni_akit_hitleri_ariyor-1202754).

<sup>94</sup> “*Yıldız Tilbenin Hitler Tweetleri Ortalığı Karıştırdı*,” *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, 10 July 2014: [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/92831/Yildiz\\_Tilbe\\_nin\\_Hitler\\_tweetleri\\_ortaligi\\_karistirdi.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/92831/Yildiz_Tilbe_nin_Hitler_tweetleri_ortaligi_karistirdi.html#).

<sup>95</sup> See “*Gökçek’ten Yıldız Tilbe’ye Destek*,” posted on the news website *EnSonHaber.com*, 11 July 2014: <http://www.ensonhaber.com/melih-gokcekten-yildiz-tilbeye-destek-2014-07-11.html>.

<sup>96</sup> “*Gökçek: Helal Olsun Yıldız Tilbe’ye*,” *Yeni Şafak Gazetesi*, 11 July 2014: <http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/politika/gokcek-helal-olsun-yildiz-tilbeye-666057>. A similar response from the pro-AKP news website *HaberVaktim* was titled “Melih Gökçek Came out behind Yıldız Tilbe!” See “*Melih Gökçek Yıldız Tilbe’ye Arka Çıktı!*” posted on *HaberVaktim.com*, 11 July 2014: <http://www.habervaktim.com/haber/378201/gokcek-yildiz-tilbeye-arka-cikti.html>.

increasingly hostile relationship with Israel under the AKP now comprise only 20-25,000 of Turkey's citizens.<sup>97</sup> AKP MP Şamil Tayyar tweeted "May your race dry up, may your Hitlers not be lacking."<sup>98</sup>

The use of derogatory language to delegitimize Outgroups – from the "çapulcular" that participated in Gezi to the supposed "Jewish Diaspora" ("Yahudi Diasporası") that Deputy Prime Minister claimed "triggered" the protests, another indication of increasingly explicit anti-Semitism in the upper ranks of the AKP<sup>99</sup> – is a strategy of identity contestation this dissertation identifies as being used, when effective, to advance the spread of one's own identity proposal by publicly degrading the quality of the other. While the AKP's use of this strategy has been successful up until recently, the increasingly dehumanizing rhetoric being used by some supporters of Ottoman Islamism, and particularly the anti-Semitic rhetoric, has generated a backlash of criticism by those shocked that the even the AKP would espouse this type of language. The nature and content of references to Hitler as a heroic leader and calls for a return to genocidal policies were unprecedented to the extent that numerous Turkish opposition newspapers and blogs brought attention to the issue with titles such as "Hitler's Rise in the Gaza Affair,"<sup>100</sup> and "Does the Response to Gaza Reinforce Hate Speech?"<sup>101</sup> Although non-Muslim communities in Turkey have often been supportive of the AKP,<sup>102</sup> Turkey's Jewish population is understandably outraged, as are all Western Liberalists and moderated Republican Nationalists.<sup>103</sup>

This backlash effectively serves not only to (further) alienate former domestic and international allies, but also to delegitimize Ottoman Islamist supporters' own claims to constitutive norms of piety and a cognitive worldview of being the rightful inheritor of the Ottoman Empire's legacies – a political entity that was in general more tolerant of non-Muslim populations than is the AKP's Turkey. As one journalist phrased it, the AKP's hostile and even hateful rhetoric toward Jews and Israel is "ridiculous and difficult to

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<sup>97</sup> Nesim Güveniş, Deputy Chairman of the Association of Turkish Jews in Israel, echoed other non-Sunni Muslim populations concerns in Turkey: "We are uncomfortable with being 'othered'." See "Young Turkish Jews Emigrating to Israel Cue to Anti-Semitism, Tensions with Israel," *Haaretz News*, 23 October 2013: <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-features/1.553964>.

<sup>98</sup> "Tayyar: 'Soyunuz Kurusun Hitleriniz Eksik Olmasın,'" posted at *NeDiyor.com*, 18 July 2014: <http://nediyor.com/2014/07/18/tayyar-soyunuz-kurusun-hitleriniz-eksik-olmasin/>.

<sup>99</sup> "Atalay: Gezi Olaylarını Yahudi Diasporası Tetikledi," *Hürriyet Gazetesi*, 2 July 2013: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23631279.asp>.

<sup>100</sup> "Gazze Meselesinde Hitler'in Yükselişi," posted at *NeDiyor.com*, 19 July 2014: <http://nediyor.com/2014/07/19/gazze-meselesinde-hitlerin-yukselisi/>.

<sup>101</sup> Yıldız Yazıcıoğlu, "Gazze Tepkisi Nefret Söylemini Pekiştiriyor Mu?," *Amerika'nın Sesi.com*, 19 July 2014: <http://www.amerikaninsesi.com/content/gazze-tepkisi-nefret-soylemini-pekestiriyor-mu/1961227.html>.

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, the argument made by Laki Vingas, the elected representative of the Non-Muslim Foundations in Turkey and Council Member of the General Directorate of Foundations, in: "Non-Muslim Minorities in Modern Turkey," *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2014.

<sup>103</sup> The independent news website *T24.com* depicts Gökçek's tweets very differently than the pro-AKP sources, for example, openly calling them racist. See "Gökçek'ten Yıldız Tilbe'nin İrkçi Tweetlerine Destek" posted on *T24.com*, 11 July 2014: <http://t24.com.tr/haber/gokcekten-yildiz-tilbenin-irkci-tweetlerine-destek,264024>.

understand.”<sup>104</sup> By being increasingly open about their extremist attitudes Ottoman Islamist supporters may, counter-intuitively, have painted themselves into a rhetorical corner from which talking itself out looks extremely difficult. Earlier claims of being a conservative democratic party and a regional negotiator, for example, have been thoroughly discredited on a domestic and international scale. The likelihood that opposition party leaders who witnessed the AKP’s radicalization, and who in some cases have been demonized by the AKP themselves,<sup>105</sup> will be willing to form a coalition if the AKP doesn’t receive enough votes to form a government on its own seems slim.<sup>106</sup> Finally, signs of a newly emerging split within the party suggest that even former ardent supporters of Ottoman Islamism and its political projects are becoming frustrated with Erdoğan’s sultan-esque behavior in insisting that issues such as the Kurdish problem be handled his way.<sup>107</sup> In response to criticism from Bülent Arınç that Erdoğan was overreaching his technically symbolic role as president, Erdoğan used the demeaning phrase “*Haddini bil!*” (“Know your place!”), and asserted his authority to make political decisions by stating: “It is my right and my mission/incumbency” (“*vazifem*”).<sup>108</sup> Arguably emboldened by its repeated

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<sup>104</sup> Author’s interview with journalist of a major newspaper (name withheld), Ankara, August 2013.

<sup>105</sup> Erdoğan has repeatedly ridiculed CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu for being Alevi. In the run-up to the August 2014 presidential election, Erdoğan simultaneously defined HDP leader Selahattin Demirtaş’s own identity for him as Zaza, a minority Iranian-Kurdish group, and then accused Demirtaş of “deceiving my Kurdish brothers” (“*Kendisi Zaza ama Kürt kardeşlerimi aldatıyor.*” See a video of the campaign speech posted on YouTube, 3 August 2014: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQPPj0\\_QaKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQPPj0_QaKQ). Even more directly, Erdoğan stated in a live interview with *A Haber* that “there is no sense in him being Zaza and then exploiting my Kurdish citizens.” See “*Erdoğan’dan Demirtaş’a Zazalık Eleştirisi,*” discussion of live broadcast posted on *RotaHaber.com*, 9 August 2014: <http://www.rotahaber.com/guncel/erdogandan-demirtasa-zazalik-elestirisi-h479623.html>. Finally, after MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli criticized the military mission to retrieve the remains of the tomb of Şah Süleyman (grandfather of the Ottoman Empire’s founder Osman I) from across the Syrian border in February 2015, Erdoğan insulted Bahçeli by negatively comparing him to Chief of General Staff Necdet Özel, saying Bahçeli “couldn’t even be a bit of [Özel’s] fingernail being thrown away.” See “*Özel Tartışma... Bahçeli: Dersi mi Kırdın... Erdoğan: Tırnağı Olamazsın,*” *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, 24 February 2015: [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/220731/OZEL\\_TARTISMA...\\_BAHCELi\\_\\_DERSi\\_Mi\\_KIR DIN...\\_ERDOGAN\\_\\_TIRNAGI\\_OLAMAZSIN...\\_OZEL\\_\\_SEViYESiZ.html#](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/220731/OZEL_TARTISMA..._BAHCELi__DERSi_Mi_KIR DIN..._ERDOGAN__TIRNAGI_OLAMAZSIN..._OZEL__SEViYESiZ.html#).

<sup>106</sup> Of course this is always possible and speculation is dangerous, particularly in a country with a history of multiple sequential coalition governments. An apt adage here would be “*Burası Türkiye, her şey olur*”: “This is Turkey, anything goes.” Indeed, when asked if the HDP would be willing to form a coalition with the AKP if passing the threshold, Demirtaş surprised many of his supporters by saying “that is something to be talked about after 7 June.” See “*Selahattin Demirtaş O Soruyu Yanıtladı: Barajı Geçerse AKP ile Koalisyon Yapacaklar mı?*” posted on the leftist website *HaberSol.org*, 23 April 2015: <http://haber.sol.org.tr/turkiye/selahattin-demirtas-o-soruyu-yanitladi-baraji-gecerser-akp-ile-koalisyon-yapacaklar-mi-114402>.

<sup>107</sup> Rumors from Ankara also suggest that former President Abdullah Gül may be looking to separate himself from increasingly radicalized Ottoman Islamism. See “*Arınç-Erdoğan Kavgasının Arkasında Gül mü Var?*” posted on *OdaTV.com*, 23 March 2015: <http://odatv.com/n.php?n=arinc-erdogan-kavgasinin-arkasinda-gul-mu-var-2303151200>. A ministerial interviewee asserted that Gül was critical of the handling of the Gezi Park violence, and Gül has generally been a moderate in the party, as well as more pro-European than Erdoğan and Davutoğlu. Author’s interview with an EU ministerial official (name withheld), Ankara, November 2013.

<sup>108</sup> “*Erdoğan’dan Arınç ve Demirtaş’a Yanıt: Kendini Bil Haddini Bil,*” *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, 23 March 2015: [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/234495/Erdogan\\_dan\\_Arinc\\_ve\\_Demirtas\\_a\\_yanit\\_\\_Kendini\\_bil\\_\\_haddini\\_bil.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/234495/Erdogan_dan_Arinc_ve_Demirtas_a_yanit__Kendini_bil__haddini_bil.html).

electoral victories and its successes in pushing through legislation to which members of each non-Ottoman Islamist proposal objected as seen at Gezi, the AKP may have created the greatest obstacle to the pursuit of its own identity proposal by marginalizing itself.

## Conclusion

After and initiating a drastic reorientation of foreign policy toward Muslim and former Ottoman lands, the AKP's ability to continue successfully realizing its Ottoman Islamist interests in domestic and foreign policy issues faces numerous challenges that have arisen over the past two years. The confluence of domestic challenges to hegemony with the Gezi Park Protests created conditions of identity contestation not seen during the AKP period, potentially opening up space for international contestation as well. Indeed, the Gezi protesters' deft use of social media, frequently using English, served not only to mobilize demonstrators within Turkey but also to generate outrage and mobilization in solidarity abroad – from the US and the Netherlands to Russia and Iraq.<sup>109</sup> Blocked by police violence and media silence, as well as many institutions of governance controlled by supporters of Ottoman Islamism, Gezi protesters in Turkey may usefully be seen through this dissertation's lens of identity hegemony as taking their contestation against Ottoman Islamism outside by focusing international civil society's attention on their struggle. Future research could assess the extent to which international normative pressure will affect Ottoman Islamism's presence in the public sphere and in institutions of governance. The sharp withdrawal of support for the proposal by members of the Gülen movement already reduced Ottoman Islamists' influence over the security forces and the judiciary. The flagrantly anti-Semitic rhetoric espoused without censure by Ottoman Islamists is indicative of a radicalization among supporters, or at least an increased willingness to share such views publicly. As ironic as it may be given Erdoğan's efforts to delegitimize dissenters as *marjinal*, the radical Ottoman Islamist-rooted rhetoric and policy making by the AKP is marginalizing the party and its identity proposal itself. As an example, former Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*) MP and AKP member Nazlı Ilıcak, who stood in solidarity with Merve Kavakçı when she was booed out of parliament while wearing a headscarf, quit the AKP in protest over its calls to prohibit unmarried male and female students from living together. Her remarks are illustrative: "This behavior is neither democratic nor conservative ... I vehemently condemn this ... I proudly stated that I voted for Erdoğan. Now I'm truly embarrassed."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> US-based demonstrators of Turkish and non-Turkish descent alike also took to social media, mobilizing protests in dozens of major cities. See, for example, Chicago Gezi Solidarity: <http://chicagogezi.tumblr.com/>; Occupy Gezi DC: <https://www.facebook.com/OccupyGeziDC>; Gezi Platform New York: <https://www.facebook.com/GeziPlatformNYC>; and Gezi Gardens (San Francisco): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLC0m3CWKA4>. For a study of solidarity movements across Europe, see Bahar Başer, "Gezi Spirit in the Diaspora: Diffusion of Turkish Politics to Europe," paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association*, New Orleans, February 2015. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/11179009/Gezi\\_Spirit\\_in\\_the\\_Diaspora\\_Diffusion\\_of\\_Turkish\\_Politics\\_to\\_Europe](https://www.academia.edu/11179009/Gezi_Spirit_in_the_Diaspora_Diffusion_of_Turkish_Politics_to_Europe). For a video of a Gezi solidarity protest in Russia, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV4fgcppDsl>; for a demonstration of support for Gezi by an Iraqi civil society group, see: <http://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/archives/1900>.

<sup>110</sup> "Bu tavır ne demokrat ne muhavakazar ... Şiddetle kınıyorum ... Ben göğsümü gere gere Erdoğan'a oy verdim dedim. Şimdi hakikaten utanıyorum." See "Nazlı Ilıcak'tan Erdoğan'a Sert Sözler: Utanıyorum!" *Radikal Gazetesi*, 6 November 2013:

With multiple ranking members of the AKP publicly criticizing Erdoğan or even leaving the party, and the rift between him and Arınç (and possibly Gül) likely undermining AKP voter confidence in run-up to the June 2015 elections, Ottoman Islamism is being shaken by contestation from within. The AKP's credibility in the foreign policy arena is also in serious doubt, particularly because of its Ottoman Islamist-inspired policies Israel and Syria. The aspirant hegemon's identity practice of portraying "our" policies as the legitimate ones and thus just cause for action in both spheres no longer carries as much support as it did even two years ago. With no site favorable to successful identity contestation in either the domestic or foreign policy arenas, there seems no viable venue left in which to advance the Ottoman Islamist identity proposal. The question of the moment, and of great moment for the future of Turkey's civil and political life, is what proposal, if any, will rise to supplant it as leading hegemonic aspirant.

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[http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/nazli\\_ilicaktan\\_erdogana\\_sert\\_sozler\\_utaniyorum-1159280](http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/nazli_ilicaktan_erdogana_sert_sozler_utaniyorum-1159280). Following an inspection of dormitory buildings in the Western Anatolian province of Denizli, Erdoğan stated that male and female students' living in the same house is "impossible" (olmaz) because it is "contrary to our conservative democratic make-up" ("muhafazakar demokratik yapımıza bu ters"). See "Başbakan Erdoğan: Kız ve Erkek Öğrenci Aynı Evde Olmaz, Denetleyeceğiz," Radikal Gazetesi, 4 November 2013: [http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/kiz\\_ve\\_erkek\\_ogrenci\\_ayni\\_evde\\_olmaz-1158890](http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/kiz_ve_erkek_ogrenci_ayni_evde_olmaz-1158890). Believed to have been carried out in the same vain several months earlier, the Istanbul district of Pendik banned construction of single-bedroom apartments, supposedly not conducive to the families with at least three children Erdoğan prescribed for Turkey. A CHP member of the district council objected by saying "Nobody can insist that someone live here or there. The party in power [AKP] intervenes in everything, from what people eat and drink to how many children they have." See "Pendik Belediyesi'nden 1+1 Tartışması" Hürriyet Gazetesi, 5 July 2013: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/23660589.asp/>.