Culture of Everyday Politics – Politics of Everyday Culture

An Inquiry into Municipal Politics in Konya and Eskişehir

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Abstract

In this thesis I compare municipal politics in Konya and Eskişehir in AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, Justice and Development Party) and CHP-led (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, Republican People's Party) municipalities. The main fields of research are mayoral biographies, municipal practice, in particular with regard to welfare and service provision, the cooperation with other municipal actors as political parties or civil society organisations, urban planning activities and cultural policy.

I am particulary interested in how municipal political actors respond to different local contexts in the two cities, given the fact that Eskişehir is characterized as 'modern', unlike Konya which is said to be 'religiously-conservative' by many in Turkey. I argue that one reason of the national success of the AKP is its ability to adapt to divergent local contexts. To this end I explore whether the AKP is part of a *muhafazakar belediyecilik* (conservative municipalism) tradition founded by the RP (*Refah Partisi*, Welfare Party). Secondly, I analyse how in return also municipalities try to shape local contexts according to their political background by their municipal practice, urban planning activities and cultural policy.

My research contributes to a growing but selective body of literature on municipal practice and local politics in Turkey. Most of this literature deals with Istanbul. This thesis adds important insights by focusing on two Central Anatolian towns. Also, most studies date from the 1980s and 90s. This work will assess whether their findings are still up to date. Moreover, it helps to comprehend more fundamental aspects of Turkish politics such as political mobilization, the establishing of links between voters, municipalities and parties as well as decision-making processes. In more general terms the present research demonstrates ways to analyse how politics influence local culture and vice-versa.

Statement of Candidature

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled
"Culture of Everyday Politics – Politics of Everyday Culture.
An Inquiry into Municipal Politics in Konya and Eskişehir"
has neither been previously submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the requirement for a degree to a university or institution other than Macquarie University. I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received during my research work and the preparation of this thesis have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are acknowledged in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number 5201200463, on 20 July 2012.

Charlotte Keskin-Joppien
 November 2015

Preface and Acknowledgement

My interest in Turkish politics started when I was an exchange student in Istanbul. At that time there was a heated debate whether Abdullah Gül should become the next Turkish president. Kemalist circles organized mass demonstrations against his candidature and in April 2007 a threat was published on the military's webpage. In this heated political climate, I was fortunate to attend William Hale's class on Turkish Politics at Sabancı University where I profited from his balanced view on what was happening in the country. This year stimulated a strong interest in Turkish politics, that, over the years has grown rather than diminished.

A particular point of fascination was the radically different perceptions of Turkish politics I encountered among the people, and also academics. Much debate concerned the question of the AKP's intentions and identity. [1] Many of its members had a history in the religious Milli Görüş movement. Some of its critics alleged the AKP planned a secret Islamization of the country, whereas others experienced it as an agent of democratization. In order to form my own opinion, I analysed the party's political ideology (*muhafazakar demokrasi*, conservative democracy) in my Master's thesis. Although an analysis of the party's programs and publications brought many insights into the party's theoretical foundations and its practical implementation, I felt the need to dig deeper. When I started my PhD in Turkology at Hamburg University Professor Raoul Motika drew my attention towards the relative lack of study of Turkish municipal politics.

My research compares local politics in two Central Anatolian cities, Konya and Eskişehir. I chose them as their metropolitan municipalities were ruled by different parties, the AKP in Konya and the CHP in Eskişehir. Additionally, I researched four district municipalities (Konya Meram and

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[1] The AKP was founded in 2001. As many of its members had a history in Islamist parties, large parts of the people speculated about its 'true intentions' albeit its self-description as 'conservative democratic'. The AKP's main political opponent ist the CHP founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It puts emphasis on the preservation of his political ideology, Kemalism and the secular nature of the state. The CHP's self-description as 'social democratic' is at least partially questionable with regard to its history, its party programme and core voters.

Selçuklu ruled by the AKP; Eskişehir Tepebaşı (CHP) and Odunpazarı (AKP)). Another reason to choose the two cities is that they are very comparable in many aspects (geography, population structure, unemployment numbers etc.) but ascribed very different images by the people in Turkey. Whereas Konya is perceived as religiously-conservative, Eskişehir is described as 'modern'.

Originally I planed to focus on the municipalities and to do participant observation with them. This however proved difficult due to the heated political climate. The insights I gained relied much on the people I had contact to, and less on a general institutional access. As a result, I decided to widen my focus to other municipal actors such as political parties' organizations or civil society organizations.

My fieldwork occurred in three different rounds. Initial research was done in October-November 2010 in both cities. A research scholarship provided by the Orient Institut Istanbul from April to October, and extended to December 2011 gave me the possibility to work on the legal foundations of municipal politics (a time-consuming undertaking given the fact that most laws and many commentaries were only available in Turkish), but also to observe the election campaigns for the June 2011 national elections. It was significant that access to the municipality and party was much better in Konya, maybe because the AKP felt 'safe' there.

The longest round of fieldwork took place from January to December 2013 supported by a PhD-scholarship from Macquarie University, Sydney as well as a TÜBİTAK research scholarship. During that time, I observed municipal politics from a citizen's perspective. I participated in a wide range of municipal activities, became a member of Eskişehir's *Kent Konseyi* (city assembly), took classes in a municipal centre, and attended the Political Academy organized by the AKP. Many of my interviews with significant local political figures were conducted during

that time. All interviews were conducted in Turkish and recorded. Interviews with low-ranking municipal staff or party members normally took place in the form of personal communications, as they preferred not to be recorded. In these cases, I took notes either during or immediately after the conversation. Expert interviews with academics were mainly conducted towards the end of 2013 as I wished to form my own opinions before discussing it with others.

Moving between the two cities as well as occasionally between Istanbul and Ankara, and moving between Turkey, Australia and Germany at times meant quite a logistic endeavor. Separating field work in three rounds often implied that contact persons had changed or that informants used new telephone numbers. However, I believe that my analysis has profited from these interruptions as they provided the time and space to reflect on observations and to question my initial conclusions and interpretations.

It was not possible to interview all mayors. As I was situated in Eskişehir, I was sometimes not fast enough to 'catch' mayors in Konya for an interview, given the fact that many interviews were granted spontaneously, e.g., by reference of someone else, not by making a formal appointment. Instead I conducted interviews with municipal directors. In Eskişehir, I conducted very productive interviews with the two district mayors. Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen however refused to conduct an interview, although the Mayor of Antalya Metropolitan Municipality, Mustafa Akaydın; CHP MP Süheyl Batum and Eskişehir's CHP President Nihat Çuhadar acted on my behalf. Instead he provided a written answer to my questions.

The strength of this thesis lies in its inclusive approach that perceives different local actors as linked in a discourse on municipal politics. I believe that focusing exclusively on the municipality provides only limited insights ino how municipalism in Turkey actually works. Furthermore, this thesis provides insights into the interplay of local context and local politics.
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However, this thesis also has its limits; an inclusive approach meant that I neither had the time, nor the word count to dig as deeply as I wished. This holds particularly true for the fields of cultural policy, political iconography and embodied politics. With regard to urban planning, municipal companies and outsourcing I was limited by the difficult access to municipal documents as well as by a lack of expert knowledge on their economic aspects. Other aspects such as the influenceof the European Union on municipal politics, e.g., by proving a legal framework or by allocating funds, were only touched upon as I believe this to be a topic of its own.

providing the freedom to follow my own path. I would like to thank Dr. Jaap Timmer, originally an expert on the Pacific, for his critical engagement on municipal politics in Turkey, and for many happy hours in Sydney's wild north with his family.

In 2013 I received a TÜBİTAK research scholarship by the Turkish state and was affiliated to the Istanbul Policy Centre of Sabancı University, Istanbul. I would like to thank Professor Fuat Keyman and Professor Korel Göymen for their support not only during the application stage but until today, as well as for many interesting insights into practical aspects of municipalism they provided.

I was overwhelmed by the generosity with which scholars such as Professor Ruşen Keleş, Dr. Zeynep Kadirbeyoğlu, Professor Fikret Adaman, Professor William Hale, Professor Birol Akgün, Dr. Ayça İnce, Professor Önder Kutlu, Professor Sabri Sayarı, Professor Ali Eşref Turan, Professor Sema Erder and Professor Metin Heper shared their time and knowledge with me. In particular I need to mention Professor Ayşe Güner, Professor Akif Çukurçayır and Dr. Ulaş Bayraktar. Comments by Dr. André Bank and Dr. Benjamin Flöhr added much to the quality of this thesis. Moritz Corbelin brought the content into a visually appealing form. Mariske Westendorp, my 'Australian outpost', helped in so many practical ways that a simple 'thank you' is clearly not enough.

Geographically I finished this thesis where it began, at Hamburg University. I would like to thank the whole staff at TürkeiEuropaZentrum, but particularly Professor Yavuz Köse and Professor Sabine Prätor for welcoming me and literally sharing their desks with me to provide the space and tranquility to finish the last chapters.

An anthropological thesis draws on material provided by 'the people'. I would like to thank my interview partners, the mayors and staff at all municipalities, and the members of the city

1 Introduction

I have known Ali, an ever smiling, short man in his late sixties and grandfather of three, since my very first day in Istanbul when I stumbled helplessly into his little café after I had lost my way in the back streets of Istanbul's Sultanahmet neighbourhood. I didn't know much Turkish back then and he had no English; however, we managed to understand each other with a lot of sympathy and good will. As the level of my Turkish increased, so did the complexity of our discussions. Most of our conversations dealt with Turkish politics as Ali was a fierce AKP supporter. Whereas he perceived that previous governments had restricted basic freedoms, and discriminated against major parts of society, he felt that with the AKP, the country "*started to breathe again*". Another topic he could speak about for hours were his plans to renovate his café and turn it into a small hotel. One day though, I found him devastated. He had just come from the AKP-run municipality where a civil servant had told him in no uncertain terms that he could receive the necessary papers, however a considerable 'off the record payment' would be required to process his application. Ali's objection that he was a fellow AKP member did not lead to the effects he had hoped for. How, he asked me, could that be? Did not the AKP promise to do everything better and to put the service to the citizens (*hizmet*) on the forefront of their politics? Didn't they promise to make politics more transparent and abolish corruption? Could it be that they were just as dishonest as other parties before them?

Prior to the 2009 and 2014 local elections I stayed with supporters of both AKP and CHP. The CHP supporters claimed that the AKP's electoral campaigns were not 'fair', and that the party bought votes by distributing not only coal and noodles, but also small pieces of gold (*küçük altın*) and money. The AKP, they said, used the ignorance (*cahillik*) of the population to seduce them by the use of religion. From AKP supporters I heard something entirely different: the CHP, was

an elitist club, they claimed, was not close to the people and did not know what Turkish people expected and needed but sought to impose their own worldview on them. By contrast, the AKP's own ideology (conservative democracy) was more open towards Turkish society's different identities and embraced everyone, while their focus was on the delivery of service (*hizmet*), not ideological indoctrination.

In May 2013 the 'Gezi Park protests' started in Istanbul opposing the plans of Istanbul Municipality to demolish the park and reconstruct the Taksim Military Barracks, with a shopping centre, in its place. The protests encompassed opposition to the large urban transformation projects (*kentsel dönüşüm*) taking place not only in Istanbul (the most prominent examples being the neighbourhoods of Sulukule and Tarlabaşı), but in the whole country.[2] Protesters criticized that urban decisions and quality of life were more and more subjected to economic interests and that cities were not ruled by municipalities anymore, but by investors. *Rant* (revenue)[3], the economic gain from land use speculation and the increasing influence of the public housing company TOKİ (*Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı*), were named as the worst effects. Many perceived the AKP as the driving force in this process of capitalization that went hand in hand with a homogenization of the country as historic neighbourhoods were destroyed by 'modernisation' and ultimately marketization.

The disagreements described above are only three incidents out of many that triggered my interest in local politics, a topic surprisingly side-lined in both media reportings and much academic publications on Turkey. Literature on Turkish municipal politics may be divided into three main approaches. The first takes a public administration perspective and focuses on how municipalism is done from a legal-administrative, financial or historic point of view (Göymen,

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[2] Soon the demonstrations extended to more general protests against the AKP government and particularly Prime Minister Erdoğan, who was increasingly perceived as authoritarian.

[3] The term *rant* is used to describe the payment which exceeds the actual land value due to speculation and an (immoral) cooperation between state and market forces.

2006; Keleş, 2012; Köker, 1995; Löffler & Kösecik, 2011; Marcou, 2006; Massicard & Bayraktar, 2009; Palabıyık & Kapucu, 2008; Parlak, Bekir and Sobacı, M. Zahid and Ökmen, 2008; Sözen, 2005; Yavas & Palabıyık, 2006; Güner, 2006; Tekeli, 2009).

Secondly, a group of studies produced mainly in the 1980s and 1990s, a highpoint of municipal research in Turkey, focused on the urban poor. Authors such as Erder & İncioğlu (2008a); Erman (1998); Heper (1987, 1989); Karpat (2004); Keyder & Öncu (1994) and White (2002) focused on how municipal politics faced the immense challenges of massive rural-to-urban migration. They traced how informal local politics related to ethnic or religious networks, as well as how identity and patronage politics led to new alignments between citizens, municipalities and political parties. Jenny B. White's comparison of municipal practice by the RP and the CHP, a major reference for this thesis, added much to the knowledge of how municipal politics actually 'worked on the ground' (2002).

Thirdly, more recent studies have focused on questions of urban transformation (*kentsel dönüşüm*). Especially after the Gezi protests in 2013 many authors have asked about the future of Turkish cities, the creation of revenue (*rant*) and the extent to which citizens are involved in planning decisions (Elicin, 2014; Kuyucu, 2014; Pérouse, 2015; Sönmez, 2013; Türkün, 2011; Unsal & Türk, 2014). Studies that take a multi-level perspective in examining local politics are an exception and appeared mainly in the form of articles (Bayraktar & Altan, 2013; Bayraktar, 2007a, 2007b; Doğan, 2007; Kadırbeyoğlu & Sümer, 2012; Kemahlıoğlu, 2012; Tuğal, 2009).

In spite of the relatively understudied nature of local politics, I felt that its study would help in understanding fundamental aspects of Turkish politics such as political mobilization, establishing links between voters and politicians, various ways of decision-making and the role of civil society. Research that focuses on party programs, that uses surveys or that seeks to apply

theoretical models often has difficulty explaining what happens 'on the ground'. On the contrary, my research was led by the question of how municipal politics were practiced on a daily basis.

In addition, I was convinced that analyzing municipal politics might illuminate the corner-stones of the AKP's continuous electoral success since 2002.[4] Turkey is a country characterized by major differences in ethnic privilege and class-related lifestyles that also manifest geographically. The successful adaption to different local contexts through taking into account patterns of social interaction and by adapting political messages to local practices and understanding seems to be a competitive advantage of the AKP. The RP, one of the predecessors of the AKP, has been perceived as the founder of a conservative municipal practice relying on primary identities (ethnic, religious, kin, *hemşehrilik*[5]) for political mobilization and activism. Additionally, they distinguished themselves from other parties by their extensive welfare provision. Many of those active in the AKP today started their career in the RP, e.g., President Erdoğan acted as RP Mayor of Istanbul (1994-1998); thus the AKP had a strong municipal practice when it came to power in 2002. This study explores whether the AKP is part of a *muhafazakar belediyecilik* (conservative municipalism) tradition founded by the RP, how it adopts to local contexts and to which extend such practice might have contributed to its political success, particularly in comparison with the main opposition party CHP.

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[4] Other possible explanations are a core electorate of religious-conservative voters, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's charismatic personality, the weak opposition, the party's pro-economy position and the economic instability prior to 2002, a wish for change among the citizens (e.g. with regard to the role of the military or the Kurdish question) and a pro-active foreign policy.

[5] While *hemşehri* literally means 'those from the same town' but it is used in a wider sense to define people from the same district or even region (or even if migrants from Turkey meet abroad). The term became prominent with regard to the larger Inner-Turkish migration that started in the 1960s, from East to West and rural to urban. Often migrants tended to settle close to other people from their region of origin, supporting each other through solidarity networks etc. Apart from describing a geographical link it also denotes a relationship of belonging (Fliche, 2005, §22).

1.1 Comparing Two Cities- Place as Analytical Category

That research has not well-addressed the question of how nationally organised political actors respond to local contexts is due less to the assumption that such a question is not important, but rather to the difficulty in defining the 'specificity' of a city and analysing its influence on urban politics. Nevertheless, images, the "*sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions*" (Gertner & Kotler, 2004, 50), are regularily ascribed to different cities, e.g., Paris is 'romance', Istanbul is 'the bridge between East and West'. Every image is the simplification of a large amount of data (e.g., geography, climate, history, economy, society, culture, architecture) and the attempt to break it down. The difficulty thus lies in defining it. Lynch was the first to draw a relation between a city's architecture and its image (1960). Lee expanded the analytical scope and used Bourdieu's term 'habitus' to describe the uniqueness of a city (1997).[6] Bockrath then suggested the term 'city habitus' to express a correlation between city structures and related practices of urban actors (Bockrath, 2008). Similar suggestions were made by Dangschat who compared the character of a city to that of a human being (2000). Lindner argued that cities have a biography (2000, 262), while Berking used another of Bourdieu's terms, namely 'doxa' to describe how every city has its own position towards the world, a sense of its own that influences how things are perceived and done. The extent and effects of city doxa become clear in the confrontation with other cities, for example when moving from one city to another (2008, 27-28).

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[6] The term habitus, introduced by Bourdieu, describes "*taken-for-granted ways of perceiving, thinking, and acting on the part of (more or less) competent actors immersed in their everyday practices*" (Paulle et al., 2012, 71). Bourdieu's main concern in his research on the Kabyle people in Algeria was to overcome the opposition of objectivist and subjectivist theoretical approaches. He analyzes that a subjectivist approach is too focused on the acting individual but neglects how structures provide direction. The objectivist approach on the other hand is too focused on directing structures and rules without pointing to the strategic options of the individual. Social practice is, for Bourdieu, more than the sum of individual action and more than a set of rules. As such it creates consistency but also flexibility and change as the habitus might also change through practise. Habitus does not only reproduces social practices but it is also a product of the practices as internal structures of the actor are externalised by practise whereas external, social structures are internalised (Bourdieu, 1979, 1993; Kumoll, 2005; Steiner, 2001).

Sociologist Löw argued that cities have an 'intrinsic logic' (*Eigenlogik*), determining which ideas are generated in a city, and which decisions are finally accepted (Löw, Steets, & Stoetzer, 2008; Löw, 2008a, 2008b).[7] The intrinsic logic functions as a constitution of meaning reproduced in the collective self generating patterns of interpretation and interaction (Löw, 2008b; Zimmermann, 2008). Anthropologist Schiffauer discerned that when analyzing how urban cultures are different from each other it is not enough to focus on cultural practises and symbols as these constantly change, but on *how* urban cultures organise this change and what their intrensic logic is (Schiffauer, 1997).

1.2   "When in Rome, do as the Romans do"[8]

If every city has an intrinsic logic, a sense of its own, then this uniqueness is likely to influence how things are conceptualized and done in that city. This thesis analyzes how politics are pursued on a daily basis as inseparable aspects of people's reality of life. I suggest the term 'culture of everyday politics' to describe how political action such as mobilization, decision-making, protest, leadership style, and patterns of interaction adapt to city uniqueness in order to be maximally effective. As such the 'culture of everyday politics' extends the focus of political culture[9], as it not only comprises the 'purely political' but also social, economic and cultural factors in its orbit.[10]

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[7] For a critique see Kemper & Vogelpohl, 2011.

[8] Popular saying pointing to the need to adapt to local culture.

[9] In this thesis political culture is defined as those "*belief systems, attitudes, values and mentalities affecting political behaviour*" (Wehling, 1993, 91).

[10] The term political culture was introduced by Almond (1956) and expanded by Almonds and Verba's 'The Civic Culture. Political attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations' (1963). Though a big breakthrough at its time and still often cited one may ask to what extent the division in parochial, subject, participant and civic political culture is still applicable and whether its quantitative approach helps to describe today's phenomena. More qualitative research was done two years later by Pye and Verba in (1965). Nearly 20 years later Inglehart and Abramson argued that a rise of post-materialist values had significantly change political culture (1994). Putnam's influential work on the link between civic participation, trust and 'good governance' analyzed the influence of non-political factors on political culture (Putnam, 1994).

Although the conclusion that Turkish political culture is characterized by authoritarianism and patronage is widespread in literature on Turkish politics, studies on Turkish political culture are rare. There is not 'one political culture' in Turkey, in the two cities, or within the two parties researched. However, it is possible to ascribe certain tendencies to act or different patterns of interaction to the two cities and to the two parties researched. It is not a coincidence but due to the different urban habitus that discontentment is expressed by a demonstration in front of the supermarket Migros in the city centre in Eskişehir, but in Konya is voiced behind the scenes by quietly approaching decision-makers through various networks.

As such, political culture is distilled from previous political experiences of a society and the 'answers' it found as solution (Rohe, 2003, 113). Laws need to respond to the dominant culture to be deployed effectively. Leaders needs to respond to the political culture with regard to the 'tools' they use (manipulation, persuasion, coercion) and their response to challenges (Kim, 1964, 332). In order to be effective actors and their public performances need to be conform to the existing political culture. However, political culture is only rarely reflected upon it - in the same way that 'habitus' - constitutes the unexpressed rules of the 'political game'.

Different political cultures are also ascribed to parties. The CHP for example is often perceived as 'elitist', an assumption that builds less on the party program and more on the forms of social interaction the party practices.[11] The AKP claims to continue the RP's municipal tradition by adapting to existing social structures, incorporating local elites, and translating their political message into a popular language in line with what is asserted to be local norms and values. With regard to political parties the use of symbols, clothing, election design, official buildings and office equipment play into political culture (Rohe, 2003, 111-117). In its 'Political Academy'

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[11] For an overview of the varying positions the CHP held since its foundation see Emre (2014).

AKP members do not only learn about the country's political history or relevant laws, but more importantly about *how to do* politics. This includes the types of clothes one needs to wear at different occasions as well as bodily movements as shaking a hand ('firm, but not too long') and the use of positive body language as political culture is often more about the form, the 'how', than about the content, the 'what'.

The above examples show the important difference between politics as theorized and politics as practised. They point to the difference of formal politics as defined by law and the varied informal practices (use of backdoor channels, lobbying, but also patronage or corruption) that accompany and stabilize it. Both parties pursue politics by the incorporation of elites (religious, ethnic, economic etc.) into the political system. In the following pages I demonstrate the role played by groups that are not officially part of the political structure but that nevertheless influence candidate selection or decision-making. Political patronage on the other hand fulfils a variety of social functions (Güneş-Ayata, 1990; Sayarı, 2014a).

In brief, national parties' attempts to adapt to local conditions demonstrates that politics is not something that is 'made in the capital' but is an integral part of the local social network and as such part of people's everyday reality. This thesis analyzes how politics are practised and lived on a daily basis. It understands informal, and even illegal practices as complementing and stabilizing formal politics as laws reveal their meaning through their application, which includes processes of (local) interpretation and reinterpretation, but also ignorance or neglect.

1.3   Politics of Everyday Culture - Building a Nation - Shaping a Place

This thesis argues that municipalities today are not mere providers of services or actors in the fields of local economics and urban planning. They not only adapt to the local context, but are

constantly trying to (re-)shape it. Municipalities work within a certain philosophy, a way of doing things that relates to their perception of 'the city'. Ideologically framed approaches such as 'conservative municipalism' (as practiced by the RP and the AKP) or 'new municipalism' (as has been practiced by the CHP) are examples of this. How mayors perceive their roles, how welfare is distributed, which forms of decision-making are practised, which urban planning projects are pursued, what events and festivals are organised in the city - all this and much more is part of 'imagining' the city by the municipality's side. The uniqueness of cities described above is not a coincidence; they are not 'just there', but the product of particular political, historical, social and economic actors and processes.[12] In addition, urban habitus, is not static but responds to changes of practise as it is situated in a triangle of conflicting priorities between continuity and change, adaption to changing conditions and compliance with established patterns of interaction (Anderson, 1990).

I suggest the term 'politics of everyday culture' to describe how locality is crafted by use of urban planning, cultural policy and municipal practise. Building activity is more than just the construction of real estate; it makes power relations visible and it is often designed to impress. In the Turkish context President Erdoğan's palace or the plan to construct the world's largest airport spring to mind. Urban planning also influences the social: buildings, streets and transportation influence with whom and how we interact. Any struggle over the images and 'meaning' transported by a city are at the same time a competition over hegemonic domination (also) through the built environment.

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[12] This points towards a second important influence on local politics in Turkey – the central state. One of its raison d'être is to unite different local contexts under one rule of law. Diverging local contexts run contrary its homogenization attempts as may be observed well with regard to the 19th century Europe or in decolonizing states (Tilly, 1975; van de Walle, 2010).

For Turkey, social-enginering aspects are well researched for the time of the early Republic. Mustafa Kemal's 'revolution' (*devrim*) as the process after the founding of the Turkish Republic are labelled by his followers, was not only an attempt to change the political, educational and social basis but also to introduce new aesthetics. A new cityscape was thought to help to form a new identity; new spatial arrangements would lead to new behaviour patterns (Bozdoğan & Akcan, 2012; Bozdoğan, 2001). The idea that the built environment 'forms' the people, homogenizes them and brings them under a centralised control is in no way particular to Kemalism.[13]

Ankara as the capital of the new nation played an important role in contrast to Istanbul whose architectural heritage was perceived as representing the decadent and exploitive power relations of the Ottoman past.[14] The 'Ottoman city' was rejected not as an actual urban form (that did not exist, there was no 'Ottoman city' per se)[15] but as a symbol of retrogression. Houston describes how Ankara and Istanbul were 'De-Ottomanised' by building activities as an aspect of the attempt by the Republic state to mark both spaces and subjects as 'Turkish' (Houston, 2005). To destroy the old by erecting the new however is in no way peculiar to Turkey. Hegemonic powers destroy symbolic neighbourhoods or historically important places and replace them by boulevards or large public buildings in order to re- or rather overwrite memory (Halbwachs, 1991).

With regard to a 'Kemalist urbanity' Göle writes that the public sphere was "*institutionalized and imagined as a site for the implementation of a secular and progressive way of life*" (Göle, 2002,

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[13] Holston shows similar processes by example of the city of Brasilia (1989), where a new society should emerge out of a modern architecture and city planning. Delitz and Fisher demonstrated how every architecture is utopian at its core (Delitz & Fischer, 2009; Delitz, 2010).

[14] German architect Herman Jansen (1869-1947) won the request for proposal for the planning of the 'new Ankara'. He proposed keeping the old citadel as some kind of open-air museum and have the new city develop around it. His functional plan focused on transportation, recreation, community and housing as the basic needs.

[15] Nevertheless some specifics of an 'Islamic city' in the Ottoman Empire (partially combined with a Byzantine heritage) can be named such as a neighbourhood comprising a public bath and a mosque (Eldem, Goffman, & Masters, 1999).

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176-177). For the Kemalists the city and urbanisation (*şehirlesme*) implied a certain lifestyle, a certain way of living together, a certain kind of society. Jenkins describes it this way:

> There is little doubt that, by the time Mustafa Kemal died in 1938, the state's campaign to `civilize` the population of the new republic had already radically changed both the appearance of towns and cities and the public social mores of their inhabitants. The patchwork of separate neighbourhoods defined by religious belief, with houses clustered around mosques, or churches, was giving way to new towns built around squares and municipal parks, with tea gardens and statues of Mustafa Kemal (Jenkins, 2008, 108-109).

Kemalist urban modernity sought homogenization to create a nation-state. Standardized modernist public buildings were constructed for hospitals, law courts, municipalities, schools etc. which were to represent the spirit and determination of the new republic. A special role was ascribed to the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*).[16] If reference was made to local styles it was to 'Anatolian forms' retrieved from excavations.[17] Statues of Atatürk were used to 'beautify' the cities and carried the Kemalist's hegemonic claim to the last corner of the country (Gür, 2013; Kreiser, 2012). The (re-) naming of streets, villages and even towns were other tools to establish a certain reading of history and a coherent urban identity. These urban planning activities often were to the disadvantage of minorities as those aspects of their cultural heritage which did not fit official history were eradicated, analyzed as causing a 'selective amnesia' by Öktem in his description of Mardin (2005, 242).

The Kemalist's claim to define 'the urban' was soon challenged. From the 1950s on Turkey experienced a vast migration of villagers towards cities in the country's west such as Istanbul, Ankara or Izmir. In her article 'Remaining Rural or Becoming Urban' Erman describes how rural-to-urban migrants experienced an urbanity coined by the beliefs of the Kemalists and their ideas

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[16] The new nation that the Kemalists envisaged was to be educated and ideologically formed in these centres closely linked to the ruling CHP. Those People's Houses also had an symbolic significance as their buildings were aesthetic 'outposts' of the Republic in its Hinterland (Bozdoğan, 2001, 93-97; Navaro-Yashin, 2002, 10-12; Yeşilkaya, 1999).
[17] At times, 'Anatolian forms' were incorporated. As examples the styles from excavation funds (e.g., Hatussa next to Ankara) were used (Ersan, 2007; Kreiser, 1997). Similar combinations of a 'modern architecture' with 'national styles' can also be observed in Iran during the reign of Reza Shah or in Italy under Mussolini.

of living in a city following a Western example (1998). Migrants were expected to adapt to the new Kemalist urban norms concerning how one should dress, interact, dance, drink and eat. However, many migrants became neither urban in the Kemalist sense nor did they remain rural. Rather they developed their own hybrid forms, of which the *gecekondu* (squatter housing) became one of the most significant symbols. Their different habitus, or as Houston names it, 'embodied difference' provoked a Kemalist opposition who perceived the city as 'theirs' (Houston, 2013). In a parallel pushback *gecekondu* urban dwellers developed a counter discourse and practice concerning how to live an Islamic urban culture (Houston, 2005).

For generations, Turkish cities have been subject to place-shaping processes by municipalities, the nation state and local actors trying to define what the urban is (or should be). I use the term 'politics of everyday culture' to describe how local culture is shaped rather than being 'just there'. Many different factors contribute to these politics of place-shaping: the revitalization of city narratives or local heroes in festivals and events; cultural policy; the structure of the city as determined by the built environment, infrastructure and areas of public interaction; its political culture and public sphere. The municipality as the major political - and in Central Anatolian cities often cultural - actor plays a prime role.

As in nation building the creation and use of artefacts and symbols is important; an 'architecture parlante' references other styles and incorporates their meaning. This thesis researches how different perceptions of 'Turkishness', different ideas of living together and of society at large are created in Central Anatolia, namely in Konya and Eskişehir. It explores these by focusing on urban planning as realized by the municipalities, the contextualization of municipal politics within a wider narrative and the use of symbols, leadership style and political culture in this

process; and cultural policy activities.[18] With regard to place shaping, three different analytical areas should be distinguished: economic, cultural and moral landscapes.

The term 'economic landscapes' refers to the fact that city branding turns the city into a 'product' that seeks to attract 'consumers' as investors, tourists and citizens. Only those aspects of a city that are 'marketable' are of interest in the branding process, so that a homogeneous vision is given priority over a more pluralistic presentation, implying a silencing of alternate voices (Malpas, 2009, 191). These processes have been widely described for the 'global city' Istanbul, but Anatolian cities have been studied much less.[19] This thesis asks how the city municipality situates itself in a global context, given the demand of neo-liberal urban politics to portray and market cities as economic values. It analyzes the extend to which municipalities focus on an existent cultural heritage in their branding activity, or create a new one, e.g., by use of 'landmark architecture'.

The term 'cultural landscapes' names a process in which the city habitus plays into the identity one develops both as an individual and also as a member of a larger group. 'Place' is an important element in the constitution of the 'self' (Oktay & Bala, 2015; Sarbin, 1983; Sepe & Pitt, 2014; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996).[20] Local identity is a structure that ensures continuity and consistency over time, for oneself and for others. This identity however is not stable but historically generated and is context specific. In this regard the use of 'we' (*biz*) or 'this is how we

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[18] These processes are well documented for Diyarbakır (Gambetti, 2007; Watts, 2010) due to the role it plays as a symbol of Kurdish nationalism.

[19] For a discussion of Istanbul see Keyder & Öncu (1994). The branding of Istanbul during the 'European Capital of Culture' period is analysed by Bıçakçı (2012) and Uysal (2013). Peel and Lloyd (2008) show by example of a small Scottish city (Dundee) how the image of a city may purposely be changed by the municipality and private stakeholders. Other examples are Barcelona (Smith, 2005), Bilbao (Alvarez Sainz, 2012), and Rotterdam (Richards & Wilson, 2002).

[20] Baumann has shown how the (imagined) opposition of 'we' and 'they' adds identity, cohesion, solidarity and emotional stability to a group (Baumann, 1990). Tönnies has described similar processes in his distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies, 1991). With regard to nationalism Anderson has demonstrated how nations are 'immagined communities' (Anderson, 1983).

do it here' is significant as Norbert Elias has shown in his work on the perspective character of identity (Elias, 1986).

Space is a social product, affecting spatial perceptions and practices (Lefebvre, 1991). As such, cities are characterized by changing (and competing) cultural representations and societal plans. The ideological framing of municipalism, everyday municipal practice and the conceptualization by mayors and municipal staff are important factors in this process. Urban planning - more or less explicitly – is a social discourse on the city's heritage and 'identity'. The use of space thus is also a political statement. Different ideas of living together are pursued by the two parties and manifest themselves in urban design and architecture, cultural policy, political culture and the situating of municipal activities (like welfare) in a wider ideological context representing a discourse on the city's heritage and identity. As the main non-local influences I identify the party ideology and the nation state both seeking homogenization, thus excluding those who 'do not belong'.

Thirdly, I use the term 'moral landscapes' to signify how bodily conduct in public is an important aspect of cities' images, and of the local context parties need to adapt to, but also of local culture as shaped by municipal example. An important aspect is gender, particularly female gender and the morals (*namus*) ascribed to it.[21] The body, as the immediate vehicle that creates and expresses 'culture', is central. Whereas citizens in Eskişehir proudly proclaim that women can walk along the street at 4 am without being harassed, women and men are expected not to sit next to each other on a tramway in Konya if free seats are available next to same-sex travellers. Urban planning and cultural policy, e.g., the content of lectures delivered at municipal cultural centres are also important influences on a city's moral pactices. In addition, municipalities not only adapt

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[21] Staeheli describes how spaces of eighteenth century society were gendered. Women's public appearance was limited rather by practise than by law due to the social construction of gender roles and understanding of 'appropriateness'. She shows by the example of New Zealand how the absence of restrooms for women were an effective way to exclude women from public spheres (Staeheli, 2003).

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to local patronage and clientalist practices but also seek to shape them. Similarly, the perception of legality/illegality, of what is *ayıp* (dishonourable) behaviour or of accepted decision-making processes, influences and is influenced by municipal practice.

In brief, this thesis analyzes municipal politics as an area of conflict between diverging local contexts vs. homogenization attempts by the central state and party ideology. The thesis demonstrates how to determine local context and analyze its influences on local politics. In comparing the municipal practice of the AKP with the CHP's municipal performance and tradition, I will show how the AKP adapts to divergent contexts with more skill, and analyze the extent to which this ability relates to the conservative municipal tradition of its predecessor, the RP. Furthermore, the thesis argues that parties do not just accept a given local context and adapt to it. Instead, they seek to shape it according to their ideas of how 'society ought to be'. The main tools to its realisation are urban planning, cultural politics and municipal practise.

1.4   Thesis Chapters

An introduction to the main questions of this thesis was given in chapter one (Introduction). Chapter two introduces Konya and Eskişehir. By analyzing the historical, economic, social and cultural factors that 'made' them, the reputations as 'modern' (Eskişehir) and 'conservative-religious' (Konya) are reconstructed. I present a history of relevant developments in municipal and national politics since 1984, the year of the introduction of metropolitan municipalities. The mayors of the two metropolitan municipalities as well as of the four district municipalities (Eskişehir's Tepebaşı and Odunpazarı, and Konya's Selçuklu and Meram) are introduced and their biographies are analyzed against the background of the cities' particularities and their political histories.

The third chapter looks at mayors, the most influential actors in municipal politics in Turkey, and the conditions of their pre-candidature and election. I argue that an individual's success involves the strategic use of local rootedness, ethnic or religious belonging, engagement in civil society organizations (CSOs), relation with local and national elites and an inner-party career prior to candidature.

The fourth chapter presents an overview of the legal development of municipalism in Turkey. It deals with the influence of the central state on municipal politics from the introduction of the first municipalities in 1857 until today. At the same time, this chapter serves to summarize Turkey's administrative structure and to introduce municipal tasks. It outlines the most important legal reforms in this regard – the introduction of a nationwide municipal system in 1930 and the subsequent legal reforms in 1984, 2004/05 and 2012. It is argued that after waves of 'Centralization' and 'Decentralization' Turkey is currently experiencing a 'Recentralization' of municipal politics as legalization reveals a political culture that historically perceives the local as a potential site of unrest that needs to be countered by centralization and homogenization.

The fifth chapter examines municipal practice and the main 'municipal philosophies' of conservative and social municipalism (*muhafazakar belediyecilik* and *toplumcu belediyecilik*). One major practice here concerns the contact of mayors with citizens, and how the local party branch, civil society organizations and the city assembly (*kent konseyi*)[22] may facilitate it.

In the sixth chapter I show how service and welfare delivery are important aspects of the culture of everyday politics as they establish contact between municipalities and citizens. Finally, the chapter asks how these extensive programs are financed, which techniques to 'create additional revenue' are used by the municipalities and how their (il)legality is perceived by the citizens.

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[22] Not to be confused with the municipal council (*belediye meclisi*), the municipal decision-taking organ.

The seventh chapter looks at urban transformation in the two cities and shows how Turkish cities have become valuable sites of capital speculation and investment since the 1980s. I examine the relevant institutions for the change of land use plans at the local and national level. The roles unofficial stakeholders like local elites or the construction sector play in these processes are discussed.

Chapter eight focuses on municipal 'meaning making' by means of its cultural activities. It looks at the activities organized by municipalities alone or in cooperation with CSOs. By using examples from both cities this chapter demonstrates how the parties' cultural policy and municipal practice aim to form a certain type of citizen. Particular focus is on Mayor Büyükerşen's attempts to turn Eskişehir into an 'European city' and the use of Konya's religious heritage (Mevlana) by its Metropolitan Municipality. It is analyzed whether the CHP is driven by a 'educative' approach whereas the AKP emphasizes public-private partnerships in the form of 'events'. In addition, the chapter asks to which extent cities engage in branding activities (*marka şehir*).

2 Konya and Eskişehir. A (Political) History of Two Cities

"Konya'ya gittiğin zaman yarı hacı olmuş sayılırsın."

"Going to Konya counts as half a pilgrimage." (Turkish proverb)

When I first arrived in Turkey as a student, I lived in Istanbul. Before long I started to wonder about the rest of the country. Therefore, in the semester break, I decided to travel eastwards by bus to Konya, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman and Van. When I told my more secular Turkish friends, they expressed their surprise: "*Why would you go there?*", they asked; "*What is there to see?*" Instead, they suggested, I should go to Izmir, Bodrum or Antalya on the Western and Mediterranean coasts, or maybe to the capital city of Ankara. These cities would give me a good idea of the state of Turkey today, particularly as they represent the modern, enlightened face of the country. In Konya, I would not feel comfortable, they said. It was much too conservative and religious. And in Diyarbakır, well, that was the city of the Kurds, dangerous and always ready for violence.

The above remarks came from a certain 'corner of society' and may be understood in the context of different ethnicities and lifestyles in Turkey that also manifest geographically (Bayirbağ, 2013). Although these spatial belongings are not static but dynamic and hybrid they still illuminate many of the conflicts in today's Turkey. Apart from ethnic (state and subaltern) nationalisms, other tensions exist between the country's more religiously inclined citizens (often associated with the government party, the AKP) and Kemalist citizens (often associated with the main opposition party, the CHP). Other factions of society exist between ethnic minorities and the main ultranationalist party MHP (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, Nationalist Movemet Party) and closely connected circles (the *Ülkücü)*; as well as political liberals that may not be associated

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with any political party; or are marked by class differences. These differences, which are ultimately more complex, have manifested themselves within the legal, social and economic domains since the founding of the Turkish Republic.

2.1 Konya

After an overnight bus trip, I arrived in Konya early in the morning. I had heard about Konya and its most famous 'citizen', the 13th century sufi, poet, theologian and philosopher Mevlana. Mevlana's famous saying "*Come, come again, whoever you are, come!"* and his dictum "*Ya olduğun gibi görün, ya göründüğün gibi ol*" (Be as you seem, seem/appear as you are) have found their way into Turkish Islam. I had also heard about Konya's main touristic attraction, whirling dervishes and their 'dance' (*sema*). What a surprise when the bus drove into Konya on the Yeni İstanbul Caddesi the first thing I saw in the morning light were long rows of grey or beige tenement housing. Built in a simple and cheap manner they reminded me of the architecture of post-war Germany and not of the 'mystic city' I had expected.

Konya is not only a city of religious, but also of archeological importance. Situated on the Silk Road and an important Hittite settlement around 1500 BC., it was inhabited by Phrygians (Iconium, 800 BC.). The main source of historic identification for the city, apart from the legacy of Mevlana, is its Seljuk past. After being conquered by the Seljuks in 1084, a group within them, the Rum Seljuk, founded an independent Sultanate that endured until 1307. Today's Konya was its capital.[23] Many great buildings have lived to tell the story of this glorious and prosperous past: for example, Karatay Medrese (1251) (now a museum of ceramics), Sırçalı Medrese (1242) (now a museum featuring Seljuk and Ottoman antiquities), the Sahip 'Ata Külliyesi (1258), İnce

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[23] Until it was occupied by the Ottomans in 1442, the city was administered by the Karamanids.

Minaret Medrese (1279), the Alaeddin Mosque (1235) and the Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi Türbesi ve Dergahı (Konya Belediyesi, 2012).[24] The Seljuk past endures as one of the main points of reference for the city. The double eagle in the city's coat of arms is a symbol of the Seljuk reign. The Seljuk past is crucial for Konya's self-perception. Konya takes pride in having been one of the earliest capitals of the Turks in Anatolia and still carries a historical grandness. Perhaps for that reason, an informant concludes, people in Konya don't feel the need to adapt. "*It doesn't matter what happens in the rest of Turkey*", he says, "*We are the ancestors of the early Turks and Muslims. Here is not like Istanbul, here you can feel safe, because here is still Anatolia.*" (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.13). In Chapter 8 I delinate how the municipality's cultural policies and high-quality publications aim at keeping the connection with the city's Seljuk past alive, and at recovering artifacts from international collections.

The last thirty to forty years have seen Konya grow into an economically prosperous city. In medieval times, it was known for its carpets but since then mostly for its agriculture. Whereas other cities, Eskişehir for example, experienced industrialization after the founding of the Republic, Konya, due to its religious identity had difficult relations with the secular state. As a result, it was deprived of state subventions and investment. However, when the economy was liberalized after the military coup in 1980 cities including Konya, Yozgat, Denizli, Çorum, Aksaray and Gaziantep experienced an economic boom.[25] Additionally globalization and europeanization processes influenced Turkish cities politically, economically and organizationally leading to an opening towards global and European markets. This sudden

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[24] The site was a gift from the Seljuk Sultan to Mevlana's father, the theologian Baha al-Din Walad of Balkh (d. 1231).

[25] Buğra and Savaşkan argue that the 'Anatolian Tigers' did not lead to such extensive growth in Central and Eastern Anatolia, but that İstanbul remained the country's most important business centre (2014). In 2011 the average income in Konya was 7,213 USD (TÜİK, 2012b, 5). It should be added that these are the official numbers through taxes, and that the large informal sector is not taken into consideration. However the unemployment rate was lower (4,9%, TÜİK, 2012b, 46) than in Eskişehir (6,6 %, TÜİK, 2012a, 25).

development led many internal and external observers to label them as 'Anatolian Tigers'.[26] These local companies' main shared characteristic was that they were either owned by conservative, religious businesspersons, religious communities or sects (*tarikat*), or had many stakeholders due to an investment system that avoided interest rates. Capital was mainly collected from members of religious groups or from remittances sent by Turks working in European countries. Many of the companies - at least in their early days - were small or medium scale enterprises. These companies introduced new ethics to the economic sphere; for example, *zakat* (obligatory alms-giving and religious tax) was expected from the 'Muslim Bourgeoisie' that attempted to diminish a poor-rich polarization by additional charity activities. Muslim businesspersons who had experienced a state that supported a secular industrial elite consequently rejected state intervention. However, at the same time they tried to influence politics by financing local and national political actors, thus not differentiating themselves much from the eonomic-political intermingling they accused the Kemalists of (Demir, Acar, & Toprak, 2004; Hösgör, 2011; Joppien, 2010, 43–52).[27]

Although the majority of voters in Konya supported right-wing or Islamist parties', there is at the same time a strong believe in technical progress, in making things more comfortable, in economic development, dynamism and investment (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.2013). With its many new cars on its wide highways, Konya at times resembled American cities. Indeed, some residents express puzzlement over their city's image. "*Conservative people in Turkey want to use Konya as a symbol for conservative lifestyle. But I have worked in different places all over Turkey",* an elderly academic remembers. *"People in the East are much more conservative. But all have this image of Konya being extremely conservative - maybe because of religion.*"

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[26] Companies associated with this boom were mainly active in textile, construction, furniture and the service sector. They included, for example, İstikbal, Kimpaş, YİMPAŞ, Kombassan, Ülker, Jet-Pa or İhlas.

[27] For details of the economic activities of the Fethullah Gülen community see Agai (2004), ESI European Stability Initiative (2005) and Yavuz (2006).

(Interview, Hasan, Konya, 25.05.2011). Rather than describing Konya simply as a conservative-religious city, its characterization as socially conservative, economically capitalist and technically modern would seem to be more appropriate.

Konya is not only an economically upcoming city but it is also one of learning. Selçuk University, founded in 1975, has approximately 80,000 students, making it the biggest university in Turkey. Necmettin Erbakan University (previously Konya University), KTO Karatay University and Mevlana University as well as several research parks complete the picture (Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2012). The influx of students meant a big change for Konya's population. Although the students mainly settled in the Bosna Hersek neighbourhood on Konya's outskirts they were perceived as 'foreign' by the majority of Konya's population. Previously migration to Konya has mainly come from its province. Migrants had a similar cultural background and rather enforced an already existing culture (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.2013).

2.2 Eskişehir

Although the name Eskişehir indicates an 'old city' (eski=old; şehir= city), there is no 'old city' in Eskişehir. Its cultural heritage though is very rich because it was situated at the centre of important trade roads. Hittite settlements dated around 2000 B.C. have been found, and evidence that the Phrygians, who came from Thracia, lived in the area from 700 B.C.[28] Not only Dorylaion (today's Eskişehir) but also Pessinus (Ballıhisar) and Midas (Yazılıkaya) were important Phrygian settlements in the region. After the division of the Roman Empire in 395 A.D., Eskişehir, like the whole of Anatolia, became part of the Eastern Roman Empire. Dorylaion (then Dorylaeum) gained importance again due to trade and its hot baths, and the city experienced a

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[28] They first settled in Polatlı, post 700 B.C. Gordion became their capital.

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high influx of Christian settlers.[29] In 708, it was conquered by the Arabs (Durilia) and, in 1074, by the Seljuks. Ertuğrul Gazi (1219-1237), the father of Osman I., settled in Eskişehir and after his death, left the power to his son who, in 1289, started to use the imperial edict of the Seljuk Sultan. Subsequent to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Eskişehir lost its importance for several centuries. During this time it was governed as a part of Kütahya province by the Ottomans (Atuk, 2002). Unlike Konya, Eskişehir was never an important Seljuk settlement thus it lacks a similar architectural heritage.

The decline of the city came to an end in the late 19th century when Eskişehir experienced a large influx of immigrants, as a result of the Russian-Ottoman wars (Parla, 2006). In pre-republican times Eskişehir was both a multi-ethnic and multi-religious town. In 1893, 48,200 Muslims, 12,700 Orthodox Greek, 6,074 Armenians and approximately 100 Jews lived in Eskişehir (Atuk, 2002, 7-20). The minority populations, especially the Armenians, provided the small town of Eskişehir with some 'cosmopolitan flair'. The Armenian club brought 'Istanbul's finest actresses and actors' to the city (Atuk, 2002). But all of this changed at the beginning of the 20th century when Eskişehir became a strategic point during the War of Independence. It was re-conquered by Turkish troops on 2 September 1922 from the Greeks. In the clash that ensued the Christian quarters (Tuzpazarı, Taşbaşı, Reşadiye Cami, Gar and Bağlar Caddeleri) were destroyed by fire (Eskişehir Valiliği, 1998, 16).

Unlike Konya, Eskişehir has always maintained close ties to the state, not only because it was one of the first cities to be connected to the railway system, but also due to the fact that a number of state-owned companies were founded in Eskişehir.[30] A city based on agriculture and trade, Eskişehir experienced rapid and heavy industrialization when it first became connected to the

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[29] Justianapolis (todays Sivrihisar in Eskişehir province) in particular became an important centre for trade.
[30] The *lületaş* (Meerschaum) mines were owned by the state.

Anatolian Railway (from 1888, connecting Istanbul with Ankara and Konya through the intersection Eskişehir) and then to the Berlin-Baghdad railway line (1903-1940). The railway line led to a heavy influx of German skilled labour and engineers. The German-founded traction shops were one of few pre-republic industrial attempts in today's Turkey (Eskişehir Valiliği, 1998, 16). In addition, the influx of Muslim migrants (*muhacir/göçmen*)[31] increased the percentage of a well-educated and skilled labour in the city (Aksoylu, 2012). Compared with other towns of the region that still heavily relied on agriculture at that time Eskişehir was far ahead. During the Ottoman period, farming and service in the army were the main professions undertaken by Muslims. Also the high percentage of non-Muslims engaged in engineering, finance, artisanship and jewellery rendered Eskişehir an over proportionally educated city that contributed to its successful industrialization (Demir et al., 2004, 166). After the founding of the Republic, Eskişehir experienced rapid urbanization; in 1933, the Sugar Factory and in 1965 the Sümerbank printed cotton industrial factory as well as a dependent machine factory were founded. The year 1930 saw the founding of SARAR, Turkeys largest apparel plant. Other early private companies included flour, tea, cement, steel and soil producing companies (Babadoğan, 2005, 53). Turkey's first and only car the '*Devrim*' (Revolution), was built in Eskişehir's industrial complex in 1961. The F-16 Jet engine factory TUSAŞ was founded in 1987 when Eskişehir hosted Turkey's first air force headquarters for NATO during the cold war. Jet fighters still make deafening noise in the city's sky and citizens easily detect who is a foreigner to their city – s/he who winces. In 1984, TÜLOMSAŞ (*Türkiye Lokomotif ve Motor Sanayi Anonim Şirketi*) a builder of railway wagons, was founded (Eskişehir Valiliği, 1998, 6). In addition, private business emerged in Eskişehir, making it Turkey's biggest organized industrial zone (Keyman & Koyuncu Lorasdağı, 2010).

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[31] Migrants are mainly Crimean Tatars and ethnic Turks from the Balkan. Migration started in the late 19th century, the last large 'wave' came in the 1980s (Kırımlı, 2012). For a detailed description see Chapter 3.

The city's industrial past gave distinction to the city's architecture and public perception over a long period of time. Every morning, some of the older citizens reported, the streets were crowded by workers cycling to the outskirts of the city. The district of Tepebaşı is still host to many factory buildings whose owners may not demolish them due to preservation orders. But they do not wish to renovate them as the possibility of maybe turning them into a building site one day is financially much more promising.

Eskişehir is located around the Porsuk River that today constitutes the heart of the city. However, that has not always been the case. For many years the industrial companies around the city pumped their chemicals and wastes into the river, transforming it into a dead, smelly sewer after the 1970s. This deterioration affected the social life of the city and the area became less lively. Also the city's dusty streets turned into mud when it rained; and, in the hot summer it smelled horribly due to large amounts of horse dung. In 1997, the German anthropologist Schiffauer experienced Eskişehir as a big village lacking public spaces such as parks, piazzas, boulevards, restaurants where urban citizens interact (Schiffauer, 1997, 131-134). Nevertheless, this perception of Eskişehir has changed considerably over the last 15 years due to Mayor Büyükerşen who focuses on cultural modernity and living together in diversity. He planned to transform Eskişehir, which was back then an industrial city, into a 'modern' city:

> I had the vision to realize the expectation of Eskişehir's citizens minimize the troubles of the city, and to transform it from a kasaba [a place between a village and a small town] into an exemplary, beautiful and modern city. The biggest success is that now Eskişehir's citizens can proudly say "I'm from Eskişehir". Our visitors, which come from all over Turkey, say: "We want a city like this". Yes, Eskişehir has indeed become an exemplary city (Interview, Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, Eskişehir, 09.09.2013).

Not only urban development measures, but heavy investment in cultural venues like theatres, concert stages and museums has led to radical change of the city's image into one of a city of culture and arts (Chapter 8). Eskişehir has two large universities (Anadolu University founded in

1958 and Osmangazi University founded in 1993) with a total of 60,000 students. Anadolu University has approximately 1,4 million students at its distance Open University (*Açık Öğretim*). Eskişehir is also well known for being a city with a well-educated population; 87% of the people have high school degrees, which puts Eskişehir in 12th place in Turkey. Konya ranks lower: only 66% of the population has a high school degree which puts Konya in 58th place in Turkish comparison (TÜİK, 2013, 50).[32]

Geographically speaking, both cities are located in Central Anatolia: they share the same snowy winters and hot, dry summers. Eskişehir has a population of approximately 800,000 (TÜİK, 2012a, 10).[33] Konya is twice its size with a population of approximately 2 million in 2011. But, as it sprawls over the Anatolian plateau (which makes it the largest Turkish city) the population density is lower with 53 persons/km^2 (TÜİK, 2012b, 12). Although an economically booming city, its population growth of 6.71% is 4% lower than that of Eskişehir and only half of the Turkish average (TÜİK, 2012b, 13). Both cities claim to be modern as evident in their use of slogans such as '*modern bir kent olmak*' or '*21. yüzyılın kenti olmak*' (being a modern city/ being a city of the 21th century). And indeed both cities are 'modern', albeit in very different ways. Citizens in Eskişehir place an emphasis on social interaction, on seeing and being seen. It is the city of a flaneur in which 'modernity' is interpreted as providing space for arts and education. This clearly adheres to the Kemalist tradition whereby the arts are among the tools required to 'better society'. In comparison, Konya is technically very modern and characterized by large streets, new cars, shopping centres, and many new buildings for habitat or commerce.[34]

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[32] Eskişehir had been in the 6th place in 2012 (TÜİK, 2012a, 42).

[33] Eskişehir's density is 57 inhabitants per km^2 with a population growth of around 10% in 2011 (12% in Turkey) (TÜİK, 2012a, 32).

[34] In 2011 the governmental socio-economic development report (SEGE, Sosyo-Ekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırması) that evaluates factors such as economics, finance, demographics, education and health, put Eskişehir on place 7, and Konya on place 20 (CNN, 2012).

Difference also exists with regard to gender. Whereas citizens in Eskişehir proudly claim that women can walk the streets alone at night without being harassed, citizens in Konya started a petitition for gender segregated transportation in the new tramway (Özteke, 2014). Both cities evince different ways of 'being Turkish', of interacting with fellow citizens, of imagining society, of different social projects, all of which manifest themselves also in different ideas of the 'urban', both in built form and in social conduct.

2.3   Political History

The following section gives an introduction to Konya's and Eskişehir's political history. It also presents the biographies of the six mayors researched and concludes with some first observations on similarities and differences. Many in Turkey regard Konya as a religious, conservative city; the Islamist Milli Görüş movement's history is closely tied to the city's history. It's founder, Necmettin Erbakan, became a member of parliament (MP) there in 1969 although he originally came from Sinop. Since more than a decade Konya is an AKP stronghold: In the 2014 local elections, Mayor Tahir Akyürek, the AKP candidate polled 64% of the votes followed by the ultra-nationalist MHP at 18%. The Islamist[35] SP (*Saadet Partisi*, Felicity Party) reached 7% and the CHP 5%.[36] These strong numbers for the AKP were no exception, as in 2004 it polled 62%, and in 2009, 67% (Hürriyet, n.d.-a). These results correspond well with Konya's image as the cradle of *muhafazakar belediyecilik* (conservative municipalism), one of the pillars of the AKP's outstanding electoral successes.

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[35] In this thesis the term 'Islamist' describes movements or parties that seek a more prominent role for Islamic belief and law in public life.

[36] The CHP candidate was İbrahim Işık. The SP candidate was Mustafa Özkafa. The MHP candidate in this election was Mehmet Emin Altunel (Hürriyet, n.d.-c).

In Eskişehir the political party landscape is not quite so clear. In the 2014 local elections Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen (CHP) gained 44%, while his challenger Harun Karacan (AKP) polled 39% (Hürriyet, n.d.-c). When Mayor Büyükerşen was still running for the DSP (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, Democratic Left Party), the results were 44% in 2004 and 51% in 2009 (Hürriyet, n.d.-a). In the national elections, however, the picture was considerably different. In 2011, the AKP polled

44 % (three MPs) whereas the CHP only gained 35% (two MPs) (Hürriyet, n.d.-b). This seems to imply that Konya is an AKP stronghold whereas Eskişehir is much more indecisive regarding its political orientation. It indicates, too, the influence of the 'Büyükerşen factor' (Chapter 3.6). Further exploration of the history of local elections in the two cities from the 1980s onwards shed light on the differences between the two cities.[37]

The year 1984 saw the first local elections that were held after the military coup. At that time, the country was led by Prime Minister Özal (ANAP, *Anavatan Partisi*, Motherland Party) who had won the national election in 1983 (Hale, 2014). Given that after the coup many political parties were banned, it was expected that ANAP would be successful in local elections all over Turkey. In Eskişehir, Sezai Aksoy (1984-1989) was elected mayor from the ANAP. Aksoy was a political nobody at the time; but he was no exception. When the political scene was re-shuffled following the coup, many 'new faces' emerged in the political arena. Aksoy had good relations with the party leadership as his brother was the *özel kalem müdürü* (office manager) for Prime Minister Turgut Özal at the time. In Konya, too, the ANAP became the strongest party: its candidate was Ahmet Öksüz (1984-1989).

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[37] The caesura 1980s was set because (1) the metropolitan municipalities were introduced in 1983, giving the municipalities wider responsibilities and more independence from the central state; (2) the military coup in 1980 was a real caesura in Turkish political history, due both to its violence and massive restructuring of the political institutions but also to the pluralisation of the economic and social spheres in its aftermath; and (3) the years post 1983 show much better data records.

In 1987, the party ban was lifted following the referendum.[38] Earlier party leaders, e.g., Ecevit, Erbakan, Baykal, Demirel and Türkeş returned to the political arena and a range of parties were (re)established. On the 'left' were the SHP (*Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti*, Social Democratic People's Party, Erdal İnönü) and the DSP (Bülent Ecevit), and on the right the DYP (*Doğru Yol Partisi*, True Path Party, Süleyman Demirel) and the RP (Necmettin Erbakan).[39] The newly-founded SHP, which was able to regroup most of the previous CHP members, represented the strongest leftist party. The party was successful in its candidate selection for the local election in 1989, most of the candidates were well known members of the local communities. The ANAP lost most of their municipalities to the SHP and DYP. In Eskişehir, Selami Vardar, from the SHP was elected. Vardar was a high-ranking accountant who had already been mayor for the CHP (1973-1977).[40]

In 1989, Konya, which had to date been known as a right-wing city, became one of the trailblazers for the Islamist politics of the RP. Necmettin Erbakan, who founded the Milli Görüş movement and was a prominent leader of a wide range of Islamist parties, had started his political career as an independent deputy from Konya back in 1969. The city seemed fertile soil for Erbakan's political project and he responded well to the political hopes of the small and middle-scale producers characteristic for Konya.[41] In 1989, Halil Ürün, an assistant professor of construction engineering who stood for the RP won Konya's Metropolitan Municipality (1989-1999).[42] His victory marked the founding of a conservative municipalism tradition in Konya, a

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[38] After the military coup in 1980, in September 1987 a referendum was held on the introduction of a new Constitution (Hale, 1994).

[39] The ban was lifted on 6 September 1987, and the national election was held on 29 November 1987. The short span of time did not allow the new parties time to successfully organize and campaign. Thus the result was another victory for the ANAP.

[40] Vardar received 40% of the votes, 28% went to the DYP (Yerel Seçim, n.d.).

[41] They were mainly active in traditional handicrafts and operated as family-run companies. They were generally excluded from state subvention, but proud of their own economic achievements. Most had a nationalist background and were organized in religious brotherhoods (*tarikat*).

[42] Ürün was also a founding member of the AKP in Konya.

tradition in which the AKP still situates itself. Since 1989 Konya was governed by the RP until in 2004 it was replaced by the AKP.

In the 1989 election, the RP had won a range of district municipalities in Turkey including Konya.[43] What in 1989 was a surprise victory for the RP became a 'national trend' in 1994 when the party won over 200 municipalities all over Turkey, among them Ankara and Istanbul.[44] The RP's main legacy with regard to local politics lay in a balance of neoliberal national politics with private welfare programs coordinated by the municipality (Chapter 6). In December 1995, the RP, after gaining 21% in the general elections, became the senior partner in a coalition government with the DYP. As the party was constantly in danger of being closed down, the RP advocated a more general decentralization of political power. However it never developed a specific municipal program (Massicard, 2009).[45] The RP's fears proved right. When the coalition came to an abrupt end in 1997 following the 'post-modern military coup'[46], the party was banned in 1998 subsequent to a decision of the constitutional court (Akıncı, 1999; Joppien, 2010, 71-75).[47]

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[43] Melih Gökçek, for example, mayor of the capital Ankara's Metropolitan municipality since 1994 and still one of AKP's most prominent figures had started his political career as mayor of one of Ankara's district municipalities (Keçiören) in 1989.

[44] Refah's *adil düzen* (just order) program used Islamism as a multi-class project for cultural change. It consisted of demands for the establishment of a welfare state, industrialization and a stronger embracing of religion in politics and society. As a result, the RP argued, a more just society would emerge. Although the RP was often represented as an 'underdog' combating powerful elites by both academics and activists alike, the picture was more diverse. Because it was anti-statist the 'just order' gave importance to private enterprises. It promoted the interests of the newly emerging, albeit both socially and locally peripheral industrialist class that came to be known as the 'Muslim Bourgeoisie'. To them, the promise of upward social mobility seemed inviting and through a political project like the RP also possible. A class conflict existing between the members of the Muslim Bourgeoisie and the inhabitants of squatter areas was bridged by non-profit voluntary organisations and religious foundations providing welfare; often coordinated by RP-led municipalities (Gülalp, 2001, 435-438).

[45] Against this background, the AKP, especially in the early days of its existence, favoured less state and stronger local self-government. It should be added that there were other attempts at decentralisation by liberal-right-wing parties that were not successful.

[46] The military asked several changes from Prime Minister Erbakan and 'forced' him to resign by threatening with a coup (Joppien, 2011a, 74).

[47] The experience of a party ban was not new to members of the RP, many of whom had already been members either of the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP*) which was banned in 1971, or of the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP*), which was banned in 1980.

While the parties on the left did not operate under immediate threat of party closure, they were torn by internal conflict. Following the 1991 national election the SHP and DYP formed a coalition government. However, the SHP was soon asunder by internal conflict and its stance on the Kurdish issue (Watts, 2010). In addition, corruption scandals that erupted in SHP run municipalities, led to a further weakening of the leftist parties' images in the public perception. Opposition to the party leadership became louder. Deniz Baykal tried to become SHP president but failed at the party congress. In 1992, he re-founded the CHP, in the process attracting many disillusioned SHP members. In 1995, the CHP and the SHP united as the CHP. Subsequently the CHP and the DYP became coalition partners in the national government. However, constant quarrelling and internal division among the SHP, CHP and DSP further fuelled citizens' lack of trust and the coalition's decline. When in 1995 the CHP called for early elections the RP celebrated a national success.[48]

At the time, the 'left' had little success at the local elections. In 1994, the right wing DYP won in Eskişehir. Its candidate Aydin Arat was an ex-director of the state-owned Eskişehir sugar company. Arat gained 23% of the votes, and 20% went to the ANAP. The RP only won 12% of the vote, much less than the national average of over 19%. The three left-wing parties the DSP, SHP and CHP achieved 36% together.[49] In 1997, Mayor Arat died and was replaced by Orhan Soydaş, the district mayor of Tepebaşı and a construction engineer by profession. But because the replacements took a long time the citizens felt that municipal duties and services were being neglected. Further the national situation of the DYP and its coalition with RP along with the 28 February 1997 coup affected the local perception of the DYP negatively, promoting a picture of political indecisiveness and instability.

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[48] Another reason was Erbakan's non-conflictual political style. The most successful leftist party was Ecevit's DSP with 14%.
[49] In this election the DSP received 17%, the SHP 14%, and the CHP 5%.

At the national level, following the 1997 coup, many voters returned to the left-wing parties. This was to prove a good time for Bülent Ecevit's DSP, which formed a coalition with the ANAP and DTP (*Demokratik Türkiye Partisi*, Democratic Turkey Party, formed out of ex-DYP members). In 1999, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured, an event that led to further prominence of Ecevit. In Eskişehir the national prominence of the DSP and the local mess created by DYP proved a chance for economics professor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, who ran for the DSP in the 1999 elections. '*Yılmaz Hoca*' (Teacher Yılmaz) as many call him, is a famous man in Turkish politics. At first glance, this seems surprising, as he is only the mayor of a mid-scale Anatolian city.

Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, CHP, Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality. Photo provided by Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality.

However, many accredit him with the impressive transformation of Eskişehir from a run-down working class city to a centre of culture and education. Some see him as representative of new municipalism in Turkey. Because of this public perception, he even came under discussion as a candidate for the presidential election in 2014.

Mayor Büyükerşen was born in 1936. His father was a lower municipal worker. He graduated from Eskişehir Academy of Economics and Commercial Sciences in 1962. He seems to have led a very active social life, evident in his involvement in or initiating of several projects, by extension making a name for himself, and gaining the respect of the people. In addition, his endeavors brought him in contact with local and national elites. A continuing personal focus

seems to have been on culture and education, e.g., he and friends famously donated blood in order to gain the financial means to open a theatre (Büyükerşen & Taşçı, 2009).

At the same time, he pursued his academic career in the Department of Finances, completing his PhD in 1966. He became an associate professor in 1968 and a professor in 1973. Mayor Büyükerşen managed to get his name known beyond the borders of Eskişehir when he founded the Open University (*Açıköğretim*) in 1973 (Büyükerşen & Taşçı, 2009, 235-292). This institution offers formal education to new groups among the people, provides additional jobs in the education sector, and has made Eskişehir one of the main centres of learning in Turkey.

In 1982, he was elected rector of Anadolu University and re-elected in 1987. This was seen by many as his most important career achievement on his way to become mayor. During that time, he also served as a member of the RTÜK council (*Radio ve Television Üst Kurulu*, High Council of Radio and Television) until 1993. During his time as rector he expanded the scope of Anadolu University, adding a School of Cinema and Television as well as faculties of Literature, Communication Sciences, Applied Arts and a State Conservatory to its portfolio. In his private life, he enjoys being a sculptor and made a wax sculpture of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for Anıtkabir.[50]

Mayor Büyükerşen likes to present himself (and is perceived by many) as the 'father' of Eskişehir, but he is also referred to as '*hoca*' (teacher/professor). In conversations I often heard *'Hoca öyle dedi*' ('The teacher said this'). Everyone knew that the reference was to Mayor Büyükerşen. In his brochures and image films he is presented as a good-looking, charismatic elderly man. In personal contact, his age becomes obvious and he seems more fragile than his public image. His

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[50] Anıtkabir, the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first president of the Turkish Republic, was built in Ankara in the 1940s. Additionally, wax sculptures for the II. TBMM building, and the '17-year-old Atatürk' wax sculpture in the Macedonian Monastery Military High School Museum bear his signature.

knowledge that the AKP would win the town convinced him to run again, though it is possible he might hand over the mayorship. His age and poor health might also be a reason why he is generally surrounded and 'shielded' by his staff. Thus, when talking to him, the feeling of 'having an audience' adds to his 'aura of power and importance'. One of his favorite accessories is a baker cap. It gives him a humble appearance linking him not only to the working class history of the town, but also to Atatürk's passion for Western headdress. While he has a good sense of humour he is also quite vain. He likes to depict himself as a one-man-show, attributing everything that has changed in Eskişehir to his merit alone. When in 2013 he opened a wax works museum in Eskişehir, he presented all figures as done by himself ("*with only minor works carried out by students which I supervised*") although this seems impossible. Also the museum was named by him as 'Yılmaz Büyükerşen Balmumu Heykeller Müzesi' (Yılmaz Büyükerşen Wax Statues Museum)

Unlike in Eskişehir, voters in Konya have not switched between right- and left-wing parties.[51] After the closure of the RP the Milli Görüş movement remained strong. From 1999 to 2004, Mustafa Özkafa, a map engineer (*harita mühendisi*), functioned as mayor representing the *Fazilet Partisi* (*FP*, Virtue Party, 1998-2001), the successor to the RP. In 2001, the AKP was founded as a break off from the FP. In Konya, the movement was divided at first; as some political figures

Mayor Tahir Akyürek, AKP, Konya Metropolitan Municipality.
Photo provided by Konya Metropolitan Municipality.

remained with SP.

Konya's current mayor, Tahir Akyürek, has a history in the Milli Görüş movement. He was born in the province of Konya in the district of Derebucak in 1959. He attended primary and middle school in Derebucak and high school in Karaman. After his graduation from Ankara University Law Faculty, he worked as a lawyer for the public social security provider *Bağ-Kur* in Konya. In addition, he acted as the general secretary of Konya's Chamber of Commerce, and was active in several non-governmental organisations. Regarding the length of his involvement in politics, it is surprising that relatively little may be found on his political record, neither online nor in newspapers.

As he was party president of both the SP and the FP, it seems justifiable to say that his inner-party roots run deepest of all the (district and central) mayors researched in this thesis (Donat, 2004). In 2001, only three days after he became Konya's party president of the SP, he had a traffic accident in which he lost a son. Akyürek himself was so badly injured that he had to stay in bed for 6 months. For a while he left active politics until in 2004 he joined the AKP for the local elections and won the mayoral election beating the SP's candidate Mustafa Özkafa. The nomination of Akyürek was part of a successful move by AKP to incorporate local political elites into their party structure, as a majority of those politically active now have a background in the Milli Görüş movement (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.2013).

These brief historical overviews show that Konya has been ruled by right-wing, conservative parties since 1950. 'Leftist' parties never played a role. However, with the emergence of the Islamist parties, a religiously-oriented municipal tradition was founded. Conversely, Eskişehir has been characterized by a constant switch of voters' favouring of left- and right wing parties, often in relation to national political trends. But, in 1999, the picture changed when economics

Professor Yılmaz Büyükerşen entered the political arena. His political success was even more remarkable as it unfolded against the national trend. Whereas since 2002, the AKP has been the uncontested political winner and the strongest party in the national elections in Eskişehir[52], Yılmaz Büyükerşen has been mayor since 1999 (from DSP) and from the CHP (since 2011).

At the time of research Eskişehir's Tepebaşı district municipality was governed by a CHP mayor, Ahmet Ataç. Odunpazarı district municipality was governed by an AKP mayor, Burhan Sakallı.

Mayor Ahmet Ataç, CHP, Eskişehir-Tepebaşı Municipality.
Photo provided by Tepebaşı Municipality.

Ahmet Ataç, the mayor of Tepebaşı district was born in Eskişehir centre in 1946 and moved to Istanbul to study dentistry (*İstanbul Diş Hekimliği Yüksek Okulu*) where he graduated in 1969. He then opened his own dentist office and between 1994 and 1999 worked as a dentist at the teaching hospital of Anadolu University. He entered the CHP in 1971 where he was active until the military coup in 1980. In 1999, he and Yılmaz Büyükerşen were invited by Bülent Ecevit to join the DSP. Ahmet Ataç was elected as mayor of Eskişehir Tepebaşı district from 1999-2004 and again from 2009 to 2014.[53] In 2011, he and Mayor Büyükerşen joined the CHP (Interview, Mayor Ahmet Ataç, Eskişehir, 11.06.2013).

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[52] In the 2011 parliamentary elections in Eskişehir, the AKP won 44% of the vote. The CHP only gained 35%.
In Konya, the AKP won 69%, the ultranationalist MHP 13%, and the CHP 10% (Hürriyet, n.d.-b).
[53] From 2004-2009 Tacettin Sarıoğlu from AKP was mayor of Tepebaşı district.

Mayor Burhan Sakallı, AKP, Eskişehir-Odunpazarı Municipality.
Photo provided by Tepebaşı Municipality.

Burhan Sakallı was born in Eskişehir province in the district of Mihalıççık (Dinek Köy) in 1962. He went to primary and middle school there and then switched to Atatürk Endüstri Meslek Lisesi in Eskişehir. In 1984, he received a degree in Turkish Language and Literature from Selçuk University, Konya, quite untypical for AKP mayors who often have a background in industry, construction or trade. In 2008, he obtained a Masters degree (*yüksek lisans*) in Sociology from the same university. In 1985, he worked in the construction of the Atatürk Dam and in 1987 in the construction of the Sır Dam, although it is not clear in which position. From 1988 on, he worked in various positions in the education sector (founder, teacher, manager) in Gaziantep, Adana, Mersin and Konya. His articles as a journalist were published in newspapers like Yeni Yüzyıl, Yeni Şafak, Zaman, Hakimiyet and İki Eylül, journals Hece, Kırağı, Jurnal, Martı, Mavi and online on 40 ikindi.com, enine boyuna.net.

Mayor Uğur İbrahim Altay, AKP, Konya-Selçuklu Municipality. Photo provided by Selçuklu Municipality.

Uğur İbrahim Altay was born in the city of Konya in 1974 where he graduated from Selçuk University as a construction engineer in 1997. He worked as a project engineer for a year. As a partner he was involved in the opening of several new construction companies. In 2009 he was elected Mayor of Selçuklu Municipality and was nominated again as a candidate for the 2014 election by AKP. He is seen by many of Konya's citizens as the most active mayor with very good political skills and the one with the most promising career ahead. His involvement in the construction sector implies that his candidature was supported by important elites in the city. Some say that Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Tahir Akyürek fears this young 'political climber' and therefore tries to avoid major urban development projects in his district so as not to give Altay further opportunities to 'make his mark'.

Mayor Serdar Kalaycı, AKP, Konya-Meram Municipality.
Photo provided by Meram Municipality.

Serdar Kalaycı, Mayor of Konya-Meram Municipality graduated from the same department of construction engineering as Uğur İbrahim Altay. He was born in Konya centre in 1973 where he also attended school. In 1994, he graduated from Selçuk University as a construction engineer, and received his PhD there in 2003. Between 1994 and 2004, he worked in the faculty as a lecturer. He seems to have had a serious academic career before becoming a major having presented at national and international conferences and published academic papers on hydrologic topics. Serdar Kalaycı's time as a mayor only spans one term from 2009 to 2014 as he was not put up again as a candidate by his party in the last election, instead with Fatma Toru the AKP presented a female candidate (Konya Haberler, 2014).

In congruence with national trends, all researched mayors were male. Overall, district mayors are younger than metropolitan municipality mayors are. In brief, the mayors have a higher educational degree than those they represent which is typical both for Turkey (Godmer, 2005), as also worldwide (Saunders, 2007). One was a rector, one a lawyer with a long municipal and civil society history, two were construction engineers and one was a journalist. Whereas engineers and construction engineers are a profession quite frequently found among mayors in Turkey (Godmer, 2005), being a journalist is rare. This holds particularly true for parties from the right-

wing spectrum which are characterized by a heavy representation of business sectors (Saunders, 2007, 213). The following chapter discusses in more detail how representative the described cases are for broader trends, and what role characteristics such as ethnic or religious affiliation play. A detailed description around the (s)election processes for mayors will highlight the important criteria.

3   Becoming a Mayor in Turkey

Being a candidates' candidate is like doing the lottery. You will have some expenses, and most probably you will lose, however for those few weeks until the party decides on the final candidate everything seems possible and the hopes are up. You feel like a mayor or a deputy and people will treat you differently - because, who knows, maybe you will make it. (Uçurdum, 2011)

This chapter discusses how a typical 'route to mayorship' looks like. Factors such as being close to the party leadership, ethnic, religious or *hemşehrilik* affiliations, and being part of a large network, are discussed and weighted against each other.

Unlike many countries, Turkey does not only hold the election of parties' candidates but also a 'candidates' candidate (*aday adayı*) competition within each party that decides who the candidate will be. In some cases, however, it also happens that a person is nominated directly without having previously been an *aday adayı*. A prospective candidates' candidate addresses his local party branch and pays a small sum of money to receive application papers. When the application is logged, a further sum has to be paid. The sum may differ considerably based on the nominee's chances of actually winning the municipal elections. Becoming an AKP *aday adayı* in Konya is expensive: it is much cheaper in Izmir due to lower chances of winning.[54] The candidacy is made public through an *açıklama* (declaration), the aim being to encourage as many people possible, including many influential figures to support the candidate. The whole event is filmed and sent to the party headquarters in Ankara. It is crucial to show to the party leadership, which has the last word in the decision, that the candidate has support from local elites and the citizens in general. The pre-election period is marked by a high degree of political mobilization. Turkish citizens are

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[54] In Eskişehir the fee for an AKP mayor candidate's candidacy is said to be between 1,500 and 6,000 TL which is considered cheap (Interview Ramazan, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

very interested in local politics, as evident in the high voter turnout which is generally over 80%. Every election distributes approximately 400,000 positions nationally; if on average five candidate's candidates for each position compete, this means a large mobilization of networks (Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013). Already this pre-stage requires high financial investment by the candidates.[55] However, putting forward ones name and making contacts are also political investments for the future. The candidacy may be used later for business purposes or one may be reconsidered for another political position.

In Eskişehir, some CHP acquaintances invited me to attend the *aday adayı açıklaması* (candidates' candidate declaration) of ex-Eskişehir CHP President Erman Gölet on 1 September 2013. Prior to his candidacy I often saw Erman Gölet, a tall, slim man with curly hair, at public events organized by the CHP organisation or municipalities. Born in the Mihalıççık district of Eskişehir province in 1961, Gölet possesses what is generally considered the most important criterion for any candidate in Konya or Eskişehir, local rootedness. His Mihalıççık (a district in Eskişehir province) background undoubtly strengthened his candidacy for Odunpazarı: those from Mihalıççık had considerable influence in the area.[56] A construction engineer by profession, he held the position of *inşaat başmühendisliği* (chief civil engineer) in the Provinces Bank (*İller Bankası*) from 1986 to 2000. Familiarity with the work of municipalism from an insider's perspective thus was one of the very last arguments to be raised in favour of a candidate. To label Gölet the 'tragic hero' of the Odunpazarı district candidate selection process seems appropriate because, although he seemed to 'have it all', he was doomed to fail due to inner-party power struggles.

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[55] The expenses include advertising, election campaign (from renting a truck to paying the activists lunch) and 'contributions' to the party's finances.

[56] Finally, one candidate with Seyitgazi (Kazım Kurt, CHP) and one with Sivrihisar background (Nevzat Önder, AKP) ran as candidates.

In 2010 Gölet was elected CHP Eskişehir party president, evidence of his close relationship with the local party organisation and its members. Gölet was well-liked by the local citizens: he came first in the candidate's survey. Through his civil society engagement and his profession as a construction engineer, he had built good relations with local elites, especially in the construction sector. However, after analyzing the candidate selection processes in Konya and Eskişehir it became clear that even a 'perfect' candidates' candidate like Erman Gölet is not necessarily succesful. When on 1 September 2013 Gölet presented himself in front of the CHP party building in Eskişehir, the street was crowded with party members, windows decorated with the CHP flag, and loud party songs boomed out of numerous loudspeakers. "*What a successful orchestration*", I remarked to the elderly man standing next to me. Then I asked him how he rated Gölet's chances of being a candidate? "*Oh*", he said, *"you mean all these people here? Well, that doesn't count for much. He also could have paid them to be here. What will make an impact on the national party leadership is who came to support him. Look, there are the MPs Süheyl Batum and Kazım Kurt, CHP Party Council member Gaye Usluer, and our local CHP President Nihat Çuhadar. Tepebaşı Mayor Ahmet Ataç could not come but sent a telegram with good wishes. This is what counts"* (Personal conversation, Eskişehir, 01.09.2013).

Metropolitan municipality Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, I realized, had not sent a telegram. His continuing rejection of Gölet proved to be the defining disadvantage for an otherwise perfect candidate.

3.1 "This is a man's world..."[57]

Erman Gölet's strongest competitor was Jale Nur Süllü, a friendly, slightly chaotic woman and former Director of the Department of Social Affairs of Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality. She was the candidate of choice of Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen who often referred to her as 'kızım' (my daughter).[58] He had earlier supported her candidacy for the DSP in the 2009 local elections. During that campaign, posters showed Büyükerşen with his arm around her shoulder, pointing out of the photo entitled "*Odunpazarı Sana Emanet Kızım*" ("I dedicate Odunpazarı to you, my daughter"). Although well-liked by the public, she was often perceived as merely his 'place holder', not as a candidate in her own right. Her political career is closely tied to Büyükerşen's and she often stressed "*what I have learned from Yılmaz Hoca*" or how she achieved something "*under Yılmaz Hoca's guidance*" (Esgazete, 2013).

Jale Nur Süllü is not an isolated case. Forging a political career is difficult for women, not only in Turkey but in most countries of the world. Women are underrepresented in Turkish parliament taking around 15% of the seats (Sayarı, 2014b; UNDP, 2010). When it comes to local politics, difficulties increase (Alkan, 2008). The average ratio of women elected to provincial or municipal assemblies since 1980 has been approximately 1% (Ömer, 2010, 165).[59] This may be due to the fact that since that time, local politics has become an arena of rent-seeking rather than of delivering public services. It has thus gained a 'manlier atmosphere' (Arıkboğa, Ekin Erkan, & Güner, 2010). Following the 2009 local elections, only 0.9 % of mayors were female (27 out of 2,948). Women accounted 3.2 % of the members of the provincial councils (110 out of 3,379) and 4.2 % of municipal council members (1,340 out of 31,790) (UNDP, 2010). The picture

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[57] Song by James Brown, 1966.
[58] In 1999, when Büyükerşen was elected, Süllü became a member of the municipal council and worked in different commissions, e.g., planning and budget. She also was a member of the executive committee of Tepebaşi Municipality. She was elected as a delegate for the European Local Government Congress (*Avrupa Yerel Yönetimler Kongresi*). She was working as the Head of the Social Services Department (*Büyükşehir Belediyesi Sosyal Hizmetler Daire Başkanlığı*) for five years, two of these also as the PR Director (*Basın Yayın ve Halkla İliskiler Müdürlüğü*).
[59] In 1984, 2% of the mayors were female; in 1994 they numbered only 0,5% (Akdeniz-Taxer, 2011, 44).

however, is not homogeneous all over Turkey. In general, the number of women in politics in large cities or in South-Eastern Turkey is comparibly good; but devastatingly bad in the smaller cities and towns, particularly in Central Anatolia (Arıkboğa et al., 2010).

In the 2004 election only 18 out of 3,216 mayors were female (0,6%) (Akdeniz-Taxer, 2011, 44). Somewhat telling, nine of those 18 were members of the Kurdish HADEP (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*, People's Democracy Party), a party that puts more emphasis on greater gender equality. Five were from the CHP, two from the AKP, one from the DYP and one from the SHP (Akdeniz-Taxer, 2011, 115). In the 2009 election the importance afforded to women by the pro-Kurdish party (the then) DTP (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, Democratic Society Party) was significant. It claimed not only the highest number of female party members (14% compared to 6% at the CHP and 4% at the AKP) but also the highest percentage of female council members appointed in cities with less than 20,000 inhabitants (5,5% compared to 3% at the CHP and 1,5% at the AKP), and in municipalities with over 20,000 (22% compared to 12% at the AKP and 11% at the CHP) (Arıkboğa et al., 2010, 467).[60]

Women's low chances of success, the difficulties they encounter when trying to reconcile a political post with the expectations demanded of a wife and mother, and women's generally low interest in political matters seem to be mutually dependent. Gender segregation in daily life also disadvantages women's aspirations to political activity. Certain areas of political discourse, e.g., the coffeehouses (*kahvehane*) are not open to female customers. In the case of Islamist women whose door-to-door canvassing was one of the main reasons behind the success of the RP, they were not able to translate their impact into structurally improving their political power, often due to notions of 'what is proper for a woman (*namus*)'. Research conducted in 2008 in Yenimahalle

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[60] For an introduction to particularly pro-Kurdish feminism see Açık (2002) and Kutluata (2009).

district, Ankara, into women's political participation revealed that also economic obstacles and a lower level of education hindered women's political engagement.[61] In the 2014 local elections, finally not one female candidate was nominated for any of the three municipalities in Eskişehir. In Konya, however the candidate chosen by the AKP to represent Meram Municipality was female (Fatma Toru).

3.2 "Tell me where you come from and I'll tell you what your chances are."[62]

The most important characteristic for a mayoral candidate, both in Konya and Eskişehir, is to have local rootedness. Just living there is not enough; all current mayors were either born in the city itself, or in Eskişehir province (*il*). Furthermore, they have spent a considerable amount of their lives in the city. Those who went to other cities (mainly Ankara, but also Istanbul and Konya) for higher education, invariably returned to their hometown immediately upon conclusion. During my conversations with citizens, this was often raised as the main argument: "*Eskişehirli olmalı, Konyalı olmalı* (He must be from Eskişehir. She must be from Konya)". An otherwise promising candidate would be immediately excluded on the ground that, "*Ah, ama o buralı değil* (Ah, but he is not from here)". A distinct feeling of local rootedness and belonging still exists in Central Anatolian cities. In Istanbul, on the contrary, more than 80% of the mayors in the 2004 election were not born in the city (Godmer, 2005, 5).

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[61] The authors of the study wrote that almost three quarters of the women surveyed were not interested in politics (65.2%). The majority of respondents agreed with several statements regarding the reasons for the lower political participation of women: "family responsibilities" (90%); "intense working conditions outside the home" (80%); "economic barriers" (92.%); "lack of sufficient knowledge and experience in administrative issues" (75%); "religious values of women" (49.9%); "social values regarding women staying at home" (71.9%); "lack of enough encouragement and support for women's political participation" (96%); "low level of education" (52.9%); "lack of interest in politics" (73.8%); "potential risks – such as becoming the subject of gossip" (65.5%). It seemed that they were not in agreement on whether the nature of women or their physical characteristics (26.3%) could be a barrier to female political participation. One of the main obstacles facing women in local elections as well as in general elections is the huge expense of campaigning (Kasapoğlu & Özerkmen, 2011, 101-102, 106). Mutlu demonstrates how the position of neighbourhood headman *(muhtar)* may be a possibility to integrate more women into politics (2012).

[62] Interview, Ali, Eskisehir, 23.10.2013.

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Most of the studies on local politics undertaken in the 1980s and 90s focused on political mobilization in the *gecekondu* areas of Turkey's big cities.[63] Often, they used *hemşehrilik* networks as the main explanations for 'how local politics work' (Kurtoğlu, 2004; White, 2002). More recent studies attribute significant political impact to *hemşehri* organisations (Godmer, 2005; Hersant, 2005). Although *hemşehrilik* associations are often described (and depict themselves) as apolitical, in reality a variety of links between them and political organisations exist, serving both sides. While on the one hand, many leading figures of *hemşehrilik* associations are also active in political parties, on the other, parties use the associations for purposes of political mobilization. These relationships are informal and mainly work through influential figures as network intersections (Kurtoğlu, 2000; Massicard, 2004; Massicard, 2005, §23, §38). Studies on the topic often originate in a very particular context of rural-to-urban migration, focusing mainly on squatter areas, however they were often used to explain local politics in Turkey per se. Thus it is interesting to ask whether the findings they propose are also appilicable to Anatolian towns, as, for example, Konya and Eskişehir.

Eskişehir and Konya have both experienced a much slower and more controlled urbanization and therefore have relatively little *gecekondu* housing. As a result, *hemşehri* networks have much less influence on candidate determination. However, migrants from within the province exert a certain influence, especially in Eskişehir's Odunpazarı district. The local election in March 2014, and the process of candidate selection, showed the influence of migrants from Mihalıççık (who refer to themselves as Malıçlı). When different candidates' candidates were discussed, e.g., former deputy Nedim Öztürk (AKP), Erman Gölet (CHP) or Jale Nur Süllü (CHP), their Mihalıççık

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[63] The term gecekondu is applied to houses that are (illegally) erected overnight on public land. For a (personal) account of life in the *gecekondu* see (Karpat, 2004).

backgrounds were highlighted as the main criteria. During an interview by a local newspaper, the president of the Mihallıççıklılar union claimed:

> We are always making our voice heard. […] Look at the examples: MHP was not able to have a MP for a long time; however, when they presented someone with Mihalıççık background he won. The CHP presented Mehmet Ali Arıkan as third on their list. He became MP. The following term they presented Nedim Öztürk and he also became MP […] Whoever sides with the Mihallıççıklılar won't lose. Büyükerşen should know this and the AK Party should know it as well (Baş, 2013).

While other influential groups in Eskişehir, for example are Seyitgazililer, Çifterliler, Emirdağlılar, Beylikovalılar, Sivrihisarlılar, all represented different districts within the province of Eskişehir, they never managed to influence the candidate selection as the Mihallıççıklılar in Odunpazarı did (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013). The influence of the Mihallıççıklılar is apparently not so much due to their size, but rather because previous Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Selami Vardar had a Mihalıççık background. This prompted him to install members of his group in important places in local politics (Sağlam, 2013)

Eskişehir has only a limited Kurdish population. Konya, on the other hand, has a significant Kurdish population, both in the city and its province.[64] However, candidates with a Kurdish background there appear to stress religious over ethnic identity:

> The mayor of Karatay Municipality for example is Kurdish. But he does not bring his ethnic identity to the foreground. He rather stresses his conservative identity, his religious identity and brings the AKP ideology to the foreground; I can clearly say that for Konya (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013).

Turkish migrants from out of Turkey (*muhacir/göçmen*) constitute a third possible group of influence. Balkan migrants reached Turkey in six waves of migration: during the Russian-Ottoman War (1877-1878); the Balkan Wars (1912-1913); post 1915 when an agreement was signed between Turkey and Bulgaria allowing voluntary resettlement; in 1950-1951, which

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[64] Among the researched mayors, not one has a Kurdish background. However, one MP from AKP (Ayşe Türkmenoğlu) and one from CHP (Atilla Kart) have.

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marked the beginning of communism und socialization; and, post 1968, when a treaty was signed to unite separated families. A last wave came post 1984, due to the 'rebirth campaign' initiated by the Bulgarian government that forced Turks to change their names to Bulgarian names, banned the speaking of Turkish in public, and finally denied the existence in Turks in Bulgaria. In 1989, the Özal government declared Bulgar-Turks 'ethnic kin' and opened Turkey's borders to them. But when the number of migrants surpassed 300,000 the borders were closed again. Also half of the Bulgarian-Turks who entered Turkey in this wave left the country in less than a year. They had not been able to integrate with their Turkish 'homeland' and were disillusioned by being perceived as 'Bulgarians' (Parla, 2006, 545-546).

Whereas the Balkan migrants play an insignificant role in Konya, large numbers of Eskişehir's population have *muhacir* backgrounds. Nowadays, they are spatially spread all over the city with many blending in the population through marriage.[65] The *muhacir* associations' self-descriptions are more that of cultural associations trying to preserve old traditions, than that of a lobbying group:

> The Balkan migrants try a bit to be influential, and so does the Cerkez lobby it is said and the Cerkez-Kaucasians. They all try to be influential in a way. This is done like: for example, I am doing politics in the CHP, I want to raise the number of members attached to me, I go to the Cerkez association, I am Cerkez myself, and I make as many Cerkez party members as possible. When we look at the Balkan migrants, they are present in every party, because they are not really getting active, because anyway the population of Eskişehir anyway comprises Balkan, Caucasian, Crimean and Tatar migrants. As they are all here they are all present in all the different parties, for example the MHP's deputy is Crimean Tatar, and also the CHP's deputy is Crimean Tatar. They [the migrants] are influential as fractions in the parties but as Eskişehir anyway consists of them I do not think they are very effective. 90% of the population of Eskişehir has a migrant background anyway (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

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[65] An exception is *'Kırım mahallesi'* (Crimean neighbourhood) in the Tepebaşı district with a higher than average Crimean population and – consequently - a *muhtar* with Crimean background.

Nafiye, who was active on the executive committee of a Crimean association, confirmed my observations by stating that *muhacir* are active in every party. She says that in her association people from the AKP, the CHP and the MHP are active, just as representatives of different parties are present in the executive board. Nafiye claimed that the association was above politics and directed towards cultural activities and solidarity as all members were either relatives, or had migrated from the same village (Personal conversation, Nafiye, Eskişehir, 11.03.2013).

Religious groups exercise a certain influence on local politics and candidate selection. Odunpazarı district in Eskişehir has an Alevi population living mainly in the areas of Atatürk Bulvarı and Göztepe and the *muhtar* in their region of settlement is generally Alevi. While the majority of Alevi appear to support the CHP, they have never managed to nominate an Alevi candidate although at times candidates' candidates have stressed their Alevi backgrounds in order to gain support (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013). In Konya, on the other hand, religious congregations play a major role, but they do not appear publicly. The focus of the huge variety of religious associations and communities is upon local issues to Muslim solidarity or proselytization. All of Konya's mayors have been Sunni Muslims; and, although religious associations (*cemaat*) seem to play a role in Konya's local politics, it was difficult to identify who belongs to which *cemaat* and which *cemaat* supported which candidate. Only rarely is it possible to gain insight into the influence of certain communities:

> For example the mayor of Selçuklu Municipality and the one of Meram Municipality, they belong to *İlim Yayma Cemiyeti* (community)[66]. There is a religious foundation called *İlim Yayma* Community, and they were their candidates. The prime minister gives this association a lot of importance, the community is centered in Istanbul, and they became the mayors [of this community] (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013).

It may be assumed that Eskişehir-Odunpazarı Mayor Burhan Sakallı and former Eskişehir-Tepebaşı Mayor Tacettin Sarıoğlu, both from the AKP, belong to the Fethullah Gülen community

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[66] *İlim Yayma Cemiyeti* is a religious community with close links to the AKP. They are particularly active in the field of *İmam-Hatip* Schooling.

due to their previous occupations and their mentioning of '*sohbet* (conversation) meetings', a characteristic of the community. When I asked citizens for such facts, their responses did not bring the results expected. Belonging to a *cemaat* (still) seems to be some kind of 'taboo topic', thus people preferred not to comment. This may not have been the case in bigger cities. But in Konya, and even more so in Eskişehir, everybody knows each other, and is interested in staying on good terms with each other.

3.3 Civil Society Activism, Backing by Local Elites and Mobilization of Financial Means

In 1986, Ahmet Ataç was elected as president of the Dentists' Chamber (*Diş Hekimleri Odası*) for the Eskişehir-Kütahya–Afyon–Bilecik region. Between 1996–1997 and 1998 -1999 he was acting member of the 'ethics commission' of the Turkish Dentists' Chamber, and served as the head of its disciplinary board from 2004 to 2008. He also served as president of the Eskişehirspor football team for two terms, and as president of a tennis club and a riding club. As well, he was president and honorary president of the 'Demokrasi Platformu', founded following the death of leftist journalist Uğur Mumcu[67] and assembling 56 different organisations. He claimed his engagement in civil society organizations (CSOs) allowed him to understand the people's feelings and expectations towards politics (Interview, Mayor Ahmet Ataç, Eskişehir, 11.06.2013). Mayor Ataç's activism in health associations and sports clubs was rather unusual compared to other mayors who engaged more with business or professional organisations. A typical example in that regard was Harun Karacan, the AKP's candidate for the 2014 municipal election in Eskişehir. He had been president of Eskişehir Chamber of Trade (*ETO, Eskişehir*

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[67] Uğur Mumcu, an investigative journalist at the daily newspaper Cumhuriyet, was killed in 1993 by a bomb placed in his car.

Ticaret Odası) since 2009 and *TOBB* (*Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği*, Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges) board member since 2011. His other civil society activism spanned sports, culture, gender, military and economic development.[68] His broad activism together with his numerous appearances at weddings and circumcision celebrations gave rise to local speculation on his political ambitions, long before he was announced as the AKP candidate.

Apropos of most AKP mayors their connections with business associations and the construction sector seemed to be favorable. Uğur İbrahim Altay, the Mayor of Konya-Selçuklu, acted as vice president in Konya TMMOB (*İnşaat Mühendisleri Odası*, Chamber of Engineers and Architects) between 2004 and 2008 and became president in 2008. Serdar Kalaycı, mayor of Konya Meram Municipality, held different directional posts at the municipal water company KOSKİ (*Konya Su ve Kanalizasyon İdaresi*) between 2004 and 2008. Regarding his civil engagement, he acted as the TMMOB delegate for the Konya branch. From 2004 to 2007 he was a member of the executive committee of the municipal company Konbeltaş (Meram Belediyesi, n.d.-b).

Mayor Büyükerşen, however, is the one clear exception compared to the other mayors. Rather than trying to become a member of an established CSO, he simply institutes them himself. To date, he has been founder (or co-founder) of seven associations.[69] His high creative energy and lack of willingness to engage in already existing structures has made it difficult for him to pursue a 'classic civil society career'.

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[68]In the past, Karacan had been a board member of BEBKA (Bursa, Eskişehir, Bilecik Kalkinma Ajansı/Regional Development Board), at the Turkish Field Hockey Federation, of the Turkish Automobile Sports Federation, Turkish Armed Forces Foundation, city representative for Eskişehir for the Bridge Association, president of Eskişehir Chamber of Commerce's Education and Social Work Foundation, honorary president of the Eskişehir Province Women Entrepreneurs Foundation and a board member of the Eskişehir 2013 Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti Ajansı (Cultural Capital of Turkic World Agency) agency (Karacan, n.d.).

[69]He was a founder and/or president of İÇEM, İşitme Engelli Çocuklar Okul Öncesi Eğitim ve Araştırma Vakfı, Eğitim Sağlık Bilimsel Araştırma Çalışmaları Vakfı, Anadolu Üniversitesi Güçlendirme Vakfı, Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı, Eğitim Teknolojisi ve Yaygın Eğitim Vakfı, Endüstriyel Kalkınma Vakfı and Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı. He acted as a leading member of Kentsel Gelişim Vakfı, Ayhan Şahenk Vakfı, Aydın Doğan Vakfı and ÇAĞDAŞ Koleji (Eskişehir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, n.d.).

The diverging biographies of the mayors (Chapter 2.3) have shown that there is not one 'prototype' of a Turkish mayor. As noted of the six mayors, two were construction engineers, one a lawyer, one a university rector, one a dentist and one a journalist. The AKP seems to place more emphasis on candidates'experience in the trade, industry and construction sectors. All mayors have played a leading role in CSOs and in business or professional associations for aspiring municipal candidates. In the parties' eyes, this provides the candidates with the necessary contacts, financial resources and political skills to be successful mayors. It also proves to the parties that the candidate is able to mobilize large numbers of people. Although the political orientation of professional organisations is 'common knowledge', political views are often expressed only implicitly (Öngün & Hassan, 2013). Generally speaking, civil society is politicized, as even professional and business associations as well as unions often have at least two 'branches' along ideological 'camps' (Buğra & Savaşkan, 2014) (Chapter 5.5). CSOs often do not represent 'society' independently, but are linked to political parties. They fulfill different functions for parties, e.g., providing resources, manpower, act as a conduit to the population and provide candidates that have been trained for the political process (Dorronsoro & Watts, 2013).

Another route to 'qualify' as a mayor is to have had a leading position at university. This is the case of Eskişehir Mayor Büyükerşen; Antalya's former Mayor Mustafa Akaydın, who was Rector of Akdeniz University, is another example. Most importantly occupying a position in the Chambers of Trade or Commerce demonstrates that one is a member of the local elites. The term '*elit*' is used by the population and interview partners to describe those in power. Alternatively, the term *önemli insanlar* (important people) is used. Being part of this cohort, and being able to cooperate with its members seems to be more important than relations with the 'common people' and party members. These are affiliations that can be acquired later (Kesgin, 2013). In Konya, local elites partially constitute themselves by occupying strategic positions in leading CSOs.

Their consensus regarding a candidate (in agreement with the party leadership in Ankara) is the most important factor deciding a candidate's success:

> Last term, for example, the Mayors of Selçuklu and Meram Municipalities were changed. The new ones that came, of course no one knew them in the beginning. They came because of consensus; for example, the Selçuklu Mayor had not been a candidates' candidate before: he had not even applied to the party, he was president of the Chamber of Construction Engineers. They invited him and made him candidate. He has not been politically active before, but he had relations to the elites here even before he became president of the Chamber of Construction Engineers. They wanted to change the current mayor and they said he might do it and they immediately made him a candidate. Although many candidates' candidates applied but they nevertheless made him candidate. He was presented as a candidate and AK Party could even increase its votes. For example, also the current Mayor of Meram was a person no one knew, he was working in the municipality as a clerk, a head of department. They made him candidate and he could also increase the votes. It does not really matter who you put up as a candidate, but it needs to be someone everyone agrees on, it must be someone accommodating. It must be someone the elites in Konya know, someone coming with their references, which is relaxing. [...] The citizens know about this [candidate selection process], well, those who need to know, the governor knows, the metropolitan municipality mayor, the deputies, those who need to know, know (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013).

In Konya AKP mayors regularly win approximately 70 % of the votes, irrespective of who stands. As such, the selection of the right candidate is less important and less risky than in Eskişehir, Istanbul, Ankara or in most other cities. The agreement of the local elites on a candidate is the important part of the (s)election process. An informant tells:

> Are names important? Yes, they are, but not in Konya. Because here AK Party recieves at least 60% anyways, if there is a difference of 5% its not important. But in Ankara or in Istanbul it is important, because there, 5% can really make a difference (Interview, Ahmet, Konya, 27.08.2013).

Many parallels may be drawn between Konya and Floyd Hunter's study of Atlanta (Hunter, 1953).[70] He established an 'elite theory' by picturing a community controlled by a small group of economically and socially influential individuals who determined urban politics 'behind the

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[70] Similar conclusions had already been drawn in 1937 by Robert and Helen Lynd in their study of Middletown. They argued that local politics in 'Middletown' are dominated, directly and indirectly by one family, 'Family X' (Lynd & Lynd, 1937). As everyone in the city knew about their influence the citizens opted not to initiate projects they knew would be opposed by the family. The study implied that economic power and political power are linked; that is, that the political decision is already decided due to the economic structure.

scene'.[71] Hunter found that the individuals came together in crowds depending on different interests, and that the leaders of each crowd formed a 'hyper-elite' of policy makers who were not necessarily visible to or identifiable by the general public (Harding, 1995, 38-39). As a result, Hunter concluded, a few people, the elite, controlled all decisions. There was no or only little possibility for other groups to influence decision-making. This invariably impacted on the roles of politicians as the governor needed to be 'backed-up' by the economic elite (Hunter, 1953, 171-206). "*The men in the under-structure of power* " Hunter wrote, "*become the doers and are activated by the policy-makers – the initiators*" (1953, 100).

The processes in Konya that establish internal order, solve major disputes, and work towards political, economic and cultural unification at the elite level are known as *konsensüs* (consensus). They invoke the impression of a regime (van de Walle, 2010, 28). But, they also reveal the shortcomings of a simple 'centre-periphery' (Mardin, 1973) understanding of Turkish politics. Local elites are in different ways connected to or part of decision-making groups in the capital Ankara. They do not hold their power due to their positions in Konya only; rather, they are people who manage to establish relations with the central party leadership or ministers. An informant tells:

> It is necessary to be recommended by some of the city's public opinion leaders. To whom? To the party headquarters, to the prime minister. Apart from that surveys are conducted among party members, artisans and others in order to determine tendencies (*temayül yoklaması*). For instance, who do you want as mayor of Konya? Such tendency surveys are carried out [by the party] to identify current trends. It's clear that the opinion of Konya's MPs is important, and all of that is taken into account by party leaders. Despite this consideration, the leader could nominate any other person of his choice. Therefore, such tendency surveys are not of great influence. Whatever the party leader says is done (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2013).

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[71] In his study, Hunter created a list of 'elite members' of the community by asking leaders of civic organisations who they would say were the most important persons. Then he asked a panel of 'judges' for their evaluation of the list of 175 names, cutting it down to 40 names and grouping them in four lists (community leaders, business and finance, local politicians, society and wealth). He then interviewed these 40 'top personalities' to find out how they interacted, how they develop 'community projects' and who among them they perceived as most powerful.

Thus, the length or intensity of an inner-party engagement, a 'grassroots credibility', is less important than good relations to local elites. Here difference exists with the RP's practice, which put more focus on grassroots engagement when determining a candidate. This should not be read solely as an ideological difference, but is clearly also attributable to the fact that the RP represented a new movement, the strength of which lay in the flexibility and mobilization of a previously disenfranchised or apolitical constituency. Conversely, the AKP is characterized by much more institutionalized structures.

The elites of Eskişehir - apart from those active in the construction business - rarely try to influence national politics. Today, most of the 'great families' of Eskişehir have vanished: only families like Kılıçoğlu (cement) or Zeytinoğlu (agriculture, cemet) or the founding family of the Eti group (food) are still known. A local journalist tells why:

> Generally, these capitalist families focus on their work, they do not care about politics, if they would, they would never make it public. [...] No, no, they do not support candidates. I did not come across something like that in my career. I connect it to the painful memories Eskişehir has. In 1960, Finance Minister Hasan Polatkan was hanged. He of course was the person of a capitalist group. Since then the capitalists in Eskişehir stay out of politics, they keep their distance (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

The above may be due to the city's recognized close relations to the nation state. Konya though has traditionally felt alien to national politics and has developed much more independently from Ankara. Only since the AKP government come into power (as well as during the short RP government) can one speak of close cooperation and exchange.

The backing of civil society organisations (and the local elites related to them) not only brings networks and votes, but also provides the candidates with the necessary financial means to conduct their election campaigns. In most cases, candidates are expected to pay the majority of their campaign expenses themselves. In general, Turkish parties are not dependent on membership fees for their funding as their financial needs are met by state subventions and

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private donations (Hale & Özbudun, 2010, 47). Additional income is generated by the fees that candidates pay to the party headquarters to 'qualify' for candidature as deputy or for inner-party posts. The Political Parties Law requires candidates for the post of a MP candidate to pay a fee that should not exceed the monthly income (net) of a deputy (Schüler, 1998, 159). However, it may be that additional, unofficial payments are made, especially when the post is promising and the chances of winning high. In sum, it may be concluded that civil society engagement is an important condition for prospective mayors. As a result of the factors described above, mayors engage in a range of obligations. These are not only to the public but also to CSOs, local elites and economically influential figures at the local and national level, as well as to their party headquarters.

In some cases, candidature is simply a pretext for making financial donations to a party, targeting the national, not the local party leadership. I stayed in Konya prior to the 2011 national election. During a luncheon at university I chatted to a Theology faculty graduate who wrote commentaries for local newspapers. Talking about the selection processes, he told me that at times parties conducted pre-elections to determine their candidates. However, victory in these pre-elections, he said, does not gurantee nomination as candidate. Party leader Erdoğan changed several candidates and deleted them from the list that year although they had achieved good results.[72]

When I protested that this sounded a bit unfair he disagreed saying that Erdoğan's intervention had actually made the election process more lawful as some of the candidates had used their personal wealth to influence the election outcome. It was only two years later that I learned the

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[72] Bayraktar and Altan write of the preliminary elections in Mersin in 2007 that were held to determine the candidates for the coming national election. A total of 3,740 party officers participated in the election to decide over 70 candidates'candidates (*aday adayı*), but the results were sent to the party centre in Ankara without being made public (2013, 24). As such it may be concluded that 'party-primaries' are actually often not more than a survey (*anket*), a barometer of party members' opinions.

real circumstances of the process from someone with close relations to the party leadership. The candidature of Recep Konuk, the owner of Konya Şeker (sugar producer and the 44th biggest company in Turkey), who received the highest ranking among all of the candidates' candidates in the 2011 pre-election, was never meant to be 'serious'. Konuk, who was originally from an MHP background, donated large sums of money to the local party organisations during his candidates' candidate campaign. When I suggested he might have bribed them by donating computers to the branches, my informant laughed and said:

> Money, seriously, it is good money. 100.000 TL, 200.000 TL is a lot of money for small districts. Secondly, the most important mechanism is Konya Şeker. They contract farmers to cultivate sugar beet, and apply a production quota. Konya Şeker says for instance; sugar beet can be cultivated on an area of 10,000 dekar in this district. Accordingly, they threaten party district organisation to decrease the quota, and thus this motivates the organisation to support them. In fact, it is used as a punishment tool. Therefore, Recep Konuk was the first in the pre-election, although everyone knew that it was not a free election. I knew that he would not be nominated, and he probably knew that as well. But he ran as candidates' candidate. He supported the party, and established relations with the deputies and ministers.

He continues to explain how Konuk's wish to stay in good terms with the government had motivated his candidature:

> As far as I remember it's the first time that a prime minister attended a sugar factory opening. But Recep Konuk didn't pay sufficient attention to the prime minister and his delegation. The members of the cooperatives and employees in Çumra cheered more for Recep Konuk than for Erdoğan and that is why the prime minister and the party organisation were offended. It is common in our tradition to show attention to a guest. It seemed to be that the host in that case showed the most attention to himself and this was perceived as insulting. And that is why Recep Konuk became a candidate and helped them [the AKP Konya party organization] financially - to repair his relations with the AK Party and improve his image (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013).

3.4   The (Un)Importance of an Inner-Party Career

While examples of an inner-party career exist, they are rare. Eskişehir-Tepebaşı Mayor Ahmet Ataç is an exception, and recalled the beginnings of his political career as follows:

I entered the CHP in 1971. At that time, I had just become a dentist, I had come to Eskişehir; first, I opened an office and then I became a party member. Until approximately the military coup in 1980, I have been active in the party leadership and at the same time I practiced my profession. After the coup those active in politics were punished and could not do politics for six years. At that time, I gave more importance to my profession, and of course at that time other parties were founded and then also SHP was founded. Despite I was not a member there, I worked very hard. I especially played a role in health programs. In 1987 I was also the founding president in the provinces of Eskişehir, Kütahya, Afyon and Bilecik. After that, I was elected as permanent president. And I was president for around 14 to 15 years until 1999. But also during that time I continued my relations with politics. In '99, Yılmaz Hoca and I were invited to join DSP by the late Bülent Ecevit. We were elected as mayors in the same year. This is how my municipal experience began. That is why prior to the 2011 election, not to separate the votes, I returned to CHP and Yılmaz Hoca joined as well. We turned back to our family home (*baba ocağı*) as we say and that is how we continue our work in CHP (Interview, Mayor Ahmet Ataç, Eskişehir, 11.06.2011).

Ahmet Ataç seemed a rather 'untypical' mayor: he had been active in the party organisation prior to his mayorship. His backing by the local party organisation may have been why he was able to run a second time in 2009 after having lost the election in 2004 to AKP candidate Tacettin Sarıoğlu. Another rather unusual case of an inner-party career is that of Tahir Akyürek, Mayor of Konya Metropolitan Municipality. His political roots are in the Islamist Milli Görüş movement wherein he pursued a long inner-party career. This may explain why the AKP nominated him as a candidate for the 2014 elections despite suggestions that he had serious problems connecting with both the people and the media of Konya. It may be that his well-connectedness to the local and national (political) elites, rather than his successful work as a mayor seems to have played a role. Tahir Akyürek is also an example of how easily those from the SP transferred to the AKP. Unlike in Eskişehir, the two parties represent two close groups within one movement. An informant tells:

Those in AKP coming from Saadet integrated themselves very harmoniously. If there is discussion within the party it is only about who to put up as a candidate, but there are no factions. In a quiet, calm way the elites in Konya decide who becomes mayor. They lobby the prime minister behind the scene. Whoever they can present as most promising to the prime minister, whoever they lobby most, he becomes candidate. […] They would never present anyone who they know would infuriate the party president or prime minister, never someone presenting just one fraction. Competition in Konya is quiet and calm;

there will never be a conflict in the AK Party, no one can afford that (Interview, Arif, Konya, 07.11.2013).

When making decisions vis-à-vis candidates, the party leadership has to take the different factions within the party into consideration. In Konya's AKP, the biggest faction comprises those from a SP background as this was the regions strongest party prior to the founding of the AKP in 2001. Their relations with those loyal to the SP are good. Reciprocally, the SP does not treat the AKP as a political enemy. The local TV Channel 'Konya TV' and the daily newspaper 'Merhaba Gazetesi' are owned by SP members. However, they 'respect' the AKP's hegemony in Konya. That is, they never report negatively about them nor air their 'dirty laundry' to their audience. Another, much smaller fraction consists of ex-members of the ultranationalist and Islam-oriented BBP (*Büyük Birlik Partisi*, Great Union Party). Their most prominent figure is Mustafa Kabakcı, who became MP for the AKP in 2007. The incorporation of important figures like Kabakcı, a previous president of the administrative committee of the Chamber of Commerce (*Ticaret Odasında Meclis Başkanlığı)* is less concerned with votes and more with incorporating local elites in the interest of achieving a peaceful political atmosphere (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013).

The backing of candidates by both local elites and the national party leadership sometimes results in the appointment of mayors with little or no political experience prior to their nominations. The two cases discussed above, Eskişehir-Tepebaşı Mayor Ataç and Konya Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Tahir Akyürek are clearly exceptions. A former mayor recounted how he had never actively participated in any political party. The beginning of his political career and his membership in the AKP rather went hand-in-hand with his candidature as a municipal mayor (Interview, Tacettin, Eskişehir, 05.04.2011). Long-term, step-by-step careers within the party structure were rare with regard to mayors: they were rare also among delegates and local party functioneers. This implies that political leaders are often 'outsiders' to the local party

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organisation at the time of their candidature, and that party members are not involved in the decision. For example, Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Büyükerşen recalled the early days of his political career as follows:

> During the rectorship at Anadolu University I received lots of offers to become a deputy from different party leaders, among them the late Bülent Ecevit. I didn't t accept any of these offers as I thought that I could be more effective in the education field and I had many more projects to carry out. When my rectorship came to an end, the late Bülent Ecevit approached me again and said "Dear Büyükerşen, you don't have an excuse left. You reformed Anadolu University into an exemplary educational institution and now you need to turn Eskişehir into a modern city. I want to nominate you as candidate for the metropolitan municipality election in the city you were born and raised in". He then proposed the candidacy to me. He told me I had no choice regarding my hometown Eskişehir and he insisted (Interview, Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, Eskişehir, 09.09.2013).

Mayor Büyükerşen was invited by the party leadership to become a mayoral candidate despite having any previous political experience. He stressed that he was invited by several parties to become a deputy, but seemed to imply that his interest was more in local projects. He clearly linked Bülent Ecevit's continuous insistence that he should become a mayor to his merits as a rector. He also presented himself as a person with no claim to political power, stressing Ecevit's usage of courting terms like "*mazeretiniz kalmadı*" ("you have no excuse left") or "*ısrarcı oldu*" ("he insisted a lot"). By mentioning that Ecevit reminded him he would 'owe' it to Eskişehir to serve as its mayor he presents himself as a simple servant who does what needs to be done out of a sense of duty. This 'narrative of a humble man serving his city' contrasted with the impression I gained of him as someone very aware and protective of his personal power. That he seemed to be sought after indicated that he was able to dictate his conditions of political involvement just as he does today. The fact that he changed his party membership - from DSP to CHP in February 2011

- further adds to his independence from the party leadership and contributes to his reputation as the 'Eskişehir one-man-show'.[73]

AKP Eskişehir-Odunpazarı Mayor Burhan Sakallı joined the AKP in 2002. He had never been active in any political party before but had friends who were active in the youth organisations of different political parties (mainly the RP). He sometimes went to their meetings and joined in discussions, but he was never sufficiently convinced to become a party member. Some of those friends are active in the AKP today. He has known Erdoğan since the latter worked in the youth organisation of RP and was Mayor of Istanbul. Sakallı first tried to get elected as an MP to parliament for the AKP but was not successful in the candidates' candidate selection (Interview, Mayor Burhan Sakallı, Eskişehir, 06.05.2011). Instead, the AKP nominated him as their mayoral candidate for the Eskişehir-Odunpazarı Municipality. After winning in 2004 and a successful first term, he did so again in 2009. Sakallı, a charismatic politician, who was liked even by CHP members had wished to become AKP candidate for the post of metropolitan municipality mayor in the 2014 election. But he was not nominated, due to his conflicts with 'hardliners' in the local AKP organisation. The newspapers and journals he wrote for, as well as his involvement in the private education sector might indicate that he belongs to the Fethullah Gülen community.[74] This may be another reason why he was not nominated as a candidate for the metropolitan municipality in 2014. Unlike in Konya, in Eskişehir more tensions existed between the different factions that support the AKP. In Eskişehir the strongest group in AKP consists of members of the religious foundation *Birlik Vakfı*. Eskişehir's AKP Party President Süleyman Reyhan belonged to this group. Ex-Odunpazarı Mayor Burhan Sakallı however did not approve of *Birlik Vakfı* which led to repeated tensions with the local AKP leadership.

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[73] Sources claim that Yılmaz Büyükerşen is not a 'social democrat by heart'. It is said that he was a member of the DP *(Demokrat Parti*, Democrat Party), a right-wing party, before joining Ecevit's DSP. He apparently also discussed possible party membership with the AKP before joining the CHP in 2011 (Interview, Ramazan, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

[74] By the end of 2013 a conflict developed between Prime Minister Erdoğan and the Fethullah Gülen community over corruption accusations.

Burhan Sakallı gained respect with his open letter delineating his non-candidacy to the local newspapers for publication (2 Eylül Gazetesi, 2013). The people regarded Burhan Sakallı as someone who kept his word and got things going. Interestingly, he also received approval from CHP members for his work and political style. Many claimed that his municipality was the best functioning, most effective municipality in Eskişehir. In light of his popularity, the AKP's nomination of Chamber of Commerce President Harun Karacan as candidate for the metropolitan municipality election was seen as a strategic mistake. Even if Sakallı might not have won the election against Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, he would doubtless have received a good result, which, by extension, would have changed the majority situation in the city council.

As much as politics is ideological, it is often surprisingly pragmatic. Although party factions were important in Eskişehir, at times they were tied closer to certain figures than to positions. When talking to the locals about the candidate election process I often heard: "*Eskişehir'de siyasetçilerin partileri değişiyor ama siyasetçiler hiç değişmiyor*" ("In Eskişehir the candidate's party affiliations change but the candidates stay the same"). Various examples substantiated their belief. During the 2014 local election the CHP became more flexible in incorporating promising candidates in Eskişehir province, although their previous party affiliation may have been different- a strategy the AKP had already used earlier. In the 2009 election the Metropolitan Municipality Mayor and Tepebaşı Mayor Ahmet Ataç were candidates of DSP, this time they were candidates for the CHP. Kazım Kurt, CHP candidate for the Odunpazarı Municipality, had been elected a DSP municipal council member in the 2009 election (later he became an MP for CHP in 2011). Serdar Taci Zengin, the MHP's candidate for the Tepebaşı Municipality in 2009 was earlier high on the list as a council member for the CHP. The same could be said for Bekir Sıtkı Saraç, who was previously a DSP council member. Niyazi Çetin, a functionary of the DP, was elected as a CHP council member. Fikret Arslan, who had been elected DP mayor in

Sivrihisar Municipality, was running for re-election - albeit this time for CHP. The same was true for Ese Ildız, a BBP member who had been elected Kayakent Mayor in 2009.[75] In 2014 İsmail Hakkı Yavuz, who had been DP Mayor of Yunus Emre Municipality, ran as the CHP's Mihalıççık mayoral candidate (Taşkın, 2014b).

The AKP, too, incorporated promising candidates, irrespective of whether they lacked an inner-party career or had a history with another party. Orhan Soydaş, a construction engineer, became the AKP candidate for Tepebaşı Municipality. A veteran of politics, in 1994 he was elected as Tepebaşı Mayor for DYP. After the death of the Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Aydın Arat in 1997, Soydaş was elected mayor in his place (until 1999). In 2004, he ran again as DYP candidate for the metropolitan municipality; but he finished third. Now, 10 years later, he was tilting at the mayorship once more, this time as the AKP's Tepebaşı candidate. However, he had no previous AKP affiliation nor was he part of the official candidates' candidate competition. Subsequent to his nomination the AKP tried to collect votes from the center-right (Taşkın, 2014b). But, local AKP members reacted negatively to his nomination as they wanted to see someone from their organisation nominated as candidate. A group of AKP members travelled to Ankara to complain against his candidature. They spoke with deputies and responsible figures among the party leadership. *"We could neither indicate a candidate, nor were we part of the discussion about the candidates* […] *we receive between 30 and 35 complaints about his candidature every day in the party organisation",* they stated. However *"this is not a rebellion"* they added, *"we just voice our complaints now, then we draw off"* (Esgazete, 2014).

As a result the AKP leadership changed their candidate for Odunpazarı Municipality at the last minute, nominating Nevzat Önder (instead of Nedim Öztürk) (Taşkın, 2014a). Önder was a rather

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[75] Interestingly the CHP introduced Ese Ildiz as its candidate on 22.12.2013. However, three days later Ese Ildiz publicly declared that he would still run, but not on a CHP ticket. He claimed to have been asked by Mayor Büyükerşen but had declined the offer. Ten days later, however, Ese Ildiz was officially campaigning as a CHP candidate, implying that behind-the-scene negotiations about candidature were conflictual.

bland man in his fifties with a career as a 'party bureaucrat'. He was supported by the local party leadership and members as well as by outgoing Mayor Burhan Sakallı and Metropolitan Municipality candidate Harun Karacan. The latter had worked with his brother Mustafa Önder at the Chamber of Commerce (Taşkın, 2014a). This incident, and the publicity surrounding it, demonstrated that, irrespective of how centralized it is, the AKP is not a homogeneous entity. Local organisations had some influence over the nomination process. This would have been unthinkable in Konya. In Eskişehir, the party organisation, in keeping with the local political culture felt the need and freedom to protest.

While party members were generally 'content' with the nomination of 'outsiders', the national party leadership ought not to overlook local members' preferences, as the protest by the AKP's Eskişehir party organisation showed. The nomination of Harun Karacan as Metropolitan Municipality mayoral candidate was a problem for many; he had no previous AKP history nor was he part of the official candidates' candidate competition. In effect, he was clearly Erdoğan's candidate, a fact already obvious prior to his candidacy when the AKP 'built him up' by inviting him to go on trips with then President Abdullah Gül. High-ranking local party figures protested more or less silently: Burhan Sakallı, who had hoped to be nominated himself, sent a note but did not take part in the ceremonies around Harun Karacan's declaration. Nabi Avcı, Minister of Education, as well as the MPs Koca and Can opted not to take part in the ceremony. Prior to the election, Harun Karacan campaigned both with his own team and with the local AKP party president and his staff. However, the minister and the deputies were absent, pretending to have obligations in Ankara. Despite their assertions to the contrary, it was suspected that they tried to distance themselves from the candidate. If he lost, there would be no comeback on them. And if contrary to their expectations he won they would find ways to reconcile themselves with him (Taşkın, 2014b).

As pointed out in the introduction, one of the strength of the AKP seems to be its ability to adapt various local contexts. However, this may also mean that it faces different 'responses' as the 'revolutionary incidents' orchestrated by the Eskişehir AKP organisation showed. In Eskişehir, a different culture of public debate existed that included also the local AKP organisation. It should be added, though, that the little upheaval described above did not go unanswered by the national party leadership. After the election, the local party leadership was replaced. In Konya public criticism of leadership discussions is not accepted. Topics are discussed by a small group of local elites 'behind the scenes'; only the results are communicated to the public. As I have suggested earlier, local elites have a strong influence on candidate selection, especially in Konya. However, they do not engage in a conflict with the party leadership. Erdoğan and his advisors have the last, uncontested word. There was one simple reason, I was told: "*Local leaders never argue with the central government. Because, as I said, money and projects come from the government. The one who argues, loses* (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2013).

3.5   "It's the leader who has the whip hand"[76]

The cases discussed above show that although factors like ethnicity, civil society involvement, closeness to local elites, and rootedness in the local party organisation play a role in the selection of candidates, it is the national party leader and his close circle who take the final decisions. A former AKP mayor described candidate determination for municipal elections in the following way:

> As you might know, it's the party headquarters that in general determine the candidates. Inner-party democracy is not really practiced. It's like that in this party; it's like that in other parties. In Turkish parties, it is handled like that in general (Interview, Tacettin, Eskişehir, 05.04.2011).

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[76] Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2013.

As I will show in chapter 4, mayors became influential political figures from the 1980s on due to legal reforms. But theirs is clearly a fragile power. Mayors remain dependent upon the party leadership, not only during their first candidature, but continuously during their time in office.

> Ask anyone in Turkey today. They will all say the mayor of Ankara is really powerful. Melih Gökçek is really powerful, he has a lot of money, many resources. But last time Tayyip Erdoğan waited till the last moment to nominate him. He [Gökçek] cried till the last day, cried, cried, and organized meetings and said: "I will announce my candidature, the people are screaming Gökçek, Gökçek". But he [Erdoğan] said "Stop it, be quite, I will not nominate him." [...] Erdoğan showed him this till the last day: "You are nothing. I have you in my grip, if I do not want you to be who you are, you are not Melih Gökçek, you are a nothing". That is what he showed him. Why did he show him that? To let him know who is the boss (Interview, MP Süheyl Batum, Eskişehir, 27.08.2013).

The degree of influence by the party leadership clearly contrasts with the normative perception of local party organisations as a 'brewing ground for democracy', implying strong ties between citizens and the state, as well as better performance and higher efficiency of the government by the political participation of wide segments of society and better accountability of political acts (Blair, 2000). By contrast, the party leader and his circle keep the party in a tight grip, influencing even minor local decisions as it safeguards his national power. The distribution of resources, the establishing of clientelistic relations, and the suppression of possible local opposition, are all means to this end.

The power of the party leader can be explained by the ways in which Turkish political parties are organized internally, especially in the determining of delegates for party congresses who, in return, elect the party president.[77] Turkish parties are characterized by a highly centralized and

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[77] Apart from candidate determination, Turkish parties have party leaders (*başkan*) that have far reaching competencies. The party leader presides over the party council (*parti meclisi*). The number of members differs between the parties; the CHP has 62 members, the AKP 50. The council meets monthly and decides on the party politics as well as the forming or ending of government/coalitions. The executive committee (*merkez yürütme kurulu*), a sub organ of the party council, consists of only the leading entities (party president and his deputies, the general secretary as well as the president of the parliament and his deputies) and determines daily politics, the direction of the party and the deputy candidates to parliament.

identical party structure - both a result of a rigid legal situation of which the main sources are the Constitution, the Political Parties' Law of 1983, and the respective party statutes (*tüzük*).

The general principles of political action are detailed in Articles 67 to 69 (the chapter on 'political rights and obligations') of the Constitution.[78] The Political Parties Law (Law 2820 *Siyasi Partiler Kanunu*, SPK, 1983) builds on the constitution, and defines the inner structure of political parties (*parti örgütü*) as well as the competencies of each organ. It further defines the requirements of the constitution of 1982, e.g., compulsory voting (Hale, 2008; Tachau, 2000; Tezcür, 2012).[79] It was created shortly after the military coup d'état in 1980, and was shaped by an atmosphere of deep mistrust of any form of party-political action. But contrary to Kumbaracıbaşı's argument (2009, 41-44), the Law of 1983 should not be seen as the starting point of a centralized party culture in Turkey, which instead had its origin in Law 648 of 1965.[80] A third legal source was the party statutes (*tüzük*), albeit they should be understood more as a detailed interpretation of the legal situation.[81] The Political Parties Law establishes a party organisation that reflects those of the administrative structure of Turkey:

- National Organisation (situated in the capital)

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[78] Article 67 defines the active and passive right to act politically, to elect and to get elected, however this right is excluding those in compulsory military service. Article 68 deals with the right to establish political parties as long as their activities are not in conflict with the independence of the state, its indivisible integrity with its territory and nation, human rights, the principles of equality and rule of law, the sovereignty of the nation, and the principles of the democratic and secular republic; no party shall aim to protect or establish class or group dictatorship or dictatorship of any kind. Judges and prosecutors, members of higher judicial organs, civil servants in public institutions and organisations, other public servants who are not considered to be labourers by virtue of the services they perform, members of the armed forces and students who are not yet in higher education institutions are excluded from party membership. Article 69 states that the activities and the internal structure of parties need to be in accordance with "democratic principles"; but it does not define them further. The constitutional court is defined as the relevant institution for party closure should a party oppose the principles named in Article 68.

[79] Many of the radical restrictions (e.g., prohibition to establish women or youth branches or to maintain relations with foundations or professional organisations were either attenuated or even rescinded in 1995 to ensure the integration of different social groups into the political process.

[80] Law 648 was enacted in July 1965 as a result of the new Constitution of 1961. The aim of the law was to define in what ways the parties were to be held responsible by the Constitution Court for their internal organisation, finances or political activities. The law contained detailed regulations on questions of party organisation, and dictated inner-party elections for candidate determination to increase inner party democracy. Additionally, it prohibited party organisation below the district level. Dodd assumes that this was to prevent political conflict and polarization in villages or neighbourhoods (Dodd, 1969, 130-133).

[81] The party statute may be changed by decisions reached by the party's general assembly.

- Provincial Organisations (*il*)

- District Organisations (*ilçe/belde*)

All levels comprise a congress (*kongre*), a chairperson (at the national level the party president), an administrative committee (*merkez karar yürütme kurulu*) and an executive committee (*merkez yürütme kurulu*). The organisations at the different levels - municipality, district and province - are identical (Art.7, 19-20 SPK). In terms of hierarchy the smaller unit is accountable to the next higher unit; for example, the municipal organisation is accountable to the district office (Kumbaracıbaşı, 2009, 42). Congresses are the highest decision-making body at each level; decisions are taken according to the majority of votes.[82] The main trick lies in influencing the determination of delegates to party congresses, an important means for party leaders worldwide to ensure ones re-election (Bille, 2001). Schattschneider wrote: "*He who can make the nominations is the owner of the party. This is therefore one of the best points at which to observe the distribution of power within the party*" (1942, 64).

The party law states that the election of delegates is a task of the party members. However, it does not give further specification, allowing parties in Turkey to 'find ways around it'.[83] There are three ways to assign deputy candidates for party congresses; *merkez yoklaması* (the party leadership selects the candidates), *blok list* (members/delegates can only decide on whole blocks

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[82] Municipal chairperson, administrative committee and executive committee are elected by the municipal congress. The congress chairman at the higher organisational level approves of the list of delegates for the congresses at the lower organisational level. He/she also represents the organisation and coordinates the activities of the executive committee at that level. Mayors and governors are ex officio delegates to the congresses. The administrative committee meets twice a month to discuss party activities (Hale & Özbudun, 2010, 46; Kumbaracıbaşı, 2009, 128).
[83] Art. 20, SPK.

of candidates) and *ön seçim* (party primaries take place under judicial control and all registered members or delegates take part).[84] The CHP Eskişehir Party President tells:

> In general, party primaries *(ön seçim)* are not practised because they lead to too much conflict and resentment. In general, we do a tendencies poll (*temayül yoklaması*) in which all party members use their vote democratically. Also, we do public surveys. For example, in Eskişehir 500,000 people are questioned over three days. In Odunpazarı we do a survey, but in the other districts the party leadership decides or we do a tendencies poll (Interview, Nihat Çuhadar, CHP Eskişehir Party President, 05.09.2013).

Apart from these institutionalized procedures, numerous examples exist as to how party leaderships dominate the election process, either by creating result-lists/faking elections, influencing party membership, bribing delegates or subjecting them to psychological pressure (Ayan, 2010; Bayraktar & Altan, 2013; Joppien, 2011a). The national congress elects the party leader; however, due to the practice described above it is the party leader who influences the election of delegates to congress. Thus, it is practically impossible to get rid of an established party leader. It can therefore be concluded that decision-making in Turkish parties is a top-down, not a bottom-up process. Turkish parties are generally cadre parties dominated by their political leaders/elites (Duverger, 1972, 60-67). Rubin and Heper rightly argue that:

> In general parties have no significant internal democracy. Leaders who make bad mistakes in elections or government survive. Corruption does not lead to a political fall. Ideas are not generated within parties where debate is discouraged. Obedience rather than competition govern the parties' political culture (2002, 3).

A change of party leadership through an internal challenge is an exception. Bülent Ecevit (DSP), Necmettin Erbakan (RP) und Alparslan Türkeş (MHP) ruled their parties for more than a quarter of a century. Similarly, Süleyman Demirel was party president of the AP and later the DYP from 1964 to 1993. Recent examples are Deniz Baykal (party president of the CHP from 1992 to 2010) and Devlet Bahçeli, who has been head of the MHP for more than 15 years. If a change in party

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[84] Bayraktar and Altan accurately critize that "*The absence of mandatory judicial supervision of the foundation and the election of communal bodies reveals a huge legal lacuna that is sufficient to corrupt the entire representative process*" (2013, 19).

leadership takes place, it is often due to 'exceptional circumstances'; blackmail or the publication

of compromising material (Joppien, 2011b).[85]

Apart from a legal situation favouring 'strong leaders', party leaders exert psychological pressure

upon members not to claim everything possible from a legal standpoint. As one interviewee

explains:

> In Turkish parties there is no democracy [with regard to appointment to posts] in general. [...] I went to the congress and no one presented itself as a challenger/rival candidate. Does this mean it is a deficient democracy? No! […] There is something natural about it. I mean, as everybody thought I did my job well, no one opposed me, and that was right. It is the same with regard to Erdoğan. There will never be a rival candidate to Erdoğan. Why? Because to us, there is no one better than him. But if there would be a better candidate, he would present himself. I mean, there is no such fear- psychological pressure is enough. This man is a leader. Why would I change a good leader? If there is someone I know, someone doing a good job, why would I change that, why should I take this risk? And that is what our society thinks (Interview, Faruk, Konya, 18.05.2011).

Critique of current practice is only rarely voiced and then only by those disenfranchised by the

system. When, after one term as a mayor the AKP did not nominate him as a candidate again in

Eskişehir and instead "nominated a bearded man" (meaning an Islamist with a RP past) whom no

one would ever vote for in Eskişehir", a previous AKP mayor criticized the party:

> When Ankara, I mean the party`s headquarters, selects the candidates, it might happen that they get the wrong information. This might result in the headquarter making mistakes when selecting the candidates. […] They just do not know them [the candidates]. But we lost one municipality because of a wrong candidate. The candidate selection is done by headquarters. That happens without any pre-selection and without public participation. This is a big handicap and, because of these barriers, the wrong candidates get selected and the party loses. That is not anything typical for the AKP; this happens in all Turkish parties on a regular basis (Interview, Tacettin, Eskişehir, 05.04.2011).

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[85] In 2011, MHP party president Devlet Bahçeli was blackmailed into stepping down due to (supposed) sex videos of high-ranking party members. In 2010, CHP party president Deniz Baykal stepped down after a video featuring him and a CHP MP had been published. Although the sender was unknown, many assigned responsibility to inner-party opposition. Others suspected the AKP.

In the strategic context of delegate election, party membership should not be understood as an initiative of the local party organisation but rather as an important means of power consolidation of the party leadership through the local organisation. As such, it has two possibilities: control of who joins a party (and if necessary its prevention) and the initiation of mass joining. The first possibility is the 'qualitative' control over who joins the party.[86] Although no one may be excluded from party membership on the grounds of race, religion or sex, Article 12 (SPK) allows parties to define their own criteria for party membership in their statutes or even to deny membership without providing reasons. And, the parties use these privileges widely: both the CHP for example (Art. 8, *tüzük*)[87], and the MHP (Art. 5, *tüzük*)[88] demand two 'references', the AKP (Art. 7, *tüzük*)[89] requires one provided by existing members before accepting an application for party membership. In Article 9 (*tüzük*), the CHP introduces the title of a preliminary 'membership candidate'. All these means serve one end: a restrictive handling of party membership that ensures that only those members are accepted who do not pose opposition to the party leadership and do not allow the inner-party opposition to build up its numbers. It may thus be concluded that the control of party joining is an effective mechanism employed by the party leadership to ensure that an appointed leader may not be challenged easily.

The second strategy ensuring party leadership power consolidation against any inner-party opposition is the initiation of mass joining of members of their own ethnic or regional groups, or parts of a larger family network. A comprehensive study of 2,000 CHP members from Istanbul supports this assessment: 33.7% of male and 59.4% of female party members joined after being

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[86] Articles 11 and 12 SPK contain the basic regulations for party joining. Article 11 defines the conditions for joining a political party and denies party membership to members of higher judicial institutions, police and the military as well as pupils and civil servants.
[87] CHP *Tüzük*, April 2010.
[88] MHP *Tüzük*, November 2009.
[89] AKP *Tüzük*, October 2010.

requested to do so by family, friends or acquaintances (Schüler, 1993, 41).[90] Hale and Özbudun

reached a similar conclusion in their study of the AKP in 2010 (Hale & Özbudun, 2010, 47). The

party leadership is entitled to accept new party members in the name of the district organisations,

enabling the possibility of registering a large number of members at once and in a centralized

manner. This may be extremely beneficial for the leadership, for example shortly before a district

congress (*ilçe kongresi*), as it enables it to strengthen its position against an inner-party

opposition. Leadership-initiated party membership, and the effect it has on inner-party dynamics

were already criticized back in 1985 by prominent SHP member İsmail Cem who writes that one

of the terms used most often with regard to left-wing social democrat parties was clique (*hizip*).

He stated that some powerful members used their power to enrol huge numbers of people as new

members of the party, bound to their will. This was, according to Cem, the nucleus of a clique:

> Another important point which needs attention is that the 'members' in our parties do not
> have any political function. […] May it be, that tendency to create cliques is in a relation
> of reason and effect to the functionlessness of the members? If such a relation exists may
> we not change the formation of cliques by changing our position towards the function of a
> member? If we would find ways to let the rank and file participate in political decision
> making processes, would this not help the Turkish left towards a more stable party
> structure? I believe the answer to these questions is "Yes"(as cited in Schüler, 1998, 68-
> 70).

I suggest that not much has changed since Cem's appeal for a redefinition of party membership.

When the AKP was founded in 2001, one of its characteristics that attracted followers, especially

from among the liberals, was its commitment to intra-party democracy. The party argued that this

was important to make minority positions heard and to act as a germ cell for the democratization

of the whole country. In its original statutes, the party differentiated itself from other parties: the

powers of the leadership were restricted, candidates should be determined only by pre-elections,

minority positions should be heard, and members would enjoy far going freedoms. Taken

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[90]Among the male members 52.2 % declared to have joined the party of their own volition, 14.1% joined due to a
membership campaign by the party.

together, these provisions aimed at establishing the AKP as a founding cell for democracy in the country. One of the founding members of the AKP in Konya reflected:

> After we fulfilled our tasks in politics we turn back to our jobs, I mean we do not see politics as a job. This position, we are 40 years on top of this country, we led this country for 40 years, does not exist anymore. The philosophy of our party is expressed in a special article of our party statute [Art. 75]. No one may be elected to the same post for more than three times. […] This means that a new generation, of which I am a part, does play a role in politics and does take political responsibility. In the last 30 years we always saw the same people that only changed their political responsibility from time to time. But, thank God, these days are over. In his last election [national election 2011] and also in our internal party meetings our prime minister said; "This is my last election, attack my post, […], we are leaving and you are following [on our posts]". This is a very important opening for Turkish politics. We are described as Islamist or conservative, but actually we are giving a new meaning to the word 'democracy' in our country (Interview, Faruk, Konya, 18.05.2011).

Once in power, the party abolished the statutes in February 2003. Since then, leadership and decision-making have been concentrated in Erdoğan's (and Davutoğlu's respectively) group, intra-party democracy has been radically reduced, the party leadership is increasingly acting in an authoritarian and top-down manner (Joppien, 2014b).[91] This is also reflected in the limited possibilities for inner-party decision making.

3.6 The 'Büyükerşen Factor'

Although clearly the dominant force in local 'personal politics' is the national party president, exceptions do, in fact, exist. Very occasionally mayors manage to become more influential locally than the national party leadership. As the political history of Konya and Eskişehir (Chapter 2.3) has shown, Eskişehir is not a traditional CHP stronghold, but rather a typical Anatolian city preferring centre-right mayors. In the 2011 national elections the CHP won two seats in parliament, the AKP three. However, the 'Büyükerşen factor' secured a victory for the

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[91] The TESEV study also looked at whether a provincial congress has been held in the last two years as an indicator for intra-party democracy. Approximately 80% of those questioned replied that this was the case. But 73% thought that party regulations on how a congress should be held were not followed properly. Here again the percentage of right wing members was slightly lower, which could mean that (a) right-wing parties show a higher degree of intra-party democracy or (b) that they are more used to obedient behaviour/party discipline and question leadership decisions less (Kumbaracıbaşı, 2009, 143).

CHP in the local greater council elections, an outcome that not only the national CHP leadership but also Mayor Büyükerşen was aware of.

> I think Eskişehir is a bit different because Kılıçdaroğlu [CHP president] knows if he does not do as Büyükerşen wants, if he does not nominate the candidates he wants than Büyükerşen himself will not run as a candidate and the party will lose. Yılmaz Büyükerşen is CHP's only chance in Eskişehir (Interview, Arif, Konya, 07.11.2013).

Only a few mayors enjoy the freedom Mayor Büyükerşen does. The previous mayor of Şanlıurfa, Ahmet Eşref Fakıbaba (2004-2009) is another example. Erdoğan tried to pressure him by claiming that Fakıbaba would be nothing without him, and that the AKP would win the city if Erdoğan just presented his jacket in the election. As a result, Fakıbaba campaigned as an independent and won, much to Erdoğan's surprise. The freedom for mayors to act like this is, however, limited. In the case of Fakıbaba, his Kurdish background (together with a good previous performance as a mayor) secured him the mayor's office even without Erdoğan's support (Interview, MP Süheyl Batum, Eskişehir, 27.08.2013). Mayor Büyükerşen is independent from the national party leadership because (a) he was already a successful mayor before he joined the CHP and (b) as rector of Anadolu University and an ambitious citizen, he was a prominent figure in Eskişehir, before he joined politics and became mayor in 1999. From his grandparent's sides he has a Crimean and Bulgarian background rooting him among the most important minorities in the city. An uncle of his father had been an MP, and his father was a *mutemet* (pay clerk) at Eskişehir Municipality (Büyükerşen & Taşçı, 2009, 15-19), thus, Yılmaz Büyükerşen was no foreigner to national and local politics. Due to the various projects of his municipality that radically transformed Eskişehir's image he became a prominent figure not only in the city itself but all over Turkey. The people of Eskişehir were proud of him and the ways in which he changed their city. As a result, also citizens who vote for MHP or AKP in the national election

gave their votes to him in the local elections. This prominence not only guaranteed him personal freedom, but also allowed him to determine party politics and the candidates in 'his' city.

> To tell the truth, he is bargaining. [He says:] "As metropolitan municipality mayor I determine all the district mayors; I determine the city council members." The party tells him "Ok be our candidate but we cannot let you determine everything"- there is an obvious conflict of interests. But I think that in this election Büyükerşen will be decisive again. […] What Büyükerşen will say is of importance and he states that he can rank the candidates if he is asked to. CHP supporters insist on Erman and say "Everything will be given to those coming from DSP, from the outside, and nothing is left for us." We face these troubles at CHP (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).[92]

As suggested in the beginning of this chapter, the question of who should become Odunpazarı candidate for the CHP dominated the newspapers' political pages and talk in the city for weeks. The main difficulty was the antagonistic relationship between Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen and the local CHP organisation. Both wanted the candidate for Odunpazarı to come from their 'camp', with loyalties towards the 'right side'.

Erman Gölet, who had a long inner-party career, was the CHP local party organisation's candidate. However, the CHP leadership in Ankara knowing that it needed Büyükerşen more desperately than the local party organisation finally gave in to him. Thus, they were well aware of Büyükerşen's manipulations: if he failed to achieve his will, he would not run as candidate again. Then the CHP would probably lose Eskişehir, one of its national 'flagships', to the AKP. Finally, in the 2014 elections, MP Kazım Kurt became CHP candidate for Odunpazarı and won the election. Kazım Kurt had a Crimean background and had served as CHP deputy since 2011, also on Mayor Büyükerşen's initiative. A rather pale, controlled man, who seemed to act more as a

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[92] Some blamed Mayor Büyükerşen for putting up Jale Nur Süllü on the DSP ticket. Others blaimed the CHP for nominating Erman Gölet. In the 2009 local election, the difference between AKP candidate Burhan Sakallı and the runner-up was only 20,000 votes. Had the DSP and CHP agreed on one candidate, they probably would not have lost the district to the AKP.

deputy of Büyükerşen than as a mayor led by a strong vision. One of his first activities as a newly elected mayor had been the construction of bird aviaries in his district.[93]

In sum, it may be concluded that certain criteria are important if one seeks to move from candidates' candidate to candidate. Local rootedness is a must. Being male also improves one's chances enormously. All candidates were Sunni Muslims. A certain ethnicity can be useful at times and in certain contexts; however, its importance is much less - at least in Konya and Eskişehir - than the previous literature on local politics indicates. Somewhat surprisingly, an internal party career apparently has little importance. The main factors have proven to include civil society activism as a means of 'developing a profile', building up a network and making contacts with the local party organisation and elites who, in return, refer a candidate to the national leadership which has the last word in candidate decision-making. This results in a rather low loyalty of Turkish mayors to the local party organisation or to citizens in general. Mayoral loyalty is firmly to the local elites and the national party leadership.

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[93] The CHP organisation in Eskişehir consisted of different factions: the main divide was between 'old CHP members' and those of the 'Büyükerşen camp' with DSP backgrounds. In the 2014 election, among the candidates' candidates for Odunpazarı municipality Ayhan Kavas, Erdal Caferoğlu and Jale Nur Süllü had a DSP background, whereas Ali Ulu and Erman Gölet came from the 'old CHP'. The preference for the DSP faction due to the 'Büyükerşen factor' is a thorn in the flash of many older CHP members. Small groups within the old CHP faction felt particular loyalty to ex-CHP president Deniz Baykal and ex-CHP general secretary Önder Sav. Other factions existed among the Alevis and the Cirkassian, and the *Ulusalcı* and Social Democrats (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

4 National Influence over Local Politics

Mayors are subject not only to the influence of the national party headquarters; their municipalities are also subject to the tutelage by national institutions. This chapter analyses the legal frameworks of the central state through which municipalities are controlled. This holds even more true for municipalities won by opposition parties to the government. I will demonstrate that decentralization does not necessarily mean more citizen participation or transparency. Instead the questions for whom is power decentralized, and why and in which political and economic context is important. The role of economic factors, inner-party decision making and the emergence of new hegemonic centres in the form of mayors may in practice counteract legal decentralization (Joppien, 2014a).

A strong centralist tradition - a legacy of the Ottoman Empire that has endured since the founding of the Republic up until today - is characteristic of Turkey. This chapter traces the country's different periods of centralization, de-centralization and re-centralization of local politics, explicates their most important effects, and analyses them in the political context of their respective political periods. The historical background starts with the patchy and insufficient introduction of a municipal system in the final stages of the Ottoman Empire. Then it moves to the introduction of a complete municipal system in the first years of the Turkish Republic (1930, Law 1580). The introduction of metropolitan municipalities in 1983 (Law 3030) and the increasing power and autonomy that accompanied it, transformed Turkey's big cities into important economic players. Under the AKP government two important legal reforms (2004/05, Law 5395 and Law 5216) were introduced that expanded the municipalities' fields of operation, and further strengthened the position of the mayors, elevating them to figures of national prominence. Critics have argued that the latest legal reform, Law 6360 (2012), has overturned the

AKP's previous commitment to decentralization, and that the party is seeking to recentralize political power in the hands of the national state.

4.1   First Steps towards Municipalism in the Ottoman Empire

The first municipalities were introduced by way of trial in the Istanbul districts of Beyoğlu and Galata in 1857. Later, so it was planned, they were to be expanded throughout the entire Ottoman Empire (Lafi, 2003, 189-190; Sahara, 2011, 30).[94] As the 'test municipalities' proved quite successful, a municipal administration regulation (*Dersaadet İdare i-Belediye Nizamnamesi*) was passed in 1868 introducing thirteen additional municipalities to Istanbul. However, their introduction was difficult and they never functioned as well as the first two trials. Municipalities were also introduced to several other provinces of the Ottoman Empire. But the introduction of the *belediye* system during the period of the Ottoman Empire proved a rather singular phenomenon.[95]

The Ottoman Empire was a centralist state; for this reason, there was little interest in the establishment of a class of institutionalized and empowered local authorities. The introduction of the *belediye* system may thus be understood as an attempt by the Ottoman palace to exercise stronger influence over non-institutionalized local entities that to date had been relatively autonomous from the palace's control (Çelik, 1986, 43). Other interpretations of the move towards a municipal system included facilitation of tax collection; the pressure of European powers, and the decentralization of political power in the provinces in order to guarantee their

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[94] The first municipality was established following a decision of the High Reform Council (*Majlis-i Ali-i Tanzîmāt*) in 1854 to introduce a municipal commission. The vast majority of the council members were from minorities (e.g., French, Greeks, Armenians or Jews) only very few were Muslim Turks. The Commission was instructed to prepare a report on European city organisation and possible measures for the reform of its Ottoman counterpart.

[95] Regarding the introduction of the *belediye* system in selected districts in the Ottoman provinces see Sahara, 2011, 26-50 on Bulgaria; and Lafi, 2003, 187-205 on the Eastern Mediterranean, especially Tripoli.

contentment and to prevent their secession. According to Şerif Mardin (1973) this division of society into centre and periphery continued even after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 when an entirely new municipal system was introduced.[96]

4.2   Lack of Will for De-Centralization after the Founding of the Republic

After the foundation of the Turkish Republic the periphery was perceived as a potential source of opposition. Any agitation was countered by strict centralist administrative measures. The primary function of the new municipalities was to control the periphery and maintain state power. The provinces (*il*), with their newly-designed borders showed little respect for the existing ethnic, religious or cultural entities, which had already undergone major transformation, given the violent upheavals and population movements that had destabilized the last half-century of Ottoman rule. The administrative reforms aimed to minimize the influence of the traditional authorities, including ethnic or religious leaders.[97] But before long it became apparent that such tight, centralist control over the peripheries was of only little practicability. A first step towards the decentralization of political power was the nationwide system of municipalities introduced by Law 1580 in 1930. The cities, as an elongated arm of the government, were to press ahead with the 'modernization' of the country. But they were given only limited competences; for example, limited responsibility for primary school education (Massicard & Bayraktar, 2009). The report on the adoption process of the law exemplified the contradictory expectations set in it:

> Experience has shown that, be it in Istanbul or another region, municipal governments need to be strengthened. In order to free our municipalities from their miserable and ruinous condition it is both a social and an economic necessity to elevate the

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[96] Turkish sociologist Şerif Mardin uses the term 'centre' to describe the state, and 'periphery' to describe the populace. As Mardin argues, the successful integration of the periphery (nobility, bourgeoisie, artisans, workers etc.) into the centre would be a phenomenon of western states being grounded in the autonomy of cities, trade, and the estates of the realm. Through a process of mutual confrontation, the periphery became acknowledged and integrated into the centre step-by-step (Mardin, 1973).

[97] While provinces have existed in Turkey since 1913, they were not introduced by a specific law.

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municipalities' power to a standard that is comparable to the developed countries. But, even if we give importance to this necessity, we should not lose sight of another socio-economic obligation, namely to keep the municipal governments under the control of the state. The danger of anarchy may only be prevented if, parallel with an extension of municipal authority, central control over those municipalities is extended (as cited in Aytaç, 1990, 91, English translation by author).

The above quote confirms that the amendment was not meant as an energetic push for further democratization, but rather allowed only for so much decentralization as was deemed absolutely necessary. The fear of loss of control of local authorities was dominant. It was more than thirty years before the Constitution of 1961 (Articles 112 and 116) allowed further decentralization of political power, a process which, however, may be understood as pure lip service as it was never adopted into national law. Only the election of the mayor was subject to change. Whereas formerly he had been elected by the members of the town council among themselves and required the approval of the central government, as of 1963 they would be elected directly by the citizens (Açikel & Balcı, 2009, 92-99; Bayraktar, 2007, §27).

The change towards strengthening local democracy was due to the considerable migration within Turkey that created completely new social conditions and forced politicians to react (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008, 8-10; Sengül, 2005, 81-82).[98] The most visible expression of this uncontrolled urbanization was the emergence of *gecekondu* neighbourhoods. Whereas initially politicians ignored this emergent urban lower class, they soon began to court its members as a constantly growing important group of voters. As 'sweeteners' they promised to recognize their housing rights and to deliver access to water, gas and electricity. After winning the local elections in 1973 (most importantly in big cities including Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir), the CHP, which at that time pursued a social-democratic program, began to address the needs of urban migrants (Şengül,

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[98] Rural exodus started in Turkey in the 1950s when the Menderes government (with the financial support of the Marshall plan) began to modernise Turkish agriculture. This resulted both in a population surplus, and in better infrastructural connection of the rural areas, which led to stronger migration to Turkey's bigger cities.

2005, 84). The CHP-led municipalities asked the central government for an amendment of competences to address urban challenges, i.e. infrastructure, public housing and transportation. This soon resulted in the 'New Municipalism' movement (*yeni belediyecilik anlayışı / toplumcu belediyecilik*). The associated municipalities organized the production and sale of products (e.g. bread) to ensure low, stable prices via municipal adjustment of demand and supply (Finkel, 1990, 191).[99] Nevertheless, these efforts to 'reinterpret municipalism' were brought to an abrupt end by the military coup of 1980.

Only a few years later, in 1984, Turkey experienced an unprecedented wave of decentralization, when a new level of local government was established: the *büyükşehir belediyesi* (metropolitan municipality).[100] This expansion was required by the 1982 Constitution and was introduced and further defined by Law 3030 in 1984. The creation of the metropolitan municipalities aimed at solving urban problems that posed too big a challenge for single municipalities. As well, it aimed to re-bind the city municipalities more strongly to governmental structures after their 'liberal period' in the 1970s (Heper, 1987, 1-3; Marcou, 2006, 25). Law 3030 was an important turning point for municipal development as it established the metropolitan municipalities as influential agents with economic power at a time when cities (especially the aspects of urban infrastructure and construction) became profitable for investors. Due to this law, metropolitan municipalities gained far-reaching competences in the sphere of urban development, the most important of which was the development and adoption of investment plans.

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[99] The most extreme form of 'New Municipalism' was the declaration of 'liberated zones' under the rule of the inhabitants (and not the state); for example, the small town Fatsa at the Black Sea or individual neighbourhoods within cities.

[100] These were complemented by subordinated district authorities (*ilçe belediyesi*).

4.3   The Origin of the AKP in Local Politics

This further economization of council activities together with agricultural transformations, violent conflict in the Kurdish regions and a decline in formal employment led to increasing social differences that were often (especially after the surpression of many leftist solidarity groups due to the coup) absorbed by Islamist welfare associations and foundations (Tuğal, 2009). These not only proved to be the backbone of the Islamist RP, but marked the beginning of conservative municipalism in Turkey. The 1990s were the decade of impressive RP municipal successes. Among party officials who began their political careers in the RP was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, previous mayor of Istanbul (1994-1998) and president of Turkey today. As Prime Minister (2003-2014) Erdoğan trusted the expertise of the same people upon whom he depended as mayor. His early fellow campaigners included, for example, Mehmet Ali Şahin, Binali Yıldırım and Erdoğan Bayraktar (Açikel & Balcı, 2009, 109).[101] It may be argued that the strong municipal conditioning of many AKP officials culminated in a specific political formation, labeled as 'pragmatic'. By contrast, some CHP politicians were accused of being 'clock-watching bureaucrats'. These evaluations were shared by many among the AKP local staff, who repeatedly claimed that CHP municipalities lacked the commitment and (economic) spirit of AKP municipalities (Interviews with municipal staff in Konya, Ankara and Eskişehir between April-November 2011 and January - December 2013, also see Chapter 5).

The RP, which gained power for the first time in the 1994 local elections not only influenced AKP's municipal practice but also their understanding of municipalism. Somewhat surprisingly the RP, despite its major municipal electoral successes, never developed a specifically municipal

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[101] Şahin was the first mayor of the Fatih neighbourhood in Istanbul, a founding member of the AKP, and Minister of Justice from 2007-2009. Yıldırım was the first director of the Istanbul ferry transport company İDO, a founding member of the AKP, and, with interruptions, Minister of Transport since 2002. Bayraktar was the first director of the Istanbul housing company. From 2002 to he was the director of TOKİ, the national housing company, and from 2011 to 2013 Minister of Environment and Urban Planning.

program (Massicard, 2009). As regards local politics, its main legacy may be found in the balance between neoliberal national politics and the private welfare programs coordinated by the municipality. But as the party was permanently threatened with closure, the RP advocated a more general decentralization of political power. The political centre saw its influence in politics and society endangered by the RP's success, a development that resulted in a coup by memorandum in 1997, and the subsequent banning of the party in 1998 by a decision of the constitutional court. But for many of its party members, the experience of a party ban was not new. Some had already been members of the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP)* that was banned in 1971, and/or the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP),* that was banned in 1980. As a consequence of these negative experiences, the RP had grown deeply sceptical regarding the 'agents of the centre' (i.e., the military, judiciary and bureaucracy) and accordingly advocated a stronger decentralization of political power (Joppien, 2011, 71-77). Given this background, the AKP too, especially in the early days of its existence, favoured less state and stronger local self-government.[102] At that time the government had very little influence on institutions at the national level. While ostensibly 'in government', it was not 'in possession' of the state. However, at the local level the AKP had a much more solid power base. It was only in the second half of their rule that they succeeded in controlling institutions at the national level. As a consequence, their efforts to join the European Union, as well as to implement their decentralization program, have waned.

However, the AKP's attempts to decentralize should not be considered only in the context of mistrust of the 'secular forces', e.g., the bureaucracy, justice and the military, but as also related to the country`s efforts to join the European Union.[103] The *European Charter of Local Self-Government (Charte européenne de l'autonomie locale*) which was adopted on 15 October

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[102] Previous attempts to decentralize by liberal-right-wing parties had not been successful (Massicard, 2008).
[103] See European Charter on Local Self-Government (ECLSG) 1985, Stockholm.

1985[104], obliged signatory states to assure the political, administrative and financial autonomy of its communities. The Charter did not reflect a model of local self-government; rather it was a codification of basic principles for a democratic local government system. As a consequence, very different systems of local self-government may comply with the Charter, the aim of which was to introduce binding standards in European countries to ensure the protection of local public authorities and possibilities of local political participation. Also important in this context was the 'Framework Convention' and two additional protocols. For potential EU-accession candidates, compliance with these regulations is a requirement for entrance. Turkey ratified the Charter on 9 December 1992 (albeit with significant reservations). Turkey has also ratified the Framework Convention on Cross-border Cooperation between Local Authorities on 11 July 2001; but it did not ratify the First Protocol (on cross-border bodies of local authorities) and the Second Protocol (inter-territorial cooperation, e.g. beyond neighbouring local authorities).[105]

As a legal framework of reference, the Charter influences the new legislation on local governments, both in the new EU Member States and in Turkey. The AKP added municipal reform to its 2002 'Urgent Action Plan' to speed up Turkey`s EU accession. In 2004, the parliament adopted a reform of municipal law; but this reform was vetoed by then president Ahmet Necdet Sezer, a firm Kemalist. Turkish Kemalist and ultra-national groups opposed the AKP's municipal reform efforts, perceiving them as a threat to one of the founding principles of

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[104] Prior to the adoption of this charter, a Charter of municipal freedoms' (*Charta der Gemeindefreiheiten*) was adopted in 1953 in Versailles.

[105] Countries are free to decide to join all or some of the provisions of the Charter. However, they must be within the limits of the Charter itself (Article 12). All paragraphs are considered individually as optional: countries are only invited to adhere to a minimum of paragraphs; at least 20 paragraphs of those of Articles 2 to 11; and at least 10 of these need to be selected from the paragraphs mentioned in Article 12, Paragraph 1. Turkey is bound, according to its own declaration by the following: Article 2- constitutional and legal foundation of local self-government; Article 3, paragraphs 1 and 2, concept of local self-government; Article 4- paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, scope of local government; Article 5- protection of local authority boundaries; Article 6- paragraph 2, appropriate administrative structure and resources for the tasks of local authorities; Article 7- paragraphs 1 and 2, conditions under which responsibilities at local level are exercised; Article 8 paragraphs 1 and 2: administrative supervision of local authorities' activities; Article 9- paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8, financial resources of local authorities; Article 10- paragraph 1, local authorities' right to associate (Marcou, 2006, 13-14).

the constitution, namely the indivisibility of the country.[106] The EU's demand for stronger political and financial autonomy of local authorities was - especially in light of the Kurdish question- seen as problematic. After several articles on political decentralization were dropped so that the law was mainly concerned with administrative aspects, the adoption of the reform became possible in July 2005.[107]

One may ask whether the reforms (at least in part) indeed represented an attempt by the AKP to solve the Kurdish question. Some Kurdish activist groups sought to establish an autonomous Kurdish region within the Turkish state whereas others aimed to establish an independent Kurdish state. As discussed earlier, the Turkish Constitution does not allow for a federal system as delineated in the general principles of the Constitution. General decentralization may, apart from the reasons mentioned above (EU accession, historic aversion to a strong state, economic considerations) have also been influenced by the idea of partially solving the Kurdish question without officially addressing it.

4.4 Main Reform Packages in 2004 and 2005

The legal reforms of 2004 and 2005 were the first successful essential moves towards the decentralization of political power in Turkey. The main elements of the reform were Law 5216 (July 2004 on metropolitan municipalities) and Law 5393 (July 2005 on municipalities).[108] Apropos of both laws, it was considered especially positive that they heralded greater financial autonomy of the municipal units (Law 5216, Article 25 and Law 5393, Article 62). The previous practice of budget approval by the provincial governor (an organ of the central government) was

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[106] Regarding the discussion of the different drafts for the reform see Göymen, 2006.

[107] The status of municipal councils has been slightly improved by the law. The council members meet monthly and have better tools at hand to control the mayor who is strongly bound by certain requirements when developing investment plans (Bayraktar, 2007, §68).

[108] Another important change concerns the provinces; Law 5302 (22.02.2005), which may not be dealt with in more detail here.

abolished (Parlak, Sobacı, & Ökmen, 2008, 44). But this also meant less control over the possible wrong-doings of municipalities given that the auditing of projects pursued by the municipalities and their financing by a higher administrative organ were also abolished.[109] Furthermore, the previous specification of municipal tasks in fixed lists at the municipality level was abandoned in favour of a flexible list-system that subsequently enabled the municipalities to react to changing economic or social circumstances at short notice. In practice, this not only meant a further strengthening of the economic power of the cities: it allowed for more autonomy from governmental control. Moreover, the metropolitan municipalities obtained far-reaching flexibility vis-à-vis hiring decisions specified in Law 5216 (Article 21). City councils could now abolish, combine or establish municipal departments, whereas earlier approval by the Ministry of the Interior had been a prerequisite.[110]

In terms of structural changes, the position of the city council was strengthened against the organs of the central government.[111] This, by extension, implied a further gain of power on the part of the mayor, who presides over the council. The strong economic involvement of the 'new mayors' is of great importance as a significant part of their task is dedicated to investment plans, land use changes, and the regulation and development of rent. As a result of the increasing interdependence of public and private interests in the area of investments, privatization, contract

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[109] Although the national audit court conducts a financial audit, it is only concerned with the validity of the balance, not questions of law or content (Göymen, 2006).

[110] Both municipalities and metropolitan municipalities may now employ staff on limited contracts as experts (or for special projects) at short notice. In this way, any prospect of shortage of specialists has been alleviated. However, the new regulation also means a higher political dependency of the staff on the mayor. Clerks and experts, concerned for their future employment, might opt not to disagree with him.

[111] The two laws specify that decisions are first taken by the municipal council, then delivered to the mayor. He may send the decisions back to the council which has the right to outvote him with a 2/3 majority. The mayor has the option of calling on an administrative court within ten days if he thinks the council's decision is unlawful. The position of the town council has been strengthened by Law 5393 which defines the conditions for the dissolving of a council more rigidly. Whereas a council may have been dissolved for *discussing* topics outside its scope of duty, it may now only be dissolved if it *takes a decision* regarding said topics. Law 5216 on metropolitan municipalities does not contain specific regulations on the dissolving. But, it is argued, the regulations of Law 5393 (Article 30) should be applied to both municipalities and metropolitan municipalities.

placing and cooperation of public and private companies, the mayor has become a 'moderator' whose political decisions not only serve the citizens as his 'traditional clientele', but increasingly also serves the interests of investors (Açikel & Balcı, 2009, 94).[112] As observed previously, this development was not initiated by the AKP. It had already begun in the 1980s with the introduction of the metropolitan municipalities. However, it seems reasonable to argue that the legal reforms introduced by the AKP in 2004/05 further oriented municipalism in an economic direction.

Perhaps most significantly, the metropolitan municipalities, which had been authorized under Law 5393 to take out national and international loans, began to act as investors in the urban space themselves (Açikel & Balcı, 2009, 106). Municipalities may offer services by transferring them either to private service providers or to publicly-owned companies (*Belediye İktisadi Teşekkülleri* - BİT). Jobs may now be 'arranged' in these companies which -in light of their relations with the municipality- feel a certain obligation to employ staff nominated by the mayor. While this legal situation has opened up new ways of patronage, the 'traditional' ones (e.g., the appointment of followers to jobs in the municipality) have become much more difficult due to the increased regulation imposed on Turkey by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Since 2002, the independent *Kamu İhale Kurumu* (Institution for Public Contracts) has monitored the issuing of the majority of public contracts. Also the introduction of an approval test for public servants (*KPSS, Kamu Personel Seçme Sınavı)* in 1999 rendered employment as a form of patronage much more difficult.

As a result of the factors described above, the popularity of mayors has increased significantly over the last two decades. They have become figures of national prominence whose political style

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[112] It should be added that not only private enterprises, but also other groups, e.g., religious brotherhoods, foundations or CSOs are trying to influence decisions in the municipality. A detailed analysis of these processes, and their relevance to the cities Bursa and Mersin, may be found at Bayraktar, 2007a.

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and success are enthusiastically discussed by the public. Examples in this regard are the mayors Kadir Topbaş (Istanbul), Yılmaz Büyükerşen (Eskişehir) and Melih Gökçek (Ankara), and candidates in the 2014 municipal elections including Mustafa Sarıgül (CHP candidate for Istanbul) and Mansur Yavaş (CHP candidate for Ankara). In the model of local governance Turkish mayors are now identified as 'notables'. Here, Turkey shows similarities with other Mediterranean countries that are characterized by strong local leaders acting in the context of weak municipal competences vis-à-vis the central government.[113] However, Turkey does not totally conform to this model but has seen radical change over the last decades. Compared to Turkish mayors of the past that had minor roles, today's mayors are strong political actors in a strengthened local context. This altered role has not only shaped the relations between the central government and the different levels of municipal government, but has contributed to the dissolution of traditional hierarchic structures. The mayor's new role as an omnipresent figure, and the importance of the people around him, e.g., his external advisors, combine to weaken the roles of municipal organs (council, committee) and the levels of hierarchy within the party (e.g., the local party president). Thus, in the spheres of influence and patronage, two major pathways of political power exist in Turkey; locally the mayor, and nationally in the circle of party leadership. Although political power has been decentralized by the strengthening of the mayor and the council, the central office of the ruling party still holds de facto power in its hands, at least in areas where it also controls the metropolitan municipality or municipality, as Turkish parties are not only characterized by strong leaders, but also by an absence of inner party democracy (Joppien, 2014b).

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[113] The model contrasts this with the type of 'primus-inter-pares', which is described as typical for Northern Europe. It is characterised by a relatively weak local leadership position within a consensus oriented, collective government that has a strong position towards the central government (Pilet, Delwit, Styvers, & Reynaert, 2009).

All of this suggests that contrary to a common view evinced in the political science literature regarding the results and consequences of decentralization, the experience of decentralization in contemporary Turkey does not necessarily mean more voice or participation[114] for the electors, nor does it signal more transparency of political processes. On the contrary, it has become much easier for the country's political parties - at least in those municipalities where they hold power - to influence local politics. The keys to this are (a) the distribution of political power between a limited number of people in the leadership of political parties; and (b) the central position of the mayor. Furthermore, when the government and the council coincide, as has been the case with the AKP over the last 15 years, one sees a greater influence of the national government over its local operatives.

4.5 Recentralization of Power?

Law 6360 (November 2012) increased the number of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey from 16 to 30.[115] In the provinces concerned, special provincial administrations (*il özel idaresi*) were abolished in favour of metropolitan municipalities. Notwithstanding, Law 6360 foresees the introduction of 'Departments of Monitoring Investment and Coordination' under the auspices of the governor. The 2012 Progress Report prepared by the Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs, summarizes their tasks as follows:

> […] to efficiently provide, monitor and coordinate the investment and services of the
> public institutions and organisations, coordinate and conduct the emergency calls,
> disasters and emergency aid services, provide the publicity of the province, provide and
> coordinate the investments which the central administration will make in province when
> required, provide the services of representation, ceremony, reward and protocol, and to

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[114] I define participation not only as a 'tool to pursue one's aims' but also as a 'value and aim of democratic politics allowing for the inclusion of more citizens in political negotiation processes'.

[115] Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Aydın, Balıkesir, Bursa, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Mersin, Istanbul, Izmir, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Konya, Malatya, Manisa, Kahramanmaraş, Mardin, Muğla, Ordu, Sakarya, Samsun, Tekirdağ, Trabzon, Şanlıurfa and Van.

guide and inspect the public institutions and organisations in the province (Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs, 2012, 23-24).

The metropolitan municipalities' incomes increased from 5% to 6% of total tax revenues in their provinces as their duties increased due to the expansion of metropolitan municipalities to the provincial level. The inclination to abolish the special provincial administrations was not new idea for Prime Minister Erdoğan. In 1995, when he was mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan municipality, he claimed that the borders of the metropolitan municipality should be expanded to the borders of the province, a proposition he attempted to realize again in the 2003 (unsuccessful) law reforms (Arıkboğa, 2009, 66). With the 2012 law reform the administrative level of village was abolished in the 30 provinces, and villages (more than 16,000) within their borders legally became neighbourhoods (*mahalle*). Moreover, municipalities with fewer than 2,000 citizens, which lay outside the borders of the 30 metropolitan municipalities, lost their municipal status and were downgraded to 'village'.

Both critics and supporters agreed that the metropolitan municipalities had gained more responsibilities with the introduction of Law 6360. However, opinions differed regarding the evaluation of the reform and the question of whether this constituted an actual recentralization (Arıkboğa, 2009, 71-72). The government argued that the new law would make local politics more effective and would improve services for the citizens. Additionally, it claimed, central oversight and responsibility would reduce the costs of services. Urban planning and administration would be optimized ('not done piecemeal'). Situating them closer to the citizens would positively influence good governance, corruption prevention and democratic participation. The Progress Report prepared by the Turkish Ministry of EU Affairs in December 2013 evaluated the legal changes positively:

[…] metropolitan borders have been revised so as to ensure the effective and productive provision of public services which aim to enhance democracy at the local level, increase the efficiency in municipal services and improve provision of services by municipalities. In this scope, the responsibilities and duties of metropolitan municipalities have been extended to include the administrative borders of the province and the financial resources of the metropolitan municipalities have increased. Furthermore, special administrations in cities have been abolished and the duties of the provincial special administrations relating to local services have been transferred to municipalities. Furthermore, in 11 provinces with metropolitan municipalities in the scope of this law, villages and small towns are transformed into neighbourhoods. Through these amendments, an effective structure in local administration and an enhanced local democracy is pursued (Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs, 2013, 16).

Critics argue that the country's metropolitan municipalities currently do not possess the necessary personal, organisational and financial capacities to handle these new responsibilities. Instead the Law is said to bring the 30 metropolitan municipalities into a situation where they are neither one thing nor the other, caught between centralism and federalism (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2013). Konya, the largest province, covers more than 41,000 km^2. This means that the metropolitan municipality is responsible for areas more than 200 km far away from its head-office.

A further criticism pointed out that municipalities lack critical knowledge of agriculture and livestock breeding (Karasu, 2013). One could also speculate whether the subordination of villages under municipalities would inevitably result in the disappearance of the distinct character of the villages and regions. Rather than preserving local peculiarities, the 'cultural homogenization' of Turkey would be further actuated, a topic that will be discussed in more detail with regard to urban planning and cultural policy (Chapters 7 and 8).

Supporters of the Law argue that the strengthened position of the mayor, who now not only presides over the metropolitan municipality but over the whole province, signals a strengthening of local autonomy and self-government. Critics claim, however, that strengthening the position of the mayor perpetuates an unhealthy development that started with the introduction of

metropolitan municipalities in 1984 and continued under Law 5216 (July 2004). The mayor's role as an omnipresent figure, and the importance of the people around him (for example, his external advisors) weaken the role of municipal organs (council, committee) or levels within the party hierarchy (e.g., the local party president). Thus a strengthened mayor should not be equated in itself with higher or 'better' citizen participation. In the period from the 1960s to today, Turkey has seen a constant strengthening of local governments' handling of both tasks and finances. However, no agency has ever evaluated how efficiently these sources are used, and whether they effectively lead to stronger local self-determination and citizen participation (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2013).

Critics of Law 6360 claim that it disentitles local institutions and representative bodies of their right to self-administration by concentrating so much power in the hands of the metropolitan municipality. The central administration (*merkezden yönetim*) is further strengthened in its position at the expense of the local administrations (*yerinden yönetim*). Furthermore, opponents argue, the Law was not developed in cooperation with local institutions. And because it was prepared 'behind closed doors', it does not take into account the needs of the municipalities.[116] Finally, with regard to the local elections of March 2014, it was argued that the law favoured the ruling party, the AKP. Given that rural dwellers may be more inclined to vote conservative (AKP), the law could also be regarded as a chance for the AKP to win metropolitan municipalities (now being responsible for the whole province), including Eskişehir and Antalya where they were previously in opposition (Deveci, 2013). However, the election results of March 2014 showed mixed results. Whereas Izmir and Eskişehir, for example, are still ruled by the opposition party CHP, Antalya was won by the AKP.

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[116] Interviews with municipal mayors and staff in Konya and Eskişehir, 2013.

After taking into account the strong criticisms of municipal staff, academics and commentators alike, one can only speculate on the AKP's motives for introducing Law 6360. It seems plausible that the party's shift towards recentralization may have been due to the fact that cities such as Istanbul or Ankara lack land for new construction. The inclusion of rural areas into the metropolitan municipality administration has opened up new markets for urban development. The replacement of the Special Provincial Administrations (*il özel idaresi)* with the 'Departments of Monitoring Investment and Coordination' indeed points towards economic motives. In times of global economic crises, domestic demand becomes critical in keeping the economy running. The AKP's economic policies are one of the main reasons contributing to the party's continued electoral success (Öniş, 2012). Moreover, the AKP's municipal approach is much more influenced by the idea of service provision (*hizmet*) to secure votes, than by questions of improving citizen participation or higher transparency of political processes. The quote "[…] *metropolitan borders have been revised so as to ensure the effective and productive provision of public services which aims to enhance democracy at the local level, increase efficiency in municipal services and improve provision of services by municipalities*" in the 2013 Progress Report prepared by Turkey underlines this evaluation (Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs, 2013, 10). As the quote exemplifies, citizens' satisfaction (not participation) is equated with democratization.[117] Although Turkey's 2012 Progress Report states that the country continues its alignment process with the European Charter of Local Self-Government with Law 6360 (Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs, 2012, 23-24), the Law may be interpreted as a backward step when it comes to decentralization. It may be that the general decrease of 'EU-enthusiasm' among the public and in political circles has rendered the party indifferent to the main principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

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[117] Also citizens often interpret an improvement of their living conditions as 'democracy' (Interview, Sema, 20.10.2010).

It may thus be concluded that political power in Turkey is characterized by a centralist tradition and a lack of 'trust' regarding the periphery. The far-reaching reforms of 2004 and 2005 (of metropolitan municipalities and municipalities) were exceptions in this regard. The implementation of both laws allowed the AKP to strengthen the role of municipalities and their mayors' vis-à-vis the central government. At the same time, the AKP, which actively pursues the neo-liberal political-economy approach of the 1980s, fosters the country`s biggest cities as powers in their own right with immense economic influence. Due to their new role as investors, renters or shareholders, cities have become increasingly independent of the financial allocations of the central government. With regard to the role of municipalities and the mayor in particular, a change of tasks from 'administrators' to 'managers' and 'financial actors' cannot only be seen in a positive light. Because citizens are primarily seen as customers, primary focus is on their 'satisfaction', not necessarily on their 'participation'. Despite further decentralization, the likelihood of citizen participation and transparency of political processes has not improved. The law reforms introduced in 2004, 2005 and 2012 at first glance appeared to imply a strengthening of local authority. Closer analysis, however, revealed that these reforms fit the centralist tradition of the Turkish state. Law 6360 further strengthens the already strong metropolitan municipalities at the expense of institutions closer to the citizens that would allow for more immediate forms of participation. For this reason, it seems plausible to argue that decentralization in itself cannot naturally be equated with democratization. The questions of how power is decentralized, to whom is it delegated and why, are much more important. It may be concluded that in the case of Turkey, decentralization mainly serves economic (not pluralist democratic) aims with reinforcement of private sector capital uppermost in mind.

4.6   Centralization and Decentralization in 'Everyday' Council Politics

What do local mayors and council administrators personally think of the current legal arrangements? The question about the extent to which governmental or central state's influence is perceived as supporting or hindering depends largely upon party affiliations. All mayors and municipal staff rued their degree of political and financial dependency on the central government. But a same-party mayor like Burhan Sakallı has more points of cooperation with and positive experiences of the central government than local mayors from opposition parties:

> Still we are not as autonomous in our local governance as in your country, but we became more autonomous with the law alterations on local governance during the AK Party government. In the past local governments were more tied to the central government. We were ruled by the laws that were put in force in the first years of the Republic. In this field the AK Party made a revolution. We are better now than in the past but we still have some way ahead of us. We are still tied to the central government and our dependency continues with regard to politics, administration and economics. But, apart from that, we are thankful that our MPs, ministers, prime minister and the bureaucracy in Ankara help us and take care to do things together (Interview Mayor Burhan Sakallı, 06.05.2013).

AKP municipalities are eager to show their mayors standing alongside figures of national prominence such as Erdoğan or Davutoğlu in the leaflets and brochures they produce. This not only demonstrates their loyalty to the party but a certain humility regarding their (personal) political success. In addition, it helps to 'boost their image'; the continuing success of Selçuklu's district Mayor Altay is attributed by many citizens to his excellent relations with the national party leadership. Many accredit the construction of the new stadium (although criticized by some as unnecessary for an already heavily provisioned district like Selçuklu) to the mayor's good relations with the national government.[118]

However unarguably, mayors from opposition parties have very different experiences with the central government. Mayor Büyükerşen, for example, reports that his municipality is always subject to obstruction by the AKP government.

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[118] The stadium, which complies with UEFA standards, has 42 000 seats.

The necessary permissions from Ankara for the additional investments in our tram system has been five years late. In the municipal council we experienced the steady refusal and intensive resistance of AKP members (Interview, Mayor Büyükerşen, Eskişehir, 09.09.2013).

Mutual accusations between Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality and the central government are common. This tension was felt daily in the city and increased prior to the local elections in 2014. A main point of conflict was the traffic chaos the city experienced after one of the city's main bridges spanning the railway line was demolished. Whereas the national government uses the traffic as a proof of the general incompetence of the Büyükerşen Municipality, the latter, in return claims that the bridge should have been demolished earlier and that the central government created chaos prior to the local elections in order to win the municipality. In general, the central government preferred to ignore the municipality, pretending that it did not exist. When the fast train line between Konya and Eskişehir was ceremonially opened by Erdoğan, Mayor Büyükerşen was not invited as speaker and was not called to the podium. Also, during the opening ceremony for the *'Eskişehir Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti'* (Cultural Capital of the Turkic World) in March 2013, he was once again excluded. The image film issued by the Cultural Capital agency showed only the AKP-led Odunpazarı district, none of the achievements of the Büyükerşen municipality (Chapter 8). It was as if this major part of the town, with its museums, parks and infrastructure, did not exist. Similarly, the advertising in the train station (allocated by the transportation ministry in AKP hands) showed only the Odunpazarı district, giving first-time visitors to the city the impression that this would be the only town place worth visiting.

4.7 Using Trials as a Political Tool

A more aggressive way of attacking political opponents is to evoke a trial (İstikbal Gazetesi, 2013a). Whereas all parties use trials as political tools, their use has become endemic under the AKP government for taking action against opposition municipalities (Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013). Trials are meant to intimidate people, even if most parties to the trial are acquitted, due to the accusation being formulated in very general terms. Nevertheless, they hinder municipalities' work and damage people's reputations.[119] Trials may be initiated either by private persons or by institutions (e.g., the municipality's planning unit) approaching the public prosecutor. "*People make a career like that*", a lawyer commented, when two AKP affiliated lawyers who had sued Mayor Büyükerşen and his municipality in January 2013 resulting in the arrest of municipal staff, were candidates' candidates for the AKP in the 2014 municipal election. But AKP Mayor Burhan Sakallı also complained that the Metropolitan municipality had initiated more than 30 lawsuits against them, seriously hindering his own work:

> They did everything possible to stop us doing our projects. When we established parks they tried to demolish them. They brought many court cases against us, trying to cancel the allocation of public land to us. They went to the law court to stop our housing projects. Well, we may say that in Eskişehir, we experienced difficulties that no other district mayor experienced at the hands of a metropolitan municipality mayor (Interview Mayor Burhan Sakallı, 06.05.2013).

As may be expected cooperation among different party municipalities is generally non-existent. CHP Tepebaşı Mayor Ataç described the contact between 'hostile' municipalities as minimal: if possible, it is left to civil servants. Mayors rarely see each other at the monthly municipal council meetings in the Metropolitan municipality. He claims that different party ideologies make it impossible for them to cooperate with or understand each other (Interview, Mayor Ahmet Ataç,

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[119] For a more general account of the pressure opposition municipalities experience by the AKP government see Buğra & Savaşkan, 2014.

11.06.2013). Mayor Büyükerşen, for one, does not favour cooperation with the AKP municipality:

> The mayor of Odunpazarı is from the AKP and our understanding of urbanism and our mindsets do not match. For this reason, no cooperation is possible. Our approach to the city, due to our different political identities, unfortunately does not provide the chance to conduct any projects together (Interview, Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, Eskişehir, 09.09.2013).

Similarly, Mayor Sakallı's account of the difficulties he has experienced with CHP Metropolitan municipality Mayor Büyükerşen is also revealing:

> To tell you the truth, we are experiencing very big problems with regard to that topic. Especially the Metropolitan municipality is not really able to cooperate. You may interpret it that way, that I am from the AK Party, from another party than the Metropolitan municipality. [...] There are no complaints like this in cities where we [the AKP] run the Metropolitan municipality and the district mayors come from a different party. For example, in Bursa, the mayors come from different parties; the same in Mersin and Istanbul. But the problems that we experience here, not even 1% of them experience (Interview, Mayor Burhan Sakallı, 06.05.2013).

He states it was not due to different party affiliations but due to Mayor Büyükerşen's difficult personality and explains how his predecessor, although from the DSP also had severe problems with Mayor Büyükerşen. Somewhat interestingly however, relations between same-party mayors do not always appear easy. Much depends on the metropolitan municipality mayor as the 'stronger partner' in the relationship. Although both Mayor Büyükerşen and Mayor Ataç became mayors in 1999, today it is an open secret that their relationship is not good. Büyükerşen's comment about their relationship was short but positive, indicating they get along well:

> As we come from the same party as Tepebaşı Municipality we are working in harmony and we achieve positive results. Today, our Tepebaşı district has become the new and developing face of Eskişehir. In the region, a couple of shopping centres, hotels and housing projects have come to life (Interview, Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen, Eskişehir, 09.09.2013).

However, several employees from Tepebaşı Municipality who did not consider the cooperation harmonious claimed that Mayor Büyükerşen constantly tried to influence their municipality's work and projects. Indeed, some reported that he was jealous of the municipality's achievements and would try to belittle Ahmet Ataç as well as Tepebaşı Municipality by not attending their events or by speaking badly about them behind their backs. They also claimed that Tepebaşı Municipality's slogan: "*Hayat Tepebaşı'nda*" (Life is in Tepebaşı) had been "stolen" by the Metropolitan municipality and reworded as "*Sehir Eskişehir'dir*" (City is/means Eskişehir).

Conversely in Konya, in which all the municipalities are governed by the AKP, there is little evidence of conflict. However, there have been some difficulties reported between metropolitan municipality Mayor Tahir Akyürek and the district mayors. Both Meram and Selçuklu Municipality mayors are much younger than Akyürek, representing a different generation of politicians and also a more managerial, team-work oriented approach. In our conversations, municipal staff mentioned that working as a district mayor provides an arena in which to prove oneself, to qualify for higher political tasks and drew the picture of Mayor Akyürek as a senior lion, surrounded by younger lions waiting to take the throne from him. Yet in both Konya and Eskişehir open opposition to the metropolitan municipality mayor is very timidly voiced. District mayors opt not to challenge the metropolitan municipality mayor, knowing that they need his approval for district municipal council's decisions (e.g., with regard to big construction projects). In an interview a local tells:

> The previous mayor of Selçuklu Municipality decided to construct an Aqua park. He had already started the building activity, but then the metropolitan municipality took a different decision, destroyed it and built a shopping centre there instead. [...] For this reason, there is, of course, competition among the district municipalities and competition between the district mayors and the metropolitan municipality mayor. We have this situation in Konya now whereby the district mayors want the metropolitan municipality mayor to leave. He, in return, wants them to leave and says:"I want people with whom it is easier to work together." [...] If someone opposes him he doesn't get along with that person anymore which was also mentioned in the local media several times (Interview, Arif, Konya, 07.11.2013).

Similarly, an academic working on public administration gives an account of his interview with Mayor Büyükerşen and claims the later had issued the wish to abolish all district municipalities as they "constantly oppose my decisions".

In brief, it may be concluded, that decentralization in Turkey did not primarily strengthen transparency and public participation. Rather it strengthened hegemonic centres in the periphery. However, due to their (s)election process described in chapter 3 and the many financial and legal constraints they are subject to, it seems plausible to question their independence from the central government and from the parties' headquarters.

5 'Doing' Municipalism

CHP politicians were often described by AKP members as elitist and as looking down on the population (*tepeden*). CHP members however continually attributed the AKP's electoral success to 'vote-buying' and bribery. This chapter demonstrates how municipalism is 'done' by describing its daily practice. As suggested by the term culture of everyday politics the analysis includes social, cultural and economic factors. The main points researched are how mayors establish contact with the citizens, and which role external actors like civil society organisations (CSOs), the local party branch or the *Kent Konseyi* (city assembly) play. The analysis is based on two influencing factors: firstly, the local context as influencing municipal practice and secondly, the different municipal traditions the parties come from: social municipalism (*toplumcu belediyecilik*, CHP) and conservative municipalism (*muhafazakar belediyecilik,* AKP). This chapter evaluates if there are indeed significant differences in practice, or whether similarities prevail due to the same institutional context municipalism unfolds in.

As shown in chapter 4, historically municipalities in Turkey have been little more than a 'long arm' of the government. Only since the 1970s can one speak of a distinct municipal tradition that emerged as an answer to the uncontrolled urbanization Turkey experienced increasingly from the 1950s. After winning the local elections in 1973, the CHP councils turned towards the demands of the city migrants (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008, 8-10; Şengül, 2005, 81-84). The associated municipalities organized the production and sale of products such as bread to ensure low, stable prices by a municipal adjustment of demand and supply. Soon the practices of these municipalities and their demands for more autonomy from the central state became known as 'New Municipalism' (*yeni belediyecilik anlayışı/toplumcu belediyecilik*) (Finkel, 1990). Out of their municipal experience they developed a 'social democratic local government manifesto', stating that all municipalities should be democratic, develop tools to improve participation, create

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their own resources and seek autonomy from the central government. Participation was the main concept (following the slogan 'not symbolic but continuous participation') and different participative methods were tried.[120]

5.1 *Muhafazakar Belediyecilik* (Conservative Municipalism)

These efforts to 'reinterpret municipalism' were brought to an abrupt end by the military coup of 1980. The new practices had not been institutionalized enough to survive without supportive networks. Many of the left-wing parties who were able to win elections in the following years were soon enmeshed in corruption scandals.[121] The Islamist RP was able to build on the CHP municipalities' experiences and integrate them into their political project. Muslim welfare associations and foundations proved to be the backbone of the RP and the beginning of conservative municipalism in Turkey. In 1984, the RP ran 17 municipalities. By 1989 they had already won more than 100 municipalities. The year 1994 marked their national breakthrough

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[120] In Ankara, for example, an annual 'capital city meeting' (*başkent toplantıları*) was introduced, where the mayor and municipal staff provided detailed information on the previous year's activities to the citizens and took questions and criticism. This took place in open meetings in a large hall and was generally attended by at least 1000 people. On a weekly basis the mayor and relevant staff visited neighbourhoods in scheduled visits. These events in the form of open discussion over breakfast were attended by district mayors, municipal councils and citizens. Thirdly participation took place with regard to special projects such as the 'Batıkent Housing' project that was planned as an additional suburb to Ankara with 55,000 units of housing as the capital was suffering from very bad pollution. Through *'Kent-Koop'* (Union of Batikent Housing Construction Cooperatives) the municipality helped various middle and low income groups like taxi drivers, industrial workers and civil servants to organize in the form of cooperatives with 300 members each. Also the groups participated in every stage of the project e.g. the decision on the types of housing or construction methods. The municipality provided credits (around 30 million $). The money was originally granted to the Turkish government by the European Social Fund and then distributed to municipalities. After citizens had moved into their flats some cooperatives remained as managing committees (Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013).
[121] This was the case, for example, at Istanbul Metropolitan municipality under Nurettin Sözen (SHP 1989-1994) (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008, 8-11).

when they were successful in 327 municipalities including major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakır, Erzurum and Kayseri.[122]

Extensive welfare provision such as coal, grocery packages and clothing soon became a characteristic of RP municipalism. The party also paid for circumcision or wedding ceremonies, set up tents with free food during Ramadan, or helped the vulnerable out with cash or small gold coins (White, 2002, 11-19).[123] Some of the welfare activities were run by the municipality itself whereas others were carried out by associations and foundations. Also the party had a superior organisational structure with women's and youth commissions, as well as ballot box observers (*müşahit*), and neighbourhood units (Tuğal, 2009, 81). Women played an important role as they collected information about families in the neighbourhood, coordinated donations, or mobilized other women. The RP adopted to varying local contexts by relying on activists, which, at the lowest level were organised in cells that were not officially part of the party structure, yet were informally linked to it. White concludes "*Linked to one another, clusters of cells easily constitute a mass movement. They are national without losing the mobilization power of local, primary identifications"* (White, 2002, 21 also see 175).

RP municipalities used the term 'service' (*hizmet)* for their activities, meaning a professionalization and 'customer focus' from the side of municipalities e.g., with regard to waste management, maintenance of streets, lighting, sewerage and installation of power cables.[124] Although RP successfully practised its conservative municipalism in a growing number of districts, it was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who gained utmost prominence as mayor of Istanbul (1994-98). Winning this 'iconic city' in 1994 marks the beginning of a new era for many AKP

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[122] In total it won 28 of Turkey's then 76 provinces, equalling 36.8% of the votes. However this was due to the 10% threshold; de facto the RP had obtained 19% of the votes (Akıncı, 1999, 3).

[123] Although these practices were not confined to RP alone it brought along the accusation of buying votes by bribing the population of poor neighbourhoods (Tuğal, 2009, 127; White, 2002, 119).

[124] This provisioning of urban areas also became known as the three Ç´s (*çöp, çamur, çukur* - trash, mud, holes) (Akıncı, 1999).

members and was at times compared to its 'conquest' (*fetih*) from the Christians in 1453. A municipal staff remembers:

> The turning point for municipalism in Turkey was when our prime minister [Erdoğan] became mayor of Istanbul. Until that time trash agglomerated, water was cut, and traffic was bad. Water was always cut, people had water only once a week. How can someone clean the dishes or take a shower, how can one clean hands and face, how can a human be happy like that? Transportation was bad, and the financial resources of the municipality were squandered. But then, when our prime minister came, Istanbul was greener, without problems, but with water and infrastructure, and gas for all. Previously there was always a black, smoky cloud over Istanbul, but when natural gas came it disappeared. That is why I think municipalism started back then (Interview, Ahmet, 27.08.2013).

Still residing in a flat in Ümraniye, although as mayor of Istanbul he qualified for state sponsored housing, added to Erdoğan's popularity (White, 2002, 121). Nevertheless, his prominence for conservative municipalism sometimes caused AKP politicians in Konya argumentative distress. They acknowledged that he had achieved a lot; still it was Konya, they claimed, where conservative municipalism was 'invented' and which served as an example for the whole of Turkey. Konya's citizens' core expectations of a neat, hard-working, efficient municipality became the cornerstones of conservative municipalism, they explained (Interview Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

An analysis of RP municipalism showed that the party managed to use citizens' primary identities for political mobilization. White escribed these as 'vernacular politics', a "*value centred political process rooted in local culture, interpersonal relations, and community networks, yet connected through civic organizations to national party politics*" (White, 2002, 27). RP activists were organized in cells are based on preexisting networks and consisting of people who "*share an intimate history of trust*" (White, 2002, 21). Alignment to the local context and 'infiltrating' existing ethnic, religious or *hemşehrilik* networks with party activists was first practised by the RP, and later became a characteristic of AKP mobilization. In the introduction I

demonstrated how the 'culture of everyday politics' extends that of political culture, as it not only comprises the 'purely political' but also social, economic and cultural factors in its orbit.

5.2 Continuity in Staff

In Konya, many of those active in the AKP today were previously active in the RP as "*change always has to be gradual, not abrupt (düzen bozmadan)*" (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.2013). With regard to the persons involved, one can clearly speak of a 'conservative municipalism tradition' in Konya. When a mayor is newly elected in Turkey, he normally changes as many staff as possible to bring in 'his own team' who he can trust. This is not the case when a new mayor takes over Konya Metropolitan municipality.[125] A municipal director points out:

> If you change staff, there is no stability. The new ones cannot continue where the others have left off. Municipalities where staff changes too often are not productive, we have these examples in Turkey. The reason is that the new ones are trying to destroy the heritage of those before them (Interview, Ercan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

In Konya, mayors are also expected to follow a set "*municipal tradition*", and not to "*step out of line*", he further elaborates. This includes taking the "*religious, moral and traditional sensitivities of the citizens*" into consideration, showing the party's awareness of the cultural aspects of politics. But as the mayors share a similar socio-cultural background with their citizens, this is not perceived as problematic. An overly personal approach to municipalism is not seen too positively as mayors are expected to "*look into the same direction*". Municipalism is described as a torch relay, every mayor simply handing the torch over to the next (Interview, Ercan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

In Eskişehir however the situation is different as politics there are imbedded into a socially much more diverse local context. Although the city tends towards right-wing parties, it has also seen a

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[125] Similarily in Sultanbeyli, most AKP administrators came from a Milli Görüş tradition (Tuğal, 2009, 150).

wide range of left-wing MPs and municipalities. Most importantly the metropolitan municipality has been run by Mayor Büyükerşen since 1999. Similarily AKP members and staff at the AKP-led Odunpazarı Municipality came from a variety of backgrounds. Whereas the leading group in the local party organisation consisted of representatives of religious groups (the *Birlik Vakfı* playing a specific role, see Chapter 5.5.1), many members also claimed to have joined the party because of its economic and foreign policy, wanting to associate themselves with the governmental party or because they expected membership to support their career plans (Personal conversations at the AKP branches and during the Political Academy classes, 2011 and 2013).

5.3   Touching the People

Under the RP 'being close to the people' became a characteristic of conservative municipalism; both by the 'cells' as described above, and also by new ways of mayor-citizen communication. When I was conducting an interview with Mayor Sakallı, an elderly man who had been fined by the municipality for opening a little shop without a permit insisted he needed to see the mayor about it. He was allowed in, Mayor Sakallı excused himself for interrupting our interview, and made phone calls to other departments, as the man was not able to find his way through the administrative warren of the municipality. In the end, although the shopkeeper still had to pay the fine, he seemed to leave contented, because he now understood what the problem had been and he had been taken seriously by the mayor.[126] When we were alone again, Mayor Sakallı pointed out to me that a mayor cannot hide behind his desk. Unlike in Western European countries, he argued, being a mayor first of all meant being among the people, embracing them and 'touching'

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[126] White describes a similar behaviour for the mayor of Ümraniye during the people's day. Although the mayor in most cases turned down citizens demands, he expressed empathy and paternal concern, making it easier for citizens to accept his dictum (White, 2002, 171).

them personally. A mayor, he claims, should be the most accessible person, a kind of 'father' addressing all of his 'children's' problems:

> In Turkey, politics is done by touching the people. This is different to where you come from, but here you are shaking hands, you are hugging, you are kissing and while they are kissing you, you pat their back. We cannot do such a distant, official, remote or plain politics as in your place. Our philosophy is to touch people's confidence and their hearts. [...] It is indispensable that you touch them. You do not give much importance to that, but here we do. For example, shaking hands is not enough, you need to hug us. Hugging is not enough, you kiss each other. Kissing is not enough, you cuddle each other and so on; our task here is much more difficult than where you come from (Interview, Mayor Burhan Sakallı, Eskişehir, 06.05.2011).

Mayor Sakallı claimed his mayoral practice largely exceeded its legal description and included solving "*an economic problem, a trade problem or with their social life; you are active in every aspect of their lives*". He described his contact with the local population as such:

> I am trying really hard to be a mayor who is easy accessible. People can call me, to ask for an appointment [...] In the evening I sit down and call them back one after another. I give an appointment to those who want an appointment, some I visit myself and some I ask to visit me. I am a mayor who is easy to access. The AK Party mayors are generally like that; they are closer to the citizens. They erased walls and distance between themselves and the citizens. That is because we learn such kind of politics from Mr. Tayyip [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan]. He wants it to be like that (Interview, Mayor Burhan Sakallı, Eskişehir, 06.05.2011).

During an interview with one of the department heads at Tepebaşı Municipality on the other hand, a man came in without an appointment and asked for help regarding some problems with zoning of his land. He did not receive help nor was he directed to the responsible person but advised to write a petition (*dilekçe*). Mayor Ataç however claims to be a very accessible mayor and that most of his citizens have his phone number. Like AKP Mayor Sakallı he also visits weddings, funerals, circumcisions and newborn babies (*iyi ki doğdun bebek kampanyası*), as well as elderly or sick people or takes the position of a marriage registrar.

> I have a very serious visitors' schedule here but I also go to the neighbourhoods a lot. In general I have breakfasts organized in the morning at various places. Especially in this season in gardens, building complex gardens, in schools or at homes [...]. Yes, for

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example sometimes 40 to 50 women are assembled in one house and they invite me for breakfast or for tea in the afternoon. [...] Maybe around 80,000 to 90,000 people have my phone number. I never hide my number or change it. [...] They say "My mayor, we are preparing a breakfast, would you like to come?" and I say "Yes, I'll come". Or you are going to weddings. I really like to be among my citizens. Recently we did a picnic on mother's day and 7,500 women came. This is a big number (Interview, Mayor Ahmet Ataç, Eskişehir, 11.06.2013).

Being close to the people is not something the AKP leaves to the disposition of each mayor, but it is something strongly expected by party headquarters. In political academies (Chapter 5.4.1), mayors and party staff learn how to do it. In the CHP however, no clear guidelines and no 'quality control' exist. Even if a mayor is very accessible, this does not mean that his municipality is.[127] Common among CHP and AKP mayors is that they describe their tasks as greatly extending legally stipulated ones. Similarily political culture in Turkey is characterized by a high reliance on personal relations and access to decision-makers versus institutions. Also the mayors stressed that it is the person of the mayor, not the institution of the municipality that counts. Running a municipality is a personal performance (*kişisel performans*), as Mayor Sakallı concludes:

> At your place most of the tasks are already institutionalized. But here it is not like that. Here the performance of an institution, a city or even a nation is tied to personal performance; for example, it would be a disaster if Tayyip Bey [Erdoğan] would not be there. At your place, institutionalization already took place, it doesn't make a difference if Ali or Veli [is the mayor], but here it makes a difference. For this reason, in countries like Turkey, in Eastern societies, the personal performance rather than the one of the institution is important for an institution's, city's or country's success or failure. [...] A communication with one, a touching of another one, showing interest in a third one; this is really important here and it makes your task more difficult. You need to be everywhere, reach everyone. And it is not possible to go to one place, but not the other, because people will be upset with you (Interview, Mayor Burhan Sakallı, Eskişehir, 06.05.2013).

The extensive tasks described above hold especially true for district mayors. Metropolitan municipality mayors move less among the people. In addition, the population has different expectations of them. They seem to acknowledge that mayors have other, even national or

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[127] Citizens generally claimed that Tepebaşı's CHP Mayor Ahmet Ataç was a very social mayor who likes to be among the people. However, both staff and citizens criticized that he did not have his municipal directors under tight control.

international duties, and less time to 'mix and mingle'. However, both metropolitan municipality mayors were criticized for distancing themselves from their electorate the longer they were in office. Mayor Büyükerşen was perceived as being shielded by municipal staff controlling access to him at their own will (not necessarily his, citizens felt).

In Konya some citizens doubted that the AKP would nominate Mayor Tahir Akyürek as its candidate in the local elections again. The main argument was his growing inability to connect with the people.[128] The director of one of his departments introduced neighbourhood meetings (*mahalle toplantıları*) as an informal way to get in contact with the local population. The first visits of the metropolitan municipality mayor were announced through the neighbourhood headman (*muhtar*) and the party organisation. In the meetings the mayor and the people of that neighbourhood attended the Friday Prayer together. Then the neighbourhood headman reported about the neighbourhood's problems, before citizens were given the possibility to ask questions. However, it took the director several attempts to persuade the mayor to go to these meetings ("*I had to put him under therapy*") as Mayor Akyürek had felt uncomfortable meeting with a random group of citizens who might disapprove of him (Interview, Ercan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

Whereas Mayors Sakallı and Ataç have more spontaneous contact with their citizens, the neighbourhood meetings are a form of institutionalized communication.[129] Another institutionalized form of interaction are the 'peoples day' (*halk günü)* or 'public meeting' (*açık oturum)* practised by AKP municipalities. Often described as an invention of the RP (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008, 18; Navaro-Yashin, 2002, 12-14; White, 2002, 171-174), they were actually introduced in the 1980s in the CHP municipalites in Ankara (Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013).

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[128] Municipal staff criticized that he was not approachable for them, and that he tended to present ideas by his staff as his own when the project was succesful, otherwise he blamed it on them (Interview, Osman, Konya, 19.08.2013).

[129] Whereas neighbourhood councils in Italy were described as 'schools of democracy' and chances to mobilize new, previously apolitical groups to the political process, the reverse seems to be true for the Turkish case (Dente & Regonini, 1980).

In Konya, Selçuklu Municipality organized weekly get-togethers every Wednesday or Thursday with the mayor in the style of *halk günü*.[130] Most of the demands were about providing jobs or changes of the land use plan. Also people asked for new roads, work place licences, permits to open a carpark, and demands related to parks and environmental cleanliness. Although meetings are supposed to be weekly they take place only around 20 times a year, mainly because the mayor is out of town or has other important appointments. Other than under the RP citizens cannot just 'step by' on peoples' day, but need to make an appointment first. Although at first glance there seemed to be a continuity between the RP and the AKP practice with regard to people's days, in fact there is not. Asking for an appointment to see a CHP mayor, or asking for an appointment to see an AKP mayor on peoples' day does not make a big difference in practice. This 'bureaucratization' of citizen-mayor communication is justified by municipal staff as a means to improve the quality of service provided, as preparing each case needs time. Citizens, however, find it difficult to adapt to these new structures (Interview, Ayhan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

In order to make citizen-mayor relations more 'professional' (thus also less personal), citizens are advised to use the online function as a smoother and more contemporary tool of communication. Also 'white desks' (*beyaz masa'* in most AKP municipalities), an 'open door' (*açık kapı*) in Konya Metropolitan municipality, a 'fellow townmen' desk (*hemşehrim masası*) at Meram Municipality and a *mavi masa,* 'blue desk', at CHP-led Tepebaşı Municipality) are tools to channel and process citizens' demands before they reach the mayor.[131] The 'desks' are little boxes set at the entrance of the municipality building where staff deal with the citizens' complaints and enquiries. As they are made of glass they give an impression of transparency and

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[130] In total 519 citizens came to 28 meetings in 2012, 126 of them women, 393 men. They were mainly retired people, housewives, neighbourhood headmans, traders or businessmen, representatives of CSOs or religious foundations, and representatives working for other public institutions.
[131] From January to June 2013 the Odunpazarı Municipality received 1,451 inquiries, most of them directed at the Directorate of Technical Affairs (İstikbal Gazetesi, 2013b).

easy accessibility. But although a 'walk in' is possible, the main channels of contact are by phone or email. These service desks date back to a RP practice and were introduced as a part of its public relations (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008, 14).

Today, all municipalities take pride in the variety of channels by which they can be reached, e.g., by mail, email, fax, and by telephone through a special service line. A director at Selçuklu Municipality claims that over four years 50,000 requests were processed. Most demands came in the form of written petitions (*dilekçe*), but also by telephone and email. Municipalities can also be reached through the 'Prime Ministers Contact Centre' *(Başbakanlık İletişim Merkezi, BİMER)*. Citizens write to *BİMER* which then distributes their requests to the governor of the province who forwards it to the responsible municipality. *BİMER* constitutes another tool by which the government can centrally monitor the municipalities' work. Municipalities need to solve any request within three days and send a report back to *BİMER*. Where response is overdue they are asked to explain the reasons for the delay (Interview, Ayhan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

Whereas mayors were able to easily explain how they got in contact with their citizens, the question of how they learn about people's needs seemed to pose more difficulties. Mayor Sakallı claimed his municipality prepares questionnaires and public opinion surveys. His staff of 1,500 "*reaches every corner of the city like capillaries.*" (Eskişehir, 06.05.2013). In the evening, the collected information is collated and action planned. Mayor Ahmet Ataç described himself as touring among his citizens to learn abot their needs; Metropolitan municipality Mayor Büyükerşen simply claimed to learn about his citizens needs by "*being in contact*" (Eskişehir, 09.09.2013). Konya Metropolitan municipality states that it learns about the citizens' needs through the members of the city council (*meclis üyeleri*). The neighbourhood headman were also said to inform the municipality about the citizens' needs or complaints. The neighbourhood representative has no (official) party affiliation, and is elected directly by the people of his

neighbourhood (Massicard, 2015). It may be though that municipal staff in Konya perceive him simply as the party's neighbourhood representative *(muhtar)*, as the long arm of the party/municipality (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013.) The local party organisation is indeed an important tool to link citizens and mayors as will be demonstrated in the next section. It seems plausible to describe it as the mayor's 'back office' with regard to the variety of tasks it assumes. As such the municipality's success depends to a significant extent on the support it receives from the party organisation.

5.4 "If people do something in unity, Allah brings them success."[132]

When I first visited the AKP's office in Eskişehir, it was located close to a busy intersection. A small house, dark, with windows protected by barbed wire; it did not make a welcoming impression. Inside it was cramped; small corridors and tiny rooms reminiscent of a labyrinth led to the office of Party President Salih Koca. What a surprise when I came back to the party about a year later. The office had moved to a new building in a bustling shopping district. A neat five-story building with shining marble and chrome its inside is organized according to different sub sections; the women's and youth branch, the party president, the assembly and a lecture room. The reception area invites visitors to sit down and browse through one of the many shiny brochures that lie about. A friendly young woman in a small booth directs those that need more help. Every visitor, with no regard to his outer appearance, is treated in an obliging way and often offered a glass of tea or water.

Overall the impression at AKP branches is that of a well-run hotel displaying both a certain wealth but also a work ethic. After visiting more AKP branches in other cities and districts I

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[132] "*Yani bir yerde insanlar birlikte iş yapıyorlarsa, Allah onları muvaffak eder demek.*" (Interview Mayor Burhan Sakallı, 06.05.2013).

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realized that the buildings and their interior design were part of the party's 'corporate identity', guided and regulated by the party's headquarters in Ankara. Paradoxically the party that is so flexible to adapt to changing local contexts maintains at the same time a nationally homogenious, strong brand. Most times my requests as a researcher were processed smoothly by the AKP organisation, although I did not always receive the answers I had hoped for (especially with regard to participation in inner-party affairs).

In the CHP organisations by contrast, my requests were often not handled very well and further queries were left unanswered. Often offices were difficult to find and included just one storey instead of a whole building. Rarely was the visitor received by reception personal. At times, instead, some elderly men sat in the corner of a room, read the latest newspapers and drank strong black tea. Often the furniture was of poor quality and run down. "*How*", the visitor asks himself, "*will they run a country if their party branches are in such a shabby state*?" Unlike the AKP, the CHP does not communicate its brand by a unified interior design. Rather the appearance is left to the 'talent' of local branches, and party identity is often simply communicated by putting up CHP posters or flags to as decoration. I argue that part of the AKP's local strength and efficiency is due to the amount of training and guidance local AKP activists receive by their party headquarters.

5.4.1   The Political Academy

The '*AK Parti Siyasi Akademi*' (Political Academy) was an eight-week class offered by the local Eskişehir branch. Large posters in the city centre inviting citizens to apply for application had caught my attention. It cost 150 TL and targets people either interested in local politics or already

active in local politics. Being an AKP member was not compulsory.[133] In the end, participants sat an exam, the winner accompanying Erdoğan on a trip to a foreign country. Twice a week, the other participants and I listened to speeches by academics and politicians. After every lecture we had to fill out an evaluation sheet - permanent (self-)evaluation is a characteristic of the AKP (Chapter 6).

Party's headquarters in Ankara organized the political academy centrally and speakers toured the country. The lecturers had different backgrounds; some were professors, some mayors or MPs, other came from the AKP organisation. The course started in April 2013 with a lecture on *'Türkiye'nin Toplumsal ve Siyasal Yapısı'* (Turkey's Social and Political Structure) by a professor of Sociology at Selçuk University, Konya, and provided a history of the Turkish Republic, albeit from an AKP perspective.

Another lecturer spoke on how AKP members should present themselves to the public (e.g., stand straight, smile and wear good clothing). Often he first presented how activists should not act, before calling someone to the stage and practising the appropriate behaviour in little role-plays. Men should wear plain white (signaling self-respect) or blue shirts (signally inner-balance). Brown suits in particular should be avoided so as not to get lost in the shuffle. Party members were asked to pay particular importance to their hygiene, and take a second shirt to events to change if necessary.

Most importantly, the speaker stressed, it was to tune in to the other. This included being interested in what the counterpart was telling and imitate its body language, inflection and even breathing rythm. The example of the prophet was given who convinced others by his positive

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[133] Similar to the 'Political Academy', political training is also provided by the youth branch for its members.

attitude and empathy. Similarily, party activists should not be critical of others and treat everyone with constant kindness.

Another section of his talk dealt with the right behaviour towards the media. Activists were admonished not to lie and to choose their words wisely as everything can immediately be spread by the internet. In particular, the speaker mentioned, was it important to keep good relations with local media, not only prior to elections but throughout the year. This included not only treating journalists with respect and empathy but also by placing advertising. Only very oppositional media should be treated harshly. Press declarations should not be too long and should help the journalists identify the most important messages.

When giving a public speech or during the election campaign, women should be given utmost importance. Celebrities should be used as a tool to attract citizens whenever possible. But also reference to the flag, religion, language and the homeland were mentioned as very effective. Above all, speakers should be positive and communicate hope ("*oyunu umut ve gelecek için verir, istikrar için verir*"). Statements should not be too long, not contain foreign vocabulary, but be metaphorical, e.g., through the use of sayings. The above demostrates how attuning oneself to a local context is not something the AKP leaves to the talent of its activists. Instead it has an tactical approach to the culture of everyday politics and activists are trained to orientate themselves even to other's body language and breathing rythm. Thus it may be concluded that 'being local' is not as organic as it might appear but is (also) a performative skill.

The CHP in Eskişehir also runs educational events for members and candidates twice a year. But, as the local Party President Nihat Çuhadar acknowledged, the education they provide is not sufficient and needs to be improved to target the challenges party members and functionaries are facing (Eskişehir, 05.09.2013). In 2009 the CHP published a guidebook for politicians ('*İyi Bir Politikacı Olmak*') (CHP, 2009). However, it is not a work by the party, targeting a Turkish

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context in particular, but a translation of a publication from the social democrat Alfred Moser Foundation from the Netherlands. Although having a catchy cover displaying previous CHP election posters, the content is a real turn-off; 155 pages and not a single picture or graphic.[134]

5.4.2   The Local Party Organisation

Another competitive advantage the AKP posses in comparion with the CHP is its effective party structure, as a youth branch member explains:

> The party is a tree. We are the roots that reach every part of society. The fruits of the tree are being in power. These fruits are shared by all of us. The main and most important part of our party, the trunk and the brain of the party - that is our leader Recep Tayyip (Personal conversation, AKP member at party branch, Eskişehir, 08.09.2011).

At the head of every local AKP branch stands the provincial party president. Apart from him there are 49 members in the provincial board of directors (*yönetim kurulu*). Also the local party president has vice-presidents (*başkan yardımcısı*). These have different posts like public relations, social affairs, law, economics and so on. Those members of the board who are not vice-presidents are responsible for keeping relations with a district in Konya province, most often the one they originate from.

The women's branch has 30 members in its board of directors. The same applies to the youth branch. As described above, each member is responsible for a district. The women's branch makes contact with the people in a variety of ways. They do house visits or visit the associations (*dernek*) in their neighbourhood and establish relations with them. Also they gather all women who cannot read or write and teach them. Additionally they have special programs targeting

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[134] The AKP's publication, a guidebook for mayor and city council members (*Belediye Başkanı ve Belediye Meclis Üyeleri Rehberi*, March 2009) instead is only half that long (82 pages) and fun to flick through as it contains many photos and graphics, important topics are marked by red headings (AK Party, 2009).

female university students, especially those who are foreign to the town and looking for contacts (Interview, İzzet, Konya, 27.05.2011).

The youth branches undertake important functions for the mobilization of voters and activists, as well as supporting AKP-run municipalities. At the universities they 'infiltrate' student clubs (political activities are forbidden on campus) and indirectly communicate AKP ideology by organising lectures and events. Also they establish themselves as inofficial contact persons for all kinds of difficulties, eg., they arbitrate in case of disturbance of the peace by night, or between students and teaching staff or the administration. Additionally they visit students at their homes or in dormitories. It is important, an activist mentioned, "*never to come with empty hands, but to bring a small box of baklava or some sweets*" (Personal conversation, Eskişehir, AKP Youth Branch member, 20.04.2011). Most importantly perhaps, AKP youth branch members are also responsible for directing students towards religious foundations, for example the *Anadolu Gençlik Derneği* or *Birlik Vakfı*, both of which provid welfare, offer dormitory places and run an extensive leisure program. The fact that youth branch members have much better access to job ressources in times of high youth unemployment in Turkey (approximately 20%, Sunday's Zaman, 2015) should not be forgotten when analysing political mobilization by the party.

The organisational scheme of the province is replicated in the districts (*ilçe*), albeit with smaller numbers. The party is also organised at the neighbourhood and village level with a similar organisational scheme. Within the city the same organisational structure applies in neighbourhoods (*mahalle*). All these units are part of a structure which effectively connects the local president with the lowest unit and vice versa. AKP members are active throughout the year; special tasks are added during election time. On election day nine AKP members are responsible for every ballot box (serving approximately 300 voters). They are comprised of three regular members, and three members each of the women's and youth branches. Upon information by the

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neighbourhood representative they visit funerals or weddings and establish contact with local citizens, according their personal situation. Showing a personal, caring face to the people is only possible because the AKP is very well organised internally, as a representative responsible for public relations explains:

> Our party is organised in society from the top to the bottom, to every little lane. There is someone responsible for nearly every voter. [...] Our party was founded in 2001, it is a relatively new party but it has a longer history. Our prime minister has a history as a mayor [in RP]. People were members in other parties before they came to AKP, that is why we had an understanding of the tasks and an experience. But we are adapting these experiences to the conditions in Turkey now. From day to day according to the newest technology we are improving our propaganda instruments (Interview, İzzet, Konya, 27.05.2011).

Exchange among different levels in the party hierarchy is supported. Once a month the Prime Minister, the Council of Ministers, the main leadership, as well as the provincial party, women's and youth branch leaders meet for dinner. Additionally local leaders meet regularly in regional meetings, e.g., Central Anatolia. As a result, party functionaries feel a high sense of unity and help each other in every way possible, even if they do not know each other personally. Close ties also exist among AKP mayors and the local party organisation, and mutual support is expected by the party headquarters. Mayor Burhan Sakallı describes his experiences with the local AKP branch and their degree of cooperation:

> We are always together with our city party leaders and district leaders, the heads of the women's and youth organisation, with our heads of neighbourhood representatives and our deputies; not once a week or once every 15 days but always together. Because, for example, if we have a program in a neighbourhood we inform at least two people. One is the neighbourhood headman of that neighbourhood, the other the AKP representative of that neighbourhood, [and] the head of the party's women's and youth branchs. Everywhere we go, our party organisation is there as well, and vice-versa. For example, last week we had an opening and also our deputies came, our provincial party president, our two district party presidents from Odunpazarı and Tepebaşı, the provincial and district women's branch presidents, the provincial party heads, the heads of our youth branches, our city council members, our provincial council members. We are strong together/united. If people do something in unity, Allah brings them success (Interview, Mayor Burhan Sakallı, Eskişehir, 06.05.2013).

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This unity is practised even if conflicts exist with regard to policy content and persons. Thus Mayor Sakallı attended the obligatory meetings of mayor, deputy and local party leadership although it is an open secret that he and local Party President Reyhan did not get along well, as the former is moderate whereas the second is a political hardliner. A well-thought, centrally operated party structure ensures that AKP-led municipalities, the local party organisation and MPs cooperate in a steady way. All actors are required to demonstrate unity and to picture the party as some kind of harmonious family. In the CHP on the contrary, the picture is much different, as a tight structure is missing. Although CHP Mayor Ataç has a long inner-party career, he does not rely on the party organisation in his work as a mayor:

> Since my relations with them date back long time there would not be any breach but I prefer to do my political activities in smaller groups. As I am very active it is very hindering to move around with big groups. I move around with two to three persons (Interview, Mayor Ahmet Ataç, Eskişehir, 11.06.2013).

Most disapproving of the local CHP branch is Mayor Büyükerşen, who stated that it is sufficient "*if they support my projects*" (Interview, Eskişehir, 09.09.2014). Whereas the AKP mayors are supported by a strong, effective party structure, CHP mayors in Eskişehir do not cooperate much with their local party branch. It was mentioned, that their municipalities "*keep the CHP alive*", which otherwise would be completely inactive (Interview, Hakan, Eskişehir, 25.10.2013). Even CHP members in Eskişehir acknowledged that the AKP is more professional, mentioning the internal party organisation structure, the efficiency with which it is used, and the party's public relations. Although living in Eskişehir and moving among party members on a regular basis, I nearly missed a public speech given by party leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. It was organised rather short-term, and party members sent 'last-minute' messages, thereby only reaching those within the CHP network.

The AKP also provides a pool of volunteers who may be used for national and local election campaigns. On an early Sunday morning prior to the 2011 national elections, for example, 1,000 cars in Konya put posters with the AKP's election slogan and a picture of then prime minister Erdoğan in their back windows. The cars belonged to 1,000 members who participated in the activity voluntarily. Every car took along three to four more people and was expected to visit at least three villages. There they distributed the party propaganda, explained it to the villagers and told them what the party had done for them so far. Members were especially motivated by the fact that this kind of organisation unfolded for the first time; it was something to 'be proud of'. Also acting in such a big group added to the fact of being part of something larger and of serving the right thing (Interview, Izzet, Konya, 27.05.2011).

By contrast, the CHP leadership in Konya was disappointed about its little success when contacting citizens. They atrributed this to the media domination by the AKP and to the fact that citizens reacted hostile to their house-to-house canvassing, often refusing to shake hands (Interview, Mevlüt Karpuz, CHP Party President, Konya, 07.11.2013).[135]

Prior to the 2011 elections, female CHP members in Eskişehir were preparing house visits. They were told by the party leadership, not to put on too much make-up or to wear too fashionable clothes, they should try to conceal possible differences in status. The CHP's lack of success when trying to contact citizens spontaniously by house visits may be related to the fact that they are not looking for people who may function as local 'door openers'. The CHP party president remarked self-critically in our interview, that the party needs to approach the people more, and instead of waiting for them, go to where they live and share their life experiences (Interview, Nihat

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[135] I thank Elise Massicard for her remark that the CHP was more successful in their election campaigning (2009) in Adana. She observed how the party used Arabic speaking activists to contact the Arab-speaking population in the Nusayri neighbourhoods. This further strengthens my assumption that mobilization in the CHP depends much on the talent of local branches.

Çuhadar, CHP Party President, 05.09.2013). However, at times even the AKP struggles to find the right local language. Prior to the 2011 national election I accompanied the Konya party organisation to a village on the way to Beyşehir. The party members, especially the women, stood out in sharp contrast to the women in the village. Some of the girls from the youth organisation had difficulty in walking on the uneven paths in the village due to their high heel shoes and, with their different clothing and make-up, they looked very different from the peasant women. Although we all ate from a large bowl with rice and meat prepared by the local women, the two groups did not mix and, although friendly with each other, remained distant.

5.5   Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

It is not only a well-functioning party organisation that works to the AKP's advantage, but also its close alignment to (faith-based) civil society organisations, especially in Konya. An academic with close ties to the government explained to me prior to the 2014 elections that: "*If the AKP doesn't win, if the government leaves, that is not important. The civil society organisations will do it* (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.2013)." Mayor Büyükerşen, although a founder or co-founder of many CSOs himself, evaluates CSOs much more negatively:

> CSOs in Turkey have been established on a distorted base. CSOs are composed of 3-5 people who are not very successful in their job careers [...]. CSOs just announce something to the local press, the public; they are just against everything, and they always demand something from state institutions. They do not intend to act actually [...] In these conditions, cooperation with CSOs is impossible (as cited in Babadoğan, 2005, 116).

In the following I demonstrate how it can be that two Turkish academics, one a mayor, one a professor also consulting municipalities, expressed such different perceptions about the value of CSOs and their role in politics.

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In Turkey, a civil society (in the 'Western' reading)[136] emerged in the late Ottoman area - philanthropic institutions and prototypes of trade unions existed much longer (Aktay & Topçuoğlu, 2007). As a constitutional right, CSOs were first mentioned in the 1908 constitution. After the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, many associations were initiated by the state in order to strengthen the nation state and give meaning to it - civil society became an 'ideological tool' for social engineering.[137] Keyman describes how:

> […] associatonal life went hand-in-hand with the duty-based understanding of citizenship which operated by giving moral primacy to the services to the state and nation over rights and freedoms (Keyman, 2014, 142).

After the introduction of the multi-party system in 1945, civil society became more diverse but not less politicized. The 1980s saw a rise of ethnicity and religion based associations due to pro-Kurdish nationalism and Islamist politics.[138] Further, after the military coup in 1980, activities of Islamist civil society organisations were actively supported by the state as part of its *Türk-İslam Sentezi* (Turkish Islam Senthesis).[139] Later, these organisations acted as coordinators of Islamist activism and as important links between party, municipality and citizens. White's research on Ümraniye exemplifies how faith based organisations cannot be understood simply as either 'civil' or as co-opted by a party, but rather as linked both in practice and perception to the party and a wider social movement (White, 2002).

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[136] Civil Society is understood here as an arena where voluntary associations of all kinds take action. The line of distinction is drawn between civil society and areas such as family, the state and political parties as well as the market (Gellner, 1994, 5).

[137] For a history of civil society organisations in Turkey see İçduygu, Meydanoğlu, & Sert (2011, 51-54); White, (2002, 201-209); Yerasimos (2000); Yükcekök, Turan, & Alkan (1998).

[138] This thesis focuses on municipal politics in Konya and Eskişehir as practised by the AKP and the CHP. However, it should be mentioned that other parties, e.g., pro-Kurdish parties or the ultranationalist MHP keep close relations with CSOs, for the recruitment of candidates, to mobilize support during elections and around special topics and legitimize and implement local political programs or carry out tasks the parties (due to high surveillance) are not able to. Associations work together with parties to produce a particular Kurdish politicized milieu in Diyarbakır and to establish a 'Kurdish governance practice' (Dorronsoro & Watts, 2013).

[139] The term describes an ideological shift that aimed to strengthen religion in order to push back communism. Its roots are in the far-right movement (Joppien, 2011a, 44).

As a response, Kemalist associations mainly emerged from the late 1980s on when Kemalists felt the secular state was threatened by Islamist politics and Kurdish nationalism.[140] Suddenly many felt the need to externalize their beliefs by putting up Atatürk posters in their shop windows or by wearing pins with Atatürk's profile on their lapels (White, 2002, 116). Contrary to Islamist parties, which are nurtured by a wider social movement, Kemalist CSOs emerged out of the party, seeking to re-establish a political and cultural hegemony and to protect a 'state' they were no longer in control of (Çevik & Taş, 2013; Erdoğan, 2000).[141]

The politicization of CSOs is also due to the fact that political parties in Turkey act under rigid surveillance by the state. As associations are subject to less restriction, they can more easily coordinate and nurture wider (social and/or political) movements, mobilize resources and constitute an intellectual platform. Politicization particularly holds true for professional organisations and unions (Öngün & Hassan, 2013).[142] This infiltration is said to have further increased under the AKP, which not only targets unions but "*even the tiniest associations* (*dernek*)" (Interview, Hakan, Eskişehir, 25.10.2013). Only CSOs that uphold the divisionist stance of political parties along secular/Islamist lines are dominant and therefore replicate and enforce those divisions.

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[140] Associations such as the Support for Modern Life Association (*CYDD, Çağdaş¸ Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*), the Modern Writers Association (*ÇYD, Çağdaş Yazarlar Derneği*), the Association for Kemalist Thought (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği)* and many others were established. *Çağdaş* is used synonymously for modern but clearly implies a Kemalist reading of modernity.

[141] The distinction between 'state' and 'society' is difficult in this context. Çevik and Taş' description of the celebration of the declaration of the Republic on October, 23 1998 exemplifies this. Kemalist groups organized demonstrations and festivals as they felt the state did not do its duty or rather was 'in the wrong hands'.

[142] The Turkish Industrialists and Businessmens Association (*TÜSİAD, Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*) for example is perceived as representing the 'old', Kemalist elites whereas the Independent Industrialists and Businessmens Association (*MÜSİAD, Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*) and the Association of Anatolian Businessmen (*ASCON*) represent the 'new', conservative religious elites (Buğra, 1998). Other examples exist with regard to women's rights (*Akder vs. KA-DER*) and education (*Özgürder vs. ÇYDD*) as well as with regard to civil society 'umbrella organisations' ('secular' *TÜSEV, Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı vs. 'Islamist' TGTV, Türkiye Gönüllü Teşekküller Vakfı*). Associations like the Bar Associations, the Chamber of Engineers and Architects (*TMMOB Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği*), or the Turkish Medical Association (*Türk Tabipler Birliği*) and dental unions are traditionally 'leftist'. Chambers of commerce, farmers, and producers chambers tend to be closer to right-wing parties. Also labor unions are 'politicized' making them ineffective as a representative of employees' rights. This shows that these divisions are not purely class-based oppositions (working class vs. bourgeoisie) but identity and statusbased (Islamist vs. Kemalist) weakening class politics as such. For further examples see (Erdoğan, 2000; Navaro-Yashin, 1998; Özler & Sarkissian, 2011).

5.5.1 *Municipal-CSO Cooperation*

Although many CSOs are politicized, their participation in municipal decision-making is low, at least in formal, institutionalized forms. Eskişehir's AKP-led Odunpazarı Municipality was the only municipality that acknowledged the role of CSOs by stating on its webpage: "*We are an example municipality with regard to democratic and participative standards due to our cooperation with civil society organisations.*" In addition, Mayor Sakallı was the only one of all mayors and staff interviewed who could easily answer my question on his municipality's cooperation with CSOs.

> Friday we are going to open the first park especially for handicapped people. A little park, 5000 m², but the first in Eskişehir. It is called `Park without handicap'. During all stages when we prepared the park we talked to all handicap NGOs - there are 18 in Eskişehir. We asked them "What kind of a thing do you want?" and they said "The sidewalk should be like this, the materials used should be like that, we want these kinds of group plays, this is deficient, let us do it like that." We collect their ideas and discuss them here in the municipality. And as a result this park is not a project by Odunpazarı municipality but it becomes a project by the people of Odunpazarı. Therefore, they feel a sense of responsibility, belonging and involvement as if they would have done the project themselves and they promote it and protect it (Interview, Eskişehir, 06.05.2013).[143]

I had heard from AKP members in Eskişehir, that I should go to *Birlik* V*akfı* to understand the local party branch. The foundation was founded in 1985, and among its founders are prominent AKP-politicians as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ömer Dinçer (former Minister of Labour and Social Security, as well as Education) and Speaker of Parliament Cemil Çiçek.[144] Its president in Eskişehir, Murat Canözer, is also the former branch president of the RP - and today successful in the construction business.

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[143] Also the municipality cooperates with a variety of other actors, and if required, even with CSOs from a rather 'Kemalist camp', e.g. the Koç (TAP) Foundation for a project on female health.

[144] This is stated at the foundations webpage under http://www.birlikVakfı.org.tr/kategoriler.php?id=205.

Their office, a large building in the historic Odunpazarı district, had previously caught my attention, because it had very massive walls, but only small windows. In the entrance a Quran was displayed, the waiting area showed different examples of kufi calligraphy. A woman in her thirties welcomed me and introduced me to the director. Both were friendly and polite, but did not shake my hand. The clothing of those in the building - all the women veiled and with long coats (*tesettür*) in dark colours, men with long, collarless shirts over long trousers - was in strong contrast to the groups of tourists and locals bustling outside. In a large hall children were reciting parts of the Quran for a competition to be held a couple of weeks later. The foundations main target group are students. They are offered free breakfast and lunch accompanied by religious talks (*sohbet*). The foundation also runs an academic program to supplement university education. Additional classes on the Quran and the prophet's life are offered for children. At the same time women can learn Turkish handicrafts. I was advised by several activists at the AKP branch to visit *Birlik Vakfı*, however I was surprised by the differences of social conduct in both places: the womens headscarfs and coats at the foundation were very plain and did not ressemble the fashionable versions combined with make-up I had seen at the AKP branch. Further, apart from the academic program, *Birlik Vakfı* practised complete gender segregation. At the AKP branch male and female activists generally took care not to touch or sit too close to an opposite-sex activist but interacted freely. Also my own perceptions were different, I felt at ease at the AKP branch yet perceived myself as a foreign body at the foundation. This was perhaps due to the fact that people there avoided conversations with me, whereas at the AKP branch activists were generally interested in my research and eager to tell me their perception of Turkish politics.

I was more than puzzled when in our interview, Mayor Sakallı told me that *Birlik Vakfı* was not important.[145] His cool reception of them, I later learned, led to repeated difficulties with the AKP

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[145] Also few other AKP members shared his perception. A former AKP mayor made negativ remarks about the foundation, advised me not to go there and pretended not to know who its president was.

Eskişehir leadership. An interview partner indicated that the difficulties between the different groups - among others the Menzilciler and Fethullah Gülen community (Şentürk, 2011) - was less about their religious orientation, and more that they represented a different capitalist group with different interests (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

When I questioned CHP activists about party-affiliated CSOs they mainly mentioned '*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*' (Association for Kemalist Thought) and '*Memleket Sevdalıları Derneği*' (Association of Those Loving Their Country), as well as a range of unions (*Kesk, Türk-İş, Demir Yolu İş, Şeker İş, Türk Metal Sendikası*) as well as the doctors' and lawyers' chambers. The cooperation between the CHP-led municipalities and CSOs however seemed to be less institutionalized than at AKP-led municipalities. Rather, the municipalities and CSOs came together for extra-ordinary events, e.g., to protest the government's handling of the Gezi protests.

Eskişehir Mayor Büyükerşen's negative perception of CSOs was also reflected in the fact that they were not seen as partners for municipal politics. The negative perception of CSOs was also shared among his municipal staff:

> I'm a little exaggerating. Those CSOs are either masturbating, which means they do nothing except satisfying themselves, or they are expecting political self-interest. In this country, there is no CSO (as cited in Babadoğan, 2005, 97).

Political actors in and outside the municipality gave three main reasons for the municipalities' reluctance to establish formalized structures of cooperation with CSOs. Firstly, mayors in Turkey are strong forces who are not used to, nor willing to share decision-making competencies. Secondly, no established structures exist to guarantee inclusive decision-making processes. Thirdly - and this was voiced mostly by municipal staff - CSOs are not seen as reliable actors. Many doubt their capacity genuinely to promote public interests, and see them as representatives

of particular, personal interests (Personal conversations, municipal staff, Eskişehir, 2011 and 2013).

By contrast, in Konya, the general perception of CSOs among municipal staff was positive. However, a clear division of labour exists. Whereas all municipalities rely on CSOs in their welfare programs; Konya Metropolitan municipality also included them on its cultural program (Chapter 8). It seems plausible to argue that the AKP is more prone to cooperation as they perceive themselves as being part of the same social movement. With regard to the CHP, however, many CSOs emerged out of the party, which might perceive itself as 'leading the cause'.

Both Konya and Eskişehir Metropolitan municipalities cooperate with CSOs in their municipal centres to promote party policies. On a bitterly cold Saturday in January, I attended an event on '*Ortadoğu'da Değişen Dengeler Bölücü Terör ve Türkiye*' (Chancing Balance in the Middle East, Subversive Terrorism and Turkey) that lasted nearly four hours. It was organized in the municipal cultural centre by the CSOs *'Eskişehir Türk Ocağı 1912'* and *'Eğitim-Bir-Sen',* as two banners on each side of the stage showed. *Eskişehir Türk Ocağı 1912* is a CSO with close links to the ultra-nationalist MHP. *Eğitim-Bir-Sen* is a union for civil servants founded in 1992 with over 230,000 members and has gained particular importance under the AKP.[146]

The auditorium was packed when the four academic speakers started to talk about Syria, the PKK and Arab Spring, albeit mixing all three together in their analysis. They argued that the Arab Spring was initiated by its own dynamics. However, through Western meddling it got out of hand. The 'PKK problem' was said to have been inherited from other governments. However, the AKP set out to solve it, which would only be realized through a peace process and disarmament.

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[146] It supports initiatives such as the instruction of Ottoman language at school or the abolition of classes on alcohol in tourism education. In Konya, the president of *Eğitim-Bir-Sen* is at the same time the president of the association of CSOs in the city (*Konya Platformu*) and was a candidates' candidate for AKP in the national elections in 2011 (Radikal, 2014).

At that time this represented the AKP's position on 'the Kurdish issue'. It was criticised quite unpopular among the party's nationalistic segment.Thus, this event 'translated' national politics to a local audience. In the panel the West, and particularly the EU, were perceived as a part of the problem ("*They nourish the PKK*"), and could therefore not be included in its solution. It was remarkable that whereas the AKP maintained up a pro-EU rhetoric at the national level (though less enthusiastically than in its first years), at the local level it was critical of the 'West' (as represented by the EU and Israel; the U.S. however was not a focus of criticism). Although the panel was made up of academics, they presented AKP's foreign policy in an entertaining and convincing way. The individual statements were short, followed by questions from the audience.

The CHP also organized meetings presenting party positions through the lecture series '*Türkiye Nereye Gidiyor*?' (Where is Turkey heading?) at the Zübeyde Hanım Cultural Centre, run by Tepebaşı Municipality. In November 2012, an event on agriculture and economics was organized by the CHP Eskişehir party organisation and *Memleket Sevdalıları Derneği* Eskişehir branch. *Memleket Sevdalıları Derneği* is a CSO close to the nationalist (*ulusalcı*) wing of the CHP. The event brought well-known speakers from national politics to the city, however they failed to connect with the audience. Many in the audience seemed to be farmers from the surrounding villages but the presented material on agriculture was long, abstract and overly detailed - nothing the audience could relate to. The event left participants exhausted. This was remarked upon by a local newspaper: "*The panel, which began with intensive attendance of citizens, was soon abandoned by many listeners because of the length and form of expression of the speeches*" (Haberler.com, 2013). Another 'turn-off' was the extremely exclusive atmosphere created by the speakers. They did not come across as dynamic or convincing but rather as defeated, speaking to a small group of 'enlightened' (*aydınlar*) in an otherwise hostile environment. The event had a strong ideological framing; Atatürk was the main point of reference, and quoted in all speeches.

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The selling of books by Mustafa Balbay and Tuncay Özkan, two journalists jailed after dubious accusations, further enforced the feeling of being part of a small group of the righteous under threat.[147] In informal conversations afterwards some CHP staff and MPs admitted that their party has serious difficulties in connecting to the citizens and getting their political message across.

5.5.2 Mobilizing Votes

Mayors use CSOs not only to enforce their relations with their core constituency as in the two events described above. CSOs are also an important means to establish ties with other social groups, e.g., *hemşehrilik* organisations that can be very influential with regard to voting behaviour. A journalist in Konya, coming from the same region as then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, and with aspirations to become an MP in the future, proposed that I attend a reception with the Foreign Minister. After some phone calls by him and an AKP MP, the local party leadership gave its ok. On the evening, around 60 male members of a local business association (*işadamları derneği*) assembled in the lobby of the luxurious Hilton hotel, situated just across from Konya's Mevlana Centre, and waited for the foreign minister's arrival.

Once he entered the lobby, a cloud of people closed around him, but were kept off by his staff. We sat down in a hall and enjoyed a dinner with several courses during which Ahmet Davutoğlu gave a short speech about his 'zero problems' foreign policy doctrine.[148] No word was mentioned about the association, nor about his candidature as an MP in the upcoming elections. During dinner, people who had arranged to do so beforehand were allowed to join the table where he sat with his wife and the MPs Mustafa Kabakcı and Ayşe Türkmenoğlu. Over dessert, I was also invited to his table and had time for some short questions on his candidacy, and a chat with his

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[147] Mustafa Balbay and Tuncay Özkan are two prominent Turkish journalists who opposed the AKP in their books and articles. Both were jailed, accused of having planned a coup against the government (Ergenekon case) but were released after four and six years respectively. A common critique is that the Ergenekon cases were politically motivated to get rid of governmental critics and military officers.

[148] In 2001, Ahmet Davutoğlu published his book ,*Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (Küre Publishers, Istanbul) with which he initiated a shift towards a more pro-active Turkish foreign policy.

wife, a gynaecologist by profession. Although the short audiences he granted that day were not sufficient to speak about substantial demands, they nevertheless fulfilled an important function, as they provided access to decision-makers. This may, for example, mean that permits can be obtained by a phone-call or that one has more chances in municipal bidding. Such events also established a local hierarchy. A municipal advisor told me that people observe closely the CSOs that the AKP is organising get-togethers with, who chats with whom, who is approached by others and who needs to approach? Access to decision-makers, he concluded, gives more information about someone's position in Konya's society than a formal position or status symbols (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013).

Another important aspect of symbolic politics concerns mutual visits between the municipalities and various groups documented by photos and shared on webpages and Facebook as well as local media. Often plates or shields with paintings or engravings are exchanged to commemorate the event. The main aim is to secure each other's support and establish personal relations. As with the visit of Foreign Minister Davutoğlu to a small businessmen's association, these mutual visits are not aimed at immediate decisions. However, establishing ties allows both parties to pick up the phone and ask for a favour when needed. Cooperation between CSOs and municipalities in Turkey is mostly not institutionalized but informal and based on personal relations. Similar to welfare, which is not acknowledged as a 'social right', cooperation in municipal decision-making is not a 'right' of CSOs, but bestowed at the 'generosity' of mayors.

This holds true for the migrants' (*göçmen*) organisations in Eskişehir also. Interaction with non-economic, non-elite groups serves to secure votes, to reach certain parts of society more easily and integrate them into the political process.[149] The municipalities align with these groups in a

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[149] That this is not an 'Oriental phenomenon' is shown by Poppelaars research on resource exchange in Dutch urban governance (Poppelaars, 2007).

variety of ways. Tepebaşı Municipality, responsible for a district with a large migrant population, is said to overproportionately employ staff from such backgrounds. Additionally, all parties take care to place high-ranking party staff in the boards of migrant associations. The party leadership and mayors are also present at cultural events organized by migrant organisations. In 2013, for example, the 'Kırım Çiğbörek Night'[150], an annual cultural event was attended by then governor Kadir Koçdemir, the AKP MPs Ülker Can and Salih Koca, MHP MP Chairman Ruhsar Demirel, CHP MP Kazım Kurt, the Romanian Ambassador in Turkey Radu Onofrei, and Eskişehir's Metropolitan municipality Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen (Anadolu Ajansı Online, 2013). Mayors also symbolically acknowledge and value the migrant population, as a former mayor remembers:

> These migrants have their own cultures and things they value. For example, the Crimean; the forced migration in 1944 is very important for them, something they will never forget. They commemorate it by a ceremony on 18 March. I erected a monument in the middle of a park for them to share these feelings. When I was a mayor, we did a small ceremony there on every 18 March. That is why they liked us so much. In addition, migrant associations have needs that we supplied. We also visited their offices, and attended their weddings; these are all reasons why they liked us (Interview, Tacettin, Eskişehir, 05.04.2011).

The importance paid to ethnicity at the local level (opposed to class, for example) is due to the ease *"with which politicians can satisfy ethnic aspirations"* (Peterson, 1981, 157), in the first instance by simply recognizing them. Politicians may attend ethnic parades or festivals, name streets or builduings after ethnic 'heroes', facilitate community celebrations or praise their food. Additionally, they may secure posts at the municipality for members of ethnic communities or put them up as candidates. As a result, ethnicity and the symbolic politics that come along with it remained an important factor in municipal politics, although, as in the case of Eskişehir, many migrant groups have resided there since several generations. As such also the establishing of

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[150] *Çiğbörek,* a traditional food of the Crimean, is a pastry filled with raw minced meat fried in oil and served with a hot sauce. Due to the large population with a Crimean migration background Eskişehir has several restaurants.

personal ties to locally dominant groups is part of the culture of everyday politics in the two cities.

In a politicized society such as Turkey, the role of CSOs is only rarely to voice differences, at least not in a bourgious 'public sphere' as described by Habermas (1962).[151] Also, many of Turkey's CSOs show insufficient levels of institutionalisation and problematic governance structures: "*although democratic decision-making structures exist as legal necessities in most CSOs in Turkey, their functionality remains questionable*" (İçduygu, Meydanoğlu, & Sert, 2011, 19-20). As a result it has for long been characterized as weak and suppressed by a strong state tradition.[152] This perception follows an ideal Western reading of 'modernisation' and equating this with a population uniting in a bottom up way to demand rights and liberties from the government.[153]

In light of the processes described above, the claim that Turkish CSOs are 'weak', may be concluded only if we apply an (ideal) Western reading. Turkish CSOs can be very influential; however, this depends much on their leaders 'closeness' to the mayor and to the decision-making circle. The ties they establish with municipalities are based on personal contacts. White correctly questions the usefullness of separating 'modern' civil society from 'traditional', community-based practices, and of drawing an artificial line between individual and institutional behaviour and activities as well as of separating political ideology from cultural practices to understand Turkish civil society (White, 2002, 5, 209-11).

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[151] Symbolic politics also exist with regard to other groups, e.g., religious communities. Also other forms were observed: in Eskişehir, influential men from politics, media, and economics met every Sunday morning to play football. I observed how a newcomer to the city with a high administrative post, was convinced to join the team. Many questions of city governance were solved at the football field thus bypassing official channels.

[152] This holds less true for cities as Istanbul and Ankara that show a higher concentration of CSOs with universalist aims than Central Anatolian cities.

[153] More recent example would be the Arab Spring as well as movements in Latin America and Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 90s (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002; Keyman & İçduygu, 2005; Keyman, 2014).

Civil society, in this broader rendering, incorporates personal, kin, and ethnic relations on the one hand, and civic and political institutions on the other, linking them in practice, rather than artificially separating out cultural, civic and political domains (White, 2002, 179). Similar to 'alternative modernisation', one is tempted to speak of an 'alternative civil society'. This is based on trust and relationships, not on 'rights to participate'. Subsequently, much of council-CSO cooperation is informal and realised through personal contacts.

5.6   City Assemblies

"*City assemblies are an opportunity to participate, but the basic conception is full of holes.*"[154]

City assemblies (*Kent Konseyi*) are presented as tools to increase the involvement of citizens in municipal affairs. The practice, however, is often different. When I asked the general secretary of Eskişehir's city assembly for permission to do participant observation in their organisation, he told me to pick a working group from the big chart displayed in the entry room. I chose the Culture and Arts Working Group (*Kültür ve Sanat Çalışma Grubu, KSCG*) and was delighted when its president, Nurhal Hanım called me only a few days later and enthusiastically invited me to their meetings that took place every Monday.

Firstly, Nurhal Hanım presented the group and its members to me. According to her, the group was active and interested in getting involved in anything that would concern arts and culture, while not paying any importance to (party) politics. Nurhal Hanım stressed how important it was to cooperate with all kinds of civil society institutions and how willing they are to do so. In order to do so they created committees within the working group. The members of the group were teachers, poets, artists, actors, musicians, students and housewives. The group had around 65

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[154] Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013.

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members, but only half of them could be counted as active. Still this made the KSCG one of the liveliest groups in Eskişehir's city assembly. As the city assembly does not have a very formalized membership structure, one of its problems is the high fluctuation of participants. Also the quality of the working groups is not standardized, but depends much on the 'talent' of the group leaders. Whereas the KSCG organized events once a month or even more often, the only activity of the council's women's group over a period of months was to set up a Plexiglas box at a shopping centre to collect toy donations.

On the first meeting I attended, the agenda dealt with a dance the city assembly had organised along the river on Valentine's Day to protest against violence against women; and the forthcoming reading of poet Haydar Ergülen in March. Over the next months as I became a regular member of the KSCG, I realized that activities were developed by the president and a small circle around her; the members were only rarely involved in the decision-making process. During implementation however, the members were highly involved and asked to use their personal networks, resources and talents for the realization of projects. A young, female student, for example, was often asked to play the violin at receptions; another woman whose daughter had a clothing shop for evening gowns was asked to provide dresses for those presenting; and an artist drew portraits to give away to prominent guests. Other members visited the neighbourhood headpersons (*muhtar*) or schools to inform them about upcoming events or to hang posters. The communication among the members (many women, but also men) was joyful and intimate (*samimi*); the president always addressed us as friends (*arkadaşlar*). Many members indeed became friends, and we often went somewhere for coffee or tea after the meeting. When one of the members had an exhibition, or concert, it was expected that all members of the group attended to demonstrate their support.

Decision-making within the city assembly's working groups is not as participative as originally intended. The group leaders are rarely elected, but rather appointed. Some members in the groups come at their own initiative, while others are also invited by the group leader from their social circle. These people are generally assigned the more interesting and responsible tasks. As such, different 'cliques' with different degrees of access to decision-making exist within the working groups.

City Assemblies in Turkey started as informal structures after the 1996 Habitat Conference in Istanbul.[155] One aim was to increase participatory mechanisms and transparency of the political process. Others were to promote cooperation of local governments and CSOs, to promote the creation of a city assembly which represents all citizens equally, and to assign special importance to the inclusion of women, youth and disabled by establishing assemblies and working groups. These voluntary initiatives were formalized in 2005 by the Municipal Law 5393 (Article 76), asking municipalities to set up city assemblies and to encourage public participation (Çukurçayır, Eroğlu, & Sağır, 2012).[156]

Turkish experiences with city assemblies differ over the country. Whilst some (as in Bursa or Antalya) work very actively, others are coopted by the municipality or ineffective.[157] City assemblies were conceived as bodies to increase public participation, but they are constrained in doing so because of municipal/mayoral domination. Municipalities provide space and

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[155] They trace back to the Agenda 21, adopted in the final declaration of the 1992 Earth Summit, UN Local Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. With regard to political participation, Local Agenda 21 gave importance to local action, cooperation of local governments and other actors. In Turkey, these initiatives first encountered scepticiam, but became popular soon, even more so after the Council of Ministers published a 'Local Agenda 21 Program Document' in March 1998 (Bayraktar, 2006, 131-137).

[156] The councils comprise of a general assembly (*genel kurul*), executive committee (*yürütme kurulu*), a president (*başkan*), a general secretary (*genel sekreter*), assemblies (women, youth, handicapped and neighbourhood), and thematic working groups. The general assembly comprises the governor, the mayor, the headmen from the neighbourhoods, representatives of political parties' local branches, a representative from the university and civil society organisations.

[157] Çanakkale is another example. It became the first city that created a working city assembly in 2004. The council prepared its own rules and regulations and elected its board. These rules later became the framework through which the new municipal law described the city assembly (Kadırbeyoğlu, n.d., 16).

infrastructure, and pay electricity and water bills. In return, municipalities are obliged by law to discuss decisions taken by the city assembly in the municipal council meetings. A problem is the sometimes close relation between the municipality and the city assembly. In Eskişehir, for example, the assembly's general secretary is the former municipal director of social and cultural affairs. He has made it clear that if Mayor Büyükerşen lost the upcoming election, he would immediately resign. Although refraining from political propaganda, the KSCG actively supported the mayor prior to the election, by organising much more events than normal, often inviting municipal staff or presenting municipal projects. City Assemblies are also subject to political pressure; a General Secretary in Konya complained about the political pressure exerted by the municipality and the local party branch (Interview, Osman, Konya, 19.08.2013). Alkan rightly concludes that:

> The measures aiming at more democratic ways of governance lay out all the defects of a pure 'pluralistic' approach on the one hand and of clientelism on the other, and, above all, they seem cosmetic rather than opening the way to 'bottom-up' styles (Alkan, 2011, 35).

In Eskişehir I also observed that the city assembly is misunderstood as a way to get close to the mayor. Some of those very active in the administration of the city assembly clearly also envisaged a political career and saw the council as a means to get Mayor Büyükerşen's sympathy. I have demonstrated in chapter 3.6 that this was the most important requirement for any candidate in Eskişehir. An example of a particularly ambitious member was a young lawyer, who always attended our meetings only briefly, but managed to take prominent positions whenever events were realized. He was also active at Anadolu University where with others, he directed a successful theatre group. During my stay in the city he became president of the Bar Associations Youth Council (*Eskişehir Barosu Gençlik Meclisi Başkanı*), and after I left I learnt he had become president of the Eskişehir CHP Youth Organisation (*CHP İl Gençlik Kollarının Başkanı*), even if there was a dispute over his 'election'.

In Konya, city assemblies were not very efficient. Those I spoke to generally perceived the city assembly as a public forum to be redundant. This may be due to the fact that strong, but informal relations already existed between the municipality and CSOs. A citizen who saw City Assemblies as a chance for more public discussion, recounts disappointedly how any possibility for critique was nipped in the bud. An academic at the public administrations department at Konya's Selçuk University explained that the Kent Konseyi concept was not successful as there already was a system for decision-taking, the consensus of the elites. What sense would it make - he asked - to bring to the fore what is already successful in the background, risking unity or damaging the municipalities' image (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013)? Another academic added that Konya's City Assemblies were dominated by the municipality (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.2013). Some municipal staff claimed that the communication between the municipality and the people was already good, thus a city assembly was not much needed.

> We have the municipal council, and the meetings are open to the public. […] Also we have different channels of communication. […] They can write a petition, or an email [on my question whether the people have any possibility to make remarks], this is their constitutional right (Interview, Ayhan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

As already noted, City Assemblies were introduced to increase participatory mechanisms and to promote cooperation between CSOs and local governments. It was shown that City Assemblies in Konya and Eskişehir work with different intensity. In both cities their work is not independent, but dominated by the mayor (Konya) or closely associated with him (Eskişehir). However, interesting attempts of citizen self-organisation, although not yet successful, do exist.

On my first day in the city cssembly of Eskişehir, Gülser Hanım was also there. Although not a regular member of the group, she was given the possibility to make a short speech. She presented a project about trash pickers and suggested a film screening. She said she had worked in various civil society organisations in Eskişehir before but was often annoyed by the hierarchic, top-down

structure. Neither her topic, nor her complaints resonated well with the other members of the group. She also invited us to the next meeting of Eskişehir's *Türkiye Küçük Millet Meclisi* (Turkish Small National Assembly, *TKMM*),[158] as a non-politicized approach to civil society, but (apart from myself) no one showed up. When I entered the big municipal lecture room the *TKMM* was allowed to use, I was surprised to find only five people there. Apart from Gülser there was Ahmet, a Kurdish ex-Islamist who was now active in a local human rights group and who had brought a friend, Hakan. Another member, İsmail, worked as a journalist for local newspapers, while Mehmet was a social sciences professor and also a leading member at the municipal city assembly. For two hours the group engaged in heated discussions about the effects of the Gezi protests on Turkish politics and how it might impact on the quarrel about the reconstruction of Eskişehirs football stadium. One emotion expressed again and again was disappointment and anger as no other citizens, nor any of the invited deputies, mayors and party leaders had showed up.

In brief, the success of *Kent Konseyi* (City Assemblies) cannot be evaluated definitely. They appeared to increase citizen participation and create a forum for citizen-citizen and citizen-municipality exchange. Yet it became obvious that, at least in the two cities researched, city assemblies are either dominated by municipalities or are at least close to the municipality. This is not only due to the municipalities, but also to citizens that perceive city assemblies as a way to get close to the mayor. This seems to imply that a political culture characterized by - among others things - patronage as a tie between citizens and mayors/parties also extends to new tools such as city assemblies. It was also significant that independent initiatives such as the *TKMM* do not receive the appreciation democratic theory would have thought (or hoped for). This, again,

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[158] The *TKMM* are a bottom-up initiative to increase citizen participation in political decision-making processes. They meet approximately every 1,5 years nationally and much more often locally. The *TKMM* aim to bring together people with various political positions and to practice non-conflictual, emphatic communication.

was not only due to politicians' ignorance, but also to lack of interest by the local populace. Unlike e.g., in Istanbul or Ankara, a certain 'fear' existed in Konya and Eskişehir to get involved in non-established forms of (political) organisation or articulation. Often, especially among women, the wish "*to not make trouble*" or "*to not step out of line*" was given as a reason.

6 Service (*hizmet*) and Welfare

> "*If someone wants to serve his country, we call him a statesman. But if someone wants his country to serve him, we call him a politician.*"[159]

Municipalities put two aspects of their municipal practice foreward: service provision and welfare. These are also important points of contact between municipalities and citizens. The AKP claims to provide much better services. AKP municipal staff distance themselves from the CHP practice which they describe as slow and ineffective, following a civil servant mentality. On the contrary, they perceive themselves as working much more dynamically, in a familial atmosphere ("*like older brother, younger brother - abi kardeş ilişkisiyle*") and, as a team with no place for egos, with high commitment ("*not a 9 to 5 job*") using resources effectively and investing in public relations. The municipality was described as a balloon: "*when the balloon rises, we all rise together*" (Interview, Ahmet, Konya, 27.08.2013). CHP municipal staff and party acivists regularly accused the AKP of vote-buying by extensive welfare provision. Prime Minister Erdoğan rejected this accusation and claimed that *sadaka* (charity) was an integral part of Turkish culture (NTV, 2009). In the following chapter I analyse service and welfare practises by AKP and CHP-led municipalities and name possible differences and similarities. I highlight how municipalities cooperate with other actors to provide welfare. Finally I demonstrate which ways municipalities use to 'generate money' to finance their welfare and service tasks.

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[159] The saying "*Bir insan ülkesine hizmet ederse ona devlet adamı deriz, bir insan ülkesinin kendisine hizmet etmesini isterse, biz ona siyasetci deriz.*" was mentioned by a citizen when talking about municipal politics, Eskişehir 23.11.2013.

6.1 *Halka Hizmet* – Service to the People

AKP-led municipalities conducted customer satisfaction surveys twice a year; results had to be sent to party headquarters for auditing.[160] Citizens were asked about their satisfaction with environmental cleanness, roads, public officers' behaviour and parking spaces. The municipality is perceived as a business and the perception of its being a brand is very strong among municipal staff in Konya, especially among those in the district municipalities. A deputy mayor explains:

> Think of the municipality a little bit as a company. If we govern the municipality in the spirit of the private sector, of a company, it will soon be in a self-sufficient state. [...] We have an ISO 10002 certificate for customer satisfaction. Our organisation is always under supervision. Also, we have a quality management system (Interview, Ayhan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

For another municipal staff member, responsible for a district municipality's public relations, service also implies creating strong (emotional) relations to citizens as well as having a recognition value:

> Think of an international brand, Coca Cola, for example. The constantly keep relations with their customers intense. They do constant advertising, they say our bottle is better, this taste is different etc. If there is a complaint, they solve it immediately. They constantly produce new products. Our understanding of municipalism is a bit like that. It is more of a 'private municipalism', less of a 'public' understanding. Like the people here are not our citizens, but our customers. As, if we lose a customer, we'll be affected negatively. If you look at it from this perspective, you work with more pleasure and speed (Interview, Ahmet, Konya, 27.08.2013).

Among AKP municipalities, two more motivations were named; firstly, an obligation arising from Islamic belief and secondly, service as part of a nationalistic project aiming to bring Turkey to its former power both nationally and internationally. With regard to Islamic belief, staff often cited a hadith by the Prophet ('The one who sleeps with a full stomach, while his neighbour is hungry, is not one of us - *Komşusu açken tok yatan bizden değildir'*). Often also the saying '*Halka hizmet, Hakka hizmet'tir'* (Service to the people is service to God) was used. A municipal

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[160] The CHP municipalities also conduct surveys however, irregularily.

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director compared the municipalities service activities to worship ("*hizmet bir ibadet olarak kabul ediliyor"*). He argues that if everyone is happy (*mutlu*) and at ease (*huzurlu*), Allah will reimburse him, too (Interview, Ercan, Konya, 06.11.2013). The argument that municipal service equals with worshipping god was also used by RP mayors when describing their services (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008, 18) and is a typical motivation mentioned by Islamic charity activists (Jung & Petersen, 2014).

What seems to be peculiar to the AKP is its situating of service provision within a nationalist project. The aim is to 'improve' Turkey and make it a regional and world power. Service in Konya is perceived as a 'global service' to the (Muslim) world as a youth branch president explains:

> I believe more good things can be done for the people of this country. Before, we brought civilization and peace to the world. We didn't occupy, we conquered. These are two very different concepts. [...] Now Turkey is at a point, that we are the hope of Ahmet in Konya, Ahmet in Eskişehir. And we are the hope of Ahmet in Bosnia-Herzogovina. We are the hope of Ahmet, who cries for freedom at Tahrir Square. We carry the difficulties/problems of those friends on our shoulder. Because every step we do here means relief for the whole region. Today in Gaza most of the newborn are called Recep and Tayyip. Today Ahmet and Mehmet at Tahrir Square scream 'Erdoğan'. These are very important points, very important dynamics. We did something in Turkey that has not been done before. We told Turkey, 'Get up on your feet and get rid of the inferiority complex you are carrying for 200 years' (Interview, Mehmet, Konya, 02.06.2011).

He presents service as just one aspect of a large project, namely to establish Turkey as an influential global power. The 'movement' he describes will re-make Turkey's imperial greatness, an ambition larger than any one (individual) life. The way he perceives party members and functionaries as interchangeable parts of a whole is reminiscent of a totalitarian understanding of politics and society.

> As we all share the same understanding of service, they can take me today and put another one in my place. He would do the same things, the same service. That is why this party is

a chance, a blessing, not only for Turkey, but for this region and the whole world. (Interview, Mehmet, Konya, 02.06.2011).

Other municipal staff perceive service as a part of foreign policy. A director at Konya-Meram Municipality tells how they 'exported' certain services to their twin cities:

> Services to the people, can be in Konya-Meram, in Erzurum, Gaziantep or Adana. It can also be France, Sudan or Tunisia. It can be anywhere. We have a twin town in Tunisia, Manowa. Last week we gave them a park. We like to leave a memory in the name of brotherhood in our twin towns. When people are brothers or friends, they make a present, so they will be remembered (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

In Hadžići (Bosnia-Herzogovina) Meram Municipality erected an education centre worth 500,000 Euro and continues to pay the teachers. The director argued how the former Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's and former President Gül taught them that 'classic' foreign policy has its limits, but that spreading one's culture among the people was also important. For 'culture' he gives the examples of *ebru* (technique of painting on water with oil colours), tile painting (*çinicilik*) and painting on wood (*ahşap boyama sanatı*) (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

6.1.1 *Vocational Classes Offered by the Municipality*

These are also skills communicated in municipal vocational and handicrafts classes in Turkey. In this chapter I analyse them as an example for municipal service provision. These classes have become very popular in the last decade and all municipalities offer them. I will demonstrate the citizens expecations, and how municipalities respond to them, lining out similarities and differences. Lastly I will evaluate whether these classes function as areas of political mobilization.

In the late 1970s the new municipalism of the CHP offered classes aiming to make women financially independent by teaching them skills as typewriting, hairdressing, literacy etc. They

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used the example of *Halkevleri* (see Chapter 1.3) that initiated the concept of 'life-long learning' in Turkey. Later the RP also offered classes but focused on handicraft courses that would not lead to possible employment but give women the chance to sell their pieces at fairs (*kermes*) (White, 2002, 237-238).

In their current form, the classes were founded as 'İSMEK' (*İstanbul Meslek ve Sanat Edindirme Kursları*, Vocational Training and Arts Classes Istanbul) by Mayor Erdoğan, in 1994 in Istanbul (Interview, Ayla, Istanbul, 13.11.2013). Over the last decade these courses have experienced growing popularity. Under the suffix -mek (e.g. İSMEK-Istanbul; KOMEK-Konya) classes are offered by AKP run municipalities. CHP municipalities also offer a variety of classes of similar quality, but use different terms, lacking a coherent system. Whereas Tepebaşı Municipality names them *Beldeevleri* (reviving an association with the Kemalist *Halkevleri* in Republican times, Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality uses the term *'Büyükşehir Belediyesi Meslek Edindirme ve Eğitim Merkezi'* (Metropolitan municipality Vocational and Training Centre). All municipalities offer classes free of charge (only materials need to be bought by the participants). The quality of teaching is generally high and many participants are advanced, taking their classes very seriously and being critical towards underperforming teachers.

The previous difference between the RP offering handicraft classes and the CHP offering 'modern skills' like typewriting does not hold true anymore. Eskişehir-Odunpazarı's director of cultural affairs explains:

> We offer a wide range of classes in, for example, sewing and embroidery, handicrafts, *Meerschaum* and glass processing, English, German, computer, web design, accounting, sign language, diction, calligraphy, carpet making and much more. We work in cooperation with the ministry of education and issue certificates. We also offer classes on child care and geriatric care. The certificates issued there offer a possibility of employment for the participants. We do not offer these classes just to fill people's free time. Even if we started the classes as a hobby or opportunity for the population to learn

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handicrafts, now the things we offer can turn into real job opportunities (Interview, Gülay, Eskişehir, 07.06.2013).

A political commentator in Eskişehir concluded that in education courses all municipalities have elections in mind: "*The AKP offers web design, and Ahmet [Ataç, Mayor of CHP Tepebaşı Municipality] offers Quran classes. Why? Because they all want to catch votes*." (Interview, Ramazan, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013). The classes are percieved as part of municipal *hizmet* (service) to the citizen; no municipality can afford not to offer them. As women are able to participate in the classes of any municipality in their city they are critical consumers that compare the quality of the different 'providers'. Of course, the cultural centres also allow municipalities to deliver employment as part of clientelistic relations.

It seems as if the classes are particularly popular in Eskişehir and that a higher percentage of people take them. This may be because citizens in Eskişehir are proportionally socially over-active. Whereas Odunpazarı Municipality runs 70 branches of OMEK (*Odunpazarı Meslek ve Sanat Edindirme Kursları*) with 5,100 students, Meram Municipality in Konya taught 1,500 to 2,000 students a year. All classes in Konya have now been taken from the responsibility of the district municipalities and are run by the Metropolitan municipality as KOMEK (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

Classes were not announced on the municipalities' web pages or in brochures but participants learned about them through friends, because they were already active in a centre or knew the teachers. When I made it to Fatma Hanım I already had been on a veritable odyssey trying to find a class offered by the municipalities' centers. Fatma Hanım, the director of a centre run by Tepebaşı Municipality (CHP), a slightly overweight woman in her mid thirties with blond hair and a friendly face was a bit suspicious initially, however when I dropped the name of a high ranking acquaintance in the municipality she finally agreed to let me participate. As the semester

had already begun, not many places were left in courses and I was sent to the tile-painting class. Like other participants I had to fill out a form and hand in a copy of my identity card and my highest educational degree to register. Class took place every Wednesday and Thursday from 1.30 pm to 4pm, but often participants often came at 1pm and stayed until 5pm. This Thursday only two other students had come; Nuray, an elderly, but energetic and talkative woman in her fifties with short hair who left the class several times to have a cigarette outside and Sevda, a younger woman, in her mid or late twenties, with a violet headscarf that nicely matched the rest of her clothing. When I told them I really liked the class a lot and that I already felt deeply relaxed after an hour of drawing pre-designs, Nuray told me that it was very relaxing for her too. Since her son had died at the age of fourteen, and as her husband was always at work, these classes were great for her to socialize and make friends instead of sitting alone worrying at home. Sevda added that she also liked the variety of classes offered at the centre and that she spends little time at home and rarely sees her husband due to the courses. Mondays, she said, was aerobics, Tuesdays oil painting, Wednesdays and Thursdays tile painting. Only on Fridays did she not come to the centre as that day was reserved for her Quran classes in the morning and her 'günü'[161] in the afternoon.

Women often mentioned that they do not like sitting at home as their mothers and grandmothers had done ("*Boşuna evde oturmamak için*"), and that social contacts decreased as familial bonds became looser. They saw the centre as a great chance to socialize with women from the neighbourhood; when in the last week of January, the class went to a semester break everyone brought some homemade food like *sarma* (stuffed wine leaves), apple cookies and cake, turning the studio into a large picnic area. Women wished to improve themselves and liked the feeling of

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[161] The term *'günü'* describes a regular meeting of a set group of women, often relatives, for chatting, tea and salty and sweet foods.

learning something new, even if it only rarely translated into paid employment or the possibility to sell something at a *kermes* (a fair set up by the municipality). Gökçe, a round-faced woman in her fifties, told me that the women participating in the classes, can be separated in two groups: elderly women like her and young women that were neither married nor had a job, thus, as she put it, "*did not manage to stand on their own feet*" yet.

Some days after my first class my phone rang in the evening and Aylin *Hoca* (teacher) asked me if I would like to join an excursion to Bursa organized by the centre. Two women were picked from every class to take part in the trip that was free of charge. (Women regularly complained that participation was not fair and that those close to the centre staff could go much more often than others.) Soon after the bus left, Fatma Hanım distributed cookies and fruit juice to us. Music was turned on and the women began to sing and clap their hands, some standing up and dancing in the corridor. It was a merry atmosphere, as most women had already done several classes in the *Beldeevi* and seemed to know each other. In Bursa the bus stopped at the tomb of the two first Ottoman sultans Osman I (1253-1324/26) and Orhan I (1281-1359/62). We made a short visit to the tombs and enjoyed the view of the city. Although some women said short prayers at the tomb nobody seemed much interested. We then moved on to the famous Ulu Mosque (1396). The longest part of the trip (around three hours) was reserved for shopping at the silk bazaar. Time was allocated generously and soon we all met coincidentally in a corner café for tea, cookies and cigarettes. Nurhan was an energetic woman who smoked one cigarette after another. She was 'responsible' for taking care of me during the trip and we soon decided that we both felt quite bored by the perspective of staying in the bazaar. We left the group and went to the 'Yeşil Türbe', one of the main attractions of Bursa. When we came back the women discussed our trip and argued that some years ago three hours at the bazaar would have been a good calculation, but now that they had several shopping centers in Eskişehir and could buy everything they wanted, it was much too long. The bus then took us to the holiday town Mudanya with around 50,000

inhabitants located on the Marmara Sea, around 35 km from Bursa. We had fish in a simple restaurant that everyone could afford and time for a little walk before the bus took us back to Eskişehir.

Although such classes do not politically indoctrinate participants or advocate any clear ideological position, they seem to be a good point to bring citizens (especially women) into contact with their mayor. Mayor Ataç visited 'my' centre twice a year, had breakfast with the participants and admired the women's handcraft. Trips as described above were regularly offered several times a year and only the choice of destinations might provide insight into the ideological stance of the municipality. Whereas all Eskişehir municipalities took excursions to Ankara and Bursa, the CHP municipality went to Gallipoli while the AKP municipality brought the women to Konya.

It may be concluded that all municipalities provided services to the people. However, the AKP, coming from a conservative municipalism tradition, put more focus on it. Its perception of citizens as consumers however is new and can be seen as related to a further marketization of municipalism by the AKP. As a result, the AKP has introduced many new tools such as surveys or central auditing to municipalism. The CHP lacks a similar 'systematisation'. The AKP justifies its provision of services according to a religious motivation, again showing similarities with the RP. New is its nationalist or 'neo-Ottomanist' rhetoric, thus situating *hizmet* in a global (Muslim) context. With regard to vocational and arts classes, there is no difference between classes offered by CHP and AKP-run municipalities, neither in content nor in execution or professionalisation. The differences in classes that once targeted 'Kemalist' or 'Muslim' women as observed by White is no longer practised. Equally interesting, classrooms are not places of political mobilization.

6.2   Welfare Provision between the National and the Local

Two key questions posed at the beginning of this thesis were: Is the AKP's municipal practise a continuiation of the conservative municipalism tradition founded by the RP? Can similar practises be observed at CHP-run municipalities? As I will demonstrate in the following sections, both questions can be answered in the affirmative. Similar to the RP, all municipalities in Turkey today engage in welfare activities, an activity clearly related to the insufficient nature of national welfare provision.

Turkey's welfare system has (until recently) mainly been characterized by fragmentation, informal employment and the importance of intra-family support as 'insurance' in risk situations. Inadequate state provision has been supplemented by private charity, alms tax (*zekat*) and alms giving (*sadaka*) being the main Islamic instruments. Religious foundations (*vakıf*) played an important role throughout the Ottoman era (Göçmen, 2014). After the founding of the Republic, the state (although etatist by definition) assigned the responsibility of welfare provision to private initiatives. Nevertheless they were often established by politicians and/or targeted the needs of state personnel.[162] After World War II social-risk coverage for formal workers (*İşçi Sigortaları Kurumu*, later *Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu*) was introduced, however it only covered those subject to the labour law (approximately 500,000 workers). In 1949, the Retirement Chest for Civil Servants (*Emekli Sandığı*) was introduced, and in 1971, its counterpart for the self-employed (*Bağ-Kur*). These institutions were limited to health provision and retirement payments. The most relevant institution with regard to welfare provision was founded in 1986, the 'Fund for the Encouragement of Social Cooperation and Solidarity' (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışmayı Teşvik Fonu*), an umbrella organisation including over 900 local foundations (Buğra & Keyder, 2006; Buğra, 2007). These were managed by representatives of the central government, however

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[162] These include the Turkish Red Cross (*Kızılay*), the Society for the Protection of Children (*Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*) and the Association of Philanthropists (*Yardım Sevenler Derneği*). Only indirectly did it provide welfare by allocating employment in public companies.

were 'private' through the inclusion of influential, wealthy locals in their boards of directors. Buğra concludes that:

> The administrative structure seemed to reflect a desire to keep social assistance outside the realm of social rights defined in the context of the formal redistributive system. [...] the idea that the provision of public assistance as a social right would create dependency and encourage laziness was and is very widespread among welfare administrators (Buğra, 2007, 46).

In 2004, the fund was changed into a general directorate, the 'Prime Ministry General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity'. Its main activities are cash payments, education and health assistance as well as development projects like micro credits (Göçmen, 2014). The AKP government is characterized by a more systematic approach to the alleviation of emmiseration. Also Turkey's aspirations to become a member of the European Union led to standardization attempts on the welfare system (Buğra, 2007, 46). However, under the AKP the main emphasis has been on private donations and voluntary initiatives.

6.2.1 Municipal Welfare Provision

Municipalities are not obliged to, but can provide welfare as stated in Law 5393 (2005).[163] Today the provision of welfare by municipalities, once an important initiative of RP-led municipalism, has become the norm. Across the political spectrum municipalities keep lists of needy families, support elderly people by home visits, provide free cleaning services, or distribute food, coal and clothing. Additionally, municipalities support people with small cash payments. A lot of this is realized through voluntary work or by the members of the *kent konseyi* (city assembly), private donations, CSOs and political parties as well as by the municipality itself or through the

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[163] Articles 14, 15 and 60.

Solidarity Fund *(Dayanışma Fonu)* headed by the governor (Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013).

Further all municipalities discriminate positively in favour of handicapped people e.g., by opening care centres for them or by employing them in special municipal projects. Additionally, mayors try to develop a profile by initiating different welfare projects. Specific to Tepebaşı Municipality is its structured focus on health, related to Mayor Ataç's profession as a dentist and his CSO engagement in the health sector.[164] Projects include health services at home ('*Evde Sağlık Hizmetleri*' and *'TEBEV-Tepebaşı Belediyesi Evinizde'*) free of charge, a Child Dentist Centre (*Çocuk Ağız ve Diş Sağlığı Merkezi*), a huge complex for older people and Alzheimer patients - the Retirement Village and Alzheimer Centre (*Yaşam Köyü ve Alzheimer Merkezi).* He opened two 'Rainbow' (*Gökkuşağı*) Cafes that employ only handicapped staff and a Day Care Centre (*Sosyal Yaşam ve Gündüz Bakımevi*) in order to take some workload off the parents and to encourage parents to take their handicapped children into the outside world (Interview, Mayor Ahmet Ataç, Eskişehir, 11.06.2013).

Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality provides coal and food to poor families (Babadoğan, 2005, 70). It has also established a variety of projects focusing mainly on women, children, handicapped and financially needy citizens. For women programs to acquire skills (*beceri kazandırma programları*) aims at teaching basic skills to enable income earning. Cultural programs facilitate theatre visits or city tours for women. The main focus is to reach women who otherwise do not leave the house, to establish contact with them, and to widen their horizons. The 'Every home an atelier project' (*Her ev bir atölye projesi)* is comparable to the handicraft skills also offered by other municipalities (Chapter 6.1.1). Objects produced there are sold in a specific

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[164] Other municipalities engage in health issues rather selectively. With regard to their health activities, Selçuklu Municipality, e.g., stated it had distributed hand disinfection gel to 70,000 to students, and disinfected the marketplace as well as parks, schools and mosques against the H1N1 virus.

shop or exhibitions. Sports classes are offered in the park during summer and in gymnastic studios during winter. A more institutionalized form of support for women is the Women's Information and Solidarity Centre *(Kadın Danışma ve Dayanışma Merkezi)*. Established in 2008 the centre offers classes such as 'Family Education' and 'Female Health' ('*Aile Eğitim'*, '*Kadın Sağlığı'*) as well as one-to-one counselling by two psychologists, a lawyer and a dietician. The main target group are women who have experienced violence at home, but other problems (unemployment, economic problems, problems with children, health, family, weight loss) are also addressed. All offers and courses are free of charge. The centre also hosts a dentist's office that works free of charge (when proof of poverty is provided) and treats both men and women.[165]

Projects for children and teenagers mainly target poor families. The Vocational Training and Education Centre (*Meslek Edindirme ve Eğitim Merkezi*) is a municipality run *dershane* (centres that prepare high school students for the university entrance exams). It is nearly impossible to pass these exams without additional classes, however the high fees of the privately run *dershane* are a problem for low income families. The municipality also runs a five-week summer school (*yaz okulu*) during holidays targeting poor families' children where, apart from classes, music, games, and sports are also offered.

Poor people can obtain free clothing at the Clothing Shop (*Giysi Destek Mağazası)*. The project already existed before but was redeveloped in a more professional shape (shop in the city centre, rafts instead of boxes for the clothes) after the election in 2009. With this they are entitled to pick '*bir üst, bir alt*' (one t-shirt, pullover or jacket and one pair of shoes or trousers) every three months. Whereas the men's clothes section was large there were only a few, poor looking clothes

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[165] The green card (*yeşil kart*) was distributed to poor and uninsured people to give them access to doctors and hospitals, albeit not medicines. In 2006 around 11 million Turks were carrying this card (Buğra & Keyder, 2006, 215-6, 223).

for women and children. The workers claimed that they hand out around 9,000 pieces of clothing a year, and significantly more before the religious holidays. During my hour-long visit no customer entered the shop and instead the three employees (a manager also responsible for women applying for micro credits, an employee and a security guard) were chatting in the office.

In order to receive welfare, citizens need to prove their lack of means. A variety of possibilities exist: by showing a poverty certificate (*yoksulluk belgesi*) issued by the neighbourhood headman (Kesgin, 2012, 163-4), by filling out a form issued by the municipality or by a statement of income (*gelir testi*). What is required depends on the municipality; at times a written statement was sufficient. In Konya welfare activities are coordinated by a database, the 'Social Map'. It monitors welfare provision by municipalities, CSOs and food banks. Its aim is to prevent duplication of aid, coordinate CSOs and provide information, thus making welfare provision more efficient.[166]

The high involvement of CSOs also means that large differences with regard to the scope and quality of services exists, as Kesgin has shown with his research on the districts Eminönü and Beşiktas in Istanbul. Whereas Eminönü Municipality (has to) run programs for urban poor and seeks to satisfy basic needs such as food, clothing, heating or health care, Beşiktaş Municipality focuses on students and cultural activities. This also influences with which CSOs municipalities cooperate: whereas in Beşiktaş the most visible CSOs are the local Lions club or professional organisations, it is *hemşehrilik* organisations in Eminönü (Kesgin, 2012, 140-156).

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[166] The municipality states that 6,156 people were registered by January 2013 (Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi, n.d.).

6.2.2   Faith-Based Organisations Providing Welfare

Konya's main welfare providers are faith-based organisations (FBOs). Charity and social welfare have been integral parts of an Islamic tradition for centuries, even if practices have varied geographically and historically (Singer, 2008). As part of a globalised world charity is now often distributed by CSOs, however the motivation to 'please Allah' remains the same (Jung & Petersen, 2014). Municipal staff in Konya gave much importance to CSOs and argued, that Islamic welfare is older that nation-states, and that state institutions lack the empathy and knowledge private associations may provide. Also, citizens, they argued, not only needed help in cash or in kind, but also guidance ("*Feeding the soul, not only the mouth.*"). As a result municipalities should take a coordination role (Personal conversations, Konya, 2013).

CSOs in Konya have nearly doubled after 2002. An important actor in Konya is '*Konya Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Platformu'* (Platform of Konya Civil Society Associations).[167] Often organisations offer a variety of services (food, clothing, heating, education etc.). Nearly all engage in moral education as they believe the right morale will automatically free people from poverty. Also most organisations run food banks; this is due to a law enacted in 2004 that gives tax exemptions for companies donating to food banks. A revision later in 2004 of the law also included clothing, fuel and home cleaning material donations. Additionally the title 'Association for Public Interest', which is granted by the Council of Ministers, guarantees further tax exemptions for donors (Aksürmeli, 2012; Göçmen, 2014).

The organisations depend on personal donations that do not on the whole come on a regular (e.g. yearly) basis but need to be collected. To this end many organisations keep lists of businessmen or shopkeepers they contact regularly and remind them of the moral obligation of the 'haves'

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[167] Its (founding) president is Latif Selvi, at the same time head of the union *Eğitim-Bir Sen* in Konya and was also a candidate's candidate for AKP in the 2011 national elections.

towards the 'have nots'. FBOs, like other CSOs, are often hierarchical organisations, centred around a central figure and lacking professional management and auditing. At times they also struggle with transparency. As donations are not always registered, they may be used for own (also political) purposes. Aksürmeli says that when he asked for the budgets, officials in two organisations queried whether he wanted the 'official', or the 'real budget' (2012, 61). A municipality consultant describes reciprocity between municipalities and CSOs as such:

> Seemingly there is no official mechanism or model by which civil society organisations can influence local politics. But in Konya the local governments, the municipalities respond to the demands of the social organisations. They give them a lot of importance. Have you heard of the *Mihir Vakfi*? They marry those that want to marry. They marry those young poor people those that do not have the financial means to do so themselves. They organize and pay a wedding for them or rent a flat. If they are asked for a favour from the municipality, they receive it. Or for example there is the *dost eli derneği*, they set up a food bank and they support the poor with foods and drinks and provide educational training. They work very close with the local government. Apart from those there are the professional chambers, the chamber of trade and the chamber of commerce; as far as I can see they also work in a compatible fashion. The CSOs represent some groups in society and the municipality needs votes and this is how they cooperate. The demands towards the municipality are sometimes for vehicles or help, a contribution or a ceremony, these kinds of things. As far as I know the municipality supports them but of course this is not something that can be measured, what and how much they are doing for whom. For example, the municipality provides them cheap land for a new building (Interview, Yavuz, Konya, 26.08.2013).

In brief, municipalities clearly need the support of CSOs for their extensive welfare provision. CHP-led municipalities tend to provide most welfare through municipal institutions. This, however, may in practice mean that the municipality heavily depends on donations, which it redistributes in its own name. Municipalities in Konya were more open to achknowledge the role of CSOs - this may be because they perceive both as originating in the same social movement. Municipalities take a predominantly coordinative role, as examplified by the 'Konya Map'. It is not surprising that CSOs want 'something back' for their welfare provision that helps the municipalities gain votes. Reimbursement can have different forms such as access, cash or in kind support.

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6.2.3 Welfare Provision by the Party

Another important partner for municipal welfare provision are the local party organizations. During an interview with a MP after a party event, several people came to our desk to leave their CV, ask for a job for their son, or for help to obtain permits. When I asked the MP about it, he just shrugged and said that a large proportion of those coming to party events actually did so to ask for a personal favour.

Patron-client relations are deeply rooted in the country's political history. The term patronage describes asymmetric relationships where a patron trades personal resources for loyalty (Güneş-Ayata, 1990, 165). Patronage distribution in return for political support is not only one of the enduring characteristics of Turkish political life but a feature of contemporary politics worldwide (Güneş-Ayata, 1994). This is (also) due to the influential role Turkish party presidents posses. Patronage is often explained by a difficult socio-economic situation, a strong public sector, or a strong party president, but also strong ties of family or ethnicity versus weak legitimacy for the political system, low commitment to the rule of law or a government acting as a main source of employment (Scott, 1969; Pappas, 2009).

The patron protects the client and supports him economically. The client on the other hand supports him politically, mobilizes others for the patron's aims and adds to his name and fame. Already in the Ottoman Empire clientelistic relationships existed between local notables (*ayan*) and the rural population. After the founding of the Republic they lost influence to small-town merchants and influential landowners (Sayarı, 2014a, 658). Parties and patronage politics are tied; the CHP formed alliances with notables to control the periphery. After the introduction of the multi-party system, patronage also rose as voters became more aware of the 'value' of their vote (E. Özbudun, 2000; Schüler, 1998; Unbehaun, 1994). In the 1960s, urban professionals,

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leaders of ethnic groups or squatter areas started to mobilize votes in return for resources (Güneş-Ayata, 1990; S. Özbudun, 2005; Sayarı, 1974; Tuğal, 2009).[168]

Patronage practices were often perceived as transitory and vanishing with modernization, however, as Sayarı rightly remarks "*clientalism and patronage have shown remarkable durability and resilience by adopting to changing political, social and economic circumstances*" (Sayarı, 2014, 656). This is also due to the social functions patronage fullfils as establishing vertical political relationships (Sayarı 1977).[169]

Patron-client relations are not necessarily perceived as wrong-doings by those involved, but rather as a support of those in one's network. Not 'helping' although one is able to, is considered as more shameful (*ayıp*) than engaging in semi-official practises. The public generally perceives this as 'mutual assistance' and positive action, not necessarily as unlawful. These practices are described by the term *torpil* (torpedo).[170] In many Turkish families the father is expected to 'find' employment for his children, the *torpil* system is a transfer of this demand to a larger context. Rather reciprocity and obligation are in the focus of those involved, particularly as no money or gifts are exchanged (Adaman, 2011). White describes patronage practice under the RP as inspired by *himaye,* a "*mobilizing bond among members of a community*" resonating with Islamic principles of responsibility, generosity, obligation, hierarchy and social justice (White, 2002, 75, 125). Patron-client relations enable citizens to cope with political and social change, e.g., rural-to-urban migration or the introduction of the multi-party system (Sayarı, 2014a). Patron-client

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[168] Patronage was described as being typical for transitory countries and as disappearing with their 'modernization' and development. Also for Turkey it was argued that it would substantially be replaced by interest based politics (E. Özbudun, 1981). Sayarı (1974) argued that patronage structures were characteristic of right-wing parties. Güneş-Ayata argued differently in her research on CHP politics in Gebze and Kayseri. She writes that the CHP presented itself ideologically, however was also seen as a channel of resources in both cities (Güneş-Ayata, 1984, 1990). She observed a multiplication of political participation instead of a replacement of 'traditional' with 'modern' forms.

[169] The abolition of party organisations below the district level after the military coup in 1960 was important with regard to patron-client relations. As result citizens in rural areas were forced to approach district or province level functionaries to express their expectations (Dodd, 1969; Schüler, 1998).

[170] On the contrary, *kayırmacılık* (nepotism) is negative.

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relations are not only about the (economic) gain but also a move against anonymity (especially in urban centres) and a seeking of personal relationships built on trust and mutual reciprocity (Wolf, 2004, 16-17). Often illegal practices stabilize and support formal politics.

> A formal framework of economic and political power exists alongside or intermingled with various other kinds of informal structure, which are interstitial, supplementary, and parallel to it. [...] Sometimes such informal groupings cling to the formal structure like barnacles to a rusty ship. At other times, informal social relations are responsible for the metabolic processes required to keep the formal institution operating [...]. In still other cases, we discover that the formal table of organisation is elegant indeed, but fails to work, unless informal mechanisms are found for its direct contravention (Wolf, 2004, 1-2).

A second reason for the persistency of patronage relations is the lack of trust towards institutions as such, people rather tend to rely on personal relations and perceive them as more effective. This again points towards the personalization of Turkish (local) politics, and the little role of institutions albeit the country's long bureaucratic tradition.

Municipalities have increasingly gained importance with regard to patron-client relations. This is particularly due to the new role of mayors, who, as hegemonic centres in the periphery, today possess more (economic) power than ever (Chapter 4). Municipalities engage in patronage in a variety of ways, most particularly by welfare activities such as the distribution of coal, goods, food etc. as well as occasional cash transfers. Quite typical is also the 'use' of relatives or friends working in public office to receive special treatment. Often state employment was seeked after - based on the personal relation to the mayor or municipal director or on party membership. The employment of people not based on need of staff or the applicants' qualifications though is not only particular to municipalities but a characteristic of many Turkish companies as well.

Parties play an important role as a link between citizens and municipalities in local welfare and patronage practices. Party members in Turkey engage in welfare activities at a variety of stages.

They receive those asking for welfare at the party office, check the legitimacy of their claim and also hand out goods. People coming to the AKP branch in Konya, for example, asked for help with medical treatment, or to pay that month's electricity bill. Also other departments, usually the directorate for public relations (*halkla ilişkiler*) in the party, provide welfare or enable access to welfare by other providers. The director tells that if, for example, a citizen comes who can't pay his electricity bill, he takes his/her name, address and phone number. He then refers the applicant to the district governor's (*kaymakamlık*) bureau for social affairs or to the social services of the municipality. They look into his case and pay the bill if they find the person to be really needy:

> If someone comes and tells me he lost his job, his child is ill or he has financial problems, the party wants to help. But, of course, people might lie. For this reason, I call someone from the party structure who is the responsible for this person`s district and ask him for information about his situation and whether it is really difficult (Interview, İzzet, Konya, 27.05.2011).

By use of the party network, especially the neighbourhood representative, and the Social Aid Map by Konya Municipality, the financial situation of the applicant is checked. If he/she is found to be needy, the case is further directed to the municipality, a CSO or helped at the party. Additionally the party sets up its own projects to contact needy citizens. The president of the youth organisation explains:

> We try to remember the forgotten ones. Those in the retirement homes, the elderly, the orphans. We pick up the children living in the outskirts of the city with a document of consent. We take them to the cinema or to the theatre. Then we invite them for lunch, and then we take them to the university. We are role models, we are their idols (Interview, Mehmet, Konya, 02.06.2011).

However, these activities are not thought of as a one-way street. When organising a concert for university students, he explains, the party also uses this as a chance to mobilize. Those that have come to listen to a concert for free (often artists currently high in the charts are invited) are approached by party members and asked to help putting up flags for upcoming events, and thus

are integrated step-by-step into the party structure. This shows that patronage and clientelism are not only ways to secure votes as a simple transaction (resources in return for votes), but also a way to mobilize the population politically and integrate them into party structures.[171]

6.2.4   The Neighbourhood Representative

For the AKP, the neighbourhood representative plays an important role in coordinating party and municipal welfare.[172] Party members are organized in neighbourhoods, streets, sometimes even in housing blocks or apartment buildings.[173] A former Konya youth branch president and now advisor to Erdoğan reports:

> In the neighbourhoods there are neighbourhood representatives and neighbourhood communities working. They organize themselves and make a work plan. The main aim in this process is to activate more people and share political activity with more people, and to make people feel they are part of the political system. This party assignment is important because people get a new identity. This identity increases the loyalty. For example, if you give a task to somebody this person will feel he is an important person. He says: I am the representative of my party in this neighbourhood. This motivates him. He tries to detect the problems in his neighbourhood and if he finds it he informs the chief of the unit, the one above him. For example: the street light doesn't work. He says this, also other people who live in the neighbourhood they tell him about the street light problem. He also works like contact person. This situation makes him happy, he becomes a part of the system, he follows the problems up and gets integrated into the party. The party doesn't repair the street light but the party finds and informs the correct state institution or the municipality. After the street lights are repaired this person feels happy

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[171] Similarly, most workers later active in the RP had first contacted the party through clientelistic connections. The RP however shrewdly combined distribution and mobilization and taught them to fight for ideological and general political goals once they were engaged (Tuğal, 2009, 137).

[172] Since 1965 Political Parties` Law 648, parties are not allowed to maintain political organisations below the sub-provincial level. The military government, the 'Committee of National Unity' forbade regional party offices after 1965 with the explanation, drawing on Article 57 in the 1960s Constitution that claims an effective control of party finances would not be possible if municipal units existed. Dodd argues that it is based on the widely held view that political party rivalry at the village and neighbourhood level leads to disruption of basic social units (Dodd, 1969, 130-33). Coffeehouses which served as party offices in the villages had become part of a hostile conflict where the respective members stopped greeting each other (Schüler, 1998). In addition, the law of 1983 maintained the prohibition.

[173] For the RP period Tuğal describes a similar organisation in the educational sector. The party was organized in schools, hallways and almost every class. Additionally the party targeted students by handing out free lunch or providing school supplies (Tuğal, 2009, 60).

and honoured. He is happy because he is doing something for the people and he wants to do more things for the people, later they want more duties or different roles in the party. If we can make this automatic there won't be any problems in the political life. Doing something for people is the biggest source for happiness. Community happiness is more important than personal happiness. Because if the community is happy, this means the people are happy. The main aim of this system to give more roles and assignments to more people. Because participative democracy works this way. [...] He knows everything about his neighbourhood, and later if he becomes a deputy people will know him from his neighbourhood. This kind of mechanism is very important in Anatolia. He won't be a bourgeois (Interview, Faruk, Konya, 18.05.2011).

Similar to the RP, the AKP also uses existing social networks.[174] The CHP is not only less structured, but also shows less flexibility to adapt to local contexts. This may be because their ideology, Kemalism, with the expectation that subjects subordinate other identities in favour of a Kemalist one, makes it more difficult to embrace other (although not necessarily opposing) local cultural values and identities.

In brief, neighbourhood representatives translate party politics into an understandable, 'daily life' language, receive and process people's problems and moods, and are 'contact persons' for neighbourhood problems, e.g., lighting, water supply or help to distribute resources. Neighbourhood representatives are not official party representatives; nevertheless, ordinary citizens understand them as 'belonging' to the party. With neighbourhood representatives the AKP successfully answers a challenge every mayor faces with regard to his citizens: the reality of their varied interests and diversity. He has to reach a lot of people though - with the growing numbers of citizens these contacts become more and more indirect. He therefore needs reliable channels to transport his message which also makes him further dependent on intermediaries (Morrell & Hartley, 2006). With regard to the culture of everyday politics as practiced by municipalities, this means that mayors cannot adapt to every socio-cultural context, however they can use 'dooropeers' and 'translators' from among the local people. Also the diversity of the

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[174] Below the official RP functionaries was a neighbourhood management commission (*mahalle yönetim kurulu*), below this head observers (*baş müşahitler*) who were responsible for 250 to 300 people in their neighbourhood. Closer surveillance was reached by the observers that followed up to 75 citizens whose situation they reported to the head observer (White, 2002, 198-99, 235).

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citizens demands a more flexible vision, adapting it to changing contexts. The neighbourhood representative might also potentially be used as a tool to exert social control regarding political stances or public behaviour. In terms of political participation however they are a 'one-way' street, as they do not constitute a political platform or encourage citizens' participation.[175]

6.2.5   Motivations for Welfare Provision

CSOs are important to provide and distribute financial and in kind help. However, municipalities often do not want to acknowledge their role but - with regard to coming elections - present social aid as their merit (Kesgin, 2012, 165, 173).

AKP municipal staff often argue that people have more needs than just food, drink and clothing; that not only the mouth, but also the soul needs to be fed. A director at Konya Metropolitan municipality tells: "*Smiling is needed, and mercy. And we need to pray for them. This is our approach, which is a bit more of an Eastern approach*." Also he argued not to question one's personal destiny too much, as *'every calamity, every trouble has been given by god and is a test of one's patience and faith*.' Rather, he claims, the poor need to accept their situation as godgiven and strengthen their faith:

> For example, in Europe you have all these statistics and regulations about what one needs. But here it is different. Also are lot of those things are luxuries here anyways. Actually

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[175] Non-organisation at the municipal level also leads to a decrease in inner-party democracy as the party functionaries are not easily held accountable/ a higher number of members (at a higher level) makes controlling of political decision making more difficult. In the 1950s, parties had party organisations in all villages and neighbourhoods with politically active cadres of 40 to 50 persons. These organisations were self-funding and did not only come together prior to elections but on a regular basis. Functionaries were well acquainted with the needs and sorrows of the population as they lived door-to-door and it was easy for the citizens to get in contact with them. Parliament deputies were 'forced' to get in touch with the people and could not isolate themselves in Ankara. Elections within the party were held democratically and reflected the will of the local party members (Schüler, 1998).

this is the main problem of human kind, to always want more (Interview, Ercan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

AKP run municipalities generally do not perceive welfare as a social right. This may be a reason why they are only rarely involved in programs that target structural causes of poverty (similarly for Kayseri see Doğan, 2007). Rather welfare provisions happen on a one-to-one, voluntary basis with no legal claim. The rich are encouraged to show solidarity through donations. After death, everyone will be questioned about their deeds, and this fear, it was said, motivates people to do their best. As their source of inspiration municipal staff mention the good example set by then Prime Minister Erdoğan, who is said to approach every citizen without regard for social status, simply driven by the wish to serve (Interview, İzzet, Konya, 27.05.2011).

In Eskişehir, the many inner-party conflicts were an obstacle for successful welfare provision. Members motivation stemmed from an adoration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and a sense of ownership and care for his political legacy, Kemalism. A common difficulty is that both parties, due to their ideological background (Kemalist, Islamist), perceive society as classless, and thus an analytical approach to poverty is missing. As such, they do not perceive welfare as a social right, but as an expression of municipal concern and generosity. The programs run by CHP show at least a tendency to perceive poverty as a structural problem that may be solved e.g., by access to education or resources such as micro credits. However, they imply a certain 'type of citizen'. With regard to their activities targeting women, they presuppose women, who move freely about the city, even after dark. Thus, a certain segment of women does not see participation as an option.[176]

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[176] The AKP-led municipality on the other hand invites women with their husbands to see a theatre play, organises events in daylight and at times when the women presumably have no other obligations (e.g. serving lunch to the family).

6.3 Municipalities Create Income

"How come charity in Turkey is low but everyone donates to the municipalities?"[177]

Delivering a wide range of service and welfare activities is costly and raises the question how municipalities finance it, despite the support they receive from CSOs and the party branch. If one believes the literature on municipalities, they are characterized by a lack of sufficient funding.[178] If one listens to AKP-led municipalities however, their financial situation could not be better. Four readings of these diverging assessments are possible: (a) AKP-led municipalities are more effective with regard to budgeting; (b) AKP-led municipalities receive so much additional funding from the central government that it makes up for an otherwise tight financial situation; (c) AKP-led municipalities take national and international loans they don't make public; or (d) other, 'off the record' ways of creating revenue exist. Below I will explore these four readings.

AKP-led municipalities generally argued that they are debt-free ("*borçsuz bir belediyeyiz*") and only work with equity. A municipal staff explains that their budgeting is more effective due to the municipalities' good image:

> The better we build our brand, the lower our spendings are. If we buy this pen for 1 Lira, another municipality buys it for 3 Lira. Why can we buy it for 1 Lira? Because we have a bargaining power and because we work with cash. How much is your voice recorder? 2 Lira? But if you go to the man and say, "Look, here is the cash, I will give you 1 Lira for it"; then he takes it. That is why all the companies bidding for tender generally offer very low prices, because they know we are a reliable institution and they will receive their money (Interview, Ahmet, Konya, 27.08.2013).

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[177] Interview, Faruk, Istanbul, 14.11.2014.

[178] The metropolitan municipalities received 6% of the total tax revenue in their province (it was 5% until the law reform in 2012), 30% of the income from parking fees and 50% of the taxes from horse racing, as well as income from rentals, sale and investment. Additionally, they may apply for national and international loans. The municipalities receive 2.85% of national tax revenue and may apply for national and international loans. Additionally, they may ask for extra payment from the affected property owners for site utilization. Furthermore, they receive fees for services as well as certain taxes (butchers tax, fire insurance tax). It should be noted that these taxes are not dynamic and have been adjusted in 1992 and 2004. As a result, the costs of collecting the taxes are higher than the income resulting from it.

However, municipalities in Konya are not as financially stable as they indicate: in 2008, their deficit was 16 million TL (Sönmez, 2013, 166).[179] In 2015 Turkish municipalities hit an historic high with regard to borrowing (approximately 1.9 billion euros). This was mainly due to large infrastructure projects undertaken by the municipalities to support economic growth (Hava, 2015). With Law 5393 metropolitan municipalities were authorized to take on national and international loans (Açıkel and Balcı, 2009: 106). However, the 2005 law also placed limitations: as in 1999 many municipalities had borrowed from international sources, the treasury finally had to pay the debt. For external borrowing (from other countries) municipalities now need approval from the treasury that guarantees the amount. With regard to national borrowing they need the approval of the Ministry of Interior once the amount exceeds 10% of their budget. At no time may the total debt including interest exceed their revenues and budget.

CHP-led municipalities in Eskişehir often complained that being from an oppositional party affects their funding negatively as the government withheld important investments, implemented strategic projects in other areas, and made loan taking more challenging (Personal conversations with municipal staff, Eskişehir, 2013). AKP-led municipalities also profit from additional payments by the government. However, they may be described as a de facto re-centralisation of municipal politics, as the central government increasingly sets the agenda for local projects and simply hands out money to the municipalities as a purely implementing organ (Interview, Ayşe, Istanbul, 14.11.2015). Further municipalities engage in a wide range of activities to create funds; sometimes the boundaries between legal and illegal activities may be blurred. A municipal staff member says of his municipality's financial situation: "*Our mayor says, it is my task to find resources* (*kaynak*). *Don't interfere with it. You do your job, I find the resources* (Interview, Ahmet, Konya, 27.08.2013).

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[179] Also CHP-led municipalities in Eskişehir engage in heavy borrowing (Sakarya Gazetesi, 2013b).

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This contrasts with a strong anti-corruption rhetoric at the national level. Especially in the 2000s, a variety of anti-corruption measures were implemented, both as a response to the crisis in the 1980s and 90s, as well as in response to pressure from international organisations.[180] Turkey has sufficient legal regulations and institutions to combat corruption. A difficulty however seems to exist with adapting those to (local) political culture and a state tradition that favours personal over institutional relations (Ömürgönülşen & Doig, 2012, 7).

As a result of international discourse, also the AKP government gave high priority to the topic; as expressed, for example, by placing the Prime Ministry Inspection Board (PMIB), a coordination unit in combating corruption, directly in the prime minister's remit. The board however became a bit absurd when corruption allegations were raised against people in direct proximity to (then) Prime Minister Erdoğan.[181] The current reading of patronage and clientelism is influenced by a (international organisation led) discourse on transparency, corruption and good governance that emerged in the 1990s as part of a neoliberal logic. With regard to their 'international standing' or to attract investment, States, among them Turkey, are under pressure to take part in this discourse (Bedirhanoğlu, 2007).[182]

Turkish citizens perceive all layers of central and local government as engaging in corrupt practices and they are prepared to pay some 'additional fees' to 'get things done' or to get them

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[180] These are for example the ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption (2006), the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption (2003), the Civil Law Convention on Corruption (2003) and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention (2000) (Adaman, 2011).

[181] Bedirhanoğlu concludes that corruption did not decrease under the AKP but might have risen due to a range of privatisations, political decentralisation and marketization in the fields of health and education. Further it is criticized that under the AKP corruption has changed from an 'conventional' to an organised style. Bribes are said to be collected from public procurements or are channelled to foundations such as the *Türkiye Eğitim ve Gençlik Vakfı* (*TÜRGEV,* Foundation of Youth and Education in Turkey). These foundations fall under suspicion due to their closeness to government circles, e.g., the board of directors of *TÜRGEV* includes Erdoğan's son Bilal (Bedirhanoğlu, 2015).

[182] In the Turkish context, by the enactment of the 1840 Criminal Law acts such as gift-giving to the Sultan's officials, previously legitimate, were redefined as as illegal and corrupt. Corruption trials were held to 'educate' and to establish a new political order in the Ottoman Empire (Bedirhanoğlu, 2007, 2015).

done 'in time' (Adaman, 2011; TEPAV, 2013). At the local level, corruption may occur at an individual level, e.g., by officials; or at institutional level, when corrupt practices are systematic elements of municipalism. Unrestricted powers, low supervision and high possible revenues increase the likelihood. Beeri and Navot rightly remark that institutionalized corruption is not due to 'personal failure', but related to the institution's management, routines and ethics. They conclude that *"honesty and ethics can be seen as a social, cultural, local and even council hall phenomenon; honesty is a social trait no less than a personal one"* (Beeri & Navot, 2012, 715).

The increased economic involvement of municipalities opens new ways to 'create money', e.g., the contracting out, use of municipal companies, or donations to receive tenders from the municipality or favours with regard to changes in the land use plan (Chapter 7).

6.4 Outsourcing

In Turkey contracting-out mainly occurs in the fields of public transport, water and sewerage, cleaning, waste collection and infrastructure. This enables municipalities to cut staff costs; at times wages paid by the municipality may be three times higher than those paid by private contractors (Kadirbeyoğlu & Sümer, 2012, 350).[183] By outsourcing, municipalities also transfer the economic risk to another entity. However, if services become monopolized, municipalities may become dependent on the companies concerned, as only a high number of competing companies guarantee consistent low prices. As in Europe, outsourcing, other than argued by its proponents, rarely leads to increased quality, but instead to increased costs for consumers, decreasing wages for staff and decreasing product quality.[184]

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[183] Municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants may not spend more than 30% of their budget on wages. If they exceed this threshold they have a hiring freeze.

[184] In France outsourcing and privatization have been practised since the 19th century and became more widespread after the 1980s. Due to outsourcing especially in the infrastructure and utility services many municipal companies disappeared from the local scene. Drinking water supply for example is dominated by three big firms;the percentage

Most citizens I spoke to assumed that the majority of tenders were not given on a strictly 'rational' basis, but favoured those close to the mayor or those from the same party. As such, mutual accusations are raised by the parties, but find little resonance with the public on the whole, which seems to perceive this type of corruption as inherent to the system. Citizens are more concerned about the quality contractors provide. In one district in Eskişehir, citizens assumed that the mayor gave a contract for waste collection to a friend. As the waste was collected properly, citizens were generally satisfied. In the other district however, the subcontractor did not collect the waste properly, which was the main point of critique, rather than why that particular company received the tender. If being corrupt meant that some politicians or businessmen got 'their share of the cake', it is perceived as more or less legitimate if the municipality also provides good services to the population (Interview, Metin, Ankara, 04.12.2013).

A Turkish academic reports that when researching municipal budgeting, he was asked which he would like to see, the official budget, or the unofficial one. He argues that almost all municipalities claimed to have doubled their budgets through 'contributions' (Interview, Faruk, Istanbul, 14.11.2013). Buğra notes that the language of Islam informs *'practices that often lack transparency both in the use of public funds and in local-government favours granted to businessmen in exchange for donations to the municipality's charity fund*' (Buğra, 2007, 47). The scope of such activities is therefore not subject to national documentation but unfolds in a semi-official grey zone, making it difficult to follow who supported whom, with which possible outcome in mind (Interview, Ayşe, Istanbul, 14.11.2015).

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of consumers served by private companies increased from 30% in the mid 1950s to 60% in 1983 and 80% in 1999. In England municipalities were urged to outsource under the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. As a result many municipal workers lost their jobs; those remaining faced lower pay, short-term contracts and higher job insecurity. In Germany private companies hold shares in over 40% of all municipal companies, more than 11% are dominated by a private majority. Also in European countries, outsourcing and privatization led to a decrease in transparency and accountability as well as to problems of coordination and sustainable politics (Kuhlmann, 2010).

When a company receives a job from the municipality, it is expected to make a donation, either to the municipality directly, or to a CSO in its orbit. However this is often not perceived as bribery by those involved. Corruption does not take place in the form of direct bribery with an immediate outspoken expectation to receive a specific service in return, which is rather uncommon and often considered as a hostile, insulting action. Instead personal relations are important; knowing many people. Ethnic, religious or *hemşehrilik* networks are also instrumentalized to 'create relations'. Naturally in Konya critiques were voiced only very rarely, as there is no serious socio-political opposition to the AKP-led municipalities. However corrupt practices also seem to exist there too, as an academic criticizes:

> Let's say the municipality got a budget of 100 million Lira. How much of this 100 million budget was used for investment and how much was sincerely rewarded? For example, corruption, the types of corruption are very different; you are a building constructor and I am the municipality and I ask you "For how much money do you do this job?" You say you will do it: "For how much?"- "For ten Lira", you say. But then [I say] "Do it for 15 or 12 Lira and give the remaining Lira to this foundation or we transfer it to this foundation or that company". This is sad and these practices are talked about a lot in Turkey these days. But it is very, very hard to prove that. That is why public control needs to be strengthened (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2014).

The audit court (*Sayıştay*) only does a formal control with regard to accounting that is not content related. Even when they come across content-related mistakes they may only initiate an inspection with the permission of the government. The informant continues:

> The Court of Auditors did not publish a report in the last two years after a legal change. This is indirect corruption. The aim is not to annoy the municipalities belonging to the governmental party. When you say something they say you exaggerate, and indeed it's difficult to prove but I have information from the inspectors of the Court of Auditors. This is really big scale trouble.

The closer the web of relationships, the more the economic interests are denied (Steiner, 2001, 32). Bourdieu realized in his studies at Kabylei that the 'archaic economy' does not admit its economic purpose. Rather the actors cover up their economic interests and stress the symbolic aspect of their transaction. Similar conclusions are drawn by Mauss who discerns how the gift
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entails the obligation to reciprocate and establishes a relation of solidarity but also dependency between giver and receiver (Mauss, 1954).

6.5 Municipal Companies

Further municipal companies (*Belediye İktisadi Teşekkülleri* - BİT) may be used to 'create means'. As they do not contribute to the (official) municipal revenue, they are not subject to the Transparency Law.[185] Municipal companies are separate legal entities with their own budget, personnel and board, but the mayor is the president of their board. What makes them public is that most of their capital belongs to the municipality. They perform various functions, e.g., installation of the lighting system, servicing ticketing machines, producing asphalt, municipality-run restaurants or the metro system, buses or the production of bread (*halk ekmek*) at a lower price than buying them from the market. Additionally, municipal companies open up new ways to create revenue. The municipality might pay the company 20,000 TL for a job that is 'worth' 10,000 and take the other 10,000 back in cash. Although official expenses are 10,000 the municipality now has another, unofficial 10,000 in cash it might use for a variety of projects (Interview, Faruk, Istanbul, 14.11.2013).

With regard to the creation of welfare means, municipal companies are important because they represent a possibility to provide jobs as patronage. These jobs are not subject to the municipal hiring restrictions described above; however, municipalities may use the companies' employees for their tasks (Interview, Ayşe, Istanbul, 14.11.2015). This legal situation makes new ways of patronage possible; the 'traditional ones' (e.g., the appointment of supporters to jobs in the

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[185] A problem is that municipalities use tax payers' money for entrepreneurial activities though not under the same conditions as private entrepreneurs (e.g. no risk of bankruptcy, receive low credits, etc.).

municipality) have become much more difficult through requirements of the IMF and the World Bank. [186]

When mayors come to office they try to change the staff and replace them with people they trust or people to whom they owe a favour. However, they can only do this in a limited way due to *'norm kadro'*. This term describes permanent staff whose position has been prepared and approved by the Ministry of Interior. The members of *norm kadro* are civil servants and as certain rules for hiring and using them apply any new mayor may not easily replace them. Mayors can bring in their staff only on a contractual basis (*sözleşme*) with limited contracts as experts or for special projects.

In brief, all parties in municipal power engage in 'corrupt' practices. This may be explained by the tight financial situation, but also by a political culture tolerant to such practices as long as service provision also functions. Municipalities are also tools to create 'additional income'. Due to the lack of transparency it is difficult, if not impossible to trace the legality of some operations. The same applies to the placing of orders to private or public-private companies. As much of the municipalities activities unfold in the construction sector, one of the main 'pushes' of national economic growth, the central government is not overtly interested in auditing municipalities' economic activities. Similarily, observers criticized an alarming apathy of the Court of Auditors, particularly in the last few years. The following chapter focuses on urban planning, the most dynamic field of municipal politics in Turkey these days - and also the one where the highest financial revenue may be expected.

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[186] Since 2002 the independent *Kamu İhale Kurumu* (Institution for Public Contracts) has monitored the contracting of the majority of public contracts. Also the introduction of an approval test for public (KPSS, *Kamu Personel Seçme Sınavı*) in 1999 made employment as a form of patronage much more difficult (Kemahlıoğlu, 2012).

7 Urban Planning

"*Nowadays the streets of Istanbul are paved with gold. Every square meter is valuable.*"[187]

Turkey is a rapidly urbanizing country. In 1950 the urbanization rate was 19%; by 2010 it had risen to 70% and is expected to reach 84% in 2050. Additionally 92% of the country is under earthquake risk (Unsal & Türk, 2014, 15). Subsequently urban transformation is a main challenge for municipalism in Turkey today. Citizens need to be convinced to have their houses torn down and move to new buildings. According to a former, high-ranking municipal director Turkish authorities are planning to tear down 6,6 million dwellings in the coming years; to date 55,000 have already been demolished in Istanbul alone.[188] The country is clearly in need of urban planning; however, processes are often not transparent and subject to corrupt interventions, both at national and local levels.

Not only since the Gezi Park protests, but even before, the AKP has been criticized for their large urban transformation projects and the corrupt and nepotistic practices implicit in them. Urban land has always involved speculation, not only in Turkey but everywhere else. From the 1980s on, cities in many countries became 'growth machines', "*organized as enterprises devoted to the increase of aggregated rent levels through the intensification of land use*" (Molotch & Logan, 1987, 13; similar Molotch, 1976).[189]

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[187] Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013.

[188] Currently 46,296 housing units are taken down and are being replaced by 88,710 new ones. For the coming years additional 170,947 units are planned (TOKİ, 2015).

[189] The emergence of this theoretical approach was closely tied to the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s. Its focus is on "*the ongoing effort of place entrepreneurs to increase local rents by attracting investment to their sites, regardless of the effects this may have on urban residents*" (Molotch & Logan, 1987, 13). Drawing on Marxist thought, Logan and Molotch distinguish between use value and exchange-value. Land has a use value (utility derived from use, e.g., a home for residents) and an exchange value (value in the market, e.g. the rent the owner receives), is non-mobile and needs to attract mobile capital (Harding, 1995, 42; Molotch & Logan, 1987, 1-2). Peterson, in his much debated *City*

Although not alone with its focus on urban growth, the AKP seems to be exceptional with regard to the speed and intensity with which urban projects are pursued - and how they are managed – by top-down decision-making, lack of consultation with population, and the ignoring environmental or heritage-protected zones. Many of the developments criticized today and described as endemic to the AKP-era (such as uncontrolled urban growth, radical change of land use plans, mutually beneficial relations between mayors and urban developers) actually started in the 1980s. The introduction of metropolitan municipalities in 1984 was an important turning point. Traditionally, planning responsibility lay in the hands of the government, but certain main competences were transferred to local governments in 1985.[190] The central government should only exceptionally have a say - however the reality is different. Conflicts of competence regarding responsibilities due to multiple law amendments, and the fact that laws are not always applied in their 'original sense', are among the main difficulties. Special purpose plans, for example, were originally thought to protect certain landscapes and heritage complexes against radical development. However more recently they are often used to facilitate exactly this (Unsal & Türk, 2014, 18). Possibilities to change existing plans are often subject to misuse:

> Although the plan modification should be done without disturbing the integrity of the plan and should be in line with the decisions of the development plan, in actuality many modifications are dedicated to speculative expectations and political gains as rewards. Especially after the handover of the planning rights to the local governments, a radical increase in the number of plan modifications has been experienced (Unsal & Türk 2014, 19).

Limits (1981) argued in a different direction. He also focuses on urban growth but - opposed to Logan and Molotch - sees it as beneficial for the city as a whole, arguing that politicians, citizens and business elites share the same goal: urban (economic) growth (Peterson, 1981).

[190] The most relevant laws on planning in Turkey are the 1933 Law on Buildings and Roads, and the Law of Development in 1957 (Law No. 6785). A Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement was established in the following year. At the same time also a State Planning Office (renamed Ministry of Development in 2011) was created and from 1963-1967 the first 'Development Plan' was created. The Law of Development, No. 3194 was introduced in 1985. This law clearly stands in relation to the introduction of metropolitan municipalities in 1984. The transfer of competences to municipalities was limited by items 4 and 9 to tourism areas, conservation zones and special environmental protection zones. Item 9 assigns planning competences to the central government for illegally developed areas, mass housing areas and areas where the major transportation routes pass through (Unsal & Türk, 2014, 18).

Under the AKP government a significant shift in the governance of land and housing has occurred. The Law on the Transformation of Areas at Risk of Natural Desasters[191] which was enacted under a discourse of protecting citizens from natural disasters, especially earthquakes, landslides and flooding caused considerable debate. It demands the renovation and settlement of areas and buildings under risk (although these may even be located outside a designated risk area). The law was presented as a legal answer to the major earthquake that devastated the Eastern city of Van in October 2011.[192] However, it was widely criticized for empowering the central government to implement urban transformation projects more easily (Kuyucu, 2014). Often inner city slums like Tarlabaşı and Sulukule in Istanbul, or the Dikmen Valley in Ankara have been targeted, the aim being to upgrade their value. Additionally the AKP changed existing legislation e.g., Article 73, Law No. 5393 (2005), to give municipalities the power to designate 'urban renewal areas' for residential, technological or infrastructural reasons; to prevent the city's historical or cultural heritage; and to implement anti-earthquake measures (Türkün, 2011, 66).[193]

In Turkey today the relevant municipal institutions involved in land speculation are the mayors and their close allies, the municipal council and the executive committee. Citizens claim that after a while in office mayors behave as if *"the city is in their hands and belongs to them."* Due to the alliances mayors have to enter into when becoming municipal candidates they face considerable constraints after their election. As shown with regard to the candidate (s)election process, local elites (many active also in the construction or real estate sector) play an important role in the

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[191] *Afet Riski Altındaki Alanların Dönüştürülmesi Hakkında Kanun*, Nr. 6306. 16.05.2012.
[192] Article 9 of the Urban Transformation Act places it over all existing acts regulations, conflicting provisions of these are invalidated by the Act. Article 3 also subjects buildings which are not under risk but in the sourounding under the Act to assure integrity of implementation. Theoretically this includes all buildings in Turkey (Elicin, 2014, 150).
[193] Related to this is Law 5366 (July 2005), which transferred the responsibility to conserve and repair cultural and natural heritage to the municipalities. A majority in the city council and the existence of an area of at least 5 ha is sufficient to label an area as 'renewal'. The scope of Article 73 was further extended in 2010 by Law No. 5998. Now areas between 5 and 500 ha, built and not built-up, were included. Their possible use after the 'renewal' was expanded. Also, the municipality has more freedom to change details of the land-use plan, e.g., the height or density of buildings (Unsal & Türk, 2014, 27).

election and 'supervision' of local politicians (Molotch & Logan, 1987, 62-69). Municipalities are interested in constant economic growth and therefore are a natural ally for land owners (Molotch, 1976, 53). Business people's continuous interaction with public officials (for example, supporting them through substantial campaign contributions) gives them systemic power. Similar processes occur in Konya:

> Well, there is a group of stakeholders, they say "We rule this city together"[..] the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Industry, the university, the governor, trade unions and others should be there for instance. This consensus, among whom does it exist? The mayor, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the Chamber of Industry and the investors (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2014).

In Konya, local elites include wealthy families, as well as religiously influential figures, the members of MÜSİAD (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, Independent Industrialists and Businessmens Association) and the Chambers of Trade and Commerce. Ahmet Davutoğlu, originating from Konya province, was often named as an influential figure whose closeness to the prime minister [Erdoğan] was appreciated. When a new stadium was going to be built, the decision-making process took place within this elite. No public discussion was held concerning the fate of the area of the old stadium or on the question of where the new stadium was to be constructed. A citizen in Konya complained:

> The metropolitan municipality mayor, the district municipality mayors, maybe the president of the Chamber of Commerce [they meet] among themselves, it is a rather small circle. In general, participative mechanisms are not taking place anyway. We have this mayor since ten years and he never asked the people anything. What do you think about constructing the [new] stadium here? At least do a local referendum or a public opinion research. In ten years, they only asked the people for their opinion once. "What colour should the new trams be?" What do I care? Let the tram have whatever colour it likes, it doesn't affect my life much, but the stadium affects me, the bus terminal [for overland buses] affects me, the medical hospital, hospital constructions, all these affect me. Why do they not ask about these? Because there is giant rent, budgets, money. You don't ask about these things. Don't ask me about the colour, because I really don't care about it! (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2014).

In Eskişehir, Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen seems to have a monopoly on decision-making. A CSO president said that: "*In Eskişehir, there is a Yılmaz Büyükerşen reality since 15 years. Everyone takes his position according to him. When he takes a decision, no one opposes him. Rather people try to get close to Büyükerşen to profit from his powe*r (Interview, Hakan, Eskişehir, 25.10.2013)." His political monoploy outweights other actors, that are influential in other cities: even Savaş M. Özaydemir, the long-serving President of Eskişehir's Chamber of Industry (*Sanayi Odası*), is said not to have influence on municipal politics.

Municipalities hold a central position in urban growth as they influence the value of property. The value is often defined by areas changing relations towards each other; e.g., good / up-and-coming neighbourhoods or building activities. To profit from these changes an investor needs to know about it early, either by being close to the politicians or by even influencing their decisions (Molotch & Logan, 1987, 27-29, 75-84, 147). Naturally, the construction sector takes a major interest in local politics due to the high profit margin in urban transformations. However, it acts 'behind the scenes' and never openly reveals its influence. Citizens do not see significant differences between the different parties as each are perceived to engage in urban coalitions:

> It does not make a difference who wins. Whether it is the AK Party candidate or the CHP candidate does not matter because in the end they both deal with the business in the same manner. Especially with regard to construction or land use, it does not make a difference who wins. Here it is like this, the mayors represent capital. Capital, anyway has its organisations and as the mayor represents it too, not much is left for the people. Well, if this is CHP or AKP or MHP does not matter, it is a liberal mentality. It does not matter if one of them has his sponsor, because they all have sponsors (Interview, Ali, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

Similar processes are described by Molotch and Logan, who argue that urban growth is a system to transfer wealth from the public to the rentier groups and their associates, "*particularly business people in property investing, development, and real estate financing"* (Molotch & Logan, 1987, 62). Low income communities, as well as poor and small local businesses are generally

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disadvantaged by urban development, displacement and growing rents. One major criticism concerns the arbitrariness of urban planning decisions and the extent to which they are determined by clientelistic relations and corruption. As one citizen said:

> For example, the municipality takes a decision and gives you permission to build a private hospital in a place [that was never previewed]. What are you doing, you obtain a big income, which is rent, actually it is illegal gain. [...] Like speculation. You are planning a street and it should be planned here but you plan it there. Because you know someone who owns land there, they profit from this and become richer. To give you an example from Konya [...] a private hospital is allowed to be constructed in the municipality's garden [it had previously been a tree nursery]. This means that municipalism has been corrupted. This is not acceptable. Not from a leftist nor from a right-wing perspective, neither from modern municipalism perspective nor from an engineering perspective, from no perspective. Because this area is already highly populated, there is already a municipality building, and if you additionally construct a hospital traffic reaches an unbearable height. A similar thing happened in the city center; you must have seen it on the way, the giant [private] 'Medical' hospital. Now it is said, the citizens say among themselves 'Because people close to the government are the owners they received a property in the middle of the city'.[194] Now what is this? Degeneration. Or for example 'Kulecity' [a huge shopping center], it was constructed under the Refah Party Mayor Mustafa Özkafa. [...] It is a disaster; how can you allow something like this. These kinds of projects must be planned in more secluded neighbourhoods; the flow on the city's main routes should not be pushed more. Theoretically there is something like a city planning department but in reality: No. Also, the new stadium will be constructed next to an historical area/area with historical buildings, in the most populated area and the tram just passing next to it. For this reason, I think that conservative municipalism either has to renew itself or its term will be finished. But is there an alternative? No! (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2014).

Similar processes happen in other municipalities. Eskişehirs largest inner-city shopping centre 'Espark' was constructed by removing industrial buildings.[195] These may not easily be taken down. But as the owner of the area had good relations to the municipality, a 'solution' was found. The buildings were taken down, and a roof was rebuilt out of the historic bricks to commemorate the now absent industrial heritage.

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[194] I understood from different sources that Emine Erdoğan, the wife of President Erdoğan, was a (secret) copartner of Medical hospital group.

[195] In 1928 the Kurt Kiremit fabric was founded there by the Greek migrant Muhtar Başkurt (Aksoylu, 2012, 50).

7.1 Municipal Council and Executive Committee

"If you say no to me, I will say no to you. So why not say yes to everybody?"[196]

Mayors orchestrate urban growth coalitions. Nevertheless, they too, need to work in cooperation with other institutions in the municipality, mainly the municipal council.[197] I attended municipal council meetings in Tepebaşı and Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality. The councils met in the first week of every month. The meetings were open to the public; however, the council may decide to hold certain meetings in private. Council members may suggest adding a topic to the agenda; the decision about this is taken with an absolute majority. The council has a quorum when the absolute majority of its members are present. An absolute majority of those present is needed to decide on a matter. [198]

Fierce opposition and harsh accusations characterize Turkish national politics. By contrast, parties often work together quite harmoniously in municipal councils and many decisions are

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[196] Interview, Faruk, Istanbul, 14.11.2013.

[197] With the introduction of the 2004/2005 law reforms, the position of the city council was strengthened against the organs of central government. Decisions taken by the municipal council are refered to the mayor. He may send his decisions back to the council, which has the right to outvote him with a 2/3 majority. The mayor has the option of calling on an administrative court within 10 days if he thinks the council's decision is unlawful.
Law 5393 defines the conditions for the dissolving of the council more tightly. Whereas a council might have been dissolved for *discussing* topics without its scope of duty, it may now only be dissolved if it *takes a decision* on these. Law 5216 on metropolitan municipalities does not contain specific regulations on the dissolving; but, it is argued, the regulations of Law 5393 (Article 30) should be applied on both municipalities and metropolitan municipalities.
The wide range of responsibilities also implies a further gain of power on the part of the mayor who presides over the council. Due to his right to set the agenda of the council's meeting, to preside over them and to decide a matter with his voice in case of equality it seems fair to argue that the mayor holds a dominating position in the city council. The only measure of control on the municipal councils' side is the approval (or non-approval) of the mayors annual activity report (Keleş, 2012, 270-282).

[198] Commissions are composed at the beginning of every term by at least three, at most five members of the council. Commissions play an important role as they prepare the texts to be put to the vote. Every municipality with over 10,000 inhabitants needs to have a commission on budget and planning and one on land use (*imar*) which, due to the financial implications most council members aspire to take part in, additional commissions are possible. Parties send members according to their share of votes in the election. Due to the 2005 legal changes the work in the committees has become more lively due to the proportional representation. Previously the governing party appointed only its own members and as a result every proposal passed the committees. In general, the commissions meetings are not public; however additional participants (with no right to vote) may be invited to the meetings as experts. Also, those directly affected by the commissions' decisions (e.g., the *muhtar* of a neighbourhood in which an urban development project takes place) are entitled to join the meetings. In order to ensure this the commissions meetings and topics are made public some days prior.

taken unanimously. Kadırbeyoğlu observed that in the case of Van the presence of opposition council members was hardly felt. She explains it by the fact that the mayor may use the council members' input to boost his own fame. In Çanakkale, she observed that council members from the AKP voted along with the CHP councilors. She contributes it to the inclusive political style by the CHP mayor (Kadırbeyoğlu, n.d., 11-12). Somewhat differently, I suggest a reading along a local 'pragmatic'. Research conducted into the background of municipal council members in Istanbul, Denizli, Kayseri and Gaziantep found that most were business or shop owners or professionals (Doğan, 2007; Kadırbeyoğlu, n.d.; Özcan, 2000). In 2004, 49% of the councilors in the Istanbul Metropolitan municipality Council were either free-lancers or office owners (*serbest meslek, büro sahibi*), another 28% worked in the construction, trade or manufacturing sector, 19% were public officers, and 1% artisans (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008, 4; similarily Çitci, 1996;). It might be that those from the same business environment perceive politics from a practical angle. Also, bearing in mind that most decisions were centred on changes in zoning, it seems plausible that the unanimity may be related to corruption.

Council members are elected through lists prepared by the parties in local elections, thus generally voters do not know who they are voting for (apart from the party and the mayoral candidate), but they are generally not interested.[199] Being a municipal councillor is a sought-after position, although members just receive an allowance for each meeting. Most of the council's decisions centre upon land use plans (in my observation more than 80% of all decisions taken in one meeting were deciding upon land use).[200] An analysis of the decisions taken in the final

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[199] Although the party leadership has the last word, candidates' lists are often prepared with the mayoral candidate as he needs to work with them closely. The number of members appointed to a municipal council is determined by the number of citizens. Cities with 500,000 to one million inhabitants have 45 municipal council members; cities over a million have 55 members. Every literate Turkish citizen over the age of 25, who has served his military service, may be elected as a municipal councillor.

[200] Apart from approving land use plans other tasks of the municipal council included approving the budget, decisions on investments and work related to the strategic plan, the taking on of loans and debts, the selling, buying or renting of municipalities immobile property, deciding on fees for municipal services, accepting donations for specific purposes (e.g., area to construct a school), deciding on debt relief for those indebted to the municipality,

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monthly meeting supported this: In May 2015, 23 decisions were taken by the greater municipal council in Eskişehir, and 19 of those were on changes of the land use plan, and all made unanimously (*oybirliği*). In April, 15 out of 21 decisions were on land use plan changes, again, made unanimously. The remaining six were approvals of municipal reports. In March, 26 out of 31 decision were on land use, and all made unanimously (Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality, 2015). Similar observations were made in Konya. In April 2015, for example, 95 (made unanimously) out of 116 decisions were on land use changes. Due to the high financial stakes, participation in the zoning commission is especially sought after. However, it was critized that council member had only little knowledge on the relevant land use legislation. Local observers of council politics supported this negative assessment:

> Zoning corruption is related to [non] supervision. The city assembly takes decisions neglectfully. It says, for example, here Kent Plaza [a shopping centre] will be constructed. That is it, there is no supervision and after this decision is taken you can protest as much as you like. Or, for example, in the municipal garden a private hospital is constructed. In my opinion, these are very serious problems at the moment. Especially, if we add something else; a lack of vision. People who are not aware about sustainable/solid local democratic practice and also about ecological values become mayors. In general, only production of rent, production of income, favours to relatives, friends and party acquaintances, all this reveals a contract, or a hidden alliance. This is one of the difficulties of Turkish local politics. That is why this accountability is very weak because these do happen under the table. […] In one of the votes, a regulation is made that favours one and in another one to the advantage of another. They all win there. For example, today they all vote in favour of [a proposal] of an AKP council member that is lucrative for all his AKP friends. But tomorrow the vote is in favour of a CHP proposal and the day after in favuor of a MHP proposal. That is why in Turkey, the opposition does not do its inspection duty but confirms the government in order to get a piece of the cake. They only look like opposition, that is the problem (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2014).

A political science professor with close ties to the AKP adds:

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cooperation with private companies or outsourcing of municipal services to them, confirmation of decisions of the municipality, naming of streets, parks etc., definition of neighbourhood borders, decision on national and international municipal cooperation, deciding on matters of dispute between Mayor and executive committee. According to Law 5393 (Article 27), municipal council members are not entitled to attend meetings that decide on topics affecting their affairs or those of relatives (up to second grade).

In terms of sharing the rent, of course, the great sharing happens in the municipal council, in the commission of land use. This happens in all municipalities. To create wealth, politicians will always find a compromise. In Gezi Park, the change of land use was also voted for by the CHP, it was unanimously. That is why they could not criticize it. They only criticized the police brutality, but not the decision itself. In Ankara it is the same. Melih Gökçek is a powerful man. But, this power does not come from himself. It is his ability to always find a compromise, even with the devil. With CHP, MHP, it does not matter. He just asks "What do you want? You want houses here? Ok, this area is yours, but don't interfere with my plans." This is a political talent, but politicians learn it very fast. Don't pay attention to the opposition between Erdoğan and the CHP in Ankara. At the local, it is always compromise (Interview, Bilge, Konya, 27.08.2013).

Although the municipal council is the main decision-making organ, the executive committee (*belediye encümeni*) also plays a role.[201] The executive committee, consisting of elected and appointed members, functions as a decision making, executive and advisory organ.[202] When the council is not meeting (e.g., in the summer break) the committee may decide topics under council competence, easily by-passing this institution (Bayraktar, 2007b; Keleş, 2012).[203] The executive committee is an in-municipality institution, and works quietly in the background. It disallows access for researchers, and does not appear in the media.

7.2 National Institutions Interfering in Local Urban Planning

Although the mayor, city council and executive committee have traditionally been the main actors in urban development, in recent years national institutions have taken many competencies off local units. Often those needing special permission directly address Ankara. I went to

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[201] In the committee the mayor plays a decisive role: The executive committee meets at least once a week (absolute majority of members necessary). The meetings are presided over by the mayor who also prepares the agenda. Decisions are taken by the absolute majority of members present. In the case of equality of votes the mayor's vote is decisive. The executive committee decides on the strategic and annual plans of the municipality and informs the municipal council about them; nationalization, the budget, unforeseen spending, reduction of debts by non-municipality actors, confirmation of selling, exchange or renting of immobile goods (initial decision taken by municipal council), and the determining of opening and closing times of venues open to the public.

[202] Until Law 5393 the committee consisted only of appointed members. Now the elected-members (three) are elected by the municipal council members among themselves in a secret vote (Law 5393, Article 33). The non-elected members (three) are public servants of the municipality appointed by the Mayor. One of them needs to be from the Department of Financial Services. Additional people can be called to the meetings for information or consultation but they do not have a right to vote (Keleş, 2012, 282-284).

[203] Also, at times the council leaves more 'daily' topics to the committee as it meets more regularly.

interview a high-ranking AKP functionary with a long history in the Milli Görüş movement and good connections to the government. I arrived a bit early, but nevertheless was asked in and offered tea in a corner of the office. Before me the functionary was seeing the representative of a large construction company who asked a favor before he left. His company wanted to build a large complex of family homes but he complained, somehow there were obstacles (*'yolumuz kapalı'- 'our road is blocked'*) and although they convinced the necessary persons locally, "*someone higher-up the ladder from Ankara"* vetoed their plans. Could this friend not find out who he was and convince him to give his ok? Yes, the functioneer promised, he would take care of the matter. His friend should not worry; he would receive all necessary permission in time.

7.2.1 'Council of Ministers' and 'Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning'

An important national institution regulating and influencing local municipal planning is the Council of Ministers (*Bakanlar Kurulu*). It may give permission to change zoning and build in areas that were not previously open for building. It may even rescind municipal decisions taken by the city council. Another important institution, the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning (*Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı*) - a 'super-ministry' - was created in July 2011.[204] This ministry may be characterized as another step towards the recentralization of planning competences as it increasingly (*de facto* and *de jure*) disentitles municipalities from their planning rights. The ministry may ask municipalities to make changes to existing or future land use plans. If the municipality does not comply the ministry will centrally prepare the land use plan for that city. Areas previously declared as heritage or protected environment can now be

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[204] The Ministry of Environment and Urbanism emerged out of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Public Works. The Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement was united with the Ministry of Public Works in 1983 (Unsal & Türk, 2014, 16).

declared construction land. "*From a planning point of view*", a high-ranking civil servant concluded, "*the new ministry turns municipalities into a joke.*" Although de jure the municipal council may protest against decisions by the Ministry and take them to administrative court the chances of winning are so low it rarely never happens.[205]

At the national level, the AKP does not only experience head wind from opposition parties or those opposing large scale transformation projects, but has also faced internal difficulties. As the Party is not a monolithic structure, but rather a 'coalition of interests', it becomes more and more difficult to convince all stakeholders. In response, the party leadership has enforced recentralization, and used decision-making short-cuts, including *torba yasa.* The term describes the preparation several bills in a package, 'hiding' unpopular bills among others. Or, the government may ask the parliament to give legislative competences to the Council of Ministers for a short period of time (e.g., six months). It may then govern by decree (*kanun hükmünde kararname*). The decree may have been originally issued for military action in North Iraq but, then be used for completely different purposes, e.g., to adopt new urban planning laws (Interview, Kamil, Istanbul, 14.11.2013).

7.2.2   TOKİ (*Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı*)

The main national institution with regard to buildung that has come under fierce criticism is TOKİ (*Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı*, Administration for Collective Housing), which was

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[205] Erdoğan Bayraktar, its first minister, was head of KİPTAŞ, the construction company of Istanbul Metropolitan municipality when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was mayor there. Shortly after the AKP came to power, he was appointed as director of the public housing administration TOKİ (2003-2010). A candidate in the general elections in June 2011, he won a seat of Trabzon. Only a year later he was appointed head of the Ministry of the Environment and Urban Planning (Pérouse, 2015, 176; Sönmez, 2013, 151-153). He stepped back after corruption allegations in December 2013, however claimed that Prime Minister Erdoğan had been fully informed about all his actions, thus should step back as well (Radikal, 2013).

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established in 1984.[206] Initially, it's main task was to produce affordable housing for low and middle income groups through cooperatives (*Konut Yapı Kooperatifi*). To a much lesser extent it has functioned as both builder and financer of housing (Pérouse, 2015; Türkün, 2011). However, its area of responsibility has constantly expanded leading to much criticism. Nowadays, TOKİ generally provides the land and cooperates with private building companies. After completion, half of the buildings are owned by TOKİ, the other half by the private building company. It is no coincidence that Istanbul, a high priced area, attracts the highest amount of construction investment. Between 2003 and 2010, 23 out of TOKİ's 25 largest projects were realized in Istanbul (Sönmez, 2013, 119, 145).

In June 2001, shortly before the AKP came to power, TOKİ was turned into a more profit-oriented direction.[207] Its role in land distribution has played a major role in this regard. Due to the Ottoman heritage, the Turkish state still owns proportionally much land. Perouse observed that at the end of 2011, approximately 50% of Turkish land belonged to the public sector; e.g., the Ministry of Defence, the Treasury, the Directorate General of Foundations, and the Metropolitan Municipalities (Pérouse, 2015, 179). By taking over some of the properties of the Property Bank which had collapsed in 2001, TOKİ expanded its property portfolio. In December 2004, the 'Office for Building Land' (*Arsa Ofisi Genel Müdürlüğü*), founded in 1969 to acquire, manage and supply land for public needs, came under TOKİ's responsibility. As a result, a further change in the fields of activity occured which turned TOKİ into one of the main players in the Turkish real estate sector.[208] Additionally, TOKİ can expropriate citizens' land in accordance with the

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[206] It was established by the *Toplu Konut Kanunu* (Housing Development Administration Fund Law, Nr. 2487) in March 1984.

[207] Previously it had enjoyed a more social period under its director Yiğit Gülöksüz between 1992 and 1997. One aspect of this new orientation was the introduction of the Collective Housing Fund (*Toplu Konut Fonu*) by Law no. 4684 on 20 June 2001 (Pérouse, 2015, 173).

[208] TOKİ also has international aspirations and pursues building activities in a variety of countries e.g., Tunesia, Pakistan or Nigeria.

Kamulaştırma (Nationalization) Law. Whereas previously every flat owner in an apartment needed to agree to a sale to the government, now a majority is sufficient (Interview, Ayşe, Istanbul, 14.11.2015).

One criticism is that TOKİ, although highly dependent on state ressources, does not operate in a transparent manner. At the end of 2003 Emlak Konut, a public real-estate company that mainly operates in the field of high priced real estate, was integrated into TOKİ. At the same time, Emlak Konut was also opened to private investment.[209] In December 2010 25%, and in November 2013 50,6% were opened to the stock exchange (Today's Zaman, 2010, 2013). This attracted many foreign buyers, the highest bid coming from the US. Due to these (partial) privatisations TOKİ became excempt from audit under the Public Procurement Law. Neither does the 'Right to Information' apply (Interview, Ayşe, Istanbul, 14.11.2015). The number of court cases opened against TOKİ or the outcome of those, the amount of compensation paid, its annual profit, the proportion of sales prices for different housing types, for example, are all unknown (Köksal, 2014).

The construction sector is an important tool for boosting both the national and local economy. After the AKP came to power in 2002, the volume of construction investment increased significantly.[210] In 2003, the Department of Development developed an 'Emergency Action Plan' that stipulated that the real estate market needed to be vitalized in order to initiate fast economic growth (Kuyucu, 2014, 612). Using construction as a stimulus, however, was neither new nor peculiar to the Turkish case. Large building projects of the past were not only a way of promoting the fame of rulers or religions, but also a way of redistributing funds (Warnke, 1984). Likewise,

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[209] Law no. 4966 (06.08. 2003) dramatically changed TOKİ's orientation by encouraging it to form public-private partnerships. Law No. 5162 (5 May 2004) gave TOKİ the right to establish public-private partnerships in the real estate sector.

[210] Elicin writes that the construction sector's share of GDP has increased steadily since 2001 and reached a peak of 6.5% in 2007. The average annual growth rate of construction's share of GDP was 11.6% for the period 2001-2007, which was almost twice that of the total GDP (Elicin, 2014, 151).

the 'urban machines' that emerged at the turn of the century in the U.S. relied partially on construction. In order to 'buy' popularity, those running the machine not only increased the cities' debts, but also engaged in cooperation with private business e.g., the construction sector (Scott, 1969, 1155).

In today's Turkey urban development is a very profitable field of economic activity. Close ties with the government are beneficial for securing bids and contracts. Over 50% of the construction companies that win the vast majority of the calls for tender put out by TOKİ have been present in this industry for less than ten years (Pérouse, 2015, 172; Sönmez, 2013, 141-143). While TOKİ issues tenders on a nationwide basis, only a small circle of large construction companies (presumably those with close links to the government) rather than local companies profit. Out of 300,000 companies, only 70,000 were allowed to bid for public tender. Out of those, only 700 were awarded tenders, and of these six received 60% out of the overall value of tenders (Pérouse, 2015, 189; Sönmez, 2013, 137). The government, as the remitter, acts as guarantee for the construction companies' credits.[211] Companies are suspected of inflating construction costs, while actually keeping them very low by harsh contracts with subcontractors. The common term *'sermaye el değiştiriyor - capital ownership is changing hands'* refers to the fact that land ownership is changing from public to private and to new groups climbing the social ladder.

Paradoxically TOKİ is nevertheless the municipalities' favourite partner in construction projects: 44.2% of the Turkish municipalities undertaking construction projects have realized them with TOKİ (Unsal & Türk, 2014, 27-28).[212] Prior to 2010, more than 175 municipalities signed

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[211] At the same time the tax rise for the transaction when buying a TOKİ flat has risen from 7% to 18%. Decision Nr. 4116 by the Council of Ministers, 24 December 2012.

[212] Among Turkish municipalities 41.9% have realized projects with landowners, 30.2% developed their projects alone, 14% have delegated development to private companies, 9.3% have established a cooperation with the private sector, and only 2.3% conducted their projects together with a union or cooperative established by landowners (multiple nominations were possible).

agreements with TOKİ or with private developers to regenerate 'bad' areas (Kuyucu, 2014, 613). A possible reason was that most of the municipalities in Turkey are run by the AKP. Thus, for local governments in the hands of the AKP, it was easy to establish cooperation with TOKİ through formal and informal networks. Cooperation with TOKİ posed minimal financial risks at it was a public institution. Many municipalities also saw urban transformation as positive. If the urban poor were forced to leave their choice districts due to relocation or gentrification this often meant a decrease in the social transfer costs in the municipal budget. Also, many municipalities hoped for higher income by tourism. Municipal staff in Fatih-Eminönü, for example, claimed that the urban poor threaten tourism in the area. Poor people, they claimed, having little awareness of the historical value of the area, damage the buildings (Kesgin, 2012, 167).

In Eskişehir, TOKİ realized 24 projects, most of them on the outskirts of the city (TOKİ, n.d.). One of the largest is the 'Vadişehir' project in Eskişehir-Odunpazarı with more than 2,000 flats.[213] Mayor Burhan Sakallı claimed that his municipality was the first in Eskişehir to conduct a large-scale housing project. He used these projects as part of his municipality's public relations, spreading the news widely in local and national newspapers and journals. As well he made sure that he was getting photographed in the fashion of a 'hands-on' mayor at construction sites with helmet and rubber boots. TOKİ has also undertaken large-scale building projects in the Tepebaşı district. In Aşağısöğütönü, more than 2,000 flats were constructed. The CHP Mayor Ahmet Ataç distanted himself from it; the project is not mentioned in the municipal publications. A 'Kent Park' project also took place in the Tepebaşı district. To a large extend the houses do not fit the category 'social housing'. Rather they are villa-type houses with prices starting from 200,000 TL (Emlak Kulesi, 2009). In Konya 71 projects were realized by TOKİ, including more than 15,000 housing units (TOKİ, n.d.). In Konya-Meram municipality, the housing projects 'Divan' and

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[213] Other large transformation projects in the Odunpazarı district are Ihlamurkent and Karapınar Vadisi. For a critical evaluation of how the transformation at Karapınar Vadisi affected the local population see Civelek (2013).

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'Güvenpark' were the main urban transformation projects realized in partnership with TOKİ. In total, 6,500 houses (*konut*) have been built over a time-span of four years. The previous inhabitants were either resettled or received housing on-site (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

In both cities, the construction projects are generally well perceived by the population, maybe because they do not unfold in the city centre, and constitute rather a 'growing' of the city than a 'transformation'. Many people noted that they are new, modern and safe. Köksal writes: *"Imagine a person who has spent all his life carrying coal and wood to a stove, and who finally manges to buy an ill-designed appartment with central heating by TOKİ; does such a person care about architectural and urban planning, green belts or urban space?"* (Köksal, 2014). In addition, residents perceive the 'site' style of construction (an enclosed assemblage of housing blocks) as positive as it constitutes a social unit that is comprehensible.

At the same time, a trend towards recentralization (Chapter 4.5) can also be observed with regard to urban planning. The locating of TOKİ under the prime minister's office in January 2004 (previously it was under the Ministry of Public Works) was a hint in this direction. Describing this transfer of planning authority from local to central institutions as 'recentralization' is appropriate. In May 1985, municpalities were allocated urban planning powers by the Planning Act[214], but recent legislation under the AKP-government wound-back municipal powers and transfered further responsibilities to TOKİ (Alkan, 2011, 150; Elicin, 2014, 29). In 2011, TOKİ was authorized to change urban development plans in areas that belonged either to TOKİ or had been classified as collective housing zones.

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[214] Some intervention powers were left to the central government (see Articles 4 and 9) e.g., centres of tourism, the Bosphorus suburbs or mass housing.

In general, TOKİ does not consult with the local government. The new building of the stadium in Eskişehir is a rare exception. The current Eskişehirspor stadium is right in the middle of the city center, prime real estate with regard to urban development. Considerable conflict occured around the question of what would happen to the area once the old stadium was torn down and moved to the outskirts of the city. Education minister Nabi Avcı 'promised' albeit in an unofficial statement, that the area would be transformed into a park. Many in the city did not trust his promise and demanded either a written statement by the government or a decision making process that involved the municipality and CSOs. In reaction to this, central state organ, the governor Güngör Ali Tuna organized a meeting '*Eskişehir, Kent Meydanını Tartışıyor'* (Eskişehir Discusses the City Square) (Sakarya Gazetesi, 2013a). Representatives of all political parties, some CSOs, Chambers, Mayor Büyükerşen and the president of the *Kent Konseyi* (city assembly) were invited.[215] Legally speaking, this was an interesting move as the governor - a representative of the central state and thereby indirectly of the government pretended that a decision to use the nascent space as a town square would have already been taken - although de facto it had not. Indeed, the discussion had no legal consequences at all as the fate of the area is still completely in the hands of the central government. A malicious interpretation would impute a pseudo debate. However, it is interesting that in Eskişehir the government engaged in a debate whereas in Konya a similar construction of a new stadium had not been discussed at all. This implies that the AKP was ready to make a concession to the (more disputatious) local political culture in Eskişehir prior to the local elections 2014.

As TOKİ's increased competences threaten the self-determination of local governments, the 'local' itself as point of reference for the towns and cities gets lost. Large scale, modular and homogenous building activities constitute a massive (nation-state) intervention into local

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[215] The govenor himself (who had managed to become very ill liked in a rather short time) did not attend the discussion himself which was carried out by an external event agency.

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environments. Urban transformation not only demolishes houses but also embedded social structures, triggering off "*a wide-ranging process of urban destruction and reconstruction, in both physical environmental and social-cultural terms*" (Lovering & Türkmen, 2011, 74). Often areas that are subject to transformation are first depicted as unhealty, quarrelsome and of doubious morality by intervening politicians. A municipal director tells:

> We received a price for our urban transformation project. If we are talking about 'brands', the urban transformation is our brand, the Minister uses us as agood example. In the project 2,620 housing units were built. The old ones were very old, the fire trucks and ambulance could not pass. We call this gecekondu [squatter housing]. We cleaned up there from a social point of view and we did modern housing. If you would have seen the area, everywhere fight and noise. It was an area for social breakdown/collapse. It was without law, and people outside the law tried to break it down. These areas need to be lifted up/exalted from a social and a physical perspective (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

Moving possible centres of unrest or crime out of the city is in no way peculiar to Turkey, Castells, for example, describes similar processes with regard to urban transformation in Paris during the 1970s (Castells, 1978).[216] Apart from security issues, the AKP aimed to redefine the 'urban'. Just as the CHP has an idea of what 'urban' and 'urbane' means and how an 'urbanite' should behave, so does the AKP. By focusing on (supposedly) decaying areas TOKİ implicitly purports a certain ideal of urbanism. In his speech at the opening of the First Housing Congress organized by TOKİ, Erdoğan stated: "*It was our wish to clear up the gecekondu type settlements which surround our cities just like a tumour"* (as cited in Elicin, 2014, 153). If a 'global city' like Istanbul has *gecekondu* areas this damages the AKP's tale of 'development' and 'modernisation' and hinders its attempts to present Turkey as an important political, economic and cultural player.

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[216] Castells argued that urban transformation further enforces residential segregation, forces low income groups to leave the city and replaces their previous housing areas with business districts and office buildings. He argues that by these means possible centers of protest are moved out of the city, and ruling classes interests are not endangered (Castells, 1978; Pickvance, 1995, 262-263).

From an asthetic point of view TOKİ's houses are characterized by a lack of diversity. Especially

with regard to cheaper housing the same 'architectural tool box' is used resulting in high,

monotone buildings. In general no reference to the local architectural tradition is made. If there is

an aesthetic variation this happens for public buildings, e.g., the new Ministry of Finance in

Ankara erected in a perceived 'Ottoman' style.

TOKİ apartements in Konya. Photo provided by Konya Metropolitan municipality.

However, one should use the terms 'local culture' and 'original inhabitant' with care. Clearly, it is

difficult to define what the 'original' or 'authentic' local culture is and to whom a place 'belongs'.

The 'urban' also means constant move of different social groups, often according to their

economic position as described by the Chicago School in the 1920s.[217] The term 'human ecology',

borrows from plant morphology to explain the development of 'natural areas' in the form of

ethnically segregated neighbourhoods resulting from cycles of migration or expulsion and

occupation.[218] When academics or activists criticize the displacement of inhabitants in Istanbul's

Tarlabaşı neighbourhood they often neglected to mention the fact that the inhabitants had been

beneficiaries of the (often forced) migration of the minorities previously living there. Herzfeld

points out the conflicting interests when 'historic conservation' is used to justify renovation. In

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[217] The Chicago School had its 'high time` from 1915-1932 (Molotch & Logan, 1987, 4-10).

[218] At this time, Robert Ezra Parks (1864-1944) of the Chicago School delivered his inaugural lecture titled *The City. Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in the City Environment*. A specific characteristic of the Chicago School was its ethnographic study of small milieus (*Lebenswelten*) or scenes in an urban context (Eckardt, 2004, 21-23; Häußermann & Siebel, 2004, 45-54; Lindner, 2004, 113).

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such processes, inhabitants are subjected to a national narrative of improvement and development. It becomes clear that what seems worthy and preservable depends upon the current discourse:

> Historic conservation often provides an excuse for intervention into urban life. In a revision of high modernism's focus on science, logic, and efficiency, this trend invokes "the past." But which past? (Herzfeld, 2010, 259).

In RP municipalities a distinct Islamist practice has included symbolic politics gesturing to a rival past to that of Kemalism. Religious symbols were introduced in the public sphere, e.g., the city symbol of Ankara changed from a stylized Hittit symbol to one displaying a mosque (Ersan, 2007). In Kayseri the *Beyaz Şehir* (White City) was constructed as prototype for a right (Muslim) life; peaceful, clean, with neither corruption nor poverty (Doğan, 2007). The pavement in Istanbul was painted an 'Islamic' green (Erder & İncioğlu, 2008). The city's RP's municipality planned to convert Hagia Sophia into a mosque and to erect a mosque in Taksim square, one of the icons of Kemalist Istanbul (Tuğal, 2009, 49). Some RP activists felt that when their party took municipal office the city had been conquered (*fetih*) a second time, this time from the Kemalist domination. However, the movement was not homogeneous as one might think: different actors defined Islamism's urban project differently. Some argued that municipalities could use Ottoman history to attract more tourists. Others, however, were less interested in market efficiency. They wanted to see the termination of the 'elitist exclusion' that had kept the masses on the peripheries of cities. These differences over the use of space in fact echoed the class tensions in the movement. On the one hand, Islamist strength in the cities was clearly related to winning the poorest and sprawling suburban votes. On the other hand, though not as numerous as 'squatters', a new religious middle class was also emerging (Tuğal, 2009, 49-50). Although the AKP has made symbolic concessions to the 'Islamic city' e.g., it is building a large

mosque at Çamlıca (Istanbul), or in Bülent Arınç's repeated demand to convert Hagia Sophia into a mosque, their general focus has been on a built environment supporting consumption and investment. The term *marka şehir* ('city with a brand') is an expression of this (Chapter 8).

7.3 Municipalities' Own Building Projects

In Turkey, municipalities do not only pursue building projects in cooperation with TOKİ, but also with external investors or on their own. Urban development activities are described - especially by their critics - as a pure 'AKP phenomenon'. In a mocking fashion the AKP's 'passion' for '*üst geçit'* (footbridges) was often mentioned in interviews. This 'trend' is said to have started when Melih Gökçek became mayor in Ankara in 1994 and has now spread to other AKP led municipalities. In Konya, one citizen commented, the current mayor had constructed at least 25 footbridges. But, far from being functional and solving the city's traffic problems, they have resulted in increased motor traffic.[219] The AKP municipal staff, however, evaluated the footbridges as a positive advancement that improved people's access to the city (Interview, Ayhan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

The critique of urban transformation as a purely AKP passion is not justified - indeed, CHP municipalities are equally involved in urban development either directly as a municipality or indirectly by their supporting of large projects through municipal council decisions. However, whereas AKP municipalities clearly put their urban transformation projects in the foreground of their self-representation, presenting it as the key task of their municipalities, the CHP municipalities tend to keep quiet about this aspect, preferring to place cultural or social projects

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[219] Criticism suggested that Konya needs a peripheral highway (*çevre yolu*) to direct the transit traffic around the city rather than pass through it.

into the spotlight.[220] Most AKP municipalities publish a yearly almanac displaying the projects they accomplished. Municipalities in Konya, for example, focus on their urban development projects, and only the very last pages are dedicated to social, cultural or health-related topics. Just as in brochures distributed by the national party organisation, in local publications 'countability' and 'verifiability' play an important role. Accomplishments are displayed in a catchy way by using statistics and graphic overviews.

Meram Municipality's report for the years 2009-2013 was titled *'We are leaving a lasting impact on Meram* (Meram Belediyesi, 2013). It consisted mainly of detailing construction projects, ranging from a new municipal building, TOKİ houses, apartment buildings and family centres to wedding salons. A second section was dedicated to sport buildings, playing fields, shopping malls, cafeterias and offices for the neighbourhood responsible (*muhtar*). Most of the construction projects were realized under the leadership (*öncülüğünde*) of the municipality. No further details were given on this leadership or the types of public-private partnership. The AKP is often criticized for placing too much emphasis on the building, and, by extension, for reducing the already limited green spaces in Turkish cities even more. However, in the image brochures importance is given to the number of parks constructed and trees planted. The 2009-2013 Meram report, for example, noted that fourteen new parks had been constructed, an impressive number for a district municipality. However, at times it is difficult to reconstruct in detail the scope of the parks. Four of the fourteen parks mentioned above are part of a theme entertainment park. On occasion, the grass strip between a six or eight lane-road is labeled as a park although it has no 'usage value' as such.

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[220] Mayor Ataç claims that the Eskişehir-Tepebaşı district was in a bad state when he took over in 1999. The streets were muddy, and the canalization system not sufficient. Although his district has really undergone a big urban transformation, this does not appear as prominent in municipal brochures and was not further mentioned by him during our interview (Eskişehir, 11.06.2013).

A fourth section in the four-yearly report focused on the 'countability' of municipal tasks mentioned above. It provided a detailed list of roads and pedestrian precincts created. Between 2009 and 2013, the Meram Municipality publicized itself by using the slogan "*We gave life to Meram's lifeblood by conducting 330,000 tons of asphalt works*." They also mention 350 kilometers of new roads constructed, 249,000 metres of new pavements in the pedestrian precinct, and 260,000 metres in parks. The municipality also claimed four new school buildings - one primary school, one middle school and two *İmam-Hatip* schools (schools for the education of religious preachers).

The last section of this four-year report focused on all the 'other activities' of the municipality; e.g., its donating of 125 table tennis tables to 125 schools, distributing of 75,000 free books, opening of municipal Internet cafes, and a half-Olympic swimming pool, its Ramadan events, cultural events and events for children. As the presentation of the topics from Meram Municipality shows, the focus is on construction, not primarily on culture or social projects. Even family health centers (*aile sağlığı merkezi*) or sports grounds were presented from a construction point of view, not from an activity or usage point of view.[221] Interestingly, Meram Municipality also undertook building activities it was not obliged to, e.g., it built schools for the central government. The municipality also constructed parks and picnic areas, public sports centres or swimming pools. In the outskirts, the municipality also constructed shopping centres. All this is *'service to the people'* ('*her şey vatandaşa hizmet için*') as one municipal director claims (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

Similarly, Selçuklu Municipality stresses construction and infrastructure especially asphalting and its park construction are foregrounded. Since 2009 Konya Metropolitan municipality has

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[221] It is said that Meram Municipality is less active than other municipalities as it is 'unlucky' due to the district's structure. It hosts many historical buildings that need to be protected and do not allow for large urban development programs.

engaged in five main construction projects; (1) the restructuring of the area between the city centre upto the Mevlana Cultural Centre (*Mevlana Kültür Vadisi*, Mevlana Culture Valley); (2) the urban transformation of the old *Sanayi Bölgesi* (industrial area) with a volume of 100 million TL, a majority spent on buying deeds; (3) a *Bilim Merkezi* (Knowledge Centre) in partnership with TÜBITAK (*Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu*), the Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Council; (4) investment in the expansion of mass transportation particularly tramways and the Metro; and (5) investment in sports facilities. The Galatasaray Football Stadium cost 10 million TL, whereas 400 million TL have been spent on Konya's Stadium (Konya Haber, 2009).

Opposition party members criticised the AKP's activities as superficial and as not targeting the city's real problems, for example the bad smell coming from the industrial area (*organize sanayi bölgesi*). Critcism also targeted the infrastructure and paricularily traffic. The tramway (introduced in 1989) was characterized as slow, not are conditioned or heated and not handicapped accessible (Interview with CHP party president, women's branch and youth branch presidents, Konya, 07.11.2013). Some citizens criticized the AKP's work ethnic as populist eye candy; while constant building activism presented the municipality as hardworking, these were only superficial, short-term projects that did not deal with more substantial aspects of municipalism. They argued that Turkey had reached a stage of economic wellbeing and prosperity that did not require such heavy construction activities anymore. Rather municipalities should start to focus on ecology questions or projects to increase the political and social participation of women and young people. As one citizen said:

> Turkey is sated with this kind of municipalism, whereas elements that increase quality of life are needed. It is sated but there are no alternatives, for example I have also seen the MHP and CHP brochures for the local elections, and they all contain nice stuff but it is nothing to convince the people. I agree, the AKP has some trouble both at the local as

also at the national level but there is no alternative politics, analysis, and strategy, nothing to convince the people. Really, this is Turkey's main problem at the moment; it is sated [by this kind of politics]. Why is it sated? What is the most crucial aspect of local politics? The financial aspects, the budget aspects and the aspects of urban rent (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2014).

Two problems accompanying urban development in Turkey is a certain apathy of the people towards the political process (especially in provincial towns were politically independent CSOs are rare), as well as strong political divisions that means citizens of different party affiliation rarely unite around projects, e.g., in opposing a transformation project. As a result, decisions by the municipality, municipal council or council of ministers are rarely questioned or contested. Further, interests are manifold and the simple dichotomy of citizen vs. rent-seeking investors is not satisfactory. Turkey has a relatively high rate of house ownership. Residential property is considered important as security for one's retirement and in case of financial crisis. Getting married often goes along with buying a flat, signalling the beginning of 'adult life'. People's pragmatic concerns vary as one recounts:

> The citizens need to lay claim on the city, on their habitat. They have to become aware of the fact that this is their habitat and that the mayor or the municipality cannot change everything as they like. For example, there is land in front of my house and I want a park to be created there but my neighbour says, no, a shopping centre should be constructed there. He says, then the value of our houses will increase and we can sell them for a higher price. This comes in handy for the politicians. I want a park and a walking path and a healthy living environment. But the neighbour next to me, I had such a conflict with one of my neighbours, he wants something else and in that sense it is difficult (Interview, Erdal, Konya, 07.11.2014).

In Eskişehir, too, existing neighbourhoods and land use plans may be changed relatively easily due to land speculation. The area, in which I lived, Yeni Bağlar, has long been referred to as '*lahana* (cabbage) fields'. It is characterized by small, one or two storey houses built in a squatter like fashion, and lies between Anadolu University and the city centre. Citizens tended to eschew it, particularly at night. A decade ago the area became subject to a large scale urban transfomation project. Construction companies bought the houses that were often enclosed by

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small gardens and large brick walls for keeping curious eyes out. Those who sold their properties either received cash or flats in the newly constructed houses. Those were built in a simple, cheap fashion, comprising up to eight storeys, with five or six flats squeezed in on each storey, targeting the students of nearby Anadolu University. The area experienced further updrought when the Espark shopping centre opened in 2007.[222]

More recently, the area around Espark has become a fashionable area for students or young professionals as it is situated between the city centre, the train station, the Porsuk River and Anadolu University. Many shoping facilities exist in Espark or in the surrounding shops. Cafes and restaurant targeting students ('a whole menu for just 6 TL') can be found everywhere and the famous *'Barlar Sokağı'* (Bars Street), with its numerous pubs, clubs and live music venues is just around the corner. Due to a rise in interest and prices, the architecture is also changing. Whereas previously buildings were constructed in a fast and simple manner, with no elevators or additional service, the new buildings are more luxurious from both inside and out, some even come with a *kapıcı* (doorkeeper). Their architecture emulates late 19th century European architecture and buildings are often called 'residence'. Step by step Eskişehir`s 'cabbage fields' are transformed into a 'lordly neighbourhood'.

Eskişehir's citizens generally perceived the urban transformation projects as positive and as contributing to the city's upvaluation. Critique mainly came from architects or engineers fearing a collapse of the area. A representative of the Chamber of Engineers and Architects stressed that the water, sewage and electricity infrastructure was not sufficient for the sudden increase in population (Interview, Bülent, 22.08.2013). A local journalist noted how the squatter houses were

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[222] A large hall nearby, 'Haller' was renovated by the Metropolitan municipality. Built in 1930 as a fruit and vegetable market it was abandoned in 1998, when the market grew and moved out of the city. In the 17 August 1999 earthquake the building was damaged, but then renovated by the Metropolitan municipality and transformed into a cultural centre with small stores, a couple of cafes and restaurants, a small theatre stage, a sports room and facilities for the youth.

already very close to each other, but that the large buildings now made the street even narrower. He said:

> This is because of revenue, they [the construction companies] take them down but they don't make the area more spacious, instead they build everything even closer to one another. [...] They pretend to construct a garage, but they transform it into flats and then they receive permission for it. […] They are adopting new laws regarding construction, for example, one says that one third should be living areas. If the construction site is 200m^2, then 70 or 75m^2 will be garden. The law is good, but they made amendments to it, and now it is only valid for previously undeveloped areas. The city centre is not included; the law misses its aim. Again, they will build houses with eight storeys and squeeze three flats on every storey. It doesn't matter which party rules Eskişehir, because unfortunately locally they all have the same mentality. Unfortunatelly the mentality is to use everything for their own profit. The people change, but the mentality stays the same (Interview, Ramazan, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

Municipalities portrayed themselves as 'helpless' in the face of the 'forces of the market'. When I questioned Mayor Ahmet Ataç about the rather uncontrolled growth, he just shrugged his shoulders; the land did not belong to the municipality, and there was nothing he could do to 'force' developers to include some green.

One difference appears to exist between AKP and CHP-led municipalities, and this is in the area of infrastructure. The focus of the AKP municipality in Konya is on cars and automobile traffic, whereas the CHP municipality in Eskişehir creates the city of a 'flaneur' by reducing car traffic in the city centre. Accordingly, Konya is characterized by several large shopping centres, while Eskişehir (still) is characterized by small shops and manufacturers.

The AKP's discourse on 'the urban' focuses on aesthetics and modern appearance as was shown in the example of TOKİ housing and the mayors' positions on squatter areas. Thus the party's social engineering perspective ('the right environment will produce the right kind of citizens') is not too different in its social determinism to Kemalist urban planning. It may be concluded that both the AKP and CHP-led municipalities engage in urban transformation. Under the AKP government the legal situation has become more 'reckless', favouring investors. However, the CHP

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municipalities apply these legalities as well. Although there is little or even no difference in practice between the two parties, there is in their framing of municipalism. The AKP promotes its construction activity in its public relations, while the CHP rather denies it and puts culture or health activities in the foreground. The municipal councils in both cities are dominated by decisions on land use changes. These are generally taken unanonimously, which is surprising given the fierce opposition at the national level. However, the rent urban transformation promises in such a fast urbanising country seems to make compromise possible. To this end, politicians and other local stakeholders band together to form urban growth coalitions - a situation in no way peculiar to Turkey.

8   Cultural Policies, Shaping Locality

"All cities are global cities, because we live in a globalising world."[223]

Around 2006 the term *marka şehir* (city with a brand) gained prominency in AKP discourse, it is now a term used by at all municpalities.[224] The idea that cities can be marketed and promoted had already emerged in the 19th century. However, perceiving each city as a distinct brand, only developed in the 1990s as part of neo-liberal policy (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Whatever the 'reality' of the city, branding presents cities as homogeneous entities with a character that may be subsumed under a single image (Malpas, 2009). Municipalities, similar to other 'brand creators', use aspects of the historical heritage only selectively for marketing and are not interested in a complex or inclusive picture. Also, mayors use restauration projects, the religious heritage, cultural activities or theme parks. It was significant that mayors tried to invent something 'new' or 'crazy' (such as constructing an artificial beach sea in the heart of Central Anatolia) to publicize the city's names known all over the country.

The following sections demonstrate aspects of city branding applied by the municipalities in Konya and Eskişehir. Perhaps most importantly, they use building activities to construct 'landmark architecture' (Lynch, 1960). When coming to a new place as a foreigner, the first assumptions one makes about its 'culture' is on the basis of the built environment. Not only for foreigners, but also for citizens architecture is an important factor affecting how one feels about the place and her/his role in it and what possibility it gives for social interaction. The artistic design of a place also plays an important role, giving further indications about its 'character. As such, architecture contains a message: even 'functional' architecture like Bauhaus has an

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[223] "*Her yer dünya şehri, çünkü bugün küresel yaşanan bir dünya var*" (Interview, Ayhan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

[224] The term was used increasingly since 2006, but I was not able to find further details of when and in which context it was used first.

'educative' character. An analysis of the built environment therefore must not only look at the visible, but as Aby Warburg's iconographic analysis suggests, analyze it as an icon in a cultural historic context (Gombrich, 1986).

Despite the branding of cities, many municipalities lack a master-plan, and initiatives are often more piece-meal than part of an inclusive urban vision. An exeption is Mayor Büyükerşen, who situated the transformation of Eskişehir within the narrative of a 'European city'. His attempts transcend the marketable aspects of a city brand and aim at reformulation Eskişehir's urban identity, includes its citizens and their (self-)perception. In response, the central government sought to use the figure of the Sufi poet Yunus Emre to develop a competing image for the city. This was realized by bringing the *Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti* (Cultural City of the Turkic World) to Eskişehir in 2013. In this respect I discern a shift of cultural policy from 'education' to 'event' under the AKP. This chapter also discusses a much more religiously coined cultural policy practised by AKP municipalities in one of the party's strongholds, in Konya. I conclude by discussing which ideas of living together the two parties follow and how they attempt to realise it by cultural policy, thus, their 'politics of everyday culture'. It adds to an only limited body of literature on cultural policy, particularly municipal cultural policy. [225]

8.1 "Eskişehir is Europe's most Eastern city"[226]

Eskişehir has proven a special case regarding urban planning. Mayor Büyükerşen's re-imagination of the city, the "*deliberate (re)presentation and (re)configuration of a city's image to*

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[225] Given the importance of cultural policy, the little academic attention it receives internationally (Barbieri, 2012) and also in Turkey is surprising. An exception is the Centre of Cultural Policy at Warwick University and the 'International Journal of Cultural Policy'. In Turkey the publication of the 'Cultural Policy and Management Yearbook' by Bilgi University since 2009 is exceptional. Some research exists on municipal cultural policy by pro-Kurdish municipalities (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009; Watts, 2010).

[226] A slogan used by Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality as part of its marketing.

accrue economic, cultural and political capital" (Smith, 2005, 399) has changed it from a city of industrialist production to a city of arts and culture. His city transformation is the only one of all researched municipalities that reveals an all-encompassing plan and vision. The mayor remembers:

> I had the vision to realize the expectation of Eskişehir's citizens to minimize troubles of the city and to transform it from a small town (*kasaba*) into an exemplary, beautiful and modern city. The biggest success is that now Eskişehir's citizens can proudly say "I 'm from Eskişehir". Our visitors that come from all over Turkey say: "We want a city like this." Yes, Eskişehir has indeed become an exemplary city. [...] I believe that each of the projects we realized in Eskişehir is a success of its own. They are extremely pleased to raise their children here. They are optimistic about the future of the city and build their dreams on it (Interview, Mayor Yılmaz Büyüerşen, Eskişehir, 09.09.2013).

Many citizens said that whereas the city had been modern and wealthy and 'ahead of its time' in the 1960s and 70s it has declined since. Muddy roads, horse droppings scattered everywhere, bad traffic and a smelly river discouraged citizens from spending more time in the city centre than absolutely necessary. Mayor Büyükerşen's vision of a new Eskişehir responded to the wish for change citizens had. A vision '*roots a community in the past, explains its present, and conjures up a preferred future*' (Grint, 2000, 14). His vision for Eskişehir was European, and his examplary places were Strasbourg and Vienna (Babadoğan, 2005, 31, 58; Milliyet, 2003). However his staff and citizens' perception of what 'being a European city' actually meant, were somewhat blurry. In conversations, the term 'European' was often used synonymously with 'modern' (Eskişehir, 2011 and 2013).

The mayor described a 'European city' as one with modern mass transportation, sufficient green spaces and an attractive city centre. He also included 'happy people' who paid attention to the cityscape. On several occasions he mentioned that a 'European City' may be created without the country being a member of the European Union (EU). Jokingly he claimed that Eskişehir qualifies as an EU member, even if Turkey doesn't (Babadoğan, 2005, 113-116).

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The most important urban planning projects in Eskişehir were the introduction of the tramway 'Estram' and the urban renewal of the area around the Porsuk river. For these projects, Eskişehir municipality recieved 205 trillion TL from the central government in 2004 (an increase of 65% compared with the previous year). Additional funding was received from external sources: 110 million euros from the European Investment Bank, 32 million dollars from the NKE Finance Agency and 25 million dollars from the North Scandinavian Investment Bank (Babadoğan, 2005, 54-55).

Estram (double rail line) was opened with two lines in 2004 and extended to five lines in 2014.[227] In 2004, Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality was awarded the 'World Rail Transport Reward' by the International Association of Public Transport (Estram Webpage, n.d.). Additionally, a mass transportation plan extending up to 2020 was developed in cooperation with Istanbul Technical University. Citizens say that since Estram services commenced, the city has changed and taken on an 'urban' identity (Interview, Ramazan, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013). For many, the introduction of this 'urban' transportation system seemed to mark the shift from *kasaba* to city, however, it is questionable to which extent the tramway actually solved the city's traffic problem.

The Porsuk River renewal project began in 2001. Until 1960 swimming and fishing was possible in the river, but industrial waste had turned it into a smelly cesspool in which living beings could not survive. "*When I was young*", an architect remembers,

> We used to go to the river with our families. There were a lot of open air cinemas, just a big screen and boxes. Everyone brought *çekirdek* [nibbles from different kernels], and the cinema owner sold tea. The cinemas were just separated by large pieces of linen. Often you watched one film, but heard the sound of the other film, from the cinema next to you. It was a jolly place where all neighbours met (Interview, Bülent, Eskişehir, 22.08.2013).

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[227] The project was undertaken jointly by the Canadian company Bombardier and the Turkish company 'Yapı Merkezi' that had, for example, already built the light railway in Istanbul and the subway in Izmir.

When the river died, increasing numbers of people avoided going there. Some of the family cinemas turned into red-light cinemas and social life at the riverside declined. Subsequently, the first step in the Porsuk project was to clean and revitalize the river. In a second phase the area around the river was aesthetically 'recreated' by building activities and decorative elements. The area around the central bridge Köprübaşı experienced the most significant transformation. Some houses either had to be demolished or were modified, the municipality offered quadruple prices for their title deeds (Babadoğan, 2005).

Many tasks were executed by municipal companies to keep costs down. The *İmar İnşaat Ticaret* company produced cement, and the *Kent Dizayn* company produced urban structures including kiosks, bridge parts, statues, and decorative and illuminated pools. Almost all of the styles were designed by Mayor Büyükerşen in European examples. To model the 'beautification' of the canal, St. Petersbourg was used as an example and municipal staff were sent there for training purposes. In 2004, Dutch-style river boats were introduced. Later, Venetian-style gondolas, which could be rented by tourists or for weddings, were added (Babadoğan, 2005, 58-65). Today the area around Porsuk once again constitutes the city centre, and the cafes and restaurants at its edges keep the area lively day and night.

Apart from transportation and Porsuk's regeneration, other urbanist projects aimed at changing the image of the city from a decaying industrial town, to one that welcomed the 'flaneur'. Phaetons, once typical of Eskişehir's cityscape in the 1970s, were re-introduced for tourists or weddings. Their current design however, does not ressemble simple horse-drawn carriages, but is inspired by Viennese phaetons.

One of Mayor Büyükerşen's main other tools to realize Eskişehir's transformation was the addition of sculptures to beautify the city. In an interview Mayor Büyükerşen advised on the use of statues in public:

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Every city for sure has places that are suitable to erect statues. But, as our relation to statues is quite new, it is advised not to use abstract statues but rather those with an emotional or memorial aspect. But not all statues should be memorial. I think we are in a transition period and priority should be given to figurative sculptures. As for materials, bronze and marble are the finest materials (Altınşehir Adana, 2011).

Mayor Büyükerşen is not only a professor of economics, but also a hobby wax sculptor. In his use of sculpture, he stands within a Kemalist art tradition. Unlike theatre or music there was no tradition of sculpture in Turkey; it had to be newly developed as figurative forms were pereceived as opposing an Islamic canon. Thus, the erecting of statues was a clear statement towards a 'deislamisation' of public space and a turn towards a 'Western' artistic tradition. In 1923, Atatürk declared that:

Any nation in the world which wants to be civilized, progressive, and perfect in every way is found to produce sculptors and to make statues. Those who claim that erecting statues as memorials of history is against the laws of Islam are those who have not studied their Islamic canon law. [...] Our nation, which is both religious and enlightened, will develop the art of sculpture, which is one of the means of progress, and will declare this to the whole world by erecting in every corner of the country beautiful sculptures as memorials of our ancestors for all the coming generations. [...] Our nation with its true qualities is worthy to be civilized and progressive (as cited in And, 1984, 228).

Statues in this tradition depict idealized monuments of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the War of Independence, their aim being to evoke feelings of national unity and pride. Others statues imagined a new Turkish nation and had an educational approach providing examples of heroic men and women one should follow (Gür, 2013; Kreiser, 2002). In its educational and classless approach, Kemalist statues show similarities to Socialist and National Socialist Art (Czech & Doll, 2007).

Sculptures in Eskişehir may be separated into three types. Some sculptures depict moments from the War of Independence or groups of soldiers. Other sculptures, in accordance with Kemalist ideology, depict average people like potters, sportsmen, doctors, sowers and builders. Differences in class or status are denied. These two subjects stand in a direct Kemalist artistic tradition.
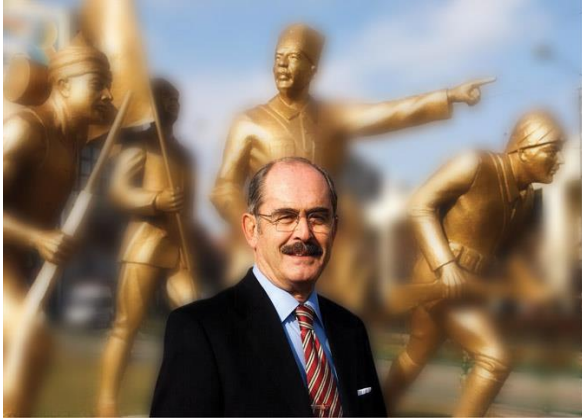
Left: Mayor Büyükerşen in front of a group of soldiers' sculptures (Photo provided by Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality). Right: Sculpture at Köprübaşı bridge depicting a fisherman (Photo taken by the author).

The third, largest group of statues is simply decorative and follows an historistic artistic tradition aiming to develop a new (European) image for Eskişehir.

In the summer of 2002, 40 statues of fibred cement were placed along the river and all around the city centre. The mayor himself made all designs. They are painted mostly in turquoise and gold, some pretend to be bronze. Their strong reference to water is striking (given the fact that Eskişehir is located in the middle of Central Anatolia), as they include large numbers of fountains and pools and depict dolphins. The use of sculptures to beautify the city has become a 'distinctive characteristic' of Kemalist municipalism. Antalya's CHP Mayor Mustafa Akaydın and Mersin's CHP Mayor Macit Özcan have started displaying them as well. But this 'beautification' might also be seen from a wider perspective, as also other cities like Skopje attempt to turn themselves into an 'Antique Disneyland' (Bieber, 2013).

Left: The picture shows Eskişehir's 'coat of arms' as introduced by the Metropolitan municipality and the date of 2003. Interesting are the shell like decorations on its top - despite the fact that there are not shells to be found in the city.

Middle: The picture represents a large fountain placed in the city's centre in front of the 'Kanatlı Shopping Centre'. The fountain is decorated by a large vase in antique style, decorated with garlands and applications. Two mermaids, only slightly dressed, carry the vase. Here a strong reference to water and the ocean is apparent.

Right: The picture shows a lion carrying the city's coat of arms. Lions are placed in front of the Metropolitan municipality's building at both sides of the stairs, transforming its functional architecture into a stately building. All photos taken by the author.

Mayor Büyükerşen's frequent reference to artistic forms of Classic or Baroque Art is historicist. This style was the artistic tool of identity formation in the 19th century both in the context of growing European nationalism and even more so in the context of an emerging bourgeoisie. Until the French revolution in 1789, the development and promotion of artistic styles had been an occupation of the courts. Because the newly-emerged, mainly urban middle class was not able to develop an artistic style of its own, they used already existing styles by blending them into something new – Historism. Such art functioned to create national feelings; Cohen demonstrates how in 19th century France the erection of statues was an educative means employed by local governments in the formation of an (imagined) community of Frenchmen (1989). Archeology, the 'rediscovery' of 'Europe's great history', also led to the acceptance of the merging of different

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artistic styles. Historicism, in other words, is a 'masquerade', which marked a period that lacked the artistic virtuosity of previous times but which aimed at keeping an appearance of old, great art. Similarily, Mayor Büyükerşen, resorted to already established forms albeit mixing them in a new context. His frequent use of 'imperial' symbols, for example lion sculptures, in order to beautify the city expresses his wish to connect Eskişehir with imperial cities and to invent a new narrative for it by imitating European residencies.

The term 'invention of tradition' describes the construction of a continuity with an (imagined) past to establish certain values and norms in contemporary society. Hobsbawm and Ranger describe it as:

> [...] a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, 1).

Constructed traditions are often tools of the state or other dominant groups, used to develop feelings of patriotism and nationalism. They happen more frequently in times of social or political change as a way to counterbalance these eruptions and to develop new norms with social functions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, 4-5). In a certain way this is also true for Eskişehir and its generation of a new identity for the city when the industrial period - at least in the city centre - ended and the city was redefined as one of arts and education. Similarly, Mayor Büyükerşen's statues are meant to transform the meaning of the city. Simply dismissing them as 'kitsch' would be short sighted.

In general, the citizens' reaction to the 'new city' is mainly positive. Most of them are proud of their 'beautiful city'; for them it has gained 'grandness' and luxury and became a tourist magnet. Only a few citizens (mainly students and staff from Anadolu University) criticize the artistic value of the statues and the materials used, the strange use of colour and their kitsch appearance.
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In the main, they criticize the non-authenticity, and the non-originality of the statues. A nationalistic-religious segment of society criticized the display of nude sculptures as well. The statues were perceived as not being 'genuine' to Turkey's values and traditions but to be a *gavur* (infidel) art. The religiously-oriented Tevhid Haber newspaper wrote that: "*Mayor Büyükerşen, who erects greek statues in a city that has been occupied by the Greeks for three years during the War of Independence, stays in Rhodos during the bayram* [religious holiday]" and claimed that he changed more than 3,700 street names, thereby damaging public memory (Tevhid Haber, 2009).

Citizens credit Eskişehir's transformation to Mayor Büyükerşen alone. This again points to the 'personalisation' of Turkish municipalism, but is also an indicator of Mayor Büyükerşen's leadership style. An elderly man of about the same age as the mayor remembers that:

> Eskişehir always had a potential, because of our industry, the high amount of migrants, the good education and our geography in the middle of Central Anatolia. We are close to the capital, and to Istanbul and Bursa. Yılmaz understood this potential and developed it. He doesn't care what the *simit* [circular sesame bread] seller or the little shopkeeper think – he has an idea and he simply does it. When he wants a park, he creates a park. When he needs money, he goes to the local elites, or applies for funding from the EU. He doesn't bother: "What do you like? How should this bridge be?" He does what he wants, but normally people like it (Personal conversation, Mehmet, 12.04.2013).

The transformation rests on Mayor Büyükerşen's 'vision', as participatory-mechanisms didn't exist; citizens were neither asked, nor informed about urban initiatives. In 1999, a meeting was organized assembling over 300 participants from CSOs, universities, unions, chambers and municipal staff to discuss the city's transformation and generate ideas. Once it was concluded, the experts took over. Municipal staff declared that they had worked 'in a scientific' way, and that the public would understand the merits of it later (Babadoğan, 2005, 83).

Citizens living in the outskirts of the city claimed that the municipality had only improved a rather small area in the city centre, neglecting the rest of the city (Interview, neighbourhood headwoman, Eskişehir, 12.06.2013). A local journalist adds:

> The people in Erenköy are really aggrieved (*mağdur*). [The tourists] come [and say] 'Oh, the parks are so nice'. But why don't the municipalities look at the other neighbourhoods [apart from the city centre]. Three, four days ago there was a lot of rain, and Erenköy was turned into a lake again, it is all under water. There is an unbelievable population, it is not a village at all, it's a proper neighbourhood of Eskişehir. It is only ten minutes by tramway (Interview, Ramazan, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

Another important aspect of Eskişehir's transformance under Mayor Büyükerşen has been the creation of parks. Kent Park has been specifically promoted as it includes an artificial beach, one of the municipality's flag ship projects.[228]

Left: The picture shows Kent Park Beach (approximately 350 metres long).
Right: The picture shows the Fairy Tale Castle at Sazova Park. Photos provided by Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality.

The *Bilim, Sanat ve Kültür Parkı* (Science, Art and Culture Park, known as Sazova Parkı) includes an open air amphitheatre with 2,000 seats, a science centre and a planetarium. Among its most visited attractions is a 'fairy tale castle' and a large, accessible replica of the ship 'May Flower'. A narrow-gauge railroad (made in Germany in 1918), which used to transport workers

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[228] Kent Park is quite large (300,000m²) and located between the intercity bus station and Gökmeydan district. The whole area was upgraded due to the park and many new construction projects developed around it. Kent Park also includes a semi-Olympic swimming pool, several restaurants, sports facilities, kiosks and many statues designed by the mayor. It is the furthest point that may be reached by the boats operating on Porsuk River.

between the Sugar company and the Air Supply Centre, was reactivated as a touristic attraction. The 'fairy tale castle' is a fusion of 13 Turkish towers. It tries to create a magic wonderland resembling the castle in the Disney logo. At the same time, the park functions as an icon for Eskişehir, and has been reproduced widely by the metropolitan municipality in leaflets or image films. A small scale park, the *Şehr-i Aşk Adası* (City of Love Island) is located in the Porsuk river between the city centre and Kent Park. Its dutch style draw bridges and beautiful flower gardens make it a popular photographic spot for newly weds. The Director of Cultural Affairs of AKP-led Odunpazarı municipality acknowledges that the parks created by Mayor Büyükerşen are part of Eskişehir's brand. However, she added: "*Other cities actually have larger parks, but as Eskişehir didn't have any parks previously, that is why the parks come to mind as a brand*" (Interview, Gülay, Eskişehir, 07.06.2013).

Mayor Büyükerşen understood earlier than most others that cities need strong images to hold their ground and developed an identifiable brand for Eskişehir. Culture has become an important part of the service industry, as cities are no longer only sites of production, but also of (cultural) consumption (Zukin, 1995). In order to create a successful city brand and transform a city's image, political leaders need a vision and be able to translate it into a comprehensive, inclusive narrative (Sevcik, 2011). Hakala and Öztürk stress that "*It is the visionary people who ultimately drive the strategies, decisions, designs and policies*" (Hakala & Öztürk, 2013, 183). A vision is important as the basis for the devlopment of strategic and development plans. Often this is difficult due to the lack of unity among decision makers, and long-term developments need the advocacy and support of citizens. Mayor Büyükerşen was particularly successful in 'selling' his transformation. Although Eskişehir is 'only' a mid-sized Anatolian town, it attracts national tourists, particularly from the region. Similarly he has created a name for himself. The artificial beach constructed in Kent Park was presented as a sensation in the national media, and Mayor

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Büyükerşen was celebrated as the man who brought the sea to Central Anatolia. He invited journalists and opinion leaders to the city, who subsequently spread the word. As a result, the tourist numbers tripled from 50,000 in 2003 to over 150,000 in 2009 (Hakala & Öztürk, 2013, 185).

8.1.1 *Eskişehir Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti-* Cultural City of the Turkic World

Mayor Büyükerşen's imagining and transforming of Eskişehir into a 'European' city of arts and education is contested by the AKP government. On 23 March 2013 Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Eskişehir for two events, the opening of the high-speed train connection between Konya and Eskişehir in the morning, and the opening ceremony of Eskişehir's Cultural Capitalship (*Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti*) in the afternoon. Erdoğan said: "*This is not only a train connection, but also a bridge of hearts between Eskişehir and Konya, between Yunus Emre and Mevlana.*"[229] He also linked his party's ideology to Yunus Emre's legacy by noting that they work in his spirit while "*using Yunus' language*". He claimed that the main pillars of Turkey's culture are Yunus Emre, Mevlana and Hacı Bektaşi.[230] A few hours later, he repeated the idea that Eskişehir is known in the world as Yunus Emre's heritage at the opening event declaring Eskişehir 'the capital of the Turkic world'. He said it is a city that tolerates different lifestyles, but did not trace this back to its history but to Yunus Emre's saying: "*I love the creations because of the creator (Yaratılanı severim, yaratandan ötürü)*".

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[229] This idea is repeated also by others, e.g., Minister of Education Nabi Avcı (AKP) at the opening ceremony of the Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti, 23.03.13, who said: "We connected Mevlana's fellow townsmen (*hemşehri*) with Yunus' townsmen."

[230] Prime Minister Erdoğan at opening of high speed train line Konya-Eskişehir, 23.10.2013.

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In 2013 Eskişehir became 'Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti' (Cultural Capital of the Turkic World).[231] The decision was taken in 2010 at the meeting of Turkic Countries (*Türk Dili Konuşan Ülkeler Devlet Başkanları 10. Zirve Toplantısı*). Prior to Eskişehir, Astana, the capital of Kazahkstan held the title (Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti, 2013). The Eskişehir Cultural Capital period is an attempt by the AKP-government to develop an alltogether new city narrative, diverging from that proposed by its political opponent, Mayor Büyükerşen. This new city narrative was based on the Turkish poet and Sufi Yunus Emre. Most of the events focused on Yunus Emre's heritage, e.g., visits to his alleged tomb (*türbe*), publications telling his biography, conferences and symposiums.[232]

In a similar way, the AKP focused on (multi) religiosity in its topics, logos and semiotics while hosting 'Istanbul Culture Capital of Europe' in 2010. The city's rich historical and architectural heritage was exploited to stress the city's multi-religious and multi-cultural past and present it as a city of tolerance binding Orient and Occident (Uysal, 2013). This approach to culture is religious, though not in a threatening way and elusive, as it does not really take a confrontational position. This can be seen in accordance with AKP's ideology of conservative democracy which is also hazy and leaves the government much room for manoeuvre (Joppien, 2011a). Part of its adaptability is to formulate open positions that can include different local groups.

For the festival's execution, an agency (*Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti Ajansı*) was founded. The executive committee consisted of 12 members, including the Governor, Metropolitan municipality Mayor Büyükerşen, Odunpazarı Municipality Mayor Sakallı, the Presidents of the

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[231] In the same year, Eskişehir was also declared UNESCO intangible heritage capital. Aspects of local culture like Nasrettin Hoca, Yunus Emre, Seyit Battal Gazi, as well as folk songs and poetry, were celebratedin symposia, exhibitions and events. However, some critics complained that they were overshadowed by the events organised under the umbrella of Eskişehir Cultural Capital.

[232] Other events commemorated on Nasrettin Hoca, whose hat was also used as a logo. Different foods, dances or sports of Turkic countries were presented. Another aspect were visits by politicians from Turkic countries or exchange programs for students or artists.

Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as the President of the Tradesmen and Artisan's Union, and the Rector of Osmangazi University. The money for the *Türk Dünyası Başkenti* came from the central government, but also from the Chambers of Trade and Industry and sponsors. The universities mainly provided support in kind, such as stages, technicians, or publications. Municipalities provided infrastructure but were financially supported by the provincial administration.[233]

The Cultural Capital was not particularly well acclaimed by the city's inhabitants, the most important reason being the non-inclusion of local actors and civil society organisations. Many CSOs that had applied for participation were disappointed as having been turned down, on what they felt were false pretexds. This defecit was even acknowledged by the AKP run Odunpazarı Municipality:

> I think the organisation was not very successful. After its founding, the agency was late in starting work. After that the CSOs were not sufficiently included in the projects, although there was such a demand. The agency's main focus was on the opening ceremony, which was realized in the football stadium and attended by Prime Minister Erdoğan. Now the governor has changed and we are not sure what this means for the working of the agency (Interview, Gülay, Eskişehir, 07.06.2013).

Somewhat similarly the local population was critical of the cultural capitalship. Many saw it as a propaganda attempt of the central government prior to the elections. Expanding the period mid 2014 to span the time of the elections as well was often mentioned as proof of this. Many suspected the government would use the event to spend large sums of public money prior to the local elections. Another critique centred on the lack of transparency regarding the budget, as well as the agency's decision-making structures.

On the other hand, Mayor Büyükerşen was also criticised for completely boycotting the event on the grounds that it came from the central government. It was said that the municipality's

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[233] As lined out in Law 6303 (10.04.2013).

experience in cultural affairs and the infrastructure built up over the last years could have turned the capitalship into a success. These voices were very critical of how the conflict between AKP and CHP affected their city negatively. As the central government is perceived not likely to change in the coming years, more and more people support an AKP mayoral candidate to 'pacify' the conflict and lift the blockade of politics in their city (Interview, Ramazan, Eskişehir, 23.10.2013).

The Eskişehir Cultural Capital festival is a good example of cultural policy in Turkey. Similar to international trends (Evans, 2003; Getz, 1991; Hall, 1992; Richards & Wilson, 2002), the 'eventisation' of cultural policy is a characteristic of the AKP government (Yardımcı, 2007). Festivals function as image makers, tourist attractions and to create local community. However Quinn criticises the use of events as non-sustainable 'quick fix' solutions for cities image problems. She argues that many festivals and events are interchangeable as they are grafted onto a locality rather than developed out of it (Quinn, 2005).

Events and festivals might also be understood as an expression of a further privatization of culture (Birkiye, 2009). The AKP repeatedly claimed that it does not want to impose any particular 'culture' on society (Aksoy, 2009, 197). Instead they present their cultural policy not as a means of education (as for Kemalists) but of economic concern.[234] As such, they situate themselves in a global discourse on the 'value' of culture. Cultural policy, not only in Turkey, but all over the world, has changed in the last years from a political to a management practice and is leavened by a neo-liberal rationale (McGuigan, 2005). Additionally more and more events are carried out in private-public partnerships, leading to a privatisation of culture (Wu, 2002).

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[234] The presentation as focusing only on event, not on education is questionable (Chapter 8.2.1), particular with concepts as the *altın nesil* (Golden Generation) proposed by the Fethullah Gülen community in mind.

Similarily, in 2007, when presenting the 60th Governmental Plan, Erdoğan stressed how his government has encouraged the involvement of the private sector and CSOs in the cultural domain. He also expected the private sector involvement to increase in the coming years (Aksoy, 2009, 193-194). Only cultural activities that are marketable find a sponsor. Whereas it is easy to find these private investors in a city like Istanbul, the situation is very different in Anatolian cities and the cultural productivity 'gap' between global cities like Istanbul and provincial towns that rely on state funding for cultural activities is expected to grow further.

8.1.2 Copying Eskişehir

The AKP-led municipalities in Konya have attempted to copy projects of Eskişehir's Mayor Büyükerşen. Meram Municipality has constructed a 80,000 m^2 park in Hasanköy district, ressembling Eskişehir's Sazova Park. It entails three sections: (1) a 'Minyatürk' section displaying the municipality's perspective on Turkey's and Konya's history in 120 miniatures; (2) a dinausor park comprising 50 moving and roaring dinousaur models (of heights up to 12 metres); and (3) a fairy tale park where statues of heroes from fary tales and comic films are erected. A moving tree tells the children fairy tales. Additionally three large pools are connected by waterfalls (Meram Belediyesi, n.d.-a). A full-sized Ottoman *Kadırga* (type of sailing boat) with a restaurant on top is being constructed. The project is expected to be very succesful, as Konya is an intersection of highways going to Antalya, Ankara and Kayseri. To target this traffic the park was built only 1 km from the highway (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013). It has many similarities with the Sazova Park constructed by Eskişehir's Metropolitan municipality. Where Eskişehir has a fairy tale castle, Meram has a fairy tale tree. Eskişehir's 'May Flower' became an Ottoman *Kadırga* in Konya.

Often the aim of municipalities seems to do something 'crazy' (*çılgın*) or 'first', and only secondarily to fit the local context. Often they copy attractions they have seen abroad. Meram Municipality, for example, is planning to build a Horse Riding Centre, just because the mayor had seen and liked one on a trip to Latvia. As reason for building such a centre in Meram a municipal director argued that: "*Horses are very good friends of humans*". He continued: "*This is a crazy project, but maybe, like the second Bosporus, in* the future a channel will be opened from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and bring water to Konya" (Interview, Halil, Konya, 01.11.2013).

Rather than drawing upon its existing cultural heritage, Selçuklu Municipality engaged in the creation of new landmarks. It defines its 'brand' mainly through building activities; the most important among them are a congress centre (*Selçuklu Kongre Merkezi*) and the 'Butterfly Garden' including a museum. Similar to the large aquariums in Istanbul and Ankara, the Butterfly Garden targets national tourists. However, when renovating the historic area of Sille, the municipality used the existing cultural assets. Sille, a small village, is presented as a symbol of peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians.The peaceful coexistence is atributed to

The picture shows a typical street in Odunpazarı district. Photo provided by Odunpazarı Municipality.

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Mevlana who asked the Muslim population of Konya not to attack the Anatolian Christian-Orthodox (*Karamanlı*), who lived there for more than 800 years (until 1922). To date, Sille functions more as a symbol, than as a magnet of tourism due to the lack of an efficient transportation system to get there (Interview, Ayhan, Konya, 06.11.2013).

Another example of a municipality refering to an existing cultural heritage is Odunpazarı in Eskişehir. Mayor Sakallı's cultural activities sought to establish Odunpazarı as a brand, and he claimed that Odunpazarı had managed to increase its popularity beyond its size (Interview, Eskişehir, 06.05.2013).[235] The project that made the biggest contribution to this aim was the restauration of the Odunpazarı houses (*Odunpazarı evlerini yaşatma projesi*), a neighbourhood within the Odunpazarı district.[236]

The '*Atlıhan El Sanatları Çarşısı*', a centre where handicrafts are being sold, adds to the popularity of the area. In order to bring the area to life and to generate revenue from tourists Odunpazarı municipality rented small shops to artisans for little money, encouraged the setting up of restaurants, established two weekly fairs for handicrafts, opened an *aile çay bahçesi* (family tea garden), three art centres, two *cam atölye* (glass studios) where visitors can observe the artists working, and a *lületaşı* (Meerschaum) museum. A small tour bus cruises the area free of charge. Most of the local small scale retailers were very satisfied with the municipality, and felt that it listened and responded to their demands. Even CHP members acknowledged the change the municipality had initiated in the area and regularly visited for recreation.

The restoration has transformed the neighbourhood, which had long been a no-go area, into one of the region's biggest tourist attractions as well as a popular recreation area for local citizens. The Director of Cultural Affairs of Odunpazarı Municipality explained it as follows:

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[235] Mayor Sakallı mentions 3,5 million visitors from Eskişehir and abroad in 2012 (Odunpazarı Belediyesi, n.d.). The representative of Bursa, Eskişehir and Kütahya Development Agency (BEBKA) gives the number of 200,000 foreign visitors what seems more plausible.

[236] The houses were built in the 19th century, similar to those in Safranbolu or Beypazarı.

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The Odunpazarı Houses are a serious brand. When Mayor Sakallı was elected in 2004 the area was a no-go area, dangerous. There were people sleeping on the streets and knife attacks. Another mayor would have taken all buildings down, and would have constructed a shopping centre. But Mayor Sakallı said he would preserve the historic neighbourhood. "A dream", they said, "not possible". But he managed without using the money of the people. He used grants and credits from the state, foundations and the Ministry of Culture. He didn't deprive the citizens of any money. And this is how this historic area was preserved and turned into a brand by beautiful restoration work (Interview, Gülay, Eskişehir, 07.06.2013).

Dispute exists over the question of who deserves the merits for the restoration of the area, Mayor Sakallı, or Mayor Büyükerşen. The latter had inititated the project, however, the metropolitan municipality had been criticized for 'rebuilding' rather than 'restoring' the houses, as well as for putting more attention on a nice skyline than on authenticity.

8.2 Cultural Policies

In this section I demonstrate how municipalities attempt to shape the local contexts according to their own municipal philosophy and party ideology. The focus is on cultural policy, particularly municipal cultural centres, as tools to influence the cultural and moral landscapes of the cities. I begin with the most impressive example, Mayor Büyükerşen's transformation of Eskişehir into a a European city of arts and education. I demonstrate how he accompanies his urban planning and design activities by cultural policy. I continue with an opposite example, the use of Mevlana's heritage in the cultural policy program of Konya Metropolitan municipality and demonstrate the difference of district municipalities to develop their own profile facing such impressive brands.

Derya and Funda, two sisters in their late forties living in Eskişehir went to the opera nearly every week. Although clearly not a member of the city's bourgeoisie (Derya was a housewife and Funda a part-time employee in a little bakery), they were very well informed about the qualities of different soloists or conductors, and knew operas and ballet well. However it seemed to me

that they were not an exception, but representative of Eskişehir, an outcome of Mayor Büyükerşen's policy to open the arts to all citizens.

Among the researched municipalities, Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality stood out with regard to its cultural program. Indeed its strategic plan for 2010-2015 formulated 'culture' as its most important aim.[237] Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality maintains three different stages (*Opera, Haller, Sultandere*)[238] with a vivid program. The symphony orchestra (*Senfoni Orkestra*) performs twice a week (Friday evening and Saturday noon); and play at additional ballet and opera performances. Performances were always full, often even sold out days in advance, particularly when featuring artists with an international standing such as pianist Fazıl Say. Particularly remarkable was the high number of young people as well as those from low-income groups among the audience.[239] Low ticket prices (5 TL for adults, 3 TL for students, 2 TL for children) is one factor influencing attendance positively. Additionally Mayor Büyükerşen has managed to establish 'cultural activities' as part of the city's identity, so that attending opera and ballet performances has (at least for many living in the city centre), become a part of their social life and a place where one runs into neighbours, friends and colleagues. Eskişehir is also the home of many museums and cultural facilities. The Kent Belleği Müzesi (town history), Çağdaş Cam Sanatları Müzesi (modern glass) and the Yılmaz Büyükerşen Balmumu Heykeller Müzesi (wax works, 160 statues 'made' by Mayor Büyükerşen) were founded by the Metropolitan municipality in recent years.

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[237] It states "*Eskişehir will be Anatolia's Capital of Culture and Arts. The city's theatres and orchestra will increase its program. Eskişehir will be made an examplary city with regard to museology. Eskişehir will be a city of festivals and of exhibitions and art galleries. Eskişehir will protect its historic and cultural heritage. Sports are made a part of the city's cultural activities.*"(Eskişehir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2010)

[238] Opera provides a stage for classic music and ballets, Haller target's Eskişehir's student population. Sultandere stage is located in the city's outskirts. Plays that were show at Opera and Haller afterwards are shown there.

[239] I observed that in other cities, Antalya, for example, even new plays could not attract enough visitors to fill the auditorium. Also cultural events were less discussed among the city's population.

Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality also differs from other municipalities with regard to its theatre program. The plays include both foreign and Turkish pieces. The program for December 2012 and February 2013, for example, presented works such as: Curse of the Starving Class (Sam Shepard), Daughters of Troy (Euripides), The Taurus Monster (Toros Canavarı, Aziz Nesin), Bloody Nigar (Kanlı Nigar, Sadık Şendil), Purple Hearts (Mor Kalpler, Ortak Yaratım), This will go by, man (Bu da Geçer Yahu, Uğur Saatçi) and Death of an Anarchist (Dario Fo).[240] The high amount of foreign plays is significant. It appears to emulate the years after the founding of the Republic, when the Ministry of Education ordered the translation of masterpieces of world literature and drama as part of the country's 'Westernization' (Birkiye, 2009, 263).

Mayor Büyükerşen's attempts to create an examplary city, as expressed in the films advertising his municipality, stem not only from a Kemalist art tradition, but also from his own passion for the arts. Apart from being a sculptor in wax, he is also a painter and designer who drew the designs for many bridges, benches and sculptures in Eskişehir's city centre. In his private life he is also a lover of classical music and *Türk Sanat Müziği* (Turkish Art Music), the opera and theatre. For example, as a student he and friends opened a theatre which they financed with money they collected by donating blood (Büyükerşen & Taşçı, 2009, 161). Most recently in 2014 the city opened a large aquarium, the 'Eskişehir ETİ Sualtı Dünyası' with the support of the ETİ group.

His particular mix of cultural activities and the focus on opera, ballet, theatre and museums, places Mayor Büyükerşen firmly in a Kemalist tradition. From 1920 to 1950 the state tried to create a 'new society' with a 'new national culture' by means of reforming education, language and history. 'Western' arts such as theatre and ballet were perceived as 'enlightened' (Tuğal, 2009,

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[240] Program brochures December 2012, February 2013 (January 2013 was only played as a half month due to New Year). Additional childrens programs were run at two stages in the city (*Opera* and *Cam Sanatları Müzesi*).

36). Cultural policy above all followed the aims of education and nationalisation, and was used as a tool of social engineering in the formation of a new nation (Birkiye, 2009). Apart from the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*), the Turkish Historical Society and the Turkish Language Society played important roles.[241] Between 1950 and 1980 cultural policy became slightly more diversified and was understood as a part of public service (*hizmet*). However, that period was also characterized by large geographic differences in the intensity and content of the delivered services. Cultural events and funding were managed by the Ministry of Education until the Ministry of Culture was founded in 1971. Within it the Directorate of Cultural Centres was established. In 2003, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism were merged, pointing towards a perception of culture as an asset that may be monetarized.

When the AKP came to power in 2002, it emphazised a pluralistic cultural policy, stating that they would not want "*to impose one culture on society*" (İnce, 2010, 99). In 2007, Mustafa İsen, then Undersecretary in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, affirmed that "*We have a tourism policy. [...] But we do not have a cultural policy. We do not want to make a cultural imposition on society*" (as cited by İnce, 2010, 108). Instead the AKP referred to the country as a mosaic and drew a connection with Ottoman pluralism (Çolak, 2006). However, religion plays an important part in the AKP's cultural policy as both the example of Mevlana tourism and the centered cultural program for citizens in Konya demonstrates.

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[241] The Turkish Historical Society was founded in 1931 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to spread his reading of Turkish history. The Turkish Language Institute was founded in 1932 by Atatürk to 'clean' the Turkish language from Arabic, Persian and Greek influences. Both were instruments in the social-engineering at the beginning of the Republic.

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8.2.1 A Strong Brand: Mevlana in Konya

Konya Metropolitan municipality has also created a strong cultural image for its city, based on the Sufi poet Mevlana.[242] The cultural director states that: "*We direct all our cultural activities towards Konya's identity as a city of love and tolerance. [...] Konya has a mystic atmosphere, and we use this mysticism in all our activities*." (Interview, Mücahit, Konya, 27.8.2013). The most important event in this regard is the annual commemoration of the day of Mevlana's death (*Şeb-i Arus*) in December. *Sema* (whirling) ceremonies take place every Saturday at 8 pm. Every Thursday and Monday they are organised by the *International Mevlana Association (Uluslararası Mevlana Derneği).* Talks named *Mesnevi Sohbetleri* (based on Mevlana's thoughts) are being organized, both in Turkish and English. Other days offer *Siyer Sohbeti* (based on a Turc epic, Siyer-i Nebi) and *Konevi Sohbetleri* (based on the thoughts of Sadrettin Konevi, a 13th century Sufi and student of ibn Arabi). Most activities take place in the Mevlana Cultural Centre run by the Metropolitan municipality. It comprises four rooms for 75, 500, 2,500 and 3,500 people, and can be used by civil society organisations and the universities free of charge.

The professional organisation of Mevlana tourism started in the early 2000s and was initiated by the Metropolitan municipality. It was supported by the local Chambers of Trade and Industry, as well as the central, AKP-run government. Sari concludes that most of the decisions taken about Mevlana tourism is dependent on interpersonal relations between ministers and local leaders, but not as part of strategic planings. She writes:

> The construction of the Mawlana Center was decided in the visit program of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Şeb-I Arus, since the roof of the stadium [19th May Stadium, which was used previously] could not prevent the rain during the whirling ceremony (Sari, 2010, 196).

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[242] In 2005, Mevlana's philosophy and whirling (*sema*) were proclaimed part of UNESCO's intangible heritage programme, and the year 2007 was declared 'Mevlana year'.

The Chambers supported Mevlana tourism as an event to create an international image for Konya. Mevlana tourism focused less on income gained by visitors, but more on the marketing aspects to increase global awareness of the brand 'Konya'.[243] Additionally, Mevlana's image as a 'soft, humanist religious scholar' fits the AKP's representation of Turkey as a multi-cultural and multi-religious country. Municipal staff claimed that tourism acts as a locomotive for other sectors and helps to:

> [...] construct an identity and create our trademark. Mawlana and Sufism is the best material to use in this way, because Mawlana and his order is a well known item in Konya. We need to think globally. Konya has been globalizing and needs to start with an identity (as cited in Sari, 2010, 201).

Nevertheless, the marketization of Mevlana has also been criticized: some citizens complained that the spirit of Mevlana is not lived honestly but that it is rather used cosmetically for the city. As Mevlana's oeuvre was not well known among the population some suggested the council open Mesnevi salons to teach local people. Certain informants saw contradictions between the values propagated by Mevlana (tolerance, forgiveness...) and the lack of realization of them in the municipality's actions as well as in Konya's daily life. Others felt that Mevlana was politicized by all parties. They wondered why politicians came to the remembrance of the anniversary of his death; was this not, they wondered, violation (*aykırı*) of Mevlana's soul as he had always refrained from politics. But explicitly criticizing the municipality on religious grounds seemed to be a taboo: whereas informants had no difficulty speaking about corruption openly, no one wanted to be recorded when criticizing the municipality's use of Mevlana's heritage. Others complained that the Seljuk past of Konya and the archaeological site of Çatalhöyük do not in comparison receive enough attention by the Metropolitan municipality.

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[243] Today, the Mevlana museum is the second most visited museum in Turkey after Topkapı Museum in Istanbul. However tourist stay rarely longer than a day. Most of the tourists come from Iran, then Korea and Japan, but also from the U.S and Europe. They mainly come in guided tours and only move between their hotel and the Mevlana complex, thus not adding much to the local economy nor mingling with the local population (Sari, 2010, 184-188). The fact that there is little space for entertainment and dining, and that most places apart from luxury hotels do not offer alcohol, further discourages tourists to stay longer.

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8.2.2   Cultural Centres and Cooperation with CSOs

This thesis argues that today's municipalities are constantly trying to (re-)shape the local context they are situated in, according to their party ideology, their municipal philosophy and their perception of what a 'city' entails. In the following section I describe how the council's 'politics of everyday culture' aim at crafting locality and a certain way of being local through their programs at cultural centres.

The first cultural centres were opened during the early years of the Republic by the state in the form of People's Houses and aimed to diffuse the new Kemalist ideology among the people. When a multi-party system was introduced in the 1950s the People's Houses were closed down and their facilities transferred to the Treasury. The introduction of metropolitan municipalities in 1984 meant they became important players in the field of cultural policy. The cultural centres have operated under the organisation of the municipalities since 2010.[244] They are required by law to promote 'national culture' through organizing meetings, exhibitions, courses, shows, contests, and audio visual programs (İnce, 2010). There is no mandatory budget for culture, but the general rule is that the central government spends 0,1% of its budget on cultural programmes.[245] Often, the municipality designes the program for cultural centres, but its operation is given to a municipal, or a private company to run. A bidding system has been introduced for cultural policy, and municipalities may outsource tasks to municipal companies.

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[244] Draft Bill on the Transfer of Ministry of Culture and Tourism`s Provincial Organisations to Special Provincial Administrations and Municipalities from 2006. After much controversy this bill was postponed and put back on the agenda in March 2010.

[245] Previously, the largest share of the cultural budget of the central government went to the construction of cultural centres, not their running, resulting in dead, dysfunctional spaces operated by the provincial cultural manager. In 2010, the AKP decided to keep constructing centres but handed them over to municipalities to run. Now the government transfers the money of construction to their allies by inviting tenders, however does not spend any money for their running (Interview, Ayla, Istanbul, 13.11.2013).

As is often the case, Istanbul set an example which was then followed by other municipalities.[246]

A third important influence stems from the European Union with regard to the financing and content (such as cultural participation, cultural rights, cultural diversity) of cultural policy in Turkey.

Konya's Metropolitan municipality offers lectures, which mainly focus on religious questions or provide answers on how to lead a good life from a religious perspective. Most religious talks are organised in cooperation with CSOs and include topics such as the foundation of Islam, Mohammed's biography, the 'Sunniness of Alevis', the 'envy' of Christians and Jews towards Islam, or the life of Sufis such as Konevi and Ibn Arabi. Other talks aim to provide guidance for contemporary life, focusing on Muslims and modernity, *Helal* food, or moral Muslim family life.[247] The municipality works with a wide range of religious CSOs, most often with the *Ribat Eğitim Foundation*, which belong to a more radical wing of the Nakşibendi community. Another CSO that cooperates with the municipality regularily is religious-conservative *'Aydınlar Ocağı'*, the strongest supporter of the Türk-İslam Sentezi in the 1980s (Chapter 5.5). Other CSOs are the *İlim Yayma Cemiyeti* which is close to the AKP and active in the sector of *İmam-Hatip* schooling, as well as *Verenel Derneği*, *Türkiye Yazarlar Birliği*, *ESADER* (*Eğitim Sosyal Kültür Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Derneği*) and *BİLKAD* (*Bilgi İletişim Kültür Araştırma Derneği*).[248]

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[246] The companies operating are *İstanbul Kültür Inc.* (founded in 1989 and providing services in the fields of culture, arts and tourism), *İSMEK*(founded in 1996 and runing Training Courses for Artistic and Vocational Education) and *Spor Inc.* (founded in 2009 and working on sports events). In Eskişehir cultural tasks are carried out by the municipal company *ESKET* and in Konya by Konya Kültür A.Ş.' (2005) which replaced Konya Sanat Kültür ve Spor Faaliyetleri Ticaret Anonim Şirketi (founded in 1998).

[247] Only very few topics dealt with historical, political or sociological topics; e.g. Türk Dış Politikasındaki Değişim (Bilkad), Güncel Konular Dışında Ermeni Meselesi (Aydınlar Ocağı), Kentsel Ayrışmanın Sonuçları (BİLKAD).

[248] The total list of events organised by Konya Metropolitan municipality with CSO involvement from March to Arpril 2013 is: İslam Medeniyetinin Kurucu Dinamikleri (BİLKAD), Yazılı Kaynaklarda Alevilik ve Kızılbaşlık, Konevi'nin Hocası Ibn-i- Arabi ve Ekberi Tarikatı, Hz. Muhammed' in (S.A.V.) Liderlik Özellikleri, Emperyalizmin Eğitim Yoluyla Kültürel ve Zihinsel Ifsadi, Müslümanlar ve Modernleşme (İlim Yayma Cemiyeti), Kuran' ın Ahlak Metafizigi, Kutlu Doğum, Türkiye'de Sağ Siyaset ve Demokrasi, Hz. Muhammed (A.S.) ile Hz. Hatice (İslamda Örnek Aile organised by Konya Aydınlar Ocağı), Helal Gıda (Ribat Eğitim Vakfı), , Vefat Yıldönümünde İmam-ı Azam Hz'leri (Aydınlar Ocağı), Said Nursi ve Hz. Mevlana Sempozyumu, Türk Sinemasında Dindar İnsan Figürü (Türkiye Yazarlar Birliği, Konya Şubesi), Miraç Gecesi Özel Programı, Ladikli Ahmet Hüdai Hazretleri Anma

Events on 'moral Muslim life' clearly stand in the tradition of *huzur dersleri* (peace of mind conversations) introduced by RP. The term originally described an Ottoman practice when bureaucrats, administrators, intellectuals and scholars met at the Sultan's order in the manner of an assembly to discuss different theological topics (İpşirli, 1998, 441-444; Uzunçarşılı, 1988, 215-222; White, 2002, 156, 161-166). The RP events included a 'down-to-earth lecture' and then gave room to discussions and questions. The way of discussing topics, by using examples and referring to local norms and values was inspired by a populist, not elitist approach to politics. The larger party ideology was 'explained' to locals, and events and national politics translated into more vernecular language. White recounts municipal events where both the Quran and *hadith*, and the rural practise of *imece*[249] are provided as examples to explain the need to support each other and become active in the neighbourhood (White, 2002). Today, the talks organized by Konya Metropolitan municipality reinforce ties with religious communities, demonstrate mutual support and present a certain lifestyle as exemplary.

8.2.3   Creating a Kemalist 'Gemeinschaft'

AKP-run municipalities are not an exception in their pursuit of cultural politics in cooperating with CSOs: Eskişehir's CHP-led Tepebaşı Municipality also used its cultural program to keep good relations with CSOs in its periphery and to massage ties with a core CHP constituency. On 10 November the anniversary of Atatürk's death was commemorated in the city's main square that lies between the Metropolitan municipality's and the govenor's building and Reşadiye Mosque. One day later an additional event was organized in the cultural centre of Tepebaşı Municipality in cooperation with the Kemalist *Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*. The auditorium was

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Programı, 8 Haziran 632 İslamda Örnek Aile Hz. Peygamber – Hz. Ayşe Evliliği (Aydınlar Ocağı), Hristiyanlik ve Yahudilik Kıskancinda İslam (Aydınlar Ocagi), Toplumsal Barış (Ribat).

[249] The term *imece* describes the rural tradition of mutual support among villagers, e.g., during harvest time, or to construct a new road. These tasks are fullfiled without direct enumeration an das such create a web of communal solidarity and obligation (White, 2002, 67-76).

packed, and those who could not find a seat were sitting on the stairs or leant against the wall. Seventeen soldiers had died in a helicopter crash only a few days earlier and we sat in silence for two minutes to commemorate them as well as Atatürk. Then the whole auditorium rose to sing the Turkish anthem. Every Turk is familiar with the verses as they sung it twice a week as pupils - every Monday morning and every Friday afternoon. Standing there among the crowd I felt emotionally touched by the sense of community that developed all of a sudden. In addition - although it was all voluntary - it also awkwardly reminded me of the election of the Chinese party leadership I had seen in the news that morning. A perfectly orchestrated event, it did not leave any other course of action open to the individual.

Emre Kongar, a Turkish sociologist in his late sixties and a prominent figure in the Kemalist movement, had been invited to speak about Atatürk. The founder of the Turkish Republic was presented by him not as a historical figure nor as an intellectual leader. Rather he aimed to create a feeling of emotional connectedness similar in remembering a beloved deceased family member. Atatürk kept looking at us from a large poster in the background. His opinion on different topics was exemplified through quotes. The feeling of *Gemeinschaft* I had experienced previously was further strengthened as the audience were addressed as the 'enlightened' (*aydınlar*) who needed to be cautious in these 'dark times' (referring to the AKP government).

Although cultural centres are not supposed to express political preferences, I saw that CHP-led municipalities focused on Kemalist thought. They did not hold any events with a religious context, except in the month of Ramadan. By contrast, AKP-led municipalities in Konya centred their activities around religion. In addition, their Ramadan program was much larger. During Ramadan, Konya Metropolitan municipality, invited different *hafiz*[250] from Istanbul and Ankara in cooperation with the *il müftülüğü* (provincial muftiate) and organized *teravih namazları* (the

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[250] The term describes someone who has completely memorized the Quran.

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prayer after the breaking of fast). One was organized in a public space for *kadir gecesi* (night when the Quran was said to be revealed) and 40,000 people attended. Also during Ramadan the municipality organised a book fair and claimed that it had 100,000 visitors in 2013.[251]

8.2.4 In the Shadow of the Metropolitan Municipalities

The clear and strong brand Konya Metropolitan municipality has created for itself through reference to Mevlana makes it difficult for other municipalities in the city to develop a compelling profile, because of the lack of powerful icons. The cultural activities of Konya Selçuklu Municipality focus on the Seljuk heritage of the city. A municipal director claimed that the aim was to define Seljukian art as a part of Konya's culture and repatriate objects from foreign museums in the future. To do so two exhibitions were organized overseas, one displaying replicas, the other one photographs.[252] Conferences on Seljukian history were organized in cooperation with Seljuk University in 2008 and 2011. Made in cooperation with national politics President Abdullah Gül attended the opening of the photo exhibition opening in Washington. Further, high-quality publications with many colour photos (e.g., Anadolu Selçuklu Kervansarayları) are part of the 'give-away' packages to visitors at governmental level.

National tourism is targeted through restoration projects such as Zazadin Han (13th century), the Sille Aya Elenia Müzesi as well as Mormi Mosque and Orta Mosque.[253] Cultural activities for local popular entertainment include *Türküler* (Turkish folk music) concerts, an extensive program

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[251] The municipality organises events with a non-religious focus such as the *'100 günde 200 etkinlik'* program comprising different concerts from pop, to rap, halk and *sanat* music. It also includes theatre plays, film screenings, poem recitation, exhibitions and music. Again it shows the AKP's focus on 'countability'. The theatre in Konya has much fewer performances than in Eskişehir and the plays are not related to a writer; plays are for example Shirley Valentine, Biz size hayranız, Ayar Hamza as well as childrens theatre (Interview, Mücahit, Konya, 27.8.2013).

[252] The exhibition 'Taşların Şarkısı', of architectural photography displayed in the offices of the Turkish American Union in Washington.

[253] Sille is a village of previous Christian-Orthodox population (until 1923). It is said to have been constructed after Helena, mother of Constantin, who stopped there on her way to Jerusalem in 327 AD. The complex also has a little mosque constructed by Rumi who asked Muslims to respect the Christian population.

during Ramadan, and a special program for women. Additionally, city tours (*Şehrimi tanıyorum-I get to know my city)* are organized and the municipality claims to have had over 6,000 participants in nine months. Large concerts, with famous popstars, for example Mustafa Ceceli with 20,000 visitors, are the main activities targeting the youth. Rather than focusing on the city's religious heritage Selçuklu municipality promotes artists from the right-wing spectrum: for example it organized an Üstad Necip Fazıl poem recitation and published high quality CD-boxes as give aways to special visitors.[254] Also it initiated a reading competition of the national anthem to commemorate its author ('*Mehmet Akif'i Anma ve İstiklal Marşını Güzel Okuma Yarışması'*).

The cultural activities of Meram Municipality focus mainly on the local population through educational classes. Its cultural centre 'Konyaevi' offers educational seminars like family education, parenting school (*ana-baba okulu*) and psychological counselling. The municipality took particular pride in its parental education course, which was running for a 6th year at the time of the interview and was, so they claimed, the first in Turkey. The course lasted for six to eight weeks and comprised professional seminars as well as the possibility for participants to talk about their personal issues. The municipality also claims to be ahead of other municipalities in Konya with its theatre program that features five to six plays a year, reaching 60,000 visitors. They show mainly comedy theatre works and Hacivat-Karagöz shadow-plays. The main focus, according to the mayoral assistant, is to make people laugh and to foster a good time. Educational plays are part of the program, works that teach children that "*eating chips is bad, whereas drinking milk is positive*" or how to protect the environment (Interview, Ali, Konya, 01.11.2013).

The CHP-led municipalities pursue a different approach to arts and culture. Eskişehir-Tepebaşı's Mayor Ataç (CHP) organizes an international artist's workshop (*Ulusal Sanat Çalıştayı*) and a pottery workshop (*Pişmiş Toprak Sempozyumu*) on a yearly basis, which by jury decision invites

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[254] Artists include Ali Ulvi Kurucu - Bir Peygamber Aşığı, or a CD with music added to poems by Abdurrahim Karakoç; and poems by Necip Fazıl.

international and national artists to come to Eskişehir and work together for ten days.[255] Unlike Mayor Büyükerşen who likes to determine every little detail, Mayor Ataç leaves the artistic directorship of the sculpture festival, in the old factory buildings of Kurt Kiremit Fabrikası, to Professor Dr. Bilgehan Uzuner, the Dean of the Art Faculty of Anadolu University. The artists - in 2013 from Turkey, the US, Germany, the Netherlands and Hungary - were assisted by students from the university and provided with accommodation, materials and working space; their transportation costs are paid for by the municipality.[256]

In the evening dinners or city tours were organized; and at the end of the workshop a symposium took place. Each artist had three to five assistants who helped with the preparation of clay, material and translation. There was also a children's corner run by employees of the municipality's art center where children could do pottery. A small market with around 30 booths was set up where local potters and craftspeople could sell their goods. The two main sponsors, local ceramic producing companies, presented their wares in another corner of the area. The Pişmiş Toprak week started with an evening event with speeches by Mayors Ataç and Büyükerşen, but also by two artists (one Turkish, one foreign). Then an exhibition with pottery opened in the old factory barracks followed by a reception – the only municipal reception I ever attended where wine was also served. At around 9 pm the group 'Yeni Türkü' gave a free concert. The ceramics produced during the week are erected all over the district, turning it into a kind of 'open air museum'. In the future Mayor Ataç plans to open a museum for contemporary art in one of the old factory buildings and uses the ceramics and art workshops as one way to built up a collection.

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[255] The symposium started in 2001 by Mayor Ataç and stopped between 2004-2010 when Tacettin Sarıoğlu from AKP was mayor of Eskişehir-Tepebaşı Municipality.

[256] Students come mainly from Anadolu University, but also from surrounding cities as Afyon and Kütahya.

Although many students had a very positive opinion about Mayor Ataç, his cultural activities were critized by many of his constituents. Many complained that he engaged in art too much, whereas 'basic duties' like the collection of waste were not solved. The sculptures erected by Mayor Büyükerşen were perceived as decorative, whereas the modern, often abstract art supported by Mayor Ataç was criticized as not artistic. The AKP avoids this dilemma by focusing on service provision; cultural activities are secondary. As an AKP municipal staff member explains:

> Cultural activities are secondary. Our streets are 100% asphalt, we have 200 parks, many women's cafes [hanımlar lokali], and 15 sports centres. You do all this and make people happy, then they won't ask you [about the necessity of cultural activities], because the citizen's feet don't get dirty with dust, because the women go to their cafes, and the men go swimming in the sports centre. When everyone is happy, they don't say anything (Interview, Ahmet, Konya, 27.08.2013).

8.2.5   *Adapting to the Local Context*

One municipality that seems to bridge demands for both service and culture successfully is Odunpazarı Municipality (AKP). Interestingly its cultural activities resemble more the CHP-led municipalities in the same city than to those of other AKP municipalities in Konya. Odunpazarı Municipality has its own theatre group that performs up to two different plays on stage every month as well as providing theatre workshops for youth. The municipality also has its own folk dance group with a very good reputation. Only about a third of the municipality's cultural activities are on religious topics. One main focus is Yunus Emre, the 13th century Sufi poet who is supposed to have lived close to Eskişehir. To commemorate his death, in 2011, a big Sufi festival was organized by the municipality and Sufi groups and musicians from all over the world were invited. In Odunpazarı Municipality, organisation of activities for the month of Ramadan falls under the responsibility of the director for public relations. Interestingly these are described

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as 'serious' by the director for cultural affairs, whereas cultural activities are described as 'fun' (*eğlenceli*) (Interview, Gülay, Eskişehir, 07.06.2013). Whereas Bayat describes how 'fun' and 'religious practice' are juxtaposed by some Islamists in Iran and Egypt - director Gülay at Odunpazarı Municipality seemed to be relieved to deal with the 'fun side' of culture (Bayat, 2007).

The municipality's high involvement in 'secular art' was partly due to Mayor Sakallı's personal interests. In addition, it confirms the hypothesis that the AKP is flexible in adapting to different local contexts. Mayor Büyükerşen has created an image for Eskişehir as a 'City of Arts and Education' and is admired for it by the population. In order to compete with him, Mayor Sakallı, who had aspirations to become metropolitan municipality mayor, needed to prove that he could also initiate a successful cultural program.

This openness and adaptability to different local contexts could also be observed for the RP. A citizen in Istanbul remembers that prior to the elections RP members went even to bars and all kinds of night clubs to collect votes, although it was opposed to their conservative ideology. He recalls: "*They said: 'This is our lifestyle, and that's yours and we respect that and ask for your votes. We don't interfere with your lives; we only want your vote so that we can provide our service to you.'*" (Personal conversation, Istanbul, 09.06.2011). However, once in office many RP municipalities showed a more restrictive understanding of 'morals' by decreasing or banning the selling of alcohol, attacking prostitution and 'immoral' behavior, broadcasting or advertisements, and removing statues from public space. In a more structural approach various forms of 'Islamic capitalism' were supported e.g. permits given for gender-segregated hotels etc. (Akıncı, 1999; Çakır, 1994; Yavuz, 1997). As a result, the AKP-run Odunpazarı Municipality faced accusations that their cultural policy would become more religiously oriented if Mayor Sakallı won the

metropolitan municipality. Odunpazarı's cultural director stresses the municipality's commitment to 'secular culture':

> We will continue all of Mayor Büyükerşen's activities. Also we will add new activities such as Turkish Folk Music and Sufi music. Also a youth choir. The cultural activities should be adapted more to the people's demands and expectations; not everybody likes to go to the opera or ballet. The things I mentioned are additions, but not to replace the current cultural offerings. From time to time they accuse us "If the AKP runs the metropolitan municipality, they will close the opera or theatre." But this is absolutely not true. Mayor Sakallı gives very much importance to all arts (Interview, Gülay, Eskişehir, 07.06.2013).

Theatre plays are put on by an amateur group and target a different audience than those presented by the metropolitan municipality by performing work less connected to 'high culture'. Additionally the project '*Odunpazarından gülmeye dave*t' ('Odunpazarı invites you to laugh') performs comedy pieces for free. The municipality puts a focus on those neighbourhoods far from the city centre, and in coordination with the neighbourhood headman, picks up citizens. Women especially are encouraged to attend, and may bring husbands (different than at the Metropolitan municipality), in case he opposes their attendance alone.

Similar to the 'Pişmiş Toprak Festivali' and 'Sanat Çalıştayı' organised by Tepebaşı Municipality, Odunpazarı Municipality also organised an international art event, the glass workshop 'Cam Festivali' with artists from Murano (Italy), Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the U.S. All year long glass artists show their expertise in public workshops at the Kurşunlu Külliyesi complex[257] where pieces for every budget are sold. This event was clearly developed in competition with the 'Modern Glass Museum' (*Çağdaş Cam Müzesi*) founded by Mayor Büyükerşen and staff indicated that the pieces in that museum were only copies of famous pieces (Interview, Gülay, Eskişehir, 07.06.2013).

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[257] The complex of houses with a library, a school (*medrese*) and kitchens built around a mosque was constructed in 1525 in Odunpazarı district.

In brief, municipal cultural policy fullfils a variety of functions. Primarily, policy makers voice the need to market their cities. Although both Konya and Eskişehir are mid-size Central Anaolian cities, they clearly perceive theselves as part of a globalising world. City branding at times was only partly targeted at the income from tourism, but also to raising brand awareness in the light of possibilities for future trade. Secondly, cultural policy also fullfils an important 'inward' function of targeting the cities' inhabitants. The pursuits of a 'politics of everyday culture' aims at distributing ideas about a correct lifestyle. These social-engineering attempts are often carried with the cooperation of CSOs: Konya Metropolitan municipality was the most impressive example in this regard. In parallel, a trend towards an 'event' based cultural policy was observed under the AKP-government. Lastly, the extent to which events not only entertain, but also facilitate political mobilization needs attention. Konya's youth branch president explains how they organize large concerts with national popstars. He gives the example of the 'Rafet el Roman' concert that took place the day prior to our interview; 15,000 students participated. Its purpose, he explained, was not only to entertain the students, but also to mobilize them for the party's political cause:

> "Let's visit a concert together", we tell them. "But after that, come and help us to put up flags. Do the one, but also the other". We always mention a Turkish saying "Work is our duty, then the rewards come from god (*çalışmak bizden takdir allahtan*) (Interview, İzzet, Konya, 27.05.2011).

9   Conclusion

This thesis addressed a range of questions: What role does local context play in politics and how do political parties adapt to it? What role does the 'culture of everyday politics' play for municipal practise? Is there a difference in municipal practise between the AKP and the CHP? Is the AKP's municipal performance a cornerstone of its national success? To which extent is municipal politics an expression of local dynamics? Or is it instead dominated by the nation state?

Parties align to local customs and translate their political message into local norms and values. They adapt to the local context by a variety of measures such as the use of neighbourhood representatives, by creating cells of activists, by assigning responsibility for certain areas to leading party members and by use of parties' youth and womens branches. In their 'Political Academy' the AKP teaches party activists bodily components of political activism, such as the right dress, how to approach voters and how to adapt to different social groups. The AKP is also strong in 'recognizing' social groups through symbolic politics for religious, ethnic or social groups as e.g., the *muhacir* in Eskişehir or religious communities in Konya. The above examples clarify to which extent official structures are complemented by inofficial ones. These cooperations are integral parts of the functioning of municipal politics in Turkey.

Organizationally, local elites play an important role. They are incorporated by the central government or parties's headquarters to complement municipal (official) politics. Local elites belong to influential economic, religious, ethnic or *hemşehri* groups and act as network brokers. Their strong influence was particularly striking in Konya. There, local elites were said to influence municipal politics by behind-the-scene arrangements. The mayor does not take major decisions without consultating them. The practise of *konsensüs* (consensus) aims to ensure that

decisions have collective approval to avoid conflict. It thus constitutes a parallel system alongside the official structure that relies on the municipal council and executive committee.

Additionally, CSOs play an integral part for municipal politics. In Konya, boundaries between the municipality, the party and (faith based) CSOs were not transparent and people perceived themselves as belonging to the same social movement motivated by religious demands. Independent CSOs were not politically visible. Those active in Konya or Eskişehir were either politically instrumentalised or party-affiliated. The personal relations of CSO leaders to mayors were more important than legal rules concerning their institutional inclusion, as their power depended on their leader's 'closeness' to the mayor and to his or her decision-making circle. I suggested that we might understand such organisations as an 'alternative civil society', based on trust and personal relations, not on legalized 'rights to participate'.

Another important factor for the adaption to a local context is the mayor himself, as municipal politics are highly personalized. Firstly, candidates for mayoral posts in Konya and Eskişehir (and one may assume in Central Anatolia in general) need to have 'local rootedness'. Citizens only accept candidates who are clearly from that place. Also, citizens in the two cities expect their mayors to be in contact with them. As a result, mayoral practise extends beyond its legal description; Turkish mayors are the 'father of the town' who seeks to 'touch' the people, both literally and figuratively, rather than the head of an institution. With regard to the economic role of municipalities, as well as patronage and corruption practices, mayors are central figures, who can be described as new hegemonic centres in the periphery. The extent of personalization also became obvious in the many networks, relations and mutual obligations municipal actors are imbededed in. The personalization of municipal politics in Turkey is surprising given the country's long bureaucratic tradition. However, I argue that both structures developed in parallel

and complement each other as informal, personalized practices support and strengthen official institutions.

The AKP is more successful in its adaption to the local context. One factor for the success of their mayors and municipalities is the local party organisation. Parties function as crucial intersections between municipality and society in both cities. Although the AKP and CHP follow similar aims - mobilizing voters and attracting activists - the AKP is more successful. The AKP succeds in its brokerage role, due to its organisational structure and its flexibility in adapting to local contexts - an evaluation which is shared by many CHP members in Eskişehir. This is due to the rather large flexibility by the party's vague ideology of *muhafazakar demokrasi* (conservative democracy) that leaves much room for maneuver. Although the party has core politics (mainly centred around the role and visibility of religion) it is ready to make concessions to local contexts in order to gain or keep political power. The CHP on the contrary is much less flexible. One reason for this lies in its narrow ideological framework. The CHP more clearly represents and seeks to create a certain type of citizen which translates as a weakness in its ability to mobilize electors, particularly in 'alien' contexts such as Konya where the party appears unable to develop any connection with the local population.

Paradoxically, the AKP's success is not only due to its flexibility, but also due to its centralization. All Turkish parties are centralized but the AKP is exceptional with regard to the extent to which local branches are centrally organized and supervised. This is apparant in many different areas such as inner-party cooperation, aesthetics such as a similar interior design of local party branches, the establishing of contact with prospective voters, the organization of activists and the 'Political Academy'. Thus, at the AKP, success is not left to the talent of local activists, but 'masterminded' by the party's headquarters.

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In addition, the AKP learned from the RP and seeks to continue its successful municipal performance known as 'conservative municipalism'. Examples are the high continuity of municipal staff in Konya, an extensive welfare provision, its cooperation with CSOs and religious groups activists and municipal staff perceived as belonging to the same social movement. Also the ease with which the AKP adapts to divergent local contexts was a characteristic of the RP. Despite these similarities, differences exist, e.g., mayor-citizen communication has become more distant due to technical innovations. The 'people's day', inherited from RP municipalism, was streamlined and modified, leading to a new distance between citizens and mayors. Perhaps more significantly, economic considerations, the contracting-out of municipal services to 'friendly' companies, and the importance of urban transformation has become characteristic of AKP municipalism. In addition, AKP-led municipalities perceive citizens as consumers first. This approach incorporates permanent evaluation by the party's national headquarters, and a professionalization of procedures by technological means. As a result, *muhafazakar belediyecilik* appears to be more 'framing' than 'content' in some aspects.

Economic interactions are another tool to anchor municipal politics in a local context. Two levels may be differentiated. Firstly, patronage-client type interactions exist between the municipality and citizens and span from a simple phone call enabling access to decision-makers, to the provision of welfare, the delivering of employment or the granting of permissions in exchange for votes and support. These interactions are based on personal, often ethnic, religious or kin-based relations. 'Favours' are generally not perceived as immoral by those involved but accepted as an obligation by those in influential posts. On the contrary, not helping although one is able to would be shameful and mean that one neglected one's social responsibilities. The use of terms like *torpil* or *himaye* are an expression of this. Secondly, corrupt practices exist between the

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municipality and private companies. In order to perform their large welfare and service programs municipalities need to 'create money'. This has led to a new alignment between the state and private actors. These take place both at the national scale, e.g., between the public housing company TOKİ and private building companies; and at the local level with regard to outsourcing and public-private partnerships initiated by municipalities. A characteristic of these arrangements is the low transparency concerning the giving and receiving of contracts. In return for e.g., municipal order, companies are often expected to 'make a donation' either to the municipality directly, or to a CSO in its orbit. Nevertheless, the economic interests are often veiled by a language of Islam or solidarity. 'Cooperation' is practised by both AKP and CHP municipalities. However, the national AKP government has initiated several legal changes to facilitate these new forms of cooperation. Such types of corrupt practices are less accepted than *torpil* or *himaye* type of practices. Still, citizens perceive it as somewhat inherent to the political culture and assume all parties engage in such practices. Thus for the citizens, the crucial point is not which company received an order on which grounds, but rather the quality of the final service delivery to them.

Local politics are not only characterized by a (municipal) adaption to local contexts but also by the process of crafting locality as described by the term 'politics of everyday culture'. Two main sources may be distinguished, the central state as well as municipalities. The central state aims at its monopoly on political and economic power to control the periphery which it historically perceives as a possible centre of unrest. Particularily municipalities from a party different that that in national government are under severe pressure. The far-reaching reforms of metropolitan municipalities and municipalities in 2004 and 2005 were exceptions in this regard. Their implementation allowed the AKP to strengthen the role of municipalities and their mayors' vis-à-vis the central government. Later legal recentralization suggest that this was a tactical move as it took place within a political period in which the AKP was 'in government' but not 'in state', as it had only little control over the justice, bureaucracy or the military. Devolving certain

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responsibilities and opportunities to metropolitan municipalities (in the main controlled by the AKP) facilitated their exercise of political power. As the AKP consolidated its national dominance it simultaneously legislated a recentralization of political power.

The extent to which local politics are a 'brewing ground for democracy' is questionable. Despite partial decentralization attempts under the AKP in 2004 and 2005, the exercise of citizen participation and the transparency of political processes have not improved. In addition, the last years have been characterized by a recentralization. Additionally, recentralization attempts were often to the favour of local elites, or mayors as new hegemonic centres in the periphery, not to the citizens. Those were often perceived as consumers of municipal politics, but not as participants. In return, citizens were not interested in an institutionalized participation processes, but instead established patron-client relations with decision makers.

In addition, the central state also seeks to culturally homogenize the periphery. The building activities which the public housing company TOKİ pursues in cooperation with municipalities exemplifies the concurrence of economic, cultural and moral landscapes in municipal politics. TOKİ is centrally controlled by the government but also a tool to benefit governmental supporters economically by placement of orders. Its urban planning activities influence social interaction. They follow the doctrine that the right kind of environment subsequently leads to the right kind of citizens – similar processes were described for the early Republican period. To justify urban transformations, neighbourhoods are often characterized as being run-down or squatter-like, and its inhabitants as criminal or potentially dangerous. Lastly, TOKİ urbanscapes are characterized by monotone housing blocks thus leading to an aesthethic homogenization and an erasing of local difference (and subsequently of identity).

In addition, municipalities try to shape locality. This may depend on a strong vision as in the case of Eskişehir's Mayor Yılmaz Büyükerşen who developed a new, European narrative for the city by use of urban planning, new aesthetics, cultural policy and appropriate marketing. That approach, however, is clearly exceptional. Rather, municipalities seek to shape locality following party ideology on what is 'Turkish' or how 'Turkish society' ought to be. Thus, they are another example of a national, homogenizing influence on local contexts.

It is remarkable, that the AKP followed a multi-layer program depending on the local context. In general, the party perceives citizens as consumers whom it seeks to satisfy by an extensive service program. Additionally, it places Islamic values more centrally into the country's politics. It follows this aim by its own municipal practise, the organisation of events, and its cooperation with various religiously oriented CSOs. This holds particularly true for strongholds, such as Konya. In other contexts, the AKP takes care not to scare off its voters. Subsequently, the municipal cultural program in Konya is completely different from that by the AKP-led municipality in Eskişehir. Whereas in Konya an exclusive focus is on religion and religiously oriented life; in Eskişehir more 'secular' topics are foregrounded. When a recurrence to Islam was made, e.g., when Eskişehir was 'Cultural Capital of the Turkic World' in 2013 or when Istanbul figured as 'Cultural Capital of Europe' in 2010, reference was made to a 'soft, Sufi Islam', characterized by love, tolerance and understanding.

It was noteworthy to which extent municipalities and political activists perceived themselves as part of a global world. Many AKP activists situated their engagement in a 'Muslim' transnational course and believed that their local practise was improving the conditions of Muslims worldwide. They saw Turkey as taking a leadership role for other Muslim countries. The heightened interest in the economic implications of shaping locality can be understood as a side effect of globalisation. Municipal staff considered their municipalities as subject to global economic

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forces. As a result, all greater and district municipalities were eager to develop a strong brand to attract national and international capital, investment and tourists. Accordingly, municipalities often engaged in 'crazy projects' by which they hoped to receive publicity, although these often had no concurrence with the local cultural heritage.

This research has demonstrated that political, cultural, social and economic factors should not (and can not) be separated when analysing municipal politics in Turkey. They are clearly interlinked with regard to their organization as to their content. Consequently, formal and informal structures cannot be separated; often informal structures support formal ones and provide for their legitimacy and efficiency. The degree of 'personalisation' of local politics is quite remarkable. In light of these factors the use of 'Western' concepts such as 'civil society' or 'social movement' as analytical tools is at times problematic to explain local dynamics.

There clearly exists a continuity between RP and AKP municipal practise while a distinct CHP municipalism seems to be lacking. Mayor Büyükerşen was mentioned as a symbol and leading example of 'leftist municipalism'. However, a closer look revealed that there is no continuity with the New Municipalism practiced by CHP municipalities in the 1970s. In addition, Mayor Büyükerşen's example was not transfered to other municipalities. This may be due to his perception of municipalism as something 'artistic', which is difficult to grasp with words. He claimed that technical improvements such as the introduction of 'Estram' or the regeneration of the riverbank may be explained. But, in his words, true municipalism would be like painting or music, depending on talent and sensitivity, and could only be felt, not explained (Büyükerşen & Taşçı, 2009, 426). Mayor Büyükerşen is clearly a successful mayor, but he is also a 'one-man-show'. His success was not systematically applied to other CHP-led municipalities, thus translates into a general weakness for the party. Contrasted with the highly centralized,

systematic approach of the AKP this seems to be a main reason for the divergent electoral results of the two parties in Turkey.

Lastly, the performative aspects of municipal politics were striking. This research has demonstrated, how municipalities invent 'tradition' (as Eskişehir Metropolitan municipality) or how they situate their practice in an established tradition (as the AKP situating itself in the RP's conservative municipalism practise). However, the AKP's 'framing' is only partially convincing given the differences to RP practise. On the contrary, very similar municipal practise between AKP and CHP-led municipalities was observed. However, due to their different political ideology, parties framed their municipal practise differently denying any parallels. Similar contradictions were also observed with regard to national and local politics: While the AKP's and CHP's national political performance was characterized by sharp opposition to each other, at the local level, particularly in the municipal council, a local rationale was observed. The above demonstrates how an analysis of municipal politics needs to take a variety of aspects (local, national, global, framing-practise, institutionalization-personalization, formal-informal as well as performative aspects) into consideration to understand how it is 'done' – this thesis hopes to have made a contribution in this direction.

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