In this paper an attempt is made to reassess how and why the laic/Islamic dual opposition has come to be a decisive factor in the politics of Turkish capitalist modernity. The question as to whether this opposition may survive into the twenty-first century is briefly discussed. It is noted that in the aftermath of the prolonged confrontation between the emergent imagined community of the Gezi Revolt and the Islamist AKP government, a religiously neutral political identity came into sight in public life, which can be considered as the harbinger of a new kind of social individuality, one which is incommensurate with the laic/Islamic dual opposition.

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Introduction

On May 28, 2013, the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) government ordered the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to move into Gezi Park in order to remove some trees and clear the ground for the construction of a new shopping mall in Taksim Square. With the exception of a number of young environmental activists, this was just another day in Turkey, a country which, until very recently, has been much admired and much heralded by mainstream media around the world as a model Muslim polity for its unrivaled reconciliation of Islam with democracy. Yet, as it turned out, this was not just another day. To the surprise of many, this was the day when the largest popular revolt in the history of the Republic of Turkey began. According to Halk TV, one of the few media channels that covered the events right from their inception, the revolt, which started in Istanbul, became a country-wide uprising against “the oppressive, arrogant and increasingly authoritarian” leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Prime Minister of Turkey since 2002. In seventy-nine of Turkey’s eighty-one cities, hundreds of thousands flooded to the streets, many carrying Turkish flags and pictures of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of the Republic, to voice their “anger at Erdoğan’s determination . . . to impose his Islamic views” “through

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giant construction projects, alcohol restrictions, rants against abortion or censorship of the arts and the media” (“The anti-capitalist Muslims.” The Economist 18 July 2013. Web. 2 August 2013). The AKP’s protracted neoliberal transformation of the state and society under the guise of democratization had seemingly backfired. What was astounding and astonishing was that, contrary to past experience, it was not the military but civil society that had come forward to stand up for Mustafa Kemal, his ideas and ideals, or at least how they were presently understood and interpreted. “We are the children of Mustafa Kemal” became one of the slogans of these “Young Turks”, who have shaken the country for more than a month. Moreover, the Gezi Revolt was endorsed, supported and joined by a vast array of anti-establishment groups and movements, including socialists, revolutionary Marxists, Kurdish parties, gay and lesbian blocs, as well as anti-capitalist Muslims. According to The Economist (18 July 2013), the latter “has emerged . . . [as] a loose group of pious activists, who deplore what they see as the venality, hubris and ostentation of Mr. Erdogan and a new Islamic bourgeoisie that has thrived under his Justice and Development (AK) party.” Thus, albeit under some peculiar conditions and configurations, Turkey once again found itself in its long-standing divide: the laic/Islamic dual opposition.

In this paper I attempt to revisit Turkish capitalist modernity to reassess how and why the laic/Islamic dual opposition came to be a decisive factor in the politics of Turkey, and briefly reflect whether it may survive into the twenty-first century after the AKP/Gezi Revolt confrontation. To do so, I draw from Braudel’s (1979) historical sociology, and argue that like any polity, the people of Turkey can be conceived of as a plurality of social individualities in line with seeing the overall society as “a set of sets.” I introduce Simmel’s (1910–11) sociological insight into the Braudelian framework to propose that social individuality is always “a dialectically constituted contradiction.” This means that it is formed first within one’s immediate social set, and later presupposed in the overall society as a “quality and form demanded of [her]/his sociability,” which may contradict one’s deeper autentic individuality. As a result, whenever a conflict between social sets occurs, social individualities presupposed by those sets are called upon to defend their sets, most of the time against their very own personal and class interests.

Against the background of these theoretical premises, I attempt to demonstrate that there exist two pervasive social individualities with two identifiable trajectories of cultural evolution within Turkish society as a whole: “the laic individual” and “the Islamic individual.” In everyday parlance, “the laic individual” is thought to be a person devoted to the secular Republic of Turkey founded
by Mustafa Kemal in 1923. With a similar logic, “the Islamic individual” is expected to be the opposite of the laic persona in that s/he is generally considered to be a person repulsed by the secular state founded in 1923. In this popular conception, the Islamic individual is thought to be exclusively faithful to Allah and the Prophet Mohammed without any genuine loyalty to the rule of law. Certainly these popular characterizations cannot be apprehended as if they are theoretical concepts. Since they are merely unqualified notions, they cannot be used reliably in social and political analysis. Nevertheless, by departing from these phenomenal representations, we can trace the cultural trajectory through and within which these two social individualities have not only gained a concrete existence, but have also succeeded in creating particular social sets according to which the identities of some individuals are presupposed.

In what follows, I first outline my theoretical premises, and then make a brief digression into Weberian and Marxian conceptualizations of modernity and capitalism. For the most part I employ the works of Polanyi (2001/1944), Anderson (1991), Corrigan and Sayer (1985), in order to provide a comparative theoretical perspective for my concise narration of the historical process that had produced the laic/Islamic dual opposition in Turkey. Finally, I turn to the issue of the future of the laic/Islamic dual opposition in the aftermath of the AKP/Gezi Revolt confrontation. Here I have recourse to Deleuze in connection with Simmel’s notion of individuality in interpreting the new identity actualized within the Gezi Revolt.

**Society as a Hierarchical Order and the Individual as a Dialectically Constituted Contradiction**

Following Gurvitch, Braudel (1979: 458) alludes to “societe globale” or “total society” as “a kind of general integument surrounding all social life, a skin as transparent and fragile as a bell-jar.” Within this breakable glass housing there appear to be various different “living realities”, each of which contains particular modes of social interaction among a number of individuals. As suggested by Simmel (1910–11), social interaction puts the individual into a dialectically constituted contradiction, and renders her/him a fundamental unity of opposites. Within this process the individual exists within and for her/his group (i.e. “the existence of individuals as society”), while s/he at the same time lives for her/himself (Simmel, 1910–11: 376). In order to understand “the social man”, Simmel proposes, we need to take into account the coincidence of these two logically contradictory determinations of subjectivity. The subjectivity through which the individuality of the individual
develops is determined by “the [socialization] processes . . . which signify for the individual the fact of being associated” yet it is also determined by her/his inherent attributes that situate her/him as a peculiar being (Simmel, 1910–11: 378):

From the common basis of life certain suppositions originate and people look upon one another through them as through a veil. This veil does not, to be sure, simply conceal the peculiarity of the individual, but it gives to this personality a new form, since its actual reality melts in this typical transformation into a composite picture. We see the other person not simply as an individual, but as colleague or comrade or fellow partisan; in a word, inhabitant of the same peculiar world; and this unavoidable, quite automatically operative presupposition is one of the means of bringing his personality and reality in the representation of another up to the quality and form demanded of his sociability (Simmel, 1910–11: 380).

For Braudel, a total society consists of many smaller “societies” or “sets” as he calls them, borrowing a term from mathematics. In the imagery of this particular conception, a total society is a “set of sets” or “ensemble des ensembles”. Any conceivable total society can be thought of as made up of four general sets. These are economic, social, political and cultural realms of social interactions within which various other sets, sectors and groups are formed and evolve over time. None of these sets, sectors and groups may establish lasting supremacy over another, or over all the others. As Braudel (1979: 460) puts it:

Sectors, groups, and sets are in fact endlessly interacting in a hierarchy that remains fluid, within the overall society which may bind them more or less closely together but which never gives them perfect freedom.

Relying on this definition, Braudel chooses to use “social hierarchy” to denote the content of the ordinary word “society”. In his conception society is perceived as both a set and a hierarchy. In other words, society is understood not only as a “set of sets” but also as a “hierarchy of hierarchies”.

His preference of the use of “hierarchy” over such sociologically more familiar concepts used for the analysis of social structure such as “social strata,” “categories” and “classes” derives from his historical inference that hierarchy can unhesitatingly be applied to “the entire history of densely-populated societies”. As he puts it, “none of these societies has ever developed horizontally, on a plane of complete equality. They are, invariably, openly hierarchical” (Braudel 1979: 463) Braudel goes on to argue that “there is no society totally without framework or structure.” This means that all societies fit one or another form of hierarchical order. In fact, he proposes to explore the structure of any society and its change by
analyzing how its overall hierarchical order has been built. From this vantage point, the first and perhaps most important thing to note is that “The hierarchical order is never simple”. This is because any conceivable overall hierarchical order is always made up of “a diversified plurality of hierarchical orders”. Then he offers us one of his most important sociological assertions: Societies “are divided against themselves and such division is . . . intrinsic to their nature.” (Braudel, 1979: 464)

Braudel illustrates with ample evidence from the early modern history of Europe that this “division against itself” unequivocally manifests itself in the process of social mobility. Those who are on the top of hierarchy do whatever it takes to stop the upward mobility of those who are at the bottom. This endless struggle for the top not only reproduces society as a hierarchical order but also keeps it divided as a set of sets. In conjunction with Simmel’s sociological insight, one can argue that these continuously produced and reproduced social sets presuppose social individualities as “veils” over the true and authentic personalities of individuals. In other words, “the individual is rated as in some particulars different from his actual self by the gloss imposed upon him . . . when he is credited with the characteristics of the social generality to which he belongs” (Simmel, 1910–11: 381). After reading Braudel in connection with Simmel one cannot help thinking that society is a masquerade, and the entire game is nothing but a contest among social individualities for reaching the very top and staying there forever.

On the basis of the foregoing I would suggest that what distinguishes Turkey from other total societies with a Muslim majority is the particular way by which it is divided against itself. As shall be explained in detail in the third section, the central axis of this division is the laic/Islamic polarization, which is a product of the peculiar history of the transition to capitalist modernity in Turkey, and thereby reflective of its socio-cultural evolutionary trajectory under capitalism.

**Modernity, Capitalism and the Spiritualization of Money Making**

Before moving onto the narration of the socio-cultural evolution of the laic and the Islamic social sets and their structural opposition in modern Turkish history, I should clarify the particular meanings that I attach to the terms “modernity” and “capitalism”. This is needed because these two terms are at the center of the narrative presented below. Thus I first introduce my readings of the concepts
of modernity and capitalism in line with the purposes of this paper, drawing on them in the subsequent section in order to make sense of the peculiarities of the Turkish modernization and transition to capitalism.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber (2005/1930) speaks of *beruf* or “calling” as an attachment of very strong sense of purpose to one’s activities. Originating within Protestant discourse, calling had a strictly religious meaning, in that it referred to “the task set by God.” The religious meaning was lost later on, and the term has come to be associated with “an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel and does feel toward the content of his professional activity, no matter in what it consists, in particular no matter whether it appears on the surface as a utilization of his personal powers, or only of his material possessions (as capital)” (Weber, 2005/1930: 19). For Weber, if there is anything like a social ethic of capitalist culture, it is the sense of “one’s duty in a calling.” If we can extend Weber’s thesis on capitalist culture beyond the context of early modern Protestant countries, it can be argued that wherever capitalism emerges as the dominant mode of production, an intensely held spiritual belief about the profanity of capitalist activities, *i.e.* “the naked cash nexus”, to use Marx’s phrase, become widespread within the overall society. So it is possible to assume that with capitalism becoming the dominant mode of production, Turkey might have experienced a similar process of the spiritualization of pecuniary activities.

The nature and the content of the spiritualization of money-making in the West European context seem to have depended on the historical particularities of its peculiar path to capitalist modernity. As Weber showed in his classic work, various forms of Protestantism or Puritanism such as Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism and Baptism had been associated with the rise of market-based capitalism, whose *dues ex machina* was the individual entrepreneur. Having an “elective affinity” with entrepreneurial capitalism, almost all forms of Puritanism liberated individuals from the yoke of the “other-worldly” asceticism of medieval Christianity. By turning faith into the individual’s own “business,” they enabled the community of believers to break with the stifling religious obligations that had proscribed the money-making activities as sacrilegious. Puritanism did not demand for hedonism in lieu of asceticism, however. In order to meet the requirements of salvation and go to heaven, Puritans must also be ascetic. Yet this asceticism should be of an “inner worldly” kind, involving self-discipline. The Puritan must have developed a conception of the self, whose calling was to disdain idleness, work hard, and accumulate ever more
money for salvation. In other words, her/his beruf was to live and act like a cash machine.

The case of Puritanism shows that the triumph of capitalism in Western Europe might have rested not on relaxing communally fettered individual greed but, on the contrary, the social construction of money-making as a sacred activity. Understood as such, like all social constructions, it involved a symbolic violence in the sense of the annihilation and replacement of a certain hegemonic social construct. The target of the symbolic violence of Puritanism was the high clergy of the Catholic Church, with its various sacraments for salvation. According to the Calvinists, for example, the high clergy could not be seen as an authority that would provide the ordinary individual with salvation, because each and every individual would have to stand alone before God on the Day of Judgment, including the Pope. Puritanism then, necessitated a cognitive transition on the part of common people, from seeing themselves as the Christians of the Church to becoming individual Christians through hard work and personal accumulation of wealth. In other words, with the spread of Puritanism, communal ties established via the Church had been progressively loosened, thereby expediting a greater development of individuality. Within this process, the interests of the individual gained an independent existence that was discernibly different from the interests of the community. What had really happened was, to use Simmel’s phrase, a change in the “third element” or the “third party” that would bring about and enforce collective solidarity to the now individuated individuals. The third element, which used to be the Church, had essentially been replaced by the market which, according to Marx, through “commodity fetishism” had concealed the exploitation of wage-laborers by capitalists or the class relation between these two.

Not surprisingly, due to the veiled class oppression, right from the beginning up until today, the capitalist market as the third element has continued to fail in providing justice and other virtues that would facilitate overcoming social inequality (Polanyi, 2001/1944). In other words, the market has been flawed in binding people into a cohesive group of individuals, and repeatedly fallen short of creating a strong social solidarity; in other words, the market ended up creating a social condition which Hobbes termed the bellum omnium contra omnes. From this depressing observation Hobbes derived another dismal conclusion. According to him, had individuals wanted to live in security they should have submitted to the ruling of an authority regardless of how this authority acquired its political legitimacy. As a matter of fact, the real course of history has greatly reflected Hobbes’ recommendation: the baby
thrown out with the bath water returned later to construct a new type of sociality, and thereby a new social individuality by supplanting the excessive individuation associated with the ideas of the Reformation and the Renaissance. In other words, the disembedded individual was re-embedded once more.

Without doubt, the re-embedding of the individual back into the community had been a protracted process, the end result of which was the sovereign “territorial state”. The novel sociality propagated by the state or authority in turn was the “nation”, which, according to Anderson (1991), appeared to be an “imagined political community” in that it would exist only as a mental image in the heads of its members. For Anderson (1991: 224), regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation flowing from the prevailing capitalist social relations, the imagined nation would furnish a ground for the much wanted collective solidarity since it could gloss social hierarchies by providing a feeling of “deep, horizontal comradeship” among the citizens of a state. In short, through the mediation of a state formation an already spiritualized market had turned into an “imagined nation” or, as Sayer (1991: 83), borrowing from Phillip Abrams, puts it, a “collective misrepresentation of bourgeois society, whose real content remains the inequities of capitalism”.

Corrigan and Sayer (1985) embark on the idea of state as “collective misrepresentation of bourgeois society” by considering the transition to capitalism in England. In their terms, as a result of the English bourgeois revolution to which they refer as “cultural revolution”, the state took on the character of a moral regulator, an agent manufacturing cultural forms of capitalism by “rendering natural, taken for granted, in a word “obvious”, what are in fact ontological and epistemological premises of a particular and historical form of social order” (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985: 4). In other words, in their view, Anderson’s “imagined nation” was the state’s cultural fabrication of a unity of what were “in reality multifaceted and differential historical experiences of groups within society”:

The law also played a fundamental role in this process as capitalism began developing with attendant class relations. The Law becomes an absolute authority as once was God. This partial displacement of religion as a dominant legitimating code for and within the state, towards solid bourgeois values of law, property, “liberty” and civility was a major cultural legacy of the revolutionary decades (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985: 80).

Thus, the state qua moral regulator moved in to be the “third element” of “modern” society, whose “solidity” would rest on the “solid bourgeois values” associated with the idea of progress.
The Evolution of the Laic and the Islamic Social Sets in Turkish Capitalist Modernity

We can turn now to the set of historical circumstances that led to the spiritualization of pecuniary activities and its evolutionary trajectory in Turkish capitalist modernity. I have mentioned previously that within this trajectory the laic and the Islamic “social men” have not only gained flesh and blood existence but also produced and kept reproducing the laic and the Islamic social sets within the overall society. In what follows, I first attempt to clarify how the formation of the Turkish nation state as the “third element” of modernity involved two separate yet intertwined forms of symbolic violence that had resulted in the creation of an imagined nation divided along the laic/Islamic axis. Next, I show how and why this imagined social division within the imagined nation had facilitated the solidification of capitalist social relations by privileging the laic set over the Islamic set. Finally, in concluding my historical narration, I provide a very short account of reasons for how and why the Islamic set has recently been on the ascent, while the laic set has come (been rendered) to assume a lesser role.

A Capitalist Modernity Against the Caliph Sultan and Tarikats

As it has been well documented in the literature, the foundation of the Republic of Turkey involved a set of reforms introduced from the top, such as the removal of Islam as the state religion, the creation of a unified secular system of education in place of religiously constituted school systems, and so on (Lewis, 1968). These and many other institutional modifications had aimed to establish a secular system of governance by abolishing the religious foundations of the Ottoman state, i.e. the Caliphate and the Sultanate. Borrowing from Corrigan and Sayer (1985), one can conceive this process of politico-legal restructuring as a bourgeois revolution geared to “render natural, taken for granted, in a word obvious” what has been a particularly objectionable sociality to the populace of Turkey. Given this, we can suggest that Turkish bourgeois revolution, though it appeared to be a political revolution on the surface, was in point of fact a cultural revolution. The objectionable sociality in question was nothing but capitalism, i.e. a society in the image of “naked cash nexus”.

For sure, in the early twentieth century in Turkey, capitalism, understood as endless and limitless accumulation of wealth, was not an unknown or unheard of phenomenon on the part of descendants of the Ottoman Empire, who would be “reformed” by the revolution.
as the “sovereign” “Turkish” citizens of the new state. Regrettably, however, “there was a strong current of popular hostility to . . . the tendency to accumulate monetary fortunes and to increase them by investment” (İnalçık, 1969: 103). In other words, there was a very “solid” unfriendly attitude toward capitalism within the overall society. The hostile attitude toward unrestrained money-making was exceptionally acute among the members of the religious fraternities, namely, **tarikats**, which were the organizations of heterodox Islam in the land. Moreover, orthodox Islam, represented by the Ottoman Sultan throughout the Muslim world under the title of the Caliph, was not less antagonistic to the capitalistic habit of thought and action. One tradition within orthodox Islam, expounded by **al-Ghazali**, was particularly keen on undermining any attempt by capitalists to gain legitimacy in the eyes of ordinary people. By outlawing profit as an end in itself, the scheme of thought of this tradition had not only penetrated into common sense but also made it possible to institutionalize a popular ethics about economic behavior that “recommended as an ideal a middle course between asceticism on the one hand and the capitalist mentality on the other” (İnalçık, 1969: 103). It is interesting to note here that even about four hundred years after the spiritualization of money-making in Western Europe, in Turkey, “a trader’s switching from market to market or from commodity to commodity, or his embarking overseas in quest of greater profit” might have been seen, by and large, as an evil act, if not a sin (İnalçık: 1969: 103).

In a nutshell, during the long reign of the Ottomans, both orthodox and heterodox Islam hindered the development of capitalism internally. This came about for the most part by precluding capital accumulation on the part of merchants involved in long distance trade, through confiscating their wealth, a practice which was more or less institutionalized. However, merchants were the primary, if not the only, social set engaged in rational economic activity driven by the profit motive. Thus, the road to the rise of an economically powerful capitalist class to assume political leadership, and spiritualize money-making activities was closed forever. In this sense, the institution of confiscation, legitimized by respect to a set of Islamic precepts in both political and civil society, guaranteed the state elite the protection of their economic supremacy over all other social sets. Not surprisingly, the Ottoman state elite constituted the only class with wealth accumulation comparable to the capitalists in Western Europe. All of this together acted as a brake on the emergence of Western European style capitalism from within.

The leadership of the revolution that had waged the national liberation war in the beginning of the 1920s, and effectively secured the political power with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey
saw the deterrence of capitalism from within as one of the chief causes of the Ottomans’ falling behind the “Great Powers”. Mustafa Kemal had a confident stance on this:

If the history of Turks is examined, it could be seen that the comedowns and breakdowns were resulted from the economic reasons. All the victories and failures are related to the economic conditions . . . Our people destroyed the enemy’s armies. For total independency, there is a rule: the national sovereignty should be supported by financial sovereignty. The unique force which will take us to this objective is economy. No matter how great the political and military victories, they cannot be enduring unless they are crowned with economic victories. Who conquers with swords is doomed to be defeated, and finally leaves his place to who conquers with cultivators (quoted in Takim and Yilmaz, 2010: 551).

According to the revolutionary cadre, the Ottoman Empire failed to secure “national sovereignty” because it failed to industrialize, and thereby became “financially” dependent on already industrialized countries. The failure to industrialize in its turn was a consequence of the brake on capitalism stipulated by the prevailing Islamic dogmas, backing the material interests of the corrupt Ottoman ruling class. Thus, a rapid economic development of Turkey, which would not only bring freedom from “financial” dependency but more importantly place Turkey in the league of “contemporary civilization” of the “Great Powers”, required releasing the brake on capitalism or “free enterprise”, by discarding the dominant orthodox and heterodox interpretations of Islam, which were mostly framed as “reactionary ideas.”

Accordingly, the builders of the Turkish nation state thought that they would have to exert symbolic violence on two separate yet intertwined fronts in order to mobilize the country toward a capitalist industrialization and modernization process. On the first front, they engaged in a concerted campaign for the defamation of the Ottoman Sultan and the ulema (the doctors of Islam), i.e. the ruling class proper, by declaring them archaic and regressive forces obsessed with the protection of their personal material privileges at the expense of the well-being of “the public”. On the second front, they pursued a well-planned war of maneuver combined with a war of position against tarikats. In the words of Mustafa Kemal, confrontation with tarikats was indispensable because Turkey could not be “a country of sheikhs, dervishes and disciples”. Furthermore, as he declared in 1923, this combat against tarikats in order to eradicate poverty and backwardness would be accepted by “the public”:

Impediments to our actions will never come from the public. The people want to be prosperous, independent, and wealthy; it is very difficult to be poor while observing the wealth of the neighbors. Those who nourish reactionary ideas think they can rely on certain groups. This is an absolute illusion. We will destroy those who stand in our
way to progress. We will not stop on the high ground of progress. The world advances in an incredible speed. Can we stay outside this rhythm? (Karal, 1998: 41, emphases added)

Thus, all solids, as long as they were impediments in the way to progress, would “melt into air”.

The emergent nationalist ideology, later to be called Kemalism, was not against Islam per se, though. To tell the truth, one of the six pillars of Kemalism, halkçılık (populism), not only approved “the public” as the “master” of the nation but also accepted their ascribed Islamic identity (the religion of the majority) as one of the constitutive elements of the imagined Turkish nation in the making. Thus, the abolishment of the Caliphate and the Sultanate and the prohibition of tarikats had been coupled with the establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) to provide, so it was said, the citizens with Islamic religious services such as the appointment of preachers, muezzins and imams and the distribution of sermons. For sure, the revolutionary cadre deliberately kept quiet about the true objective of the DRA, which was to establish control over the Islam practiced in civil society in order to contain any form of opposition against the development of modern capitalism from the quarters of heterodox Islam that immediately went underground after their legal banishment.

The DRA was not the only state organization that had been marshaled for controlling Islam according to the requirements of the social and economic organizational path taken by the bourgeois revolution. The army and the universities were also considered important institutions for educating and disciplining the nation concerning the true content and meaning of Islam at the level of “the high ground of progress” or in the words of Corrigan and Sayer, in line with “solid bourgeois values of law, property, “liberty” and civility”. As Gürbey (2009: 379) argues in a recent article, what was encompassed by the term “secularism” was in point of fact “a civilizing project” – to which I refer as a bourgeois “cultural revolution” – which involved “an attempt of the state to form religious subjects whose ultimate obedience is owed to the nation-state”. In other words, the so-called radical Kemalist laicism or the radical secularism of the Republic of Turkey was the political project of the Turkish bourgeoisie aimed to create a new Islamic subject. Laicism was, as it were, the terminology for bourgeois Islam that would not be hostile to “the tendency to accumulate monetary fortunes and to increase them by investment”. Thus, Alam (2009: 357) captures an important feature of the Turkish capitalist modernity when he argues that “there are clear continuities between the Turkish Republic and the Ottoman system, when state and religion
were closely intertwined, notwithstanding the difference in the role and status of Islam under each system."

Without doubt, there is a remarkable difference between these two social formations in regard to the incorporation of Islam into the state structure. While Islam had been utilized in legitimizing the divine authority of the Ottoman state, it was employed in framing and disseminating a calling commensurate with the spirit of capitalism by the “secular” state. The idiosyncrasy of the Kemalist *beruf* emanated from its attempt to align the religious duty of an individual “Muslim-Turk” with her/his money-making activity, which was considered an end in itself. As part of its classless society discourse, Kemalism sought to mobilize a great force of Islamic ideas through a vast array of institutional channels in order to make the citizenry believe that whatever particular position they might take on in the social division of labor (such as businessman, merchant, farmer, engineer or unskilled worker), they must see their involvement in pecuniary activities as a vocation for the sake of the national development.

A committee formed in the Faculty of Divinity at the Istanbul University in 1928, for example, along with the DRA, explicitly aimed to help create an individuated Islamic calling in tune with the requirements of capitalist social relations by reforming and modernizing Islam (Gürbey, 2009: 375). According to the committee, Islam should be rendered a “rational” and “scientific” faith in order to make “religious life” harmonious with “economic life”. In other words, the religious convictions of people should be remodeled by pushing religion from the public domain to the private realm in order to render Islam an ally rather than an enemy of capitalism. To sum up, it would not be inappropriate to argue here that political and economic factors alone could not have led to the staggering expansion of capitalism in Turkey in less than five decades in the first half of the twentieth century. The reformed “Islam” integrated into the Kemalist calling played a considerable role in the construction of an imagined nation in the midst of the widespread inequities associated with capitalism. In this sense, Kemalism, although engendered by the materialistic considerations and interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie, also constructed a religiously grounded “misrepresentation of bourgeois society” by providing a deeper spiritual meaning for an otherwise profane capitalism. Not surprisingly, at present, the so-called laic Turkish business class – which have been supported by generous state subsidies and business friendly economic policies at the expense of subordinate groups and classes – still consider their profession, i.e., the activity of wealth accumulation, as a civic duty to develop Turkey in line with the West European model of capitalism, which,
in their worldview, represents the “contemporary level of civilization” (Buğra, 1994).

Within a decade, Kemalism succeeded in converting many citizens in major urban centers – where unfettered capitalist social relations had made a rapid and strong impact on the daily lives of individuals – to laicism or the new religion to which I refer as bourgeois Islam. Nevertheless, it failed to gain the loyalty of the majority of the people in small towns and rural areas. This was mainly because these spaces remained mostly untouched by the expansion of capitalism, except for functioning as cheap resource bases. In other words, not having experienced any significant change in their material conditions of life, the majority of the people in the countryside were not motivated toward changing their age old calling, according to which they must pursue a life consistent with a “middle course between asceticism on the one hand and the capitalist mentality on the other”. As Mardin (1993, 1971) explains in detail, although banned, tarikats protected their legitimacy in the eyes of many people by providing a sense of meaning and a spiritual framework in contradiction with the Kemalist calling. The Islamization of Turkey seemed to be an unintended consequence of Kemalism’s avowal of Islam in the service of national development by depicting it as a “personal faith” practiced in the private realm. Islamism, as both a political and an intellectual current, emerged without delay in reaction to Kemalism in order to retain a positive public impression of Islam and disseminate counter-arguments against the unquestioned appropriation of Western values and structures (Aydın, 2006). In the late 1940s, with the onset of multi-party politics, Islamism gained further ground in civil society and empowered many people to assert and declare their collective Islamic identity publicly. In the 1950s, it was obvious that capitalist modernity in Turkey had bifurcated into two major social sets, i.e., two social individualities, the laic and the Islamic ones in the manner of a dual opposite.

The Laic Social Set on the Top of the Hierarchical Order: 1960–1980

Economic, political and ideological clashes between the laic and the Islamic social sets that still seem to divide and define the unique nature of the division of Turkish society against itself today, all surfaced in an oppositional manner during the 1950s. As we have seen, the ideological schemata of the laic set rested primarily on the core idea of the nation state as the leading “civilizing” agent against the allegedly reactionary interpretations of Islam that had constituted obstacles to the development of “free enterprise system”. With
the transition to the multi-party system after 1946, however, the ideology of the laic set encountered widespread reactions with public visibility. Even before the establishment of the Democratic Party (DP) – an off-shoot of the ruling Republican People’s Party (CHP) – voices from the Islamic social set began to be heard in public life. One of the fervently debated issues had been the lack of traditional Islamic teaching within the national education system. In 1946 the CHP conceded to reopen imam-hatip high schools in order to contain the growing opposition to its authoritarian stance (Geyikdağ, 1984). Throughout the 1950s the DP ruled the country. Known as “the Menderes years” after the leader of the DP Adnan Menderes, it was in this decade that Islamism entered the mainstream political life for the first time. Some of the leading tarikats immediately supported the DP government because of its lenient approach to non-state versions of Islam, while some others avoided politics altogether. Nevertheless, the Kemalist state qua moral regulator as the “third element” of Turkish modernity gained further solidity on the basis of “solid bourgeois values” associated with the idea of progress.

Very much in tune with Bauman’s (2000) depiction of “solid modernity”, throughout the 1950s, “the melting of solids” gradually resulted in the unraveling of the market from the once habitual political, ethical and cultural compulsions. Interestingly, the emergent capitalist social order, within which the market had gained a phantasmagorical autonomy from the rest of society, came to be seen as more durable than the orders it replaced. Some tarikats such as Nakşibendi and Nurcu did not hesitate to support and join the DP, which unequivocally championed liberal capitalism publicly with the strange slogan, “a millionaire in each and every neighborhood” (Geyikdağ, 1984). This was the age of solid capitalism that came to dominate a larger part of human life on a world scale under the U.S. industrial hegemony (Arrighi, 1994). The main beneficiary of this era was the laic bourgeoisie, which moved upward and toward industrial investments (Eroğul, 1987). The state helped this industrial capitalist class by providing the required and needed organizational and legal environment. It was in this period, for example, that the Union of the Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey were formed in order to help the growth of an industrial-based capitalist economy (Öncü, 2003). Despite the backing of state, the laic bourgeoisie, located largely in Istanbul, failed to establish a stronghold of political representation in the parliament. Supporting and supported by the DP governments, the laic bourgeoisie remained politically dependent on landlords and small commercial capitalists of Anatolia – the two propertied classes within
the Islamic social set. (Savran, 1992; Ahmad, 1977). As the DP government did not have the luxury to lose the backing of the latter group, given the relatively disproportionately large size of the electoral vote concentrated in Anatolia, the laic bourgeoisie began to move away from the DP to search for independent political representation in the second half of the 1950s. This political stalemate gave way to a political crisis that was dissolved by a military intervention. With the new political regime that emerged after the May 27, 1960 coup d’etat, the hand of the laic bourgeoisie was strengthened. The new regime not only introduced a more democratic constitution facilitating the curbing of the power of the majority, but also gave impetuous to the further development of an industrial base, grounded in five year development plans and economic policies that provided protection for Turkish industry. Thus, the laic bourgeoisie finally coupled its supremacy in the economic and cultural sets with its supremacy in the political set. As a result, the laic social set came to occupy the top of the hierarchical order.

At the beginning of the 1970s, industrial capital accumulation accelerated, and in connection with this a modern proletariat and its political and economic organizations emerged. However, another political crisis arose in the 1970s (Ahmad, 1977). Because governments were split between the laic bourgeoisie and the Islamic Anatolian propertied classes, they represented two conflicting and disparate mandates (Schick and Tonak, 1987). They faced increased demands of the laic bourgeoisie, which had economically become more powerful, and the ocean of small capitalists scattered throughout the rest of the country. In tandem, the growing opposition of the working class threatened profitability, through strikes and civil unrest, further destabilizing the economic supremacy of the laic bourgeoisie (Margulies and Yıldızoğlu, 1988). Inevitably, the latter conflict led to the restriction of democratic rights whose effective use required strong governments controlled by the laic bourgeoisie (Savran, 1992). However, the division of the propertied classes on the laic Istanbul-Islamic Anatolia axis prohibited this political condition from being materialized. With the coup d’etat of September 12, 1980, the legislature came momentarily under the control of the laic bourgeoisie in a context completely under the surveillance of the army, which was a set within the laic social set (Ahmad, 1981; Savran, 1992).

The Islamic Social Set on the Rise: the Post-1980 Era

After 1983, during the period of the Motherland Party (ANAP) governments of Turgut Özal (1983–1989), the conditions of the supremacy of the laic bourgeoisie have been seriously eroded both
by the rise of Islamism as an oppositional political movement and an Islamic capitalist class that employs aggressive strategies geared toward taking over the commanding heights of the economy, especially after the AKP’s taking office in 2002 under Recep Tayip Erdoğan. This surprising shift in the economic, political and cultural hierarchies of the total society of Turkey has been a consequence of the transition from national developmentalism (i.e. the peripheral form of the embedded liberalism) to neoliberalism as the dominant mode of capital accumulation.

Harvey’s (2005) reflection on the history of neoliberalism sheds significant light on the idiosyncrasies of the new political and economic organizational form that can be seen to have emerged in this latest stage of capitalism both in Turkey and elsewhere. In his view, to use Bauman’s phrase again, the capitalism of solid modernity – that is, the embedded liberalism at the core and national developmentalism on the periphery – began to go wrong by the end of the 1960s. With signs of the crisis of accumulation becoming apparent, in the 1980s the state qua moral regulator came under the disapproving critique of the social sets at the top of the hierarchy, due to their framing of it as the major culprit responsible for ills of society and troubles of individuals. Because the state at this particular stage of capitalism had been poised as the ultimate authority to reconcile social conflicts, especially the one between capital and labor, it had to set standards for the social wage by constructing a variety of social provision systems (health care, education, and other such entitlements). Without doubt, the social wage, both as an idea and policy, became an unbearable cost for capital under the conditions of accumulation crisis. As a pragmatic political project, neoliberalism, then, was to dismantle the social state, and thereby free capital from the constraints of social provisions, constructed once with the hope of inventing an everlasting solidity. Within this process, as the social state melted, little by little, into air, class compromise between capital and labor as well as the feeling of “deep, horizontal comradeship” among the citizens also dissipated. It rapidly became all too clear that the fundamental mission of the emergent neoliberal state “was to facilitate conditions for profitable capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital” by casting individuals into, to use Marx’s phrase, an “everlasting uncertainty”, and leaving them alone with the task of building their lives as their “careers.”

There is no question at present that in Turkey neoliberalism had also succeeded in liquefying solidarity based social contract and restored the power of the capitalist class in general over economically disadvantaged classes and groups. However, as Harvey (2005: 31) puts it, “while neoliberalization may have been about the
restoration of class power, it has not necessarily meant the restoration of economic power to the same people." "The opening up of entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as new structures in trading relations, have allowed substantially new processes of class formation" (Harvey, 2005: 34) As the size of market got bigger as a result of ever-increasing and intensifying commodification of life, the long suppressed dictum “buy cheap, sell dear” was easily unleashed to justify making a quick fortune. As neoliberalism matured over time, the ever growing volume of capital had been created via financial operations to be seized, more often than not, by a new class of capitalists. We should note here that the latter feature of neoliberalism seemed to be precisely in tune with the historical generalization proposed by Pirenne in his classic article “The Stages in the Social History of Capitalism”:

At every change in economic organization we find a breach of continuity. It is as if the capitalists who have up to that time been active, recognize that they are incapable of adapting, themselves to conditions which are evoked by needs hitherto unknown and which call for methods hitherto unemployed. They withdraw from struggle and become an aristocracy, which if it again plays a part in the course of affairs, does so in a passive manner only, assuming the role of silent partners. In their place arise new men . . . who boldly permit themselves to be driven by the wind actually blowing and who know how to trim their sails to take advantage of it . . . (Pirenne, 1914: 494–495).

In Turkey, it was the rising Islamic bourgeoisie who appeared to “know how to trim their sails to take advantage of” the global and local political and economic opportunities in the neoliberal environment of the post-1980s.

Nevertheless, this was a very unusual success story because the rise of Islamic bourgeoisie was an unintended consequence of the neoliberal hegemony project of the laic bourgeoisie, whose domination over society rested primarily on the anti-democratic legal order installed by the military regime of the September 12, 1980 coup. The coup, indisputably representing the interests of the laic bourgeoisie, in its fight against the working class and its sizeable political and economic organizations, had made recourse to Islam in framing a new official ideology, which would expectantly facilitate social consensus on the new economic organizational path taken. In this context, first the military regime and later the ANAP governments articulated a new version of what I have referred to earlier as the laic bourgeois Islam. This was the so-called “Turkish-Islamic Synthesis,” a version of conservative Turkish nationalism with more emphasis being placed on the Muslim side of Turkish identity as compared to the Kemalist nationalism of the previous era (Ataman, 2002; Cetinsaya, 1999). Yet surprisingly, in practice the
Turkish-Islamic Synthesis came to be called Atatürkism within the circles of the new neoliberal hegemonic bloc (Kurt, 2010: 117). Atatürkism, understood and launched as an Islamic interpretation of Kemalism, aimed to unite the laic and Islamic social sets under the political leadership of the laic bourgeoisie. So it was not startling to observe that the so-called conservative ANAP governments built on the very basis of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis had left untouched the junta’s banishment of the Islamist National Salvation Party (MSP) and the groups and organizations affiliated with its political vision called the National View (Milli Görüş), representing the material interests of the smaller elements of the propertied classes within the Islamic social set.

Since its inception in the 1970s the National View movement has been in downright competition with the cultural and economic supremacy of the laic bourgeoisie. Formulated by the late Necmettin Erbakan, the charismatic leader of the MSP, the National View has been (and still is) anti-Western, anti-Kemalist, and anti-neoliberal – i.e. against the three pillars of the laic bourgeois ideology. First of all, the National View is against the Europeanization of Turkey and its NATO membership because it explicitly demands and works toward the establishment of a Muslim Common Market against the EU, the creation of a common currency among Muslim nations, the formation of a national defense industry and an independent foreign policy based solely on the cooperation of Muslim states. Secondly, the National View rejects the Kemalist Turkish nationalism by conceptualizing the nation as the Ummah, i.e. the unity of all Muslims, without any explicit reference to any ethnic identity. Finally, as in the case of the Ottoman era, the National View advocates a state-regulated market economy under the banner of the Just Order (within which interest is supposed to be abolished to ensure the conditions of just profit and just earnings gained from trade and industry) as opposed to the “free market” championed by the neoliberal hegemonic bloc.

Erbakan returned to politics in 1987 and rebuilt the MSP as the Welfare Party (RP). Organizing a country-wide opposition in a short time, the RP indeed gained a solid sway over a large segment of the discontented masses in the second half of the 1990s. This inexorable ascent of the National View movement was bolstered further by the general tendency in favor of Islamization in the sense of re-traditionalization in civil society as an unintended consequence of the dominant discourse of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis. In addition, the RP succeeded in gaining the support of the majority of the Islamic bourgeoisie in the newly emerging industrial cities of Anatolia. This nascent fraction of the industrial bourgeoisie was competing in the low-end of the global export markets and demanding
various state subsidies and financial support from the state treasury. All of this found resonance in the rapidly flourishing and diversifying Islamic media. Due to state repression, the absence of any socialist or leftist opposition allowed the RP, without much difficulty, to convert its ideological ascendancy into extraordinary political victories. First it won the municipal elections in Turkey’s two largest cities crowded with the working masses, Istanbul and Ankara, in 1994. In the national parliamentary elections, the RP increased its share of the votes from 7.2 percent in 1987 to 21.4 percent in 1995 and became the leading party. Erbakan finally became the Prime Minister in 1996 in the RP-DYP (True Path Party, a center-right party) coalition.

The RP-led government represented two unpleasant challenges to the neoliberal hegemonic bloc still under the leadership of the laic bourgeoisie. First of all, Erbakan, as a veteran Islamist, immediately began to pursue anti-Western foreign and defense policies. Secondly, he introduced a set of economic policies and programs in accordance with the spirit of the Just Order, working unequivocally against the neoliberal agenda. In late 1996 and early 1997, Erbakan visited several Muslim countries as Prime Minister, and tried to organize an Islamic Union in opposition to the EU. He succeeded in creating an international organization among eight Muslim countries, referred to as the D-8 (Developing Eight). The media, owned and controlled by the laic bourgeoisie, did not wait long to instigate a smear campaign against Erbakan by framing him as a dangerous fundamentalist eager to replace the rule of law with the Shari’a. In the midst of this well-orchestrated “war of maneuver” by the neoliberal hegemonic bloc, which was also silently approved by the U.S. and the EU, on February 28, 1997 the Turkish parliament was suspended by another military coup. Erbakan was forced to resign in June, 1997 and the RP was closed. He was subsequently banned from politics in 1998 by the Turkish Supreme Court. Shortly after that, the RP mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayip Erdoğan was imprisoned for reciting a poem, and consequently banished from political life.

Following the coup, the National View divided into two groups – the hardliners led by Erbakan and the so-called reformists led by Erdoğan. The reformists refused to be framed as Islamists, instead coining the term “conservative democrats” to refer to their ideological position in the political spectrum. It was they who led the hurried formation of the AKP in 2001 by rejecting the anti-Western stance of the National View, and declared that they would recognize membership in the EU as the strategic priority of Turkey. The AKP’s party program was very much in harmony with the U.S. administration’s project to reform Islam in the
Middle East and the North African region after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This was the so-called “moderate Islam” undertaking strategically formulated by the State Department as “the ideological arm of an otherwise military campaign” to establish the supremacy of the U.S. in the region (Mahmood, 2006). The legal basis of the Islamic “crusade” of the Bush administration, so to speak, went back to the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) signed into law under Bill Clinton in 1998. The IRFA gave “unprecedented powers to the U.S. federal government to expand its regulation of religious life on an international scale in the name of enforcing and protecting religious freedoms” (Mahmood, 2006: 327) Moderate Islam was indeed part of the neoliberalization campaign in the name of “democratization” by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a non-governmental organization almost fully funded by the U.S. federal government. In this sense, the so-called reform of Islam was to a large extent the neoliberalization of Islamism.

Without delay, the Turkish neoliberal media created a climate of positive opinion for the AKP’s “conservative democracy” as the exclusive guarantor of individual freedoms and rights against the oppressive state and the legal system. The reformed Islamist party in its turn guaranteed an unconditional adherence to the ongoing IMF led stabilization policy and the structural reforms. In November 2002, just one year after its establishment, Erdoğan’s AKP won the national elections with a clear majority. Due mainly to favorable global economic conditions, the first AKP government did not face any serious bottleneck in the flow of capital from international markets. Economic growth rates increased, unemployment rates decreased. Thus, the “moderate” Islamist Erdoğan came to be the most successful prime minister of neoliberal Turkey. Securing the confidence and support of the U.S., the EU and global financial circles, he became victorious once again in the 2007 national elections – followed by a third victory in 2011. Although the capitalist class as a whole gained from the AKP’s successful implementation of neoliberal policies, the government was certainly “the executive branch” of the rising Islamic bourgeoisie, who succeeded in accumulating billions of dollars of extra capital in less than a decade by means of the advantages and favoritism provided in privatization initiatives and public tenders. After some futile attempts to offset the upsurge of “capitalist Muslims”, the laic bourgeoisie have eventually come to “assume the role of silent partners.” In other words, they have recognized that “they are incapable of adapting, themselves to conditions which are evoked by needs hitherto unknown and which call for methods hitherto unemployed.”
Instead of a Conclusion

To conclude the paper we can finally move on to the future of the laic/Islamic dual opposition in the aftermath of the AKP/Gezi confrontation. The Gezi Revolt has been widely covered in the world media while still unfolding. So the reader can easily gather information about the details of this world-historic event by “googling” “Gezi Revolt”, “OccupyGezi”, “ResistGezi”, “Gezi Resistance”, “Taksim Solidarity” and so on. The “OccupyGezi” entry alone brings more than three million hits as of July 24, 2013. Here I shall focus only on the surfacing of the laic/Islamic opposition, and some of the reactions to it by the participants of the revolt.

As I mentioned in the introduction, at the initial stages of the uprising, the majority of the protestors were ordinary citizens, carrying Turkish flags and pictures of Mustafa Kemal. Needless to say, these were individuals from the laic social set. Nevertheless, it was not they, but the Prime Minister who brought to the fore the laic/Islamic opposition (Yılmaz, 2013). Immediately after the first mass demonstration on May 31, Erdoğan began to refer to the protestors as “drunkards” and “alcoholics”, two popular Islamic allusions to the laics. Not long after this, he showed up in most of the mainstream TV channels to announce that he would demolish the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) in Taksim, and built a new “baroque” style one, although the laics treat the building sacrosanct. He added that he would build a mosque next to the new cultural center, even though the laics have been opposing this project for decades. To gain the backing of the Islamic social set he organized a rally and gathered hundreds of thousands of his supporters in a major square using public funds and the public transportation system. In the meeting, he informed the angry crowd that the protestors drank alcohol in a mosque, walked on the mosque’s carpets by shoes, and involved in some sexual acts there. In one of the AKP affiliated newspapers, a columnist went on to claim that the protestors had group sex in the mosque. Although these allegations were all denied by the muezzin of the mosque, the message had already been sent to the Islamic social set. The most important conflict-ridden message of Erdoğan, however, was the one about the value of the protestors’ “tweets” on the popular social media site Twitter. He asserted that “their one million tweets are equal to one ‘bismillah’ (the Islamic prayer meaning in the name of God) of us.”

One of the early loud reactions to Erdoğan’s “us” versus “them” polarization tactic came from İhsan Eliaçık, the leader of the anti-capitalist Muslims. On the face of it, Eliaçık aimed to correct the ferocious language of the Prime Minister and his fanatic and dogmatic interpretation of Islam. He stated that “Islam is about
social justice, not about rituals like praying five times a day, or women covering their head.” Moreover, he said, “its rules are simple: don’t hurt others, don’t steal, don’t lie, don’t remain silent in the face of wrong, and respect the environment” (“The anti-capitalist Muslims.” The Economist 18 July 2013. Web. 2 August 2013). In a covert way, he was saying, “don’t be like Erdoğan!” The anti-capitalist Muslims’ unequivocal acquiescence of the Gezi Revolt seriously damaged the AKP’s campaign to frame the protests as part of a long battle between the laic and the Islamic social sets. It even backfired because the protestors from the laic set joined the anti-capitalist Muslims in their Friday prayers and open-air iftars (breaking of the fast during Ramadan) – which became popularly known as “earth tables.” When interviewed about the mushrooming of the “earth tables” throughout the country, one grassroots member of the anti-capitalist Muslims said the following: “We are acting as leaders only in terms of calling for the event. The people themselves set the tables. We do not discriminate between those who fast and those who do not. There are many who say they do not fast but are willing to join. We are inviting everyone” (Taştekin, Fehim. “Turkey’s Gezi Park Protestors Regroup for Ramadan.” Al-Monitor 14 July 2013. Web. 2 August 2013.) Thus, the earth tables, insofar as they represent the “Gezi Spirit” or what I may call the imagined Gezi community, seem to be a moment of overcoming the laic/Islamic dual opposition of Turkish capitalist modernity. Can one argue then that this opposition may disappear into thin air in the rest of the twenty-first century? I would say both yes and no.

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze might be of help here because, as May (2005:3) cogently puts it, he was interested in “the question of what other possibilities life holds open to us, or, more specifically, of how we might think about things in ways that would open up new regions for living.” It is obvious that both the laic and the Islamic individuals sitting at the earth tables of the Gezi community “opened up new regions for living” in Turkey. They, as political and social subjects, actualized a new religiously neutral identity, one which differs from both types of the social individualities of Turkish capitalist modernity. In other words, they truly became secular individuals. In this sense, they belong neither to the laic social set nor the Islamic social set any more. This is because they do not – to turn to Simmel once more – presuppose the individuality of a person according to her/his faith or creed. They “do not discriminate between those who fast and who do not.” In other words, agency of these individuals is liberated from the laic and Islamic “veils”, i.e., from the constructs of the nation state and capitalism.
Here Deleuze’s two notions of difference, *i.e.*, “difference in degree” and “difference in kind,” may help one to understand better the historical achievement of the Gezi Revolt. Difference in degree is an opposition between previously constituted identities in space. As Deleuze himself puts it, it is a difference of “exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative difference” (quoted in May, 2005: 54). The laic/Islamic dual opposition is such a difference. This is the *realm* of determinism. It is made up of two identities constituted within the landscape of Turkish capitalist modernity, which, most probably, will continue to exist as long as people of Turkey as already constituted actors keep looking upon one another through the laic and Islamic “veils.” Difference in kind is the one that unsettles a difference in degree. It is an internal difference “of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination” (quoted in May, 2005: 54). In May’s (2005: 55) words, it emerges in a moment in duration “where difference differs with itself.” This is the *moment* of freedom. The individuals of the Gezi community differed with themselves and threw away the laic and Islamic veils to see one another as individuals whose identity is not presupposed. Definitely, the Gezi individuality, as long as it becomes widespread, may move on and help others to leave behind the laic/Islamic dual opposition.

**References**


