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Grandchildren of Ottomans vs. Children of Atatürk: A Script on Turkey's Emerging Political Identities Towards 2023

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Grandchildren of Ottomans vs. Children of Atatürk: A Script on Turkey's Emerging Political Identities Towards 2023

"And indeed my words had divided us. But were we not already divided?"
- from *Four Ways to Forgiveness*, by Ursula LeGuin (1996).

The Opening Act

It has been 20 years since Sandıkçı and Ger (2002) spotted the changing consumer identities in Turkey as expressed in emerging consumption patterns within an energizing, emerging market. Coincidentally, it was only months later in that same year, the newly founded and, at the time seemingly moderate, right-wing party got elected and formed the government. That is the party governing Turkey since then, surviving an attempted coup, and winning various elections. Indeed, under the one-party rule, the emerging generation in Turkey is ambiguous in its orientation regarding life, due to a variety of reasons (Tarı-Kasnakoğlu, Türe and Kalender 2020). Some of these reasons will be dwelled on later in this essay.

Juxtaposing disharmonious concerns to cope with challenges that elicit ever-new layers of reemerging challenges each day, the new generation in Turkey is establishing not only novel consumption patterns, but also propagating differentiating political collective identities. The authors – two young adults who were born and grew up in a vague cultural-political scene, since their early years – have been experiencing and attempting to deal with every phase of the "new" reformation happening within the context of Turkey. Years have passed under the general dominance of one political party, and, over time, the party has shifted its moderate stance. In the beginning, it drew from the subtle-right side of the spectrum, adopting positions which were welcomed by earlier generations. These positions resonated with aspirations satisfying the then-establishing liberal concerns, besides targeting the interests of the general public. Later, however, the subtlety evolved into a concrete radical-right stance, by championing the culturally conservative strategies in the name of generating a bundle of economic benefits. Given this context, our purpose is to take the initiative to open an updated discussion of the ways in which the global ideological market is shaping the collective political identities in the context of contemporary Turkey.

Therefore, in this essay, we are presenting our reflections on the translations of global neoliberalism in the lives of the postmodern consumers in the contested marketspace and culturescape of contemporary Turkey. Such issues, especially the rising role of neoliberalism, are of course being raised in the larger context of the global marketing literature also (Dholakia, Ozgun, and Atik 2020). Informed by the underlining ideological positions that are re-territorializing within Turkey's cultural market, we cluster our observations into two emerging metaphorical collective identities: the "grandchildren of Ottomans" and the "children of Atatürk". Respectively, the first is the collectivity leaning towards economically neoliberal yet culturally conservative politics whereas the second courageously leaning towards culturally liberal politics yet being negligent in economics. Meanwhile, both are being caught in the processes of internal tribalization and global polarization. To reiterate, these issues are arising in many parts of the world, including the United States (Wu and Li 2020); however, our perspective from Turkey, in terms of consuming political identities, especially as the country approaches the centennial of it becoming a Republic, provides a unique contribution. Hereon, the aim is to posit explorative interpretations of the implications of globalization within postmodernism, of course in the context of Turkey but with an eye on the globe, to grasp the nature of simultaneously tribalizing and polarizing forces and processes.

Point of View: Turkey in the 21st Century

The first era of 'new Turkey', the 2002-2007 period, began with high hopes manifested in the form of projects of economic progress and publicity blurring the boundaries between the conservative and liberal ends of society under a flag of democracy. Examples of such projects included building roads connecting the far ends of the rural areas and the developing cities, increasing the representation of the stigmatized groups in the society in public affairs, and opening numerous privately-funded universities as part of regional growth. Throughout the second era, from 2007 to 2011, and in spite of the 2008 world crisis that was dubbed the Great Recession, Turkey's potential in terms of market growth was promising. This was due to expected returns on intensifying private sector investment in the economy as the era was marked by drastic infrastructural changes throughout the country and announcements of mega construction projects. Firstly, the social and infrastructural construction of a "new Turkey" was ongoing, as the target was set in the motto of "Vision 2023" (Dogan and Stupar 2017). A prominent example was the still debated contract for the multibillion-dollar mega-airport in Istanbul (Gürsel and Delibaşı 2013; Delibaşı 2019).

Moreover, the 2009 ethnic liberty package was put on the table, raising heated debates on issues so far forsaken by theses of 'unity of the nation-state'. The year 2010 was also the time during which Turkey's membership in the European Union was evaluated. The third era, from 2011 to 2015, was critical since the domestic pot started to boil. First, there were the anti-governmental protests of 2013 that were crushed with violence. Then, in 2014, the breaking of the bond between the government and a particular radical Islamist terror organization divided the conservatives. Yet, this period ended somehow with the reelection of the government in 2015. Brushing off the devastating 2016 coup attempt did not lead to a closure either. The timeline then proceeded to the 2017 constitutional referendum, through which the parliamentary system, with a prime minister elected by the parliamentary majority was changed to the presidential system. The domestic pot kept boiling with the repeated terror attacks in the largest cities of the country, causing continuous civil and military loss in and out of Turkey's borders. These developments, then, set the scene for the current era, 2018-2023, and, possibly, for years to come. This contemporary period started with the instability in international affairs as well as vital bottlenecks in domestic policy. During the municipal elections in 2019, İstanbul and the capital city, Ankara, changed hands, with the governance of the largest city shifting to the opposing party. Then came the disrupting year of the 2020 pandemic, and in 2021 accelerating rates of undocumented refugees remained as an unaddressed issue, similar to other nettlesome issues such as femicides. In 2022, the failure of the global free market system, in which the 'invisible hand' seems to have been left fingerless, is crippling the economy, plunging it into a state of struggle.

In the stark contemporary present, the degrees of ideological de-territorialization can be seen in the transformations in the distinctive consumption styles of the groups; consumption styles in which, previously, identities have not been strictly mutually exclusive (Sandıkçı and Ger 2002). A complex set of forces and processes seem to have been let loose: the structure of the script that has been written twenty years ago since the spectacle of the Western influenced middle-class consumers is now fading into the stressing skepticism about a near-future of economic availability.

In this section, in a greatly condensed manner, we have introduced a point of view about the 21st century changes in Turkey – economic, political, and cultural. Although extremely reductive – an expanded view would fill many books – such a review, that we have presented so far, has articulated the shifting situation of the past twenty years in Turkey, a country that is still shaken by the echoes of these drastic changes. More transformative events happen each day, pointing to the need for taking an

up-to-date glance on the de-territorialized collective identities of the cultural market. This is especially important in terms of evaluating the global influences upon the path that Turkey seems to be on, in which, the re-territorializations of the political identities as collectivities connected to this local context are to be pursued towards the 100th year of the Republic, as the centennial year of 2023 is approaching.

Scene: Postmodern Consumer in Contested Market

Multiple approaches that deliver diverse contents for the notion of "postmodern consumer" should be taken as a tribute to the unclassifiable nature of postmodernism, since each of those grounded conceptualizations highlights "the importance of understanding the local context to get the sense of what is at stake in the term postmodernism, which although given global impetus, clearly has a wide range of local inflections around the world" (Featherstone 2007a). Drawing from Featherstone, we describe post-consumer here, as the subject of our discussions, specifically for the purpose of this commentary. In reviewing Giddens' theoretical frame, Warf (2011) highlights two ideas that have bearings here. Firstly, within that theoretical frame, the agency of human beings is said to be reproducing their surrounding world, in return the world that they interact with is reproducing them, though in Giddens this process is conceived through human socialization. Secondly, instead of two opposing forces between actor and object, Giddens is depicted as favoring a dichotomy that is simultaneously decisive and mutually reproductive. Our conceptualization is in line with complexity theories, which, to begin with, do not ostracize reflexivity between micro-macro; rather, these theories treat and divide social construction into multifaceted concepts of beyond-human agents and contexts. The post-consumer is to be acknowledged here as an agent that is nested within the markets to which it connects; nonetheless, in a way that it exists equally with the market; meaning, not only that the consumer is a part of the market but that the market is also a part of the consumer. Consequently, there is a co-constitutive relationship between diverging levels of scales in this reality (Giesler and Fischer 2017). As the post-consumer can be regarded to constitute the micro in the macro globe, all entangle into the in-between market (Akaka et al. 2021). A somewhat different take on these processes is available in the idea of the construer – the entity that consumes, but not just passively; it also constructs, designs and produces aspects of the marketized exchanges (Firat and Dholakia 2017).

Following these lines of reasoning, the prevailing conflicts, compliances, and negotiations within the expansive cultural dimension of

the market can come across as sources of struggle, and at the same time as sources of opportunity, while dissolving the frames of modern segmentations to co-create lived postmodern consumer identities. Therefore, ideologies relevant to a context can take position in a site that is linked to the external influences that contribute to the shaping of the local cultural market, in collaboration with a collective of consumers who are internal to the locality under consideration. Albeit underrated – due possibly to remnants of modernist thinking – variable degrees of collective identities within postmodern society play an important role in irrefutable dialogue with the formation of consumer identities. For instance, different value calibrations of being identified as a "Turk (*Türk*)" and as being "from Turkey (*Türkiyeli*),» whilst eliciting a sensitivity that will be mentioned shortly, effects of small differences of supposedly common values can be felt deeper, like invisible paper cuts. Another example, is the use of identifying oneself as a "Muslim" by different collective identities, and the term "Muslim" thus implying understandings of diverging collectivities (Jafari and Süerdem 2012; Jafari and Sandıkcı 2015). This is because, although the expression is similar or even the same, their connotations are composed from varying ideas of value, which may not fit or ill-fit each other in their contents. Besides, in certain cases, the ideas can be completely oppositional to each other, thus spawning further fractions among collective identities. The process of how collective political identities form, thus, broadly lies in creating networks that re-imagine the past and project a desirable future, through re-interpreting the value-ideas or ideologies, in a flux of the flow of everyday experiences.

Admitting the failure of finding the gateway to the heavens where concepts ideally take residence (Deleuze and Guattari 1994), we argue that ideologies are things carrying ideas of value. Like any other thing, ideologies are produced as they are manifested, consumed as they are adopted, yet, overall, presumed, in the sense that they are re-interpreted each time they are outwardly manifested and/or adopted intrinsically. A collective identity, accordingly, can be thought of as a capacity generating the in situ presumption of ideology, linking the producing and consuming ends of the process (Arnould, Arvidsson and Eckhardt 2021). Hence, akin to tangible commodities in the global market, ideologies are exchanged, imported, exported, and customized within the local markets that are influencing and being influenced by the collective identities. Turkey, like any other society, is embedding an ideological site within its cultural market, carrying forces of locally grounded as well as globally trending tides of ideologies with cultural, political, and religious connotations. Turkey, however, is one of the especially interesting contexts, since it is also a

contested market due to extreme social and economic fluctuations. Such a context creates a necessity on the part of the consumers to express more visible ideological provisions, in mundane situations, relentlessly, on an everyday basis; perhaps, due to a need for simplicity, seeking rather stable patterns in the risky, wavy fabric of a constant turmoil. Accordingly, we can see that the ideologies condensing within the cultural market and available to the new generation of consumers in Turkey are sculpting and molding the two emerging collective identities, as we present next. Beneath the very visible local lines, however, the vigorous craftsmanship of the global hand can be traced.

To illustrate the contested situations in contemporary Turkey, especially in political-cultural terms that affect everything, including media and consumers, we can imagine an ongoing play in two acts. These two acts represent distinct, but still slightly overlapping, emerging collective identities. These acts are not sequential but overlapping and competing for attention – of voters, citizens, consumers, businesses, politicians, artists, and everyone else.

Act 1: Tirade of Democracy by Ottoman's Grandchildren

The ideology that is central in the current cultural market in Turkey can be described as a religious democracy mainly because the common ground that is being marched on by the ruling government is found through political Islam, which tirelessly harvests the resentment toward the Kemalist ideals of the then-ruling elites that stigmatized the religious majority during the late-Republican period (1938-1950). Wutzer (2015) discussed the resentments of a similar kind, although in different societal contexts; religious awakening movements retrieve support from the ordinary people's feelings of pettiness, offended by the actions of the secular elite, whose attitudes are perceived as condescending in the imposition of their progressive projects upon the majorly traditional publics. The particular resentment here in contemporary Turkey is specifically bountiful within the demographics of the older generations. These generations constitute the portion of the society, whose members either have personally experienced the cultural stigma on religiousness in their encounters with the modernized portions; or, inherited their family history of being left behind for decades, during the cultural and economic revolutions that Kemalist policies carried on. With the rise of the early-Democratic period (1950-1960), contrasting shifts in power balances could be observed in the subsequent decades.

From the 1980s to the present, the ironic stigma on the majority of the public has been gradually removed from the political center, through the effective impacts of the succession of subtle-right cultural ideologies.

Because the Kemalists have "owned" the republic for narrating the voice of the public, contesting ideology had to rely on the religious past of the monarchy. As such, the depictions of a grand empire fallen due to betrayals, and disgraced due to misunderstandings of history, appeared in the ideological arena. Simply put, neo-ottomanism emerged and took hold (Yavuz 1998; 2016). This was achieved by what we will call the tirade of democracy, due to the fact that this movement always had an open and visible leader espousing the rhetoric and managing the act. Coming to post-consumers as the new generation of Turkey, we see that it is not the case that these younger members of the public have experienced a dominant stigma regarding living a religious lifestyle. So, it is the twist of this act, for performing an intriguing answer to the question, with what motives, being an "Ottoman's grandchildren" is now being adopted by the new generation of Turkey.

Re-Imagined Past and Neoliberal Future

It is apparent to us that the disruption of the current ideological territorialization of this collectivity residing at the current ideological center is primarily arising from the problems related to economics. Erupting tides whispering a demise of capitalism (Stiegler 2014), arguments diagnosing its disorders (Streeck 2014), major shocks like the pandemic followed by unplanned global economic recessions (Reinhart and Reinhart 2020), and more questions directed at the contemporary late-stage capitalism are signaling a globally rising critique of this stage of capitalism. Within the locality of Turkey, suspicion regarding the demise of capitalism is less theoretical, since the budget for sustaining even a mundane lifestyle has become too expensive as the living wages and resources of the public stagnated. Therefore, the tirade of the central ideology needs to narrate to the new generation of Turkey, the optimism for the long-term, which is targeted for 2023, to spawn hope within the hearts of the distressed. Chiefly, in our observation, the exceptional part of the making of the ideology performed on the central stage of Turkey can be identified as not occurring randomly, but being constructed as a top-down cultural production strategy. Strategies of this type, in De Certeau's terms "are accessible only to those who are in control of the established power structures, thus cultural producers" (Karanfil and Gürsoy 2020, p.102).

The present-day domestic battle in Turkey is not against the oppressions of the Islamic faith, or in the name of freedom of belief. It is a battle for managing the disbelief; not in religion, but in economic policies. The wholesale management of disbelief, packaged via the propaganda of the political authority, branded with a "religious appearance" (Baudrillard

2017, p.28), is its being marketed as faith in the economic growth of Turkey, as if such growth is predestined to be achieved only under the leadership of the ruling government. To handle such a task, aside from the communication bodies of the state, which are transparently managing the public relations in governmental affairs, the strongest elements in the media sector have been privately established in support of the government's narrative. Like mushrooming of the privately-funded universities, the media sector was promoted as a cash cow. Surely, in this case, to be marginally profitable, cultural productions are to be in line with the government's approval. Hence, rising agents in the media sector were organized as oligarchic structures, functioning for the government's ideological monopoly. These agents are manufacturing a variety of mass media content (Çevik 2019), such as TV series, public announcements, movies, and daily news. These populist media consumables are strategically generating the content that is carrying the core values of the central ideology, as repeated or re-interpreted in the central politics.

Sure, ideologically loaded mass media contents are "instrumental in popularizing a new political identity at home" (Özçetin 2019, pp.946-947). In our understanding, these are especially played out in terms of diffusing a sympathy towards the neo-Ottoman collective identity among the younger generations. Subsequently, there is the issue of the grand tell-tale that is commonly used in both official and unofficial media agencies operating for the government and dominating the making of the cultural industry (Adorno, 1975) that is contracted for distribution to ideological spheres. This tale, in the case of public backlash to the economic projects, is putting the blame – actively scapegoating – the "old Turkey" because the statism-led and quasi-socialist policies are declared to still have an impact, a dragging effect, limiting the country's economic growth. In the name of relieving the stress upon today's majority public supporting the "new Turkey" people are being re-assured to put their trust in the neoliberal stance in economic strategies. While these strategies are proliferating and seeking deeper roots, they are also, allegedly, creating cracks in the foundational historical grounds of the Republic of Turkey.

A practical example of government-led neo-ottomanism is shown in Figure 1. It shows some scenes from the video-ad released on social media by the official social media account of the health ministry for promoting the made-in-Turkey Covid-19 vaccine. The storyline directly stars the sultan of the late-Ottoman period, while references to the early-Republican period exclude Atatürk.

Figure 1: Selective re-imagining in storytelling Turkey's history

The image displays two sponsored social media posts from the account 'saglikbakanligi' (Ministry of Health). The top post features a historical photograph of Sultan II. Abdülhamid in a study, with text identifying him and the location (Yıldız Sarayı, İstanbul, 1886). The bottom post features a close-up of a hand in a white glove holding a small vial labeled 'TÜRKOKIM' and a syringe. Both posts include 'Learn More' buttons and social media interaction icons.

It is no breaking news that the civilized world has taken the turn to the neoliberal path (Gamble 2001), locating capitalist institutions along the way as its hegemonic powerhouses, seeking no public consent for the economic order it has been establishing since then (Harvey 2006; Özgün,

Dholakia, and Atik 2017). Hall (2011) identified classical capitalism to be a sworn nemesis of the state, coopting globalization as a means to evade state intervention underscoring that neoliberalism is not a concrete thing but a process, combining global models while diversifying in the locality. In the marketing literature, Dholakia, Ozgun and Atik (2020) have explored the nuances of neoliberalism and connections to the broadening spheres of applications of marketing techniques.

In the experience of contemporary Turkey, the neoliberal ideology of the ruling government is strictly economic; market interrupting, directing the capitalist strategies firsthand, making synthetic ways for oligarchic corporate enlargement and free international trade. Sketching lines of such rising economic liberalism are associated with the accelerating pace of globalization, armed with digital technologies for its expanding transactions (Gamble 2019). Hence, the influence of global ideology upon the strategy that contributes to the emergence of the collective identity that we discuss here metaphorically within the local cultural market of Turkey, is closely relevant.

Broadly, we observe that the glorified re-imagination of the distant past narrated in the tirade as inspiration for the future of economic prosperity is the underlying force, providing reasons for the re-territorialization of this political collective identity. This punchline is giving seemingly satisfactory answers to the question of what motivations help some portions of the moderate-nationalists and religious-conservatives in Turkey, those who have given birth to the neo-Ottoman movement, to ideologically cope with the ongoing privatization of core public services, the devaluation of the currency, and the state-led liquidation of resources and lands by the acquisitions of international commercial investors. Moreover, the overall act is manufacturing a rather obvious answer to how a portion of the new generation can identify themselves with the political stance performed here since the medium can hint at the effect of the message (McLuhan and Fiore 1967).

Act 2: Chorus of Republic by Atatürk's Children

If the right-wing narrative of political Islam, neoliberalism, and authoritarianism promotes a collective identity that is at the center of today's cultural market, it is a matter of interest as to what identities are being pushed to the margins. Since ideologies of the margin are capable of proposing radical stances that can offer possibilities of imagining alternatives (hooks 1990, cited in McKittrick 2011), it is cathartic for the plot of this script to sense that the chorus smoothly rises against the tirade, in rivalry and possibly also delivering a starring performance. Megill (1985)

saw a contradiction in history through which history can define itself, that in the case other-ness does not exist, it must be created. Notably, here we do see that the opposing voices are less unified and identification is not blatantly declared compared to the central act discussed above. We would like to underline, however, that in Act 2 of the script, debates are emanating, from these at-the-moment more fragmented processes, in the form of two peculiarly contrasting identity metaphors.

Atatürk's secularism was not an idle site of play, it is an ideological production system revolutionizing the cultural market. Some of the political identities on the margin today may be rejecting an association with Atatürk, due to the misrepresentation by the Kemalism stance which has been embodied by the "nation-statist" (ulusalcı) mindset. Yet, we concede on the point that the strong secular tone, influencing the chorus's act, is indeed inspired by the ideological clef of Atatürk, as here Atatürk exists humbly as an uncredited muse in the remaking of the composition of an independent Turkey. Due to the intuitive affinity for the undeniable roots, we would like to portray the collective identity emerging on the margin of the cultural market of Turkey as the "children of Atatürk". We do so despite acknowledging that the chorus of this act is polyphonic and observing that some of the internalities may not directly agree on referring to problematic connotations of the early Republican period based on the argument that conveying issues of the past into the current day is risky. In fact, the secular republic ideal shared as the common ground by these fragments is connected to the core ideals that Atatürk laid out for Turkey. Nonetheless, we will be paying tribute to this act's fluid, heterogeneous, and incomplete nature. Meanwhile, in reality, it must be accounted that the collective identity in the previous act is not altogether absent of such qualities either, recalling that this essay is presented as a script for potential and cultural critique.

Ethnic Diversity and Gender Equality

Seats ticketed to global neoliberalism for the performance scripted here are many, due to its multiple facets. The translation of its economic side into the locality of Turkey has been depicted in Act 1. The side that is informing Act 2 is associated with the spreading global cultural aspects of neoliberalism. Regarding this responsive act, we will discuss the collaboration of strategies and tactics, being enacted together in a mix within the alternative ideological sites of Turkey. We observe that the highlight of the chorus's act can be interpreted as occurring partly through the top-down strategies that have been mentioned earlier, but now coming not from country-wide but global-wide production. Also partly, it happens through the bottom-up tactics of marginal identities, which are utilizing global apparatuses to reject central

trajectories of the local; tactics that are meant to be used, in the terms of De Certeau, as an armor that “offers those who are devoid of power opportunities to adapt to the societal structure created by those in power through their use of strategies” (Karanfil and Gürsoy, p.102).

International liberal ideology settles the "agendas that liberal democracies use to organize the world based on their vision of (...) protection of human rights, [which] were promoted globally" (Huang 2020, p.4). In other words, the politics of the referred agenda include a recognition of representative nationalism in the name of diversity, yet exclude radical stances like ethnocentrism and racism to expand the global market via full cultural liberalization. Certainly, we do not miss the point that, indeed, within the subjective portrayal of this script, while economic neoliberalization is characterized as a pure villain, cultural neoliberalization, is given a voice of an occasional protagonist. Influences of global promotion of the ethnic representation into local cultural markets can be traced through the title of this very paper, which has been created on the basis of reflections of two young adults from Turkey, who today identify themselves as women, heterosexual, ethnically Turk, religiously Muslim, highly educated, city-born, with middle-class upbringing. We are mandatorily aware that the majority of the socioeconomic statutes defining our intersectional identities sustain us a living among the comparatively privileged circles, at least within the domestic domains. Unlike the predecessor versions of a discussion that we situate here, hidden in our avoidance of using a generalized "Turkish-ness" while describing the collective identities of the context that we share with heterogeneous others, is an acknowledgment of the diversity within the borders of Turkey.

On the other hand, contemporary communication platforms like social media, while far-reaching worldwide as a web, propagate multi-dimensional dissemination of the local translations of the global liberal culture. Particularly, in Turkey, the advocacy initiatives for raising awareness of everyday struggles regarding the inequalities facing non-masculine genders and the stigmas upon the non-heterosexual orientations are clustering through the social media platforms. Next, we will argue against this recognizing that "to know who you are, you need to know who you are not" (Featherstone 2007b, p.80). The self-clustering alternative new generation of Turkey is connecting themselves to the non-discriminatory advocacy movements. Some portions of this collectivity are even daring to openly engage in anti-racist, anti-misogynistic, and anti-homophobic activisms. Hence it can be remarked that while mechanically controlled strategies do so mundanely, organically sprouting tactics are vitally

benefitting the contemporary social platforms for their ideological production (Demir 2021).

Figure 2: Past of the present epoch of secularism in Turkey



To reiterate and reemphasize, such new ideological stances filled with intersectional consciousness emerging within the alternative ideologies of Turkey, are mirroring the non-dualist expressions which are traveling the globe. Such as, within the making of the further fractioning ideologies of the globalized culture, eccentric groups of the new generation are not sticking with the shades of white and black but painting a map with all the colors of the world. Within that map, there is a place for advocating against Israel's policy on Palestine while locating oneself far away from being anti-Semitic. Furthermore, there is also a place for arguing about the problems of uncontrolled flow of refugees arising because of the lack of a cultural orientation program by the states, without being anti-refugee. These are

examples of the distinctive wisdom that are highly relevant in the creation of an opposing collective identity specific to the context of Turkey, through the novel shapes they are given by local crafters. Equally, how these are linked to the locality of the cultural market can only be grasped by a view from inside the context. Therein, during the observations upon the makings of the current provisioning of secularism, can be seen:

- diverse advocacy and activism agencies of the emerging young public,
- carrying ideals of ethnic diversity and gender equality,
- grounding the ever-prevailing secular stance against the dogmatic ideas through scientific, literate, conscious, self-made enlightenment.

An illustration of the similarities between a highly secular Turkey of the 1960s and its echoes in contemporary times can be found in Figure 2. The sign held by the woman on the left reads: "What the ignorant destroyed we will build through knowledge." It is a banner from a student protest at the center of the capital city, Ankara. On the right, the sign reads: "What ignorance destroyed we will build through science." It is a banner from the protest regarding the deterred ceremonial graduation walk at ODTÜ (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi – Middle East Technical University), Ankara.

Although the situation of the present day continues to be critical, there is no wholesome economic reform program manifested by any of the opposing parties. Furthermore, the opposing public's critiques of privatization, corruption, and tax frauds are not erupting into a demand from the multitude of the political parties to propose a strategy towards remaking the welfare state organization that goes beyond mere narrative. Hence, we observe the alternative collectivities of the circulating ideology, a lack of integrated socioeconomic stance, which could have ideally relieved the prevalent burden upon the society. It is, ambiguous, to what degree the liberal cultural trends of the globe translate into the economic politics of Atatürk's children whilst what complications they can project upon the current government's intensifying neo-liberalization rests unknown. The gap in the second act's performance is, therefore, caused by the energy put on only protesting against the human rights violations, which in itself is totally a brave move considering the growing pressures on freedom of any anti-governmental speech (Caman 2021). Yet it is a fact that lacking an economic agenda in a contested market, risks a political stance falling into evanescence before having a chance for governance. Within their own ideological sites, Ottoman's grandchildren are able to relieve the economic

burden via advancing cultural interpretations. On the contrary, Atatürk's children of today do not seem to settle on a cohesive story that can co-create the two. Accordingly, we only demonstrated territorializing components of this vague collectivity, and shined the spotlight on the missing component. It has been repetitively recorded, that the majority of the audience applauded the previous act. Still, in the situations of blatant juridical injustice or ill-suited pragmatist demagoguery that receive general public backlash, we see, that the central ideology can be cornered by the circling ones. That is why, staging a weakly improvised solution in the atmosphere of such situations, is unable to deliver any punch-line that can overthrow the previously favored performance. So, it is an unanswered question; where exactly, the new generations of Turkey that are identifying with such a loosely framed collective identity are to locate themselves, within the cultural-economical matrix of fundamental politics.

Discussion: Postmodern Polarization and Tribalization

Decades ago, the tensions between cultural homogenization and heterogenization were taken as a central problem of the globalizing world (Appadurai 1990). These issues, of course, still persist as evident, for example, in the reviews and essays around the film *Minari* published in MGDR (Hong 2021; Tran-Nguyen and Nguyen 2021; Uzuner 2021).

In the contemporary world, however, conceptualization of globalization goes a step further as an interrelated process in which "the local and the global are interdependent and cannot exist without each other" (Firat 2016, p.2). In this essay, using Turkey as a context, we wanted to think about how these threads are crossed and knitted, weaving the global-local co-created ideologies as they are reflected through depiction of two collective political identities, externally polarizing and internally tribalizing. We drew the lines between the collective political identities we metaphorically used, for instance, for exploring the contemporary cultural market of our lived context, to reflect on the happenings surrounding us. What is happening – not just in Turkey but all around the globe – is not only an economic matter, for example, of the rich getting richer while the poor are getting poorer. It is also a cultural matter, for example, of people becoming polarized into sides tilting dangerously against each other, while rights get more and more intermixed with wrongs, both anyway being artifices of politics. Our discourse was deliberately dramatic from the start. In the end, it is time to break the lines down, to say what is now at hand. In actuality, it is altogether us in the divisions, from the center to the borders. Indeed, figuratively, through ideas we may be divided, yet, despite the facts, hope can change the script we have written.

The canons of social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979) have pointed to the concepts of social classification, social comparison, and social identification being initiated within and through group memberships. Increasingly, these affinity groups are found to reflect in the members' consumption behaviors. A preliminary argument here can be delivered similarly, yet we would like to initiate the approaches that are more tentative in their focuses. In our thinking, the path should shift from consumer behavior to the lived culture as an inquiry shift from the individual to collective subjects. Collective consumer identities, emerging not endemically within the ideological sites of the cultural market but on varying terrains can be resourceful grounds for exploring consumption *agencements* (Cochoy 2021). The conceptualization of consumption itself, however, needs to be expanded beyond its traditional material understanding, comprehending the reality of expressivity on material grounds as well. The consumption of ideology embedded in the Covid-19 vaccines, for instance, found that consumers of vaccine-related stances were polarizing into nationalists versus globalist collectivities in a study that empirically tackled these issues (He and Chen 2021). The production of ideology around the issue of climate crisis, to cite another instance, can be argued as necessary for planetary tribalization around proactive values that can trigger collective practices to reverse climate change (Ang 2021). In the controversial comedic-serious film *Don't Look Up*, for example, towards the end, there is dramatic polarization and tribalization of some who believe in and are petrified by the impending doom, and others (the majority) who prefer to ignore the doomsayers and want to party on (Atik, Ozgun, Dholakia 2022).

The discussions we have presented have worked on polarization-tribalization, as if, the processes of neoliberal globalization are akin to the physics of the vortex rings. The formulation here, however, is necessarily less precise, for giving space to the volatility of the human-prosumed reality. The push of neoliberal globalization which carries the cultural and economic waves is taken as the force which is disrupting the exemplified context of Turkey. These waves enable the dynamism in polarizing directions, diverging due to the distance in situ created between the two by the very nature of the specific context. Thereon the dynamism circulates into the tribalizing directions that are creating the inner circles, being a flux emerged by the nature of not only this context but the human sociality. Indeed, theoretical developments demonstrating (or challenging) the interlocking of the simultaneously forming tribalization and polarization require considerable further discussion in light of the postmodern reality – perhaps a post-postmodern reality – that seems to be seeping into the micro-aspects

of everyday life (including consumption) as well as coloring and shaping the macro-aspects of ideologies, mediascapes, politics, and policies.

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