THE AKP'S DELIRIOUS SPACES: ENJOYING THE NOTIONS OF CONSTRUCTION AND ARCHITECTURE IN NEOLIBERAL TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

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After the Justice and Development Party (AKP), that had been in office for almost ten years, presented the project of Kanal Istanbul, more commonly known as the 'crazy project' in the eve of 2011 general elections, a state of excess and delirium became visible in several segments of society such as mass media and business sector. With respect to its vision of changing the landscape in quite a radical fashion, the 'crazy project' is emblematic of the excessive and delirious state in the construction sector for the last five years or so in Turkey. This thesis focuses on the AKP's hegemony through its spatial practices and regulations of everyday life. In this research, the role of social fantasy is discussed regarding the ways in which the notions of architecture and construction are conceived. Accordingly, the issue of 'catching up with the West', which has been quite prevalent from the foundation of the republic, is re-problematized in the neoliberal context. Apart from the discursive aspect of the subject, the role of enjoyment (*jouissance*), that which escapes analysis, is taken into consideration by consulting Lacanian psychoanalysis and its pertinent concepts throughout this thesis.

Keywords: The Justice and Development Party (AKP), architecture, construction, space, hegemony, psychoanalysis, enjoyment, transgression, Turkey

ÖZET

AKP'NİN ÇILGIN MEKANLARI: NEOLİBERAL TÜRKİYE'DE İNŞAAT VE MİMARI KAVRAMLARINDAN HAZLANMA

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Kültürel Çalışmalar MA, 2012

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2011 genel seçimleri öncesinde, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (AKP) Kanal İstanbul projesini – veya daha çok bilinen adıyla 'çılgın projeyi' – kamuoyuna duyurmasının ardından, toplumun birçok kesiminde taşkın bir ruh hali kendini gösterdi. Fiziksel coğrafyayı radikal bir şekilde değiştirme tahayyülüne istinaden, 'çılgın proje' son birkaç yıldır Türkiye'de inşaat sektörünün içinde bulunduğu taşkınlık halini temsil edici niteliktedir. Bu tez, AKP hegemonyasının mekansal ve günlük hayatı düzenliyici pratikler üzerinden nasıl kurulduğuna odaklanıyor. Bu araştırma dahilinde, toplumsal fantazinin rolü mimari ve inşaat kavramlarının algınalışı üzerinden tartışılıyor. Yine bu doğrultuda, cumhuriyetin kuruluşundan itibaren güncelliğini koruyan "Batı'yı yakalama" olgusu neoliberal bir arkaplanda yeniden sorunsallaşırılıyor. Konunun söylemsel boyutunun yanısıra, hazzın (*jouissance*) rolü Lacancı psikanaliz ve ilgili kavramlar doğrultusunda tez boyunca irdeleniyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), mimari, inşaat, mekan, hegemonya, psikanaliz, haz, ihlal, Türkiye

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INTRODUCTION

During the electoral campaigns in 2011, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister of Turkey and the president of the ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, announced *Kanal Istanbul* – better known as the 'crazy project' – after weeks of suspense about the content of the party's 'mysterious' and 'crazy project'. In broad strokes, the project entailed opening up a man-made strait, a new Bosporus so to speak, in addition to the already existing natural one to be finished by 2023, the hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Erdoğan states that the main objective of the project was to canalize the heavy oil tanker traffic in the Bosporus to the new canal. By this way, he claimed, the danger derived from oil tankers could be eliminated, and the Bosporus would again be a "natural wonder" in which "history and the future co-exist." *Kanal Istanbul*, however, does not merely consist of a 50 kilometer long, 25 meter deep and 150 meters wide canal connecting the Sea of Marmara to the Black Sea; it also includes a comprehensive urbanization and 'mall-ization' around the canal. In a way, what the masterminds of this project have in their minds is building up a second city within the provincial borders of Istanbul and restructuring the – now-going-to-be island – Istanbul metropolitan area. Moreover, it is not hard to guess that this kind of far-reaching urban project summons question marks concerning the necessity of infrastructure. Overall, the project is estimated to cost more than 6 billion dollars. Besides the need for huge financial resources, there are several other possible problems that this project will cause: environmental issues, the uncertainty of what to do with the settlements over the construction area, and the status of the new Bosporus in terms of international law, to name but a few.

Besides the content of the project, its presentation deserves specific attention by virtue of its style, scale, and organization. Weeks before the mega-event of the project's presentation, the party made a preannouncement without giving any information about the content. This gesture – which can be read as a 'marketing success' – added some mystery into the phenomenon of the 'crazy project'. The content of the project became a subject in everyday conversations as people tried to guess the content. Eventually, the presentation of

the project did some justice to the curiosity not only in terms of its content but also regarding the 'form' of the whole event. The presentation by the Prime Minister himself turned into a political spectacle par excellence regarding several factors such as the organization of the space of the congress center, the meticulous selection of the audience, the use of digital animation, and the extensive coverage of the event in a hyperbolic and lofty fashion by the mainstream media.

At the outset of the TV broadcast, we see an excited crowd cheering Erdoğan by calling him 'grand master'. The first few minutes of his speech were frequently interrupted by applauses and outcries of individuals 'oiling' Erdoğan which further ignited the crowd. Nonetheless, the delirious state of the crowd did not last long against the (over-) confident and charismatic performance staged by Erdoğan. After the crowd settled down, the Prime Minister started his speech which was decorated with poems and saturated with allusions to the 'ancestors'. It was quite intriguing to see the quick transformation of the formerly frantic crowd into quiet and attentive spectators in tune with Erdoğan's rhythm. During his speech, the Prime Minister touched upon a wide spectrum of subject-matters mainly about his party's successes and others' failures as one would expect from a politician in the election eve. Yet, this self-praising opens toward a much broader historical context comprising the Ottoman and the republican eras. In other words, the Prime Minister presented his time in office as a major turning point in the whole Turkish history. Another detail to be dealt with was the shooting angle of a mobile video camera moving up and down behind the right-hand shoulder of the Prime minister. This was the angle which gave us some idea about the scale of this event: the number of spectators, lighting, size of the congress hall, and Erdoğan as the man apart and the great leader at the center of this organization.

The declaration of the project caused an immense reaction in the society, and it became a major topic in daily conservations, television discussion programs, news of mass media… Numerous individuals and institutions were consulted for their opinions which provided a wide range of perspectives. Television channels devoted extensive time to this issue while most columnists dedicated their columns to this topic in the days subsequent to the presentation event. For many of those who were supportive of the project, *Kanal Istanbul* symbolized the 'developing Turkey' in the sense that the country was strong enough to realize such a project. People from different professions ranging from real estate agents to economist assertively demonstrated their sophisticated knowledge regarding the construction process and its aftermath. 'Men on the street' – of whose ideas we can get a glimpse in street interviews – were often enthusiastic about the project: 'Istanbul is now the center of the

world' or 'Turkey deserves such magnificent projects.' Some praised themselves for having rightly guessed the content of the crazy project.

While the excitement was still palpable, Prime Minister Erdoğan continued to announce other 'crazy projects' during his rallies in other cities. The effect of the 'crazy project' swelled and spilled over Istanbul as crazy projects for other cities such as Izmir, Ankara, and Sinop started to be anounced in the weeks following the presentation of *Kanal Istanbul*. Ankara was going to be the global center of the defense industry.[1] Izmir was promised more than thirty projects including satellite cities, two new city hospitals, a sub-sea tunnel connecting the two sides of the Izmir gulf, and so on.[2] Sinop, on the other hand, was going to be an island like Istanbul.[3] *Kanal Istanbul* did not only go beyond the provincial boundaries, but even offered news about the reactions of neighboring countries to the project. Financial Times published an analysis which took the issue from the perspective of international relations. According to the article, Turkey should maintain a delicate balance in its foreign policy inasmuch as *Kanal Istanbul* would entail a re-interpretation of the 1936 Treaty of Montreux which frames all activities in the Bosporus.[4] Erman Ilıcak, the chairman of a Turkish-origin construction firm which does business in Russia shared his thoughts with us about the possible reaction of 'the Russians'. Against the predictions that Russia would cause complications concerning the Treaty of Montreux, he claimed that Russia would not hinder but support *Kanal Istanbul* since it would expedite the passage of Russian ships.[5] "The crazy project intimidated the Greeks" was a headline based on another news which was published by a 'news paper with high circulation' involving some theories about how Turkey would strengthen her hand on the oil trade in the Mediterranean Sea.[6] The ambition to pass over the national boundaries manifested itself in 'surplus' projects such as creating a star and

[1] Bunlar da Ankara'nın çılgın projeleri. (2011, May 25). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1138601&title=bunlar-da-ankaranin-cilgin-projeleri&haberSayfa2

[2] Karasu, A.R. & Özkan Ö. (2011, June 4). İşte o çılgın 35 proje. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1142981&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[3] Sinop, "ada" oluyor. (2012, March 2). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1253729&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[4] Wright, R. (2011, Jun 27). Bosphorus Canal: Questions raised over a 'crazy but magnificent' project. *Financial Times*. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/2d911672-a081-11e0-b14e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1zYi8CydZ

[5] Akkan, F. & Kamburoğlu A. (2011, May 20). Ruslar 'çılgın proje'ye engel değil destek olur. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1136438&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[6] Çılgın proje Yunanlıları korkuttu. (2011, April 30). Milliyet. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/cilgin-proje-yunanlari-korkuttu/dunya/dunyadetay/30.04.2011/1384531/default.htm

crescent shaped island with the materials to be gained from the excavation for the project.[7] This gesture, as one may surmise without difficulty, aimed to place a signature on the surface of the world by 'creating' an island designed like the Turkish flag that could be seen from space.

The frantic state was most obvious in the business sector where firms tried to get the copyrights of the 'crazy projects'.[8] In one of his speeches, Erdoğan mentioned a Turkish entrepreneur who was ready to invest thirty billion dollars in the project. Later, this mysterious businessman in question appeared and confirmed the Prime Minister's statement as he claimed that "if this project would cost ten billion dollars, its return would be more than three hundred billion dollars" (İnan, 2011: my translation).[9] Also, the company owned by this businessman released a commercial film demonstrating Istanbul as a futuristic – or rather fantastic – city with huge skyscrapers, flying cars, etc…[10] In short, such entrepreneurial transactions in the business sector did not merely tout the crazy project, but they also reproduced the delirious mood encouraged by the ruling party's electoral strategy.

Not surprisingly, there has been much opposition to Erdoğan's lofty project from the political realm, the civil society, and mass media. The main opposition party with Kemalist leanings, CHP (Republican People's Party) chose to disregard the project by pointing at the more persistent and severe problems such as poverty or unemployment. The leader of CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, remarked that the projects of the government, rather than merely being crazy should address the most urgent needs of the people. As an alternative to this large-scale project, Kılıçdaroğlu pronounced a more humble proposal: car carries between each side of the Bosporus with the aim of diminishing the traffic jam particularly on the bridges and generally in Istanbul.[11] Also, investments of this kind prevalent during the era of

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[7] 'Çılgın proje' bir ada daha doğuruyor. (2011, May 5). *Radikal*. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1048351&CategoryID=77
Çılgın projenin hafriyatından 'çılgın ada' çıktı. (2011, May 6). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://ekonomi.milliyet.com.tr/cilgin-projenin-hafriyatindan-cilgin-ada-cikti/ekonomi/ekonomidetay/06.05.2011/1386746/default.htm
'Çılgın Proje'den çıkan hafriyatla 'çılgın ada' yapılacak. (2011, may 5). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1130368&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[8] 'Kanal Istanbul' marka olma yolunda. (2011, May 5). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://ekonomi.milliyet.com.tr/-kanal-istanbul-marka-olma-yolunda/ekonomi/ekonomidetay/05.05.2011/1386392/default.htm

[9] O çılgın işadamı ortaya çıktı. (2011, May 3). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://ekonomi.milliyet.com.tr/o-cilgin-isadami-ortaya-cikti/ekonomi/ekonomidetay/03.05.2011/1385498/default.htm

[10] The commercial movie is an interesting combination of a futuristic narrative and Islamic teology. Futuristic images that were displayed throughout the film was espoused by the story of genesis. "We do not only building cities but also realizing what is already fated." Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgu4DKedt38

developmentalism, such as factories to be founded in small cities with high unemployment rates, appeared to be the projects implied in this line of thinking.[12] Kılıçdaroğlu expressed his main opposition with the statement that "there is no room for the human in this project."[13] A sarcastic response came from Nihat Ergin, the Minister of Science, Industry, and Technology: "They are saying that there is no human in it. This is not a swimming pool but a canal project."[14] The Prime Minister Erdoğan joined the tirade and digressed from the subject-matter by accusing Kılıçdaroğlu and CHP of creating obstacles against the concrete projects and services that AKP had been producing with love and passion and of "digging a tunnel from CHP headquarters to Silivri[15]."[16]

The the third largest and ultra-nationalist party, Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), claimed that AKP's crazy project was a stolen idea which had originally been pronounced in the Democratic Leftist Party's (DSP) election proclamation in the 1990s.[17] This claim was then confirmed by the vice president of CHP.[18] Prime Minister Erdoğan did not negate this claim, yet he argued that there is a difference between uttering and actually substantiating the project.[19] Another contention brought forward by the deputy chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party was that *Kanal Istanbul* is nothing but an empty election promise of the ruling party to allure the voters.[20] The president of MHP, on the other hand, referred to the growing income gap among the population caused by unjust distribution of wealth which in

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[11] Kılıçdaroğlu'ndan 'İstanbul trafiği' projesi. (2011, April 30). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/kilicdaroglu-dan-istanbul-trafigi-projesi/siyaset/siyasetdetay/30.04.2011/1384463/default.htm

[12] Kılıçdaroğlu: Yeni CHP, halkın partisi. (2011, May 25). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1138714&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[13] Seven, E & Turan, O. (2011, April 29). *Yeni Şafak*. Projede maksat muhalefet olsun. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://yenisafak.com.tr/Politika/?t=29.04.2011&i=316568

[14] "Bu yüzme havuzu değil kanal projesi." Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.kanalistanbulprojesi.web.tr/bu-yuzme-havuzu-degil-kanal-projesi.html

[15] It is the name of the location of the penitentiary inhabiting a number of former ruling elite including political, intellectual and military figures who are accused of plotting coup against civil government.

[16] Erdoğan: Bu CHP'nin üstü şişhane altı kaval. (2011, May 4). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1130253&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[17] Çılgın değil çalınan proje. (2011, April 30). *Milliyet*. Retrieved Jul 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/cilgin-degil-calinan-proje/siyaset/siyasetdetay/30.04.2011/1384224/default.htm

[18] Çılgın projeyi ilk Ecevit gündeme getirmişti. (2011, April 27). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/cilgin-projeyi-ilk-ecevit-gundeme-getirmisti/siyaset/siyasetdetay/27.04.2011/1383138/default.htm

[19] Çılgın Proje'ye Ecevit'li savunma. (2011, April 29). *Radikal*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&Date=29.4.2011&ArticleID=1047746&CategoryID=78

[20] 'Başbakan heves pazarlıyor'. (2011, April 28). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/-basbakan-heves-pazarliyor-/siyaset/siyasetdetay/28.04.2011/1383630/default.htm

his view would be exacerbated with the crazy project.[21]

According to the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the formal representative of the Kurdish movement in the political realm, *Kanal Istanbul* was just a distraction from the real burning issues such as the Kurdish problem and the democratization of the Turkish state. Additionally, the former president of BDP, Hamit Geylani stated that his party was against all endeavors harmful to the environment.[22] The Felicity Party (SP), founded by the hardliners of the Virtue Party (FP) from which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) emanated as the reformist wing, laid claim to *Kanal Istanbul* as its own project. The president of the party declared that the party's Beyoğlu organization had been working on *Kanal Istanbul* for the last ten years.[23] Şevket Kazan, a well-known figure in the circles of political Islam and who was at the time a parliamentarian candidate from SP, predicted that the project would be a nuisance for Turkey, as other regions would be neglected while all resources were being spent in Istanbul. To Kazan, it would be a wasteful project to spend excessive effort on making Istanbul a worldwide city instead of uplifting the country as a whole.[24] Another argument presented by the party was that *Kanal Istanbul* would have no recuperative effect toward social peace and harmony.[25] The People's Voice Party (HAS Parti), another Islamist party which is distinguished by its critical stance against neoliberalism claimed that the project was no more than a dream insofar as neither environmental studies nor a preliminary examination of feasibility had been made. Numan Kurtulmuş, the president of the party, mockingly proposed to build a presidential palace for the Prime Minister with the materials to be gained from the excavation for the project.[26] Two political parties unsuccessfully striving for the votes clustered in the center right, Truepath Party and the Party of Turkey, also argued for the

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[21] Bahçeli: Kanal İstanbul, soygun düzenini çılgınca sürdürecek bir projedir. (2011, May 7). *Zaman.* Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1131333&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[22] Geylani: Çılgın Proje, aldatmacadan başka bir şey değil. (2011, April 29). *Zaman.* Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1127798&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[23] Kamalak: Bu çılgın değil çalgın projedir. (2011, April 28). *Zaman.* Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1127205&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[24] Şevket Kazan: 'Kanal İstanbul' Türkiye'nin başına bela olur. (2011, April 29). *Zaman.*
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1127751&keyfield=6B616E616C206973746746 Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
16E62756C

[25] Yasin Hatipoğlu: 40 tane kanal açsan toplumsal huzura yetmez. (2011, May 1). *Zaman.* Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1128563&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[26] Kurtulmuş: Kanal'ın hafriyatıyla Başbakan'a boğazda başkanlık sarayı yapalım. (2011, May 3). *Zaman.* Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1129460&title=kurtulmus-kanalin-hafriyatiyla-basbakana-bogazda-baskanlik-sarayi-yapalim&haberSayfa=1

unattainability of the project.[27]

The project did not only become the primary issue in media coverage, but it also created a certain extent of hysteria in mass media as several names frantically compete with each other in order to inform their readers about the content of the project. This in itself turned into a display of superiority as each journalist/opinion leader pompously demonstrated how deep his knowledge was and how accurate his sources from the intelligentsia within the ruling party were. Apart from that, there were diverse reactions and opinions in the media. *Kanal Istanbul* was unsurprisingly advocated by pointing to the habitual arguments of the the capitalist rhetoric. It was claimed that the project would be a pristine terrain for new investments[28] and a source of supply to the national economy in the future.[29] As a pre-emptive argument against the possible criticisms regarding the project's enormous cost, it was also claimed that the project would pay for itself in a short period of time, as fast as fifteen years.[30] Another usual statement of assurance was that millions of unemployed people would be employed after the realization of the project.[31] Along with such economy-based advocacies, *Kanal Istanbul* was surprisingly presented as ecologically more favorable in relation to its being an alternative route alongside the natural Bosporus for the heavy traffic of oil tankers.[32] What is interesting though is that despite *Kanal Istanbul*'s being an urban project by definition, the focus of debates around *Kanal Istanbul* was not the advantages of the project for urban development. Although there were some news about the project's possible returns such as new areas of employment, attraction of international investments or

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[27] Şener: Çılgın proje seçim polemiğidir unutulur. (2011, April 27). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/sener-cilgin-proje-secim-polemigidir-unutulur/siyaset/siyasetdetay/27.04.2011/1383159/default.htm
Açıkgöz: Kanal projesi gerçekleştirilemeyecek olduğundan adına 'Çılgın' dendi. (2011, April 30). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1128196&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[28] Demir, A. (2011, April 30). 'Kanal İstanbul' projesi yeni yatırımlara kapı açacak. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1128598&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[29] Baysal, E. (2011, April 30). Çılgın projenin ekonomiye katkısı 50 milyar dolar. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1127958&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C
Bakan Şimşek: Çılgın proje vergi gelirlerini artıracak proje. (2011, April 30). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1128204&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[30] Kılıç, Y. (2011, April 29). 'Çılgın proje 15 yılda masrafını çıkarır'. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1127539&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[31] Çılgın proje kaç işsizi iş sahibi yapacak? (2011, April 29). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1127750&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[32] "Kanal İstanbul'dan geçecek tankerler, trafiği azaltır." (2011, April 27). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1126921&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

'better' urbanization [33], only a small number of opinion leaders in the mass media touched upon the actual advantages of the project.

Apart from those who openly opposed this project from various perspectives, it would be interesting to mention some columnists, many of whom are known as the liberals close to the ruling party. They reacted in a restrained fashion by applauding AKP's visionary policies while reminding the pending problems and soliciting the government to act with the same courage and vision in order to solve them. The most popular rhetorical move was to point at the pending reforms of EU accession and other urgent issues as the real 'crazy projects waiting to be realized. To put it in simple terms, what this group of people posited was that the real crazy project would respond to the real top priority needs, for instance the comprehensive reforms required in the process of accession to EU.[34] Making provisions against the inevitable earthquake expected to take place in Istanbul in the near future was another such matter.[35] Yet, another proposal of a 'crazy project' was stabilizing the economic variables and creating a less risky domestic economy.[36] The importance attributed to the 'real' crazy projects such as the agenda of EU reforms is so great that achieving this, it is believed, will be a recipe for all the existing problems of Turkey ranging from the restrictions on the freedom of expression to the Kurdish issue.[37] This is, of course, attributing too much importance and credit to the EU reform program and probably the people who defend this view are very well aware of that. However, this is a routine rhetorical tactic used by liberals who tend to support the government's actions in order to entice, or perhaps to seduce, the decision-makers and to make them pursue more 'sober-minded' policies and act in accordance with democratic values. One of the objectives of this research is to show that this

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[33] Altan, M. (2011, April 28). Çılgın projenin çipi. *Star*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
 http://www.stargazete.com/politika/yazar/mehmet-altan/cilgin-projenin-cipi-haber-347531.htm
Başyurt, E. (2011, April 28). Ezber bozan çılgınlık. *Bugün*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://gundem.bugun.com.tr/ezber-bozan-cilginlik-152422-makalesi.aspx
Ünal, A. (2011, April 25). Çılgın Proje. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=1125773

[34] Berkan, İ. (2011, April 29). Esas çılgın proje ne olurdu biliyor musunuz? *Hürriyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/17662924_p.asp

[35] Özgentürk, J. (2011, October 26). Deprem daha çılgın. *Radikal*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1067494&Yazar=JALE-
OZGENTURK&CategoryID=101

[36] Yıldırım, S. (2011, April 30). Başbakan'ın asıl 'çılgın proje'si. *Radikal*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1047781&Yazar=SERVET-
YILDIRIM&CategoryID=101

[37] Altan, A. (2011, May 1). Berkan'ın çılgın projesi. *Taraf*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.dengeazad.com/en/NewsDetailN.aspx?id=11598&LinkID=162

kind of stance means 'missing the whole point' about the politics of the AKP which operates on the 'non-rational' aspect of the society such as collective enjoyment (*jouissance*).

What appeared as the most intriguing response in the media, on the other hand, was to endorse the project and to praise the Prime Minister Erdoğan as the mastermind of this extremely ambitious enterprise with respect to his 'thinking-big' and unique vision[38]. Erdoğan's intelligence was boldly underscored along with his claimed righteousness and unwavering commitment to serving the people.[39] The corrupt and already outmoded mentality of the Kemalist regime, as the *Ergenekon* narratives[40] describe it, was contrasted with Erdoğan's 'path-breaking' and noble *weltanschauung*.[41] The Prime Minister and his party were also hailed as the authors of a genius political maneuver in the eve of general elections. It was suggested that the announcement of the project should be seen independently of its content and feasibility. To put it in simple terms, the fact that Erdoğan declared such a daring project and succeeded to manufacture consent for his agenda in itself deserved to be extolled regardless of project's 'doability'. It was not merely the potency of the government but also the inaptitude of the opposition. While the dynamism and ingenuity of the AKP's project is eulogized greatly, the inability of the political opposition to offer anything that can compete with *Kanal Istanbul* is asserted in order to emphasize their incommensurability with the government's merits.[42]

The project ceased to be an agenda topic and sank into oblivion in the aftermath of the elections. This smooth process of 'disenchantment' from the delirious experience of enjoying the crazy project may evoke the formula of conventional politics: far-fetched political promises given prior to the elections are doomed to be neglected and forgotten afterwards. However, one should also avoid repeating here the conventional Kemalist argument, still

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[38] Beki, A. (2011, April 28). Erdoğan'ın zeka gösterisi. Radikal. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1047612&Yazar=AK%DDF%20BEK%DD&Date=28.04.2011&CategoryID=98

[39] Taşgetiren, A. (2011, April 28). Tarih yazmak. *Bugün*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.bugun.com.tr/kose-yazisi/152421-tarih-yazmak-makalesi.aspx

[40] Öztürk, İ. (2011, May 2). 'Çılgın proje'. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=1128830

[41] Ibid.

[42] Öztürk, İ. (2011, May 2). 'Çılgın proje'. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=1128830
Türköne, M. (2011, April 29). En çılgın proje. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=1127436
Beki, A. (2011, April 28). Erdoğan'ın zeka gösterisi. Radikal. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1047612&Yazar=AK%DDF%20BEK%DD&Date=28.04.2011&CategoryID=98

prevalent in the context of Turkey, according to which people are not enlightened or well-educated enough to claim their rights in the public sphere *vis-à-vis* the political authority. I believe that a paradigmatic shift is in question altering the mode of interaction between the ordinary voter who allegedly makes his/her choice by rationally calculating the possible gain and loss, and the political elite who tries to entice the former by presenting appealing promises to be, more or less, realized in order to extend its reign. Another way of understanding this would correspond to the notion of 'end of promise' concurrent with utopia's fall from grace in the realm of politics (Ranciere, 2007). Here, it would not be far-fetched to claim that this sort of political paradigm is somewhat linked to neoliberalism, which cannot be reduced to a set of economic principles but also corresponds to a certain politico-aesthetic discourse. Therefore, this inquiry will try to discuss this sort of political paradigm in its relation to Turkey's experience of neoliberalization and look for the dominant politico-aesthetic trends cherishing certain types of collective desire and enjoyment. In other words, one of the major concerns of this research is to contextualize this *mise-en-scene* in which people did not postpone their satisfaction until the actualization of the project in the case of announcing *Kanal Istanbul* but instantly enjoyed the promise itself rather than restraining the satisfaction until its realization in an uncertain future.

In the case of *Kanal Istanbul*, a collective imaginary, especially endemic to conservative circles in the media, was to postulate a historical lineage between the visionary leaders and the Prime Minister Erdoğan in terms of creating projects changing the landscape of Istanbul.[43] Some preferred to describe Erdoğan as a master builder, an artist, a dreamer and a futurist.[44] However, it is mostly the Islamic heritage of the city with which *Kanal Istanbul* is associated. Hence, the claimed continuity between Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the historical figures is narrowed down to Ottoman sultans rather than extending back to the Christian Byzantine past. This link between the glorious figures in the past and the contemporary political leader is not merely based on the interpretations of commentators and columnists. Two particular names come to mind at this point with regard to their reputation for manipulating the landscape or challenging its limits: Mehmet II and Sokollu Mehmet, the

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[43] Bardakçı, M. (2011, April 28). 'Çılgın proje', geçmişte tam altı kez gündeme geldi. *Habertürk*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/murat-bardakci/625306-cilgin-proje-gecmiste-tam-alti-kez-gundeme-geldi
Taşgetiren, A. (2011, April 28). Tarih yazmak. *Bugün*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.bugun.com.tr/kose-yazisi/152421-tarih-yazmak-makalesi.aspx

[44] Beki, A. (2011, April 28). Erdoğan'ın zeka gösterisi. Radikal. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1047612&Yazar=AK%DDF%20BEK%DD&Date=28.04.2011&CategoryID=98

grand vizier of Suleyman, Selim II and Murat III. Mehmet II is extolled for his strategic move of by-passing the Byzantine barricades and traps at the straits of the Golden Horn by hauling his battleships through the land with the help of a greased platform during the siege of Constantinapolis. The latter is most famous for his endeavors to open a canal in Suez that would link the Ottoman armada directly to the Indian Ocean.

The Prime Minister Erdoğan himself implied this kind of continuity in his loaded language. Suffice it to remember his reference to 'Ferhat and Sirin', originally a Persian saga, which tells of an impossible worldly love sublimated to a divine love later on within an ascetic context. It is the part in which the male protagonist pierces mountains in order to attain his beloved that Erdoğan referred to while announcing his project which includes a remarkable alteration in the landscape for the sake of his beloved, the 'people'. During his speech in the event of presenting the project to the public, Erdoğan alluded to a series of Turkic monarchs by emphasizing the importance of dreams which had become glorious realities:

> … Man lives as long as he dreams on Earth. Sultan Alparslan dreamed and opened the gates of Anatolia to enlightenment. Ertugrul Ghazi saw a dream in which burgeons growing out of his chest turned into a sycamore stretching from Danube to Euphrates/Tigris, from the Nile to Drina and he planted the seeds of a world empire, the Ottoman State, while chasing this dream. Mehmet the Conqueror dreamed and moved his ships over land. In this way, he put an end to a dark era and initiated a golden age. The Suleymaniye Mosque at the outset ornamented the dreams of Mimar Sinan, subsequently it became the pearl of Istanbul. The Selimiye Mosque became the pearl of Edirne, Turkey and of the world in general. There have always been dream and profound imagination behind domes, madrassah, monuments, libraries, unique lines of poetry. The triumph in the Battle of Gallipoli is the achievement of Mustafa Kemals, of commanders with imagination who can dream of freedom. The Independence War and the Turkish Republic is the opus of Anatolia and Thrace that can dream. Dream is the seed planted in reality… There is dream beforehand before foundation of all great civilizations (Erdoğan, 2011: my translation).[45]

It is also possible to witness a conspicuously transgressive dimension which is not specific to the case of *Kanal Istanbul*. One would not be wrong to suspect that an enjoyment emanating from violating the long-established norms and rules was being shared by the political power and 'ordinary' subjects. Not only barren bureaucratic limitations but also moral codes are to be violated in venturing on such a mass-scale project. Along with the regulations of bureaucracy, issues like the protection of the environment, housing rights, and urban planning are not simply neglected but even presented as impediments against the

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[45] To read the full text of Erdoğan's speech in the presentation of Kanal Istanbul: http://www.habergo.com/haber/23273/iste-erdoganin-cilgin-proje-konusmasi-ve-projenin-animasyonu-izle-video-27042011.html

development of Turkey. While the topic was still hot, some commentators drew attention to the growing 'energy' in the society that was trying to free itself from its confines.[46] In this line of thinking, the declaration of the project pointed to the fact that in the reign of the AKP government Turkey got rid of the shackles that had been imprisoning the country's immense potential and opened the path that would lead the country to grandiosity and "the level of contemporary civilization" (Atatürk, 1927). 'Rampant horse' and 'restless tiger' are claimed to be the two symbols that can properly depict the current position of Turkey.[47] Imagining a prospering country breaking away from its chains does not only legitimize the transgression of conventional rules and values but it also fosters a certain kind of enjoyment: a 'transgressive *jouissance*'. Throughout this thesis, the notion of transgression will be discussed on the axis of Kemalist modernity and neoliberalism inasmuch as the 'crazy project' appears to bear features of both paradigms. The modernist approach 'enframes' space through disciplinary technologies since it conceives of it as static, passive, and empty. As it will be stressed in the following chapters, the Kemalist nation-building program included a pedagogical, disciplinary, and radical re-organization of social space in order to 'create' its modern citizens. While incorporating the former's properties to a large extent, neoliberalism, on the other hand, drops the disciplinary tendencies, and embraces an 'aesthetic populism' (Jameson, 1991). Moreover, interaction with space in the neoliberal paradigm is based on neoliberalism's peculiar economic tenets – efficiency, globalization, consumerism, gentrification, etc…

At this juncture, it would be productive to touch upon the link between political power and the hegemonic spatial practices in various geographical-temporal contexts. Especially, the political economic perspective comes to the forefront with regard to the type of relationship between ruling political parties and the locomotive sector of the national economy in a neoliberal context. Fredric Jameson asserts that "[a]rchitecture is business as well as culture; and outright value fully as much as ideal representation" in order to point the economic forces as one of the determinant factors not to be overlooked while writing about

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[46] Türköne, M. (2011, April 29). En çılgın proje. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=1127436
Beki, A. (2011, April 28). Erdoğan'ın zeka gösterisi. Radikal. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=1047612&Yazar=AK%DDF%20BEK%DD&Date=28.04.2011&CategoryID=98
Taşgetiren, A. (2011, April 28). Tarih yazmak. *Bugün*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.bugun.com.tr/kose-yazisi/152421-tarih-yazmak-makalesi.aspx

[47] Türköne, M. (2011, April 29). En çılgın proje. *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=1127436

architecture (Jameson, 2005: 243). According to Jameson, architecture is the first artistic and cultural category that responds to the vacillations and paradigmatic shifts in the realm of economy (Jameson, Is Space Political?, 2005). In this line of thinking, it is no surprise that architecture appears to be the most conservative artistic practice with respect to its practical feature and the vast capital it requires. Experimental endeavors are quite few in numbers, as they usually prove to be costly and unaffordable until new advanced techniques and materials start to replace the traditional methods of design and construction **Invalid source specified.** (Tafuri, 1996).

However, it would also be erroneous to conceive of architecture as a discipline wholly confined within the domain of economy, rationality and utility and to evaluate the form of any architectural design with regard to its 'function'. The major ideological objective of the Modern Movement, which "encompassed a revolutionary aesthetic canon and a scientific doctrine in architecture originating in Europe during the interwar period," was to transcend ideology (Bozdoğan, 2001: 4). In his response to this approach represented by prominent figures such as Le Corbusier, Adolf Loos and the Bauhaus school, Theodor Adorno attacks the assumed boundary between the functional and the ornamental by asserting that the form of function is always-already dependent upon cultural, historical, political and socio-economic contexts. In Adorno's view, the functionalist trend that omits ornamental characteristics in architectural designs is in fact an aesthetic choice per se (Adorno, 2005). In accordance with Adorno's deduction, Slavoj Zizek articulates that the concept of 'utility' obscures the ideological register by making us believe that there is an 'extra-ideological' stratum of everyday life. In Zizek's formulation, for ideology to function properly, its inherent antagonisms must be projected onto the extra-ideological strata of the material world.[48] Hence, one should be extra cautious in the face of concepts such as utility insofar as the kernel of ideology is situated at the point where it is believed to be suspended (Zizek, 1999).

According to Henri Lefebvre, the permanence of ideology depends on its ability to demarcate the territory under its control in order to reproduce the preferred set of relations on this clearly defined space (Lefebvre, 1998). David Harvey, on the other hand, suggests that

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[48] Here, Zizek elaborates Althusser's examination Ideological State Apparatuses as bearers and executors of ideology and of their importance in reproducing the conditions of production. "If the ISAs 'function' massively and predominantly by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning, in so far as the ideology by which they function is always in fact unified, despite its diversity and its contradictions, beneath the ruling ideology, which is the ideology of the ruling class." From "Ideology and Ideological State Appratuses," by L. Althusser, in *Mapping Ideology*, (ed.) Slavoj Zizek, 1994, London, Verso, p.110.

the permanence of social relations comprising discontinuities as well as continuities requires occupancy of the space demarcated by ideology. In Harvey's perspective, it is in this way that the production of space through a series of social, economic, cultural and political relations becomes a major activity – which is both conscious and unconscious – in the construction of collective identities and subject-positions (Harvey, 1997). Processes of hegemony construction as in the cases of nation-building projects and the institution of capitalist relations involve effective production of space in order to establish and maintain a certain set of relations. The emergence of modern spatial practices accelerated in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries has become the focus of several thinkers, most importantly Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan. Their most critical intervention is to re-conceptualize the internal-external duality on the axis of the self and its surroundings. Most roughly, the critical intervention of these scholars can be summarized as the insight that the subject is not a self-contained entity, and even the most 'innermost' features of subjectivity are immanently linked with the alleged material externality (Lacan, 1994) (Foucault, 1986).

Hegemony constitution through spatial practices, economic relations in the construction sector, and the politico-aesthetic expressions of architecture do not solely concern actual materiality. Categories such as politics, architecture and the activity of construction are not to be confined to their actual aspects but to be seen in their virtuality as well, especially in this phase of history. There are various approaches which construe architecture as signification, texture, and representation: "Architecture is not only the built form… but also a discursive and visual practice that embraces the 'word' and the 'image'" (Özkaya, 2006: 183). In his analysis of urban semiology, Roland Barthes rejects the notion of "one-to-one symbolism" operative in the "dead part of Freud's work"[49] (Barthes, 1997: 161). In another article, he gives an account of how Paris throughout the nineteenth- twentieth-centuries has been transformed into a visual totality, an "euphoria of aerial vision", from the vantage of Eiffel Tower – which according to him is a virtually empty sign – so as to satisfy the visual experience of the urban population during their recreational time (Barthes, 1997). Paul Virilio is one of the prominent scholars who insert the digital registers into their discussions of architecture and urban space. According to Virilio, boundaries in city landscapes are endowed with more and more immaterial elements.

In effect, we are witnessing a paradoxical moment in which the opacity of building materials is reduced to zero. With the invention of the steel skeleton construction,

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[49] Here, Barthes is probably refering to Sigmund Freud's 'Interpretation of Dreams' in which he tries to capture the truth of dreams (the manifest content) through a close reading of symbols (latent form). As a structuralist, in his early career at least, Barthes justifies the discordance between the signifier and the signified.

curtain walls made of light and transparent materials, such as glass or plastics, replace stone façades, just as tracing paper, acetate and plexi-glass replace the opacity of paper in the designing phase [...] Deprived of objective boundaries, the architectonic element begins to drift and float in an electronic ether, devoid of spatial dimensions, but inscribed in the singular temporality of an instantaneous diffusion. From here on, people can't be separated by physical obstacles or by temporal distances. With the interfacing of computer terminals and video monitors, distinctions of *here* and *there* no longer mean anything (Virilio, 1997: 360).

Aside from this trend of the immaterilization and digitalization of everyday spatiality, it is possible to argue that architecture by virtue of imaginary and textual dimensions can also be experienced virtually. Thanks to the broad coverage and ubiquitous advertisements of construction firms, gated communities and shopping malls both in printed and visual media, subjects as spectators can imagine and conceive of the city topography on a virtual plane. Here, it would be helpful to allude to Slavoj Zizek's discussion about the 'spectralization of the fetish' within the context of 'postmodern' capitalism in order to understand this elusive, in a way paradoxical, interaction between actuality and virtuality:

> … [I]n our postmodern age, what we witness is the gradual dissipation of the very materiality of the fetish. With the prospect of electronic money, money loses its material presence and turns into a purely virtual entity (accessible by means of a bank card or even an immaterial computer code); this dematerialization, however, only strengthens its hold: money (the intricate network of financial transactions) thus turns into an invisible, and for that reason all-powerful, spectral frame which dominates our lives. One can now see in what precise sense production itself can serve as a fetish: the postmodern transparency of the process of production is false in so far as it obfuscates the immaterial order which effectively runs the show […] Again, the paradox is that with this spectralization of the fetish, with the progressive disintegration of its positive materiality, its presence becomes even more oppressive and all-pervasive, as if there is no way the subject can escape its hold… (Zizek, 1997a: 102-103).

In the light of what has been said so far, the aim of this study is to offer an alternative perspective to formulate the case of *Kanal Istanbul* in particular and the fault lines of enjoyment within the new political paradigm evoking crazy projects. In this regard, rather than "the values of the tactile, the tectonic, and the telluric" features, this research will focus on the virtual aspect of space (Jameson, 1997: 238). More accurately, the social and political imaginary of space will be discussed together with the hegemonic narratives on the questions of architecture and construction.

In his presentation of *Kanal Istanbul*, Erdoğan underlined the primacy of 'dream' in the mega-projects of Turkish history, such as the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, the construction of Mimar Sinan's architectural masterpieces, and the 'victory' in the Battle of

Gallipoli against Britain – the superpower at the time. Then the question to be raised is what kind of dream(s) the modern-day 'crazy project' corresponds to. One may invoke psychoanalysis if dreams are at stake. In this respect, it would be productive to consult psychoanalysis, especially Jacques Lacan's revision of Freud's works. The tripartite structure of Lacanian psychoanalysis, which is combined of the 'Imaginary', the 'Symbolic', and the 'Real', offers a roadmap in our interpretation of dreams revolving around the phenomenon of *Kanal Istanbul*. In this particular situation, the Lacanian framework will come in handy because *Kanal Istanbul* takes place predominantly on the virtual plane and it is very much about the collective imaginary, identification, and enjoyment. Moreover, Lacanian theory is particularly enlightening about late capitalism and the enjoyment regimes it brings about. One should acknowledge that *Kanal Istanbul* has several dimensions interacting with power and ideology but it is also important to contextualize it and insist on its commodity feature against the neoliberal background. Accordingly, the fetishistic character of this probably never-to-be-realized project will be put under scrutiny by making use of various concepts in Lacanian psychoanalysis. As one can surmise from the choice of a project such as *Kanal Istanbul* that does not actually exist yet, the focus of this research will not be the subjects' interactions with their material surroundings. The main focus of this thesis is instead how the AKP hegemony has instituted itself by operating on its subjects' interaction with the imaginary aspect of space through virtuality and the symbolic order. Since the notion of subjectivity within the virtual realm is another issue vehemently debated in contemporary psychoanalytical literature with reference to all three Lacanian registers, 'the Imaginary', 'the Symbolic', and 'the Real', Lacanian psychoanalysis will appropriately draw the framework of this study in order to grasp different subject-positions within virtual reality. At this point, the concept of 'interpassivity' will offer insightful and inspiring, albeit counter-intuitive, ways of conceptualizing the well-established and ossified dualities: subjective/objective, active/passive… Moreover, interpassivity, as will be stressed later on, is intrinsically connected to enjoyment, or to be more accurate, it is about how the subject relates to and deals with the radically destructive effects of both its own and the Other's *jouissance*.

Another guideline of this research is Cihan Tuğal's inspiring work, *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*, regarding the book's examination of the process of the AKP's hegemony constitution. In his book, Tuğal gives an outline of the shifts and oscillations within the Islamist movement for the last three decades, and offers a detailed analysis of how the pro-capitalist branch of the Islamic movement, namely the AKP, became triumphant and constituted its hegemony. Tuğal's study provides a

great number of original insights about AKP's hegemony, since it focuses on micro-level discursive operations. While doing that, however, Tuğal does not refrain from making deductions about the big picture which, from his standpoint, can be summarized as follows: The 'organic crisis' between civil and political societies that had arisen in the context of neoliberalization was solved after the AKP managed to found its hegemony by normalizing capitalist relations in almost all sectors of the society. In order to manage that, according to Tuğal, the AKP heavily invests on shaping everyday life through spatial arrangements in accordance with late capitalist tenets. Although Tuğal's work is quite insightful and illustrative in articulating the experience of the AKP, there are some aspects remained unexamined which are crucial in explaining the party's success in instituting its hegemony. One of those aspects is affect – or the realm of 'the Real' in Lacanian psychoanalysis – which can be described as that which is not *yet* symbolized. In addition to emotions, ineffable registers are not merely resorted to the processes of hegemony construction but they also play a cardinal role in determining human subjectivity. Since Tuğal lays his theoretical base on Antonio Gramsci's works, such registers are not adequately emphasized – if not totally negated – and that their decisiveness especially in contemporary politics is often overlooked. Another drawback of Tuğal's study may be linked to its date of publishing which does not cover the last three years. During this period, the AKP has undergone a drastic change as the formerly dominant attitudes such as the political pragmatism and professionalism of the party were replaced by a palpably nationalist and *etatist* political stance. One of the wagers of this study is to investigate the blueprint of two politico-aesthetic trends visible in the party's hegemonic spatial practices: the nationalist and developmentalist discourse of the early republican era and the neoliberal urban policies prevalent in Turkey from the 1980s on.

In the first chapter, a brief historical account of Istanbul's last three decades will be given. Since, this period is saturated with myriad political vicissitudes, the historical background of the city is intertwined with the social, cultural and economic, as well as political patterns operative both at the national and the global level. It is crucial to take all these levels together into account and mention the relationships among them so as to provide a more accurate understanding of what has been going on in Istanbul along with other global cities in recent decades. Therefore, the process of neoliberalization will occupy a central role since it has changed the political economy as well as the urban landscape and demography in a drastic fashion. This radical transformation devastated the former social and political order, and it caused a 'discrepancy' between the civil and political societies. Cihan Tuğal refers to this discrepancy with a term he borrows from Gramsci, 'organic crisis' (Tuğal, Passive

Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism, 2009). Oscillations of this organic crisis will be the undercurrent in our account of the last three decades of Istanbul in particular and Turkey in general. While the AKP is an ardent deployer of neoliberal policies in many respects, one should consider the fact that a crises caused by the exclusionary mechanism of neoliberalism was solved by the same party. Therefore, this chapter will deal with the distinguishing characteristics of the AKP hegemony as well as the party's congruence with neoliberal values.

The following chapter will venture on a comparison between two different types of hegemony in the modern history of Turkey, between the early republican era and the last ten years under the AKP rule, with reference to how they narrativize and conceive of space, architecture, and construction. Rather than delving into a semiotic reading of dominant architectural styles in these two settings, we will be concerned with the 'imaginaries' of these different hegemonic orders by looking at their discourses on architecture and construction. This approach will be productive given that the members of the party have more and more used a language that is similar to the developmentalist and nationalist tones of the early republican discourse. Additionally, over the last five years, the professional attitude striving for efficiency formerly dominant in the party's spatial practices seems to lose its primary position as aesthetics of grandeur and national pride have become ostensible in the AKP's spatial program. In this respect, it is legitimate to look for parallelisms between the Kemalist nation-building program and the AKP's spatial politics even though political-Islam and Kemalism are usually considered as antithetical to each other.

However, the whole experience of the AKP is not simply a – rather bizarre – mixture of neoliberal and Kemalist/developmentalist discourses. In addition to those, AKP hegemony is very much about the politics of emotions and enjoyment. Therefore, what resists and remains outside the discursive analysis will be the major concern of the last chapter. In order to discuss this sort of register that resists analysis and any type of symbolization, we will call upon Lacanian psychoanalysis due to its apt conceptualizations of the ineffable. The complex relations between the three Lacanian registers, namely the 'Symbolic', the 'Imaginary', and the 'Real' will be handled so as to acquire a theoretical framework in our conceptualization of the 'inconceptualizable'. In our theoretical discussion, the role of spatiality and the link between transgression and enjoyment will be of central importance. The notion of transgression, on the other hand, will be stressed in relation to the social and political fantasies about bureaucracy and public law in Turkey. Moreover, we will embark on a detailed discussion of 'interpassivity' by alluding to the pertinent works of Slavoj Zizek to

approach the issue of *Kanal Istanbul* from an original and productive perspective. The concept of interpassivity will provide us with new ways of articulating the boundaries drawn between subject and object, human beings and things as in the case of the crazy project. Against this backdrop, our debate will revolve around the enjoyment regimes employed by the AKP hegemony.

CHAPTER 1

ISTANBUL'S RESTRUCTURATION AS A 'GLOBAL CITY' IN THE AGE OF NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism with its far-reaching consequences on all aspects of life doubtless has decisive effects on urban landscapes where socio-economic relations are more concentrated compared to other spaces. Not only the fields specifically believed to be determined by macroeconomic variables, but also day-to-day practices have been altered remarkably through spatial regulations along with neoliberal provisions and tenets. Cities have particularly come into prominence as consumption and recreation centers inasmuch as they started to become autonomous from the economic forces of nation-states. Up until the last quarter of the twentieth century, a national economy planned, regulated and even led by the central government had been the ideal type in the Western-oriented developing countries. Yet, the two successive oil crises in the 1970s undermined this prevailing economic order that had been considerably stable for two decades. Consequently, the existing economic regime became unsustainable inasmuch as everyone but most notably the countries pursuing Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) policies started to have budget deficits along with skyrocketing oil prices, and hence increased production costs. In response to this situation, an alternative economic vision, neoliberalism that had been incubating for three decades came to the forefront and presented itself as the way out of this deadlock (Mudge, 2008). Economies

in huge debts unexpectedly found themselves at the pocket of bankers and those who held the finance capital. Since this school of economics was considerably recognized in circles of finance all around the world, the bail-out of bankrupted economies took place in accordance to neoliberal principles (Harvey, Neoliberalism as creative destruction, 1988).

In contrast to an economy constituted in line with Keynesian principles, neoliberalism favors the supply side over the demand side of the economy by enforcing macroeconomic discipline through budget-cuts and privatization rather than pursuing full employment policies with high wages in order to increase the aggregate demand by sustaining a high level of purchasing power for the masses. As an outcome of these policy changes in line with neoliberal tenets, capital is not anymore embedded in and dependent on national boundaries. Capital, in the context of neoliberalism, becomes more and more international, financial, and thus volatile. Cities, on the other hand, have gradually oriented themselves as individual actors competing with each other in order to attract this volatile and wayward international capital (Keyder, 1993). To achieve this goal, urban dynamics are subjected to free-market rules, and the city landscape is restructured in order to address the aesthetic and security concerns of capital. The global city is to turn into a showcase offering some extent of 'exoticism' in order to arouse interest. Yet, this exotic touch should be confined to the boundaries of reliability and predictability so that the capital can feel itself safe while contemplating the aesthetic properties of the city. A corollary of conducting an urban transformation along these variables is the 'aesthetization'[50] of the city in which an exclusively visual relation takes place with the urban landscape while its tactile and visceral features are simply ignored. Consequently, the parts to be 'spared' to the fancy of international capital undergo a transformation which distinguishes them from other districts of the city, and this visual differentiation creates an invisible wall between disadvantageous urban population whose movements are now restricted and those who have the resources to benefit from the now-aestheticized city. Spatial segregation goes hand in hand with income

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[50] The notion of 'aesthetization' which usually has a negative connotation should not be confused with the concept of aesthetics. The term aesthetics became popular among the eighteenth century philosophers who contemplated on subjects such as art and beauty. Although it was Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten who introduced the term to philosophical inquiry, Immanual Kant's works have deservedly been the major source of the conceptualization of aesthetics. In "Crititique of Aesthetic Judgement," Kant investigates the quality of aesthetic judgement and argues that aesthetic judgement operates where cognitive-intellectual faculties fail. In this line of thinking, Sigmund Freud contributes to the discussion in his ground-breaking study on the term, 'Unmheimlich', or 'uncanny'. According to Freud, aesthetics is not a theory of beauty but of qualites of feeling. In his view, the study of aesthetics sheds light upon the provinces of unrepresentable and ineffable registers – one of which is the subject of the 'uncanny'. 'Aesthetization', on the other hand, is a notorious concept ascribed to Walter Benjamin's examination of fascism – "aesthetization of politics." In a nutshell, "aeshetization of politics" describes a scene where politics is deprived of its content (conflicts, contradictions and antagonisms), and it is reduced to a mere art 'form'. By the same token, the aesthetization of everyday life in the context of neoliberalism implies a hegemonic strategy aiming at transforming subjects' daily experiences into aesthetic projects to be realized through consumption.

inequality as the earned rights of the wage-earners gradually erode concomitantly with the blurring of the boundary between legal and illegal (Yardımcı, 2005). The whole urban infrastructure, the political economy and the aesthetic formations of the city center(s) are reconfigured in line with the necessities of the global market of finance and tourism by introducing new legislative framework so as to extend the powers of the municipality apparatus. Valuable lands are now served on a silver platter to the upper (-middle) classes while working class members and the urban poor are dislodged from their settlements. This process of gentrification also brings about new visual and aesthetic regimes as well as restructuring the social, economic and political aspects of city life.

Early Stages of Neoliberalization and the Emergence of Istanbul as a 'Global City'

Istanbul, as well as Turkey in general, has been the emblematic stage of the above-mentioned transition. In the aftermath of WWII, mechanization and industrialization accelerated, most prominently in the rural areas, thanks to the profound support of the USA at the outset of the bipolar international system of the Cold War era. Starting from the 1960s, a state-led developmental program, Import Substituting Industrialization (ISI) became the official economic policy as in many other 'developing' countries in the context of the Cold War. ISI was basically about establishing a domestic industrial infrastructure by importing technology, capital goods/inputs temporarily and catering the locally manufactured final product to the state-protected domestic market (Gülalp, 2001). Consequently, agriculture-led national development was replaced by an extensive industrialization process which led to a dramatic demographic change as masses migrated from the countryside to industrial town-centers (Pamuk, 1998) (Keyder, 1999). Since the insufficient inclusionary mechanisms of the Turkish state had long failed to provide shelter to the large number of people rushing to urban areas, a squatter housing type, *gecekondu*, had been the solution to the problem of accommodation. State officials turned a blind eye while government properties were unofficially allocated to the new settlers (Geniş, 2007). An informal and self-feeding system emerged out of this picture where a quasi-patronage relationship between the *gecekondu* dwellers and political power-holders had been at work.

This state of affairs became impossible in the 1980s as the scope and pace of migration from rural areas to metropolitan cities, most notably Istanbul, increased unprecedentedly, and the remaining vacant spaces in the city started to fall short of

accommodating the newcomers (Erman, 2001) (Buğra, 1998). In one of the National Security Council declarations in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, the junta government directly addressed the squatters as the 'violators of 12 September orders' – referring to the martial laws pronounced by the junta rule (Ekinci, 1998). Moreover, the state's policy of overlooking the spread of the squatters gradually changed inasmuch as the conventional patronage system faded away from the political realm and the urban landscape started to be shaped in line with the housing market dynamics (Geniş, 2007). Another reason behind the deadlock of the formerly operative urban state of affairs was the fact that neoliberal policies became growingly hegemonic in economic and urban restructuring, and they aimed at transforming Istanbul into a global city (Ercan, 1996) (Keyder & Öncü, 1993). As a result of executing neoliberal policies in this era, the traditional populist policies were replaced by neoliberal populism[51] and this planted the seeds of an organic crisis between the urban masses and the political elite (Öniş, 1997).

Also, with the *coup d'etat* in 1980, the previous political structure was shattered by the ruthless practices of the junta regime. And a new institutional framework was established in a top-down fashion, initiating a disconnection between the state and society that was to last until the early 2000s (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000). In the transition from junta regime to civil-democratic regime, the vacuum in civilian politics caused by the three-year junta regime was filled by the Motherland Party (ANAP). The experience of ANAP throughout the 1980s can be summarized, in its general traits, as the process of installation and institutionalization of neoliberalism (Zürcher, 1995) . While the welfare state was shrinking, political society during the rule of the ANAP with its inter-class and class-cultural alliance, and thanks to the successful implementation of neoliberal populism under the charismatic aura of Turgut Özal, the leader of ANAP, was still able to maintain its ties with civil society. In this context, Özal appeared to be the perfect candidate to enforce free-market rules and values while keeping the social and political stability during a period of transition from junta

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[51] There are different approaches in describing neoliberal populism. While some scholars asserts for the incompatibility between neoliberalism and populism, others belive otherwise. A reason of this discordance is diverse ways of conceptualizing the notion of populism. Yet, a depiction of neoliberalism pertinent to the case of Turkey would be as follows: "The common denominator of neo-liberal populism is that reforms tend to be initiated in a top-down fashion, often launched by surprise and without the participation of organized political forces. Perhaps this is not surprising given that reforms involve significant social costs and a disproportionate number of losers are associated with this process. The style of policy implementation tends to be autocratic and this autocratic style of policy implementation tends to undermine representative institutions and to personalize politics. Active dialogue and consultation with the key interest groups is by definition excluded from this process. An all-powerful and charismatic leader plays a crucial role in the scenario in terms of implementing the reform package and legitimizing it in the eyes of broad segments of the electorate. Hence, neo-liberal populism entails the co-existence of liberal economics with illiberal politics or a kind of shallow democracy." From "Economic Legacy of Turgut Özal: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective," by Z. Öniş, 2004, *Middle Eastern Studies,* p.127.

rule to a civilian political regime with broad popular support over a short interval (Öniş, 2004). "Turgut Özal's personality was crucial to the key party; indeed, it is doubtful whether the coalition would have survived long without him. He had a foot in both camps; he had been a successful manager in private industry in the 1970s and was very well connected in big business circles, which liked his liberalization of the economy. On the other hand, he was known to have connections with the Nakşibendi order of dervishes… Özal was to prove adept at playing off the factions within the MP against each other" (Zürcher, 1995).

Bedrettin Dalan, a member of ANAP who served as the mayor of Istanbul between the years 1984-1989, was another salient figure embodying several characteristics of the Motherland Party. In his term of office, Dalan's practices pointed to an ambition to make Istanbul a global city by turning the city into a spectacle. During his term in the office, not only the unwanted elements were dispelled from the urban centers with the intention of gentrifying the city's visual regime, but it was also aimed at marketing Istanbul as a 'global city' in the global arena. Apart from spatial segregations, the urban elite could now delve into an exclusively visual interaction with the city owing to advanced communication and transportation technologies. Moreover, the urban landscape was saturated with spaces such as glossy malls, sumptuous residences, and gentrified districts for the pleasures of the upper class consumers.

At this juncture, it would be illustrative to refer to Henri Lefebvre's discussion of everyday life and alienation. Lefebvre notes that capitalism puts the rhythm of everyday life in tune with its own rhythm by "thoroughly penetrating the details of daily life" (Lefebvre, 1988 : 75). The visual regime sits at the center of the alienation process for the everyday has an abundance of images and visual elements with the potential of fascinating and seducing their spectators.

> Clever images of the everyday are supplied on a day-to-day basis, images that can make the ugly beautiful, the empty full, the sordid elevated – and the hideous 'fascinating'. These images so skillfully and so persuasively exploit the demands and dissatisfactions which every 'modern' man carries within himself that is indeed very difficult to resist being seduced and fascinated by them, except by becoming rigidly puritanical, and, in rejecting 'sensationalism', rejecting 'the present' and life itself. The sudden eruption of sexuality in the domain of image – and more generally in leisure – calls for an investigation in its own right (Lefebvre, 1991: 34).[52]

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[52] Desire and enjoyment, concepts which are widely used in psychoanalytical theory, have a great deal of importance in Lefebvre's analysis of capitalism and 'the everyday'. From Lefebvre's point of view, the explicit display of sexuality employs a certain type of enjoyment by transgressing the moral ban which continues to pretend that it is still in effect in the aftermath of transgression. However, an important lesson taught by psychoanalytical literature is that *jouissance* with reference to its radically subversive and even destructive dimension cannot be fully administered by any ideology or symbolic order. See H. Lefebvre, "Critique of Everyday Life," 1991 for an insightful analysis of everyday life and sexuality.

Such radical transformation of Istanbul was enabled by a suitable legal context. In that respect, what distinguished Dalan from his predecessors was the municipality law of 1984 which concentrated the power in the hands of the local governments and put new financial resources at the disposal of metropolitan mayors. With this regulation, local governments became more inclined to behave as market facilitators by privatizing municipal services such as transportation and housing:

> The implementation of these changes also enabled the then metropolitan mayor Bedrettin Dalan […], in the late 1980s to engage in a series of urban renewal projects in Istanbul. These projects majestically initiated dramatic transformations in the urban landscape of the city, through mega-projects, Hausmannian in nature – such as the opening of the Tarlabaşı boulevard, a major axis of the city connecting the Taksim Square to the Golden Horn; the demolition of industrial complexes along the shore of the Golden Horn, which recast the entire urbanscape of this former industrial and working-class district; and the relocation of various industries from within the city to its periphery (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008: 12-13).

These changes in the municipality law, and the liberalization of the global economy, stimulated an environment in which transnational economic forces with know-how and capital could play a more active role than before (Geniş, 2007). Nevertheless, the liberalization and privatization trends were by no means independent of the state's social, political and economic practices. On the contrary, the neoliberalization process, like other transformations of *laissez-faire* throughout history, required the state's active participation and strong enforcement. Under the new legislative framework, the Mass Housing Fund and the Mass Housing Administration (TOKİ), founded in 1984, came to be the two key state-owned institutions that conducted urban restructuring with the aim of increasing and regularizing "the flow of finance to the housing sector and particularly to large housing developments catering to middle- and upper-income groups" (Geniş, 2007: 778).

Parallel to these developments taking place at the national level, Istanbul's urban fabric was going through a radical shift toward a spatial lexicon consisting of social exclusion and stigmatization (Keyder, 2005). On the one hand, we have the urban elite believing that the purity and essential tissue of Istanbul was defiled by the inflow from rural areas. Gated communities appeared to be a solution to this 'problem' and they started to pop up in different parts of Istanbul as the urban upper-class tended more and more to move to the secure and sterilized enclaves around the city (Bali, 2009). Nevertheless, the causal relation between the two factors is not a simple one. Research shows that gated towns actually engender feelings of insecurity and fear among their inhabitants (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008). However, these feelings are not the only effects (or motives) of this spatial

segregation. The world outside gated towns, that is often associated with poverty, is not only criminalized but also 'abjectified'. In this regard, spatial separation provides the basis for constructing a consistently 'modern' identity for the dwellers of such fortified enclaves (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008).

On the other side of the coin, there was an ongoing story of social exclusion practiced upon the urban poor and the working-class impoverished as a result of the de-industrialization process which is a pillar of neoliberalization. As mentioned before, cities with their own political economy and aesthetic tendencies turned into actors relatively autonomous from the provisions of nation-states when developmentalism lost its allure to the driving economic forces and to the masses after the 1980s. Consequently, cities became competing actors in order to attract the volatile and constantly flowing capital at the global level, and hence tuned themselves to the interests of the market forces rather than performing developmentalist road-maps of the political center (Keyder, Ulusal Kalkınmacılığın İflası, 1993). As the city economy became more integrated to the global market dynamics, valuable lands in Istanbul started to be colonized by these economic forces as well. The city centers went through a radical change while long-established and historical neighborhoods were evacuated as an indispensable part of the comprehensive gentrification process, and as trade-centers began rising at the heart of the city. The working class and the urban poor came out to be the losers of this neoliberal urban transformation program as inhabitants of many districts in the city were often forcibly displaced (Keyder, 2005). The moral base of such regulations with devastating effects on the urban masses involved the denigration of the urban poor by depicting the squatters, or *gecekondu* dwellers, as greedy pillagers and defilers of urban civility (Bali, 2009) (Buğra, 1998).

Despite all these setbacks of the neoliberalization of the city, the process was able to continue and it is in many ways operative at the present time. In order to understand how this trend of transformation has maintained itself considering its devastating effects on the population, we should look at some patterns of the early neoliberalization era during the 1980s and 1990s. It was already mentioned that the market and its norms became ubiquitous during the neoliberalization process as we see that the worldwide re-organization of capital manifested itself in the radical transformation of global cities. Although the everyday life of most social segments deteriorated remarkably, the market managed to inscribe itself to a large extent as the new norm and reality (Tuğal, 2009). One of the factors that made this possible was the seductive aspect of the market. Consumerism was instigated through the mass media as the society was introduced to personal credit cards, car loans, and other forms of financial

credit (Bali, 2009). It is also possible to claim that a new visual and aesthetic vocabulary was introduced especially by the image bombardment through media which caused radical effects on collective perceptions, norms and values (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000). Along with the seductiveness of the market comes the 'withering of politics'. As the capital and the market rules become the sole determinant in social, political, cultural as well as economic aspects of life, labour is excluded from political reckonings and more importantly from the decision-making processes (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000). One key element behind the withering of politics was the mass media's disposition to trivialize "the real political issues that underlie the rhythm of daily life or by dramatizing and publicizing the trivial/unpolitical/private" (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000: 503). In the context of neoliberalism, the economic provisions of the political left and right converge, and this causes a shortage of competing ideas and values and reduces the importance of political debates taking place in the public sphere (Öniş, Democracy, 1997).

> The only competition is over "who" will implement the policies. It has thus become increasingly difficult to distinguish among the parties, except for their leaders. Turkish politics, in reality, has been reduced to administration. The diminished potential of the public/political space to influence public policy is, therefore, one aspect of the shrinking realm of the political and qualitative sense (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000: 495).

At the outset of the 1990s, ANAP started to stumble in the government and lost significant popular support in the following elections. This was reflected in the context of Istanbul where Bedrettin Dalan lost to Nurettin Sözen, the candidate of the Republican People Party (CHP), which had a social-democratic agenda at the time, but had traditionally been a bearer of the official ideology. However, Sözen's agenda did not significantly differ from Dalan's which can be seen as an example of the above-mentioned convergence of policies among political parties. Although one can talk about a continuity of the neoliberalization process of Istanbul, the 1990s are full of oscillations caused by manifold social, political and economic problems such as successive economic depressions, the Kurdish question, the political tension between the political-Islamic movement and the secularist state (Öktem, 2011). The crisis-prone economy and the politics imbued with uncertainties did not let the subsequent mayors catch up with the pace of urban transformation in Dalan's term in the office (Keyder, 2010).

Against this background, it is important to recognize that the boost in the popularity of political-Islam in Turkey occurred in the same period. One plausible analysis is that the urban lower class that was excluded from the blessings of Istanbul's globalization process sought

refuge in political-Islam which promised to install a 'just order' as a way out of neoliberal globalization (Keyder, 2009) (Bora, 2009) (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000). In Cihan Tuğal's account, the electoral triumph of the Welfare Party in 1994 can be interpreted as a response to the organic crisis, the disintegration between the state and the civil society, deepening throughout the 1980s and 1990s. From this perspective, Islamic mobilization appears to be formulated as the "reconstitution of hegemony" as an attempt to link society and the state. To Tuğal, the process of hegemony reconstitution includes "the organization of consent for domination and inequality through a specific articulation of everyday life, space, and the economy with certain patterns of authority under a certain leadership which forges unity out of disparity" (Tuğal, 2009: 24).

The Rise and Fall of Political-Islam in the 1990s

The period in which the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) acquired the municipality of Istanbul, along with that of Ankara, was rather full of fluctuations, ambivalences and inconsistencies. In 1994, the Islamist party came out victorious from the local elections by gaining two out of the three metropolises, excluding Izmir. This was a great shock to almost everyone but particularly the secularist segments of the population and the political power-holders in the existing status-quo were presumably bewildered most. According to many scholars, the anti-*globalization*, -Western, -*capitalist* discourse of the Islamists attracted the marginalized city population whose social and economic position had deteriorated due to the restructuring of urban space along the tenets of neoliberalism and globalization (Keyder, 2005) (Tuğal, 2002). On the other hand, a belligerent tone was quite palpable in the RP's rhetoric. The discourse of (re-)conquest in the Islamist circles was one of the most attention-grabbing (Bora, 2009). According to this vision of conquest, Istanbul as the grand capital of the Ottoman past should be reconstituted by cleansing it from degenerated and alien, in other words Western, elements. Istanbul came to occupy a key role in the Islamist Party's strategies to consolidate its political and discursive power hinging on two pillars. First, as one can grasp without difficulty, Istanbul was the symbol of Ottoman hegemony that had lasted for more than four centuries. On the other hand, Islamist discourse rather interestingly addressed itself to the multicultural feature of the city. However, the twist here was the interpretation that it was the Ottoman hegemony that had fostered and maintained cultural diversity and social

harmony (Bora, 2009).

At the macro level, the type of populism that Islamists implemented was another distinctive feature. Most political parties in Turkey engaged in populism of rulers and states in which patronage relations take place on the assumption that the interests of classless masses are one and the same with those of the state (Tuğal, 2002). Neoliberal populism draws its strength from its ability to recruit disadvantageous groups' support for its agenda without envisaging economic improvement for them (Filc, 2011). The Islamist populism, on the other hand, was also profoundly different from this type of populism. Islamist populism in the 1990s, unlike other modes of populisms, preferred "consistent redistribution of resources from dominant groups to subordinate groups. Moreover, during the coalition government led by the Welfare Party, some sectors of the working class received wage rises which can be considered a rare event in the post-1980 period in Turkey" (Tuğal, 2002 : 95).

However, if we are to conceive of the experience of the Welfare Party as an attempt of reconstitution of hegemony, we should also bear in mind that the notion of hegemony is an incomplete process by definition (Tuğal, 2009). Along with several achievements, it was also possible to observe certain weaknesses and setbacks in the case of the Welfare Party. For instance, it would be misleading to assume that the Welfare Party was wholly aloof from the rules of the market despite this popular discourse and the populist practices which were radically distinct from those of other political parties. After coming to the offices of municipality, Islamists had to take the economic principles into consideration in governing cities (Bora, 2009). It is also crucial to underline that the political-Islamist movement in the 1990s was far from being homogeneous in terms of class affiliations, discursive positions and economic vision. Cihan Tuğal prefers to divide the Islamic movement of that time with regard to different stances toward capitalism roughly into three categories: "proponents of a moral capitalism," proponents of an alternative capitalism," and "those who morally oppose capitalism" (Tuğal, 2002: 98). Tuğal conceptualizes the Islamist promise of the 'just order' as a floating signifier which is to be activated in the negotiations between the 'real' (institutions, relations of production and domination) and the "imaginary" (the signification of the real in the realm of language and symbols) (Tuğal, 2002).[53] In this *mise-en-scene*, moral anti-capitalists came to be the most disadvantageous due to the Islamic real; that is "intensifying unequal secular relations between believers" (Tuğal, 2002: 106).

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[53] In his analysis, Tuğal borrows the terms, the 'real' and the 'imaginary' not directlyfrom Jacques Lacan but from Cornelius Castoriadis whose works are deeply inspired by Lacanian conceptualizations. See C. Castoriadis, "The Imaginary Institution of Society," 1998 for a more detailed description of these concepts.

Another problem for the failure of the RP experience was the fact that political-Islam was becoming an ever stronger political alternative that gave way to paranoia and a sense of insecurity to the secularist segments of the society, but especially among the ruling political elite. The tension reached its peak when the political-Islamic party, Welfare Party succeeded to form a coalition government with a center-right party, the Truepath Party (DYP) in 1996, and the slippery ground upon which the civil and the political societies continued their relationship, although with great difficulty, fell into pieces after a 'post-modern' military coup in 1997 (Castoriadis, 1998). In February 28, the military declared an ultimatum against the rising menace of *irtica*[54] and forced the government, in which the Welfare Party (RP) was the big shareholder, to cosign it. In the aftermath, a comprehensive witch-hunt was initiated targeting the members of political-Islam not only in the political sphere but in everyday life.

Meanwhile, political Islam started to be designated as a rising threat to the perpetuity of Turkey's secular regime by the state. There had already been a tension escalating between the Welfare Party and the secularist state institutions, most prominently the army and the jurisdiction. However, with the 'post-modern' military intervention in 28 February 1997, the mutual distrust reached its acme:

> The military intervention of 28 February, 1997, restricted itself to giving "recommendations" to the coalition government instead of disbanding the parliament as the military did in 1980. It asked the government to increase obligatory secular education from five to eight years, restrict Kur'an schools and these policies without estranging its base. The government resigned. The impact of the military intervention was sustained by acts such as the closing down of the RP (January 1998) and the banning of its leader, Erbakan, from politics. The Virtue Party (FP), which replaced RP, toned down its criticism of the establishment but also ventured to elect a veiled woman to the parliament. The ideologues of the FP had started to reframe the veiling issue as a matter of democracy and human rights, which led them to expect European Union (EU) to intervene on their behalf. The veiled Member of Parliament (MP), Merve Kavakçı, had to leave the parliament before she could be sworn in, under the pressure of nationalist and center leftist parties. This was one of the incidents that led to the closing of the FP. Center right and center left, the old foes were united in their support for the military intervention and its ongoing repercussions. The differences within (hegemonic) civil and political society were suspended to fight counterhegemony. After this counterattack by the system, the Islamist party plunged into a deep crisis. As several ways of challenging hegemony failed, a sizable part of the Islamist leadership opted for joining the elite (Tuğal, 2009: 46).

As a result of this military intervention, the Islamic endeavor to re-connect the civil

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[54] Although the literal translation of irtica would be reacion, this is far from conveying the meaning of the word in social perception. The word *irticai tehlike* (reactionary danger) had often used in the resolutions of the National Security Council in order to address the waxing Islamists movement as an approaching menace to the continuity of the secular regime in Turkey.

society with the political society came to a halt. The defiant position of the political class in order to protect its own interests became a common situation throughout the 1990s (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000). This position of the state created a gulf between the political sphere and the civil society with respect to the fact that several segments of the latter started to be construed as a menace to the survival of the dominant political and ideological regime by the former.

When the coalition government led by the Islamists could not properly function under the shadow of the military's suffocating presence anymore, general elections were held in which a center-left party with Kemalist tendencies, the Democratic Leftist Party (DSP) under the leadership of Bulent Ecevit and the ultra-nationalists, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) increased their votes dramatically in comparison to the previous elections. In addition to these two, ANAP, with its constantly diminishing popular support after the death of Özal in1993, became the small partner in the new coalition government which continued to govern until the general elections in 2002. During the reign of the three-party coalition, numerous crises emerged, most of which derived from the disharmony among the ruling parties. Yet, the major blow to this government was the great economic depression in 2001.The middle class was severely traumatized by the dramatically increasing job cuts as a result of economic downsizing (Bora, 2011). Political society's reliability which had already been waning over the 1990s, fully evaporated in the eyes of the people with the devastating influence of the economic breakdown. Hence, in a nutshell, the 1990s up until 2001 can be summarized as a period in which the neoliberal transformation of Istanbul at the local level and of Turkey at the national level, for the most part, continued but also stumbled from time to time by the overbearing and persistent social, political and economic instabilities, crises, and discontinuities.

The Repressed Returns For Good: The AKP Hegemony

In the general elections following the economic crisis, all incumbent political parties forming the previous government were left out of the parliament for they were not able to pass the ten-percent threshold. Only two parties were able to overcome the quota restriction and enter the parliament: the Justice and Development Party (AKP), formed by the pro-democratic and increasingly neoliberal youth of the Welfare Party, and the Republican People Party (CHP), the advocate of the Kemalist/secularist bureaucracy-dominated status quo. The

AKP was the winner of the elections with a wide margin, having attracted the votes of those who were most severely affected from the economic crisis in 2001 (Ataay & Kalfa, 2009). Moreover, the party held the absolute majority in the parliament with unrivaled power of legislation and constitution amendment. Nevertheless, the army and the bureaucracy were still sitting at the heart of the status quo and had no intention to share their power with this newcomer. Besides, the memory of the former Islamist parties that had been closed twice by the high-court was still fresh in the minds of the AKP members. Against this background, the AKP invested a substantive part of its discursive capacity in the ongoing process of European Union accession, and promised to speed up the democratization process. The conservative vein was still there but it was now tamed and 'moderated' with the implementation of free-market rules and with the party's announced commitment to make Turkey an EU member by conforming to the Copenhagen Criteria (Tuğal, 2009) (Öniş & Keyman, 2007).

Different from its predecessor, the Justice and Development Party convincingly presented itself as an offspring of an "alternative modernity" without denying its Islamic roots (Tuğal, 2009) (Keyman & Koyuncu, 2005). Nonetheless, the key element in the AKP's long-running political success, which had been absent in the Welfare Party experience, was its ability to forge "cross-class electoral alliances incorporating into its orbit both winners and losers from the neo-liberal globalization process" (Öniş & Keyman, 2007: 179). A concrete example of this strategy was establishing a delicate balance between the two umbrella organizations dominant in the Turkish business sector: TUSIAD, the representative of big corporations, and MUSIAD, composed of small and medium sized enterprises mostly located in Anatolian cities with conservative and Islamic tendencies. These two business associations functioned as the pro-EU coalition supporting the AKP government in its first five-year rule (Öniş & Keyman, 2007).

The peculiarity of the AKP's strategy of coaxing both the losers and the winners of neoliberalism into compliance with its policies was also observable in the local-urban contexts. Indeed, the reorganization of everyday life through spatial practices at the micro level has been a crucial strategy in the constitution of the new hegemony of the AKP (Tuğal, 2009). The AKP turned its back to militant metaphors widely used by the Welfare Party such as *second conquest*. Along with this disposition, the AKP's program of urban transformation envisioned partial de-Islamization of space: "As the business wing of the Islamist movement now dominated the party, the emphasis further shifted to creating to proper urban infrastructure and culture that would attract investment. The overall appearance of cities was secularized, but cities also became more Islamic through the integration of Islamic

businesses, consumers, and life-styles" (Tuğal, 2009: 55).

Moderation of the Islamic features on the plane of high-politics and in the arrangements of everyday life brought about a discursive shift in the new representative of the Islamic movement. As the party dropped the former confrontational rhetoric employed by its predecessor, the AKP was able to present itself as a post-ideological organization and mindset by claiming that it allegedly 'embraces everyone'. As the urban transformation reached an unprecedented pace, the party was now able to emphasize the notion of services (*icraat*). In Prime Minister Erdoğan's own words: "We are not doing ideological politics, but politics of service."[55] Those who opposed or criticized those services were denounced as 'ideological' elements trying to prevent the prospering of the country and improvement of the citizens' life quality. At this point, everyday life emerges as a realm characterized and praised as extra-ideological, which should also be put under scrutiny. Problematizing the notion of everyday life particularly matters in a context where the contemporary right-wing political discourse claims to be, rather convincingly, 'life itself' (Bora, 2012: 18).

After the overall economic collapse in 2001, the Turkish domestic economy went into a growing trend which coincided with the AKP's electoral victory in 2002. This economic growth prompted the government to encourage the construction sector towards sectoral expansion (Balaban, 2011: 24). In 2004 and 2005, the AKP government promulgated new municipality laws that reinforced the already powerful office of the mayor. These new laws entailed: "broadening the physical space under the control and jurisdiction of the greater municipality; increasing its power and authority in development (*imar*), control and coordination of district municipalities; making it easier for greater municipalities to establish, and/or create partnerships and collaborate with private companies; defining new responsibilities of the municipality in dealing with 'natural disasters'; and outlining the first legal framework for 'urban transformation,' by giving municipalities the authority to designate, plan and implement 'urban transformation' areas and project" (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008: 13).

AKP's municipality reforms also included revitalizing the Mass Housing Administration (MHA) directly tied to the Prime Ministry. With a number of legal regulations, MHA is now furnished with vast powers and even formulated as the ultimate administrative body in charge of the housing and land management. Nevertheless, it would be

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[55] Çetik, A & Sert, C. (2009, March 4). Başbakan Erdoğan: İdeoloji değil, hizmet siyaseti yapıyoruz. *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/basbakan-erdogan---ideoloji-degil--hizmet-siyaseti-yapiyoruz-/siyaset/siyasetdetay/04.03.2009/1067002/default.htm

erroneous to assume that MHA now endowed with such extensive legislative and administrative power tends to crush the private construction companies. Conversely, MHA works both as a facilitator for private companies to take part in public contract for housing projects and as a profit-oriented company by venturing to urban transformation projects under the name of 'fund raising' (Balaban, 2011) (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008).

"*Gecekondu* Trasformation Projects" is another pillar of the AKP's program of urban restructuring. These projects include "the demolition of *gecekondu* neighborhoods and dis/replacement of the residents to public housing projects" (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008: 15). Also, several districts were evicted and demolished under the pretext of 'renewal', 'rehabilitation', and 'preservation' of the "historical and cultural heritage" of Istanbul, enabled by the Law no. 5366 (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008: 15). To put it more simply, the urban fabric has in fact been grievously destroyed, ironically with the intent of preserving and 're'-creating a nostalgic and gentrified model of the city's cultural and historical heritage. This process often ends up in a class-based spatial re-arrangement by passing the renovated neighborhoods from its former inhabitants into the hands of middle and upper classes (Gülhan, 2011).

Towards the end of its first electoral term, the AKP started to intensify the nationalist flavor in its rhetoric in order to attract further the votes of ethnic Turks (Cizre, 2008) (Duran, 2008). Consequently, the AKP has consolidated its political power by enhancing its votes dramatically in each election.[56] In the meantime, the government has gradually undermined the strong positions of the secularist elite, the Turkish Armed Forces and the dominant Kemalist presence within the judicial organ, and wiped out the *etatist* corpses from the state in due course. As the party started to become the sole political power holder, the nationalist tone and belligerent tendencies in the government's and the Prime Minister Erdoğan's rhetoric have significantly increased. Hereupon, comprehensive legal (and political) campaigns have been launched against various groups such as the former secularist elite, the Kurdish movement, and a wide spectrum of leftist groups that are claimed to be threats to the civil government.

Here, a clarification should be made. Nationalism is not simply a strategic concern to be pragmatically resorted to in times of need for the AKP; it is also an organic feature of the party (Tuğal, 2009) (Coşar, 2011). Contrary to the paranoid ideas and feelings widespread among far-right Turkish nationalists, a self-confident stance is at stake in the AKP's

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[56] The AKP again increased its popular support and gained almost %50 of the overall votes in the last general elections held in 2011.

formulation of Turkishness by synchronizing the nationalist narratives with the Islamist understanding of the Ottoman past (Bora, 2011).

> The party's resort to nationalist sentiments marks the indispensability of nationalism for its political identity. It speaks of the historical "Turkish nation, taking the three continents under its wings, and embracing numerous tribes and countries with loving care"; the "metaphysical foundation, universal ideal" of the Turkish nation; and the civilizational (meaning that the "Ottoman civilization that has far surpassed the West in historical development") assets of the Turks, including "love, lore, and insight [irfan]" (Erdoğan 2002a, 2007; my translation). Likewise, the emphasis on "one nation, one flag, one state… the shared values and ideals as a means for strengthening our unity" and on the "impossibility of thinking small for the Turk… they have to think big" gives clues about the mode of nationalism that the party attempts to appropriate (Erdoğan 2007; my translation). Direct and indirect references to tolerance and the will to live together, despite differences, as organic features of Turkishness attest that merging conservative nationalism with the irresistible tide of liberalism (irresistible for the party's survival) results in banal nationalism, as conceptualized by Michael Billig (Coşar, 2011: 182).

As Michael Billig contends, "banal nationalism" is very much about daily practices epitomized in "flagged" streets, edifices, and other parts of everyday spatiality (Billig, 1995). The rising banal nationalism palpable in the Prime Minister Erdoğan's speeches is reflected on everyday life through spatial regulation. As Erdoğan himself mentions the "impossibility of thinking small for the Turk," the newly rising constructions meet this aspect of 'thinking big'. Although notions such as the 'unity of the state', or 'nation' have long been of great importance for the AKP, it is possible to argue that the main emphasis has shifted from a pragmatist self-restraining attitude concerning a delicate inter-class balance to a more unreserved position of making a series of aggressive and scandalous statements with impunity (Tuğal, 2009: 154). In this regard, the claim that AKP, during the first years in office, dropped grandiose visions inherited by the Virtue Party seems to lose its currency by looking at the contemporary situation. The professional attitude and pragmatic position espoused by the discourse of "doability" has been replaced by nationalist/atavistic 'dreams' of grandeur.

According to Cihan Tuğal, the concept of hegemony comprises the aspect of daily practices and spatiality as well as more noble dimensions such as high politics or macro economy. One of Tuğal's insightful observations regarding the two-decade experience of political-Islam in Turkey is that the AKP has been incredibly successful in instituting and maintaining its hegemony through spatial arrangements regulating the day-to-day activities, rituals, and visual experiences of the society (Tuğal, 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising to

witness that the above mentioned shift in the party's political rhetoric is reflected on social spatiality, most prominently on the urban landscape. Since Istanbul has been at the focus of the Islamist 'imaginary' of its Ottoman past, the city has been thoroughly subjected to the AKP's program of hegemony constitution through spatial arrangements. The growing proportions in the newly rising structures propose a parallel between the growing actual sizes of buildings and the prospering country and nation (Penpecioğlu, 2011). By the same token, politics in Turkey has been immersed, to a large extent, into the paradigm of 'the hollowing out of politics' intertwined with neoliberal/nationalist architectural utopias, like *Kanal Istanbul*, insofar as the fascinating magnitudes of modern-day mega-constructions and projects override the political economic queries: What is the accurate cost of such projects? With which financial sources will these projects be realized? In what precise ways and to what extent does the government foresee creating employment during and in the aftermath of these projects' actualization? Nevertheless, an organic crisis does not accompany this anti-politicization trend as in the 1990s (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu & Yeldan, 2000).

Apart from the West-East axis, the all-embracing urban transformation goes hand in hand with the absorption of capitalism. The AKP's real achievement is its ability to convince people that they are equal with the rulers and an indispensable part of the success story of national development in a neoliberal context where there are clearly-defined winners and losers. During the AKP rule, capitalism is naturalized and inscribed as an indispensable dimension of daily activities. In other words, the AKP hegemony has been successful in creating and reproducing a subjectivity that is incapable of thinking any beyond of capitalism. In his field study, Cihan Tuğal reports of his interviews with the construction workers who 'desire' to see a stable economy. According to Tuğal, this is the conservative government's doing since the economy was dereified before the 2001 crisis. It is as if, in the context of well-functioning conservative political hegemony, the workers relinquish their own desires and enjoyment in exchange for those of the market. Here, religious rhetoric is also put at the disposal of capitalist relations as in the case of 'fate' [*nasip*] (Tuğal, 2009).

All sorts of antagonisms are construed as obstacles against national prosperity. This can be most lucidly witnessed in the aspiration of one of Tuğal's interviewees for Saudi Arabia, since it is considered the ideally functioning Islamic regime in which there is no union and no right to strike but everyone has full insurance (Tuğal, 2009). In other words, politicization is portrayed as responsible for all social unrest and any malfunction of the 'welfare system'. As discussed earlier, in the context where the hegemonic political power presents itself as extra-ideological – or 'non-ideological' – questioning the quality and

politics of the party's practices and services can easily be labeled as 'ideological' by the party members.[57] In this respect, the example of Saudi Arabia tells us something crucial about the political fantasies operative under the AKP hegemony. Politics are to be excluded from the political realm as the ultimate aim of politics should be defined as 'serving the people' regardless of questions such as: What does 'serving the people' mean? How to serve the 'people'? Who are the 'people', and who are not? Such queries are silenced or rebuked as 'killjoys' who do not want the 'people' to have a better life due to their 'ideological' thinking. In this symbolic matrix where neoliberalism sets norms of sterility, security, morals, aesthetics, and politics, it becomes even more difficult to conduct effective opposition against the 'successful' implementers of neoliberalism. Here, one should also consider the fact that spatial regulations in line with neoliberal precepts lead to mass scale displacements and violations of the housing rights of disadvantageous groups. In its claim of serving for the 'people', it becomes questionable whether the political authority counts those who suffer from gentrification projects as a part of the 'people. A more puzzling question regarding this case would be how the AKP, which that has been the most ardent and reckless practitioner of gentrification projects, manages to solve the 'organic crisis' caused by the exclusionary practices of neoliberalization.

Abjection, which is a strategy effectively deployed by the political authority, may be counted as one possible answer to this question. Groups of scapegoats, for example Jews and atheists[58], who were quite popular in Islamic conspiracy narratives especially in the 1990s, are still operative in hegemonic 'fantasies' (Tuğal, 2009). By means of such fantasies, the inherent limitations and contradictions of the hegemonic order are externalized, and a well-functioning and coherent system becomes 'imaginable' and possible in the absence of those

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[57] S&P ideolojik yaklaştı, bunu Tayyip Erdoğan'a yutturamaz. (2012, May 4). Milliyet. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://ekonomi.milliyet.com.tr/s-p-ideolojik-yaklasti-bunu-tayyip-erdogan-a-yutturamaz/ekonomi/ekonomidetay/04.05.2012/1536016/default.htm
"İdeolojik aktörler rahat durmuyor." (2012, April 22). *Cnntürk*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.cnnturk.com/2012/guncel/04/22/ideolojik.aktorler.rahat.durmuyor/658242.0/index.html
Kefenimizle devam ediyoruz. (2012, June 10). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/kefenimizle-devam-ediyoruz/siyaset/siyasetdetay/10.06.2012/1551616/default.htm
Erdoğan: Sivas'ta zaman aşımı yoktur. (2012, March 16). *Milliyet*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-sivas-ta-zaman-asimi-yoktur/siyaset/siyasetdetay/16.03.2012/1516205/default.htm
AK Partili Şahin: Muhalefet 19 Mayıs'a ideolojik bakıyor. (2012, May 18). *Zaman*. http://zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1289797&title=ak-partili-sahin-muhalefet-19-mayisa-ideolojik-bakiyor

[58] AKP'li Özcan Ulupınar: Ateist, dinsiz insandan kimsye fayda gelmez. (2012, March 28). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://t24.com.tr/haber/akpli-ozcan-ulupinar-ateist-dinsiz-insandan-kimsiz-fayda-gelmez/200407
Şamil Tayyer ile Nihat Doğan'dan Fazıl Say'a küfürlü saldırı. (2012, April 6). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://haber.sol.org.tr/medya/samil-tayyar-ile-nihat-dogandan-fazil-saya-kufurlu-saldiri-haberi-53485
Ersanlı'nın yahudi aşkı. (2011, November 1). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.habervakti.com/?page=news_details&id=59019
Yeni Akit Büşra Ersanlı'yı hedef gösterdi. (2011, November 1). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://haber.sol.org.tr/medya/yeni-akit-busra-ersanli-yi-hedef-gosterdi-haberi-47915

externalized obstructions. To put it more accurately, it is believed that the system would work smoothly if there were no opposition which supposedly does not cease to create obstacles against the 'course of action' (Zizek, 2002). The AKP's discourse concerning the activities of construction and architecture owes greatly to this fundamental fantasy. Not only the shanty towns eyed by the state institutions conducting urban transformation are discredited for being nests for 'terrorists' but also the resistance movements against neoliberal urban transformation projects are often assimilated in a 'blame game' where they are denounced as part of the conspiracies hampering the country's development.[59] 'If nobody were on the way, the AKP would have solved all the problems of Turkey'[60]

Another distinguishing characteristics of the AKP as a neoliberal party is its 'neoliberal populism' – or 'neo-populism'. Although the notion of populism became outmoded in the 1980s as neoliberalism spread across the world as the prevailing economic system, in the 1990s it returned in the forms of "radical right populism in western Europe, nationalist populism in eastern Europe and the combination of a populist political style with a neo-liberal project, which most of the relevant literature considers as characteristic of Latin America" (Filc, 2011: 235). After the example of Turgut Özal, the current Prime Minister Erdoğan might be considered another case of a 'neo-populist' leader embodying exclusionary and inclusionary features. On the one hand, lower classes are excluded and stigmatized by the neoliberalization program. On the other hand, the extensive use of populist rhetoric appeals to subordinate classes' populist identity through which they have been constituted as subjects in the political matrix: *populus* or the 'people'. At the symbolic level, neoliberal populism tends to favor a more exclusionary signification of the 'people' as a cultural or ethnic totality.

A further salient feature of this kind of populism is that it lays its foundation on the absence of inclusive mechanisms which were present in the pre-neoliberal era (Filc, 2011). As Keynesian principles do not count anymore, it becomes impossible for any government to pursue populist economic policies at the expense of fiscal discipline. Accordingly, populism in this kind of setting cannot operate upon the notion of promise in the classical sense. In one of his books, Jacques Ranciere writes about the presidential debate which took place between

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[59] 'Allah akıl fikir versin!'. (2012, April 3). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://haber.sol.org.tr/kent-gundemleri/allah-akil-fikir-versin-haberi-53362
Hes karşıtlığı teröristlikti, şimdi de 'cinnet' oldu. (2011, October 27). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://haber.sol.org.tr/devlet-ve-siyaset/hes-karsitligi-teroristlikti-simdi-de-cinnet-oldu-haberi-47774
Taş atan çocuklar için 'kentsel dönüşüm'. (2011, December 11). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25304881/

[60] Mahçupyan: PKK olmasa AKP, Dink cinayetini çözerdi! (2012, January 18). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.gazetea24.com/haber/mahcupyan-pkk-olmasa-akp-dink-cinayetini-cozerdi_80923.html

François Mitterand and Jacques Chirac: the former is "the man of the promise never kept" whereas the latter is "the man of dynamism who always move forward" (Ranciere, 2007: 8). The paradigm of neoliberal populism seems to coincide with the latter in which politics becomes an activity exercised in the present as the future is no more than an extension of the present. According to Ranciere, contemporary politics has freed itself from the illusionary self-representation of the 'promise of happiness' (Ranciere, 2007).

In this light, *Kanal Istanbul* may appear to be at odds with this formula of politics inasmuch as it is, at face value, a prodigious promise: a radical change in the geography, building two satellite cities out of nothing, creating an island in the shape of Turkish flag… Although this holds true to some extent, it should also be taken into account that Kanal Istanbul has never been treated as a political promise in its conventional sense. The whole issue of the crazy project was more like a political spectacle magnetizing a collective enjoyment than being about convincing people regarding the project's possibility or feasibility. On the other hand, this situation does not fit Ranciere's description of the newly emerging politics due to the project's highly ostensible utopist features: national development/prosperity and 'catching up with the West'. At this juncture, one should recall that the AKP cannot simply be understood as an outcome of the neoliberalization process for the last four decades. The party should also be regarded as a product of the discourse that had been prevalent since the early stages of Turkish republic. As we will see in the next chapter, the AKP's spatial policies and discourses concerning this subject is marked by a visible similarity to the modernization and the nation-building project of the early republic.

CHAPTER 2

NARRATIVES ON ARCHITECTURE AND CONSTRUCTION: THE LEGACY OF THE MODERNIST-DEVELOPMENTALIST DISCOURSE OF THE EARLY REPUBLICAN ERA

In this chapter, two hegemonic configurations in different historical moments of modern Turkey will be compared regarding the operative narratives revolving around the idea of architecture and construction. The first one is the early Republican era in which it is possible to witness a comprehensive architectural and spatial reconstruction within the context of a modern program of nation- building. After the Turkish Republic was founded, and replaced the centuries old Ottoman Empire, the republican political elite ventured on a set of reforms with the aim of creating a new modern society. While carrying out reforms ranging from constituting new institutions to meticulously regulating the population's daily practices, the republican state spent extensive effort in constructing new public spaces with the intention of creating modern citizens. This was an extremely pedagogical program executed in a top-down fashion by excluding any critical contribution or public discussion. Accordingly, architecture came to be a highly regarded discipline, and the figure of the architect appeared as a pedagogical figure endowed with the skills to create modern spaces that would supposedly lead to the emergence of a modern Turkish society composed of proper citizens (Bozdoğan, 2001).

Our other case will deal with the last ten years of Turkey during which the country has undergone a radical change in a direction different from the roadmap of the early republican program. It has already been stated that the political rhetoric of the ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), has gone through a discernible change as the power relations in the country went in the party's favor. It seems that the increasing national tone in the statements of the cabinet members, especially of Prime Minister Erdoğan manifests itself in the aesthetic and discursive expressions of the new mega-constructions. As the country's economy can be considered relatively stable over the last ten years, especially in a context where the United States and all the Euro-zone are in deep economic deadlocks, the optimistic view paves the way to an arrogant and 'sanctimonious' nationalist discourse: 'We are now catching up with the West', 'Turkey is finally breaking free from its rusty shackles," "we are now worthy of our great Ottoman ancestors'… At the same time, the neoliberal tenets of urbanization are still at work but now operating in co-operation with a playful form of national pride. Yet, before delving into a full-fledged discussion of these two particular cases, it would be fruitful to clarify some concepts and draw the theoretical framework of the relation between ideology/political hegemony and spatial subjectivities.

The Nation Building Project in the Early Republican Era

The act of "building" has been functioning as a metaphor associated with the act of creating a nation. This metaphor aptly fits into the Kemalist nation-building project in early republican Turkey. After the foundation of the republic, Mustafa Kemal, the still-iconographic figure of Turkish politics, and the other republican leaders launched a far-reaching project of modernization and secularization. High modernism was used extensively as the dominant architectural style in their endeavors to change the daily habits of the population through creating modern spaces (Bozdoğan, 2001).

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

From the Ottoman elite in the nineteenth century to the political cadres of the republic, successive figures of modernization tirelessly aimed to 'catch up' with the 'contemporary civilization' – that is the West. Kemalist republican discourse differentiated itself from earlier Westernization projects with the claim of 'starting off with a clean slate'. Since this was one of the bases of legitimacy for the newly founded republic, the Modern Movement[61] appears as the architectural form to symbolize modernization and Westernization (Bozdoğan, 2001). Apart from being an aesthetic choice, one of the reasons why modern architecture was designated for the nation-building project in the early republic was the "simplicity and austerity of modern forms… with their connotations of rationality and economy of means" (Bozdoğan, 2001: 61). After decades of war and an incessant series

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[61] Modern Movement is an aesthetic canon in the twentieth century architecture which is characterized by privilaging revolutionary ambitions, the scientific doctrine, and universal validity. "Use of reinforced concrete, steel, and glass, the primacy of cubic forms, geometric shapes, and Cartesian grids, and above all the absence of decorationi stylistic motifs, traditional roofs, and ornamental details have been its defining features in twentieth century aesthetic consciousness." Note. From "Modernism and Nation Building. Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic," by S. Bozdoğan, 2001, p.4. Copyright 2001 by S. Bozdoğan. Reprinted with permission.

of demographic and economic devastations, modern forms of architecture would appear as an appealing option (Bozdoğan, 2001). Since the Kemalist modernization project and the 'New Architecture' embraced a progressive understanding of historicism, Istanbul as the imperial capital of the Ottoman State became of secondary importance. Ankara, the new capital of the Turkish Republic, was now at the focus of the nation-building project and it was designated as the model-city for the country to made 'out of nothing' (Türkoğlu Önge, 2007).

> Ironically, it was the "dirt and dust" of old Istanbul against which the newness and cleanliness of Ankara were celebrated as a republican icon. The "old versus new" construct was employed extensively in visual and literary representations of Ankara. Istanbul, the city that had been the seat of imperial power and religious authority for five centuries, was delegated to serve as Ankara's "other" in every respect. Not only in architectural and urban terms but also in terms of less visible qualities, "the purity, moral superiority, and idealism" of the new capital were contrasted with "the imperial and dynastic traditions, the cosmopolitan contamination and decadence" of Istanbul (Bozdoğan, 2001: 67).

The doctrine of the 'architecture of revolution' [*inkilap mimarisi*] as a national roadmap to architectural reconstruction was based on the universal pillars of modern architecture – that is predominantly scientific, functional, rational, anti-ornamental. The "architecture of revolution," which was also called the New Architecture, resorted to the notions of rationality, utility and to the idea of progressive historicism so as to render itself as "historically necessary" (Bozdoğan, 2001: 110). The rationality and utility of this architectural doctrine became functional instruments as the republican elite pedagogically encouraged people "to live economically, to combat waste, and to use national products" (Bozdoğan, 2001: 137). In its claim of surpassing ideology – in the narrow sense of the concept – in architecture by choosing rationality and functionality over aesthetic style and monumentality, the New Architecture was subjected to another ideology, the 'ideology of the plan' (Tafuri, 1996). The ideology of plan was highly ostensible in the deliberate organization of urban public spaces that implied the existence of an omnipotent political vision making deliberate architectural and urban planning by exercising cold abstractions on space (Sargın, 2002) (Batuman, 2002).

In this setting, professions that were considered to embody scientific discourse became valuable professionals such as the bureaucratic intelligentsia, technicians, engineers, planners and architects while traditional techniques of construction started to be outmoded. The figure of the architect gained the most remarkable prominence since they were seen as both "technical experts thinking economically and rationally" and as "artists giving shape to a new nation" (Bozdoğan, 2001: 156). The merit of combining those two properties palpably

increased the scope of the architect's activities: "The architect was no longer an artist or craftsman but an expert with an unprecedentedly broad range of involvement and responsibilities in everything from sociological and economic matters to the design of domestic furniture" (Bozdoğan, 2001). In line with this mindset, architecture came to occupy a pivotal role in city planning (Tekeli, 1984). While negating the stylistic ornamentation prevalent in Ottoman revivalism (otherwise known as the First National Architectural Movement) for being anachronistic, architects of the New Architecture were to maintain a certain extent of artistic creativity in contrast to engineering as a competing profession (Batur, 1984) (Bozdoğan, 2001). In this regard, there always remained a margin of ambiguity in the interplay between aesthetics and functionalist attitudes (Bozdoğan, 2001).

This kind of praiseful depiction of the architect went hand in hand with the denotation of modern architecture as an instrument in mankind's struggle against nature. In one of his speeches, Mustafa Kemal contended: "Civilization is a sublime force that pierces mountains, crosses the skies, enlightens and explores everything from the smallest particle of dust to the stars."[62] In this phrase, the word civilization, to which a supernatural power is figuratively attributed, refers to modern science in general but it also implies the technical achievements of engineering and modern architecture, hence the example of 'piercing mountains'. However, it is not a matter of choice deriving from civilization's solemnity but of necessity to follow this 'sublime force', materialized in the West's material and social achievements (Bozdoğan, 2001). So, Mustafa Kemal's deference towards civilization can also be formulated as a fascination with human beings' gradually increasing control over nature and its sublime, untamed forces.[63] Architecture is endowed with great importance inasmuch as the

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[62] *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri 2*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1959, p.212.

[63] A topic somewhat related to the emergence of a new national monumentality within context of late capitalism would be a reformulation of the concept of the sublime regarding this subject-matter at hand. The notion of the sublime is exhaustively dealt by 18th century philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke and Friedrich Hegel. In its simplest terms, the sublime stands for an aesthetic register that exceeds the capacity of reason and cognitive faculties, and which generates a sense of grandeur and deference in the perception of earthbound subjects. This otherworldly and quasi-religious formulation of the sublime was mostly used in evaluating the aesthetic value of works of art where reason and intellectuality fails to function properly, and widely respected by the 18th century Romantic figures In the realm of architecture, we come across the concept in the notion of 'industrially sublime' most properly epitomized by the Chrystal Palace. In the modern-day, this concept has become popular against the backdrop of postmodern capitalism. This time, however, the concept of the sublime is understood to be sullied by the material conditions of contemporary everyday life (technology, dominant visual regimes, palpable presence of advertisements, erection of mega-constructions…) and does not remain within the noble enclave of metaphysics and high culture. In contrast to the vision of early philosophers meditating on the concept, the sublime is believed to be commodified and reified through economic activities in a number of sectors such as tourism and construction. See C. Bell & J. Lyall "The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity," 2002 for a more comprehensive discussion.
There are alternative approaches in contemporary thinking, mostly in post-structural academic circles, to the notion of the sublime with quite different focuses. One of them is formulated by Jean-Luc Nancy whose wager is to delineate an alternative version of sublime that leaves out its baggage of grandeur, ecstasy and pathos. Jacques Derrida is another prominent name who embraces the idea of the sublime especially in Kant's conceptualization, by virtue of its consideration of formlessness to include the registers of the non-presence and the unrepresentable. In a sense, what these three thinkers do

success of the national development project is measured by its performance in struggling, transforming and taming nature (Bozdoğan, 2001). In a word, the strength of any given nation becomes commensurable with its ability to defy and alter its physical surroundings and geographical limitations.

However, the project of nation-building in early republican Turkey was far from being smooth and homogeneous. First of all, modern Western architecture was far from being a homogenous and linearly progressing set of choices and practices; it involved several contradictions and diverse architectural styles and approaches (Colquhoun, 1981) (Hitchcock, 1987). Risking over-simplification, one can talk about two predominant architectural tendencies during the interwar period: On the one hand, there was the Bauhaus Movement which promoted simplicity, functionalism and economism, while the Neoclassical style, on the other hand, was more of an eclectic, stylistic and monumental architectural attitude (Tekeli, 1984) (Bell & Lyall, 2002). It should be reckoned that this nation-building project in question took place in a non-Western context which engenders its own hybridity and complexity (Bozdoğan, 2001). Even though the two pre-dominant tendencies of modernization of the society and creating a new nation seemed to overlap in most cases, they competed and gained superiority over one another depending on the conjectural power relations of competing political discourses. However, in most cases of conflict between universal architectural/aesthetic trends and vernacular conditions, it appeared that it was in fact the latter in which the Kemalist project invested most.

> The aim of modernist Turkish nationalists was not limited to industrialization and economic development, but included the creation of 'civilized', westernized, and *modern* subjects. Rather than aspiring to be an ethnocentric project of authenticity, Turkish national identity was primarily a modernist project of total cultural transformation. Thus, national identity was subservient to the project of modernity (understood as westernization). In other words, modernity was the ultimate ideal and the national form was important and necessary as a requirement of *that* modernity (Akman, 2004: 110).

It is true that railways across the country, grand avenues in prominent city centers, ornamental buildings, giant statues incorporating heroic narratives of nation-building contributed to the collective self-imagination of an advancing and industrializing nation. In many respects, the New Architecture displayed a staid attitude with its strong emphasis on the

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is to relocate the notion of the sublime from the aesthetics of grandeur and ecstasy to a "heterotopias," the field of affect. In this kind of definition, the sublime serves as a resistance against the rigid dualities of modernity – presence/non-presence, subjectivity/objectivity. This emphasis on the concept of the sublime would compel us to reconsider the interaction between the subjects and the Other in the blurring boundaries of each one's interests, aspirations, desires and enjoyments. See J. Rosiek, "Maintaing the Sublime: Heidegger and Adorno," 2000 for a more detailed examination of this subject.

deeds of moderateness and frugality. However, it was also possible to witness entertaining and even playful examples. Izmir *Kültürpark* and, Izmir International Fair and Youth Park were some products of early Republican architectural culture which attracted and/or created joyful and large crowds. Going against earlier architectural trends, they functioned as popular places of gathering and recreation with important democratic undercurrents (Bozdoğan, 2001). Additionally, the use of electricity translated into neon lights, projectors and other unprecedented forms of lighting was "a key ingredient in the spirit of celebration, youth, optimism, and progress" (Bozdoğan, 2001: 132). This duality can also be observed in the cleavage between two forms of public display of industry and progress, namely popular magazines of technology and official Turkish publications. The former was about the fascinating images of the futuristic American technology while the latter was solemnly showing off its modest but actual technological and industrial accomplishment (Bozdoğan, 2001: 116).

In short, the whole nation-building process in the early republican era was very much about exorcizing former identities from social space. The primary objective of the Kemalist program was to reproduce the 'Western civilization' in Turkey by creating modern spaces and pedagogically interfering in daily practices (Said, 1994). The discourse of progress supported by publicly visible images had been a handy tool to flatten out class-based inequalities or urban-rural diversion as well as being a source of legitimacy throughout the first decades of the republican Turkey (Bozdoğan, 2001). Masses were summoned for desiring the process of 'catching up with the contemporary civilization' insofar as a corporatist picture was rendered in which 'everyone' was believed to make sacrifices by adapting a modest, frugal, waste-aversive life style. Public depictions of the 'prospering nation' presented a harmonious picture of the society in which the city-dweller and the peasant – two poles of the gap in effect then – co-existed peacefully and free of any conflict (Bozdoğan, 2001). Notwithstanding the fact that the Kemalist modernization project carried out a pedagogical mission to transform the society by intervening its daily habits and rituals, this project could not preclude 'unintended consequences' in the long-run. Popular appropriation of public spaces created by the Kemalist state itself opened a space for collective action by exploiting the oscillations and vicissitudes in the hegemonic order (Batuman, 2002). Like all other forms of hegemony, the modernization project enforced by the elite cadres proved to be incomplete despite all its efforts of wiping out the Ottoman legacies and of strictly controlling people's daily practices. After seven decades, in a context where a rather distinct form of hegemony prevails under the rule of an Islamist party, we come across with a 'crazy project'

that demonstrates a remarkable contrast and also a certain extent of continuity with, but exceeding the financial and physical magnitudes of, spatial projects of the early republican nation-building program.

Delirious Istanbul[64] in the Context of Neo-Nationalism and Late Captalism

Kanal Istanbul might be regarded as a curios case combining the neoliberal discourse of feasibility along with prospective security and sterility, and the populist rhetoric flattering collective emotions such as national pride, aspiration towards grandeur, and "catching up" with the West at the imaginary level. At the outset, the project, in case of its successful materialization will undoubtedly stand for the national grandeur for embodying the triumph against natural forces and geographical limitations. In the animation of the project, the landscape that will sit at the heart of the canal is saturated with colorfully illuminated skyscrapers and a number of bridges which are reminiscent of canal cities like Venice or Amsterdam. In that respect, the *Kanal Istanbul* project, on the one hand, invests in a playful consumerism by visually evoking the refined tastes of the West and, at the same time, summons popular fascination with the futuristic urban panorama, oddly enough in retrospective fashion. Accordingly, the presentation of *Kanal Istanbul* would suggest that this is an anachronistically modernist and developmentalist initiation. AKP's former professional stance which pursued measures such as feasibility, utility, functionality, and 'doability' seems to be shifted now with the declaration of such a mega-project even though the media organizations supportive of the government have passionately advocated otherwise. Indeed, there are several reasons to believe that the declaration of this project as AKP's campaign pledge before the general elections in 2011 is not a political promise in its traditional meaning – a mutual agreement between voters and politicians to be fulfilled by the latter in a foreseeable future – but an already accomplished political action. In order to get a better grip on this problematic, we should now cast a look at this project's context where AKP appears to be the hegemonic actor both in the realm of high politics and in the banal details of everyday life.

Cihan Tuğal, in his germinal book, *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*, examines how a decades-long organic crisis with its dimensions of

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[64] Here, Rem Koolhaas' germinal work, Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan, is alluded. See H. Foster, "Design and Crime: And Other Diatribes," 2002 for an insightful discussion of Koolhaas' architectural and aesthetic discourse.

class struggle and spatiality is managed by the AKP as the party founds and reiterates its hegemony. According to Tuğal, the key element in the party's long-running political success was its readiness and resourcefulness to work at the everyday level of ordinary people (Tuğal, Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism, 2009). Despite its Islamic roots, the AKP's major urban strategy, at least in the first year of its rule, has been to de-Islamize the city landscape by removing pronounced Islamic symbols which are usually perceived as defiant and belligerent. One of the most obvious instances is the re-construction of the municipality building in Sultanbeyli, a prominent bastion of political-Islam in Istanbul.

> Central to Sultanbeyli's spatial symbolism was the municipal building, the windows and color of which resembled those of a mosque. The building was highly visible from the highway. After the AKP took control of the municipality, it initiated a conscious eradication of Islamist "symbolic space." The municipal building built by the Islamists was demolished by the ex-Islamists (Tuğal, 2009: 208).

Another critical feature of AKP's urban policies is to embrace the fundamental neoliberal propositions: carrying out a dencentralized, rational, and effective local administration will cancel out the injustices and inequalities induced by the market (Tuğal, Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism, 2009). On the one hand, the AKP promotes one of the central tenets of modernist social engineering," while, on the other hand, the primacy of central planning in creating new public spaces is abandoned by the party cadres (Tuğal, 2009: 209). Another point of the AKP's divergence from the early republican practices is that it usually prefers a gradual approach in conducting urban reconstruction plans rather than venturing on an en masse restructuring of the city (Tuğal, 2009). Moreover, it would not be a far-fetched argument that legal arrangements concerning the powers and activities of municipalities throughout the 1980s, 90s and 2000s have paved the way to the effective implementation of neoliberal policies in Istanbul. "All these laws grant the municipalities the power to undertake major urban projects, overriding the existence checks, controls, and regulations in the legal system" (Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008: 14). This situation can be regarded as at odds with the strict commitment to the laws in effect considering the legal procedure of Ankara's urban planning that was starkly carried out by the political authority (Altaban, 1998) (Tankut, 1993). Privatization becomes a pervasive phenomenon in multiple sectors, and this becomes visible as the role of contractors [*müteahhit*] and sub-contractors increase in the construction sector (Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008). Apart from public authorities, several other actors from the private sector – both national and transnational –are introduced to the game (Geniş, 2007).

It is important to recognize that the figure of the contractor gains prominence and replaces that of the architect, which used to stand at the discursive node of architecture and construction activities. Although the first ten years of the 2000s can be regarded as the 'golden age of architecture' in terms of the growing number of architects, flourishing architectural publications, better functioning institutional frameworks and technological innovations, economic monopolization, stylistic mediocrity and repetitiveness are pervasive symptoms within the prevailing mentality, "more building, less architecture" (İnceoğlu, 2010) (Şentürer, 2010). In contrast with the architect whom the early republican regime celebrated as a pedagogical figure by virtue of his ability of balancing the principles of rationality, functionality, and economism with artistic faculties; the contractor emerges as the popular figure of the self-made man, and an entrepreneur striving towards maximizing his profits. In the context of modern-day Turkey, a number of private construction firms have become quite salient but none of them draws as much attention as Ali Ağaoğlu, the owner of the Ağaoğlu conglomerate whose tag line is 'architect of life'[65]. Ağaoğlu can be counted as a celebrity who does not refrain from participating in talk-shows, television and magazine interviews. In his extensive public appearance in the media, Ağaoğlu explicitly displays his opulence in a rather tactless manner: counting his cash during a live broadcast, constantly mentioning his car collection, showing off his supermodel girlfriends, and so on (Türk, 2011)… At the same time, despite these conspicuous demonstrations of his wealth, Ağaoğlu manages to present himself as a 'man of the people'. Ağaoğlu does not hide that he rejoices in earthly blessings – sports cars, beautiful women, luxurious residences – and he obtains a masculine and orthodox tone in his statements regarding his lechery, homophobia – or should I say his hetero-pride –, insatiable and hunger for power and success (Türk, 2011). Taking all that into account, Ağaoğlu exemplifies what Slavoj Zizek calls an 'obscenely enjoying' character. In one of his insightful deductions, Tuğal asserts that "[i]t was characteristic of the AKP discourse and self-presentation that businessmen and professionals (and especially the financial experts) metonymically came to stand for the whole population" (Tuğal, Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism, 2009). The case of Ağaoğlu fits into this conceptualization, hence his ability to present himself a self-made 'man of the people'.[66]

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[65] 'Ağaoğlu: Yaşam Mimarı'

[66] This seems paradoxical because the figure of Entrepreneur occupies an exceptional position as "the innovator who can take risks like no other, who will create jobs by undertaking investment, and who will be the engine of economic growth and efficiency, providing thereby the supply-side 'base' for the consumption-led 'superstructure' of a late capitalist utopia." Note. From "Jouissance and Antagonism in the Forms of the Commune: A Critique of Biopolitical Subjectivity," by Y. Madra & C. Özselçuk, 2010, Rethinking Marxism p. 491. Copyright 2010 by Y. Madra & C. Özselçuk. Reprinted with permission.

In the advertisement of one of his projects, he contends with masculine self-confidence: "I dreamed of gardens on the tenth floor. I did it. Now they will exist!"[67] This self-confident posture can also be applied to Ağaoğlu's unshaken belief in his country and nation. In a newspaper interview, he claims that this project had been considered during the Ottoman periods, and opening a second Bosporus would be not a crazy project for Turkey which can handle it quite easily.[68] Looking at the two utterances of Ağaoğlu, one is tempted to draw a parallelism between those and Erdoğan's speech in the presentation of the *Kanal Istanbul* project which makes a strong emphasis on the 'primacy' of imagination. The optimist and self-confident nationalist rhetoric, that becomes prevalent in the heydays of neoliberalism in Turkey, can be discerned here: "I dreamed of it. Now it will exist!" [69]

Leaving aside the 'rakishness', Erdoğan and Ağaoğlu have a number of other resemblances. As said earlier, both Ağaoğlu and Erdoğan use an extremely populist language. They present themselves as 'men of the people' in their own terms. In their addressing of the subject of urban transformation, the populist register of both names' speeches becomes palpable. Erdoğan contributes to the Örnektepe transformation project carried out by the Beyoğlu Municipality with a written statement: "My people [*benim milletim*] do not deserve living in slums. Dwelling in houses under the risk of being demolished by earthquakes does not suit my citizen. We are already late. Now we must take this new step."[70] Ağaoğlu's statement is more elaborate but strongly resonates with Erdoğan's: "Because everyone in this country deserves living in a beautiful house of good quality with a swimming pool."[71]

At this point, Ağaoğlu takes a step ahead and embarks on a pastiche sequel to his first

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[67] See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBjHzml5INU

[68] Ağaoğlu: "İkinci bir boğaz yapmak çılgın bir proje değil." (2011, April 27). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://konut.milliyet.com.tr/agaoglu-ikinci-bir-bogaz-yapmak-cilgin-bir-proje-degil-/agaoglu/haberdetay/27.04.2011/1383169/default.htm

[69] "We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will. And this subordination is no mere momentary act. Besides the exertion of the bodily organs, the process demands that, during the whole operation, the workman's will be steadily in consonance with his purpose. This means close attention. The less he is attracted by the nature of the work, and the mode in which it is carried on, and the less, therefore, he enjoys it as something which gives play to his bodily and mental powers, the more close his attention is forced to be." Karl Marx, Capital: Volume I. Retrieved June 25, 2012 from http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch07.htm

[70] See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Jt-Fesb2ts to watch the introductory film of Örnektepe Transformation Project by Beyoğlu municipality.

[71] See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBjHzml5INU to watch the commercial film.

TV commercial in which the director of the commercial film, Sinan Çetin becomes the cast mate of Ağaoğlu. In the opening scene, Çetin shows up and gives several shots to act like Ağaoğlu in numerous takes until he admits his failure. Following that Ağaoğlu steps in and instructs him to relax in front of the camera before he starts to play his part. Here, besides the emphasis on Ağaoğlu's ultimate access to knowledge on every field, it is conveyed that he does not have anything to hide as he 'shows off' every aspect, out of sincerity and self-confidence. Nonetheless, the question to be raised at this point is "beyond everything that is displayed to the subject […] what is being concealed from me?" (Copjec, 1994: 36). The exhibitionist move of the TV commercial can be read as an endeavor to suspend the fiction by inviting the behind-the-scenes register. In fact, the gesture of unraveling what is – claimed to be –hidden to the spectator does not simply entail a moment of enlightenment. In his discussion of commodity fetishism, Zizek incisively points out that "the unmasking of the secret is not sufficient" (Zizek, 2008: 8). In Zizek's reading of Marx through a psychoanalytical scanning, the secret of the commodity is its form rather than its content, hence the 'commodity-form' (Zizek, 2008). In this line of thinking, focusing on the exhibitionist gesture in order to grasp its meaning would be a useful approach. Ağaoğlu's obscenity – the simultaneous display of excessive debauchery within affluence and self-proclamation of being 'one of us' – in the sense that psychoanalysis employs the term is intimately related to this attitude of exhibitionism.

Skyscrapers can be regarded as another form of obscene display of vertical arrogance within a context where they function as the new monuments of national development. For they embody the national delusions of grandeur supported by the imaginary aspect of skyscrapers' phallic appearance (Grigg, 2008). In a setting where the discourse of 'belatedness' is operative, the spread of skyscrapers can be presented as symbols of development inasmuch as they require extensive financial resources and advanced technical know-how. The decoration of skyscrapers located in Istanbul's financial centers with huge Turkish flags in the national Victory Day in 2011 was an excellent demonstration of the marriage between neoliberalism and nationalism.[72] Another example is a recently released advertisement of a new skyscraper in which political leaders of super-powers give speeches about the growing importance of Turkey. "I am trying to make a statement about the importance of Turkey, not just to the United States but to the world" utters Barrack Obama, in

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[72] İstanbul'da bayrak şöleni. (2007, August 30). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://haber.mynet.com/istanbulda-bayrak-soleni-335583-guncel/
Kentel, F. (2011, September 3). Beton milliyetçilik – milliyetçi beton. *Taraf.* Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.taraf.com.tr/ferhat-kentel/makale-beton-milliyetcilik-milliyetci-beton.htm

the opening sequence of the commercial which continues with the narrator's words: "The world speaks only about the best. A unique magnificence meets with rising Turkey. Above all that has been built so far… In the new finance capital of the world, Europe's highest structure, Istanbul's new fashion center: a new age project with its superlative design. The world will turn and look at it."[73] It is ironic that in this mood of self-assurance, the recognition of (the whole world but most importantly) the West is desperately needed. Moreover, skyscrapers and other high structures can be considered as the inherent transgression of the AKP's discourse since the historical peninsula where the Ottoman spatial heritage resides is now surrounded by them. The silhouette of the old Istanbul – 'our own history' as Prime Minister Erdoğan puts it – is defiled by the high rise buildings on the background.[74]

The surplus project of *Kanal Istanbul*, the 'crazy island' is emblematic of the mentality of belatedness. As mentioned in the introduction, a crescent and star shaped island was planned to be created with the soil and other materials to be gained from the excavation of the project. So what is the point of creating this kind of island? One possible explanation is the political power's intention to mark the physical landscape with its national pride and ambitions of grandeur. In this symbolic grid, space is formulated as something passive waiting to be shaped by its human masters. In fact, this kind of relationship – masculine brutality deployed on space – can be euphemized by complimentary gestures. For instance, Prime Minister Erdoğan describes the state in which Istanbul was when he came to office as follows:

> I knew that we have a diamond at hand but I believed that this needs to be worked with dexterity. While we were raising Istanbul on her feet, we pondered several dimensions because Istanbul was betrayed, spoiled, and badly damaged… This is a betrayal against the history of Istanbul, against our own history. Now, we are endeavoring to recuperate and transform it (Erdoğan, 2011: my translation).[75]

This statement evokes the male fantasy in which the knight in shining armor rescues the powerless woman from her desperate condition. Here, Istanbul with its precious essence was defiled by other ruthless men, more precisely those who had previously held the office,

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[73] See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alkGeKluIHU to watch the entire commercial film.

[74] İstanbul'un silueti böyle değişti! (2011, September 14). Milliyet. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/istanbul-un-silueti-boyle-degisti-/gundem/gundemdetay/14.09.2011/1438325/default.htm

[75] "Elimizde bir elmas parçası olduğunu biliyordum ama bunu ince ince usta ellerde sabırla işlenmesi gerektiğine inanıyordum. İstanbul'u ellerinden tutup yeniden ayağa kaldırırken çok boyutlu düşündük çünkü İstanbul ihanete uğramıştı, İstanbul'a yazık ettiler, darbe üzerine darbe vurdular... Bu İstanbul tarihine geçmişimize ihanettir. Şimdi biz bunu yeniden geliştirip dönüştürme çabası veriyoruz." Shopping Fest oldu Galataport da olacak. (2011, March 26). *Sabah*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2011/03/26/shopping_fest_oldu_galataport_da_olacak

and it is now waiting to be purified by its savior.

However, there is another edge to the case of the crazy island with regard to its imaginary spectator. It would not be far-fetched to think that the interlocutor of the island with the shape of a crescent and star is a bird's eye-view, possibly conceived of as a gaze looking down onto the Earth from space. It is, in that sense, a display of power; the power to shape the physical world not merely out of necessity, but also out of pleasure. Apart from the intentions of grandiosity, the making of this island would possibly address a gaze 'transcendent' to worldly boundaries. It aims at conveying the message to those who are able to cast this kind of gaze – most probably the West – that Turkey can now reflect back to this formerly overbearing gaze. Yet again, this sort of self-identity is constructed by gearing for the Other's gaze, gaze of the West: "The imagined Western gaze is an integral part of this [oriental] identity," even in the latter's most seemingly assertive moments (Ahıska, 2003: 365).

The relationship between social relations/political power and space carries inherently transgressive characteristics. The modern paradigm ignores the dynamism of space, and reduces it to a passive material to be shaped. More accurately, modern spatial practices transgress the very reality-materiality of space in line with voluntarism by making cold abstractions as 'absolute political space' imposes itself as reality despite its abstract feature (Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 1998). In addition to that this already transgressive paradigm exercising masculine brutality onto space is also transgressed with the inauguration of a certain type of enjoyment. The notion of deliberate and detailed planning through which cold abstraction can inscribe itself onto space is violated by a newly pervading symbolic order that reproduces itself through its 'inherent transgression'. The enjoyment that arises from this transgressive gesture becomes crucial in the functioning of fantasy. The fantasy of 'historical necessity' in the creation of political spaces is now replaced by a spectacular and playful tendency which does not attribute to itself any notion of necessity but pleasure.

The case of *Kanal Istanbul* becomes meaningful in this context. The project was presented as a continuation of Mustafa Kemal's[76] nation-building program which had been halted for decades because of narrow-minded, corrupt and demagogue Kemalists. Apart from Erdoğan's reference to the atavistic figures prominent for the official Turco-Islamic history in the presentation of Kanal Istanbul, the project was also claimed to be emblematic of Turkey's

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[76] The AKP carefully distinguishes the cult of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk from his political cadres and the Kemalist program in general. While his actions are highly praised, the political mentality dominant in his time, namely Kemalist is strongly denounced for being authoritarian, elitist and *etatist*.

'catching up with Western civilization'. On the one hand, the AKP appeared to internalize basic Kemalist aspirations such as creating national and modern – albeit deviated from its original description – spaces by ignoring the 'reality' of space shaped by the existing set of social relations. Furthermore, novelty seems to be a shared promoted feature shared by both hegemonic visions regarding spatial activities inasmuch as crafting 'brand new' spaces is privileged not solely by the early republican elite but by the AKP as well. However, on the other hand, *Kanal Istanbul* bears the characteristics of neoliberal mega-projects with respect to its playful and spectacular aspect inciting consumer activity while dislodging disadvantageous groups that are not able to conform to the mandate of excessive consumption. Nevertheless, in addition to all that, there is also the issue of enjoyment which remains beyond the grasp of this sort of historical comparison as well as of any discursive analysis.

As an example to the weak spots of the AKP hegemony, Cihan Tuğal draws our attention to the party's tendency to behave like a 'postmodern prince' by deliberately "escaping standardization so as to maintain appeal to different sectors, demonstrating that hegemony must be reconsidered in the context of the twenty-first century" (Tuğal, 2009: 228). Tuğal points out the risks of losing the grip on the masses for the AKP in a context of an ongoing passive revolution by claiming the necessity of standardization in party's construction of an effective hegemonic order (Tuğal, Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism, 2009). This argument is in accordance with one of Tuğal's major assumptions, that no hegemony can be totally complete and coherent in itself but its limitations are always marked by structural inconsistency or contradiction. At this juncture, this research aims to question this equation between limitation and inconsistency by consulting Lacanian psychoanalysis, and focusing on the province of enjoyment in which the relationship between hegemony and contradiction may be understood in a new light.

CHAPTER 3

TRANSGRESSIVE ENJOYMENT AND INTERPASSIVITY IN LATE CAPITALIST TURKEY

Psychoanalysis, especially the Lacanian revision of Freud's works, has gradually been recognized as a useful tool in explaining the notions of subject and identity in various fields especially cultural studies and social-political theory. Several names influenced by Jacques Lacan's works, such as Slavoj Zizek, Ernesto Laclau and, Judith Butler, have contributed greatly to the ongoing debates in social theory with their different thought-provoking and vigorous approaches. Even though these names do not agree with each other in most cases, it is still possible to talk about a Lacanian psychoanalytical approach becoming ever more influential in academic circles. One apparent advantage of Lacanian psychoanalysis is its sensibility to dimensions often overlooked or dismissed by various approaches in the social sciences, concerning the individual rather than social dynamics. This asserted clear-cut boundary between individual and society is rigorously debunked by Lacanian scholars while giving us seminal insights into new ways of understanding the relationship between the human psyche and social forces. Stressing the concept of enjoyment (*jouissance*) is one of these novel insights of Lacanian psychoanalysis.

The discussion of enjoyment is pertinent to the current situation in Turkey where a de-centered political hegemony institutes itself by means of carrying out 'affective' socio-spatial performances. Although the AKP hegemony has its limitations and contradictions, it would not be wholly correct to take these as weaknesses which will eventually undermine the party's hold of its hegemonic position. Conceptualizing the notion of contradiction with its complex relation to *jouissance* against a Lacanian backdrop would provide us an alternative,

and perhaps a more profound understanding of how ideology interacts with its contradictions in general, and strategies pursued by the AKP hegemony so as to foster certain types of collective enjoyment.

Subjectivity, Imago, and Spatiality in Psychoanalysis

In Freud's formulation, the subject is the effect of space, and "[s]ubjectivity is a continual process of negotiation with space, of attempting to locate and reassure one's self of one's limits and to confirm the place of reality" (Kirby, 1996: 84). Spatiality is central also in Lacan's articulation of subjectivity, and its appearance in one of the three Lacanian registers, the 'Imaginary'. What Lacan argues is that, as the child grows up, he needs to identify with the *imago*, in the mirror or in others' appearances, so as to conceive of himself as a unified body. This identification is constitutive of the subject in enabling the child to 'demarcate' himself as a psychical entity separated from his surroundings (Lacan, 1994). Here, we see the predicament of the subject in its endeavor to constitute itself as a spatially defined totality through the medium of an external object or subject. In other words, without that externality through which the subject's image 'virtually comes into being', the subject is not capable of imagining itself as a self-contained entity. In that sense, the perception of self-wholeness comes with the price of depending on those 'outside' the 'I', and one can assert that this situation in itself would create the effect of lack. In this narrative, visuality and spatiality seems to have pivotal positions in the process of subject formation. Since the child (mis)recognizes himself in the mirror-image which is devoid of any actual reality, it would not be wrong to claim that subject is constituted in the virtual realm by "assum[ing] the identity of the image" (Pile, 1996: 123) (Copjec, 1994). Also, the mirror stage stages a radical discordance in the child's sense of its anatomical incompleteness due to 'perspectival limitations'. In simpler terms, the child can see only from one perspective while some of its anatomical parts remain outside its vision (Pile, 1996). Things get even more complicated here regarding the fact that the child's body and the mirror are located in the 'real' world. Therefore, the child's encounter with its image inaugurates a complex dialectic of spatio-visual relations, inasmuch as the imago – which now becomes an innermost component of the child's psyche – is located in an exterior world which has both visual and actual dimensions.

The mirror situates the child within a space, but this space has a 'de-realising' effect. In the dialectic of identification with the reflection, the child learns to mimic the

morphology of its fictional image and the effect of this is to both create an obsession with space and to institute an air of unreality about spatial relationships. The child is 'captured' in space, but the 'spatial dialectic' already separates the child from the 'nature' of that space: the spatial dialectic operates through the constitutive opposition between the child's fantasy of its own spatial relationships and its specular place in the world. There is a set of geographical questions here which would disrupt Lacan's 'simple' mirror. The child is situated within a multiplicity of dialectic spatialities: the child's body, the virtual world of the mirror, the 'real' world which contains the mirror, and the child's place in the world… (Pile, 1996: 124).

This complex dialectic of spatial relations sets in motion an alienation effect derived from '*méconnaissance*', or 'mis-recognition'. The case of misrecognition is essential to the child's ego constitution and its maintanance by a series of tactics protecting ego boundaries by employing strict schisms between 'me' and 'not-me'. Yet, this process may also end up in the incapability to recognize 'the desires of others' by falling in love with one's own image (Pile, 1996).

The visual regime in Lacan's theory does not merely consist of the subject. Different from social-constructivist approaches, there is a profound register of objectivity embodied by the gaze in the Lacanian framework of visuality. Here it would be apt to mention the Lacanian Real since the drives are intimately linked to this register. The gaze as the 'scopic drive', is often formulated as the eruption of the Real in the symbolic-visual regime.

For Lacan, the encounter with the object (it is worth repeating that objects in psychoanalysis are objects for the whole mind, including people) is profoundly dialectical and is suspended within a visual regime: the dialectic situates the subject who vacillates between the look and the look back, where this subject position is profoundly disturbing (Pile, 1996: 126).

The look back mentioned in the passage is the gaze. The gaze can roughly be described as a drive related to visuality and it functions as the 'looking-back' of the object in response to the subject's look (eye) upon it. So what is the relationship between the gaze and the I? The gaze determines the 'I' in the visible by photo-graphing the 'I'. This is to say that, the gaze "determines the complete visibility of the I" and maps the I "on a perceptual grid" (Copjec, 1994: 67). The gaze is radically subversive of the potent position of the subject's 'eye' by undermining the established meaning system prevalent in the 'Symbolic' supported by the Imaginary – that is the believed-to-be the clear-cut schism between the active subject and the passive object. To put it more simply, the fantasy of the all-seeing subject in a matrix where objects appears as surveilled (eyed) elements cannot be sustained when the object reflects back on the subject. This is the eruption of the Real in the visual realm, and any

encounter with it causes *anxiety* and the feeling of 'uncanniess'[77] on the subject by distorting the subject's indisputably master position in the visual regime (Pile, 1996) (Copjec, 1994).

> The split between the eye and the gaze is not achieved without cost, for it is instituted by an anxiety – the threat of castration […] The gaze slides over this anxiety and escapes consciousness. In this spatial topography of the mind, the gaze always lies behind or beyond understanding – once more evoking the idea that the subject's relationship to its specular image is founded by a profound failure-to-recognize its place […] Anxiety – the threat of castration – speaks of further qualities of the visual: fantasy and desire. The child that sees its image is already fantasising about the image and its relationship to it. The child is captured by the object in front of it, thus the image becomes what the child wants to see – it is constructed out of this gaze and infused with desire (Pile, 1996: 128).

Space, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, is endowed with an uncanny form of subjectivity rather than being a passive and static backdrop waiting to be shaped by its human masters. The space of vision has a privileged status in the determination of subjectivity since desire is formed in its contact with the field of visuality. In this *mise-en-scene*, the subject is not at the center but it is defined against another center where a lack emerges, privileging one signifier, the phallus (Pile, 1996). At this juncture, one should not miss that the question of power has a primary significance in spatial organizations. The stern control of space implies an arrogant attitude and will to power with the intention of reproducing the existing value and meaning system through the creation of phallic spaces. In most cases of the exertion of power, space is marked by the phallus and a masculine arrogance/brutality (Pile, 1996). According to Lefebvre, capitalist spatial relations require a cold abstraction in which space is castrated, and the body is immersed into the visual regime (Lefebvre, 1998).

Late Capitalism, Enjoyment, and the Suspension of the Law

Although the role of 'the Imaginary' is pivotal in the constitution of the psychoanalytical subject, visuality in itself is insufficient to illustrate the complete story of the emergence of the psychoanalytical subject. Here we are also to deal with 'the Symbolic'. At the interface between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, the internalization of the mirror-*imago* and other images by the subject takes place in the symbolic order (Fink, 1995).

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[77] According to Freud, anxiety is *the* authentic feeling. It is the universal currency of affect which means that every emotion can be translated into it. One can talk about a basic equivalence between affect and jouisscance since both signals a satisfaction that comes with a deeply disturbing and even painful experience.

Whereas the imaginary is the order of what we see, the symbolic is the structure supporting and regulating the visible world. As the realm of language, it structures our experience, providing not only the words we use to describe ourselves and our world, but also the very identities we take up as our own (McGowan, 2007).

According to Lacan, the symbolic is always at the center concerning the constitution of the subject (Stravrakakis, 2010). This can roughly be explained due to the fact that human beings are born into language and defined by its tools – by being named – from the very beginning. For Lacan, in the simplest terms, the subject is constituted with a lack caused by the primordial loss of the object (of desire) in the subject's immersion into the symbolic order – the order of formal/differential relations (Zizek, 1997a). In its passage to the Symbolic, the subject becomes resigned to the impossibility of satisfying the 'mOther' and steps into the Symbolic by incorporating the lack emanating from this resignation.[78] Against this background, subjectivity in psychoanalysis becomes the space of identification through which every identity is constituted within the symbolic realm (Stravrakakis, 2010). By the same token, it is this lack which deploys desire, a psychic dynamic striving for the object (of desire) – that is an object that is already lost, probably never exists, and unattainable. With respect to the unattainability of the object, satisfaction is always postponed in desire. Another point is that desire emerges in the Symbolic, in other words in language. The subject is always-already in the symbolic order, and there is no form of subjectivity prior to the inscription of the Symbolic. It is none other than the symbolic register which bounds us to authority and power insofar as the Other's, the regulative node of the Symbolic, command is irresistible and the subject, by virtue of its de-centeredness, is immanently dependent to the Other (Stravrakakis, 2010: 59). Nevertheless, one should not miss the fact that the symbolic order and language are also structurally lacking orders in themselves. Due to the imperfect feature of the Symbolic, the consistency of both the Other and the subject positions within the symbolic grid are under constant threat whereas, paradoxically, the positivity of the 'fetishistic-object' take place when the two lacks, those in the subject and in the Other overlap (Zizek, 1997a). The Symbolic continuously tries to conceal or disregard this bilateral lack with the support of fantasy. What fantasy does is to provide a *rationale* for the impasse of desire caused by the Symbolic's structural deficiency. By this way, we are able to assume and embrace our identities by ignoring the fact that there will be an unbridgeable gap between the signifiers of any given identity and our subject positions (Stravrakakis, 2010).

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[78] This is basically the scene of castration in the Oedipal complex where the Father (or the Name-of-the-Father) steps in and prohibits the incest-taboo. Lacan deliberately chooses to coin this prohibition as the Name-of-the-Father since it stands for the pure signifier that brings about the Symbolic.

As stressed earlier, the subject is integrated into the Symbolic by bringing along its constitutive lack which emerges with the loss of the object. Yet, lack is not the sole effect of the scene where the subject is lured into the symbolic order. Along with that, the Symbolic brings about an excess which is conceptualized as enjoyment (*jouissance*) by Lacanian psychoanalysis (Stravrakakis, 2010). *Jouissance* resides in the Real which precedes and evades language (the Symbolic). Unlike 'Law-abiding' desire, *jouissance* offers instant satisfaction to the subject and it has the incredible potential to disrupt, subvert and 'transgress' the functioning of both desire and the Symbolic. Despite the fact that the drive does not require any permission or guidance from the Other, it would be erroneous to assume that it is wholly divorced from the symbolic order (Fink, Desire and the Drives, 1997).

> On the one hand, the symbolic ideal forms the background for the transgressive practice; on the other, this practice, through the enjoyment it procures, may serve 'to bolster the ideal and the objectives it structures' […] Every effective hegemony has to operate on all these levels, co-opting and neutralizing its radical potential – and undergoing in the process, gradual shifts that, however, do not threaten the reproduction of hierarchal order (the basic parameters of domination" (Stravrakakis, 2010: 69).

As cited earlier, all symbolic orders are by definition incomplete and lacking. Yet, for any hegemony to sustain its longevity, it needs to take its own failure into account by conditioning its own transgression. In this vein, the effectiveness of ideology is marked by its ability to construct "a space of false disidentification" (Fleming & Spicer, 2003: 167).

By the same token, symbolic identification is not sufficient to hold a given society together, in Zizek's perspective, but the bond between its members involves a shared relationship to the Thing, to 'enjoyment incarnated', in his own terms (Zizek, 1993). At this point, the unconscious side of ideology aside from its visible symbolic/legal order comes into the picture where the ground for resistance becomes slippery as "the public ideological message is sustained by a series of obscene supplements" (Stravrakakis, 2010: 71). In this setting, the Other does not call for 'full cooperation' with the provisions of the public Law but clandestinely encourages its subjects to transgress them (Stravrakakis, 2010).

Psychoanalysis has long been concerned with modern society and the effect of its set of relations on the psyche. For Freud himself, the *raison d'être* of psychoanalysis is indeed the psychic disorders caused by the repressive mechanisms necessary for a well-functioning modern 'civilization' (Freud, 1961). But it was Jacques Lacan who drew attention to capitalism by positing a kind of homology between surplus-value and surplus-enjoyment. According to Lacan, university discourse – of which capitalism is a part along with modern

hegemony of scientific knowledge – is capable of producing surplus value qua *jouissance* (Vighi, 2010). Hence his famous 'reprimand' to his students in the tide of the 1968 movement: "What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a master. You will get one!" Zizek's take on the issue, which is different from that of Lacan, would be illustrative in order to understand the enjoyment regime of capitalism.

> The elementary feature of capitalism consists of its *inherent structural imbalance*, its innermost antagonistic character: the constant crisis, the constant revolutionizing of its conditions of existence. Capitalism has no "normal," balanced state: its "normal" state is the permanent production of an excess; the only way for capitalism to survive is to expand. Capitalism is thus caught in a kind of loop, a vicious circle, that was clearly designated already by Marx: producing more than any other socioeconomic formation to satisfy human needs, capitalism nonetheless also produces even more needs to be satisfied; the greater the wealth, the greater the need to produce more wealth. It should be clear, therefore, why Lacan designated capitalism as the reign of the *discourse of the hysteric*: this vicious circle of a desire, whose apparent satisfaction only widens the gap of its dissatisfaction, is what defines hysteria. A kind of structural homology exists between capitalism and the Freudian notion of the superego. The basic paradox of the superego also concerns a certain structural imbalance: the more we obey its command, the more we feel guilty, so that renunciation entails only a demand for more renunciation, repentance more guilt -- as in capitalism, where an increase in production to fill out the lack only widens the lack (Zizek, 1993: 209).

According to Zizek, in capitalism's hysteric discourse, the Master whose role is to regulate the excess becomes inoperative, and consequently the obscene superego runs the show without the Master's regulative intervention (Zizek, 1993). The suspension of the Master's function within the set of capitalist relations leads to a new type of administration of the excess, namely *jouissance*. In this setting, the production process is incorrectly depicted as the concealed dimension of 'how things really are'. The production process works as the fetish that fascinates with its very presence (Zizek, 1997b).

The argument that we are now living in a 'post-ideological' paradigm is another point problematized by Zizek as a part of his discussion of late capitalism. The illusion of a 'post-ideological' society derives from the fact that nobody needs to believe in the context of late capitalism insofar as commodities believe in their place (Zizek, 1989). As to Zizek's interpretation of Marx's 'commodity fetishism', commodities – almost literally – acquire a life of their own due to the Real of our social reality. That is to say that the appearance of commodities endowed with magical powers is how 'things *really* seem to us' in a context where we participate in our social reality composed of a dominant set of social exchanges. Hereby, the set of capitalist relations gains an objective property with respect to the fact that its perpetuity does not depend on subjective consciousness. In the domain of *jouissance*,

positions of subject and object are inverted, and it is now commodities that believe and enjoy for us (Zizek, 1997b).

By taking all those into consideration, psychoanalysis enables us to approach the questions of identity, subjectivity, identification, visuality and fetish from unconventional perspectives and opens up new horizons to conceptualize, challenge and subvert hegemonic forms and the existing ideology. In this psychoanalytical framework, political discourse in contemporary Turkey will be put under scrutiny with respect to the current political hegemony's complex interaction with its own *joussiance* and radically transgressive dimension. The organization of *jouissance* by the ruling ideology in modern-day Turkey will be stressed throughout this chapter. Moreover, the visual dialectic in the psychoanalytical framework and the complex aspect of identification will form the basis of legitimacy in our discussion of the case of *Kanal Istanbul* throughout this chapter.

"Make way for Turkey!"[79]

Zizek mentions that in one of his essays written during the war years George Orwell praises a version of English patriotism emanating from the daily life of the lower classes as opposed to the 'official' and 'stuffy' version (Zizek, 1993). Add 'musty and fusty' to the two adjectives for the latter version, and such a discourse has been in effect for the last ten years in Turkey. After the AKP won the general elections and came to office in 2002, it re-instigated privatization and urban transformation which had been decelerated since Özal's death. Nevertheless, several legal decisions were made against the AKP government's enterprises by the bureaucracy and the judicial body. Especially in the first five years of office, the party embraced an accusatory rhetoric against those two official branches. Less than three weeks after the AKP's electoral victory, the president of the party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who then could not become the prime minister due to his political ban, sternly warned the bureaucracy:

> Here in the presence of the nation I want to call on the bureaucracy: Keep up with us. From now on, an unusual phase begins, note that. Because this is our shared destiny. Political cadres together with bureaucracy, all of us have to work day and night. That is why bureaucracy is in the position of driving away the dark clouds which has been there to date. In this respect, if they will ever be excess baggage, take no offence but,

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[79] 'Açın Türkiye'nin önünü!' This slogan is coined by Cem Uzan, one of the neoliberal 'princes' of 1990s, who ventured on politics by 'buying himself' a political party in. During the electoral campaigns in 2002, he used an excessive populist-nationalist tone. Although there has never been a 'warm relationship' between the AKP and Uzan, the former had no difficulty to appropriate the latter's discourse in the following years.

they should think about paying the price starting from today[80] (Erdoğan, 2002, my translation).

Throughout the following years, most of the cases in which the government and the bureaucracy ran counter to each other were about the role of private enterprises in public contracts. The public contract of the *Galataport* project which was nullified by the then Deputy Prime Minister Abdüllatif Şener could be counted as one of those cases since the binding decision was made by having regard to the Council of State's motion for the stay of execution.[81] The *Galataport* project is of great symbolic importance since it was the first urban mega-project for Istanbul to be put into action under the rule of the AKP. The gravity of this incident can be observed in the Prime Minister Erdoğan's personal tenacity even six years after its phase-out. In 2008, Erdoğan speculates on how things would be if the *Galataport* project had been realized: "If today *Haydarpaşaport* [the counterpart of *Galataport* in the Anatolian side] was realized, five billion dollars would be invested there so far." And he continues addressing those who played a part in the rescission of the project: "They come and stand against us in the blink of an eye… What are they serving for? Can anyone witness this kind of mentality, this sort of logic in any of developed countries? It is impossible."[82] After three years, Erdoğan brought up the issue again but this time in a more self-assured way: "When we helped her to get on her feet, Istanbul was betrayed. Even the judicial branch did not let us realize *Galataport*. We have lost some time but we will now finish both Galataport and *Haydarpaşaport*."[83]

Erdoğan made this statement in the opening of 'Istanbul Fashion Week' which can be taken as a context quite emblematic in itself. This is one of the mega-events whose numbers

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[80] "Bir de burada milletin huzurunda bürokrasiye seslenmek istiyorum. Bizi iyi takip edin. Hızımıza muhakkak yetişin. Artık bundan sonra alışılmışın dışında bir dönem başlayacak, bunu da bilin. Çünkü bu bizim ortak kaderimizdir. Siyasi kadrosuyla, bürokrasisiyle, gece gündüz demeden çalışmaya mecburuz. Onun için bürokrasi bugüne kadar üzerinde dolaşan o kara bulutları defetmek durumundadır. Bu bakımdan eğer bize ayak bağı olacak olurlarsa, kusur abakmasınlar bunun da bedelini ödemeyi şimdiden düşünsünler." Full text of the speech. (2002, November 19). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/188602.asp

[81] Galataport ihalesi iptal edildi. (2006, January 31). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.cnnturk.com/2006/ekonomi/genel/01/31/galataport.ihalesi.iptal.edildi/155187.0/index.html

[82] "Bugün bir Haydarpaşaport yatırımı gerçeklemiş olsaydı oraya yapılacak yatırım 5 milyar dolardı... Bakıyorsunuz hemen dikiliveriyorlar karşınıza...Bunlar neye hizmet ediyorlar? Dünyanın hangi gelişmiş ülkesinde böyle bir zihniyet, böyle bir mantık görebilirsiniz? Mümkün değil." Erdoğan: "Haydarpaşaport gerçekleşseydi 5 milyar dolarlık yatırım yapılacaktı." (2008, January 26). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.haberler.com/erdogan-haydarpasaport-gerceklesseydi-5-milyar-haberi/

[83] "Elinden tutup kaldırdığımızda İstanbul ihanete uğramıştı. Galataport'u gerçekleştirmemize bile yargı izin vermedi. Ama vazgeçmedik. Biraz zaman kaybettik ama hem Galataport'u hem de Haydarpaşaport'u bitireceğiz" Shopping Fest oldu Galataport da olacak. (2011, March 26). *Sabah*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2011/03/26/shopping_fest_oldu_galataport_da_olacak

are growing every year as Turkey deepens its 'structural adjustment' synchronized with the global economy. Mega-events of this kind have long been functioning to distract the international public's attention from the severe social and political problems of the organizing countries as well as reiterating the hegemony of neoliberal precepts both at national and international levels (Yardımcı, 2005). The golden age of neoliberalism under Turgut Özal's rule in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, exemplifies such situation. In this setting, one can talk about two opposite trends: on the one hand there was excessive state violence, and on the other hand a discourse of freedom which was mostly put into effect while the civil government was rising. This was a period marked by a boost of international cultural and sportive events concomitant with systematic torture and maltreatment exerted by the armed forces against political activists, predominantly those with leftist affiliations (Gürbilek, 1992).

In the same event, Erdoğan also mentioned the 'Tophane incident' in which art galleries newly emerging in the district as a part of the ongoing gentrification process were vandalized by the neighborhood residents for some uncertain reasons. According to the Prime Minister, this unpleasant scene would not have occurred if the jurisdiction had let the government carry on *Galataport*, *Haydarpaşaport*, and Tophane projects. This argument is emblematic of the AKP's rhetoric concerning those who oppose the party's urban practices.

On the other hand, municipalities and the Mass Housing Administration (TOKİ) are given vast powers which enable them to by-pass legal and bureaucratic restrictions. Erdoğan Bayraktar, the former president of TOKİ and the current Minister of Environment and City Planning, in one of his statements explicitly declared his intention of abolishing 'unnecessary' bureaucracy in the realm of construction so that private construction companies will be more comfortable in their investments.[84] This is indeed the salient characteristics of the government's urban policies: 'make way for national and international investments'. In return, the contractors in the construction sector present their gratitude to Erdoğan in person.[85] The Prime Minister makes a statement that the reason of his struggle with bureaucracy is attract international capital into Turkey by facilitating complicating legal and bureaucratic procedures.[86]

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[84] Bayraktar: İnşaatta bürokrasi bitecek. (2012, April 24). *Türkiye Gazetesi*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com/haber/532872/abone.aspx#.T-eT5Rdo3So

[85] Müteahhitlerden Başbakan Erdoğan'a bürokrasi teşekkürü. (2012, April 5). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.showhaber.com/muteahhitlerden-basbakan-erdogana-burokrasi-tesekkuru-552357h.htm

[86] Erdoğan: Bürokrasi kabustur. (2008, April 27). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/444285.asp

It is no coincidence that the slogan 'make way for Turkey' was initially used by the extremely obtrusive 'neoliberal prince', Cem Uzan, who participated in the 2002 general elections as a party leader, presumably in order to evade being sentenced for several embezzlements. Nevertheless, this can easily be taken as the AKP's own because of the fact that the party assimilates the slogan through its steady utterance by the party cadres: 'make way for entrepreneurs, businessmen, private companies.[87] Not only the private sector in general for whom the government claims to 'make way' but also for other countries[88], and even, supposedly, for the unions in Turkey[89]. The slogan tells us something about the transgressive character of neoliberalism. Rights earned in several decades of struggle within a certain social and political-economic structure fall victim to neoliberalism's 'creative destruction' (Harvey, 1988). David Harvey points out that a certain way of conceptualizing freedom has functioned as a strong discursive weapon for neoliberalism and played an important part in its 'naturalization' at the global level (Harvey, 1988). But the question to be raised here is 'freedom from what'? No doubt, it is freedom from the state's interventionist policies and bureaucratic limitations.

Although appealing to international capital is crucial for this anti-bureaucratic discourse, it is hard to say that it is all about economic and practical concerns. The changing rhythm of life that comes with all-embracing privatizations is already recounted by Cihan Tuğal. In his viewpoint, professionalism becomes pervasive in people's work habits, and in this way capitalism naturalizes itself at the level of daily/economic practices (Tuğal, 2009). The short passage from the interview with one of his interviewees is very illustrative of the operative discourses on the notions of privatization and bureaucracy:

> Privatization is good. The state is cumbersome. The people working for the state have no interest in their work. Bu here, we are all after profit. We are always struggling. We are always trying to do something. But the eye of the *memur* is always on the clock. He wants to go home as soon as possible. But I come here six in the morning, and I go back at seven. This is how one should work (Tuğal, 2009: 226).

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[87] İşimiz müteşebbisin önünü açmak. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/isimiz-mutesebbisin-onunu-acmak/19876
Alınan verginin yüzde 84'ü hizmete gidiyor. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/alinan-verginin-yuzde-84u-hizmete-gidiyor/25291
Konya'da dondurma fabrikasının temeli atıldı. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/konyada-dondurma-fabrikasinin-temeli-atildi/26897

[88] Somalili kardeşlerimizin yanında olacağız. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/somalili-kardeslerimizin-yaninda-olacagiz/26813

[89] Sendikaların önünü açmak için çabalıyoruz. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from
http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/sendikalarin-onunu-acmak-icin-cabaliyoruz/11569

Here, there is a question of nationalism intricately related to neoliberal precepts which seems to be underemphasized, if not totally overlooked, in Tuğal's work.[90] The fight against the 'bureaucratic oligarchy' becomes an inherent part of 'making way for Turkey' so that the country can 'reach the level of contemporary civilization'. Again, populism is a vital element in the employment of this discourse by depicting bureaucracy as the bar preventing the happy coalescence of the state and the 'people'[91]. In one of his speeches, Erdoğan complains about the prohibitive mindset of the 'bureaucratic oligarchy' by alluding to a Turkish saying which can be roughly translated as: 'The goal is not to eat the grape but beat the grape-grower'. The Prime Minister claims that the goal of the bureaucratic oligarchy is 'beat the grape-grower whereas Erdoğan presents the major objective of himself and of his party as 'eating the grape' together with the 'people'.[92] In other words, Erdoğan's 'offer that cannot be refused' is to make way for Turkey by freeing from the bureaucracy's outmoded prohibitive so that the state and the 'people' together can prosper.

This perspective offers an alternative understanding of Cihan Tuğal's discussion of 'organic crisis' and its overcoming by the institution of the AKP hegemony. Yael Navaro-Yashin, in her book, "Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey," outlines the fetishistic aspect of the Turkish State with reference to the *Susurluk* scandal through which certain dark connections – an elected parliamentarian, Istanbul's former vice-chief of police and a well-known mafia dealer against whom there still had been charges, found in a car wreck – operative in the 'deep state' were 'accidently' revealed to the public. In Navaro-Yashin's account, after this disclosure, however, things seemed to be going back to normal due to the cynic position towards the state which was pervasive in the society. Moreover, she notes that those who were already critical of the Turkish state significantly sharpened their rhetoric toward the state and started to make use of a vocabulary of abjection in order to describe it: swamp, rottenness, filthiness, crookedness, degeneration, so on and so forth

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[90] It is hard to say that this results whether from the immersion of Tuğal anthropological standpoint into everday dimension or whether from the fact that the nationalist tone was not palpable enough for the reseacher's eyes and ears.

[91] According to Ernesto Laclau, what we come across in the concept of the 'people' of populism is an underprivilaged 'partiality' (*plebs*) sees itseslf as a part of the totality of the community (*populus*). For him, the 'people' corresponds to an 'absent fullness' with regard to the fact that the harmanious continuity of the social is spoiled by an experience of lack. Nevertheless, this experience of lack is alleviated by the populist fantasy of dichotomic depiction of the community. Laclau asserts that "[t]his division presupposes [...] the presence of some privilaged signifiers which condense in themselves the signification of a whole antagonistic camp (the 'regime', the 'oligarchy', the 'dominant groups', and so on, for the enemy; the 'people', the 'nation', the 'silent majority', and so on, for the oppressed underdog...". See E. Laclau, "On Populist Reason," 2009 for a thorough and interesting analysis of the notion of populism.

[92] Erdoğan'ın bürokratik oligarşi isyanı. (2009, May 10). Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://siyaset.haber.pro/cikti.php?bul=17773

(Navaro-Yashin, 2002)… In Cihan Tuğal's "Passive Revolution," the existing organic crisis between the civil and political societies, which more or less coincides with Yael Navaro-Yashin's argument, was resolved after AKP came to office in 2002 and consolidated its power over the last decade. According to Tuğal, as the masses who were previously excluded and kept out of the discursive center started to be incorporated by the hegemony, the hegemony itself has undergone a remarkable transformation (Tuğal, 2009).

A discursive landmark in this recipe is the abjection of 'bureaucratic hegemony' and its outmoded mentality.[93] By clean(s)ing its abjective components, the state can now move forward as a purified entity with the banishment of 'bad apples'. By the same token, the process of abjection is operative in the dominant discourses of urban planning. In the previous chapter, it was briefly mentioned that the resistance against urban transformation projects are denigrated and labeled as degenerate and even 'terrorist' initiatives with the aim of hampering Turkey's progress.[94] In this respect, the gentrification process, in the hegemonic Imaginary, works as a project of 'clean(s)ing' these elements from the cities' visual regimes. Again, the discourse of 'making way for Turkey' has had a facilitative function in the comprehensive programs of urban projects along neoliberal values. Also, by the elimination of its abject, the Turkish state is 'vindicated' and 're-instituted' as the proper proxy through which people can enjoy or to which they delegate their enjoyment.

Kanal Istanbul: A Mega-Project of Enjoyment

The declaration of the 'crazy project' by the Prime Minister Erdoğan during the

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[93] According to Julia Kristeva, the abject is basically what the 'I' is not. The concept of abject is endowed wih the most disturbing and disgusting effects on the 'I'. Therefore, it is banished for the sake of the pure consistency of the 'I'. However, Kristeva continues, the borderlines does not remain clearly defined, and the abject continuies to disturb and haunt the 'I' by through fascination and *jouissance*. According to her, it is jouissance alone that causes 'the abject to exist as such'. One does not know, neither desire it, but joys in it.. I believe that the current ruling hegemony in Turkey has a curious relationship with its abject, embodied primarily by the former-Kemalist oligarchy (and its clandestine clic, *Ergenekon*) and secondarily by the 'non-liberal' Left and the hard-liners in the Kurdish movement. In the indictments of the public Law, it is possible to witness that all these elements merge into an amorphous, conspiring organization with an edge of sublimity with respect to its alleged near-omnipotence and omnipresence. Even though this mentality is denounced in almost every government statement, one can still claim that it also functions as a source of fascination. See J. Kristeva, "Powers of Horror," 1982 for a more comprehensive analysis of the concept of 'abject'.

[94] Again, this relationship is not as simple as that. Because a type of abjection is here at stake, it introduces a ambivalent interplay between desire and disgust: "A bourgeois Imaginary saw the 'lower' classes as ignoring the moral codes necessary for respectability: this 'moral laxity' produced an ambivalent gaze, because moral looseness was simultaneously threatening and absorbing. Thus, low-Others were seen to be dirty, diseased, criminal and sexually promiscuous; on the other hand, such 'freedom' from moral restriction was fascinating (both captivating and captive-making); the bourgeois observer could hardly keep their eyes off such behaviour. This fascination (desire and disgust) with low-Others was mapped across the topography of the city..." Note. From *The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, space and subjectivity by* S. Pile, 1996, London Routledge, p. 179. Copyright 1996 by S. Pile.

AKP's electoral campaigns triggered a vibrant public debate. As recounted in the introduction, the major focus among the supporters was on the daring characteristic of the project rather than its 'doability' or 'feasibility'. Hence, the predominant pro- attitude was to endorse the project and to praise the Prime Minister Erdoğan as the mastermind of this extremely ambitious enterprise for his 'thinking-big' and unique vision. The CHP leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu uttered his objection based on the idea (Pile, 1996) that "there is no human being in this project."[95] The Prime Minister Erdoğan countered this accusation by claiming the impossibility of satisfying Kılıçdaroğlu due to his 'negativity bias'.[96] Nihat Ergin, the Minister of Science, Industry, and Technology; on the other hand, responded to this accusation with a rather sarcastic tone: "They are saying that there is no human in it. This is a canal project, not a swimming pool."[97] It seems apt to depart from this sarcastic response which is to be taken quite seriously since Ergin unwittingly gives utterance to ideology prevalent in the context of the AKP hegemony.

According to Slavoj Zizek, this kind of discussion hinging on the humanist-ideological dichotomy of 'human beings' and 'things' would be more productive if one consults one of Marx's famous inversions – that is "material relations between persons and social relations between things." On this ground, Zizek contemplates on the role of fetishistic reversal in ideology. According to him, it is neither the Lukacsian approach that assumes an unalienated subjectivity (or belief) prior to reification nor the Althusserian version of structuralism in which fetishistic positions are determined in the set of differential relations that originates the fetishistic gesture. Zizek argues that it is the displacement itself of "the innermost relations between people […] onto relations between things" which is in fact "original and constitutive" (Zizek, 1997b: 41). Commodity fetishism, for Zizek, installs itself upon a strong 'objective' belief, rather than knowledge, which cannot be easily dissolved with plain disenchantment – realization of what commodities really are. Accordingly, the reason of 'durability' of commodities is the inherently reflective feature of belief.

> Belief is always minimally 'reflective', a 'belief in the belief of the other' – 'I still believe in Communism' equals of saying 'I believe there are still people who believe in Communism' – while knowledge is precisely not knowledge about the fact that

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[95] "Kanal İstanbul"a Kılıçdaroğlu'ndan ilk yorum. (2011, April 27). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1126846&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

[96] 'Kanal Istanbul'da insan yok'. Şaşırdım, neresinde yok? Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.kanalistanbulprojesi.web.tr/kanal-istanbulda-insan-yok-sasirdim-neresinde-yok.html

[97] Bakan Ergün: Kanal İstanbul'da insan yok. Çünkü, yüzme havuzu değil. (2011, April 30). *Zaman*. Retrieved July 03, 2012, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1128354&keyfield=6B616E616C20697374616E62756C

there is another who knows. For this reason, I can BELIEVE through the other, but I cannot KNOW through the other. That is to say, due to the inherent reflectivity of belief, when another believes in my place, I myself believe through him; knowledge is not reflective in the same way: when the other is supposed to know, I do not know through him. (Zizek, 1997b: 43)

This reflective aspect of belief is at work in the case of subject-object relations in commodity fetishism. This notion of belief through the Other is turned into 'acting (or being active) through the Other' with the inauguration of "interpassivity." In Zizek's account, one can talk about two sorts of interpassivity: the Other acts in my place, instead of me; and I act through the Other. In the first situation, the Other acts and enjoys in place of me by depriving me from 'my own passive reaction of satisfaction', whereas in the latter formulation, it is indeed me who acts and enjoys through the Other and I can sit back and relax while the Other handles my obligation to enjoy (Zizek, 1997b). So what is interpassivity in Zizek's point of view?

> The object which gives body to the surplus-enjoyment fascinates the subject, it reduces him to a passive gaze impotently gaping at the object; this relationship, of course, is experienced by the subject as something shameful, unworthy. Being directly transfixed by the object, passively submitted to its power of fascination, is something ultimately unbearable: the open display of the passive attitude of 'enjoying it' somehow deprives the subject of his dignity. Interpassivity is therefore to be conceived as the primordial form of the subject's defence against *jouissance*: I defer *jouissance* to the Other who passively endures it (laughs, suffers, enjoys…) on my behalf. (Zizek, 1997b: 51)

Against this backdrop, the subject steps in a primordial relationship with his object which complicates the clear-cut subject-object separation. To Zizek, "the object is the form of being passive through another" (Zizek, 1997b: 51) and it primordially suffers in my place, which means, enjoys for me. So what overwhelms the subject in his encounter with the object is that the subject sees himself "in the guise of a suffering object: what reduces [him] to a fascinated passive observer is the scene of [himself] passively enduring it" (Zizek, 1997b: 51). In the paradigm of interpassivity, the humanist duality, 'human beings' (subjects) versus 'things' (objects) which is also set forth by Kılıçdaroğlu; "There is no human beings in this project" loses its currency.

Zizek takes a step further and distinguishes between the two forms of experiences conflating the object-subject distinction: 'objectively subjective' and 'subjectively objective'. Zizek alludes to Kantian transcendentally constituted reality as an example of the latter, whereas in the former, the semblance is experienced objectively within the domain of the

subjective semblance itself as in the case of materialization of the ruling ideology into ideological apparatuses and practices (Zizek, 1997b). In Zizek's account, "fantasy […] belongs to the bizarre category of the objectively subjective" (Zizek, 1997b: 53), and he asserts that this notion is intimately related to the mystery of fetishism.

> …what the fetish objectivizes is 'my true belief', the way things 'truly seem to me', although I never actually experience them in this way; apropos of commodity fetishism, Marx himself uses the term 'objectively-necessary appearance'. So when a critical Marxist encounters a bourgeois subject immersed in commodity fetishism, the Marxist's comment to him is not 'Commodity may seem to you a magical object endowed with special powers, but it really is just a reified expression of relations between people'; the actual Marxist's comment is, rather, 'You may think that the commodity appears to you as a simple embodiment of social relations […] but this is not how things really seem to you – in your social exchange, you bear witness to the uncanny fact that a commodity really appears to you as a magical object endowed with special powers.' (Zizek, 1997a: 120)

Now, we can recast a look at the AKP's crazy project, *Kanal Istanbul* in the light of Zizek's discussion. The objection of Kılıçdaroğlu to the project is reminiscent of a comment by the 'non-actual Marxist' inasmuch as he pursues an ill-fated political strategy to disenchant people from the 'objective fantasy of commodity fetishism' (Eagleton, 1991: 40). In terms of 'what in reality takes place' in the whole case of the crazy project, it seems plausible to assert that *Kanal Istanbul* is a decision taken by a handful of individuals and it strives to distribute public resources in advantage of a dozen businessmen through land and real-estate speculation. However, formulating the whole chain of events and intentions at the level of actual individuals would be 'incorrect' insofar as a symbolic order functions effectively only as virtual. Still, this does not negate the fact that the virtual feature of the Symbolic is highly effective in determining the 'the fate of things' (Zizek, 1997a: 100). As said earlier, the symbolic order with all its lacks and limitations sustains itself with its fantasmatic support. If we take into account the fact that fantasy may be defined as an objectively subjective category, the symbolic order becomes irreducible to a set of subjective relations. Therefore, Kılıçdaroğlu's position in this debate is not only indefensible on the plane of ethics ('I' know 'how things truly are' and I open your eyes to the truth of the project that 'there is no human in it') but also in terms of its currency within this political-aesthetic paradigm. It simply did not work.

Enjoyment is an important aspect to be stressed in relation to the phenomenon of *Kanal Istanbul* due to the relentless outburst of the obscene display of power on the psychical world. Herein, space is 'feminized' by being construed as a passive object in a male fantasy.

The hegemonic order marks space with its phallic images like skyscrapers which are promoted as symbols of national development in the neoliberal visual regime. This may also be taken as the expression of the spatial arrogance and masculine brutality of the AKP hegemony and its spatial regulations. If we are to talk about the transgresive practices on space through cold abstraction, *Kanal Istanbul* is the paragon of this mentality. Moreover, one can also talk about a certain kind of masculine enjoyment regime emanating from playing with the landscape as easily as with a pie, which is supported by the fantasy of an atavistic historical continuity – Mehmet II who moves the ships from the land, the Grand Vizier Sokullu Mehmet who plans to open a canal in Suez with his 'transcendent' vision, etc…This continuity may be interpreted with reference to the figure of the obscene father in Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, who possesses a mythical 'uncastrated' enjoyment.

The father of the 'primal horde' in *Totem and Taboo* is the 'father of *jouissance*', an exception to the Law with which the father in the oedipal triangle is bound. "The father of the primal horde is the *père sévère*, who is egoistical and jealous, the sexual glutton who also keeps his sons in check by the threat of castration" (Grigg, 2008: 30). Lacan clarifies the ambiguous roles of the father as Freud defines it in the Oedipus complex and in *Totem and Taboo* by positing the imaginary-symbolic-real distinction. In Lacan's formulation, the real father, the father of the primal horde who enjoys all of the women is a retrospective product of a 'fundamental fantasy' which implies an impossibility – that is the impossibility of enjoying all women. The real/mythical father, in Lacan's account, has both the function of enjoyer and the prohibitor of enjoyment. It is also interesting to observe the development from the Oedipal father whose function is to pacify and regulate the 'obscure power of the feminine sex' embodied in the omnipotence of the figure of the mother to the mythical father figure in *Totem and Taboo* who seems to assume this obscure omnipotence (Grigg, 2008). The whole issue of *Kanal Istanbul* is relevant to this discussion. What Prime Minister Erdoğan does by mentioning the 'mythical' figures – who were indeed actual human beings but whose representations are deeply mythical – in his presentation of the project is to claim to resurrect and embody the 'uncastrated enjoyment' which was allegedly possessed by the ancestors. This is, in other words, the negation of castration. Like those figures who enjoyed all the physical geography without suffering any limitations, the contemporary political power presents itself as a resurrection and embodiment of this impossible enjoyment.

In one of her works, Nurdan Gürbilek, a Turkish literary critique, contemplates on an important author, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, whose works are often consulted in order to have an understanding of the right-wing political aesthetics in Turkey. Gürbilek argues that

Tanpınar's writings are products of longing for a lost past. But this past is described as 'glorious' and national in Tanpınar's works. From Gürbilek's viewpont, Tanpınar's stories become meaningful insofar as they find a place in the 'glorious' national continuity whereas elements remaining outside this harmonious continuity are regarded unpleasant and undesired residues. In Gürbilek's exegesis, what Tanpınar strives to do is to re-deem a past characterized by properties such as harmony, oneness, completeness and wholeness (Gürbilek, 2011). This kind of attitude may also be witnessed in the Prime Minister's articulation of the glorious past and self-presentation as the latest link of this historical continuity. Yet, at this juncture, we must pay attention to the fact that this sort of oceanic relationship with the (m)other – or the father inasmuch as the two converges in terms of their function when the 'obscene' father in *Totem and Taboo* – in which uncastrated *jouissance* is believed to exist is the ruse of *jouissance* itself. It is *jouissance* alone which retroactively constructs the primordial state of wholeness/completeness (Stavrakakis, 1999).

By taking these into consideration, we should now focus on the kind of enjoyment (*jouissance*) that is at stake here. In general, one can distinguish between two sorts of *jouissance* in terms of their different relation to the Other. The phallic *jouissance* is instituted upon the failure of the phallus which cannot fulfill the subject even after its acquisition of the object cause of desire. This *jouissance*, also known as 'symbolic *jouissance*', is fallible. The Other *jouissance*, on the other hand, is infallible but more elusive than the former. In this situation, the subject can be duped by *jouissance* insofar as what the subject reckons as its own *jouissance* can be the one extracted (stolen) by the Other. Then again, interpassivity comes into the picture, when this *jouissance* can also be our enjoyment as the Other, or our enjoyment through the Other (Fink, 1997). In Zizek's interpretation of Lacan, the enjoyment comes to be the enjoyment of the Other through imputation. In this formulation, the 'theft of enjoyment' gains a different meaning as in the fantasies projected to various 'others' (Zizek, 1993)

Apart from distinct types of *jouissance*, one's relationship with the enjoyment of the Other occurs in more than one way. According to Lacan, this is feminine version of *jouissance*. Since the Other *jouissance* is ineffable, it can be experienced by women without knowing anything about it (Stavrakakis, 1999). A comparison of the hysteric and the pervert illustrates two opposite ways of dealing with the Other's enjoyment.

> Hysteria provides the exemplary case of desire as a defence against *jouissance*: in contrast to the pervert who works incessantly to provide enjoyment to the Other, the neurotic-hysteric wants to be the object of the Other's desire, not the object of his enjoyment – she is well aware that the only way to remain desired is to postpone the

satisfaction, the gratification of desire which would bring enjoyment. The hysteric's fear is that, in so far as she is the object of the Other's enjoyment, she is reduced to an instrument of the Other, exploited manipulated by him; on the other hand, there is nothing a true pervert enjoys more than being an instrument of the Other, of his *jouissance* (Zizek, 1997a: 33).

We come across a predicament here. Although it may seem to be a resistance against the overbearing effect of the Other in the subject's experience of enjoyment, the hysteric discourse does not offer a way out of our unproductive relation with the Other *jouissance*. Since, the hysteric is obsessed with the sacrifice *jouissance* that enables her to enter the Symbolic, she incessantly tries to retrieve this enjoyment 'illegitimately' taken from her by the Other. In other words, the hysteric does not recognize the legitimacy of the Other. But the problem arises at the point in which the ultimate goal of the hysteric becomes the prevention of the Other to profit from her own enjoyment even if this means sacrificing everything (Zizek, 1997a).

The pervert discourse where one enjoys by turning himself into the instrument of the Other appears to correspond to the enjoyment regime in the case of *Kanal Istanbul* and generally in contemporary Turkey. Can we not articulate the impassioned spectators that attended the event of the *Kanal Istanbul* presentation as perverts in their feverish attempt to supplement the representation strived by the Other? In line with this, the glowing cheers and ovation of the spectators in the conference hall do nothing but cherishes the Other's enjoyment by validating its fantasy: "Look at them enjoying!"[98] If we go back to Kılıçdaroğlu's objection – 'there is no human being in this project' – the question can be re-articulated as follows: what is the role of human beings in this project? It is true that no figure of human being appeared in the digital animation of *Kanal Istanbul*. But what kind of envisagement is in effect for the human beings in the 'cold abstraction' of the crazy project? By being there, do they not become a part of the 'sublime' totality of the nation by witnessing a 'historical movement' since the great accomplishments of the ancestors? Can human beings be more than mere decorations within this phallic geography aspired by the Other? These questions provide a more fertile ground for us to discuss the AKP's spatial policies and

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[98] "...'Look at them enjoying!' recalls the gaze, which previously was the preeminent agency for making one ashamed. For the period in which Lacan is speaking, if it is necessary to recall the gaze, it is because the Other who could be looking has disappeared. The look that one solicits today by turning reality into a spectacle—and all television is a reality show—is a gaze castrated of its power to shame, which it is constantly demonstrating. As if the mission, or at least the unconscious consequence, of this capture of the television spectacle was to demonstrate that shame is dead." Note. From "On Shame," in *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis,* J. Clemens, & R. Grigg (eds.)*,* by Jacques Alain Miller, 2006, London: Duke University Press, p.15.

aesthetics in relation to the enjoyment regime employed by the party.

CONCLUSION

In the last three decaded, Turkey has gone through a drastic spatial transformation, most of which has taken place in urban areas. This change has accelerated in the last couple of years as neoliberal urbanism re-gained momentum after its initial installation in the 1980s. One comes across numerous ads of new residences and luxurious mass housings in mass media. Skyscrapers and trade centers continue to pop up in the urban business centers. Those constructions do not only address a limited number of *crème de la crème* but also the new middle class which has remarkably grown in the last decade. The displacement of the urban poor and the working class dwelling in the central districts of cities is another dimension that is often obscured or underemphasized. The political power, on the other hand, has heavily invested in those spatial practices in order establish and maintain its hegemonic position. Overall, there is a whole politics revolving around the issues of space and architecture.

This thesis aimed at investigating the AKP's affective politics through an examination of the party's spatial practices and discourses. From the time that the party obtained the majority in the parliament after 2002 general elections, an unprecedented discourse concerning space and architecture came to be in force. Because the party embraced neoliberal principles in city planning, notions of effectiveness, feasibility, and professionalism have come to be decisive factors in the AKP's spatial politics, at least in its early period. Nevertheless, especially in the last three years, the party's stance has been remarkably altered. The factors which were prevalent during the party's first years in the office became of secondary importance as aesthetics of grandeur and national pride started to manifest themselves in the government's recent actions and rhetoric which to a large extent reminded the Kemalist-nationalist spatial practices. However, studying neoliberalism and the modernist-nationalist discourse in terms of their effect on the party's politics are not sufficient to understand the success of the AKP hegemony despite the fact that these two attitudes may very well be taken as the two cornerstones of the party's spatial politics.

At this point, *Kanal Istanbul* which is more commonly known as the 'crazy project' is preferred to be the departure point of this study since the project exemplifies the discursive and aesthetic features as well as the inherent contradictions present within the AKP hegemony. The whole process of the presentation of *Kanal Istanbul* can be considered to be a marketing success on the part of the political authority and a state of delirium on the part of the public. During the first months of the campaigns of 2011 general elections, an aura of suspense was created around the project whose content was going to be announced by the the Prime Minister himself. Names who can be defined as the 'spin-doctors' of the incumbent government, instigated the anxiety by guessing the content of the project before its official declaration with the aim of 'showing off' their prestige and vast information networks emanated from the capacity to be the 'inside-man' in the decision-making circles. The presentation, on the other hand, was a political spectacle par excellence. The huge conference hall, the digital animation of the project, the performance of the Prime Minister Erdoğan, the cheering crowd were formative of the spectacular atmosphere in the event. In the aftermath of the presentation, the frantic state continued especially in the business sector. Entrepreneurs with close links to the government conspicuously excessively invested, both financially and rhetorically, on this project which lacked the preliminary surveys concerning the issues such as financial resources, feasibility study, or site investigation.

However, it was not only the supporters who contributed to the popularity of the topic, but also those who opposed *Kanal Istanbul* had a considerable role in the project's 'topicality'. A part of the opposition dismissed the project completely while some put in a claim for *Kanal Istanbul* originally as their idea. Various opinion leaders did not hold a defiant stand against the AKP and its project but tried to convince the government to pursue a more 'down-to earth' agenda such as solving the Kurdish issue or the topic of EU accession. Nevertheless, the most intriguing comments came from those who announced their support to the project regardless of the project's possible advantages in the case of its realization. According to this approach, the project was a sign of the Prime Minister Erdoğan's political genius and his capability to appeal the masses by incorporating them with his own 'dreams'. One of the basic assumptions of this study was that this sort of interpretation points to a new political paradigm in which promise in its classical sense loses its currency, and a new relationship between the political elite and the voters is introduced. In the old formula, the promise employs a desire mechanism with the postponement of satisfaction until its realization whereas the in the paradigm of 'end of promise' – token by Jacques Ranciere – it is now the promise itself that is enjoyed by the masses regardless of its 'doability' or

'practicalness'.

The major concern of this study was to investigate the ways in which the AKP constitutes and maintains its hegemony through spatial practices and regulations of everyday life. To be more precise, discourses concerning more specific topics such as architecture and construction, as well as space in general, were put under scrutiny in this thesis. Accordingly, the discussion was carried out mostly on the virtual plane rather than referring to the 'tactile' aspect of space. Neoliberalism was treated as one of the pillars of the party's hegemonic position. In this line of thinking, it would not be wrong to argue that the 'crazy project' bears several characteristics of neoliberalism which points to a certain social, political, and cultural matrix as well as a set of economic precepts. In the neoliberal setting, the politics is 'hollowed out'. More accurately, political realm is deprived of politics while politics is turned into a spectacle, an 'aesthetized' experience which ignores class conflicts and antagonisms by de-contextualizing politics from social 'reality' – or the reality of social relations. The neoliberalization of the city with urban transformation projects goes hand in hand with the neoliberalization of political arena with the trivialization of politics. Yet, we also see that the dominant features of the former hegemony do not easily go away as the AKP's rhetoric has become more and more in tune with the Kemalist/nationalist discourse in the recent years. Kanal Istanbul is a perfect example of such tendency since important tenets of neoliberalism, such as effectiveness and feasibility, seem to be replaced by a crude display of national power and aesthetics of grandeur. Still, looking merely at these two components prevalent in the party's discourse falls short of explaining how the AKP produces and reproduces its hegemony. Something, that is quite crucial for the well-functioning of the hegemony, eludes this analysis as well as all kinds of analyses. Therefore, this thesis ventured on an arduous wager of giving account of 'bits of the real' of the AKP hegemony by employing the concept of enjoyment (*jouissance*).

Herein, Lacanian psychoanalysis became one of the basic guidance of this research for several reasons. Because the social psyche has lately been in an excessive state, as we see most clearly in the case of *Kanal Istanbul*, psychoanalysis appeared as the suitable approach to understand the dynamics of this situation. Moreover, the Lacanian conceptualization offers a productive ground to understand the process of subject-formation with respect to virtuality and spatiality. According to the Lacanian framework, subject is formed through the mechanisms of identification and (mis-)recognition which confuse the boundaries set by the 'humanist' mindset. At this juncture, the concept of 'interpassivity', which can roughly be described as subjects' way of dealing with enjoyment, gains a critical importance because

clearly defined boundaries between the one and the other, between subject and object start to be blurred when *jouissance* comes into the picture. Apart from that, Lacan and several Lacanian intellectuals write abundantly on late capitalism which is extremely pertinent to our case. Taking into account the transgressive character of late capitalism, as argued by Slavoj Zizek, Yannis Stavrakakis, and several others, was quite helpful in grasping the AKP's spatial politics-discourse.

Cihan Tuğal's "Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism," was another basic source that drew the framework of this study. Since Tuğal gives a detailed account of how the AKP constitutes its hegemony through spatial regulations and daily life practices in his book, this thesis extensively consulted to this work. In Tuğal's perspective, the AKP experience is very much related to the process of neoliberalization and the spread of capitalist relations into the general population. By conducting an ethnographic study in one of the bastions of political-Islamic movement, Sultanbeyli, Tuğal clearly illustrates the ways in which contentious tendencies are absorbed by the hegemonic position while this absorption brings about a change to the content and structure of the hegemony. Nevertheless, this thesis also strived to deal with an aspect underemphasized – not completely overlooked – in Tuğal's book. This is the affective aspect, the unsymbolizable and ineffable dimension – which was translated into the terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis, as the 'Real' and *jouissance*.

In the first chapter of this research, neoliberalism was put under investigation with the intention of grasping its part in the AKP hegemony. A brief historical account of the institutionalization of neoliberalism was given so as to have a better understanding of the background against which certain spatial political practices and urban policies became operative. The story of Istanbul with reference to its 'promotion' to the status of global city was accompanied by the structural transformation of political, social, cultural and economic realms at the national level. Also, the emergence and the dissolution of the 'organic crisis' – a Gramcian term employed by Tuğal – constituted a subtext throughout the chapter which overlapped the neoliberalization process in the last three decades of Turkey. In the first part of the chapter, the early stage of neoliberalism in the 1980s was stressed. This era witnessed the implementation of neoliberal policies by the Motherland Party (ANAP) under the leadership of Turgut Özal on the national scope while Bedrettin Dalan – the then major of Istanbul and a member of ANAP – carried them out in the context of Istanbul. During Dalan's term in the office, municipalities were equipped with vast powers to execute radical urban transformations which re-arranged the class relations within the city. As Istanbul was organized in accordance with the requirements of capital, the city started to be conceived of

as a commodity and a 'show case' to pleasure those who can afford.

The second part of the chapter, the 1990s was under focus. In the first years of the 1990s, ANAP started to lose power and after the unexpected death of Özal, the one-party government was replaced by a coalition government. Successive government was also going to be formed by coalition for the next ten years, up until the AKP's electoral triumph in 2002. In its broad contours, the 1990s was a period imbued with economic crisis, political instability and uncertainty. On the one hand, the macroeconomic numbers were going worse each day together with the painful decrease in people's purchasing power. On the other hand, the political elite was paying the most attention to the threats that it defined, namely the Kurdish movement and the political-Islam. This situation caused an organic crisis in which a mutual distrust between the state and the civil society reigns. The rise of the political-Islam and its representative party, the Welfare Party (RP) in that era might be construed as a reaction against this course of events. Istanbul was at the center of the RP's attention inasmuch as the city was regarded the seat of the Ottoman heritage and its symbolic power. After coming to the office, the party embraced a belligerent rhetoric by mentioning the *second conquest* by cleansing the degenerate elements from the old imperial capital, Istanbul. Although the Welfare Party, to a large extent, was able to implement a radical populism favoring disadvantageous group in the expense of the welfare of upper classes, it was still bound with the prevailing economic rules. Furthermore, the defiant attitude of the party was used as an excuse to a 'post-modern' military intervention which ousted the coalition government formed by the Islamists and the center-right party, DYP.

The last part of this chapter focused on the AKP's coming to power and constitution of its hegemony in the neoliberal context. After the removal of the RP, another coalition government was formed, and ruled the country until the economic crisis in 2001. In the general elections held after the crisis, the AKP was able to form the new government without any partners by collecting more than the thirty percent of the votes. According to several scholars, the key factor to the party's success was to form a pro-EU, pro-Western, inter-class coalition. Most roughly, the AKP constituted close links with the business circles by virtue of its pro-market stance while the party also invested on the everyday life through spatial regulations in order to retain its hegemonic hold on the masses' consent. The belligerent tone that was inherited by the RP was dropped by the AKP as the discourse of 'service' [*icraat*] became central in the party's rhetoric. This discursive shift also enabled the AKP to present itself a 'non-ideological' party whose only motive is allegedly 'to serve the people'. While TOKİ and private construction companies with close links to the government started to

colonize various regions of the city, this was rendered as a part of the service people without considering the winners and losers of this process. In this setting, it is possible to talk about 'the hollowing out of politics' regarding the AKP's political discourse where politics itself is suspended. The fantasy of Saudi Arabia is a perfect expression of this attitude as an imagined land bare of political conflicts and social antagonisms. In addition to that, a new type of populism, namely the neoliberal populism, was put in action by the party. According to this version of populism, fiscal discipline and macroeconomic balance has primary importance, and because of that political promise in the conventional sense, which has a crucial role in the Keynesian eras throughout the 1960s and 1970s, loses its currency. One of the AKP's major achievements was to implement this kind of populism while at the same time retaining its popular support.

This brings us to the next chapter inasmuch as neoliberalism does not suffice to explain the whole AKP experience. Here, aside from the AKP's neoliberal feature, the early republican legacy and its effect on the party's discourse were scrutinized. This chapter is constructed by two parts. At the outset, the Kemalist hegemony, especially prevalent in the first decades of the republic, was analyzed with respect to its spatial practices, regulations and rhetoric. In a nutshell, this period was marked by a set of pedagogical spatial practices exerted by the political elite in order to create modern Turkish citizens. A major aspiration of the early republican ruling class was to craft a modern country along with universal values. Add to that, the country was in dire straits since it newly came out of the war. Modern Movement appeared to be the perfect option for the Kemalist project due to this architectural movement's emphasis on functionality and economism. In this context, architects came to be salient figures allegedly endowed with artistic skills and technical knowledge at the same time. They were often regarded as the pedagogical figures that were capable of framing the normative life for the 'new men'. Nevertheless, the early republican architectural aesthetic was not solely about dull pedagogy but it also comprised some exceptional examples that bear character and democratic potentiality.

When we come to the AKP case, it is possible to see vestiges of continuity as well as of rupture and discontinuity. As the AKP started to show more and more developmentalist and nationalist tendencies in its spatial practices, the party's rhetoric started to resonate with that of the early republican hegemonic discourse. The cases of the 'crazy island' and the decoration of trade centers with Turkish flags may be counted as the two examples of continuity with the early republican project of displaying the national identity in public spaces. But it is also important to take into account that the AKP came to power in the context

of late capitalism. In that respect, both the political economy and the hegemonic discourse regarding the notions of architecture and construction demonstrate significant differences from those of the early republican era. At this point, we come across with the figure of contractor [*müteahhit*] most perfectly epitomized by Ali Ağaoğlu in the context of contemporary Turkey. In contrast to the pedagogical figure of the architect, Ali Ağaoğlu can be said to occupy an exceptional position and performs an obscenely 'enjoying character' due to his expensive car collection and supermodel girlfriends. Yet, on the other hand, this lofty life-style does not prevent Ağaoğlu to present himself a 'man of the people' by putting on a populist rhetoric. Overall, Ağaoğlu appears to be an emblematic figure not only of the contractors, but also of the hegemonic discourse in Turkey with respect to his various similarities with the Prime Minister Erdoğan.

The last chapter of this thesis was dedicated to the role of enjoyment – that which exceeds the symbolic order – in the hegemony of the AKP. In the first two parts of the chapter, Lacanian psychoanalysis' conceptualizations of subjectivity, space, transgression and enjoyment were stressed. In addition to that, the rhetoric of 'make way for Turkey' was dealt with in relation to its all-pervasiveness during the reign of the AKP. Regarding this case, the enjoyment derived from the fantasy of 'progressing' through the transgression of the bureaucratic and legal restrictions and limitations was contemplated. The gesture of abjection appeared as another dynamic generating enjoyment. Here, the political power vindicates itself by 'defecating' the unwanted elements from its body, and employs a certain kind of enjoyment emanated from the act of defecation.

The final part of the chapter focused on the role of 'interpassivity' in seeing the whole case of *Kanal Istanbul* under a new light. By consulting the works of Slavoj Zizek, interpassivity, as a way of dealing with the traumatic effect of enjoyment, was conceptualized as a register that blurs the boundaries between the subject and the object. Moreover, the notion of fetishism was elaborated in relation to the case of interpassivity throughout our discussion. At this juncture, the statement of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the main opposition party, that 'there was no human' in *Kanal Istanbul*, was put under consideration. Since the 'humanist' formulation 'human beings' verses 'things' loses its validity in the paradigm of fetish, Kılıçdaroğlu's argument seems to miss the point. Hence, questions such as 'who enjoys what' or 'what sort of enjoyment' were raised. The Prime Minister's persistent reference to the historical continuity from the Ottoman rulers to the present day, and the type of examples with regard to mankind's relation with geography imply a certain kind of enjoyment which negates castration. The contemporary political power claims to possess

such 'full' enjoyment by displaying its power in two ways: by playing with the psychical environment not out of necessity, but pleasure; and by offering a harmonious wholeness and oneness with the glorious past. Subjects' interaction with this allegedly 'full' enjoyment, on the other hand, has a perverse character. Because subject-positions in this matrix can be possible only insofar as they find 'meaningful' *locuses* in the metaphysical 'wholeness' and 'oneness', a perverse relationship with the Other's enjoyment takes stage as subjects enjoy by becoming the tool of the Other, the decoration in the Other's fantasy.

At this point, it would be suitable to make some clarifications. First of all, the fetish for the state is to be added in the equation in order to make sense of the issue of crazy project which is not merely about neoliberalism but also very much linked to the unconscious attachments to national identity and to the state as the rightful proxy of national enjoyment. However, one should also consider that the notion of state is never as obscene as that of today in Turkey. Notwithstanding its former attitude towards its inherent limit and deficiency, the state does not conceal its lack and inconsistency from the eyes of the public. On the contrary, contemporary political discourse in Turkey traverses its inner limit by enjoying it overtly and obscenely. Although we are here talking about a conservative political movement, the fact that it embraces neoliberal values immerses it into the aesthetic level of late capitalism. As mentioned earlier, in the era of late capitalism, the command to 'enjoy' becomes a mandate coming from the Other. Moreover, the phenomenon of Kanal Istanbul as an expression of commodity fetishism ought to be ruminated in conjunction with the fetish for the state. It is deeply related to the idea of the 'I' as a part of Turkey which is now prospering and finally catching up with the West. Or to put in yet another, and perhaps a more accurate way, the whole issue is about me clinging to and trying to get a piece from the Other's phallic enjoyment that is put in circulation by the political hegemony. In this setting, Istanbul, as the old Imperial capital, becomes a site of collective imaginary, or better a locus of social fantasy, upon which the Other commands people's enjoyment to be invested.

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