"They Want to Control Everything": Discourse and Lifestyle in Contemporary Turkey

By
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Abstract

Based upon anthropological fieldwork and contemporary literature as well as an analysis of media reports and statements by government officials such as current president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, this thesis explores the interrelations between political discourses, lifestyle, and identity construction in contemporary Turkey. In the thesis, it is depicted how certain lifestyle choices are legally limited or (drawing on moral, religious, and nationalist discourses) labeled as 'bad' or 'wrong' by the current AKP government and certain parts of society. The informants interviewed for this thesis, mostly well-educated, young Turkish urbanites, feel like these restrictions of lifestyle choices limit their possibilities to freely construct and express their identities, which leads to feelings of resentment, unhappiness, and discomfort. By analyzing political developments in the 20th and 21st century, it is furthermore illustrated that authoritarianism has been a substantial part of the Turkish state project ever since the founding of the Turkish Republic. The current political events and conflicts about lifestyle and identity construction, it is argued, have to be understood in this context rather than depicting them as based upon a strict dividing line between 'secular' and 'religious' parts of society, as it is often depicted in Western media.

Keywords: lifestyle, identity, critical discourse analysis, Kemalism, secularism, political Islam
Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank Sara Johnsdotter, who supervised this thesis project during its final months, for all her encouragement, advice, and support in stressful times. I am also grateful to Gabriella Körling for being my supervisor in the early stage of my research. Her advice has been of great help before, during, and after my fieldwork. I would furthermore like to thank all my teachers and classmates at the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology for their comments and inspiring discussions inside and outside the class room, with special thanks to Rosalie Post and Caitlin McEvoy for their helpful comments and support.

I am grateful to the research node The Good City for covering the costs for my trip to Istanbul, and even more so for all the other opportunities it provided me with over the last two years.

Last but not least, I am very thankful to my friends and informants in Antalya and Istanbul, whose willingness to share their experiences with me made this thesis possible. Special thanks go to my flatmate in Antalya for all his help, and for making me laugh at least once a day.
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<tr>
<td>AKP</td>
<td>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</td>
<td>Justice and Development Party</td>
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<td>CHP</td>
<td>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</td>
<td>Republican People's Party</td>
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<td>HDP</td>
<td>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</td>
<td>Peoples' Democratic Party</td>
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1. Introduction: the 2013 Gezi Park protests

This is about our freedom. About whether we are allowed to drink [alcohol], about how many children my wife is supposed to have, about who is allowed to kiss whom and where — they meddle in everything! The AKP intrudes our private life! ... The prime minister tells my wife how many children she should have. Which kind of bread we should eat. Soon they will tell us which music we're allowed to listen to ... They don't leave us any space to breathe. (Erdal, as quoted by Guttstadt 2014: 205ff.)

In late May 2013 what would become known as the 'Gezi Park protests' began as an attempt to stop the unlawful demolition of a small park in the heart of Istanbul's Taksim area. Soon, the small local environmental protest turned into huge nationwide protests against the prime minister at that time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and his Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / AKP). Parks were 'occupied' and more than a hundred thousand people gathered in Istanbul's Taksim Square. The protests spread through all major Turkish cities including Ankara, Izmir, Eskişehir and Antalya. One of the recurrent slogans that could be heard and read during the rallies was "The park is not the issue, you still haven't got it?" (Moudouros 2014: 185). What then was the issue? As sociologist Coşkun Taştan (2013: 33) reports in his article "The Gezi Park Protests in Turkey: A Qualitative Field Research", the majority of the protesters cited "restrictions on liberties, government interference in their daily lives, and the Prime Minister's authoritarian rule as their reasons for joining the protest". Those restrictions included the government's attempts to reduce alcohol consumption in Turkey, gender inequality, the attempt to outlaw abortions, and bans and censorship on social media such as YouTube and Twitter. As Taştan (ibid.) continues, most protesters expressed that the "government – and Prime Minister Erdogan [sic] in particular – represents a threat to their liberties that they tend to associate with identity and belonging" — which is also exemplified by the quote in the beginning of this chapter.

A few days into the protests, after some violent clashes, the police withdrew and left Taksim Square completely at the hands of the protesters. A camp emerged, and at every time of the day tens of thousands of people were present at Taksim Square. While there were the occasional minor altercations between some of the protesters, most participants describe the atmosphere at Taksim Square at this time as almost utopian (see Guttstadt 2013; Yücel 2014).

There were reading circles, workshops on sexism, choir concerts, and discussion forums. The

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1 Tayfun Guttstadt is a Turkish-German author who holds a degree in Islam Sciences and published a book on the Gezi Park protests, in which he printed many of the interviews he conducted for the book in full length. All quotes from Guttstadt 2014 as well as Yücel 2014 used in this thesis are my own translations from German.

2 The government did not react kindly to the protest; the dream of the "Gezi commune" (Yücel 2014: 35) was violently ended by the police after only a few days. Eleven people were killed in different cities and, according to the Turkish Medical Association, 8163 were injured due to tear gas, plastic bullets, water throwers, and the use of batons.
protesters were far from being a homogeneous group; secular and religious Turks, Kurds, Alevi, younger and older people, left-wing students as well as bankers joined. One of the people I interviewed during my fieldwork, Lilly, summarized what the Gezi Park protests meant to her as follows:

In Turkey, it is like you don't have your own identity. You have so many identities. There is Lilly the family girl, Lilly at work, Lilly for the neighbors, this Lilly, that Lilly. In Gezi, it was the first time that I felt like I could be myself. I think the word is 'acceptance'. Normally, in Turkey, there is no tolerance and no acceptance of other people. In Gezi, you could just be who you want to be and everybody accepted it.

So to Lilly, the Gezi Park protests constituted a place of refuge, a place where nobody was trying to tell her what to do or who to be. While the initial idea for my fieldwork was to do research on events that happened around Gezi, and ways of protest that emerged from Gezi into everyday life, my research focus changed quite quickly after conducting my first interviews. Unlike I had anticipated, the people I spoke to were not so eager to speak about the protests as such. Most of them instead wanted to speak about their current situation, the feeling of 'not being accepted' which Lilly described; the feeling that made them come to Gezi Park in the first place. Consequently, I decided to focus my research more on the circumstances that made people feel like they could not be themselves. According to Sırrı Süreyya Önder, the protest were not so much directed at the AKP as such, but about "opening spaces for democratic politics" (Yücel 2014: 67), and against the government's "mentality of domination that says: 'I decide what is being done'" (Yücel 2014: 67). This tension between parts of the population and the government is often depicted by Western media as one between 'secularists' and a party that tries to introduce religion into its politics. My informants, however, rarely dwelt on words or concepts such as "religious", "Islamist", or "secular". Instead, they spoke about restrictions in everyday life, and about feelings of social pressure, control, and discomfort, deriving from a feeling of being morally judged for their choices. In other words, to them it was not about religion, it was about people trying to influence how they live their lives. As Anthony Giddens (1991: 81) points out, lifestyle choices are a crucial part of the construction of a self-narrative or identity.

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3 For more details on the protests' wide demographic see e.g. Gürcan and Peke's 2015 article "A class analytic approach to the Gezi Park events: Challenging the 'middle class' myth". Further, Deniz Yücel's (2014) in his book Taksim ist Überall. Die Gezi-Bewegung und die Zukunft der Türkei and Guttstadt (2014) in his previously referenced book provide interviews with informants of different ethnic, social, and political backgrounds.

4 Lilly is a woman in her late twenties. Originally from a town in western Turkey, she moved to Istanbul a couple of years ago, where she now works in the local branch of a global player in the food industry. She holds university degrees in linguistics and film studies. She will be quoted extensively throughout this thesis.

5 Note: only around half of my informants actually took part in the protests.

6 Önder was a member of parliament for the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP) and among the first protesters in Gezi Park.

7 Why I have chosen to here follow Giddens' use the term construction rather than formation will be
the Gezi Park protesters interviewed by Taştan (2013), my informants spoke about how lifestyle restrictions for them led to feelings of not belonging, and having their identities questioned. Consequently, this thesis seeks to investigate the following questions: Which practical restrictions and discourses do the informants attribute these negative feelings to? How is interferences in lifestyle choices legitimated and exercised? And how do people react to it?

The relevance of these questions has been shown by the political and social developments in Turkey since the fieldwork for this thesis has been conducted in early 2014. In December 2014, Anthropologist Jenny White asked the rhetorical question "[Is] Turkey at a tipping point". In the article, she describes the deep division of Turkish society, a fact that became even more evident after the general elections in June 2015, when no new government was formed, because none of the four parties in parliament could agree to form a coalition. What followed were weeks of highly polarizing and divisive campaigning, including accusations of jeopardizing Turkey's future and security against opposition parties, especially with regards to the Ankara bombing in October. The subsequent November 2015 snap-elections saw the AKP regaining the sole majority.

Drawing on and further developing the concept of Muslim nationalism introduced by White in her book Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks (2013), this thesis seeks to illustrate that social division and polarization are indeed a vital part of the AKP's success. Furthermore, it will be explained how this relates not only to political discourse, but also to social practice. In a discourse-analytical approach, it will be shown that the AKP bases part of its politics in moral values and expectations of certain lifestyles. Consequently, as will be illustrated by ethnographic examples, deviating lifestyles are antagonized via legal and discursive means. This results in social pressure and stigmatization, which leads to feelings of discomfort and insecurity for my informants. In other words, the aim of this thesis is to link political discourses to the real life experiences of the people I interviewed, and to analyze that connection.

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8 Jenny White is an associate professor at the Department of Anthropology at Boston University. She has conducted research in Turkey since 1975 and authored books such as Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics (2002) and Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks (2013). She has further published several articles and book chapters on Turkey.

9 On October 10th, 2015, 102 people were killed at a peace rally organized by trade unions and the opposition party HDP, which will be further introduced in the chapter on the Kurdish question. After the bombing, AKP government officials blamed the HDP for provoking the attack in order to gain sympathy votes in the November snap-elections.
Outline

In the next chapter, the methodological background of this thesis will be addressed. Brief information about the field sites will be provided, and practical, methodological, and ethical considerations before, during, and after fieldwork will be discussed. Additionally, a short overview of the theoretical background of the main argument of will be given. Chapter three will provide historical background information that is crucial to the understanding the current situation in Turkey. Here, the currently dominating political currents in Turkey will be theoretically analyzed drawing on anthropological works on secularism and nationalism in the Turkish context. One of them is Kemalism, the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic, the other is Muslim nationalism as exemplified by the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP). An introduction to Kemalism will be followed by a short overview on the rise of the AKP and an analysis of its ideological background. Thereafter, the popular depiction of Turkey as a country torn between secularists and Islamists will be critically investigated.

Chapter four will then link these theories and ideologies to political and moral discourses and practices in everyday life in Turkey as experienced by my informants. Ethnographic examples will be provided for my informants' perception of a mentality that says "I know what is best for you", which will then be linked to the discourses introduced in the previous chapter. The following chapters deal with different topics brought up by my informants as examples of how the government is limiting their lifestyle choices. In the fifth chapter, discourses and legal changes regarding the consumption of alcohol will be described and analyzed. It will be shown that alcohol consumption in Turkey can be an ideologically loaded act highly relevant to identity construction. Chapter six deals with how my informants perceive government efforts to limit access to social media in the context of the government's attempt to silence criticism. In chapter seven, discourses around the so called 'Kurdish question' and their influence on my informants' lives will briefly be addressed, and it will be illustrated that these discourses are dynamic and can change rapidly. In the final ethnographic chapter, chapter eight, discourses on sexuality and gender-relations will be presented and analyzed regarding religion and nationalism and social stigmatization, before chapter nine offers concluding thoughts.
2. Methodology and theoretical background

In the first part of this chapter, methodological and ethical issues before, during, and after the fieldwork will be discussed. The second part of the chapter will briefly introduce the theoretical framework for the main argument.

This thesis is based on a total of fourteen weeks of ethnographic fieldwork, nine of them in Antalya and five in Istanbul. The fieldwork took place between January and March of 2014 and in January 2015. With a metropolitan area that includes more than a million people, Antalya is the largest Turkish city on the Mediterranean coast. When trying to find a suitable field for my masters thesis research, I was hesitant about choosing Turkey as my fieldwork destination. For one, I did not speak the language, and most anthropologists would agree that knowing or being able to learn the local language is one of the more important criteria when choosing a fieldwork destination (see Bernard 2011: 259). On the other hand, I had considerable background knowledge about Turkish culture, history, and politics from previous travels there, and I also knew people who promised that they would help me with translating and getting in touch with English-speaking informants. As Bernard (2011: 268) recommends, it makes sense to choose a field site that promises an easy access to data, which in case of the anthropologist means access to informants. Bernard further suggests that one should make use of personal contacts wherever possible (ibid.), and I decided to take that advice. This was the reason why I decided to conduct my fieldwork in Antalya rather than the perhaps more obvious Istanbul — a decision I am happy with, as I have since realized that people with little familiarity with Turkey often assume that the Gezi Park protests and the phenomena described in this thesis were and are spatially limited to Istanbul. This is not the case, and with this thesis I partly hope to contribute to the representation of voices from outside of Istanbul.

During my fieldwork in Antalya I lived in a shared apartment, which I found through social media. While I was nervous about my living situation and my future flatmate Erhan (a freelancing translator and author in his forties, originally from Istanbul) before going to the field, living with him actually turned out to be a piece of good fortune for my research. Not only was Erhan a professional translator (he translated several news articles, videos, and social media postings for me), he was also a very social-minded person with countless friends. He hosted dinner parties in our house, took me to all sorts of meetings and parties at his friends' houses, and

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10 In 2013, I had spent a total of six weeks in Turkey, during which I visited Istanbul and Antalya and spent several weeks long-distance hiking 350km through the Taurus mountains. In this time, I met and talked to people from different parts of society, from political activists and retired university professors in Istanbul to old goat herders in the Taurus mountains. As the Gezi Park protests erupted only days after I left Turkey in May 2013, I kept following the developments in Turkish politics after returning home.

11 The names of all my informants have been changed for this thesis. Some pseudonyms where chosen by the informants, others I assigned randomly.
organized barbecues in the park and gaming nights; all of these events proved to be great opportunities for participant observation and informal interviews, and brought me in contact with dozens of English-speaking Turks. As Ulf Hannerz (2003: 213) phrases it, "ethnography is an art of the possible", and having Erhan as a contact created great possibilities for me. My second important contact in Antalya was Aylin. Originally from Izmir, she moved to Antalya to study at the university to become an English teacher. I had met Aylin the year before during my travels, and stayed in contact with her through Facebook since. Apart from helping me greatly with practicalities during my stay, she also introduced me to some of her friends, who then became informants. The other informants relevant for this thesis will be briefly introduced in the respective chapters they are cited in.

**Interviews and informants**

When gathering my ethnographic material, I mostly relied on participant observation (see Bernard 2011: 256ff.) and informal interviews (see ibid: 156). Additionally, 14 formal semi-structured interviews were conducted (see ibid: 157ff.). Through Erhan, who introduced me to everybody we met together as his "flatmate and friend", it was easy for me to establish a basic rapport with several people. When I told people about both my previous travels to Turkey and my personal and professional interest in Turkish politics and society, they usually started seeing me not as a tourist but as a person with a genuine interest in their country and their lives, and were often willing to share their stories with me. I started my formal interviews by asking the informant how they felt about the political situation in Turkey, in reply to which the informant would usually express worry. Except for one informant, who decided to speak about very specific party politics, the informants would then start to talk about how they felt that the government had an influence on their lives, and bring up the Gezi Park protests. From there, I would see where the conversation would take us, and what they wanted to speak about. I always made sure to inquire whether my informants were or had been associated with any political party, which none of them was or had. As for the selection of my informants, it is important to note that they only represent a small part of Turkish society, which limits the variety of the material I gathered. While they came from various backgrounds and parts of Turkey, all of the informants quoted in this thesis have received some form of tertiary education (although not all of them obtained a degree), they all have spent time abroad, they (or their families) have a reasonable to good income, and at the time the interviews were conducted they all lived in major cities. Thus, while this thesis will suggest that they are subjected to attacks on their values, lifestyles, and in s
ome cases their physical well-being, in other ways, they are very privileged. In this sense, the present study can partly be seen as a result of studying "sideways", as Ulf Hannerz (2006: 23ff.) calls it, as the interviews were conducted by an international masters student with mostly internationally-minded university students and graduates.

**CouchSurfing as ethnography**

While a number of my informants in Antalya were found through my initial contacts Aylin and Erhan, I also relied on a social media platform called CouchSurfing to find informants. The main idea of CouchSurfing is that, through the CouchSurfing website, people can offer to host travelers in their house for free. It further allows users to organize open events like pub crawls, hikes or quiz nights, and has several discussion forums / groups. I had used CouchSurfing for traveling before in several countries including Turkey, so I decided to use it to find people to interview who were not friends of my main contacts Erhan and Aylin, in order to broaden the range of informants. To do so, I posted a request in the local Antalya group in which I asked people to meet with me and "talk about Turkish politics" for my masters thesis project. Several people replied, and in the end I interviewed five different people in Antalya that I had met through CouchSurfing.

Later in my fieldwork, the opportunity to apply for a travel grant from the research node *The Good City - Urbanism and Social Change* arose. I decided to apply for it and use the money to take a short-trip from Antalya to Istanbul, in order to further broaden the range of my informants, and to be able to conduct participant observation at the International Women's Day protests. I further decided to make more use of CouchSurfing in Istanbul; out of practical reasons (my grant only covered the costs for accommodation for five nights), but even more so out of methodological considerations, as will be explained below. During my CouchSurfing time in Istanbul, I stayed in three different houses — with Lilly, with Orhan, and with Başar and Selin, a married couple. Two additional interviews were conducted with Meltem and Bilgül, whom I had also contacted through the website and who, despite the fact that they could not host me at the time, expressed interest in my studies.

As Cici Siyue Liu (2012) points out in her "CouchSurfing Ethnography", "CouchSurfers are motivated by a desire to make local connections, experience different cultures, and learn from the people and ideas they encounter through traveling", and Rosen et al. (2012: 990 ff.) maintain that the relationship between a couchsurfer and his or her host is usually one of trust and belonging. Consequently, CouchSurfing proved to be useful in order to find informants within my limited time frame in Istanbul — being able to share my own CouchSurfing
experiences with my informants served as a great way to easily build rapport, especially as they already expected to create a relationship of trust with me due to our roles as couchsurfer and host. Furthermore, my informants' participation in CouchSurfing is part of the very lifestyles I wanted to investigate. Erhan, for instance, had hosted more than 150 people over the last years, some of them for as long as several weeks. To him, opening his house to strangers, talking to them, having a drink with them, was a central part of his identity, as he told me.

At the same time, I made sure to make it explicitly clear to the hosts / informants that I was there on fieldwork, and made certain that they were aware and okay with me collecting data and using our conversations for this thesis. Bernard (2011: 256) reminds us that participant observation is about "getting close to people, making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives", and about "experiencing the lives of the people you are studying as much as you can" (ibid: 258). Being invited to my informants' homes and being around them all day, albeit only for a night or two, proved to be a valuable experience, and a good way to "get close" and be able to conduct intensive participant observation. On the other hand, using CouchSurfing as a means of ethnography also turned out to be difficult (as usually all ethnography does), as it requires a high level self-reflexivity and reminding oneself that one is in the field as a researcher. In addition to the already complicated relationship between the anthropologist and his or her informants, CouchSurfing can create extra dependencies, as the host is offering a free service to the traveller. Thus, it is important to stay aware and open about your intentions and the purpose of the stay, and to keep reflecting upon your roles as both anthropologist and CouchSurfer. While people may open their houses, they might still practice some form of self-censorship, and it might be tempting to lose some of the necessary critical distance when you are relying on a person to let you stay in their home, evenmore so if they do that in a very welcoming and hospitable way.

Other than the opportunity to quickly build rapport, CouchSurfing also created opportunities that might not have opened up for me practically otherwise, for example when I was able to participate in a protest held on a closed campus due to the help my CouchSurfing host Orhan. Orhan spontaneously suggested joining the protest while we were hanging out at his apartment. In a city as large as Istanbul, with its long distances and confusing public transport system, it would not have been possible for me to take this opportunity had I not already been staying with him. Furthermore, Orhan was able introduce me to his friends as "my couchsurfer Lars", immediately signaling to them that I was trustworthy enough to lend me one of their campus access card, which allowed me to enter the university premises.
**Limitations**

Charlotte Davies (2008: 217) points out that "ethnographic knowledge is in part a product of the social situation of ethnographers". All anthropological research is limited by the language, identity, and positionality of the researcher. The factor that was most limiting to my fieldwork was clearly the language barrier. As I do only speak a few phrases of Turkish and did not have the means to afford an interpreter (which would have introduced new methodological considerations in its own right), my choice of informants was limited to people who had sufficient command of English to feel comfortable enough to be interviewed by me and express themselves about complicated and highly loaded topics. This limitation has heavily influenced the complexion of this thesis, which could accordingly be described as a study of formally highly-educated, internationally-minded mostly young urbanites. Further, my lack of knowledge in the local language kept me from completely submerging in the field, as I was often not able to have even small conversations with people I met in the streets or shop owners, and I had to rely on Aylin and Ferhan for translation whenever I saw things that I thought might prove valuable for my research, such as graffiti or political banners. Furthermore, I was not able to validate quotes from government officials who were cited in English-speaking Turkish newspapers such as *Today's Zaman* or *Hürriyet Daily News* myself. Here, my contacts were a great help, as they checked for me whether quotes were correctly translated and not taken out of context.

Whereas my language was definitely a limiting factor in my fieldwork, my ethnicity proved to be more of an asset. Germany and Turkey maintain an active and close relationship, and roughly three million people of Turkish descent live in Germany, where many Turks have relatives.12 Especially in Antalya I was sometimes able to have a chat with somebody in German rather than English. And in Istanbul, once an elderly man walked up to me when he overheard me speaking German to a street-vendor, shook my hand and said in German: "Welcome to Turkey, welcome to my country. Germany has always been good to me, and I hope that Turkey will be good to you, too", before turning around and leaving me standing there, puzzled. Furthermore, several of my informants had visited Germany before or where planning to do so, and my being German may have led to building rapport more easily than it would have built with an American or Swedish person. Since Istanbul and Antalya both have international universities and are highly frequented by tourists, I further did not stand out when I was walking the streets or visiting cafés and bars, at least not in the more central parts of town, and consequently I never had the impression that anybody thought that I was entering spaces in which I did not belong. The only downside to this

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was that sometimes people assumed that I was a tourist and treated me somewhat dismissively as if I was just looking for a cool snapshot or something exotic to tell at home, but whenever I engaged with somebody in deeper conversation, I felt like their perception of me changed.

The second limiting factor was my gender. While on no occasion it stopped me from going where I wanted or speaking to whom I wanted to speak to (I was able to conduct interviews with men and women alike, and my research focus did not require me to enter any predominantly 'female' spaces), in hindsight I felt like, while in the field, my male perspective limited my understanding of how gendered certain aspects of my female informants' lives were. I was overwhelmed by the impressions of my first 'real' fieldwork, and when I tried to make sense of the government interventions in everyday lives that I was told about, I automatically looked at them from a male perspective. As a result, I took topics like gender segregation or discourses on contraception and abortion as 'just another example' for government intervention in people's lives, instead of seeing them in their specific gendered context. As Bernard points out, research is messy, and it only gets cleaned up during the writing process (Bernard 2011: 54) — during the cleaning up process and through more familiarity with the literature, I became more aware of my male perspective and realized that here, deeper inquiry and follow-up interviews would have been desirable.

**Participant observers, observing participants and ethical considerations**

Participant observation in Antalya was conducted on a daily level by accompanying my informants, mostly Aylin and Erhan, in their daily activities. Especially with Erhan, who worked from home as a translator for novels, I spent a lot of time 'hanging out', going to the local market, and taking walks together. I further accompanied Aylin to many of the places she would regularly visit to meet with people or work at, like tea gardens, bars and cafés. Aside from the above-mentioned social occasions that Erhan helped me participate in, such as barbecues and dinner parties, I further specifically tried to conduct participant observation and interviews at protest rallies. In Antalya, I was able to do so twice. Once I accompanied a protest march about government corruption charges, another time I witnessed an art-form-like five minute noise protest to raise awareness against forced marriage and domestic violence against women. In Istanbul, I was able to conduct participant observation at two massive protests. Together with my informant Başar, I took part in the International Women's Day protest rally, and a few days later I joined the protest-turned funeral march for Berkin Elvan (as will be elaborated on below).
As Bernard specifies, "participant observers can be insiders who observe and record some aspects of life around them (in which case, they're observing participants)" or "outsiders who participate in some aspects of life around them and record what they can (in which case, they're participating observers)" (Bernard 2011: 260, emphasis in the original). This differentiation is interesting to me especially with regard to participant observation in political contexts, where it can carry implications for ethical considerations, as will be discussed below. The role I filled when doing participant observation at the protests in Antalya can be described as that of the participating observer. The first protest I went to, the one held against government corruption, happened during the first weeks of my fieldwork, and I still felt very much like a foreign stranger who was observing everything from the outside. Being without my key informants and translators, I did not understand what most of the banners and signs read or what people were chanting. Feeling like an outsider, instead of becoming a part of the protest I rather joined a group of photo-journalists who were walking next to and in front of the protest march. I only dared to approach and talk to protesters after the march started to dissolve at the final destination, when people were standing around in smaller groups. Even then, my attempts to find people to talk to made me feel clumsy and insecure, as I somehow felt as if I did not belong there, and everybody I talked to initially took me for a tourist. I did not conduct any useful interviews at that protest, but it was still a valuable and memorable experience, as it made me reflect upon my role and limitations as a researcher. On the other hand, the last protest that I conducted participant observation at during my fieldwork was a different experience, as the following notes from a day in March 2014 will illustrate.

I am walking on a six-lane road in Istanbul’s Beşiktaş district. I am surrounded by people. Being taller than everybody here by at least a head, I can see far. Wherever I look, I see people. The few cars that are still on the highway have no chance of driving. They are honking, but not to signal. They are rhythmically honking, as if to support the chants that are going on. The people around me are chanting something in Turkish. I turn to Orhan. ”Orhan, my friend, what are they saying?” ”Katil Tayyip Erdoğan”, Orhan responds — ”Murderer Tayyip Erdoğan!”. We walk on. People appear in the windows of the multistory buildings by the side of the road. I can see men and women, young and old alike. My attention is caught by a woman with a headscarf. She appears to be old, the age of a grandmother. She is banging pots together, like many of the people in the windows. I’ve read about this before, and I know that they’re expressing their support for the march. People wave at them, signaling to come downstairs and join us. Some of them disappear from the windows. I assume they are joining. We walk on. The people chant something new. ”What are they chanting, Orhan?”, I ask. ”They are telling Tayyip to send his son Bilal to buy bread”, Orhan says. Next to me, a woman in her thirties starts crying... We walk on.
The scene described here took place on March 12th, 2014 in Istanbul at the funeral march for Berkin Elvan, a fourteen year old boy who was hit in the head by a tear gas canister fired by police a year before while he was out buying bread for his family during the Gezi Park protests. The funeral march was later attacked by the police with tear gars and plastic bullets, and according to media reports more than 20 people were injured and more than 150 arrested. I accompanied my CouchSurfing host and informant Orhan and some of his friends to the march, and we joined a group of some thirty protesters at their university campus. There, they went from class room to class room to call for a student strike in order to join the march. On the one hour long march to the starting point of the official funeral march, we met up with several other groups, so that by the time we arrived at the starting point, 'our' number already had grown to several thousands. This all happened towards the end of my fieldwork, and by this time I felt much more closely connected to the people around me. As Bernard (2011: 256) phrases it, participant observation "produces the kind of experiential knowledge that lets you talk convincingly, from the gut, about what it feels like to plant a garden in the high Andes or dance all night in a street rave in Seattle" — in this case, the feeling that spread from the people around me to my gut was that of inconsolable grief for the death of a child and fierce anger at the authorities for not investigating into the murder. Seeing the same police that I had four days earlier witnessed tear-gassing peaceful protesters on the International Women's Day protests made me even more angry, and all of a sudden I found myself joining the chant "Wake up, Beşiktaş, because Berkin is never going to wake up again!" directed at the observers in the houses we passed by. I felt satisfaction when I saw some of them join. After a few moments, I stopped and hesitated. What was I doing? What about my fieldwork ethics? "I shouldn't chant that", I thought, "I am here to observe, not to protest! I'm a researcher, some sort of scientist, I'm supposed to be as objective as possible!". At the same time, being overcome by emotion and submerging in the field in this particular way enhanced my understanding of the field, as it made me identify and connect with my informants in a new way. John Law (2004: 69) suggests that the traditional empiricist and positivist answer to questions of objectivity would be "detachment" and "disentanglement from location", but convincingly argues drawing on Donna Haraway that "detachment is never possible" (ibid.), and that what is important instead is to "acknowledge and take responsibility … for our necessary situatedness" (ibid.) in order to reach a certain degree of objectivity. Similarly, Didier Fassin (2008: 341) suggests that because "value judgement is the most commonly shared attitude toward the social world, the anthropologist cannot avoid and

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should not elude the moral position he or she adopts", but instead be careful to limit the influence their value judgment has on their material, for it is "epistemologically but also politically crucial to consider moral reflexivity as part of our research activity, in other words to question the values and judgements that underlie our work" (ibid.). Bernard (2011: 262) points out that total objectivity is a myth, and Philippe Bourgeois (2012 [1992]: 328) states that there are no definite answers to these ethical considerations and that all one can do is reflect upon them and discuss them. I will conclude this discussion with summarizing Howard Becker (1967: 244ff.), who convincingly argues that while all social research is biased in some ways, it is nevertheless important and valid, as long as limitations are being pointed out and discussed.

**Critical discourse analysis**

One main focus of this thesis is the analysis of how discourses shape the social reality of my informants. Where this thesis seeks to analyze discourses, is to be understood in the context of critical discourse analysis, by which I am referring to a broader current within the theory of discourse (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 60). Within this current, discourse is understood as a form of social practice which is constituted by the social world as well as it does constitute the world. Through this dialectical relationship, discourse thus shapes social structures and identities as well as it is representing them (ibid: 61; see also Fairclough 2013: 178). Critical discourse analysis involves the analysis of concrete use of language in social interaction (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 62). It claims that through discursive practices, unequal power relations between social groups are being reproduced through what is described as "ideological effects" (ibid: 63, emphasis in the original), and it focuses on the analysis of the relations between discourse and power, and ideology and identity (Fairclough 2013: 178). While some approaches within critical discourse analysis follow a more traditional Marxist understanding of power as something that is possessed through controlling the means of production, others follow a more Foucauldian view of power as lying in reciprocal power relations (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 63). However, this approach also diverges from Foucault in arguing that through ideological effects, social groups can be subjugated to others (ibid.).

Norman Fairclough developed a three-dimensional model of discourse for his understanding of critical discourse analysis as both theory and method (Fairclough 2013: 178). According to Fairclough (1992: 73), language as a communicative event is three-dimensional: it is textual, it is a discursive practice involving the acts of production and consumption, and it is a social practice (Fairclough 1995a: ix). Thus, when thinking in terms of critical discourse analysis, it is important to linguistically analyze the text (i.e. the words and rhetoric that are
being used), to analyze the discursive practice (i.e. how the context in which producers and consumers apply the text to already existing discourses), and to look into how the discursive practice shapes the broader social practice (i.e. how social practice is being reproduced, challenged, or restructured). To give a very simple example: a politician's statements (text) regarding the 2015 Paris attacks might through discursive practice be linked by both the producer (the politician) and the consumer (the people) to other discourses on migration, views of Europe as 'civilized' and 'enlightened', or racism. This might then lead to a change in the state's and people's behavior towards migrants (social practice).

While I will not apply Fairclough's model par for par in this thesis, his work will serve as a framework to link discourse to social practice and analyze the interrelations between the language used by certain political players, and social realities. Fairclough describes critical discourse analysis as systemically investigating

often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts and (b) broader social and cultural structures, relations and processes … how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power … how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (Fairclough 1995a: 132f.)

Central to Fairclough's understanding of critical discourse analysis is the above-mentioned understanding that discourse is a form of social practice that not only reproduces, but also changes identities and power-relations. Fairclough stresses the importance of analyzing language use, and his approach can thus be described as a text-oriented form of linguistic discourse analysis. At the same time, he argues that an interdisciplinary perspective is needed in order to link the textual analysis to an analysis of social and cultural processes (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 65ff.). Such a two-fold analysis will be provided in this thesis by linking my informants' experiences to discourses that are for example influenced by public statements of influential government officials. Their use of language and discourses will be investigated throughout the ethnographic chapters, in which I use quotes by government officials and media reports as ethnographic material to support my analysis of different discourses.

However, critical discourse analysis is not enough to analyze social practice itself. It can only serve as a tool to understand how social practice is influenced. Other concepts need to be applied when actually analyzing practice. In this thesis, I will use the concept of lifestyle to investigate why certain options of choice are perceived as important by some people, as well as American anthropologist Laura Nader's concept of controlling processes to explain how the government tries to implement limitations of these choices. According to Nader, to analyze control is to analyze how "ideology, hegemony, social and cultural control" work "vertically
through ideas and institutions" (Nader 1997a: 712). She suggests that "control [has] moved from a social to a cultural mode; social control or overt coercion is culturally less acceptable in a democratic society" (Nader 1997a: 712), whereas cultural control is "often invisible" (ibid.) and therefore unconsciously complied to. In this thesis I argue that the control the AKP government attempts to exercise over its citizens is often overt and very visible, and thus consciously perceived by my informants. This awareness leads to feelings of resentment among those who reject the government's demands for certain lifestyles.
"Lifestyle"

"What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone ... and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour."
(Giddens 1991: 70)

When researching the Turkish context, "lifestyle" is a recurrent term. It is used by government officials, journalists, and Turkish scholars alike. Jenny White (2013: 39), for instance, names a "Westernized secular lifestyle" (emphasis added) as a crucial part of Kemalism, when it is first introduced in her study *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks*, whereas anthropologist Christopher Houston (2013: 333) describes the early Kemalist reforms of the 1920s as a "modernization project to govern the visibility of Islamic lifestyle" (emphasis added). Similarly, Turkish anthropologists Ali Murat Yel and Alparslan Nas (2013a: 570) talk about Kemalist aversions against the "Islamic lifestyle" (emphasis added), and then prime minister Erdoğan, while denying that certain laws postulate "an interference in lifestyle", equates lifestyle with "a matter of identity". So clearly, "lifestyle" is acknowledged as an important concept in contemporary Turkey. British sociologist Anthony Giddens defines lifestyle as a set of "routinised practices, the routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieux for encountering others ... Each of the small decisions a person makes every day — what to wear, what to eat, how to conduct himself at work, whom to meet with later in the evening — contributes to such routines."
(Giddens 1991: 81)

While the term lifestyle nowadays often refers in a somewhat trivial way to consumerism, Giddens describes lifestyle as incorporating not only responses to utilitarian needs, but further contributing to the construction of an particular narrative of identity (ibid.). This identity is in its nature reflexive, open, and subject to change (ibid: 5; 81). Lifestyle in Giddens' terms can be understood as a means of constructing identity, which according to Fairclough (1992b: 238) is ideologically effected through discursive practice. An example of this understanding of lifestyle would be the varying consumer-choices, for example the decision to consume organic vegetarian food, which drawing on environmental discourses can contribute to the construction of the identity as an environmentally concerned activist.

Giddens further points out that the term lifestyle "implies choice within a plurality of possible options, and is 'adopted' rather than 'handed down'" (Giddens 1991: 81). While Giddens' work has received wide criticism (see e.g. King 1999; O'Boyle 2013), and the focus in anthropology

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14 Kemalism is the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic and will be further introduced in the next chapter.

has shifted from identity *construction* to identity *formation* (see e.g. Widmark 2003), Giddens' understanding of lifestyle is useful here, because he emphasizes that *choice* and a "plurality of options" are integral parts of lifestyle as a means of identity construction. As will be shown in the ethnographic chapters, this is exactly where my informants' feelings of discomfort emerge – they are aware that their lifestyle options are being limited, and perceive it as an attack on their identity and sense of belonging. Jenny White (2013: 132) points out that lifestyle choices such as "media, market, home décor, clothing, body habits, and eating and leisure practices provide a continually transforming palette for individuals to draw from in representing themselves. In Turkey, these elements are highly politicized". Consequently, the chapters three and four seek to present how and why these lifestyle choices became "highly politicized" and which implications this carries for political discourses and the informants' everyday life.
3. Turkey: historical context and analysis

This thesis argues that my informants feel that their lifestyle choices are being limited. One of the research questions formulated in the introduction asks which discourses contribute to their perception. In order to fully understand these discourses, how they evolved, and which implications they carry for my informants, it is important to understand the larger historical context of the current political and social developments in Turkey. An analysis of how discourses shape and are being shaped by social reality can only be successful when it takes into consideration how these discourses have been constructed and how they are interconnected. That is what will be summarized and discussed in this chapter, in which a brief history of the Turkish Republic will be presented, before a short comparative analysis focusing on the ideology of the two currently dominating political parties will be conducted.

As Jenny White (2014: 187) points out in her book *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks*, "Turkey can not be characterized as a Muslim or as a secular democracy without upending all the preconceptions the terms Muslim or secular entail in the context"; neither can the way the current government is ruling Turkey. Thus, this chapter attempts to give a short overview of the emergence of Turkish state secularism. Furthermore, the categories of 'secular' and 'Islamist' will be introduced and theorized for the Turkish context. The last section of this chapter will then briefly explain the specific implications of nationalist discourses in Turkey, and how they relate to religion. This introduction is necessary for the analysis of government politics and their influence on my informants' lives, which will be conducted in chapters four to eight.

A short history of Kemalism

What is Kemalism? Kemalism refers to the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic. In short, Jenny White (2013: 39) describes Kemalism as combining "a kind of authoritarian democracy with a Westernized secular lifestyle". It is named for its founder, Mustafa Kemal, later named Atatürk ("Father of Turks"), Turkey's first president. Kemal had made a name for himself as a successful military commander in the First World War, and became the leader of the Turkish national movement during the following war of independence (Zürcher 2004: 142ff.). Later he founded the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* / CHP) (ibid.). The CHP has traditionally kept close ties to the military, from which it emerged, and Mustafa Kemal's influence on the political and social developments in the early years of the Republic can hardly be overemphasized. Between 1923, the founding year of the new Turkish Republic, and 1946,
the CHP was the only party entering elections. Kemalism is based on six principles which were presented and written down at a CHP congress in 1931. These principles are republicanism, laicism,\(^\text{16}\) nationalism, populism, statism and revolutionism (Zürcher 2004: 181; Azak 2010: 9).

Not all of these principles are equally important to all Kemalists, and of course there can be nationalist, laicist, or republican actors in Turkey that would not consider themselves Kemalist, as they might reject one or more of the other principles of Kemalism. The analysis carried out in this thesis will focus on two of these principles, namely laicism and nationalism, as the discourses revolving around them are constantly being re-negotiated with severe consequences for the political and everyday life in contemporary Turkey, and thus my informants' lives. The first principle to be explained here is that of laicism in a Turkish context.

**Turkish laicism in theory and practice**

As Bobby Sayyid points out,\(^\text{17}\) Atatürk personally detested Islam, which he "repeatedly described … as 'the symbol of obscurantism'; as 'a purified corpse which poisons our lives'; as 'the enemy of civilization and science' and so on" (Sayyid 1997: 65). Consequently, laicism became one of central pillar of Kemalism and one of the priorities of the first Kemalist governments. Laicism (Turkish: *laiklik*) is often simplistically described as secularism, which would be the separation of church and state; but laicism in the specific Kemalist sense differs from this definition, which is widely used in public discourse in Europe (White 2008: 357). Let us go back to the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 for a moment, when the republic emerged from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. In its heyday, the Ottoman rulers had not only reigned over large parts of Southeast Europe, the Caucasus, Western Asia and North Africa, they had also claimed caliphal authority — that is succession to the prophet Muhammad as ruler of the entire Muslim world. Hence, in Ottoman times, the state claimed both worldly and religious authority. In order for Atatürk to be able to create a new republic, this had to be changed. The religious authority of the caliphate presented a threat to the political authority of the republican government, which for Atatürk represented the highest authority in a "modern" nation-state (Sayyid 1997: 59). After some internal power-struggle, Atatürk succeeded in abolishing the caliphate in 1924 (Azak 2010: 9). In doing so, he unfixed the link between the state and Islam, between political power and religion, and subjugated religion to the state (Sayyid 1997: 78).

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16 Laicism here refers to a specific form of Turkish state secularism, which will be further elaborated on below.

17 Bobby Sayyid is Reader in Rhetoric at the School of Sociology and Social Policy and former director of the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding at the University of South Australia. He is the author of books such as *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (1997) and *Recalling the Caliphate: Decolonization and World Order* (2014).
As political scientists Taha Parla and Andrew Dawson point out in their book *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?*, "Kemalist laicism is most often described throughout the literature as 'secularism', leaving the impressions that Kemalist laicism achieves everything from a radical separation between state and tradition to the privatization or elimination of religion in the conscience" (Parla and Davison 2004: 14). This is, however, not the case. Rather, Kemalist laicism aims at the control of religion *through* the state (Kemerli 2015: 283; White 2008: 357). The first Kemalist governments adopted many political and social reforms that aimed at 'westernizing' Turkey (Sayyid 1997: 63ff.). They initiated a "process of westernization in all fields of life, such as art, law, education, dress and food habits" (Azak 2010: 10), trying to completely remove religion from the public sphere and establish state control over all religious institutions (Zürcher 2004: 181). According to anthropologist of religion Talal Asad, secularism in a nation-state aims at regulating "all aspects of individual life — even the most intimate, such as birth and death" (Asad 2003: 199), because it is vital to the authority of the state that "all social activity requires the consent of law, and therefore the nation-state", not religion (ibid). And indeed, during the early years of the republic, the state undertook several direct interventions in people's everyday life in order to secularize the public sphere (Azak 2010: 11). New laws were introduced that affected people in a direct way on an individual everyday level, e.g. by banning traditional head gear such as the *fez* hat and turbans, restricting 'religious' clothing to mosques, and making Sunday the day of rest instead of the traditional Islamic Friday (Zürcher 2004: 187; Azak 2010: 11f.; Baran: 5).

Despite these measures, however, Kemalism, is not completely opposed to Islam itself; in fact, it entails Islam. What Kemalism does reject is Islam that seeks political influence. This becomes clear from the fact that in 1924, the Department of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, short: Diyanet) was established as a governmental institution. The duties of the Diyanet are expressed in law, which today reads that the Diyanet aims "to execute the works concerning the beliefs, worship, and ethics of Islam, enlighten the public about their religion, and administer the sacred worshiping places", that is the training of preachers, the building of mosques and so on. According to Houston, the main task of the Diyanet has always been the "fabricating of a nationalist Islam" (Houston 2013: 337) that does not threaten the authority of the state. Such an Islam can be accepted by Kemalists for as long as it stays out of the public sphere. Once it enters into politics however, Islam has to be dealt with. Consequently, in 1960 a military coup was executed against the first non-Kemalist government. The ruling Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*) had won the second multi-party elections in 1950 and taken over

government from the Kemalist party CHP, and brought about a resurgence of Islam in daily life. This was not taken well by the Kemalist-led military. Consequently, the Democrat Party government was charged with betraying the revolution and the principle of laicism by military leaders, as any digression from the Kemalist paradigm of laicism was "condemned as 'abuse of religion for political power' and a betrayal of the Atatürk reforms" (Ulus 2010: 13). This coup set the tone for how the military would deal with unwelcome governments and parties in the future, and more military coups were executed in 1971, 1980 and (allegedly) 1993 (Kemerli 2015: 283). Several religious-leaning parties such as the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi / MNP), the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), and the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) were declared unconstitutional for threatening laicism, and consequently banned by the Turkish constitutional court throughout the second half of the twentieth century (White 2013: 43ff.).

**Kemalism in crisis and the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP)**

Over the last decades, Kemalism has lost much of its power and influence over Turkish society and politics. Already in 1997, Bobby Sayyid described the Kemalist discourse to be in a state of "hegemonic crisis" (Sayyid 1997: 84; see also White 2014: 360) and attested that the "crisis of Kemalism has found an increasingly loud response claiming that the only solution to the crisis will be found in Islam" (ibid: 77). The big winner of the crisis of Kemalism is the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi / AKP). Since 2002, the AKP is the governing party in Turkey. In the latest elections in November 2015, the AKP has won the absolute majority with 49.48% of the votes which resulted in 317 seats of the 550 seats in parliament, while the biggest opposition party, the Kemalist CHP, only gained 25.31% (134 seats). While in 2005 political scientist Sultan Tepe (2005: 69) described the public sphere in Turkey as still influenced strongly by Kemalism and "aggressively secularist", according to Doğan Gürpinar (2013: 455), the development since then can be characterized as "the vulgarization and marginalization of the Kemalist ideology and Kemalist discourse".

The AKP can be described as a center-right to right-wing conservative party with neoliberal economic views. Some scholars and journalists describe it as religious-conservative, and many of its opponents refer to it as "Islamist" (Houston 2014: 334). How could a party with

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19 In order to represent Sayyid's approach correctly, it is important to note that "Kemalism" here for Sayyid does not only refer to Kemalism as a concept in Turkish politics founded by Atatürk, but rather "describes a hegemonic political discourse in the Muslim world, within which Islam was no longer a master signifier of the political order" (Sayyid 1997: 70).

"disputed Islamic ancestry" (Houston 2013:335), the AKP, become the dominant force in contemporary Turkish politics and stay in power for over a decade without the military interfering? Houston (2013: 334f.) points out that the "complexity of the contemporary Turkish situation presents a different mix of elements for the anthropology of secularism to consider". Over time, the perception of the AKP among scholars and observers has changed dramatically.

The AKP was founded in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül and other dissidents who had left the Welfare Party after it was forced out of the government by the military because of suspected Islamist tendencies in 1997 (White 2014: 359; Saraçoğlu and Demirkol 2015: 304; Gunter 2008: 60). What then does Islamist mean? In this thesis, I will use the definition given by Bobby Sayyid in his 1997 book *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, in which he postulates that "an Islamist is someone who places her or his Muslim identity at the centre of her or his political practice" (Sayyid 1997: 17). While the terms Islamist and Islamism in today's media and political debate are often used in a negative way and connoted with fundamentalism and even terrorism, Sayyid's definition should be understood as value-free. As Sayyid rightfully points out, Islamism is a political discourse, like socialism or liberalism, and it must be treated accordingly. When I speak here about Islamism, I thus speak about a politics, not about religious views. What does this imply for an analysis of the policies of the Justice and Development Party (AKP)?

While being run by pious Muslims, the leaders of the new Justice and Development Party in its early years claimed that the AKP was a secular party which wanted to represent everybody. Their politics would consequently not be based on religious views, which they considered to be private and personal attributes of the politicians rather than a part of the party program (White 2014: 359). After taking over the government in 2002, the AKP was widely perceived as a pro-democratic, moderately conservative political party by both international observers and many Turks alike. İhsan Dagi, professor of International Relations at the Middle Eastern University in Ankara and editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Insight Turkey*, in 2008 wrote that "to judge from the AKP's public statements, social base, program, and behavior over more than five years as Turkey's ruling party, it appears to be not an outright Islamist movement, but rather a conservative one within the tradition of Turkish center-right politics" (Dagi 2008: 26), and that the AKP could be described not as an "Islamist faction, but rather a globalist, market-oriented, pro-Western, and populist political party" (ibid: 30). Even Jenny White (2008: 376), who in her recent publications became more critical of the AKP, as will be shown below, in 2008 described the AKP as promoting the idea that the laicist state was a necessary "administrative mechanism".
Indeed, in the beginning of its rule, the AKP actually passed several reforms in order to comply with Copenhagen criteria for EU membership (Tepe 2005: 71; see further Yücel 2014: 52; Arbatlı 2014). During this time, the AKP avoided "strong ideological statements or open conflict" (Tepe 2005: 75), and its reign can be described as rather successful. The government improved the infrastructure in many cities and especially in rural areas, built new roads, provided stable electricity for remote villages and doubled the per capita income. The Turkish economy boomed and in Istanbul, whole new districts of high rises emerged (White 2014: 357; Arbatlı 2014). However, claims have been brought forth by many Kemalist and non-Kemalist Turks alike that the AKP had just been hiding its Islamic identity, disguising itself as a middle-right conservative party that believed in the laicist paradigm (White 2013: 46). In reality, these voices claimed, the AKP had always aimed at adopting anti-laicist policies. In her 2015 article "AKP's Authoritarianism and Post-Politics", Ayşegül Kars Kyanar (2015: para. 4) suggests that many of the recent social and legal reforms in Turkey are in fact based in "Islamic values and norms, and that "Islamism and conservatism are … intertwined" in "the AKP's 'hegemony project'" (ibid.).

However, I do not wish to argue here that the AKP is trying to establish a 'religious regime' in Turkey or aiming at introducing Sharia law. What I am arguing instead is that the laicism is understood differently by AKP officials than it is by most self-ascribed laicist Turks. As presented above, in the Kemalist sense laicism refers to a state control of religious affairs and religion being restricted to the private sphere. The AKP, however, prefers "secularism as a hands-off principle in which government keeps an equal distance from all beliefs' and does not interfere in any religious affairs" (White 2013: 46). In an official AKP document from 2003, Erdoğan reinterpreted laicism in a non-Kemalist way, when he equated it with secularism and summarized this approach demanding "state impartiality towards religions and between denominations of Islam (mezhep), as well as freedom for individuals to live their lives in accordance with their irreligious or religious beliefs" (Erdoğan, as quoted by Houston 2013: 342). To summarize: where laicists will be worried about policies and law-making being influenced too much by the religious views of pious politicians, AKP supporters who support secularism will more likely be worried about the state's interference with their expression of religion by trying to exclude religion from the public sphere. This is one of the points where conflict and polarization between the two can arise.

21 Examples of these reforms are the lifting of the headscarf ban in higher education and the public sector, and the introduction of compulsory Quran courses at public schools (Kars Kyanar 2015).
In the sections above, laicism was introduced as one of the pillars of Kemalism and shaping concepts in contemporary Turkish politics. Another omnipresent topic in Turkish discourses is nationalism. According to Houston, an "increasingly chauvinistic or xenophobic nationalism of militant laicism" (Houston 2013: 344) exists in contemporary Turkey. This nationalism is rooted in the circumstances of the foundation of the republic, since "for at least a century the defining context of secularism in Turkey has been nationalist State power and governance, not colonial or post-colonial" (ibid: 338). When the Ottoman Empire disappeared and the Republic emerged, the new government needed to create a national identity for the new state. In Ottoman times, the term 'Turkish' had merely been used to refer to speakers of the Turkish language (White 2014: 27). When the new government was faced with the task to create a 'modern' nation-state on the ruins of a giant multi-ethnic empire, it created the concept of Turkishness as a common foundation for the new state (Zürcher 2010: 11). Turkishness (türkülük) is a vague term that relates both to quality and belonging. Historian and political scientist Hamit Bozarslan (2007: 46) describes Turkishness as a "'positive atavism' containing, in its very essence, civilization, revolution, beauty, and the spirit of independence". In the founding years of the republic, "this identity was … imposed gradually on the population through a process of nation building in which … [the] suppression of alternative or even sub-identities" (ibid.) played a big role. The Ottoman Empire had been held together by the authority of the caliph over Muslim subjects. With this authority gone, "the invention of the 'Turk' … was essential to replace the Muslim as the political subject" (Sayyid 1997: 66). Consequently, multi-ethnicity was seen as a severe threat to the nation and persecuted and silenced (Demir 2014: 385).

As White (2014: 360) points out "in addition to the resurgence of religious piety, and in spite of Kemalism's lost influence … nationalism … is alive and thriving in new forms" in contemporary Turkey. Turkishness as a concept is not only the base of the nationalist Kemalist ideology of the CHP or the ultra-nationalist ideology of the right-wing National Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi / MHP), but also of what White calls the "Muslim nationalism" of the AKP. In contrast to the Kemalist ideology, following which Turkishness is based on blood (White 2013: 2ff.), Turkishness for 'Muslim nationalists' is based mainly on religiosity and a cultural connection to historic Turkey. For this particular form of nationalism, White argues, "the new Turkish identity … is that of a pious Muslim Turk whose subjectivity and vision for the future is … divorced from the Kemalist state project" (White 2013: 9). It is based on a nostalgic

22 Other than the AKP and the CHP, the MHP is the third party that regularly exceeds the 10% electoral threshold in general elections. Ideologically, MHP supporters are often described as ultranationalist Kemalists, who prioritize ethnic nationalism over laicism.
revival of Ottoman past, and sees a form of "Turkish Islam" as central to the Turkish national
identity (ibid: 48f.). Here we can observe what Fairclough (1995b: 57ff.) describes as creative
interdiscursivity: familiar discourses are being re-articulated and combined in a new way. The
choice of discourses that are available for interdiscursive combination is limited in practice by
power-relations and ideology (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 74; Fairclough 1995b: 14), which
Fairclough defines as "meaning in the service of power" (ibid.). With Kemalism in the above-
described weak position, the AKP was able to hegemonically recombine the nationalist discourse
with the Islamist discourse that Sayyid describes, and thus create the ideological discourse of
'Muslim nationalism' as suggested by White and explained above. How this 'Muslim nationalism'
as a discourse serves the AKP will be discussed in chapter four.
The implications this discourse can carry for the social reality, and thus my informants' lives, are
drastic, as the following example will show. One of my informants, Arın, is a Turkish citizen
who self-identifies as "Turkish". His family has lived in Istanbul for centuries, and unless it is
explicitly addressed, there is no way of knowing that he is in fact a descendant of Armenian
Christians — which excludes him from both types of nationalism, as he has both the wrong
religion and the 'wrong blood'. As he phrased it himself: "To most Turks, I can never be [a] Turk.
Religious people say I am no Turk because I am no Muslim. Nationalist people say I am no Turk
because I am Armenian. I don't belong with any of them".

23 Symptoms of this Ottoman revival are for instance the reintroduction of compulsory Ottoman language
classes in school, President Erdoğan's new guard of honor which dresses in hilarious costumes fashioned
after those of soldiers from different Ottoman provinces, and the resurgence of festivities around Ottoman
holidays (see further White 2013).
Kemalism versus Islamism?

In this chapter, Kemalism, the founding ideology of the Turkish republic, has been introduced as consisting of six ideological pillars (laicism, nationalism, populism, statism, republicanism and revolutionism). Two of these (laicism and Turkish nationalism) and their recent renegotiation have been further described and analyzed, because they are highly influential on government politics and the social reality which directly affects my informants, as will become clearer in the following chapters.

Furthermore, it has been illustrated that the political situation in Turkey is more complicated than the popular picture of 'nationalist secularist versus Islamists' that is often painted by international media. Neither do the labels fully grasp the variety of ideologies and opinions in both currents they seek to describe, nor are these currents the only two that exist. Additionally, both sides also share important attributes, as they both pursue authoritarian politics and believe in "educational molding and a barrage of interdictions" (White 2013: 185) and direct interventions in everyday life (Azak 2010: 11; see also White 2013: 182), as has been shown for Kemalism and will be elaborated for 'Muslim nationalism' in the following chapters.

As will become clear from my ethnographic material, many people do not see themselves as belonging to either side, because they were brought up under a hegemonic Kemalist discourse that promoted a 'westernized' laicist lifestyle, but refuse other aspects of Kemalism as much as they refuse the AKP's positions. Consequently, Houston (2013: 347) reminds us, Kemalism "is not the only way that secularism is understood, lived out and acted upon in Turkey", which is why a depiction of the tension in Turkey as ‘Kemalism versus Islam' falls short, because it overlooks the people who are outside of both, such as my informants (see also Moudouros 2014: 193).
4. Knowing "what is best"

"In Turkey, everybody always thinks he knows what is best for you. The politicians are just like my uncle who tries to tell me how to bury my father, because he thinks I don't know it myself."

(Erhan, personal conversation)

"Democracy is widely understood as a mandate for the winning party to impose its values. Here again the patriarchal family serves as an explicit model for the relationship between Father State and his citizen children."

(White 2012: 185)

The feeling of "everybody always thinks he knows what is best for you" that Erhan describes in the quote above was a common theme during many of the interviews I conducted. In this chapter, the processes that lead to this feeling will be analyzed. In the second quote given above, anthropologist Jenny White compares family relationships to the relationship between the state (the older relative who knows "what is best") and its citizens (the children). This relationship will be analyzed with regards to the specific ideological background of the governing the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the long-standing Kemalist influence on Turkish politics. It will become clear how the government and its supporters justify legal and social restrictions of certain lifestyle choices through claims of a moral authority, which is established drawing on the religious and nationalist discourses discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, underlying processes of social and cultural control will be investigated, and it will be illustrated how they are partially responsible for my informants' feelings of discomfort.

The father of the nation

First, it is worth looking into the example that Atatürk and the cult of personality around him provided for the AKP. One of the key aspects of the Kemalist ideology is the importance it gives to the figure of the charismatic leader. The founder of Kemalism, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was and is not merely described as Turkey's first president; up to today he is regarded as the nation's father — hence the name Atatürk (Father of Turks) — and has been referred to as the "Eternal Chief, National Chief, Commander in Chief, Teacher in Chief" (Azak 2010: 17). Today, Erdoğan is claiming a similar role as a strong leader and father figure by "presenting himself in his campaign ads and speeches as the heroic savior of the nation, the patriarchal father protecting the honor of his national family" (White 2013: 357; see also Keyman 2013: 21). With regards to the change in AKP politics described in the previous chapter, White (2014: 356) speaks of an

24 A small example from my fieldwork to illustrate the still prevalent cult of personality around Atatürk is the fact that the supermarket closest to my apartment in Istanbul was selling stickers of Atatürk's face in the children's section right next to stickers of ponies, cars, and robots.

27
"autocratic turn" in which Erdoğan "returned to … fearmongering and aggressive political paternalism" (ibid.; emphasis added). An example of Erdoğan's striving can be found in the way he handles public criticism. In Turkish law, insulting Atatürk is considered a criminal offense that is not taken lightly. During the last years, however, more people have been charged with insulting President Erdoğan than with insulting Atatürk - mostly journalists, but also ordinary citizens who posted criticism on social networks like Twitter or Facebook. Political scientist Ian Bremmer points out in an article for *Time*, that "while most of us just tweet back something snarky when we're criticized on Twitter, Erdoğan [sic] has personally filed criminal complaints against at least 67 people for 'insulting' him online". Relating to cases in which several people had been charged, among them a 16 year old school boy, Turkish journalist Mustafa Akyol summarized in September 2015 that "in Old Turkey, the major blasphemy was insulting Atatürk. In New Turkey, it is insulting Erdogan [sic]".

Turkey's current president and former prime-minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan can be described as a polarizing figure, to say the least. To many people opposing the AKP government, Erdoğan has become almost the personification of evil, while at the same time many of his supporters almost worship him. All of my informants mentioned him several times in our interviews, and as his statements quoted in this thesis show, he gets involved in the public debate on numerous topics that one would not necessarily expect a prime-minister or president to address directly. This section will give a brief overview on his life and the way in which he became arguably Turkey's most influential political figure of the last decades in order to illustrate what both his supporters and critics see in him, an why his statements are so influential in public discourse.

Erdoğan was born in 1954 in Istanbul's conservative Kasımpaşa district, a rather poor neighborhood. In his youth, he sold pastries and lemonade on the streets, before he became a semi-professional football player for Kasımpaşa S.K. After finishing high school, he earned his university degree in business administration. Accordingly, his life story is that of a hard-working self-made man who rose from poverty to power, an image many of his supporters admire (White 2014: 357; Arbatlı 2014). After the 1980 military coup, Erdoğan joined the Welfare Party, and in 1994 became the mayor of Istanbul. As mayor, he mostly stood for pragmatic policies and city development, perceived positively even by many skeptics. In 1997, shortly before the Welfare

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Party was banned by the constitutional court as mentioned in chapter three, Erdoğan was sentenced to ten months in prison (of which he served four) for publicly reciting a poem that featured the lines "The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers".28 The quote was seen as inciting hatred and violence.

After the foundation of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2001, Erdoğan quickly rose within its ranks and became Turkey's prime minister from 2003 to 2014, when he became Turkey's president. During his time as prime minister, Erdoğan became very popular with many conservative and neo-liberal Turks due to the government's economically successful politics and his image as a pious, strong and successful self-made man. His image became so powerful that he was even able to politically survive several accusations of corruption against himself and his family in 2013 and 2014 without substantial electoral loss.

On the other hand, Erdoğan became (in)famous for his use of abusive language against any form of opposition, which critics see as one of the reasons for the ongoing division of the Turkish population.29 He has been accused of 'megalomania', for which critics cite the construction of a new 1,000-room presidential palace which was constructed in a protected nature reserve, and his many gigantic building projects like a huge mosque, an artificial 'second Bosphorus', or a thirds airport for Istanbul as evidence.30 As a consequence of Erdoğan's statements and behavior, the Turkish Medical Association, the country's politically engaged trade union representing 80% of the country's medical doctors, in a PR coup published a statement in which they voiced concerns about the then-prime minister's mental health, based on his "polarizing, excluding and 'otherifying' language".31 The deep social division, and how it is represented by the person of Erdoğan, is best illustrated by the fact that during the Gezi Park protests, government supporters formed groups that violently attacked protesters with clubs and sticks while rhythmically chanting "Recep — Tayyip — Erdoğan!" (Esra, as quoted by Guttstadt 2014: 139). Similarly, one of my informants reported that during the Gezi Park protests, she was being chased down a side alley by a group of people wielding sticks and even a hatchet, chanting the prime minister's name and other pro-government slogans.

The AKP and the concept of the millet

Apart from acting in the Kemalist tradition of interventions in everyday life described in chapter three, the AKP's claims to authority are linked to a concept that keeps gaining importance in Turkish politics, namely the idea of the *millet*. *Millet* (literally: *nation*) refers the "nation of Islam" (Kemerli 2015: 283) or "Muslim Nation" (Moudouros 2014: 182). The concept as it is understood today gained popularity in the 1970s, when the *Millî Görüş* ("National Vision") movement emerged based on Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan's vision of a 'modern' Turkish nation-state based in Muslim ethics. *Millî Görüş* aimed at reconnecting Islam with nationalism (White 2013: 39), to which Moudouros refers as "the state's reunion with its own nation" (Moudouros: 2014: 182). Many of the AKP supporters see the party's rise to power as the solving of the conflict between the religious parts of society and the state, a reconciliation in other words, now that finally the rightful rulers and representatives of the 'real Turkey' have come to power (ibid.). In power, the AKP has brought about positive change for many religious Turks, who had previously felt marginalized by authoritarian Kemalism (ibid: 183). In other words, as an AKP vice-president phrased it: "There will be no turning back to the old. After two centuries of struggles, Turkey has been reunited with its roots [which are in Islam]. This nation has brought to power its own children. It has found its own power and it will not step down from it" (Kurtulmuş, as quoted by Moudouros 2014: 183). Kurtulmuş's quote is highly representative of a mindset which political scientist Fuat Keyman (2014: 23) refers to when he notes that for the AKP, elections "go beyond simply being determinant of who governs Turkey". As Keyman further elaborates, electoral wins are seen by the AKP as a confirmation of the party's intention "to become a 'hegemonic governing force,' shaping and reshaping not only politics and democracy but also modernity" (ibid.). Modernity in Turkey, as has been described in chapter three, has long been linked to Kemalist discourses that depicted Islam as backwards. Thus, the AKP is here not only claiming governmental authority, but also a hegemonic position and authority over the previously Kemalist-dominated discourse on modernity, which they attempt to link to their understanding of Islam. The implications of this claim for an analysis of authoritarianism and the government's influence will be discussed in the following section.

32 The term *millet* stems from Ottoman times, when it referred to a legal authority within a certain confessional community.
33 The unfixing of this link by the Kemalists during the founding years of the republic has been discussed in chapter three.
The good, the bad, and the Imam

A quote from Erdoğan's time as mayor of Istanbul in the 1990s shows his understanding of politicians as being not only public officials, but also moral authorities. Didier Fassin (2008: 334) defines moral as the human belief in the ability to tell right from wrong and good from evil, which is exactly what Erdoğan expressed belief in during his time as mayor, when he stated "I am at the same time the Imam of this city and I am also responsible for the sins of the citizens of Istanbul" (Erdoğan, as quoted by Moudouros 2014: 182). As Nikos Moudouros (ibid.) points out, "within this sentence, the Islamic references highlight the essential, which is the claim to centralize power in the face of another 'loving father', who knows exactly what is best for the nation", just like Atatürk before him. Here, a connection to the Gezi Park protests and the way the government reacted to them can be found. As mentioned in the introduction, according to Sırri Süreyya Önder, some analysts and government supporters have tried to reduce the protests to "an anti-AKP rebellion" (Önder, as quoted by Yücel 2014: 67). However, what the protests according to Önder were really about was "opening spaces for democratic politics" (ibid.) and the government's "mentality of domination that says: 'I decide what is being done'" (ibid.). As presented above, the mentality of "I decide what is being done" or "knowing what is best" is in fact part of the AKP's identity as representatives of the previously oppressed millet; but it is also a part of the authoritarian Kemalist state tradition that has shaped Turkish politics for almost a century. Thus, the AKP government, in its own view, deserves both respect (because it represents the state) and obedience and gratitude for the positive reforms it has brought about (Moudouros 2014: 183). Consequently, the government perceived the demands for more democracy and civil rights made by the Gezi Park protesters as a form of disrespect and ungratefulness. Drawing on President Erdoğan's self-image as the 'loving father', his reactions to the Gezi Park protests and any form of opposition in general can almost be understood as the political equivalent of the cliché 'as long as you live under my roof, you'll do what I tell you' conversation between a parent and an ungrateful teenager who needs to be disciplined.

So far, in this chapter the AKP's hegemonic claim to sole authority has been presented. Next, the role religiosity plays in constructing this claim will be explained. Unlike Atatürk, who aimed at creating a laicist nation-state and personally despised Islam, Erdoğan claims to be inspired by religion. Accordingly, Saraçoğlu and Demirkol (2015: 308) describe the AKP as a "religious party". While the AKP avoids calling itself a religious or Islamist party (Houston 2013: 334), AKP representatives often hint at religiosity in political campaigns. This is

34 Önder was a member of parliament for the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP) and among the first protesters in Gezi Park.

35 He has been more careful at this since his above-mentioned conviction in 1997.
exemplified by Erdoğan's publicly expressed desire to educate a "more pious generation", or by his waving of a copy of the Quran at election rallies in the cities of Batman and Siirt in May 2015, where he on stage accused the he rivaling left-wing Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi / HDP) of having "nothing to do with religion" and wanting to shut down the Diyanet. Another example of AKP officials referring to religion is Prime Minister Davutoğlu, who made use of the idea of the millet when he claimed at a campaign rally in the same month that "God, the nation and history are with us". This introduction of religion into AKP politics has severe implications for discourses on moral authority, and thus, as will become clear, impacts my informants' everyday lives. Didem Unal and Dilek Cindoglu (2013: 15) maintain that recent AKP policies and rhetoric indeed indicate a "regulation of the political on the basis of moral", which in case of the AKP is based in Islam. According to Sayyid,

ultimately, for Muslims, Islam is another word for 'Goodness incarnate'. Thus, when Islamists claim that the best government is an Islamic government, here 'Islamic' refers to the incarnation of goodness, so that the claim becomes: the best government is good government. This is a claim which is difficult to refute. (Sayyid 1993: 48)

Sayyid here explains why politics, piety and morality are intertwined in political Islam: Piety is the basis of morality, thus a party of pious men must be moral. As a result, AKP politics according to the party's supporters "[express] 'by its nature' the right and the fair" (Moudouros 2014: 184).

Another reference to this claim of moral superiority can be found in the use of the AKP party name. While the party is officially listed as Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party) by the constitutional court, AKP officials and supporters usually use the name Ak Parti instead. Ak is Turkish for "white", and "clean", and as historian Hans-Lukas Kieser points out, when it is used by AKP supporters as a part of the party name, ak "deliberately contains a moral and a practical aspect. It refers directly to Tayyip Erdoğan and his image as an incorruptible politician, both being 'clean' himself

and cleaning up his environment" (Kieser 2006: 152). Consequently, AKP officials and supporters often explicitly hint at the connection between the party's name and its "pure" and "clean" (Yavuz 2009: 1) and "sinless" (Kieser 2006: 152) policies, attempting to discursively strengthen the party's claim to moral authority.39

**Making use of Kemalist structure and discourses**

As presented above, the government's claim to moral authority is grounded in its role as a representative of the *millet* (i.e. the unity of religion, the nation and the state). Thus, it is based on both religiosity and Turkishness — two concepts that are sacred. As a result, it is not possible to criticize the government without being labeled as an enemy, since the government is "the body through which the 'universal' and 'national' good is expressed" (Moudouros 2014: 184). This makes the government the sole authority for what is acceptable and what is not. Accordingly, Turks who criticize the government are often branded as influenced by foreign, mostly 'Western', powers (Moudouros: 183; see also White 2013: 55ff.).40 Denouncing criticism as 'unturkish' and foreign also has a long tradition among nationalist Kemalists who see Turkey as being threatened by foreign imperial powers (see Guttstadt 2013: 184ff.; White 2013: 59ff.), and Jenny White maintains that in contemporary Turkey, where "Kemalism has been largely dethroned … the levers of power it developed remain in place" (White 2014: 356). These levers are now operated by the AKP, and "Erdoğan has revived the Kemalist threat paradigm, using the same language, railing against outside and inside enemies" (ibid: 357). But what is new under the AKP government is that critics are now discursively being positioned outside of the *millet*, which according to Moudouros (2014: 183) is "above all a matter of common traditional values and a dynamic of social unity". Consequently, any deviation from these values, of which alternative lifestyles are an expression, are perceived threats to the social unity, and people with deviating lifestyles and moral values, such as my informants, become enemies that threaten this unity.

39 The AKP appears to be successful at establishing *Ak Parti* instead of AKP, as recently more and more articles in the international media as well as some scholars have started to use that name.
40 An example of specific interest to anthropologists is provided by White (2013: 55), who quotes former Mayor of Istanbul Bedrettin Dalan saying "Foreign departments take Turkish children, give them good grants on condition that they study Turkey and show them the results. They even use our children against us. … Anthropology is the science of identity. Anthropology is a knife that cuts both ways. They bring the Kurds against us".
Controlling processes

As explained above, the AKP makes use of nationalist discourses in order to delegitimize and antagonize any form of opposition. Additionally, an image of the AKP as a morally pure party led by a pious man who is responsible for the sins of the citizens is discursively being constructed. Following this image, Erdoğan as the knowing leader is responsible for preventing his citizen-children from committing sins, and as the father of the nation he must at the same time protect them against inner and outer enemies. How are these positions maintained? If we follow Antonio Gramsci (1971: 57) in his definition of hegemony as "'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'", Erdoğan and his government are clearly in a hegemonic position. Following Gramsci, a "social group ... subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well" (ibid: 57f.).41 As shown above, the AKP now indeed has a firm grip on power in Turkey, and it keeps "leading" by voicing strong opinions on how things should be, and changing the laws accordingly. Gramsci continues that ultimately, "antagonistic groups" will be "subjugate[d]" (ibid: 57f). This can be said for Turkey, no matter if the dominating group exists of Kemalists or representatives of the millet, as has been shown in the previous chapter. In Turkey, according to White (2013: 185), traditionally "there is little tolerance of heterodoxy, criticism, or pushback, ... [and] democracy is widely understood as a mandate for the winning party to impose its values". This understanding of the government mandate as a mission to impose moral values is what will be elaborated on in the following chapters. My informant Erhan expressed his feelings about the government's claim to moral authority in an illustrative quote: "These assholes just want to control everything. It's like Big Brother ... That's the problem with these people, they believe they know everything ... They want to control you. They hate it when people are happy".42 The ways in which this control is sought will be explained in the next section.

American anthropologist Laura Nader (1997a: 712) introduces the concept of "controlling processes" to analyze how "ideology, hegemony, social and cultural control" work "vertically through ideas and institutions". According to Nader (1997a: 711 f.), in order "to trace the dynamics of power we must employ more than knowledge of power structures, controllers, and the repudiation of agency or its glorification as resistance". Similar to Gramsci, who differentiates between domination (through force and coercion) and hegemony (through consent and ideology), "theorizers of controlling processes are now at pains to differentiate between

41 It is important to note, as Kurtz (1996: 107) points out, that leadership in this sense is not to be understood as executed by a single individual, neither by a structuralist deep structure, or discourse, but rather by a state apparatus or a hegemonic center such as a government.

42 Erhan specifically asked that I did not omit his frequent use of swear words for government officials when quoting him.
control that is consensual and the notion that consensus is control" (ibid: 719). To solve this problem, Nader suggests that "control [has] moved from a social to a cultural mode; social control or overt coercion is culturally less acceptable in a democratic society" (ibid.). This conflict between overt coercion and the wish for a democratic society, as will be elaborated upon in the following chapters, is where part of the tension between my informants and the current government arise. Those who, despite not being Kemalists, grew up under the Kemalist paradigm which promoted a laicist 'Western' lifestyle and adopted said lifestyle, find the AKP's policies since its authoritarian turn unacceptable. They grew up in a globalized world influenced by Kemalist discourse that described Turkey as a 'modern' and 'Western' democracy, in which even the AKP government initially strove for a Turkish EU membership. In recent years however, as will be elaborated in the following chapters, the government's language threatens force to people with deviating lifestyles and moral values, and has stopped looking for any political consensus, which represents a return to overt "undemocratic" social control that has become unacceptable to many (see Nader 1997a: 719). The government is able to do so because it is in a powerful position. According to Nader (1997b: 1), power is what is central to controlling processes. Following Nader, power is both "means — ways in which people are controlled — and ends, the prize of political strategy". In order to research controlling processes, I will here focus "on power as means — the way in which individuals and groups are influenced, persuaded to participate in their own domination, and thereby controlled" (ibid.).

An excerpt from an interview which Turkish-German Islam scholar Tayfun Guttstad conducted with an informant illustrates what happens when the government attempts to exercise overt control over unwilling citizens:

They steal our lives … [Erdoğan] appeared and said: "I do what I want. The people, the women, the dogs, the trees, the birds, they don't matter to me". He destroys everything … he does it openly, because he has support and votes. He does not care about you and me … he does this and that, throws everything into the trash and says: "Don't drink alcohol!", "Make this many children!", "Have this amount of sex!", "Don't have abortions!", "Don't kiss!" – he meddles with everything.
(Pınar, as quoted by Guttstadt 2014: 157f.)

As Nader (1997a: 720) points out, "cultural control when it is hegemonic is impersonal, embedded, and often invisible, and even those who in fact exercise it may not understand its extent". But as the quote above shows, the control that is being exercised by the AKP government is quite the opposite — it is perceived as personal (in the figure of Erdoğan who "destroys everything"), consciously exercised, and visible to everybody. Cultural control as defined by Nader is at work at the same time here, for all society is permeated by hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses. In Turkey, the discussed discourses have a strong hold, because
of its history of nearly a century of Kemalist ideology. Analysts "have been aware of the presence of such forces, which channel our time, our behavior, our values, and our notions of what is to be old, beautiful, sexy, or clever" (Nader 1997a: 720), and that "these forces are often defended in terms of ideological constructs such as free-market competition, free and open science, meritocracy, or self-realization" (ibid.). Accordingly, I suggest that my informants perceive government restrictions as social control which attempts to regulate certain parts of their lifestyles, which they see as an attack on their possibility of creating a certain self-narrative or identity.

In fact, some statements by government representatives explicitly address even the small details of everyday life. One example of "knowing what is best" that has been repeatedly highlighted to me by informants after I left Turkey is a speech delivered by Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç. As The Guardian reports, Arınç went off on a tangent about how men and women in today's Turkey should behave, specifically addressing the lack of morality among women:

[Arınç said:] 'A man should be moral but women should be moral as well, they should know what is decent and what is not decent … She should not laugh loudly in front of all the world and should preserve her decency at all times' … Arinc [sic] went on to denounce a moral degradation that left society awash with drugs and prostitution, and lashed out at popular Turkish soap operas for encouraging lax lifestyles, in comments quoted throughout the Turkish media and online. He denounced the excessive use of cars, saying that if even the 'river Nile was filled with petrol', there wouldn't be enough to go around. Arinc [sic] also slammed the excessive use of mobile phones in Turkish society, with women 'spending hours on the phone to swap recipes'. Imitating a Turkish woman on her mobile, he said: "Is there nothing else going on? What happened to Ayse's daughter? When's the wedding?" People should say these things face to face.\footnote{Agence France-Presse, "Turkish deputy prime minister says women should not laugh out loud" in The Guardian, Jul. 29th, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/29/turkish-minister-women-laugh-loud-bulent-arinc.}

Here, Arınç creates an antagonism between moral and immoral, 'good' and 'bad' lifestyles, trying to impose his own ideas on everything from gender relations to the desirable amount of car and mobile phone use. The speech became somewhat infamous among the opposition, and was referred to by one of my informants as "showing how ridiculous this all is" — a summary that clearly illustrates how overt and thus confrontational the government's attempts to control are.
Government is to citizen as uncle is to nephew as boss is to employee

In the beginning of this chapter, an analogy was drawn between the relationship between family members and the relationship between the government and its citizens. Data gathered during my first formally conducted interview in Antalya allows to extend this analogy. In the interview I conducted with Zeynep, a woman in her thirties, she told me about the struggles she had in her daily work life due to the fact that her boss in her words was an "AKP supporter" and a "very religious man". Zeynep grew up in a small town in the European part of Turkey and has lived abroad as well as in a traditional town in eastern Turkey before moving to Antalya. She described herself as a Muslima who believes in God, but is not conservative or pious. She drinks alcohol, is divorced, and likes to dress "fashionable and modern", as she called it. She described herself as not particularly interested in politics, and she has never taken part in any protest or other forms of political activity. When asked about the governments' influence on her everyday life, she briefly spoke about the new alcohol legislation (which will be addressed in the following chapter), but then switched the topic to her work life:

Like I said, my boss is a very religious man. He is very educated, speaks several languages and he is abroad a lot. He is even married to a Swedish woman who converted to Islam. … He made a lot of rules for work. It is not allowed to wear short skirts or sleeveless tops at work. That's so annoying, especially in the summer, when it is 40° or more! … During Ramadan, I am one of the ten people out of, like, 70 employees who don't fast. Even though I know that most of the others are not very religious. What I mean is, they drink alcohol and they are just not religious outside of work. But they want to impress the boss. The cafeteria at work is closed during Ramadan. That's okay, I can bring my own food. But you know what also happens? All the water-dispensers at work magically break every Ramadan and have to go to the repair-man! … It is so annoying! Do they think we are stupid? Every year it is the same! And the people look at you and say, like, 'Why don't you fast, too?'

After telling me about all the little things that annoyed her at her work, Zeynep paused for a moment. Then she continued:

I don't understand why he has to be like that. I think it is really okay to be religious. But why can't they just let everybody do what we want? [She hesitates] Maybe, this is like it is with the government, in small, you know. They can be religious, they just should accept everybody who does not want to stick to their rules. Islam is not about forcing people, not in my thoughts at least. And a government should not force it on people.

Just like the introductory quote to this chapter by Erhan, who talked about his uncle trying to tell him how to bury his father, Zeynep's account shows that the "knowing what is best" mentality is not limited to the government. It is also practiced on a day-to-day level, exercised by individuals like Erhan's uncle or Zeynep's boss, who seek influence over people's decisions and actions. In doing so, like the government, they take away from "plurality of possible options" (Giddens 1991: 81) available to the other person. The affected people perceive this limitation as 'being told
what to do' by actors who try to impose their values on them through practical-legal (employer-
employee) or discursively established power-relations (uncle-nephew), through which they
demand respect and obedience: government is to citizen as uncle is to nephew as boss is to
employee.

This chapter has sought to present that the government justifies the limitation of lifestyle
choices through claims to moral authority, which are based on its ideological background. It has
been explained these claims are discursively established through references to religion and
nationality that are potentially exclusive of people with deviating moral values and lifestyles,
such as my informants. Furthermore, underlying controlling processes and the potential tension
that arises from them have been investigated, and it has been shown that feelings of discomfort
arise where expectations of choice are met with overt social control denying that choice. In a last
step, it has been demonstrated that claims to "knowing what is best" are prevalent in individual
relationships as well as the relationship between the state and its citizens, and thus ever-present
in my informants' everyday lives. In the following chapters, examples will be presented of how
the government tries to put its claims to moral superiority into social practice, and how my
informants deal with these attempts.
5. Of the drinking and non-drinking of alcohol

I vividly remember sitting with a group of Turkish friends in a living room in Antalya in April 2013, just weeks before the beginning of what would later become known as the Gezi Park protests, when one of them burst out laughing while reading something on the internet. After a short conversation in Turkish, which I could not follow, the others laughed out just as loudly. When they translated to me what had happened, I could understand their ridicule. Prime Minister Erdoğan had just stated in an interview that "beer was forced upon the masses as a means of 'modernization'" – a reference to the Kemalist interventions in everyday life introduced in chapter three. Neither beer nor the enormously popular raki (an unsweetened, anis-flavored spirit, widely considered the national beverage of Turkey) were Turkey's national drink at all, but that "indeed, our national drink is ayran [a non-alcoholic yogurt beverage]." To my friends, this statement was hilarious. To them, Turkey's national drink was clearly raki.

In this chapter, the changing legal situation regarding alcohol consumption will be presented as an example of a direct government intervention in lifestyle choices, and it will be explained why in Turkey alcohol consumption can be a politically loaded practice which contributes to the construction of a self-narrative or identity. Examples from my ethnographic material will be provided that show how my informants perceived and dealt with the changing legal situation. Furthermore, the governments' attempts to stigmatize alcohol consumption will be illustrated, and it will be shown how these attempts can lead to violent consequences.

When I returned to Turkey for my fieldwork in January 2014, the rather liberal legal situation regarding alcohol sale I had known from previous travels had changed. As of September 9th, 2013, retailers were no longer allowed to sell alcoholic drinks between ten o'clock at night and six o'clock in the morning. In areas around mosques and schools the sale of alcoholic beverages became illegal altogether, a relatively strict limitation considering the high density of mosques and schools in larger Turkish cities. The government explicitly described this new legislation as being part of a wider policy aimed at reducing the already low alcohol consumption in Turkey for health reasons. Regulations passed in this context over the last years included policies such as the ban of alcohol from "food and sports advertising" or "as promotional prizes" in general (White 2013: 212). Additionally, the number of available licenses for alcohol selling has been reduced drastically (ibid.), and from 2002 to 2009, the taxes on beer were raised by 737%.


45 See reference in note above.

46 Kömürcüler, Güneş. "Restrictions on alcohol sales go into effect today in Turkey" in HürriyetDailyNews,
Alcohol, identities and lifestyles

This law is not a ban, as some have been saying. It is not interference in lifestyle. Nobody should make this alcohol regulation a matter of identity. If you want to drink your alcoholic beverage, take it and do it in your house. Go and drink whatever you like. We are not against it. But we do not allow drinking between some hours and within 100 meters of mosques and schools [...] I want to repeat, this is not a ban, not an intervention in lifestyles.
(Recep Tayyip Erdoğan)47

When introducing the new alcohol legislation, Prime Minister Erdoğan claimed that the new alcohol legislation did not present an interference in lifestyle, and alcohol consumption as such could not be considered a "matter of identity". However, as will become clear in this chapter, alcohol consumption in Turkey can be exactly that.

According to Jenny White, for instance, drinking alcohol for Kemalists can be described as "a practice given the status of a sacred tradition, intrinsically bound to the authority of Atatürk [sic], himself a noted raki enthusiast" (White 2013: 120). As a reaction to the passing of the new legislation, a spokesperson of the Kemalist opposition party CHP was quoted saying that "the AKP's departure point is to intervene in the individual's rights and freedoms. It is to eliminate a lifestyle in Turkey which is not internalized by them".48 Apparently, despite the prime minister's view, by Kemalist Turks (and also by several of my informants, as will be illustrated in this chapter), alcohol consumption is considered a part of identity construction after all. When a person in Turkey offers to buy you a drink and you reply that you do not drink alcohol, the first question more often than not is whether it is for religious reasons, as I experienced several times myself. As Aylin confirmed to me: "Well, in Turkey, if you don't drink alcohol, people will usually think that you are a very religious person. Because the only people that don't drink are religious people or ill people".49


49 Having this in mind, I decided to start having at least one or two beers or glasses of wine when meeting informants in a context where I would be expected to do so – sometimes, however, I refused in order to spark a conversation about the topic.
According to Jenny White, with urbanization and growing economic success, many men of what she calls the "Islamic bourgeoisie" have

either  jettisoned  both  the  mustache  and  the  round  Islamic  beard  and  clothing  distinctions  in  favor  of  
the  clean-shaven  look  of  the  global  businessman,  making  them  indistinguishable  from  
secular  Kemalist  men  …  the  only  inviolate  remaining  marker  that  distinguishes  a  secular  from  a  pious  male  subject  is  a  willingness  to  drink  alcohol.  
(White  2013:  120)

In this context, "a sip of whisky, like a drop of blood, is a highly charged cultural marker of social class, lifestyle and political values. … The kind of alcohol one drinks [or does not drink] marks one's class and secular or pious lifestyle" (White 2013: 132). Alcohol consumption can further be used as a marker of distinction that labels consumers as morally corrupt. This happened when excessive alcohol consumption was used by the government as a pretext to justify the crackdown on the Gezi Park protests. In an attempt to discredit the protesters in the eyes of the more religious parts of the population and justify the harsh police intervention, Erdoğan and other high-ranking AKP members repeatedly claimed that protesters had consumed alcoholic beverages inside a mosque close to Gezi Park, which would be sacrilegious and insulting behavior. The mosque's muezzin, however, stated in an interview with daily newspaper Yurt that he "did not see anyone consume alcohol within the mosque or hold an alcoholic beverage bottle … I cannot say something I have not seen". Injured protesters had sought refuge in the mosque and received first aid there during heavy clashes with the police in the surrounding area, but the image of the drunk Gezi protester stayed with many government supporters up to this day. In this way, the dichotomy between drinking alcohol, a bad thing, and the AKP as a representative of the afore-mentioned incarnation of goodness (Sayyid 1997: 48) is being reproduced through accusations of sacrilegious behavior against people with deviant moral values and lifestyles.

Alcohol sale and everyday life

Remembering how much my friends enjoyed grabbing a spontaneous evening beer from one of the small markets that are located on almost every block, I was curious to hear what my informants would have to say about the alcohol ban. The first person I spoke to about the new legislation was Aylin, who had also been present at the above-mentioned conversation about Erdoğan's interview back in 2013. Despite being unhappy with the government for imposing "another annoying rule", Aylin was not too concerned with the new legislation, because she felt that it affected her "only a little bit". "Actually", she continued, "there are shops who just ignore it, so we can go and buy alcohol there". When I talked to Erhan about the newly implemented laws, however, he voiced his opinion strongly, telling me that "it's bullshit, man". When I asked him if the new legislation had an impact on him personally, he replied as follows:

Erhan: "Of course it does! Now, I have to think before, if I want to drink wine or beer. I can not simply go in the evening and buy something from the market."

Lars: "Somebody told me that there are places where they don't care about the ban..."

Erhan: "Yes, but still I have to think. I have to go to these places then instead of my normal ones. And it is a risk. Also for the shop owners it is a risk. They have to worry about stuff now that they did not have to think about before. So these people [the government] make life more difficult for other people."

Erhan was seriously upset by the new legislation, and felt that it had great impact on his everyday life. As a freelancer who worked from home, he often stayed up late and liked to spend evenings with a glass of wine on his balcony or the beach. Now, this had to be planned ahead. "Also," he continued, "I find it annoying, you know. I have this special cup I drink wine from. It's my thing, it's part of who I am. I like drinking alcohol. People should not forbid me things that I like as long as it doesn't hurt anybody". Here, Erhan clearly stated that consuming alcohol to him was a part of who he was, his identity.

Another informant I talked to was Selin. She holds a university degree and works for the Istanbul branch of a global player in sports clothing and can be described as one of the more politically active of my informants. She is a member of an informal group of feminist activists and has participated in the original Gezi Park protests. Throughout all our conversations that dealt with politics, she was highly critical of both AKP and CHP. One evening, I had met and interviewed her husband Başar, who works for a major foreign internet company, after they had read a public post that I made on the CouchSurfing website looking for informants. As the evening progressed, we were joined by Selin and some of her friends, with whom she had participated in protests linked to the International Women's Day earlier that day. After this first
meeting, Başar and Selin organized a dinner in a local restaurant for some couchsurfers they wanted to introduce to Turkish food and drinking culture, and invited me as well. They specifically chose a place that served alcohol, because they wanted their guests to be able to taste rakı, to which they referred as "very Turkish". In the restaurant, Başar ordered a bottle of rakı, which was then shared by the whole table. Tony, a German couchsurfer also present at that dinner, later referred to it as "the rakı-dinner", which I found to be quite representative of how the Turkish participants repeatedly stressed the importance of rakı for a get-together of this kind. "An evening with rakı", Başar insisted, "is always very different from one without rakı. Rakı is important". I later interviewed Başar and Selin in their apartment, and the conversation quickly turned to the new alcohol legislation. When I asked if the couple felt like the new legislation had an impact on their personal lives, Selin replied:

Selin: "Actually, not so much. And honestly, I think that people just complain about it because it was done by [the] AKP. If it was another government, I mean, people wouldn't protest against it. I mean, in a lot of European countries there are similar bans because of health or security reasons. People now complain because they think it is a religious ban. I think it is interesting, people that complain most about it are middle class people. But for them it's not so bad really, I mean, not like for the people in the poor parts. Young men there just sit on the street and get drunk and then they fight or go home and beat their wives. That's not good."

Başar: "But Selin, actually it effected us very much last week! Remember, Lars, when we went to the meyhane [literally 'tavern' / Turkish restaurant that serves alcohol] for the rakı and you left afterwards? We wanted to go for another beer with the others, but because of gentrification, everything is so expensive around Galata [an area of Istanbul close to Taksim Square] now. So the guys didn't want to go into one of the bars. Usually, we would just have bought some beers in a market and sat down on the ground, but now we couldn't!"

Selin: "'Oh, that's true. But it was the first time it effected us. Maybe it will be more, when summer comes.'

Başar: "I am sure it will be. ... But I have actually bought beer after ten [o'clock]. The guy in the shop was really afraid and paranoid. He kept asking, like, 'who is this outside? Is he police? Do you know him?' and stuff like that. He didn't want to sell us the beer. We were talking for ten minutes, saying 'Look, you know us, we are not police! We just want to drink a beer!' In the end, they sold it to us, but he was really uncomfortable with it."

Başar then elaborated on how much it annoyed him that due to the new legislation, one of his favorite activities for warm summer nights could now only happen with planning-ahead. "Actually, I think this will change a lot of my behavior. I think I will get used to it probably quite quickly, but it feels weird that something like this influences your life", he concluded.
Another informant I spoke to about the new legislation was Lilly. During an informal interview, tellingly over a glass of wine, she gave me her view of the government's efforts to reduce alcohol consumption. When I asked her whether the recent change in laws had an impact on her own life, she strongly affirmed:

Yes, absolutely. Usually, I don't drink at home, but we love to have drinks outside in the summer. And now we can't do that spontaneously. We have a get-together with old university friends every Monday, you know? In the beginning we were like 'Okay, nobody is going to care about it', because in Turkey, nobody ever cares about rules. But with this thing, it's different. We were in the shop at ten past ten and the guy didn't sell us the alcohol, he said 'No, I can't do it, they will find out'. Although we said we don't need a receipt or anything. It really sucks. When we go to a bar in Kadıköy [a hip place in the Anatolian part of Istanbul] or something, in the summer, we like to sit outside and drink raki. The last time, at ten, the guy came and said 'You have to go inside now. You can not drink outside, people will see!' and so we had to go inside like if we were doing something very bad. I hate it. It's not like I am an alcoholic or anything, but drinking alcohol with friends is a part of who I am.

So to Lilly, the changes in legislation in fact did make a difference, they had an impact on her lifestyle and her ability to act out who she was.

According to a an article in daily newspaper Today's Zaman, the government claimed to have "drafted the bill in order to protect children and young people from the harmful effects of alcoholic consumption", and was "also confident that the law will help to significantly reduce the number of traffic accidents, given that, as Erdoğan noted, alcohol is one of the major causes for road accidents in Turkey. Describing the law as a historic step, 'I do believe the number of traffic accidents will significantly decrease,' he said". My informants, however, came up with different explanations for the government's motivation to change the laws regarding alcohol sales, and they were eager to share them with me. For my flatmate Erhan, the government's motivation was clear and simple. After telling me how the new laws interfered in his everyday life, he stated: "And it is all about control for them [the government]. They want to control you. They hate it when people are happy". He repeated this view some weeks later in a conversation in which he complained about the people being too concerned with other people's lives: "If they don't want to drink alcohol that's fine, but why do they have to forbid me? It's like they don't want people to be happy". Aylin similarly stated that she thought the new law was a means for the government to enforce their ideals on people. Knowing she came from a conservative religious family, but not being religious herself, I asked how the matter was dealt with in her family. She replied

My mother knows that I drink alcohol, but she doesn't want me to, and I think she would rather not know. But sometimes when I am home [at my parents' house in Izmir] in the summer, I go out to drink and then she smells it when I come home. But my father doesn't. He can not know. He would go crazy! He might stop giving me money for studying and make me come back to Izmir even. But the good thing is, I think he doesn't even know how to tell if I drank or not. He's more concerned with the smoking.

Selin, on the other hand, believed more pragmatic administrative reasons behind the new law:

Selin: "People say that the alcohol ban might actually lead to the small markets being closed in a few years. Because now, they don't sell as much alcohol and if you have to plan ahead, I mean, you can as well bring alcohol from the supermarket during the day instead of buying it there. They say that's what the government wants."

Başar: "Really? Why so?"

Selin: "Because the markets often sell the alcohol without receipts and don't pay taxes for it. So it would be good for the government if the markets disappear. [To me:] But you know how it is in Turkey, everybody says something. You never know what's true [laughs]."

Potential problems for retailers were also addressed by Bendevi Palandöken, head of the Confederation of Turkish Craftsmen and Tradesmen (TESK), who, according to a newspaper article stated that "200,000 people earned much of their revenue from their alcohol sales at night, but no longer … this regulation may unfortunately trigger illegal sales and lead to the reports being made in neighborhoods. Imagine a man who does not like a retailer in his neighborhood. He may accuse the retailer of selling alcohol illegally at night".53 This might explain the shop owner's 'paranoid' behavior that Başar told me about.

**Laws against alcohol, violence against drinkers**

The government did not stop their fight against alcohol consumption at legal interventions and discursively labeling alcohol consumption as bad. How little understanding President Erdoğan has for people who drink alcohol, becomes clear from reports about him stating that "he could not understand why people had to drink wine, when they could just eat the grapes instead",54 and already back in 1994 as mayor of Istanbul, he had banned alcohol completely from an art exhibition at a municipal venue (Moudouros 2014: 182). In 2015, according to newspaper *Today's Zaman*, Erdoğan explicitly promoted a change in social practice, when he called on his supporters to actively pressure alcohol consumers to stop drinking: "Serious neighborhood pressure is needed against smokers and alcohol drinkers. We should altogether establish a social

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environment in which smokers are chided and drug addicts are treated like ill”. In fact, Zeynep had already told me in our interview two a year before that she often felt judged when neighbors saw her buying alcoholic drinks in the supermarket. Already a year earlier, it became evident what statements like Erdoğan's call for more neighborhood pressure in combination with the ongoing labeling of others as enemies can lead to. While on a short visit to Istanbul in May 2014, I read about an incident at an art gallery opening located in the Tophane district of Istanbul, close to İstiklal Caddesi, Istanbul's liberal and touristic center. At the gallery, guests were violently attacked by a group of men armed with sticks, after some visitors had refused the neighbors' demand to take the cocktails they were drinking in front of the gallery entrance inside. Like the incident with the groups chanting Erdoğan's name that was addressed in the previous chapter, this incident exemplifies that in an atmosphere in which people who do not share the government's values are constantly being labeled as bad and enemies of the millet, inhibition against violence gets lost. As shown above, alcohol consumption in Turkey can be described as one of the "routinised practices" (Giddens 1991: 81) that not only "fulfil utilitarian needs, but … give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity" (ibid.), parts of who they are, as Lilly and Erhan described it. However, it is not endorsed by the current AKP government, and while parts of the population agree with the government's rejection of alcohol consumption, alcohol consumers are antagonized. Not seeing the need to create a consensus, the government resorts to overt control, limiting certain people's lifestyle choices through legal means as well as by calling for social pressure.

56 See note above.
On March 20th, 2013, I entered the living room of the apartment I shared with Erhan, smartphone in hand. "Erhan", I yelled through the open door of his room, where he was working on yet another book translation, "Twitter is not working anymore, I think it's blocked!". "What" he replied, "these assholes again!". Only days before, President Erdoğan reportedly had promised that the AKP would not "allow the people to be devoured by YouTube, Facebook or others". According to political scientist Ekim Arbatlı, the Turkish government has recently "increased limitations on internet freedom, including extremely controversial bans on social media outlets. Especially during the 2013-2014 period, various attempts were made at online content restrictions by the AKP government" (Arbatlı 2014: sec. III, para. 6). This chapter seeks to illustrate and explain the government's efforts to gain control over social media, which was perceived by my informants as a further interference in their everyday lives.

In Turkey, there are 36 million active Facebook users and 11.5 million Twitter users, resulting in a total of 92% of the population with internet access using social media – the highest percentage in the world.59 Thus, social media has an enormous outreach in Turkey. Already in the spring of 2013, during the heyday of the Gezi Park protests, then-prime minister Erdoğan reportedly had publicly singled out social media as "the worst menace to society".60 What made Twitter and social media in general such a hot topic in Turkey that the prime minister felt the need to personally get involved? I will begin the investigation of this development by providing a brief overview on the situation of freedom of press in contemporary Turkey, as the limitation of access to social media has to be understood in the context of government attempts to shape the public opinion.

In the 2015 Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Turkey is listed on place 149 of 180, ranking lower than countries such as Qatar (position 115), Afghanistan (position 122), or Myanmar (position 144).61 Critical journalists have been charged...
with and sentenced for the likes of insulting 'Turkishness' or supporting terrorism for critically reporting on the army's role in the conflict with the Kurds (Yücel 2014: 148ff.). The Vienna-based non-profit organization International Press Institute (IPI) registers in its "Democracy at Risk: IPI Special Report on Turkey 2015" that "that more than 66,000 websites are currently blocked in Turkey, whether by the administration or by the courts. According to Hurriyet, more than 150 content bans on media have been imposed in the last four years" (IPI 2015: 29). An example of how the government utilizes the judiciary system to silence critical media can further be found in the case of media mogul Aydın Doğan, founder of Doğan Holding (a conglomerate that owns major newspapers such as Hürriyet and Radikal and TV channels such as CNN Türk, TNT and Kanal D). Doğan was fined a record 400 million Euros for tax evasion after a controversial court process, in what many believed to be a disciplinary action for some of his outlet's criticism of government politics (Yücel 2014: 148). After the incident, Doğan's outlets are said to have become less critical (ibid.). Furthermore, as Arbatlı additionally points out, since 2008, close friends and associates of Mr. Erdoğan have acquired large shares in the television and print press, which marks a clash between what is real news and what is acceptable as news by the AKP officials. Many journalists and columnists have lost their jobs in the process, with many others becoming political targets and openly attacked during public speeches of the Prime Minister at various instances. These developments have also led to large scale self-censorship within the media workers, and anecdotal evidence suggests that the pressure starts mostly at the channel or newspaper executive level before news can even be made public.

(Arbatlı 2014: sec. II, para. 2)

The self-censorship addressed by Arbatlı became further evident when police brutality around the Gezi Park protests escalated on June 1st, 2013. While CNN in the US aired live footage from Taksim Square, CNN Türk aired a documentary on penguins, leading to the antarctic animal becoming a symbol of Turkish media bias and a mascot of the protesters. Because the mainstream media initially only briefly covered the protests, Facebook and Twitter quickly became crucial to the mobilization of protesters. One of Guttstadt's informants who took part in the protests maintains that "if we had not had our cameras with us during all this tear gas, and had Twitter not existed, nobody had ever known about it" (Buse, as quoted by Guttstadt 2014: 116). Between May 29th and June 3rd 2014, the hash tag "#DirenGeziParkı" (which roughly translates to "Resist, Gezi Park!") was used in more than 5.5 million Tweets, 400,000 of which included pictures and videos, and similar hash tags such as "#occupygezi" and "#direnAnkara" were respectively used several hundred thousand times as well (Yücel 2014: 152). According to Yücel, this enraged Erdoğan personally, and on the evening of June 3rd he for the first time explicitly named Twitter in a press statement, referring to it as a "menace" (ibid.).

In the previous chapter, it has been argued that the AKP government claims to
representing 'goodness'. Because this image is vital to their claim to moral authority, the government seeks influence over TV stations and newspapers in order to influence public discourses. Thus, a platform like Twitter, which promotes and thrives on a pluralism of opinions and exchange of ideas, is indeed threatening — to the AKP's claim on moral authority, that is. As the AKP represents the millet, the social unity, in their perspective Twitter is indeed a "menace to society". Realizing the importance that social media gains when it fills in for balanced reporting by the traditional media, the government reacted. Legal measures were taken to limit oppositional influences on Twitter, which resulted in 92% of all world-wide court orders to remove content from Twitter coming from Turkey. Furthermore, rumors about the AKP secretly paying people to attack critics on social media had kept circulating on the internet before and during my fieldwork, and were indeed supported by the "Special Report on Turkey 2015" in which the International Press Institute (IPI) speaks of 6,000 "AK Trolls' [which] have become a de facto, online government army capable of manipulating public opinion through anonymous accounts – an army that regularly engages in harassment and intimidation". Users who publicly criticize the government on social media are flooded with accusations such as "traitor" or "Zionist agent", and often obscene insults. But not only anonymous "AK trolls" engage in these practices: in fact, Ankara's AKP mayor Melih Gökçek called critical BBC journalist Selin Girit a "traitor to the fatherland" on Twitter and asked his 700,000 followers to protest against her (Yücel 2014: 153). This resulted in Girit receiving "thousands of Tweets including insults, threats of rape and murder" (ibid.). Here, we find another example of how discourse labeling of others as traitors and enemies leads to a deeper division of society and at the same time has severe consequences for the targeted individuals.

**Youtube and Twitter bans — "annoying" and "undemocratic"**

During the weeks prior to the Twitter ban referenced in the beginning of this chapter, some Twitter accounts had been used to spread what seemed to be legit top secret information from within the judiciary system. The respective Tweets related to upcoming raids of newspaper offices, and to allegations of corruption against members of both the AKP government and the Erdoğan family. The specific tweet that finally lead to Twitter being blocked for several days in early 2014 included a YouTube link to a recording of a discussion between high level army

personnel and government officials discussing a false flag attack on Turkish soldiers in order to create a pretext to interfere in the Syrian civil war. The government denied the authenticity of the recording, but at the same time stated that it was a threat to the national security. As a consequence, access to Twitter from within Turkey was technically blocked for several days. Further, access to YouTube was blocked as well, with the ban not being lifted until June 2014. Whereas Twitter as a company decided to cooperate with Turkish authorities by deleting the accounts of the responsible whistle blowers, YouTube refused to cooperate. The YouTube ban was declared illegal by several Turkish courts short after it was imposed. The government, however, did ignore the court ruling for several weeks until the constitutional court repeatedly released statements saying that the ban was an ongoing violation the constitutional right to freedom of expression.

These bans were not the first time that Twitter and YouTube had been blocked by the authorities. In fact, access to YouTube actually had been blocked several times before throughout the 2000s, sometimes on Kemalist incentive, e.g. for spreading videos that were considered as insulting Atatürk. As a result, many Turkish internet users are familiar with technologies that allow them to still use banned websites, such as VPN clients and browsing via proxy servers. However, the fact that they were still able to access them did not mean that blocked websites were of no concern to my informants. When asked about the topic, Erhan made the same case he made when asked about alcohol sale. It annoyed him. "I have to worry about stuff now that I usually should not have to worry about. We have to use VPN and things like that. It is annoying. [The] Government should not tell me which websites to visit". Other informants described the bans in terms of "yet another little annoyance" in their everyday life as well. While today there are several easy ways to access blocked websites on a computer, it is still not as easy for everybody to do so on a mobile device like a smart phone or a tablet. My informant Sever told me that

"it really sucks. You're at a party or something, and then you want to show somebody a song with YouTube, and then you have to get a laptop, because it doesn't work on the phone. It's nothing bad, but it's annoying. And it shouldn't be that way. This is not democracy. ... I really find it [the Twitter ban] so annoying. I like to read Twitter on my phone when I'm on the bus, or I have to wait for something, or – [he laughs] – on the toilet, you know? Also, I like to share articles and things with it. I read so many interesting things online, and I want to share them with people, so that more people can read them. I can do it on Facebook, but that's different, you know? … Because there you reach less people, only your friends."
Sever, as well as Erhan when quoted above, hints at something deeper here: while they both phrase it in terms of 'annoyances' in daily life that are not really bad, they also feel that the ban is an expression of non-democratic policy, and that the government is acting in ways it should not act. Furthermore, to Sever, Twitter is a means of sharing his views with others, an option that is being taken away from him through the blocked access to it.

As illustrated above, the government has clearly strengthened its efforts not only to control access to social media platforms, but also to shape its contents, by employing professional 'opinion makers'. While my informants' descriptions of it varied between "annoying" to "not democratic", the government's attempts to regulate and control social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook have to be seen in the context of an attempt to gain control over all media, including newspapers and broadcasters. Furthermore, Erdoğan's statement about social media as "the worst menace" to society which needs to be "eradicated" here illustrates the importance of a statement's wording. Wording here refers to the interdiscursive relations that a certain lexical choice implies (Fairclough 1992: 190), i.e. it's inherent reference to other existing discourses. Erdoğan describes social media as a menace which aims at devouring the people. He further accuses social media users and platforms of spreading lies about the government and the nation. In doing so, he draws on the nationalist discourse described in earlier chapters, according to which the Turkish people is being threatened by inside enemies (Turkish social media users with deviating views) and outside enemies (the foreign-owned platforms themselves). Fighting off this self-constructed threat provides the government with the opportunity to show off "the power of the Turkish republic", as Erdoğan promised when quoted in the beginning of this chapter.
7. Of terrorists and nationalists discourse — and how things can change

I am standing on a small balcony above İstiklal Caddesi in Taksim, Istanbul's most liberal district. Başar had asked me to step out on the balcony with him for company, as he wanted to smoke a cigarette. Now he says "It's good that you came outside. I wanted to talk to you about the Kurdish question earlier, but I can't. Not here. It is not possible to speak about these things in front of everybody. Not even in front of some of my friends. You never know what they will think, and it might really have an impact on who they think you are as a person". "Why is that?", I ask him. "You can never know what they think about it. Even more left people might think that Kurds are terrorists. Everybody knows somebody who went to the army, many of us had to go to the army. Maybe somebody has friends or relatives who were killed. People are not rational about this. You always have to be careful".

(Personal notes, March 2014)

As the episode depicted above shows, one of the most difficult topics touched upon during my fieldwork was what Başar referred to as "the Kurdish question". A deep analysis of discourses and actors related to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict would go beyond the scope of this thesis, and only two of my informants actually brought up the topic, so I did not gather much ethnographic material on it. The fact that these two informants felt the need to speak about the topic, however, and the impression left by Başar's effort to tell me that he did not feel comfortable talking about it, convinced me that it still needs to be addressed here, even if only briefly.65 Furthermore, this discussion provides the opportunity to introduce the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), which was founded only shortly before my fieldwork and has since become an influential actor in Turkish politics. It will be introduced in more detail the second section of this chapter.

The second informant other than Başar who brought up the Kurdish question was Lilly. Towards the end of our interview, I asked her if there was anything else she wished to address. She paused for a moment and then replied:

There is also the thing about Kurdish people. You know, I have lived in many cities in Turkey, because my parents are teachers. I have friends everywhere. Also Kurdish people from when we lived in the east. People are calling them terrorists. Outside the east, when you meet someone and get to know them, and after some time they tell you that they are Kurdish, a lot of people back away from them. If you have Kurdish friends, it is suspicious.

When I asked her if she was directly affected by the judgment of others for having Kurdish friends, she denied, because she "had gotten used to it" and "did not care" what other people thought about her because of it. But to others, "and of course the Kurdish people", Lilly said, this was a big thing. In contemporary Turkey, Kurds are by some still labeled as terrorists, just because they are Kurds. This stigmatization can rub off on their Turkish friends and acquaintances, and influence the way they speak about the conflict. The conversations with Başar and Lilly took place towards the end of my fieldwork, and the practical circumstances as well as

65 Consequently, I do not claim that this chapter attempts to give a conclusive overview on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict related discourses. Due to the focus of this thesis and the conducted interviews, the chapter describes the situation of two Turkish informants, and does not represent or aim at representing or analyzing Kurdish perspectives.
my lack of familiarity with the topic at the time did not allow for follow-up questions regarding the topic. I do not know whether my other informants did not bring up the topic because they felt uncomfortable about it or because they did not care. When I asked Erhan about it, he did not really want to speak about it, because according to him, "it doesn't matter if you are Turkish or Kurdish. Both can be nice, both can be assholes. So I don't care", and that's what he wanted to leave it at. However, the mechanics that are at work in this discursive labeling of people as terrorists and 'friends of terrorists' will be explained in the following section.

The Kurdish question constitutes a highly relevant part of both Kemalist nationalism and 'Muslim nationalism'. White (2013: 53) points out, "Kemalist nationalism excludes Kurds from the nation unless they reject their roots … and become fictive Turks", because to Kemalist nationalists, 'Turkishness' is linked to blood and heritage (ibid: 2ff.). Muslim nationalism, on the other hand, is "potentially inclusive of Kurds as fellow Muslims within the Turkish realm" (ibid: 53). If they accept the governments' claim to moral authority based in Islam as well as the authority of the Turkish state, Kurds can thus become part of the millet. Consequently, the AKP government has sought peace talks with Kurdish leaders, and in its early years pursued the so called "Kurdish opening". The "Kurdish opening" included some democratic reforms, such as a Kurdish-language TV station and the official use of Kurdish names for several towns in the east of Turkey, which before was both forbidden by law (ibid: 52). This opening lead to increased electoral success for the AKP among more conservative and religious Kurdish voters (see Akdağ 2015). By Kemalist nationalists, however, the "Kurdish opening" was perceived as an attack on the "Turkish" character of the republic. Together with the AKP's discursive and legal attempts to weaken laicism (e.g. through the legal changes regarding the headscarf ban or the new alcohol laws), the "Kurdish opening" was depicted by nationalist and ultra-nationalist Kemalists as a part of one big attack on Atatürk's Turkey (Guttstadt 2014: 123). Thus, it had to be fought. This development lead to even more hardened fronts in the Kurdish question.

As was pointed out in chapter three, when the AKP took over the government in 2002, many center-left Turks were actually hopeful that the AKP would break up old Kemalist structures, instead of making use of them. Hope was that this would lead to a change in nationalist discourse that would allow for a peaceful and democratic opening of the Kurdish question. But as a result of the AKP's authoritarian turn, these hopes were shattered, and the people that had dared to hope were confronted with a dilemma that made whole situation even more complicated: the party that supported a less-violent solution than the Kemalists was the same party that was actively impeding many other civil rights and liberties — the kind of politics you did not want to be identified with.
Throughout 2014 and 2015, however, the public discourse on the Kurdish question was changing. The Kurdish question had been discussed among politically active left-wing Turks before, but as Başar's account exemplifies, it was not easily talked about among people closer to the political center. But already before the Gezi Park protests, several Turkish socialist, feminist, and social democratic groups together with trade unions and the Kurdish-based Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) had formed the umbrella organization Peoples' Democracy Congress, which later resulted in the founding of the Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi* / HDP). The HDP promotes participatory democracy, gender-equality, and a peaceful solution of the Kurdish question, and as a coalition of Kurdish and Turkish groups, it opened up a new support base. Throughout the next two years, the HDP established itself as an alternative to both the AKP and the Kemalist CHP (for more details, see Celeb 2014). Its support grew also among more conservative Kurds in Turkey, when the AKP government refused to help the Syrian Kurds in city of Kobane that was besieged by ISIS, and due to numerous reports about an alleged cooperation between Turkish armed forces and ISIS. Consequently, in the general elections in June 2015, the HDP crossed the ten-percent electoral threshold and entered parliament after polling at 13.1%. This marked the first time in Turkish history that a Kurdish-rooted party entered the national parliament (Cagaptay 2015: 1).

Here, the episode described in the beginning of this chapter comes back into play, in what can be seen as an example of how quickly political discourses and practice can change. Roughly a year before the June elections, Başar had told me on the balcony about not being able to speak about his views on the Kurdish issue even in front of some of his closer friends. In late May 2015, the same Başar publicly posted on his Facebook profile that he was going to vote for the HDP in the upcoming elections. In the lengthy text he published, he urged his over 400 Facebook friends to rethink stereotypes constructed through "nationalist stories" about "terrorist Kurds" and "martyrs who died for Turkey". He stated that he had had no Kurdish friends when he grew up, and talked about how he was raised to believe in people who speak Turkish, not Kurdish, but how he did not see how that was of any relevance anymore. He then went on to slam both the AKP and the Kemalists for not bringing about any positive change regarding civil liberties over the last decades, and asked people to decide who to vote for based on actual political programs, not nationalist sentiments. While due to the limited time and the narrow focus of this thesis, I did not have the opportunity to thoroughly investigate how exactly this happened, Başar's text

For a list of founding member organizations of the Peoples' Democratic Congress, see http://www.halklarindemokratikkongresi.net/hdk/bilesenler/hdk-bileseni-kurumlar/517.

The HDP is co-chaired by a male and a female chairperson and has a strict 50% quota for women and 10% quota for representatives of the LGBT community. Accordingly, positions for male and female co-mayors were created in the eastern cities where the HDP won the local elections.
clearly exemplifies a change in discourse through which it has become possible to claim new positions and publicly express them. Furthermore, Başar was not the only person I interviewed to do so; at least two more of my informants posted less elaborated, yet similar texts before the June elections, and even more of them keep regularly posting articles about the Kurdish question up to this day on Facebook and Twitter.

The government reacts

The results of the June 2015 general elections were inconclusive. Despite losing almost nine percent of their electoral share compared to the last elections, the AKP once again became the strongest party when it polled at 40.9% (Cagaptay 2015: 1). Because none of the other three parties in parliament (the Kemalist CHP, the ultra-nationalist MHP, and the Kurdish-rooted left-wing HDP) were willing to form a coalition with the AKP or each other, new elections were announced for November 2015. As a reaction to the change in discourse on the Kurdish question and the subsequent loss in votes in the June elections, the AKP politics regarding the Kurdish changed drastically. Drawing on nationalist anti-Kurdish discourses, the government chose confrontation. The peace talks were terminated, and the army started to impose curfews over major Kurdish cities. New violence arose in the east of the country, with several civilians and alleged terrorists being killed on a weekly basis, including prominent Kurdish human rights activist and lawyer Tahir Elçi in late November 2015. By going back to a politics of polarizing, e.g. by contradictory blaming the political left and specifically the HDP for the Ankara bombing that saw more than one hundred left-wing and peace activists dead in October, the AKP was able to redraw voters from both HDP and the ultra-nationalist MHP and win the absolute majority in the November 2015 snap-elections (Cagaptay et al. 2015).

In this chapter, it has briefly been presented how nationalist discourses related to the Kurdish question have an influence on two of my informants' lives. Furthermore, it has been illustrated how interwoven certain discourses (e.g. laicism and nationalism) are. Next, it has been shown how complex the political landscape is in Turkey, where the enemy of your enemy is still your enemy: Many non-Kemalists may have agreed with the AKP's initial "Kurdish opening", but rejected the rest of the AKP's program. At the same time, they appreciate a laicist lifestyle as supported by the Kemalists, but reject Kemalist ideas about nationalism. This leaves them caught between two stools. While I have no proof for it, I suspect that this predicament is part of what led to the change in discourse regarding the Kurdish question. At the same time as those people

68 Analysts suggested that most of the nine percent the AKP had lost went either to the HDP or to the ultranationalist MHP (mostly nationalists that were disappointed by the AKP's open approach; see Cagaptay 2015: 2).
were looking for an alternative, the Kurdish party BDP that was labeled as 'terrorist', formed an alliance with non-Kurdish political groups, which created a new actor in the discourse that was no longer automatically labeled as Kurdish and 'terrorist'. Consequently, people like Başar dared to speak openly about their views regarding the issue. In any case, the balcony conversation with Başar and his Facebook posting a year later exemplify how dynamic these political discourses are. Furthermore, it was illustrated in this chapter how changes in discourse carry implications for the political and social reality, and that the government is still able to quickly react to changing discourses by adjusting its policy in order to maintain a hegemonic position.
8. "They are sitting with boys and girls!"

This chapter seeks to explore views of gender-relations and sexuality in contemporary Turkey with a focus on how lifestyle choices are being limited through social pressure and government discourses that are grounded in a claimed moral superiority. First, different perceptions of mixed accommodation and men and women spending time together will be investigated, in order to show how social pressure and judgment can affect my informants' choices of who they (openly) keep company with. In the second part of the chapter, discourses on women's sexualities and sexual reproduction will briefly be presented and analyzed as an example of how the government, using radical language, draws on religious and nationalist discourses in order to stigmatize people who want to take choices that are contrary to its own moral values.

In November 2013, then-prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan reportedly addressed that in some cities, male and female university students were living in mixed student accommodation:

[Erdoğan said:] 'It's not clear what is going on in these places. They are all mixed up, anything can happen. As a conservative democratic government, we have to intervene. In these places, there is intelligence received by our security forces, the police department and the governorates. Acting upon this intelligence, our governors are intervening in these situations. Why are you annoyed about this? ... Erdoğan portrayed such actions as part of the government's responsibility, stressing that this had nothing to do with intervening "in people's lifestyles. ...Mothers and fathers cry out, asking 'where is the state?' These steps are taken to tell them that the state is here," he said, adding that he knew that parents would be uncomfortable allowing girls and boys to live together.69

In addressing these issues and targeting mixed student accommodation, Erdoğan argues, the state was merely answering requests by concerned parents. Once again, as presented in chapter four, the government here acts as a substitute for a parent. Here, Erdoğan explicitly states that he knows 'what is best', and what parents want for their children. Instead of leaving it to the family to find a solution, in Erdoğan's understanding, the state has to intervene, because of its moral authority and because only the state has the means to enforce what is best for everybody. Thus, it is the state's moral duty to limit the student's choices of who to live with.

In the interviews I conducted, none of my informants could actually say anything about mixed student accommodation, as they all lived in private housing. Some of them, however, used the opportunity to share experiences with neighbors and other people who reacted strongly to unmarried men and women living together or spending time together inside their apartments. As addressed in chapter four, Erdoğan has publicly expressed that "serious neighborhood pressure is needed against smokers and alcohol drinkers".70 The accounts given by my informants and

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69 "Turkish government to act on accommodation housing female and male students" in Hüriyet Daily News, Nov. 5th, 2013 (no author given).

70 "Erdoğan calls for 'neighborhood pressure' against smokers, alcohol drinkers" in Today's Zaman, Mar. 4th,
presented in this chapter will illustrate that said serious neighborhood pressure already exists with regards to unmarried women who wish to spend time with men, and can have a serious impact on the informants' lives.

When I interviewed Zeynep, who was introduced in chapter four as the woman who had trouble with her boss, she told me the story of a friend of hers. The friend had hosted what Zeynep called "not even a party, just a small get-together for some drinks with some people on a Friday night". The people, she said, had not been playing loud music or been overly loud in any other way. They were drinking alcohol though, and it was a mixed crowd of male and female friends. At one point, before midnight, all of a sudden a geared-up police squad knocked on the door. They aggressively stated that "the fun is over now" and then sent everybody home, threatening arrest to those staying. What had happened? According to Zeynep, conservative neighbors had reported her friend to the police — not for being too loud, but "because they were drinking alcohol, and they were sitting with boys and girls", both perfectly legal in Turkey. "Did you know," Zeynep asked me, "that that is almost a phrase in Turkish? 'Sitting with boys and girls', it is something bad and you shouldn't do it, they say". While I knew that many conservative Turks had different views about gender relations than my informants, I had not heard of that particular phrase before. It would however be mentioned to me in slight variations in several interviews after this first introduction. Zeynep continued by telling me that she constantly felt judged by neighbors and acquaintances for inviting male friends over to her house for dinner or other social gatherings, and that she would love it if the neighbors could just ignore it and "let people meet who they want, where they want". When she talked on, it became clear that Zeynep felt restricted in the choices available to her when it came to meeting with men. "It is becoming a burden", she stated, "and I now always think first about if we can maybe go to another person's place instead. That makes me sad, because I'm a person who loves to cook for people and host parties". Here, it becomes clear how much of an influence the neighbors' judgment has on Zeynep: she chooses differently than she would like to, because she can not stand the way the neighbors react to her preferred choice. As introduced in the second chapter, lifestyle according to Giddens (1991: 81) includes, among other factors, "what to wear, what to eat, how to conduct [one]self at work, whom to meet with later in the evening". Zeynep is a

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71 In another interview, my informant Başar spoke about "sitting with men and women". He told the story of a friend of a friend of a friend who allegedly died after jumping out of the window of his girlfriend's apartment. According to the story, the man wanted to save his girlfriend from the trouble she would have gotten into if the neighbors, who were knocking on her door, had found him there. Başar himself was not sure if this story was true, and I did not find any reports verifying it, but the fact that such a story circulates and is not immediately considered pure invention is telling in itself.
prime example for how all of these are affected through stigmatization (by the neighbors who judge who she is meeting with) and attempted control (through her boss, who tells her not to eat at work during Ramadan and what she is supposed to wear; see chapter two). She perceives this as an attack on her identity, because she considers being sociable and hospitable a part of her personality.

Another person I spoke to about this topic was Aylin. During my fieldwork, I sometimes slept on the couch in my informant Aylin's living room, for example when I had to meet with people late in the evening or early in the morning, as my apartment was located in the outskirts of Antalya, whereas Aylin lived right in the city center. I had also stayed at Aylin's former apartment for a couple of days in the year before, when I couchsurfed with her and her flatmate at the time, Gizem, while traveling in Turkey. I had not asked Aylin yet why she had moved to a new apartment, when she actually brought up the topic herself one day, telling me about her neighbors:

Aylin: "You know, the people here, the neighbors, they are like family, at least they say that. They say, like, 'Oh you can come with everything and I will help you', and they really do help you. But it also means, they are like parents in bad ways and they try to control you, you know? In my old apartment, the one I shared with Gizem, we were not even allowed to have boys in there! The landlord said he would throw us out if he would find out boys would visit! And the neighbors all agreed with that!"

Lars: "Oh, I didn't know that! You never told me about that when I stayed there with you guys."

Aylin: "No, no, we never wanted anyone to worry. It always worked out. But the neighbors were really looking after it, they were always spying on us somehow. That's one of the reasons I moved to this new apartment now.'

As this excerpt shows, Aylin chose to react to the limitation of her choices in whom to meet with by moving away from the neighbors and the landlord that tried to tell her what to do. When I asked her if it was better at her new place, she replied extensively:

It was very annoying there. It is a little better here, but the neighbors still would not approve [of having male visitors]. They are not looking after it on purpose so much. But I'm still trying to hide people. Like when Flo [Aylin's Austrian boyfriend] is here, we keep the curtains closed, because [the] neighbors start talking bad things about me otherwise. Even if we just sit on the couch. Boy and girl, you can't even sit together ... And in the morning, I always get the breakfast alone [by myself], and we never go to the shop here [in the same building] together, because I know that the guy [shop-owner] would tell the landlord 'Oh, she is with a boy, with a foreigner from Europe'. Maybe it would be trouble. Also, maybe my parents will ask him about things like this when they come and visit, the shop guy, I mean. My father would do that. He will go there and have a chat and then ask if he saw me with guys. So if we want to buy something together, we go to the shop that is further away.
After this interview, I doubted whether I should keep visiting Aylin in her house, in order not to cause her any trouble, but she insisted: "No, no, of course you should keep coming here. I do not want to let these people decide who I can meet in my own apartment and who not. It is not their business". Apparently, she felt that there was less risk with receiving male visitors in her new house, and that she was willing to take the risk in order to defend her choice of visitors.

During this conversation, Aylin also brought to my attention that her parents did not know that she was not living with Gizem anymore. "They would never approve of me living alone", she said. When I asked her why, she shrugged: "I guess they think that there can be no bad things going on when you live with another girl, that you are both holy and protect each other". Aylin continued that if her parents found out that she lived alone, they would make her move to a shared apartment or all-female student accommodation.

As I learned some weeks later, Aylin went through quite some trouble to keep up the facade of her living with another girl. One day I asked her if she wanted to join me and some of Erhan's friends for a barbecue the next weekend, but she said she could not come because her parents would be visiting then. When I asked her if they would not find out that she lived by herself, she replied that she would trick them by having a female friend come over early in the morning. They would place a second tooth brush in the bathroom and some clothes in the bedroom, and once the parents would arrive, the friend would start packing a backpack and then pretend to go to her parents' house for the weekend. When I expressed my surprise that Aylin thought this would work, because the apartment only had one bedroom, she laughingly stated that would not be a problem, because she had a double bed, and that it was perfectly fine to share a bed with another girl, because people like her parents "would never suspect that two girls could have sex or anything" anyway.

When I later told my informant Lilly about this scheme in a conversation we had about living situations and sexualities in Turkey, she started laughing: "Yes, I can imagine that very well! Homosexuality between girls is so unthinkable for Turks. They don't like gay men, but they can not even imagine gay women. I think my parents have never even heard the word lesbian".

In general, Lilly's living situation was quite different from Aylin's. When I stayed at Lilly's house in an upper middle-class gated community in Istanbul, my presence did not pose a problem at all. In fact, Lilly told me to "just tell the guard you're here for Lilly. He will show you the way, he's used to me having lots of visitors all the time, and many of them don't speak Turkish". When I met one of her male neighbors, he pointed out to me that in complexes like Lilly's, nobody cared whether men and women hung out together. And if they did, "who cares?" he asked. They were just random people that happened to live there too, he stated, and it did not matter what they
thought. To students with no own income like Aylin, however, it matters what the neighbors think, as they are in a position to exercise social pressure on her and cause trouble with the landlord or her parents, which might result in her having to move to another apartment. Here, the neighbors take over the role of "knowing what is best", and force women like Aylin to either conform to their moral values (by not receiving male guests), hide their choices, or leave. An example of how far this attitude can go is given by one of Guttstadt's informants, Esra, during the Gezi Park protests. She reports:

The relationship with our neighbors was never really good. To them, we are people who don't know how to behave. People who come home late at night, are noisy, and always have visitors over … One evening, we came home from the protests … Suddenly a man appeared in front of us and said: 'Quickly, run'. Then we heard voices and I thought maybe police were around, maybe something is going on. But the man pushed us and yelled 'Run'. It was very close to our house. Then I understood what was going on: a furious mob armed with clubs was chanting 'Recep – Tayyip – Erdoğan'. We reached our home through back alleys … [later] we overheard our neighbors saying we were outrageous people, we deserved punishment, we shouldn't live here, in such a volume that we had to hear it. They wanted us to hear it.

(Esra, as quoted by Guttstadt 2014: 139)

Esra's quote is telling in several ways. Just like the attack on the Tophane art gallery that was discussed in chapter five on alcohol consumption, it illustrates how discursive labeling of others as morally bad leads to a social climate in which threats and physical violence become acceptable. On another layer, it exemplifies the "serious neighborhood pressure" against devious lifestyles that Erdoğan called for. Thirdly, it exposes the mindset of moral superiority, because Esra's neighbors do not only wish for her behavior to change, but also that she is punished for her "outrageous" behavior which can not be tolerated.

Marriage, family planning, sexuality

In our conversation about judgment by the neighbors, Aylin also brought up her family situation and what her parents would think about her Austrian boyfriend.

If I would want to marry a foreigner, my family would not allow it. If my parents knew that I had an Austrian boyfriend, they would go crazy. They would say that it is so wrong. First he is not Turkish, and then he is not even a Muslim! Not circumcised! They would never allow that. But you know, I still see myself marrying a European guy somehow. I once was with a Turkish guy, but I broke up with him, because he was so religious, and he never drank alcohol, and he always talked about Turkey. I don't want that. … You know, my aunt is married to some sort of communist. When I went on Erasmus in Austria, he told me I should sleep with as many foreigners as possible. Just to make the conservative Turkish people angry [laughs]. It's like with Turkish people who eat bacon and sausages in Europe because they know it would make their parents angry [laughs again].

Here the contradictions of everyday life become visible. Aylin, who confidently speaks about wanting to marry a European man and can joke about breaking rules to offend conservatives with her aunt's husband is the same Aylin who feels that she has to hide her boyfriend and other male visitors from the neighbors. In her current environment, she feels forced to keep the choices she makes about who she wants to spent time with a secret. Others, like Lilly, did not feel the need to hide any visitors, but they were aware of the judgment that was going on for other choices they took. In our interview, Lilly offered her views of gender and sexuality, which apparently was an urgent topic for her. Lilly, whose boyfriend lives in Wales, was eager to tell me about her experiences of being judged for living her sexuality as an unmarried woman:

What annoys me much more [than the alcohol laws we had been talking about before] is the whole abortion thing, and also contraception. When I want to get the pill, they ask me "How old are you? With how many people do you have sex? You are not married? Do your parents know?" etc. As if it was any of their fucking business! When I'm with my boyfriend in the UK, they also ask questions about how many people you have sex with and such, but you can see the difference in their faces. They want to educate you about medical things, so that you can be healthy. The Turkish people ask to judge you. You can see it in their faces. They think you are a bad person, because you want to have sex with somebody, and you're not married, and you don't want to make children. … I could never speak about these things with my parents. I honestly think my parents believe that I am still a virgin.

As she pointed out in our interview, Lilly does not have a problem with answering questions about her sexual life. What she has problems with is when medical professionals who are supposed to help her judge her choices based on there moral values instead of their professional knowledge. Experiences like the one Lilly describes here are what political scientists Feride Acar and Gülbanu Altunok refer to when they state that in government policy as well as public discourse, "even in the cases where there is no direct reference to religion, there remains a strong sense of moral judgment and a selective stigmatization of practices that religion denounces" (Acar and Altunok 2013: 15). As Lilly told me, this stigmatization is also occasionally being turned into practice, as she knew of several cases of bus drivers or random people in the metro yelling at couples to stop kissing, or to stop standing or sitting close to each others. What is the link between government politics, discourses and the "strong sense of moral judgment" (ibid.)? Didem Unal and Dilek Cindoglu maintain that "fertility control and discipline of bodies … [and] the regulation of women's reproductive capacities have always been emblematic of social engineering projects in modern Turkey" (Unal and Cindoglu 2013: 21). To the AKP, drawing on their understanding of Islam, being a woman is defined through the women's role in the family, through motherhood and nurturing (ibid: 24). This is illustrated by statements Erdoğan gave during his turn as prime minister. In 2014, he was quoted saying that "Our religion has defined a position for women: motherhood". He further repeatedly stated that every family should have

73 Akyol, Riada. "On Erdogan and Muslim mothers" in AlJazeera, Nov. 28th. 2014. Retrieved from
at least three children, in order to keep Turkey's population young and growing. "One or two children mean bankruptcy … three children mean we are not improving but not receding either. So, I repeat, at least three children are necessary in each family, because our population risks aging". And at a ceremony launching a governmental project aimed at increasing birth rates, he gave a speech in which he blamed an ominous group of undefined "they", trying to influence families and birth rates in Turkey:

They operated birth-control mechanisms for years in this country. They nearly castrated our citizens, our people going as far as using medical procedures. This is what cesarean section is all about. While they were doing that, it was like committing murder. They fooled people. They said, 'You are going to die; we are going to save you.' But their goal was different. … Their objective was to reduce the population of this nation and for this nation to lag behind in the competition of nations. We are disrupting this game. We have to. That is why there is much to do by our families. I am especially calling on mothers, on our women. You are the primary force to disrupt this game. You have to take a stand."

Here, Erdoğan is reviving the old Kemalist threat-paradigm, the discourse after which the "Turkish people" constantly has to be defended against shady enemies from within and without. Women, he argues, have to fulfill their duty and provide the nation with children.

Where Erdoğan uses nationalist rhetoric to encourage women to give birth, his successor as prime minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, refers to religion and the universal good that is represented by the AKP: "Our women are fulfilling that divine mission of keeping humanity alive". Women like Lilly, who choose to use birth control and thus do not comply with this demand, subsequently become allies of the unknown enemy, contributing to the downfall of the Turkish people. At the same time, they reject a "divine mission", making their actions sacrilegious. What we see here, where the only acceptable identity for a woman is that of a mother, is indeed Foucauldian biopower at work: a "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power" (Foucault 2007 [1978]: 1) via institutions such as the family, the health system and education (Unal and Cindoglu 2012: 23).

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Referring to Turkish journalist Ayşe Önal, who wrote a book about 'honor killings', Jenny White (2013: 151) describes a "clear link" between women's sexual purity and the honor of the nation. As White points out, in "the dual discourse of honor and the nation, the nation, like a family or tribe, depends for its honor on the chastity … of its women. … Women's boundaries, like those of the nation, must be protected, and their behavior, like those of a nation's subject, must be demonstrably pure" (ibid: 153). This pureness can only be obtained under the protection of the male state (ibid.) — back we are at the state as the parent who knows what is good and what is bad, and thus has to decide for its citizens. Choices such as 'I want to have sex and use birth control' can not be permitted, as they would take away the woman's purity, and at the same time threaten the family as a crucial unite of conservative politics (Acar and Altunok 2013: 20).

The government's language becomes even more drastic when it comes to the topic of abortion: in a conference speech in 2012, Erdoğan stated that abortion was murder (Unal and Cindoğlu 2013: 21). While it is technically legal in Turkey during the first ten weeks of pregnancy, several of my informants told me that it is practically impossible to get an abortion outside the big cities, as many doctors will refuse to perform abortions for moral reasons. The official discourse on abortion is highly divided and martial: Referring to an incident now known as the 'Uludere massacre' or the 'Roboski air strike', Erdoğan stated that "each abortion is an Uludere" (Erdoğan, as quoted by Unal and Cindoğlu 2013: 22).77 "Nobody", he continued referring to abortion, "should have the right to allow this. You either kill a baby in the mother's womb or you kill it after birth. There's no difference".78 Here, Erdoğan equals abortion, something legal, to the killing of 34 unarmed civilians by armed forces, a veritable massacre. As well-known Turkish publisher and intellectual Ragip Zarakolu points out, "[Erdoğan's] comments may not lead to a change in legislation, but the people who want to or have to have an abortion, won't feel safe anymore, or not to have an abortion at all. Maybe doctors will refuse to perform abortions. In any case, it leads to a decline in freedom" (Zarakolu, as quoted by Guttstadt 2014: 271). Indeed, utilizing a rhetoric of violence and threats, women are discursively divided into good women (those who choose have children and fulfill their duty to the nation) and bad people (those who choose not to).

77 In the incident Erdoğan refers to 34 Kurdish civilians were killed by Turkish war planes, because they were allegedly mistaken for PKK fighters.
In this chapter, it has been presented how certain choices of women are being discursively branded as morally wrong by the government and parts of society. The cases of Aylin and Zeynep were introduced as examples for how women react differently to judgment by neighbors: while Aylin moved to a new apartment when the circumstances at her old place became unbearable, and now does not want to let "let these people decide" who she can meet, Zeynep is strongly affected by neighborhood pressure. She feels forced to host less parties and dinners, which leads to feelings of discomfort, because she can not live out part of her identity as "a person who loves to cook for people and host parties". Lilly, on the other hand, does not have to deal with neighborhood pressure. She feels affected by moral discourses on contraception and abortion though. These discourses are being radicalized by the AKP government which here draws on nationalist and religious narratives, resulting in the judgment of women who take choices that deviate from the governments moral values.
9. Conclusion

As Giddens (1991: 81ff.) suggests, lifestyle is a means of constructing one's identity. The analysis of the ethnographic material has shown that for my informants, decisions about how you dress, where and when you drink alcohol, who you live with, or whether you want to have children are indeed a part of constructing and expressing their self-narrative or identity. Through participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and an evaluation of current literature (Taştan 2013; Yücel 2014; Guttstadt 2014), this thesis has sought to illustrate that in contemporary Turkey, these lifestyle choices are being limited both by government policies and discursively, i.e. through social pressure. Examples of this cited by the informants included the restrictions on alcohol sale and social media use, feelings of judgment because of the use of contraception, and stigmatization related to whose company one decides to keep. These limitations of lifestyle choices were regarded by the informants' as annoying in practical day-to-day life, unjust, and partly undemocratic. In several cases they further lead to feelings of general discomfort, because the informants felt as if they could not be who they wanted to be. The informants' reactions vary: Erhan feels very angry at the government and its supporters, and he tries to be affected as little as possible by coming up with ways around restrictions. Aylin decided to move to a neighborhood with less direct social pressure, and that she would try to ignore judgment because she did not want to let others decide who she is allowed to meet with, as does Lilly. Zeynep on the other hand considers the ongoing judgment by neighbors a burden, and has changed her behavior in a way which she hopes will be less looked down upon, resulting in her not being able to live out a part of her personality.

As has been explained in this thesis, the limitation of choices by the government is both justified and realized through discourses which depict the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) as morally superior and therefore obliged to decide for its citizens, in order to protect them. As a consequence, the government combines legal measures (see the restrictions on alcohol sale and social media discussed in chapters five and six) and discursive means (see the calls for neighborhood pressure regarding alcohol consumption and mixed accommodation, and the discursive labeling of women who use contraception or have an abortion as enemies of the nation in chapter eight) in order to limit deviant lifestyles. The government often attempts to assert these lifestyle limitations through what Nader (1997a: 711) refers to as "social control" and at times "overt coercion" (ibid: 119). This is perceived by my informants as authoritarian and patronizing.
Drawing on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis and literature regarding religious and nationalist discourses in Turkey (especially Sayyid 1997; Houston 2013; White 2013; Moudouros 2014), the discourses the government uses to exercise control and legitimate its hegemonic position have been analyzed. It has been argued that the AKP interdiscursively combines religious and nationalist discourses with pre-existing Kemalist ideas which legitimate state interference in everyday life and the elimination of deviant lifestyles. By analyzing the language and rhetoric of government officials – the textual dimension of the discourse according to Fairclough (1995a: ix) – it has been illustrated that through a constant discursive othering of people with deviating lifestyles, social practice is affected and society is becoming more and more divided. This division, however, from the informants' perspective does not so much run along the lines of 'secular versus Islamist'. To my informants, more so than their religiosity, the important characteristic of the government and its supporters is that they try to impose their moral values and a respective lifestyle on the informants.

Here we come back to what Lilly was quoted saying in the introduction: "In Turkey, there is no tolerance and no acceptance of other people". As illustrated in the analysis, "acceptance of other people", or different lifestyles and moral values, is indeed simply not possible according to the 'Muslim nationalist' discourse, because all of these pose a threat to the unity of the nation. Consequently the inhibition threshold to attack people with deviating lifestyles and moral values (discursively through neighborhood control, or violently) is being lowered, since it is implied that they need to be subdued in order to protect the nation – which leads to an even deeper division.

In chapter seven, Esra was quoted saying that she had heard her neighbors stating that "we deserved punishment, we shouldn't live here", because of how she and her flatmates behaved. In a way, this is exemplary for what is going on in Turkey on a larger scale. My informants reported feelings of being stigmatized for lifestyle choices such as alcohol consumption, using contraception, "sitting with boys and girls" or having Kurdish friends. As a result of stigmatization and feelings of judgment, several of them told me, they would like to leave Turkey if possible, because they 'could not take it anymore' — Esra's neighbors would probably be glad to hear this. As I am writing these words in November 2015, I know that at least five of them actually did leave Turkey and moved to Europe after my fieldwork. The system of pressure, it seems, is working.
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Appendix: A very brief timeline of the history of the Turkish Republic

1918 – The Ottoman Empire is parted and occupied by the allies after the end of World War I.
1918 – War of independence led by the Young Turks against the occupants and the Sultanate.
1922
1923 – Foundation of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Atatürk is named the first president.
1924 – Abolition of the Caliphate.
1938 – Atatürk dies and is succeeded by İsmet İnönü.
1939 – Turkey does participate in combat actions during World War II.
1945
1950 – First free multi-party elections, won by the Demokrat Parti.
1960 – Military Coup against the governing Demokrat Parti for "abuse of religion for political power" and "betrayal of the Atatürk reforms" (Ulus 2010: 13).
1971 – Military Coup after ongoing political violence between right-wing and left-wing activists.
1984 – Escalation of the violence between Kurdish groups and the state
1996 – The Welfare Party forms the first "pro-religious" government since the founding of the Turkish Republic
1997/– The Welfare Party is driven out of office by the military and finally banned for 1998 "threatening laicism.
2002 – Erdoğan's AKP wins the general elections in a landslide. Reforms at securing EU membership are initiated.
2009 – The 'Kurdish opening' is initiated, e.g. legalizing the use of the Kurdish language in public.
2013 – Anti-government protests in several major cities, sparked by the attempted demolition of Istanbul's Gezi Park
2014 – Erdoğan is elected president
2015 – June: general elections, left-wing Democratic Peoples' Party enters parliament for the first time. No new government is formed.

November: Snap elections, the Erdoğan's AKP regains the absolute majority after months of violence in the Kurdish-populated eastern parts of Turkey.
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