

The Development of Environmental Consciousness in Modern Turkey

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Introduction

Turkey has a very central geography that bridges East and West, North and South, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. This unique geographical position implies rich biodiversity, sensitive ecological habitats and a wealth of cultural and historical resources. Turkey's rugged topography experiences high seismic activity where earthquakes and erosion can pose hazards. (Turkey has experienced some major earthquakes in recent years.) Topography and soil conditions allow only a third of Turkey's total land area to be suitable for various types of agriculture, creating pressure on available fertile land. Although Turkey is blessed with an abundance of water resources, it requires proper management to utilize the water in the most efficient way. Other natural resources whose management should receive attention include certain minerals, forests, fertile soils, and fisheries.¹

With an estimated 67 million people, Turkey is one of the twenty most populous countries in the world and has the fastest population growth rate of all OECD countries (1.6% in 1997). A relatively high growth rate normally puts additional pressure on natural resources and results in greater production of wastes. Rapid urbanization usually exposes a growing population to a range of concentrated environmental problems and puts pressure on resources (marine and coastal resources, for example). Rural migration to the urban centers usually originates in areas with low agricultural production where the use of land often exceeds its carrying capacity. Excessive migration combined with inadequate infrastructure facilities in the urban centers causes environmental concerns.²

Major Environmental Problems³

Being the ancient cultural and spiritual home, indeed the birthplace, of many civilizations, Asia Minor's fertile soils in have experienced many environmental problems in her long history, as a result of human-nature interaction. The *National Environmental Action Plan of Turkey* categorizes the country's current major environmental problems as follows:

- the urban environment (air quality, water supply and wastewater, and solid waste management)
- natural resource management (water resources, soils and land, forests, biodiversity)
- marine and coastal resources
- cultural and natural heritage
- natural as well as man-made environmental hazards

Air pollution is the first environmental problem Turks confronted beginning in the early 1980s. It was a visible and disturbing problem in major cities and industrial zones and sites.⁴ Air pollution is caused by "unplanned and unregulated urbanization, manifested through the use of low-quality fuel coupled with improper combustion techniques, shortage of green areas, unplanned and unregulated construction, and heavy traffic; and inappropriate selection of industrial sites and the emission of waste gases into the air without adequate technical precaution."⁵ Studies have indicated that between 1990-1995, in 26 cities-including the cities of Bursa, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Istanbul, Kocaeli and Konya, which each have a population of more than one million according to the latest census in 1990 the average sulfur dioxide concentration in winter exceeded the long term limit set by the Regulation on Protection of Air Quality; in 34 cities, the short term limit was exceeded for more than 100 days in the said period. Since then, however, the problem of air pollution has decreased in major cities with the implementation of a natural gas network and other measures.

The second environmental problem is water pollution, that is, "ground, thermal, and mineral waters, rivers, lakes and coastal zones are under the threat of heavy pollution due to household and industrial discharges, and extensive or incorrect usage of pesticides and fertilizers."⁶

The third problem is soil pollution, which is associated with water pollution. It is also caused by household and industrial discharges, and inappropriate use of fertilizers and pesticides. Erosion, moreover, is one of most important soil problems in Turkey. Recent studies have estimated that roughly 500 million tons of topsoil is being lost every year, causing productivity losses in agriculture and a decrease in the storage capacity of reservoirs.⁷

The fourth problem is the maintaining the flora in Turkey, such as forests, pastures, and grasslands. All these areas are under the threat of an excessive and incorrect use of fertilizers and pesticides, fires, and direct human destruction.

The fifth critical environmental problem is noise, especially in big cities, which adversely affects human auditory health and perception, upsetting physiological and psychological balance, and lowering work performance. The main sources of noise pollution are traffic, places of entertainment, building and road construction, and industry.

Another problem peculiar to Turkey is solid waste landfills, which "not only pollute the environment but may also jeopardize safety of anyone near them from methane gas explosions. Such a problem was witnessed in Istanbul's Umraniye District. A methane explosion in April 1993 at a waste disposal site triggered a landslide, resulting in the death of 30 people who hold lived in houses in the surrounding area."⁸

Behrooz Morvaridi, a scholar from Yale, considers Turkey's "environmental problems" as social problems, which reflect the interrelationships among resource change, human productive activities, and the accompanying transformations of people's lives.⁹

The Emergence of Modern Environmental Consciousness

Although the history of environmental problems goes back to ancient times, environmental consciousness in modern sense is a new phenomenon for Turks just as it is for others. Western societies began to perceive the harmful and devastating effects of industrialization and development in the early 1960s. Since then, as Apel puts it, "scientific-technical civilization has confronted all nations, races, and cultures, regardless of their group-specific, culturally relative moral traditions, with a common ethical problem. For the first time in the history of the human species, human beings are faced with the task of accepting collective responsibility for the consequences of their actions on a world-wide scale."¹⁰ Environmental consciousness, therefore, arose first as a response to the these problems respectively in industrial and developed societies.

Turkey, like many other nations in the process of development and industrialization, has experienced similar problems and has been trying to learn from, if not only to mimic, the Western experience of environmentalism. I personally believe that, as Apel reminds us above, *one cannot talk about environmental problems and resulting environmental consciousness in the rest of world without paying attention to the world-transforming activities of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries*. European hegemony and influence, for example, not only destroyed the traditional Muslim political system but also the economic and social institutions that had sustained it.¹¹ With these remarks in mind, we can look at the development of environmental consciousness in modern Turkey. The Turks began to settle in Anatolia (Asia Minor) from the second half of the eleventh century and created a number of political entities. The greatest were the Anatolian Seljuks, the Ottoman Empire and now the Republic of Turkey.

As nomadic tribes, Turks possessed a sense of reverence for nature even in their pre-Islamic history. Like primal peoples elsewhere, they lived

within a state of natural balance and held natural objects in high esteem, in some cases even considering them as sacred. This can be compared with the ecological attitudes and practices of American Indians, for example.¹² The ancient Turks regarded mountains, rivers, brooks, springs, trees, and lakes as sacred.¹³ With the coming of Islam, they came to see nature as the realm in which the beautiful names of God were manifested. This shifting perception could be seen in Turkish folk poetry, especially in the poetry of the thirteenth-century Anatolian dervish and folk-poet Yunus Emre (d.1321).¹⁴ As a Sufi (Muslim mystic), Yunus believed that every particle in the world, animate and inanimate, was a manifestation of the beauty and greatness of God, and therefore was a sign of the Divine. Some of Emre's poems are still used today by those seeking to raise environmental consciousness among modern Turks. His conception and vision of the environment is best summarized in his famous saying: "We love all creation for the sake of the Creator."

In the Ottoman Empire, there existed some institutions for the protection of natural sites, though these were admittedly rare and benefited mainly the elites. Within civil society, however, there existed charitable foundations (*waqfs*), which were well-known throughout the Muslim world.¹⁵ When the constitution of these institutions is studied, evidence of concern about environmental protection and well-being of animals can be seen.¹⁶

Certain new organizations emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century through the influence of the French Revolution. In 1909, for example, a *Law of Associations* [Cemiyetler Kanunu] was issued, and almost remained intact till 1938.¹⁷ However, this should not be regarded as an indication of environmental awareness in the modern sense, but rather as a general consequence of the traditional Islamic value system.¹⁸

Although the Turkish Republic replaced the Ottoman Empire in 1924, it seems that some basic attitudes restricting the participation of individuals in the decision-making process remained the same. In other words, "the state dominance over the society in Ottoman Empire...reflected itself to the new Turkish state" and resulted in "a rigid state-society polarization."¹⁹ The founders of Modern Turkey were overwhelmed with the problems of a war-torn country in the early years of their careers. However, by the 1930s, a number of organizations had become interested in environmental issues, including the Animal Conservation Association, the Island Reconstruction Association, the Embellishment of Çamlıca Association, the Mountaineer Club, and the Turkish Association of Foresters. The crucial point, however, is that these organizations were not bodies which were independent from state.²⁰ The activities of these and other organizations were strictly limited and controlled through one party rule. Therefore, none of them could act as a pressure group during the early period of the Republic, which ended in 1950s with the dawn of the multiparty era. At that time, the ban on associations and strict control over the social and political participation of the citizens was lifted. As a result new social groups emerged, representing different interests and views arising from the public sphere.

Ironically, environmental problems such as the inadequacy of infrastructures in big cities, the rise of squatter housing because of rapid industrialization, and migration to large cities, began to show their face around the same time. One result was the establishment of the Turkish Association for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, one of the first achievements of Turkish environmentalism, in 1955. The founders of this and similar organizations included forestry engineers, bureaucrats, and scientists, and their goal was to prevent forest destruction and to preserve soil and water resources.²¹

The term "environment" (*çevre*) is spelled out for the first time in the 1961 Turkish Constitution, where according to article 49, "everyone's physical and mental health should be protected." The subsequent development of environmental institutions and protections has been based on this article.

Official Response to Environmental Crisis

Awareness of local environmental problems acquired an international dimension and became a global issue in the early 1970s. In fact, the idea of developing national policies to conserve environmental resources first appeared right after the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm. The Turkish government also grew concerned about environmental problems, and became an active member of numerous international institutions to address the problem. With the influence of the conference, in the Third Five-Year Development Plan (1973-1977) which was prepared in 1973, environmental problems were dealt with for the first time. The plan stressed that the regulations concerning environmental protection should be added to the corpus of existing law. As a result, environmental law was incorporated into the national canon in 1983.²² The efficient use of natural resources and their transmission to further generations was also emphasized in subsequent Five Year Development Plans as follows: "in the utilization of the natural resources in Turkey, importance will be attached to the conservation and development of these resources, taking into account the ecological balance and to enable the future generations to make use of them."²³ In 1978, organization at the state level continued with the forming of the Undersecretariat of Environment.

A growing awareness of environmental issues can be seen in the 1982 Turkish Constitution, which includes several articles on the protection of the environment. Article 56, for example, proclaims that "everyone possesses the right to live in a healthy and balanced environment. Developing the environmental circumstances, protecting environment health and preventing environmental pollution are the duties of the state and its citizens." However, Article 56 is not the only article regarding environmental protection. Article 43, for example, states that the public interest should be respected in coastal zones; Article 63 indicates the duties of the state to protect all historical sites and sites of exceptional natural beauty; Articles 44, 45, and 169 give the state the responsibility of undertaking all precautions to preserve the soil and

forests; Article 23 gives the state the right to regulate, and if necessary to suspend, the freedom of establishment in cases where environmental danger exists.

Turkey's major environmental law institutions are based on the aforementioned constitutional principles. Accordingly, an "Environment Law" was established by Parliament in 1983. It was followed by the National Park Law, the Law for Protection of Cultural and Natural Wealth, the law to Protect Coastal Zones, the Construction Law, the Municipalities' Law, the Law to Protect General Health, the Law to Encourage Tourism, the Law of Forestry, the Law of Water Products, and the Decree on Using Agricultural Lands. In the wake of all this new legislation, the Ministry of Environment was founded in 1991. Although the Turkish state assumed the responsibility for maintaining a suitable and healthy environment for its citizens, it also left open the door for citizens to play a role in environmental protection.

The Role of the Ministry of Environment

The role of the Ministry of Environment has been limited by its share of state funds. One reason for its small budgetary allocation may be that it was a new institution without a traditional bureaucracy of its own. However, many environmentalists believe that the state still does not consider environmental protection to be a high priority. In other words, politicians and policy makers are not really interested in long-term policies. Even so, the Ministry of Environment has organized some major conferences and invited different environmental groups and sectors to discuss the current environmental problems threatening Turkey and how to address these problems. The Ministry has also published books, pamphlets, films, and pictures to enlighten the public and raise environmental awareness. By publishing these books, The Ministry of Environment has tried to show its willingness to see the environmental problems from a broader perspective on the one hand, while at the same time encouraging and promoting scholars of diverse backgrounds to produce similar works.²⁴

Environmental Education in Schools

The role of education in raising environmental awareness is clear. In recent years many countries have expanded their educational curricula to include environmental courses and revised other relevant courses in the sciences, history, and other fields to include an ecological dimension. The Turkish national educational system is not an exception to this trend. In fact, in accordance with Article 56 of the 1982 Turkish Constitution, new environmental studies courses have been implemented at different levels of the educational system. The Ministry of Environment has worked with the Ministry of National Education to develop the materials to be used, and provided in-service education for teachers. In 1990, the Ministry of National Education signed an agreement with UNESCO on a project for environmental education. As a result, the Ministry has prepared a handbook for primary school teachers. It has been hoped that teachers could help raise the

awareness of children on issues such as health and the environment with the help of this handbook.²⁵

Environmental topics covered at the primary and high school levels include the major environmental problems and the protection of air, water, and soil; remedies for pollution; lower risk ways of improving living standards; and the conservation of natural resources.²⁶ The Ministry of Environment also provides schools with pamphlets, brochures, pictures, books, films, slides and seminars. Furthermore, students participate in tree-planting activities organized by schools and the Ministry of Forestry. (The Ministries of Environment and Forestry have recently merged.)

Turkish Universities are also adapting themselves to respond the environmental challenge. Today, many universities have environmental engineering departments and research centers. There are now more than 2,000 environmental engineers in Turkey. Other departments deal with environmental sciences, conservation planning, and threshold analysis, while certain architecture, landscape design, chemistry, construction engineering, physics and medicine programs offer environmental courses.²⁷

However, the education of the public and the raising of environmental awareness should not be left to formal educational institutions alone. NGOs, the mass media, and local authorities can also play a role in increasing public awareness about the environmental challenge and working towards an environmentally-friendly way of life. This point is underlined by Robert Brull, who notes that "The social learning capacity of our society must be expanded to generate new ways to respond to the process of ecological degradation. One key component in fostering social learning to address ecological degradation is through the development and instantiation of binding ecological norms."²⁸

"Social learning capacity" leads to increased empowerment within civil society as a whole. As the society and citizens grow more informed, they want to be a part of the decision-making process. The diverse character of society leads to dialogue and cooperation. It provides new opportunities to the voiceless, unrepresented and oppressed. The social aspect of environmental thought could thus be seen as a major contribution to modern ideals, specifically democracy. Through an increased environmental consciousness, people come to understand the interdependence and interrelatedness of ecosystems and humanity as well.

This gives strong justification for developing an environmental ethic within society. As Marilyn Cooper suggests, "to enable large-scale, multicultural action among numerous human communities, an ecological ethic must work within the pluralist, postmodern world. This requires an ethic that can accommodate a wide range of cultural viewpoints, including conflicting notions of what is sacred and profane, what constitutes truth and heresy, and even basic notions regarding what it means to be human."²⁹

NGOs and Environmental Awareness

Thanks to the growing importance of civil society in the world, traditional Turkish political life also has been changing in recent decades and leaving more space for public participation. This is the main reason for the advent and rapid growth of NGOs in Turkey since the 1980s. Since then, we have seen the blossoming of environmental organizations and the raising of environmental consciousness among the Turkish public.

In the early days of the Turkish Republic there were 26,000 registered foundations, which were inherited from the Ottoman Empire. In fact, these were religious charity foundations (*waqfs*). Today, there are almost 60,000 associations, 3,000 foundations and 1,000 unions in Turkey, each of which function in society for different purposes.³⁰ (A list of NGOs in Turkey is provided in Appendixes A and B.)

In fact, environmental awareness in Turkey came largely as a reflection of global environmental movements. The global nature of the problem on the one hand, and the rapid acceleration of global communications on the other, have made possible an increasing level of solidarity and cooperation among environmental groups and movements worldwide. Turkish environmentalism has arisen within this context of global environmental consciousness.

Initially, environmental initiatives tended to be protective and reactionary rather than based on any sort of thoroughgoing worldview. These initiatives were either *against* something conceived to be a threat to the environment, or *for* the protection of specific natural sites. Turkish environmentalists, for example, opposed thermal power plants at Gökova (1986), Aliağa (1989), and Yatağan (1989), and a nuclear power plant at Akkuyu (1993). To these can be added, from 1989 onward, the popular movement in Bergama (western Turkey) against the use of cyanide in gold mining.³¹ The latter case is so far unique, in the sense that it has featured the active participation of villagers and local communities for the first time. It is surprising to see peasants, who just one decade ago used to demonstrate in favor of new industries in the hope of jobs and economic growth, were now demonstrating for the protection of the environment. The environmental movement, therefore, is coming to be seen as "a celebrating example of constitutional democracy and citizenship," and moreover, as "a precursor of social projects critical of the instrumental rationality in the Turkish context."³²

Actions for the preservation of two relatively small parks in downtown Ankara, Zafer Park in 1986 and Güvenpark in 1987, which inhabitants of the capital regarded as the lungs of the city, were protective in nature. Activists opposed any urban development policies that would reduce the city park system, arguing that if Ankara was to be the symbol of modern Turkey then it must contain green sites as well. The two parks were saved thanks to the activities of environmentalists, who proved able to inform the public about their rights and raise their voices to protect "their" parks and "their" city.

The Aliağa Power Plant trial, meanwhile, occupied the Council of State for years. This case is highly significant because the relevant environmental statutes of the legal code, including Article 56 of the 1982 Turkish

Constitution, were actively utilized, and the role of the administration in environmental conservation was emphasized. The legislative provision of the court included the opinion that "Ecology is above all the national interests."³³ This is interesting in the sense that by appealing to "anthropocentric" environmental legislation, Turkish environmentalists obtained an "ecocentric" result.³⁴

The Bergama movement was significant in that it received sympathy from the public with its extensive participation by women, its non-violent approach, the creativity, persistence, and determination of its protesters, and the occasional use of shocking and non-traditional forms of protest, including a nude protest. The locals were well organized under an ad hoc Environmental Executive Committee; the organization was informal rather than institutional. The movement reached across boundaries, from the local level to the national, eventually receiving international support as well. Moreover, the activists framed the problem not only as an environmental issue, but also in terms of people's right to resist in the interest of protecting their own welfare and livelihoods. The Bergama movement provided an opportunity to implement the right of social opposition and civil disobedience.³⁵

Furthermore, according to Öncü-Koçan, "The Bergama villagers accomplished a notable change in gender relationships and in the relationship between the public and private realms. The movement opens the political space to the experiences of the women who previously were excluded from public sphere, and hence broadens the social base of democratic citizenship."³⁶ In sum, the Bergama movement has been one of the most effective environmental initiatives to take place in Turkey.

Mass reactions against nuclear plants are especially interesting in this context, and may have far-reaching implications. One motivating event may have been the Chernobyl disaster on 26 April 1986 in Ukraine. As former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized, "it has painfully affected the Soviet people, and shocked the international community. For the first time, we confront the real force of nuclear energy, out of control."³⁷ The Turkish people's reaction toward nuclear power plans should be analyzed in the light of this and other environmental disasters. Chernobyl—which is located uncomfortably close to Turkish territory—showed the world very clearly the international dimensions of environmental problems. In the case of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant, demonstrations were nation-wide as public announcements and marches were held in various regions of the country to protest the decision of the plant's construction.

Today, Turkey's environmental movement consists of a broad but generally ineffective official sector, a civil environmental movement (foundations, associations and cooperatives formed by the private sector) that prefers to exist in relation with the first group and which sometimes shows a technocratic tendency in dealing with environmental groups, and a third, tiny group which, though thoroughly independent of the first group, has largely been reduced to ineffectiveness and silence. Arnd-Michael Nohl,

after examining the manifestos, programs, and works of Turkish environmental NGOs, classifies Turkish environmentalist movements under four distinctive and in some cases overlapping groups: Greens, radical environmentalists, defenders for conservation of nature and environment, and protectors of industry and environment.³⁸

The Turkish Greens

The Turkish Green Party was founded in 1988. The Turkish Greens were influenced by the Green movements of the West, especially of Europe. The Greens differentiate themselves from other environmental groups, whom they accuse of collaborating with the state.³⁹ Moreover, they rejected the Western concepts of the Enlightenment and modernity—that is, the theory of linear development, Western cultural and educational norms, and so on education—which had been accepted by many modernist Turks. As the Greens consider the environmental degradation to be a direct product of the Enlightenment, they seek to envision a new worldview which is more holistic and humane.

The Green Party was founded by members of a variety of marginal groups, such as feminists, atheists, homosexuals, lesbians, anti-militarists, and others, which made the majority of Turks suspicious about their real aims. Many believed that these groups were using environmentalism as a way of legitimizing themselves. Even the Turkish Foundation for Environmental Protection, a leading environmentalist society, declared their suspicions about the Green Party and its founders. However, one positive aspect of the Green Party cannot be ignored: it allowed other mainstream parties to develop their own positions and policies about environment.⁴⁰ The Party was disbanded in 1994 because of legal formalities. State officials argued that it had not followed legal procedures. According to Ciğdem Ademi, however, the actual reasons “were internal struggles and being unable to create an effective action platform.”⁴¹

Radical Environmentalists

Radical environmentalists argue that environmental problems are best can be understood within the process of democratization. These problems emerge when the public is left out of the decision-making process. Environmental problems, therefore are democratic problems, and can be solved through the political empowerment and participation of “informed citizens.” According to one Turkish radical environmentalist, “the cause of ecological problems are human beings, their social way of living and their interaction with nature.”⁴²

The S.O.S. Mediterranean Association, originally established in 1990 as the S.O.S. Mediterranean Bureau, can be seen as the major representative of this group.⁴³ Initially, it was set up as a working group within the Turkish Green Party. The main objectives of the group are “to prevent the exploitation of Mediterranean ecosystems, to halt the ecological crisis which threatens the world in the region, to provide peace in the Mediterranean. In

addition, natural resources which are exploited by tourism and industrialism, polluted rivers, endangered species, destroyed historical sites are among the subjects to be dealt with."⁴⁴ Turkey's radical environmentalists underline the importance of "green philosophy and ecological policies for providing the continuity of the harmony between man and man and man and nature."⁴⁵

Conservationists

The basic characteristic of this group is their non-political and radical discourse. Among the prominent conservationist organizations are The Environment Foundation of Turkey (EFT) and the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA).

EFT was established in 1978 as "a non-governmental, non-profit, voluntary and independent organization carrying out its work in accordance with the principles of the Civil Code of Turkey."⁴⁶ They emphasize their non-political character as follows: "We have not been involved in extremist movements. We have not dealt with politics. We have not stepped over the line drawn for a moderate, balanced and realistic NGO. We have not lost our respect for the fluency, clearness and richness of the Turkish language in our publications. We have always been loyal to the unchangeable essential philosophy of the Republic of Turkey and the principles of Atatürk [the founder of modern Turkey]."⁴⁷ Moreover, EFT has good relations with international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the World Bank. Today, EFT continues its work in the form of research, publications and creating public awareness. The Foundation has published many books on various issues pertaining to the environment, and these books constitute the basis of the environmental literature in Turkey.

TEMA is another exemplary non-political and civil organization, which provides environmental in-service courses to public. It was established in 1992 with the main objectives of trying to prevent soil erosion, protecting the natural heritage, and preserving biological diversity. It was founded by a prominent Turkish businessman, Hayrettin Karaca.⁴⁸ Karaca links environmental problems, especially those of erosion, deforestation and desertification, with those of political and economic systems, consumption patterns and the modern civilization. He also associates Turkey's social problems such as migration, underdevelopment of rural areas and starvation with the productivity of the soil, the decline of grazing lands, floods, and erosion. Although Karaca is a businessman, he is very critical of modernist development and economic theories, especially modern consumption patterns. His philosophical attitude toward environmental problems and how to overcome them can be seen from the following remarks, where he draws interesting conclusions for well being of environment and human happiness:

What we are witnessing in reality today is that the rich get richer as the poor get poorer. The time has come to question the formation of

our current economic system of ever-higher production and ever-higher consumption. The time has come to ask, "How much is enough?" The time has come to consider a system of sharing that will call for "sustainable living" in place of "sustainable development," which is unlikely to be a functional economic model for the future.

(...)

We propose, instead, the concept of "sustainable living," which entails a new pattern of sharing and a new lifestyle. Human beings should strive to maintain a level of consumption that would meet their needs while allowing for the satisfaction of needs of future generations and the survival of our species.

The only way to share voluntarily is to concede that none of the aspirations of our times--becoming richer, more powerful and consuming more--can sustain human life on earth. This fact must be realized by humanity.

Peace among human beings is solely possible if there is peace between man and nature. Unless we conquer greed, we cannot achieve peace. This is a moral decision to be taken by each person on his/her own. It cannot be legislated by political bodies or enforced by military measures. It requires individual insight into the problems of our world.⁴⁹

TEMA's major concern is "to raise public consciousness about environmental problems such as soil erosion, deforestation, conservation of the surface of the soil, the decline of productivity in farming areas and threats to the biodiversity of the land."⁵⁰ TEMA also "focuses on developing and carrying out pilot projects on rural development, rangeland rehabilitation and reforestation."⁵¹ In addition, public education about these issues is of vital importance.

Apart from the formal education system, TEMA is involved in several unprecedented projects with other target sectors, from the Turkish Military to the Department of Religious Affairs. TEMA is also the publisher of a series of books on a wide range of environmental issues, including a children's section.⁵²

Islamic Groups and Environmental Problems

The interest and involvement of religious groups in environmental debate, in the modern sense, had also emerged in the last two decades. The search for the "historical roots of ecological crisis" and the role of religion emerged in the late 1960s.⁵³ As discussions on the environment clearly interested many people, Muslim thinkers, scholars, and writers began to write extensively on the subject.⁵⁴

Initially, one of the Islamists' main arguments, similar to other critiques of modernity, was to see environmental degradation as a result of a modernist-secular culture which had destroyed the sacred dimension of natural world. If, they argue, the traditional Islamic worldview could be

implemented by Muslims, the extent of environmental degradation would be less, at least, than it is at present. They agree with S.H. Nasr on that "signs of environmental crisis in nearly every county, from the air pollution of Cairo and Tehran to the erosion of the hills of Yemen to deforestation of many areas of Malaysia and Bangladesh."⁵⁵ However, only one who "studies the situation superficially can blame Islamic view of nature for this degradation"-in fact, as Nasr argues, "the modern West thrust the environmental crisis upon the whole of mankind."⁵⁶ Therefore, Nasr's influence on Muslim environmentalists was evident in the case of Turkey. Meanwhile, other Muslim scholars attempted to understand the legacy of Muslim civilization with a "green lens" and then to develop an environmental ethic based on Islamic value system.⁵⁷

Unfortunately, the religious discourse on environmentalism in Turkey has not yet produced any genuine environmental institutions and groups. However, Muslims and Islam are not the only ones to blame. There are some other reasons which deserve attention. The first is a rigid state-society polarization inherited from the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸ The legacy of this is, as Ergun Özbudun puts it, "the institutionalized political system in Turkey; that is, a system that sees the citizens just as voters and expects them not to get involved in the affairs of the state."⁵⁹ Another problem is the secular structure of state, which does not tolerate any organized civil activity for religious groups. In fact, the secular establishment has always been suspicious of any form of religiosity and religion-based activity.⁶⁰ The Turkish version of "modernity" considers "every tradition as a barrier against development; every community is perceived as a potential threat to annihilate the Republic..." thus, "Turkish modernity visualizes its individuals abstracted from tradition and demands them to feel and behave accordingly." Because of this understanding, "Turkish modernity perceives every formation apart from the center as an enemy."⁶¹

Muslim environmentalists, therefore, have so far confined their attention to the publication and dissemination of scholarly and popular works on environmental awareness. They have also organized many national and international conferences, panels, workshops, and symposia.⁶² For example, a considerable number of academic and popular Islamic journals have devoted special issues to environmental problems; discussing them in detail and raising public awareness through the media.⁶³ The Presidency of Religious Affairs has published several books on the environment, and also organized a number of educational and training courses in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and TEMA to educate its staff, especially imams (religious leaders), regarding the nature and challenge of contemporary environmental problems.

Another interesting point is the contributions and activities of politicians who belong to so-called Islamic political parties, especially the mayors of some major cities such as Istanbul and Ankara. When the Islamically-oriented *Virtue Party*, which was later banned,⁶⁴ won the majority of votes (21 per cent) in 1995, their "record for clean, efficient government

at the local level was a major factor in its strong showing in the December 1995 elections."⁶⁵ The mayors, especially those of Istanbul and Ankara, were regarded as having been very successful. When they gave priority to environmental issues, the militantly secularist political circles rebuked them and even accused them of hiding their true agenda and face behind the veil of environmentalism.⁶⁶ However, according to a recent study, "the fears of a growing radical Islamic presence in Turkey's politics are unfounded—and...the warnings are mostly sounded by the country's old elite, which is trying to label Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, chairman of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and present Prime Minister of Turkey, as a religious fundamentalist, who is exploiting his impoverished and Islamic origins."⁶⁷ When they used the color green in their environmental campaigns, the secular media and elites labeled these mayors as reactionaries. They argued that green is the symbol of Muslim civilization and the politicians were thus using the environment for their own agenda. What is interesting, however, is that the public, believing in the sincerity of the politicians, elected them to second terms.⁶⁸

Today the major cities of Istanbul and Ankara are greener and cleaner than ever. Many local environmental problems have been alleviated and millions of trees planted. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's achievements as mayor of Istanbul included improving water distribution and planting nearly one million trees.⁶⁹ In addition, the municipality of Greater Istanbul published a number of scholarly and popular books to help raise environmental awareness among the general public.⁷⁰ They also invited some well-known environmental activist and thinkers, such as Rudolf Bahro, a leading German environmentalist, to give talks and attend workshops in Istanbul in 1996-1997 under the banner "From East and West."

Conclusion

Turkey, like other developing countries, has been experiencing a variety of environmental problems as a result of development and modernization. However, since the early 1970s there has been a growing environmental awareness which mushroomed in the form of environmental NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, this was a new phenomenon in a nation-state where all public spheres had been filled by the state itself.

Environmental problems caused Turks to organize and think for themselves, and to try to involve themselves in policy and decision-making processes. The result was the appearance of many new civil environmental groups, a green party, radical environmentalists, conservationists, and protestors. In a country where the unemployment rate is relatively high, the mass demonstration against new power plants and environmentally unsound technologies have been remarkable.

Another interesting point is that the development of environmental awareness in modern Turkey has coincided with the development of democracy and human rights. When we look at the constitutions of early civil societies in the country, we see that they are all concerned with

environmental protection. Although, in its early phase and development, Turkish environmentalism was undeniably influenced by Western environmentalism, it has been trying to develop a local voice with international implications. This increasing localism can be seen in the case of the Bergama movement and the mass demonstrations for the preservation of parks in the capital. The Bergama movement, moreover, triggered many other local movements. One of its major achievements was to open the political arena to the experiences of women, who previously were excluded from public sphere, hence broadening the social base of democratic citizenship.

Islamic groups in Turkey have become interested in environmental problems and have developed their own discourse, participating in debates on environmental crisis, its root causes and alternative approaches to the problem. Turkish Muslim environmentalists have thus been trying to develop an environmental awareness using religious and traditional resources.

The unifying dimension of Turkish environmentalism is significant. Under mottos such as "One World" or "we are all in the same boat," members of different religious and cultural backgrounds have gathered on the same platform to work for the protection of the environment, joining their forces and energies for a better planet and brighter future. Accordingly, in Turkey we have seen secular, leftist, and religious environmental groups participate in mass demonstration for protection of environment. In other words, very different kinds of environmentalist groups have worked together for environmental protection and awareness. To sum up, we can say that environmental awareness has also led different groups to discover first their interdependence in regard to the natural world, and then to each other. In the process of working together for a better world and improved democratic rights, Turks have been discovering their potential as citizens. This new vision of citizenship can contribute to the development and consolidation of democratic culture in Turkish society.

APPENDIX
MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs in TURKEY

A

	Establishment Date	The number of members in 2000	Main Objectives
Environmental Protection Association of İskenderun	1986	216	To implement activities to solve environmental problems, give information, create awareness and form public opinion in İskenderun and its environment.
Association for Peace Against Nuclear Danger and Health Professional for the Environment	1987	389	To enlighten and warn the public about nuclear war and all kinds of arming, at first, and all the agents and events harmful for health, life and environment to human beings that threaten the future of humanity, to contribute to the protection of mankind, environment and world peace by conducting studies
Association for Protection of Environment and Consumers	1989	410	Work to prevent destruction of nature with a regard for ecological balances. Protect and defend consumers' rights.
Association of Black Sea Environmentalists for Natural Environmental Conservation	1992	205	To contribute to the protection of the environment, nature and natural sources through direct or indirect education, research, projects and applications.
Association of Friends of Ecology and the Environment	1993	60	Protection and improvement of country's natural flora and fauna, and natural riches; use and protection of land and natural sources in best possible manner in inhabited and rural areas and avoiding all sorts of

	Establishment Date	The number of members in 2000	Main Objectives
			pollution.
Environmental Foundation of Turkey	1978	12	To create public opinion on subjects related with environment; to organize conferences, seminars and to conduct research with this objective and within the framework of projects; to publish a book related with these activities.
Environmental Volunteers Association	1992	110	Evoke environmental awareness and provide information.
Global Balance Association	1995	13	To conduct research on Turkey's natural sources in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, to maintain their protection and improvement, to introduce them locally and abroad; to assist in the formation of a sensitive and aware society.
Greenpeace Environmental Association	1986	7600	To preserve natural and cultural heritage, to endeavor for the formation of a relationship between man and environment.
Society for the Conservation of Nature	1975	12000	Contribute to protection of nature and natural sources and to the establishment of a future in harmony with nature.
Bodrum Volunteers Society	1989	72	To preserve antiquities, peace and culture; to protest the unorganized urbanization, destruction of forests, excessive boat traffic along the shore and illegal invasion of shores.
The Research Association of	1989	34	Research and training on determination of rural

	Establishment Date	The number of members in 2000	Main Objectives
Rural Environment and Forestry			environmental problems, with special attention to forestry.
S.O.S Environmental and Cultural Administration Cooperative of İstanbul Residents	1991	200	To preserve and improve natural and cultural heritage; to protect the ecological order which regulates quality of living; to organize and to create awareness among local people for protection of their environment; to provide scientific alternative solutions for their social and environmental problems; to formulate civil pressure groups in the sense of accelerating legal procedures and practices by mass demonstrations.
Social Ecology Society of İstanbul	1995	20	To provide a comprehensive approach to ecological and social problems and to organize activities.
Foundation for the Conservation and Promotion of the Environmental and Cultural Heritage	1990	50	To enrich and preserve the natural, historical and cultural heritage; to leave a better world for the future generations; to keep the air, water and the green clean.

Source: Adapted from Çigdem Ademi, *The Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey, Non-Governmental Organizations Guide: Main Establishments*, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1996.

APPENDIX B
 STATISTICAL DATABASE OF NGOS ACCORDING TO THEIR PURPOSES

Purpose of the NGO	Number of NGOs	%
To construct a public institution	14832	22.5
Educative	14770	22.5
Religious	13396	20.3
Sports and Hunting	10092	15.3
Solidarity and Cooperation	5518	8.4
Environmental, beautification and development	3532	5.4
Cultural	1216	1.8
Children	395	0.6
Women	179	0.3

Source: Adapted from Çigdem Ademi, *Onde Gelen STK'lar*, Aydın Gönel, 1998: 23.

Notes

¹ *National Environmental Action Plan in Turkey*, Executive Summary. See <www.unescap.org/stat/envstat/stews-13.pdf>.

² *National Environmental Action Plan in Turkey*.

³ This section is summarized from Fikret Adaman, "The Political Economy of the Environment in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Fall 1997, 136-138.

⁴ I still cannot forget the air pollution in Ankara in 1980-81. It was so severe and dangerous that all schools and colleges were closed for several days. Everyone stayed indoors. This was the first eye-opening environmental problem for many Turks.

⁵ See, Adaman, 136.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, 137. To highlight the magnitude of the problem, TEMA (The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats) uses a metaphor to attract public attention to the soil erosion: they argue that the erosion of one year could cover the entire surface of Cyprus with a 20-centimeter layer of soil.

⁸ Adaman, 137.

⁹ Behrooz Morvaridi tries to illustrate the links between social relations and environment in his paper, "Environmental Degradation in Eastern Turkey: The Case of Contract Farming," *Transformations of Middle Eastern Natural Environments: Legacies and Lessons*, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies Bulletin 103, 108-122. Also see Semra Somersan, *Türkiye'de Çevre ve Siyaset* (Environment and Politics in Turkey), Metis Yayınları, Yeşil Kitaplar 2, İstanbul, 1993.

¹⁰ K. Otto Apel, *Toward a Transformation of Philosophy*, (Boston: Routledge, 1980), 23.

¹¹ Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 20.

¹² See also Keith Thomas *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London, Allen Lane, 1983).

¹³ See Abdulkadir İnan, *Tarihte ve Bugün Şamanizm* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954); *Makaleler ve İncelemeler I-II* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1987).

¹⁴ He was but one of the thousands of Sufi dervishes of Islam, but he played an outstanding role in Turkish culture, literature and philosophy. Some writers regard him as the most important poet in Turkish history; his poetry, language and philosophy shaped Turkish culture and still does so. See, Talat Halman (ed.), *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies 2, 1991); and also İbrahim Özdemir, "Sufi Views of Nature," unpublished paper.

¹⁵ The *waqf* is a social, legal and religious institution which played an important role in the social, cultural and economic of life of the Islamic world, especially the Turkic world of the Seljukid and Ottoman periods, from middle of the eighth century until the end of the nineteenth. See Bahaeddin Yediyıldız, "Türk Kültür Sistemi İçinde Vakfın Yeri," *Türk Vakıfları*, ed. Z. Baloğlu, (İstanbul: Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı Yayını, 1996), 40-47. The original paper is in Turkish and translated by R. Acun and M. Öz as "The Place of the Waqf in Turkish Cultural System." However, the English is poor. See <<http://www.history.hacettepe.edu.tr/archive/waqfkultur.html>>.

¹⁶ See İbrahim Özdemir, "Osmanlı Toplumunda Çevre Anlayışı," (Environmental View of Ottoman Society) in *Türkler*, H. C. Güzel, K. Çiçek, S. Koca, eds., (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), v. 10, 598-609.

¹⁷ Akın Atauz, "Çevreci Sivil Toplum Hareketini Yakın Tarihi" (The History of Modern Environmental Civil Societies), *Türkiyede Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000), 197. Also see N. Ahmet Yücekök, İltur Turan, Mehmet Alkan, "Tanzimattan Günümüze İstanbul'da STK'lar", (NGOs in Istanbul From Tanzimat to Present) (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998).

¹⁸ For the impact of Islamic value system on Muslim society and institutions see Halil Inalcık, "İstanbul: An Islamic City," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 (1990): 1-23, and Albert Hourani and S. M. Stern, eds., *The Islamic City: A Colloquium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

¹⁹ Feza Sencer Çörtoğlu, *Environmental Pressure Groups in Turkey* (Unpublished MA Thesis. Ankara: Bilkent University, 1997), 42. Ian O. Lesser observes that "many Turks are increasingly uncomfortable with the traditional, dominant role of state institutions. This discomfort is reflected in declining public confidence in the competence of the state and a growing tendency to organize lives and enterprises without any reference to the state." See *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan*, 13.

²⁰ Çörtoğlu, 49.

²¹ Kemal Görmez, *Çevre Sorunları ve Türkiye* (Environmental Problems and Turkey), (Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi 1997), 109.

²² See Çiğdem Adem, *The Development Of Environmentalism In Turkey: A Sociological Case Study Of Two Environmental Non Governmental Organizatio*, Unpublished Master thesis, (METU, Ankara: May 2000), 33-45. Also Ebru EKEMAN, *AB ve Türkiye'nin Çevre Politikalarının Karşılaştırılması İncelenmesi*, (İstanbul: İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı Yayınları No:153, 1998), 64 .

²³ See, Adem, 33.

- ²⁴ These books published by The Ministry of Environment include İbrahim Özdemir, *The Ethical Dimension of Human Attitude Towards Nature*, Ankara, 1997; İbrahim Özdemir, *Çevre ve Din* (Environment and Religion), Ankara, 1997; *Aile ve Çevre*, (Family and Environment), Ankara, 1995; *Sürücüler ve Çevre*, (Drivers and Environment), Ankara, 1995; *Sanayiciler ve Çevre*, (Industry and Environment), Ankara, 1995.
- ²⁵ See, Mehmet Tuncer-Demet Erol, "Environmental Education in Turkey; Some Views and Proposals of Biopolitics" <business.hol.gr/~bio/HTML/PUBS/VOL4/fe-tunche.htm>.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Robert J. Brulle, *Agency, Democracy and Nature: The U.S. Environmental Movement from a Critical Theory Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 49-73.
- ²⁹ Marilyn M. Cooper, "Environmental Rhetoric in the Age of Hegemonic Politics: Earth First! and the Nature Conservancy," in Carl Herndl and Stuart Brown, eds., *Green Culture* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 257.
- ³⁰ Çörtoğlu, 41.
- ³¹ "The case of the mobilization of a group of people from seventeen villages in the hills of Bergama in the northern Aegean region of Turkey in opposition to Normandy Mining Corporation, an Australian-based multinational consortium operating a gold mine in the region." Ahmet Öncü-Gürcan Koçan, "Democratic Citizenship Movements in the Context of Multilayered Governance: The Case of the Bergama Movement," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Spring 2001, 29.
- ³² See Öncü-Gürcan Koçan, "Democratic Citizenship Movements," 30, especially footnote 2.
- ³³ Abdullah Ersoy, "Türkiye'nin Gündemindeki Çevre" (The Environment in Turkey's Agenda), *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), vol. 11, 276-288.
- ³⁴ See, Adem, 79-80.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 90.
- ³⁶ Öncü-Koçan, 54. Also see Akın Atauz and Tanıl Bora, "Türkiye'de Çevreci Hareket" (The Environmental Movement in Turkey), *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), vol. 11, 282.
- ³⁷ For the impact of the Chernobyl incident and related articles see <<http://www.sln.org.uk/geography/enquiry/we40a.htm>>
- ³⁸ Arnd-Michael Nohl, "Türkiye'de Hükümet Dışı Örgütlerde Ekoloji Sorunsalı," (The Ecology Problematic in NGOs in Turkey) *Birikim* 57-58 (1994): 23-27.
- ³⁹ They published a journal called *Ağaçkakan Dergisi* (Woodpecker Journal) and publicized their views. See, for example, Y.S. Emek, "Yeşil Hareketi ve Ağaçkakan" (Green Movement and Woodpecker Journal) *Ağaçkakan* 8 (1993): 2.
- ⁴⁰ Ruşen Keleş and Can Hamamcı, *Çevrebilim* (Ankara: İmge, 1993), 206-208. Also see İbrahim Özdemir, *Yalnız Gezegen* (The Lonely Planet: Essays on Environmental Ethics and Philosophy) (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2001), 176.
- ⁴¹ Çiğdem Adem, "The Development of Environmentalism in Turkey: A Sociological Case Study of Two Environmental Non Governmental Organizations". Paper for the 5th Conference of the European Sociological Association, "Visions and Divisions", Research Network "Environment & Society", August 28 - September 1, 2001, Helsinki, Finland. Footnote 3. <<http://www.sls.wau.nl/enp/esn/documents/Adem%20Environmentalism%20in%20Turkey.doc>>.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ The S.O.S. Mediterranean Association had 75 members in 2000, all volunteers; no professional staff exists. The organization does not have a hierarchical administrative structure. See Adem, 98, 100, 106.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, 100.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid. See also Akın Atauz, "Çevreci Hareketlerin Türkiye'yi Sarsmayan On Yılı"(The Ineffective 10 Years of Environmental Movements in Turkey), *Birikim* 57-58 (1994): 17- 22.
- ⁴⁶ <www.cevre.org>.
- ⁴⁷ <www.cevre.org>.
- ⁴⁸ The rest of the founders of TEMA could almost constitute a directory of Turkish business and industry. (See their web site: <www.tema.org.tr>.) This feature of TEMA, being established by leading businesspeople, is the one that is criticized the most by Turkish environmentalists, many of whom believe that industrialization is a major cause of environmental problems.
- ⁴⁹ Quoted from Adem, "The Development of Environmentalism in Turkey: A Sociological Case Study of Two Environmental Non Governmental Organizations".
- ⁵⁰ From *Bulletin of Activities* 1 (Istanbul: TEMA Foundation, 1994), 1.
- ⁵¹ See Adem, "The Development of Environmentalism in Turkey: A Sociological Case Study of Two Environmental Non Governmental Organizations".
- ⁵² For major activities, achievements and publications: <www.tema.org.tr>. Also see Çiğdem Adem, *The Development of Environmentalism in Turkey*, 115.
- ⁵³ See Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Oguz Erdur, "Reappropriating the 'Green': Islamist Environmentalism," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 17 (fall 1997): 151-66. Erdur uses the term "Islamist" for Muslim thinkers, writers, politicians, and activists alike. However, I do not think it is a good term to include all these groups. More importantly, the term "Islamist" is relatively new, was coined by Muslim secularists and Western Orientalists as a category which referring back to the pre-modern world. By using this word, they imply that what Islam or Islamists propose or offer is not modern and must be rejected. Therefore, I think the words "Muslims or Muslim Society/Societies" is better to describe religiously motivated groups. According to Ziya Oniş, for example "Islamists are not against modernity in its various manifestations. Notably, they are extremely modern in terms of being highly receptive to modern technology and scientific education. See, "Political Islam at the Crossroads: From Hegemony to Co-existence," *Contemporary Politics* 7/4 (2001).

⁵⁵ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Islam and Environmental Crisis," in *Spirit and Nature*, ed. Steven C. Rockefeller and John C. Elder (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 86.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 87.

⁵⁷ See Richard C. Foltz, Frederick M. Denny and Azizan Baharuddin, eds., *Islam and Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁵⁸ See Çörtük, 42.

⁵⁹ Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*, (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

⁶⁰ A good example of this suspicion can be in the devastating earthquake of August 17, 1999. Even in the context of earthquake-relief efforts, the state officials have attempted to limit the role of Islamic groups. See Stephen Kinzer, "Turkey Blocking Muslim Aid to Quake Victims," *New York Times*, August 27, 1999, 3.

⁶¹ Adem. *The Development Of Environmentalism*, 61. As a result of this rigid understatement, "the state has been dictating norms about "good" and "true" life to its citizens."

⁶² Erdur also accepts the scholarly contribution of Muslim environmentalists. See Erdur, "Reappropriating the Green," 151.

⁶³ For a list of these journals, see Özdemir, *Yalnız Gezegen*, 188-190.

⁶⁴ The Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) was established in December 17, 1997 and replaced the Welfare Party which was banned by the Constitutional Court on the grounds of violating the constitutional principle of laicism. This was heavily circumscribed by the so-called "trial of February 28," a "post-modern" coup based on a militant understanding of laicism and manifesting itself as an effort of military-political containment aiming at "a democracy without Islam." See Ahmet Yıldız, "Politico-Religious Discourse of the Parties of the National Outlook in Turkey: A Critical Perspective," *The Muslim World* (April 2003). Also see Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook, 1997).

⁶⁵ See Binnaz Toprak, "Politicization of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey," Said Arjoman, ed. *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 124. When anthropologist Jenny White interviewed supporters of the Welfare Party, the Islam-oriented party Erdoğan belonged to when he was elected mayor of Istanbul in 1994, "not a single one of them mentioned religion as the reason for their vote," she says. "They all complained about inflation, unemployment, lack of trash pickup, and water shortages. They complained about the corruption of the previous party, and about a methane gas explosion at a garbage dump in an Istanbul neighborhood that killed dozens of people." Erdoğan was credited with being an honest mayor who competently restored city services. For the full interview visit: <http://www.bu.edu/bridge/archive/2002/11-08/turk_pol.htm>

See also Ziya Oniş "Political Islam at the crossroads: from hegemony to co-existence," *Contemporary Politics* 7/4 (2001): 281-298; Nilufer Göle, "Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics: The Case of Turkey," in Augustus Richard Norton, ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 17-43.

⁶⁶ For example, when the municipality of Istanbul painted the cobblestones around the municipal area as an indication of environmental awareness of administration, there were rumors and criticisms in the media. Instead of seeing it as "one" step in new environmental policy, it is seen as the manifestation of Islamic policies. See Erdur, 151. Erdur is a typical example of secularist mind-set. Although he acknowledges the contributions of what he calls "Islamist" (interestingly he never mentions what he means by this term), he is very critical about their sincerity. He is especially disturbed by their critique of modernity. As we know the tradition of critique of modernity and enlightenment project belongs to the West as well. In fact, the critique of modernity in the rest of the West was mainly influenced by that tradition. Just to mention, The Frankfurt School and Critical Theory will suffice. Just few examples: Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 1987); Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947) and Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. [1947]. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1972)

⁶⁷ According to White "people misunderstand what makes this party popular, and that's what makes them afraid. The AKP is not made up just of the poor, and the Islamists. There are big industrialists and intellectuals supporting this party — and many people who are not devout Muslims" <www.bu.edu/bridge/archive/2002/11-08/turk_pol.htm>.

⁶⁸ Jenny White, for example, shows how everyday concerns and interpersonal relations, rather than Islamic dogma, helped Welfare gain access to community networks, building on continuing face-to-face relationships by way of interactions with constituents through trusted neighbors. She argues that Islamic political networks are based on cultural understandings of relationships, duties, and trust. She also illustrates how Islamic activists have sustained cohesion despite contradictory agendas and beliefs, and how civic organizations, through local relationships, have ensured the autonomy of these networks from the national political organizations in whose service they appear to act. See Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization In Turkey: A Study In Vernacular Politics*, (University of Washington Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ From <backissues.worldlink.co.uk/articles/161198140511/18111998163726.htm>.

(Italics added.) The former mayor of Istanbul and present Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the most popular political leader of the country. On November 3, Turks voted overwhelmingly for his party. When he began an environmental campaign early in his career as the mayor of Istanbul, he was rebuked and criticized by secularists. See Erdur, "Reappropriating the 'Green'." For the performance of the Islamist municipalities, see U. Akıncı, "The Welfare Party's Municipal Track Record: Evaluating Islamist Municipal Activism in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 53/1 (Winter 1999): 75-94.

⁷⁰ They translated into Turkish, for example, a series of books on religions and the environment published by World Wildlife Fund, and distributed them for free. The first to be translated was *İslam ve Ekoloji* (*Islam and Ecology*) (İstanbul: İGDAŞ Yayınları, 1997). See also Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A. Grim, "Introduction: The Emerging Alliance Of World Religions And Ecology," *Dædalus* (Fall 2001).