

# REVISITING NATIONAL SECURITY DISCOURSE IN TURKEY WITH A VIEW TO PACIFICATION: FROM MILITARY POWER TO POLICE POWER ONTO ORCHESTRATION OF LABOUR POWER \* \*\*

## Articles (Theme)

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## Abstract

In this article, I try to analyse the neoliberal re-structuration in Turkey with a view to fabrication of official national security discourse and its adaption as common sense among productive classes. Acknowledging pacification as a counter-hegemonic approach to securitization, I offer an alternative framework to study the role of national security in Turkish politics that goes beyond rather traditionalized civil-military dichotomy. I argue that national security is a technique aiming at pacification with both imperial and local targets and that it should be understood with recourse to the neoliberalism-security-pacification axis. The article composes of three sections. First, I explore the history of the term pacification. Second, I look at the discursive continuities on national security between the military regime and the civilian AKP governments. Third, I reflect on the alternative forms of solidarity emerged during the Gezi Resistance that open the possibility of creating a counter-hegemonic common sense.

**Key terms:** Gezi Resistance, militarization, national security, neoliberalism, pacification, police

## TÜRKİYE’DE ULUSAL GÜVENLİK SÖYLEMİNİ PASİVİZASYON BAĞLAMINDA YENİDEN DÜŞÜNMEK

### Özet

Bu makalenin amacı, Türkiye’deki neoliberal yeniden yapılandırma sürecini resmî ulusal güvenlik söyleminin fabrikasyonuna ve bu söylemin üreten sınıflar tarafından ortak kanı olarak adaptasyonuna referansla analiz etmektir. Bu amaçla, pasivizasyonun güvenlikleştirme için karşı hegemonik bir yaklaşım sunduğu kabulünden yola çıkarak, Türk siyasetinde ulusal güvenliğin rolünü çalışmak için daha ziyade gelenekselleşmiş olan sivil-askerî ikileminin ötesine geçen alternatif bir çerçeve önerisi sunacağım. Ulusal güvenliğin, hem emperyal hem yerel hedefleri olan pasivizasyonu amaçlayan bir teknik olduğu ve dolayısıyla neoliberalizm-güvenlik-pasivizasyon ekseninde anlaşılması gerektiği yazının temel argümanını oluşturuyor. Makale, üç bölümden oluşuyor. Birinci bölümde, pasivizasyon kavramının tarihini inceleyeceğim. İkinci bölümde, askeri rejimlerden sivil AKP hükümetlerine ulusal güvenlik söyleminin devamlılığına

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bakacağım. Üçüncü bölümde ise Gezi Direnişi sırasında ortaya çıkan alternatif dayanışma biçimlerine ve bunların nasıl karşı hegemonik bir ortak kanı yaratma ihtimalinin yolunu açtığını tartışacağım.

**Anahtar terimler:** Gezi Direnişi, militarizasyon, ulusal güvenlik, neoliberalizm, pasivizasyon, polis.

*Think of an orchestra. If the flute is detuned while violin and contrabass are making a sound in harmony with the piece, then that piece of course cannot be performed. Namely, the important thing is that everybody should perform their duty, without halt, in harmony.*

General Kenan Evren, President of Turkey, November 3, 1981

*[T]he key practice of pacification is...a feat of enormous social engineering to (re)build a social order.*

Mark Neocleous

The construction and orchestration of a certain social order that complies with the accumulation of capital, the security of private property and reproduction of labour power has been the utmost task of the modern liberal nation states. In that, security has functioned as the key term of liberal order building, reflecting both monopoly of violence and consent creating aspects of the state (Neocleous, 2008). The concern of security has helped ruling classes not only break and/or prevent opposition, but also secure a foundation for capital accumulation, cheap wage labour and easy flow of goods and services in the free market. That is one of the reasons why Marx referred to security as the “supreme concept of bourgeois society” (quoted in Neocleous, 2008: 11; Rigakos, 2011: 59). Nevertheless, it was not until after 9/11 that the security concern spread among the masses not only in the US, but across the capitalist world. Since 9/11, securitization has functioned as an ideology, absorbed in and adding value to everything from policy-making to commodities to rights-based claims: not only national security and social security, but also food security, job security, workplace security, supply chain security, environmental security, and on the list goes. Security has come to define every aspect of daily activities by colonizing and de-radicalizing the discourse on for example hunger, exploitation, imperialism, environmental degradation. (Neocleous and Rigakos, 2011). It has done so by also convincing people to give their consent to any regulation regarding security, not only from above but also from the free market and from below, in the name of their own

security, meaning to avoid harm to their mental, physical and psychological integrity; so that any kind of opposition to the discourse of security has been dismissed. The more the talk went around the term security, the more the radical thought on issues became submissive (Neocleous and Rigakos, 2011).

The discreet charm of the term can be unfolded with reference to three main strategies among others that the term security maintains itself: war—a constant struggle against and the destruction of the elements of insecurity—; order building—a creation and recreation of a more secure environment—; and administration—an enforcement of laws and regulations regarding the new order (see respectively Neocleous 2014; 2000; 1996). Although security with its war, order building and administration aspects is not new to neoliberalism and has always been inherent in the liberal ideology as a key term (Foucault, 2008; Neocleous, 2008), it should not be wrong to claim that the discourse of security has been hegemonic under neoliberalism through constructing itself as people’s and institutions’ own responsibility and a part of their self-care. That is to say, in the process of neoliberalization security has been democratized to include citizen-subjects as carriers of the discourse, agents of the surveillance and warriors of the insecurities and instituted itself as the “common sense” in Gramscian terms. Then, the construction and consolidation of the hegemonic discourse of security under neoliberalism needs to be analyzed from a counter-hegemonic perspective that reveals the ways in which it has been used to keep masses under control and pacify them while making them “perform their duty in harmony.” And that alternative approach, according to Mark Neocleous and George Rigakos, comes with security as pacification. As war strategy pacification bears the secret of security and allows us develop a critical stance towards the hegemonic discourse of security.

In this article, I try to analyse the neoliberal re-structuration in Turkey with a view to fabrication of official national security discourse and its adaption and adoption among productive classes as common sense through making use of the conceptual framework pacification provides. In Turkey, the neoliberal-authoritarian nexus was initiated under the three-year military interim regime following the 1980 military coup when the official discourse on national security was transformed and expanded to include literally everything; so much so, one of the generals who could define national security as follows:

In this country, from rice prices to highways to touristic places there is not a single matter that is not related to national security. If you are thinking too deeply,

that as well becomes a matter of national security (quoted in Ahmad, 1999: 156, my translation).

Authoritarian and militarist tendencies of Turkish political structure have for so long been blamed both in theory and in politics on the series of military *coup d'états*, in particular on the 1980 coup.<sup>1</sup> My primary aim here is to offer a framework that goes beyond the civil-military dichotomy through revealing the discursive continuities on national security from the military rule to the civilian Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—AKP) governments of the 2000s. It is my contention that the civil-military dichotomy in the analyses of Turkish politics has in turn masked the differences among diverse approaches on the issue and set a blockage on the critical understanding of specificities of the diverse politics on diverse issues. As a result of this dominant approach a perception has emerged assuming that if it was not for the military tutelage Turkish political life would not have suffered all the misconducts, anti-democratic procedures, oppression and so on. With this aim in mind, I start off by exploring the term pacification, then move forward to Turkey's transition to neoliberalism, and then to the AKP rule. I will conclude with a brief discussion of how counter-hegemonic actions in the face of security measures were developed during the Gezi Resistance that started on May 2013.

### **Pacification through the Claims to (National) Security**

Michael Lebowitz argues that “capitalism tends to produce the workers it needs, workers who look upon capitalism as common sense” and that “[t]o struggle against a situation in which workers ‘by education, tradition and habit’ look upon capital’s needs ‘as self-evident natural laws’, we must struggle for an *alternative* common sense” (2012: 347).<sup>2</sup> The common sense of today’s capitalism has been the desire and the need for more and more security. The increasingly authoritarian official state discourse and unofficial market-based discourse on security in general, and national security in particular has been proved to be a pre-condition for neoliberal re-structuration over the last thirty years. In order to struggle for an alternative common sense, then, the secret of security should be revealed, and that is, pacification. In other words the key mechanism of security is pacification as a war tactic aiming counter-insurgency, order building and administration of the population (Neocleous, 2011).

Pacification is a military concept that was popularly used during the US war on Vietnam. Since then, however, the term disappeared not only from the discourse of political power and the

opposition but also from the academic literature. It has recently been introduced to critical security studies by Neocleous and Rigakos (2011) as an alternative to security with recourse to the historical significance of the term and its relationship to security projects as part of their broader study, controversially named “anti-security.” Rigakos argues that the need for an alternative occurred as security began “to latch itself on to almost all aspects of human relations” and constituted an “analytical and political blockage” (2011: 60). Since security is taken for granted as omnipotent and since it is malleable enough to be congealed in everything, and thus since it is roundly seen as something we should always want, the concept of security is not deemed useful for contemporary critical analyses; it obscures more than it reveals. Even the most critical analyses, when they start with the term security, always have the tendency to broaden the reach of security discourse (Rigakos, 2011). Rather than security, speaking of pacification and the projects of pacification as security jobs brings forth new ways of understanding the *security fetish* that marks the neoliberal world order and excites the way to create a critical, counter-hegemonic approach to security.

The genealogy of the concept of pacification goes back to the sixteenth century. According to *Oxford English Dictionary* pacification was first used in the Edicts of Pacification of 1563, 1570 and the Edict of Nantes (1598). Here, the term meant “an ordinance or decree enacted by a monarch or state to put an end to strife or discontent” or “an instance of achieving or restoring peace; a reconciliation, a truce; a peace treaty.” Hence, the term had a dual meaning: ending a discontent most likely by means of force and making peace by enactment. In other words, the term has connoted force/violence with peace/consent. When it first appeared in official discourse, it replaced the term “conquest.” Philip II of Spain declared in July 1573 that “all further extensions of empire be termed ‘pacifications’ rather than ‘conquests’” as the violence used during or after the conquests caused discontent among the people at home (quoted in Neocleous, 2010: 14). Yet, pacification was not merely a substitute term for conquest for rhetorical concerns. With his declaration, Philip II was also suggesting a new war strategy which would include establishing “cooperation with the lords and nobles who seem most likely to be of assistance in the pacification of the land” and gathering “information about the various tribes, languages and divisions of the Indians in the province” and seeking “friendship with them through trade and barter, showing them great love and tenderness and giving them objects to which they will take a liking” and keeping their children as hostages “under the pretext of

teaching them,” and finally he was adding that “[b]y these and other means are the Indians to be pacified and indoctrinated, but in no way are they to be harmed, for all we seek is their welfare and their conversion” (quoted in Neocleous, 2011: 199-200). This initial definition of the process of pacification demonstrates that the main concern of the empires were no longer mere territorial gain, but also the population—i.e. gaining the “hearts and minds” of the people, adapting them to new terms of European trade.

Around the same time in Europe a new approach to government and the state was being shaped under the name of police science [*Polizeiwissenschaft*].<sup>3</sup> In 1608 Obrecht wrote that there are three tasks of police: (1) information of population and territory; (2) a set of measures to augment the wealth of the state; (3) public happiness (cited in Pasquino, 1991: 113). In line with Obrecht, von Sonnenfels [1764] suggested that “the ultimate purpose of states may be divided into... four sciences, viz.: *external security; internal security; diversification of gainful occupations; and raising the revenues* necessary for the expenses of the state” (quoted in Small 2001: 470). In the same vein, Adam Smith argued that “[t]he four great objects of law are justice, police, revenue, and arms” (Smith, 1896 [1763]: 3). At the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century, the philosophical background feeding the emergence of the liberal state and social order, namely the theory of the nation’s happiness and prosperity, was surrounded with ideas not so much on liberty and perpetual peace, but with ideas more on police, security and arms. The development and enlargement of the urban spaces, with Thomas Hobbes’s words, “masterlesse men” and their behavior, such as gambling, drunkenness, idleness, caused an anxiety among the ruling classes and led to a war on these “dangerous classes,” not so much to clean them up through punishment and violence but more to “pacify and indoctrinate” them for the new order (Hunt, 1999).

Police has served as the preliminary mechanism in singling out cultural differences amongst the proletariat while ensuring life-style differences between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, and hence has become the crucial institution in the organization of the reified social relations through fetishizing the notion of security. It helped foster the hegemony of the new mode of governance along with the capitalist ideals while at the same time informing, training, civilizing and orchestrating people. In doing so, the nineteenth-century police targeted the diverse popular culture of working classes (Storch, 1976). Therefore, Neocleous (2011) is right to argue that the internal pacification in the name of “the establishment of peace and security”

was started in this period in Europe. Security and peace has never referred to only “defense” or “absence of war” in the writings of classical liberal thinkers. On the contrary, in these writings both security and peace required “active military practices”.

During the US war on Vietnam, pacification as a substitute term for counter-insurgency became vital and gained popularity. Security was employed as an additional aspect that maintained the imperial-military connotation of the term as Special Assistant for Pacification of the time (from 1966 to 1968), Robert W. Komer (later in 1968, the US ambassador to Turkey), defined the “new model” pacification (Komer, 1970), and acknowledged that “pacification required first and foremost the restoration of security” (quoted in Neocleous, 2011: 193). The restoration required a civil-military joint action in affecting the everyday life of the Vietnamese through land reform, economic development, health and educational services, roads and communications. Accordingly, in Vietnam, the population was bombarded with ideological slogans and advertisements for commodities while the violence persisted. Pacification-security involved a dual function, as President Johnson put, it was “a war to build as well as to destroy”: building a civilized society and political order while destroying old values and those allegedly opposed to the new order (Neocleous, 2011: 197).

Then, pacification functions as a thread that connects the US project in Vietnam to sixteenth-century European colonialism and the fabrication of liberal social order in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The thread reminds us “that the core logic of police power is peace and security and that the war machine that is the state and capital is to be organized around this logic” (Neocleous, 2011: 201). In this respect, pacification can be defined as the main mentality of modern liberal government concerning insecurities, i.e., enemies within—insurgents to the order of capital accumulation—and enemies abroad. Thus, it also becomes interchangeable with domestic and international colonization in making the conquered spaces conducive to capital accumulation, circulation of goods, and creation of productive and docile subjects while securing the insecurity of bourgeois order. This is not clearer anywhere than the times of crisis. Each crisis is meant to revolutionise production, distribution and consumption and to restructure the capitalist order has always required new security measures. As Marx depicted “[c]onstant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones” (Marx and Engels, 1977 [1848]: 39). This historico-conceptual scheme sheds light on the possibilities of an

alternative and counter-hegemonic reading of the militaristic discourse in Turkish politics that especially erupts in times of crisis.

### **Turkey's Experience with Pacification: Constant State of Emergency in the Name of Security**

Nation-state construction in Turkey had relied on discursive policies that called for constant alertness for (national) security in everyday life. The official history based on the Emancipation War and the heroes combatting against the conquerors of the land as well as the enemies within—both people against secularism and those ethnic minorities rebelling against the nation building under Turkishness—constituted the backbone of official ideology. The concept of national security was first institutionalized with the establishment of The National Security Council (NSC, replacing then National Defense High Council) in accord with the 1961 constitution following the 1960 military coup. The council was designed to act as an advisory to the cabinet ministers for the issues regarding national security. After the 1980 military coup, the scope of the term national security is expanded to define “peace and security of society” and the new National Security Law defined the term as follows: “protecting and watching the constitutional order, national being, totality of the state as well as all its benefits including political, social, cultural and economic benefits and its contractual law against all kinds of internal and external threats” (quoted in Bayramoğlu, 2004: 87-88, my translation). The role of the NSC was expanded and its decisions became binding for the government. In other words, under the name of national security, the military cadres have obtained executive authority to direct social, cultural, economic and technological developments in the country when needed (Bayramoğlu, 2004).

Nevertheless, reading 1980 *coup d'état* and its aftermath only as the legitimation of military's domination over the civilian politics would obscure the main targets of the military intervention. Leftist movement rising among the youth and working classes in Turkey in line with other Western countries from the late 1960s onwards was tremendously concerning not only for the ruling elite in Turkey but also for the NATO countries, in particular for the US as the anti-Americanism grew among the masses.<sup>4</sup> Komer's appointment as the US ambassador to Turkey in October 1968 was not welcomed in Turkey. Komer was first protested upon his arrival on Ankara Airport, the protestors calling him the “Vietnam Butcher.” Another significant protest

occurred when he visited Middle East Technical University (METU). Students put his car on fire while he was visiting the University.<sup>5</sup> Although his appointment was very short, not even a year due the administration change upon elections in the US, Komer's appointment and his personal interest in the Middle East tell much about the US-Turkey relationships at the time. In line with Komer's new model of pacification a decade after he had left Turkey, 1980 coup and the following three-year military interim regime aimed at pacifying oppositional forces through joint civil-military action, brute violence and other socio-cultural mechanisms in the name of rebuilding and maintaining national security.

Transition to neoliberalism in Turkey in parallel to other countries went hand in hand with neo-conservatism. The post-1980 socio-political structure has had two main components: neoliberalism in economy and Turkish-Islamic synthesis on socio-cultural axis, and basically no space was left for political participation of ordinary citizens except the elections (Coşar, 2012). Along the lines of the IMF and World Bank-commanded structural adjustment programs, new regulations suggested the decrease in the state's role in economy; privatization; an end to subsidies in agriculture; the liberalization of foreign trade; encouragement of foreign investment; and liberalization in imports. The aim was to integrate Turkish capital with the global capital and lay the grounds for the neoliberal restructuring of the country (Coşar, 2012). In doing so, the military regime has got the support of Turkish capital. Two years before the military coup, in 1978, the report published by the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association (*Trkiye Sanayiciler ve İřadamları Derneđi*—TSİAD) clearly stated the new paradigm:

If the state tries to do everything, it ends up doing nothing...If the state produces can food, raise turkeys, makes shirts, opens grocery stores, these efforts take all its time and sources away; the state then cannot find the required time and sources to perform its key function, that is protecting the nation's border and maintaining the security of people and property (quoted in Haspolat, 2012: 173, my translation).

Despite the support, the neoliberalization process was maintained with ups and downs, with the first hard-hit crisis in 1994, to-be-followed by the 2001 crisis. The clumsiness of the preceding coalition governments were blamed for the crisis. The IMF and the World Bank suggested a government stronger in executive power yet even smaller in economic intervention.

Turkish-Islamic synthesis, on the other hand, was promoted in the post-1980 period through the nullification of the democratic rights of citizens (Coşar, 2012). The primary aim was

to clear labour organizations and left wing politics off the way to neoliberal policies. So much so, General Evren, the chief of staff and the president of the country during the military regime, did not hesitate to name this operation as an operation of clearing off microbes from the society in many occasions: “As we cleaned up some microbes that has sneaked among the [Turkish] youth, the Turkish youth now encounters us with their purely clean faces” (Evren, 1981: 87). This sanitation found its meaning in religious-nationalist conservatism. Accordingly, the governments in the post-1980 period adopted variants of religious conservatism which encouraged politicization of the Islamist tendencies among the masses. This tendency resulted in an increase in the votes of the Islamist political parties. Yet then again the Kemalist reflexes of the military were uneasy not so much about the rise of Islamism, but about the uncontrolled rise of Islamism. Thus, the military intervention of 1997 targeted the political Islam. As a result of the intervention the prime minister, the leader of the Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*—RP) at the time, was forced to resign and his party and its leaders were banned from politics for five years. Islamists established another political party (*Fazilet Partisi*—FP), but it was banned again in 2001. The AKP was founded in 2001 by a group of people with roots in the banned Islamist political parties.

In short, the economic crisis of 2001 on the one hand and the democratically elected Islamist political party’s crisis with the military on the other eased the way for the emergence of the AKP with strong popular support.<sup>6</sup> The new party’s motto was change: They were claiming that they themselves have changed, meaning they no longer pursued fundamental Islamist politics, and that they were to bring change to the country with their “conservative democracy.”<sup>7</sup> The AKP therefore managed to get the votes of the previous center-right political parties (Coşar and Özman, 2004). All forms of social solidarity were redefined and “dissolved in favour of individualism, private property, personal responsibility, and family values” (Harvey, 2005: 23). They also managed to get support from capital holders by promising to continue with the IMF and the World Bank’s recovery plans. In a sense, economically the AKP governments stepped forward to complete the unfinished transition to neoliberalism (Coşar, 2012). In its first term in power as a majority government the AKP proved to be a reliable government for neoliberal policies; worked in accordance with the needs of capital holders; avoided any kind of dispute with the military elite; and gained the “hearts and minds” of the masses with its populist strategies.

The AKP as a political party mainly constructed its identity on the basis of anti-military tutelage especially in their second term in government. The main promise of the AKP was a true civil democracy whose consolidation would rely on the elimination of the rather traditionalized military interference into politics. Already initiated reforms, concerning military's role in politics in line with the European Union adjustment programs in 2001, was put on a fast track during AKP's second term in government (Heper, 2005). One significant example in this respect was the five-year long Ergenekon trials, which resulted with the long sentences for military high commanders including the chief of staff, who were accused of being terrorists and charged for life-long prison sentence. The Ergenekon case was symbolic in the sense that it helped the AKP government to corrode the power of the military both in the eyes of people and political actors.<sup>8</sup>

However, increasingly authoritarian AKP rule has proved to be no different than the military authoritarianism. In parallel with the global neoliberal restructuring, in its second term, the AKP government began to silence any kind of opposition in the name of national security by inscribing itself more and more authorities at the executive level. The parallel increase in the authority and capabilities of the police forces and the private security side by side with the dissolution of the military's tutelage has been noteworthy (Haspolat, 2012). By 2011 Turkey became the number one country in the world in terms of numbers of alleged terrorists detained. The new anti-terror legislations made it possible to accuse academics, journalists, political party leaders, military high commanders and university students for terrorist activities.

War as pacification not only refers to the great wars of the twentieth century but also to a series of wars directed against the enemies within, most outstanding being the war on terror (Neocleous, 2011). Although seem metaphorical to the criminologists, from the perspective of pacification, war on drugs, smoking, alcohol, crime, cancer, poverty and so on are the real wars with targets, aims and specific strategies and tactic. They target everyday life practices, aim to replace them with new practices through diverse tools from moralization to securitization. Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer (1985), referring to Gramsci, argue that the construction of modern states juxtaposed with moral regulations and that the state structure took its shape through a cultural revolution which in turn portrayed and legitimized state authority. If we apply their thesis to the neoliberal re-structuration of modern states, it would not be wrong to argue that the states pursue their pacification-security projects through initiating a new moral and cultural (though perhaps passive) revolution.

### **Towards an Alternative Common Sense: Resistance against Pacification**

The moral and cultural revolution initiated by the AKP governments led to a common sense in which neoliberal individualism met with Islamist conservatism. In the post-1980 period, the feminist struggle aside, it is difficult to assert that any leftist or trade union organization has worked seriously on an agenda to initiate the ways for an alternative common sense. Demands of the leftist organizations could not go beyond claims for fair wages, better work place safety, and defense of past gains—all that leaving the struggle within the boundaries of capitalist relations—up until the TEKEL (Alcohol and Tobacco Monopoly of Turkey) strike in 2010. TEKEL workers' over 70-day long occupation of the downtown Ankara upon the privatization of state-owned tobacco factories was the first extensive resistance of the 2000s solely against neoliberal pacification tactics (Coşar and zman, 2012).<sup>9</sup> Although the strike did not succeed in expanding across the country, the resistance made working classes' concerns over neoliberal privatization, precariousness, and austerity measures visible. In terms of the outcome, among others, a few points that both beneficial for and paving the way to the Gezi Resistance of 2013 can be mentioned here. First, unusually high number of police, deployed at the centre of Ankara and the massive police violence during the first few days of the strike verified the already spoken expansion and change in the police forces. Second, the ignorance of the strike in the mainstream media revealed the close ties between the few capital holders who own the media power and the AKP government, and the resultant auto-censure regarding the broadcast of the opposition to government. This realization directed people's attention to alternative ways to make themselves visible through social media and other Internet channels. Third, PM Erdoğan plainly showed off his authoritarian tendencies and one-man rule in his remarks so that it was evident from that point on that Turkish political history was going towards another one-man rule that is ruthless, not open to negotiation, intimidating and marginalizing. In response, for the good or the bad, PM Erdoğan has been located at the centre of the opposition. Fourth, in the post-1980 period, for the first time in a popular movement we witnessed “the brushing aside of the identity conflicts,” in Coşar and zman's words (2012: 117), as Turkish and Kurdish workers stood together against the neoliberal policies.

Since a thorough analysis of the Gezi Resistance would exceed the scope of this article, I would like to focus partially on the motives and the tactics of the struggle to exemplify how the resistance to the pacification techniques in neoliberal times looks like. Police violence as part of the AKP’s pacification project was put in full capacity during the Gezi Resistance so much so it made the scenes from the resistance resemble a real battle field. During the resistance more than 100 people had head trauma, 11 people lost their eyes and 11 protestors lost their lives. It was not only the loss that made the Gezi a war scene, it was, even more so, the tactics and motives of the police: they attacked protestors in a systematic, well-organized, carefully planned and continuous manner. The aim was not just to incapacitate but to eliminate the protestors. In return, ordinary people learned how to fight back: how to reduce the effect of tear gas, how to incapacitate tear bomb canisters, how to build barricades, how to run, how to hide, how to call for help—and this they did so mainly through peaceful means.



Ankara, 2013 (Fotoğraf: Çağkan Sayın).

The government but in particular PM Erdoğan approached the whole resistance as an instance of war. Among other things this was all the more clear in the aftermath of the evacuation of the Gezi Park by police force when the banners of the resisting groups were replaced by a huge Turkish flag and the portraits of the founder of the Turkish Republic thus denoting what Ayşe Deniz Temiz (2013) names as “the re-conquest of the lost lands.” As mentioned earlier, the AKP’s record in government also represented a challenge to the Kemalist

republican agenda and in this respect the AKP made use of the nationalist-statist discourse of security (e.g. “launching a second National Emancipation War”) thus revealing the continuity of national security discourse as a strategy to ensure the hegemonic construction of the new socio-political order. The Gezi Resistance and the AKP’s response can be read as an attempt to turn this war into the realization of this discursive re-conquest in practice.<sup>10</sup> Exemplary here is PM’s call on his supporters to take to the streets under the name of “respect to the national will” demonstrations. On the other hand, during the most violent night of the protests across the country, on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, the mainstream media channels were broadcasting his speech to the nation reminding the first days of 1980 *coup d’etat* when the chief of staff informed the nation about the situation on the TV screen.

Yet the police violence and the struggle against it is not the only defining dimension of the Gezi Resistance, despite being the most astonishing one. The main motive behind the Gezi Resistance was to stand up against the imposition of the increasingly hegemonic common sense built on neoliberal values of profit-making, privatization, precariousness, and gentrification on the one hand, and neoconservative moral and cultural values promoting Islamic way of life. Alongside the protecting the environment and public spaces from capitalism’s greed, the recent ban on alcohol sale and consumption, the recent limitations over abortion, and increasing intervention on how people dress and behave in public spaces were on the forefront of the complaints the protestors had voiced in the first stages of the resistance. It was hence clearly an uprising against the new common sense that was being perpetuated by the AKP rule.

Although the initial motivation was not to offer an alternative common sense, the Resistance evolved towards opening a window for an alternative. The type of solidarity exercised during the resistance let the protestors bring the differences together without merging or melting them on a common ground. Similar to TEKEL strike, it became the new normal to see pro-Kurdish flags side by side with Turkish flags, secularist Kemalists siding with anti-capitalist Muslims, LGBTI people hand in hand with nationalists, fans of competing soccer clubs building barricades together, each in their respective club’s uniform. Therefore, in the face of the governments’ age old tactic to divide people on the basis of identity politics, instead of saying “we are a culture of mosaic that includes all colors”—an old motto, rather color blind to differences—they enunciated: “we are all that whatever you are trying to marginalize, intimidate and humiliate” by naming themselves *Çapulcu* (loiter in Turkish) after PM Erdoğan called

protestors a “bunch of loiters.”<sup>11</sup> Such position became advantageous over the old one as it left the ruling elite without their *precious* means to divide. Similar to TEKEL strike, alternative media channels were used to spread the news across the world, the banner, reading “the revolution will not be televised” being a popular one; again leaving the ruling class with uselessness of the monopoly of the traditional media channels, i.e., TV, newspapers and radio. The protestors’ initial disappointment with the mainstream media also led to an awakening. One of the popular banners read “I now understand you my Kurdish sister/brother”—referring to the war on the east during the 1990s and early 2000s and the way it was represented in the mainstream media.

Pacification tactics succeed so long as they sneak into everyday practices, make an ideology a common sense without referring or naming that specific ideology, and politicize daily activities within the seemingly depoliticized and/or apolitical spheres of action. It was the great success of the Gezi Resistance in Turkey that revealed the secret of pacification by mobilizing people around a matter of protecting green spaces. It revealed the secret by mobilizing the youth who were for so long considered depoliticized through the trauma of the post-1980 era and by making every organization from the far left to fundamental nationalists question their concepts of the political and their way of action. Although a concrete result has not yet appeared in the form of an alternative form of organization, as Gramsci would expect from a counter-hegemonic, revolutionary practice, it would not be wrong to foresee that the pacification model adapted in Turkey is no longer at ease in intervening and pacifying people’s life styles.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Thinking through militarism with a sole focus on military prevents us from seeing other facets of militarism. Pacification provides with a broader framework to define and understand how militarism functions in our lives, hidden underneath the daily activities just below our concern for security. More security brings more militarization just as it brings less security. Thus, it is apt to argue that the reflection of the spirit of the twenty-first century on Turkey’s politics can better be understood not in terms of the rather traditionalized civil-military dichotomy but in terms of the relation between neoliberalism and pacification. In other words, an analysis on the persistence of authoritarian practices, sometimes recalling a tendency to totalitarianism, should transcend military *versus* civilian regimes formula and be grounded on the

conceptualization of national security as a police technique that is embedded into (neo)liberalism so as to function as a means for pacification. In so doing, one might escape from the bewildering effect of seemingly contradictory policies of the AKP governments, which seem to belie each other. In the process of the consolidation of new social order the AKP government's use of police power went hand in hand with interventions into social and cultural life. Briefly, the AKP's social policies have proved to be individualizing and personalizing, which in turn attack the social, rights-based claims in everyday life. This attack has been accompanied by constant appeal to conservative cultural and moral priorities as a means to compensate for the costs of the elimination of rights-based discourse from the socio-political scene. All in all, it can be said that the AKP's pacification projects worked through the destruction of the established military forces' authority on the one hand, and the production of a militaristic police establishment, side by side with the forging of consent for the neoliberal-cum-Turkish-Islamic socio-political space among ordinary citizens on the other.

By revealing the secret of pacification, the Gezi Resistance opened the way towards the crisis of hegemony for the government. It is a crisis not only in the economy and the political institutions, but, in Stuart Hall's words, "in a wide series of polemics, debates about fundamental sexual, moral and intellectual questions,... in the relations of political representation and the parties—on a whole range of issues which do not necessarily, in the first instance, appear to be articulated with politics, in the narrow sense, at all" (1987: 20). Looking at the crisis of neoliberalism today, both in Turkey and in the capitalist world, from the pacification viewpoint would open more doors for resistance.

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<sup>1</sup> In the mainstream analyses of Turkish politics, civil-military distinction has long been used as a starting point. And it was rightly so, because of the prevalence of military interventions in Turkish political history.. Turkish nation-state was established by the military cadres who led the Emancipation War and who established the republic in 1923. This legacy left the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) with the responsibility of protecting the republic not only against the enemies abroad but also and more importantly, given the context of international order at the time, against the enemies within. This responsibility made it almost a habit for the TAF to intervene into politics almost once in every decade after the transition to the multi-party system in 1946. Turkey experienced a military coup in 1960, a military warning in 1971, another coup in 1980, another warning in 1997, and a mild form of warning in 2007. It has been argued that the military heritage revealed itself in the state tradition (Heper, 2007) that treated any kind of political opposition as a national security issue and dealt with it through military and/or police forces (among others see Ahmad, 1999; Bayramoğlu 2004). Henceforth, the discourse on military tutelage in approaches to the history of Turkish politics has been dominant.

<sup>2</sup> Yet of course it should be noted that this *common sense* is never entirely consistent. Although the discourse of capitalist culture as we define it with individualism, commodity fetishism, normalization of exploitation and so on is hegemonic, its hegemony does not apply spatially and historically to every group evenly. Unevenness of this hegemony is what paves the way to alternative forms as I will show in the last section.

<sup>3</sup> During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *Polizeiwissenschaft* was concerned with the content of the ‘order’ in the making as well as the form of the state to be structured. See Kneyemer, 1980 for detailed genealogy of the term.

<sup>4</sup> Searching through the newspapers of the time demonstrates the rising concern in the US about the situation in Turkey. As a NATO member and border neighbour to European countries, Turkey should have stayed as an ally. In the newspaper reports, emphasis on the US financial and military aid to Turkey is almost represented as regret or as in exchange of demand for alliance. See “The New Young Turks”, *New York Times*, March 17, 1969; “Turkey’s New Mood is Puzzling: Anti-US Sentiment Evident in Land of NATO Ally,” *New York Times*, February 17, 1969.

<sup>5</sup> Komer’s case is still remembered as the victory of the revolutionary forces of the time. Nevertheless, the rumour says that after the incident the CIA has had a black list that would include those responsible for the incident. By the end of 1970s all the name in that so-called list was either executed by the state or ambiguously killed in other incidents during the increasing clashes between protestors and the police or between the leftists and right wing forces.

<sup>6</sup> It has been a reflex of the voting population in Turkey. Although the masses did not show noticeable resistance to the military interventions and respected the military (not a forced respect all the time—it is the official history that grants the military a respectful status in the social and political hierarchy), when it comes to the elections, they popularly vote for those the military opposed.

<sup>7</sup> Conservative Democracy was the foundation manifesto of the party, with an “emphasis on ‘identity differences as a sphere of natural freedom,’ it is asserted that the ‘conservatives care for ... ‘national,’ shared values’” (Coşar, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> In Turkey the rumours about existence of a Gladio-like “deep state” organization that would function beyond the authorities of legitimate and legal institutions without having to be accountable to any authority in order to “protect” the country and its continuation has always been hidden beneath the public discussions about politics. Up until the AKP governments, although some party leaders and even a prime minister openly mentioned such an organization, nobody could or did take a serious step to reveal it. Relying on this not much spoken but well-known phenomenon of Turkish political culture, under the AKP government a series of operations has been initiated with the so-called target of unveiling the deep state organization and putting the responsible persons on trial. With these operations the AKP has managed to appeal to the masses as well as liberal intelligentsia by claiming that they finally are eliminating the “deep state,” a blockage for true democracy. The operations were conducted in a highly suspicious manner with thousands of pages of charge sheets containing no tangible evidence, secret witnesses, illegally produced tapes, and so on. With the case of Ergenekon people from diverse political and ideological background including the leader of Worker’s Party, a retired police chief, military high commanders, and journalists were detained on charges being members of the Ergenekon Terrorist Organization—a name that the public at large had heard for the first time with the beginning of the trials. The defendants were accused of organizing a coup d’état against the democratically elected government and putting the state’s continuation at risk. The series of legal operations under the AKP rule did not only target the military high commanders or those belong to the ruling elite of the old regime. The legal operation targeting *Koma Civakên Kurdistan (Group of Communities in Kurdistan—KCK)* resulted in over 1,800 detainees including Kurdish journalists, democratically elected mayors, political figures, trade unionists and human rights defenders. These operations contributed the AKP’s pacification through realizing a certain law and order agenda.

<sup>9</sup> In 2002, TEKEL shared the same fate as the rest of the state-owned enterprises and was put on the fast track to privatization. The AKP government first divided TEKEL into three separate branches (alcohol, cigarette and tobacco), and then one by one sold them off: first alcohol in February 2005, next cigarettes in October 2006 and, finally, tobacco in February 2008. During the first two phases of privatization worker layoffs were not in massive numbers as some regulations protected them. However, in the last phase, in February 2008, the decision for near 12,000 workers working in the tobacco processing factories was made that they would be laid off over the next two years.

<sup>10</sup> That was for so long thought an achieved goal on the discursive level by the AKP. So much so, during the last general election campaign PM Erdogan was called the “master” who completed his apprenticeship in the previous terms in power.

<sup>11</sup> It would not be wrong to argue that such solidarity was on the way since 2007 when an Armenian journalist, Hrant Dink was assassinated and hundreds of thousands took to the streets silently with banners reading “we are all Armenians.”