**Common Ground or Battlefield? Deconstructing the Politics of Recognition in Turkey**

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*This article examines the impacts that the embrace of diversity talk has had on identity and ethnic politics in Turkey that has evolved toward a relative and selective recognition. Based on the analysis of the cases of the Laze and Kurdish movements, the article argues that the politics of recognition is built conjointly by an array of actors, at different levels, with different aims, and through their very practices and interactions. The article shows that although the embrace of diversity talk may mark a depolitisation of the ethno-national claims, it still gives room to forms of resistance. These dynamics have shaped a non-coherent, multi-layered, recognition that does not allow the building of a common ground in the country but rather of a battlefield around discursive and policies choices.*

INTRODUCTION

Identity and ethnic politics is a burning issue in contemporary Turkey. Since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, “nation,” “citizenship,” and “minority” have been the key concepts for managing difference[[1]](#endnote-1) but the principle of non-discrimination has been used to silence any expression of difference, which has therefore been impeded, if not banned or punished. The last 20 years however, and in particular the period of the Justice and Development Party government (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – AKP) from 2002, have witnessed some changes toward more accommodation of difference and what Derya Bayir has called a “selective recognition.”[[2]](#endnote-2) One has witnessed the rise of diversity-talk among various actors from governmental bodies to ethnic activists. Expressions like “multiculturalism,” “diversity,” and “pluralism” have become widespread within the public sphere(s), and even among various ethno-national groups. The objective of this article is to examine these changes and to question what impact the embrace of diversity-talk has had on ethnic politics and on the making of a selective and relative politics of recognition as well as on the power dynamics underlying it.[[3]](#endnote-3) To date, research has focused on these changes at the level of national policies, and in particular on the debates about citizenship, and legal issues at large.[[4]](#endnote-4) There is still very little analysis of the actors and their practices that have participated in the actual shaping of this politics of recognition. Some literature has focused on a critique of a diversity talk that emphasizes the mixture of cultures in a spirit of “tolerance” and “sympathy,”[[5]](#endnote-5) while concealing the contentious dimensions of both the past and present and transforming diversity into a commodity.[[6]](#endnote-6) So far, the literature has not focused on ethnic entrepreneurs’ use of diversity talk and on their role in the shaping of the politics of recognition. Drawing on these observations, as well as on the literature that has stressed the hegemonic potential of multicultural policies,[[7]](#endnote-7) the article aims to question the dynamics of power and domination behind the spreading use of diversity talk in Turkey. More particularly, it focuses on the ways it is used by ethnic movements and entrepreneurs and on how these uses play in the power relationship and in the conflict that has opposed for nearly a century the state to all forms of ethno-political expression and mobilization. I embrace an approach according to which power does not lie in force alone but also in a will to obey, is made of conflicts and compromises, and graspable only in its very practice.[[8]](#endnote-8) Thereby, the article argues that the dynamics of depolitisation and contention coexist and that although the embrace of diversity talk may mark a depolitisation of the ethno-national claims, in some specific contexts, and at some specific times, it still gives room – both at the same time or in different times or context - to forms of resistance. This resistance oscillates between the tactics, as defined by Michel de Certeau[[9]](#endnote-9) as “an art of the weak,” “a maneuver” “within enemy territory,”[[10]](#endnote-10) to the constitution of alternative, “proper”, politics. In order to articulate my argument, I adopt two methodological stances: the comparison and the focus on the micro level (while paying attention to the variation of scales, and historical moments). The comparison between two ethnic movements and claims aims at highlighting some of the key dynamics within the country’s politics of recognition. The first one is the Kurdish movement, the oldest ethno-national movement in the Republic of Turkey, characterized by political and armed contention, and long standing territorial claims (from separatism in the early days to autonomy today). The second is one of the more recent ethnic movements, the Laze movement, often characterized by the actors as mainly a cultural movement. I propose to observe these movements from the local level that provides a good lens to grasp the circulations and interactions that shape the dynamics of power and domination. Therefore, taking the local as a scale of observation, I nonetheless pay attention to the variations of scales and to the circulations. In particular I am very aware of the “global diffusion of the political discourse of multiculturalism” and the “codification of multiculturalism in certain international legal (or quasi legal) norms.”[[11]](#endnote-11) Doing so I stand aloof from the mainstream works on Europeanization[[12]](#endnote-12) for example, according to which one could put forward the hypothesis that the Turkish politics of recognition directly stems from the liberal turn of the country and the European integration processes.[[13]](#endnote-13) Being aware of the variations of scale and circulations, within a historical trajectory, should enable us to grasp the domination-resistance dynamics in its complexity. Indeed I argue that the politics of recognition is built conjointly by an array of actors, at different levels, with different aims, and through their very practices and interactions. It is by deconstructing the making of these politics of recognition that one can find where the political stakes and domination lay. I have chosen to observe these dynamics from the case of the municipality of Diyarbakir in Turkey’s Kurdish populated areas and the case of the association GOLA. It is one of the most ancient Laze associations and of the rare ones being actively involved in the Laze region of the Eastern Black Sea. Diyarbakir is a major city in the Kurdish-populated area in Turkey and has been at the heart of the Kurdish conflict at least since the late 1970s. As such it has been the focus of external attention and intervention and plays a central role in shaping the politics of the Kurdish movement at large. Diyarbakir is governed by a pro-Kurdish major since 1999.[[14]](#endnote-14) It is therefore a site of “contention”: although the local government is engaged in ‘representative politics,’ “the relationships between the state and office holders continues to be a publicly adversarial one.”[[15]](#endnote-15) As such it is an important place to observe these above dimensions of domination-resistance. This article is based on data collected during numerous fieldtrips in both Diyarbakir (numerous trips since 2001) and the Laze area (4 fieldtrips since 2012), and analysis of literature. The article is composed of three sections. The first section examines the rise and fall of a diversity wave in Turkey under the AKP government so as to set the scene and provide important timeline to the analysis. One must keep in mind though that what happens at the national level may provide some windows of opportunity but does not necessarily affect the local level since the scales do not always interlock. The second section analyses the Laze movement, and in particular the work of the GOLA association. Although its demands and modes of action seem to be in relative agreement with the government’s contemporary approach to recognition, the adoption of diversity talk also comes from the international sphere in what seems a process of top-down transfer. Diversity talk nonetheless needs to be moderated locally since what seems consensual at the national level is not consensual everywhere. The third section focuses on the Diyarbakir municipality’s approach to multiculturalism. It shows that the embrace of multiculturalism has clearly been a tactic that will later consolidate in the building of contentious politics. Today multiculturalism is an official policy in Diyarbakir and in all pro-Kurdish municipalities. However this policy clearly oscillates between contention on the one hand, and consensus and normativity on the other hand. The embrace of the policy by the Kurdish movement is multidirectional and shows that there is not always a match between the design of the policies nationally and locally.

THE RISE AND FALL OF A DIVERSITY WAVE IN TURKEY

It is often assumed that Turkish citizenship is a legal-political status and has nothing to do with culture or ethnic descent.[[16]](#endnote-16) Only non-Muslim minorities had a recognized status and specific treatment following the Treaty of Lausanne in 1924. This conception led to a unitary definition of the nation in which all expressions of difference were banned. This definition of citizenship, that has its root in the Ottoman heritage of *millet*[[17]](#endnote-17) and the Lausanne treaty, is still the same today. It has nonetheless been subject to many discussions through the past two decades in particular and led to some changes in the Turkish national project i.e. a (relative and selective) recognition of differences. This evolution has come from different actors from within and outside the country. It followed a non-linear evolution from the neoliberal era, inaugurated by the Coup d’Etat of September 1980, and witnessed several stages until the AKP period during which a discourse of “fraternity” within a “united nation” is developed. The analysis of the different periods of AKP rule (2002-2015) also shows that recognition does not bring an end to the conflict and the violence.

Neoliberal Turkey

As stated by Derya Bayir, the Turkish “rigid concept of equality before the law which assumes that all benefit from uniform rights and have uniform duties as individuals” […] is “in line with trends in post Second World War international law that foresaw the realization of minority rights by the recognition of the same universal individual civil and political human rights for all and equality in their application.”[[18]](#endnote-18) This international trend started to shift globally, as stressed by Will Kymlicka,[[19]](#endnote-19) and in Turkey, the neoliberal project of Turgut Özal (Turkey’s Prime Minister 1983-89; President 1989-1993)[[20]](#endnote-20) was to be ““integrative” and “inclusive,” embracing different religious, sectarian and ethnic groups. Multiculturalism is welcome as it makes the normalization and pacification of cultural identities possible.”[[21]](#endnote-21) Public debates in the early 1990s brought forward the possibility of including the diversity of cultures and religions - framed in the country as a “cultural mosaic” – that could be included in a redefined citizenship as “Turkeyness” (*Türkiyelilik*).[[22]](#endnote-22) Minority actors also contributed to these debates. For instance the Kurdish author Mehmed Uzun published a book on multiculturalism in 1995. This series of thoughts on the coexistence of various cultures in the Kurdistan of his childhood and about multiculturalism as a policy, seemed to echo Mıgırdiç Margosyan’s work, and to have been fed by his experience of Swedish multiculturalism.[[23]](#endnote-23) Özal’s presidency also brought the first legal change in the management of difference when in 1991 the ban on publishing in the Kurdish language was lifted. The global context marked by the collapse of the great ideologies, the end of the Cold War, and the rise of identity politics[[24]](#endnote-24) is not for nothing in the rise of these diversity talks in Turkey. Like the one of “national unity and integrity” the catchword of “peaceful coexistence of differences” aimed “to maintain peace and order.”[[25]](#endnote-25) Indeed the 1990s are also marked by the total war against the Kurdistan’s Workers Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* – PKK) and one has to wait for a decade to witness the real boom in diversity-talk and the development of politics of diversity.

The Heyday of Diversity Talk in the 21st century

The first years of the 21st century mark the heyday of diversity-talk in Turkey at a time when the Western world started heralding and even deploring the end of multiculturalism. This was the time of Turkey’s recovery from the biggest economic crisis in its history, under the AKP, and with the financial assistance of the International Monetary Fund. These years also correspond to the period of European Union (EU) integration. The negotiations of adhesion to the EU started after 1999 and led Turkey further on the road to recognition. In practice, provisions for (mainly) linguistic rights were detailed in the Accession Partnership Document (2001) and the National Programme of Turkey for the Harmonization of the European Union Acquis Communautaire (2001). Following these, different changes took place in the legislation allowing for teaching and broadcasting in different languages within specific conditions.[[26]](#endnote-26) Two EU programs were then launched to foster the application of these young laws, to increase “mutual understanding, knowledge and wider appreciation of the cultural variety of Turkey” and to improve “understanding of cultural diversities and to increase awareness and knowledge of cultural diversities.”[[27]](#endnote-27) The beneficiaries of the programs were mainly minority actors. Implemented in 2007, the programs were not re-conducted. According to Ayhan Kaya, the post-Helsinki process period marked a shift from the “minority” discourse to the “cultural diversity” one.[[28]](#endnote-28) The term cultural diversity is not however used by state or governmental actors. It is mainly embraced by non-state actors like international organizations working in Turkey, or local NGOs and foundations well connected internationally like Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği[[29]](#endnote-29) or Anadolu Kültür. It is discussed in some academic spheres.[[30]](#endnote-30) This narrative is also brought into the realm of the corporate world and business[[31]](#endnote-31) through different publications, and the translation of world-famous works[[32]](#endnote-32) as well as by international firms like Colgate and Bosch. Local historians and researchers throughout Turkey also started rediscovering and writing about the past diversity and a supposedly peaceful coexistence, often recalled with nostalgia. One, if not the, highlight of the diversity period was the publication of *Ebru. Reflections of Cultural Diversity in Turkey* in 2006. This book was prepared by the photographer Attila Durak who left NY City in June 2001 to start a 5 year journey in Turkey. NY inhabitant since 1996, he wrote: “My impressions regarding the multitude of colors and voices in New York ignited my desire to explain the cultural diversity of Turkey via photographs […] At the same time, I began to contemplate whether “mosaic” was truly the best means of describing the diversity not only of New York, but also of the cities in Turkey where I had grown up.”[[33]](#endnote-33) The book therefore aims to dwell on a fluid and changing definition of identity conceptualized as “Ebru” (paper-marbling) which “connotes fluidity, movement, connectedness, permeability and contingency.” As such it is a metaphor that offers promising alternatives to others such as “mosaic” or “quilt.”[[34]](#endnote-34) Although other words are used like “multiculturalism,” “mosaic,” and “melting-pot,” the key word of the work is “cultural diversity.” The book, which was supported by an array of international and national actors including the Ministry of culture, is not only a photographic work. Based on Andrew’s seminal work[[35]](#endnote-35) published in Turkish in 1992, this is the second important book on the issue. It comprises a section composed of texts written by well-known Turkish academics and writers. In a way, the book, followed by a touring exhibition, is a key step in popularizing, though mainly in the intellectual and artistic sphere, the image of an ethnically diverse Turkey. This period can henceforth be qualified as the heyday of diversity. Representatively, it is marked by some legal reforms, promoted by left wing and liberal intellectuals, and backed by a network of NGOs, supported by European and international programs. Clearly, however, early in 2015, diversity is not a word of national policy in Turkey. One witnesses a return to a more unitarian nationalist definition of “pluralism.”

The AKP’s unity and fraternity discourse

More legal changes took place at the end of the 2000s with the “Kurdish Opening” of the AKP government (quickly rephrased as the “Democratic Opening”) which launched TRT6, a state TV channel broadcasting entirely in Kurdish, on 1 January 2009, after the High Council for Radio and Television law was changed in a hurry to allow it to do so. Private TV channels also started broadcasting freely in the languages of their choice. Some Kurdish departments opened in state universities. Then, the “Democratic Package” published in September 2013 made possible the use of non-Turkish languages during electoral campaigns and for political propaganda, and the reinstitution of old place names; it furthered the education in non-Turkish languages in private education.[[36]](#endnote-36) It also mentioned the creation of an Institute for Roman Culture and Language.[[37]](#endnote-37) Openly, the Kurds were not the only target of these laws.[[38]](#endnote-38) After the “Kurdish opening” launched in 2009, it was the turn of the Alevi and Roma “openings.” Probably led by a desire of minimizing the Kurdish ethno-national claims, these evolutions also participated in the actual (relative) recognition and construction of various communities. These elements of recognition’s making are also to be understood in the realm of domestic politics and electoral competition,[[39]](#endnote-39) economic growth (peace being the condition of growth in the Kurdish regions), and regional policies (rapprochement with Iraqi Kurdistan). Again recognition does not lead to, nor does it aims to lead to conflict resolution as shown by the crushing of the Group of Communities in Kurdistan (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan* - KCK) at the very moment of the Democratic Opening. Analyzing this period, Ayhan Kaya mentions a “discursive shift” from “majority nationalism” to “diversity as an ideology.”[[40]](#endnote-40) However the AKP’s stress on unity remains strong and has grown even stronger in the general election competition of the summer and autumn 2015. For instance the document produced to inform the opinion about the “Democratic Opening” in 2009 stated that the basic mission of the state is to recognize and protect (as a richness) the differences of religion, languages, faiths, philosophical approaches, political opinion, and culture.[[41]](#endnote-41) This said, the principle of “one state, one nation, one homeland and one flag” was strongly reiterated as well as the one of Turkish as sole official language. This conception of citizenship and national identity was reaffirmed in the “Democratic package” in 2013.[[42]](#endnote-42) Both documents stressed the importance of the unity (*birlik*), entirety or oneness (*bütünlük*) and fraternity (*kardeşlik*). The discourse of the AKP is not one of “diversity” (notably absent) but of respect and protection for the differences. The key word is pluralism (*çoğuluk*) and it is crucial to note that in UNESCO’s language cultural diversity makes reference to the differences among nations whereas pluralism makes reference to the differences within nations. [[43]](#endnote-43) Again here, pluralism, nationalism, and war do not exclude one another.

THE LAZE CULTURAL MOVEMENT: NEGOTIATING A LEGITIMATE DIVERSITY

The word Laze has been used to refer both to various people of the Eastern Black sea region and to a Black Sea people who call themselves *Lazi*, speak their own language, and who are also referred to as Laze by outsiders. Many pejorative stereotypes are associated with the category.[[44]](#endnote-44) This population is originally located in the Eastern Black Sea region between the towns of Pazar and Hopa. This region has known a strong outbound migration toward western cities, since the Ottoman times, and more importantly since the second part of the 20th century. These two elements may have played a role in the integration of the Lazes into the Turkish nation, deplored by some Laze intellectuals as assimilation,[[45]](#endnote-45) or ethnocide.[[46]](#endnote-46) What is sure is that in the late 1990s, “the suggestion that the present-Lazuri speaking population constitutes an entity with its own unique ‘spiritual culture’ is foreign to the Lazi themselves.”[[47]](#endnote-47) In that context, and given state repression, it could not be guaranteed that the efforts of the Laze intellectuals to revalorise their identity and assert their distinctiveness would bear fruits.[[48]](#endnote-48) In this section, I will examine the way in which the Laze movement has embraced diversity talk and negotiated its vision of diversity. If that vision seems today not to be at odd with the current official positions on recognition, the movement’s specific embrace of diversity can only be understood by paying attention to the interlocking of international, national, and local scales, and the local process of negotiation. It looks like the voice of the Laze intellectuals have finally found some echo in the population since ethnic identity can today be turned into a resource.

Emergence and Characteristics of the Laze Movement

The movement developed outside the Eastern Black Sea region mainly, in the early 1990s, around two dynamics: cultural entrepreneurs and artists, with a leftist or liberal background, clearly considering Turkey as a multicultural country and working for the preservation, revitalisation, and rediscovering of Lazuri language, oral traditions and music in an atmosphere of dialogue and tolerance. These discourses of multiculturalism and cultural diversity appeared in the early 1990s[[49]](#endnote-49) and have spread until today with the Laze Culture Association and the GOLA association for instance. This movement is often referred to as the “Laze cultural movement.”[[50]](#endnote-50) The second dynamic came from a pre-existing network of hometown associations[[51]](#endnote-51) from the Eastern Black-Sea region, associations that have played a fundamental role in building and reproducing the locality.[[52]](#endnote-52) Contrary to the first type of actors, they are more cautious to use the ethnic categories. Towards the end of the 2000s however, the ethnic name has been used more easily both in Western cities and in the Eastern Black Sea where the first association bearing the ethnic name was funded in 2010.[[53]](#endnote-53) In spite of their diversity, today, all the actors aim at reassessing the Laze identity against the strong, widely spread, negative stereotypes, and revalorizing the identity. The ecological narrative may have helped to do so at the time of growing ecological mobilization in Turkey[[54]](#endnote-54) in general and particularly in the Eastern Black Sea area where, from the mid-1990s onwards, mobilizations were directed against the construction of a littoral motorway, numerous hydroelectric centrals, mines and quarries. These developments enabled - as in the case of indigenous peoples - some from within the Laze movement to take up more global and positive agendas. The identity discourses produced by ethnic entrepreneurs stressed the relationship between the people, the land, and the landscape. Any aggression against the environment is perceived as an aggression against Laze culture, and sometimes as a part of the state’s assimilation policies and of capitalist domination.[[55]](#endnote-55) In this vein, tea monoculture introduced with state monopoly in the 1940s has been criticized since the early 1990s for being a tool for assimilation.[[56]](#endnote-56) This monoculture is perceived as having destroyed the bio-diversity from which the culture sprang[[57]](#endnote-57) and ended the collective agricultural works (*İmece*) in which cultural production was rooted.[[58]](#endnote-58) Corn, hazelnut, or red-cabbage have become symbols of the past and (more) authentic culture.[[59]](#endnote-59) The ecological dimension of the movement has been present since the 1990s as has the discourse of diversity and multiculturalism. It may be strengthened by other elements coming from national, regional or international dynamics. The GOLA association was established by Laze activists, including Birol Topaloğlu, a relatively famous Laze musician, a tourist professional, and an “ethnic music” professional. The later, settled in San Francisco, turned into a broker, and skilled with transferrable narratives, is also the key mediator with their main funder, the Christensen Fund, working for “bio-cultural diversity.” The Fund defines biocultural diversity as “the weave of humankind and nature, cultural pluralism and ecological integrity.”[[60]](#endnote-60) The Fund aims at fighting against the “global erosion of diversity” and, through grant making, at “backing the efforts of locally recognized community custodians of this heritage, and their alliances with scholars, artists, advocates and others.”[[61]](#endnote-61) GOLA activities are first and foremost centered on the Green Upland Festival for ecology, art and culture (*Yeşil Yayla festival*) organized yearly since 2006 in different villages of the Laze speaking region. Since its early days, the festival is very active on the environmental front by organizing panels about the environment, activities on ecotourism, nature walks, or cleaning of the festival area. Each year the festival is organized around a theme (stream, stone, cow, fruit, honey, or recycling.) The association was first based in Istanbul but now has its main office in the Laze speaking region. The activities of the association match well the backgrounds of its members (artist, ethnic activist, restaurant owner, tourist or music professional), the importance given to diversity and ecology since the early days of the Laze cultural movement, and the narratives and modes of action furthered by its main funder. Although the weight of the latest seems considerable, as one observes the similarities of narratives and repertoires of actions, the way it may bend the framings of the organization need to be moderated. The choice of narratives and practice is not determined, but is multi-directional and tied to contingencies.

From Ethnicity to Bio-cultural Diversity: A Necessary Consensus?

In 2015, 9 years after its foundation, the aims and fields of intervention of the association were quite heterogeneous. Although at least some founding members defined themselves as Laze activists[[62]](#endnote-62) and are cultural entrepreneurs, the association bears a name in Laze language, has a Laez Youth Choir, and offered Laze language classes in Istanbul, it remains relatively careful on ethnic framing. The first grant from the Christensen Fund (2005) mentioned a festival as “foundation for a cultural revival” (it was to be called the Laze Upland Festival but is actually called the Green Upland Festival). Progressively the grants shifted to livelihood development around culture, agriculture and tourism,[[63]](#endnote-63) although in practice however, until now the key activities have mainly revolved around the festivals. At the beginning, its goals were to make known the different cultures of the region, to draw attention, protect and vitalize the values of these cultures,[[64]](#endnote-64) following the general line of the organization that defines itself as “multi-cultural,” “open to all kinds of diversities,” and embracing “a non-dictating, democratic and participative approach.”[[65]](#endnote-65) This adaptation of the stated primary objectives may be related to the necessity for the Istanbul-based NGO to work in the region. Many times, the key members of the association mentioned how difficult it is to work locally and to do what they actually wanted. In other words, they had to make compromises. They had to moderate their views on ethnicity as many people they interact with on the ground are cautious not to emphasize an ethnic identity which moreover does not always make sense to them. They also have to moderate their view on diversity: for instance, they did not stage any Kurdish music until 2013 although they would have liked to do it before.[[66]](#endnote-66) This caution can be traced back to the third edition of the festival organized in the Hemşin area in 2008 when the concert by the group *Helesa* performing in different languages of the region had to be relocated to another local town, outside Hemşin territory. As *Hemşinli* (both Hemşin people and inhabitant of the region) are associated in various ways to Armenians,[[67]](#endnote-67) and because of the funder perceived locally by some as “Christian” and “American”, their activities had been framed by some local actors as part of an “Armenian plot.” In order to act locally, the diversity performed needs to be locally acceptable. But things have progressively changed. Now a Laze association has been established locally, closely associated to a municipality and a hometown association. Emphasizing ethnic identity is not as contentious as it used to be.[[68]](#endnote-68) On the contrary, it can nowadays become a resource at a time when state agencies and private organizations foster ecotourism as a tool for local development. Although the bio-cultural diversity narrative may enable more easily than ethnicity the building of a “middle ground”[[69]](#endnote-69) with international and local actors, shifting to ecological and development activities implies that cultural and ethnic activists learn and implement new repertoires of actions.[[70]](#endnote-70) Currently, these repertoires are largely imported and replicated thanks to always renewed connections: for instance GOLA’s “Black Sea fruit heritage and sustainable living project” comes directly from another similar project in the Aegean region; all the foreign movies shown at the GOLA Nature Film Festival in 2012 were previously dubbed and shown by the Film Festival for Sustainable Living in Istanbul (themselves all previously shown in a similar festival in Sweden). The link between Laze culture and the natural environment being made, activists stress that the protection of the culture and of the environment goes hand in hand. However the environmental discourse is also moderated so as to build here again, a compromise. Today, most of the Laze actors revalorise rural culture and knowledge as very well shown in the cases of GOLA, the Arhavi-based association *Çkuni berepe*, and the Museum of local life in Dikyamaç village. Even the Laze Culture Association, although based in Istanbul, and with limited resources, mentions in its status that it works for the “protection of the richness of the geography, and struggle to solve environmental and ecological problems,” and “the protection and development of alternative, traditional, and ecological methods of agriculture.”[[71]](#endnote-71) When it comes to environmental mobilisation, it is striking to see that none of the explicit Laze associations mentioned above are actively involved in the environmental movement. This is likely to be the case since so as not to be viewed as contentious actors, something which would make work on the ground more difficult again as some local allies may be involved in environmentally destructive businesses. Laze activists who promoted an atmosphere of dialogue and peace within Turkey have continued to do so up until the present day. Therefore the stress on diversity by GOLA may come from the main funder but is a vocabulary mastered earlier. Today, all actors tend to moderate the views on ethnicity so as to operate on an uneasy ground. If, there, ethnicity has been and still is often associated to Kurdish “separatism” if not “terror,” diversity-talk is more and more accepted and depoliticised through two processes: the state recognition policies that, for example, has legalized the teaching of Lazuri as an option in secondary schools, and state development policy that can, even indirectly, foster the commodification of ethnic culture.[[72]](#endnote-72) The project of protection and enhancing of diversity carried out by GOLA and an increasing number of Laze actors may have been (and in some contexts remains) contentious locally. It is however becoming in line with both the national agenda of pluralism and the local policy of development through (eco)tourism.

DIYARBAKIR’S MULTICULTURALISM BETWEEN CONSENSUS AND CONTENTION

In this section, I analyze the embrace of multiculturalism by the Kurdish nationalist movement through the lens of the Diyarbakir municipality’s work. The available narrative of multiculturalism was first used as a tactic: the movement, playing within the “other’s territory,” used the narrative of multiculturalism widely available and relatively consensual at the time. However the situation quickly became more complex. While multiculturalism has become an important aspect of the political autonomy policy in the city and in Kurdistan at large, cultural diversity has also been turned into a resource for tourism and development, in line with national and international trends.

Multiculturalism: A Tool for Self-rediscovery

When gaining control over the local government at the 1999 elections, the pro-Kurdish party HADEP developed symbolic politics, or politics that enables the affirmation of norms and explicitly Kurdish practices and the production of an alternative vision and narratives to the state ones.[[73]](#endnote-73) One of the important places and moments of symbolic politics, before the municipality had rebuilt its cultural infrastructures, was the Diyarbakir city festival in which Kurdish culture became progressively visible. It is therefore a key location to observe the emergence of the municipality’s multicultural discourses and practices.

One could argue that the narrative of multiculturalism and art for peace-building was imported in Diyarbakir by the collaboration of the municipality with Vecdi Sayar and his corporate Pi-production for the organization of the first edition of the Diyarbakir Art and Culture Festival (*Diyarbakır Sanat ve Kültür Festival*) in 2001. Vecdi Sayar is highly experienced in the field of cultural policy and in the organization of cultural events: he was cultural attaché in Paris and director of the Istanbul International Film Festival; he organizes the Perafest, a festival that put forward the multicultural dimension of the old Pera neighbourhood in Istanbul. He also organized the first cultural event of national scope in Kurdistan, the Istanbul-Hakkari Culture Bridge (2000, 2001 and 2003). The aim of this Bridge (and of the Diyarbakir festival) was two-fold: developing cultural activities and events in a region where they were absent; creating a peace environment, a dialogue between Kurds and Turks through the means of art. He underlined that the role of art in general should be to serve peace,[[74]](#endnote-74) a role that others fostered, like *Anadolu Kültür* which opened the independent Diyarbakir Art Centrein 2002. Vecdi Sayar worked hand in hand with the Diyarbakir municipality, creating a festival with local municipality artists, artists raised from within the Kurdish movement, but also nationally famous singers, poets, or theatre companies. The discrepancy between his professional culture and the political commitment of the actors of the Kurdish movement probably led to some tensions, and the festival’s further editions were organized by the municipality alone. Today it has given way to several thematic festivals co-organized by a network of pro-Kurdish municipalities and cultural centers in the region, along a relatively more nationalist, or at least ethnic, line.[[75]](#endnote-75)

Although the collaboration between a professional of culture, and the ethno-national movement, newly in charge of the municipality and local cultural institutions, was short-lived, the narrative of art for peace has remained strong throughout the years as shown for instance in the festival’s slogans like “Art despite all” (2003), “Voices and colors for peace” (2004), or “Meeting of faiths and culture” (2006). Although these narrative first refer to the Kurdish conflict in the country, they also make reference to the non-Muslim inhabitants of the city (Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Armenians), although barely present nowadays. If the early editions of the festival constituted a place and a moment to promote peace in the country at large, there was also a moment of remembering and reimagining the different populations and faiths of the city. Religious diversity and multi-faith prayers were sometimes staged in the old city’s churches.[[76]](#endnote-76) Advertising posters and festival program covers featured sentences in several languages, mainly Kurdish, Turkish, Armenian, and English. Although the use of the English language clearly showed the desire to turn the festival into an international scene, and to turn Diyarbakir into a “world city,” staging the remembered religions and ethnicities was also part of the rediscovery (if not recreation) of the city’s past and identity. Indeed, the municipality’s Director of culture at the time of the first festival (2001-2004) stated that the emphasis on multiculturalism was first aimed at “unearthing” the multiculturalism of Mesopotamia (a term often used as a euphemism for Kurdistan, which was banned until recently).[[77]](#endnote-77) The festivals enabled the inhabitants to rediscover the original identity of the city. The festival bulletins presented, along with daily activities, information on local culture and architecture, and invited inhabitants to stroll along the city lanes. They also provided space to local authors who have also played a role in recreating the multicultural past. In the wake of Mıgırdiç Margosyan’s *Gavur Mahallesi* (1992) that tells the story of a Christian neighborhood in Diyarbakir after the First World War, Şeyhmus Diken’s early work was really instrumental in reconstructing the multicultural city.[[78]](#endnote-78) The festivities enabled Diyarbakir’s inhabitants to rediscover themselves. They also became a modality of self-narrative.[[79]](#endnote-79) The use of the multicultural narrative also made it possible to deal with Kurdish culture in an indirect fashion, and without drawing the attention of the state authorities too directly, which could result in repression. In the early 2000s in particular, multiculturalism was clearly used as a legitimate euphemism: the various persons involved in the festival’s organization acknowledged that they could not have done what they wanted by openly referring to “Kurdish” culture.[[80]](#endnote-80) Clear examples of this legitimate euphemism are the Days of Literature and the Conference on Middle-Eastern Literatures and Multiculturalism organized in 2003 in the city which had absolutely nothing to do with “Middle-East Literatures” or “multiculturalism.” Instead the event focused on Kurdish literature, a literature in different Kurdish languages. As such, we can here distinguish the early stages of the formulation of an alternative Kurdish multicultural policy.

An Alternative Kurdish Multiculturalism

The multicultural narrative continued to be used as a consensual, relatively legitimate term with which to pursue ethnic politics. The Kurdish movement also developed the image of a tolerant and diverse Kurdish nation and of Kurdistan (or Mesopotamia) as a multicultural land. Pro-Kurdish parties became more and more inclusive, as shown in the general election campaigns of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi* - HDP) in 2015.[[81]](#endnote-81) Multiculturalism also constitutes a kind of middle ground in which pro-Kurdish actors can engage with various international ones. This is done by bypassing the state agencies: the local governments design and implement policies before the practices are actually made legal through reforms at the state level as shown by the multicultural and multilingual policies of Diyarbakir’s district municipality of Sur. Although bypassing the state, the development of these policies started in the mid-2000s when discussion about multiculturalism and diversity was at its height in Turkey. Based on a local survey regarding language uses, and probably drawing on pre-existing models from South Turkey (with an important proportion of European residents) and Basque or Catalan autonomous communities,[[82]](#endnote-82) Abdullah Demirbaş, mayor of Sur district (historical city), in agreement with the Mayor of Diyarbakir metropolitan municipality developed in 2006 the project of providing multilingual services to its citizens. The municipality services were to be provided in English, Armenian, Kurdish, and Turkish languages. In 2007, together with his municipal council, Demirbaş was removed from office as the Turkish High Court had judged that municipal services could not be delivered in any language other than Turkish. It was the first time that a mayor “had openly engaged in the public use of Kurdish.”[[83]](#endnote-83) As stressed by Casier, “Kurdish activists consider the Turkey–EU accession negotiation period as one during which the brokers of Kurdish organizations and parties have the best bargaining position to realize change at home.”[[84]](#endnote-84) The choice of the pro-Kurdish Party for a Democratic Society (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi* – DTP) to draw specific attention to that case in Brussels and Strasbourg is a carefully planned strategy of “the Kurdish ‘lobbyists’, who aimed to gain the sympathy of a broad and international audience.”[[85]](#endnote-85) And this strategy was successful indeed. The Director of culture of the Sur district municipality stressed that the books that the municipality had published in English, Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian and Assyrian[[86]](#endnote-86) make a strong impression on European visitors.[[87]](#endnote-87) In practice, however only Kurdish and Turkish are really spoken in the city. The Sur municipality became the first flagship of the multicultural policy of the Kurdish movement as shown in its heritage, language and faith policies, but more generally in its practices of democracy at large: the district municipality established in April 2012 the Assembly of the Forty, an assembly that gathers people’s representatives from different ethnic, religious and ideological backgrounds, and which aims to improve the quality of the municipal services.[[88]](#endnote-88) Nowadays multiculturalism is not a euphemism anymore, and is not only a tool with which to build a common ground. It is a line of policy, part of the democratic local self-government policy embraced by the Kurdish movement as a whole since 2011. This policy follows the ideological change within the PKK, largely inspired by the thought of Murray Bookchin: the Kurdish movement does not struggle anymore for the establishment of a nation state, but for the creation of a democratic autonomy, based on direct democracy and people’s assemblies.[[89]](#endnote-89) Bookchin’s thought, rejecting all forms of hierarchy, encourages an ecological approach to diversity according to which all different beings would add to the complexity and richness of the whole.[[90]](#endnote-90) The 2015-2019 municipal strategic plan, subtitled *Colorful Diyarbakir,* clearly endorses the principles of democratic autonomy as stated in the municipal mission: “To create a local government based on multilingual services, gender equality, democratic self-governance, and in which the people’s resources are used in a equal and efficient way, and according to people’s needs.”[[91]](#endnote-91) Accordingly, multiculturalism is one of the key values and principles embraced. One of the main fields of intervention is the “Regeneration of mother-tongues and cultures” including the “protection, revival and transmission of the different languages and cultures found in the city to the new generations, and the creation of a multicultural and multilingual Diyarbakir.”[[92]](#endnote-92) Practically, the multicultural policy deals with the provision of multilingual municipal services, the encouragement of multilingual cultural activities for children and adults, the strengthening of the municipal theatres and libraries. Except the provision of funeral services adapted to diverse beliefs,[[93]](#endnote-93) multicultural policy is circumscribed to the field of culture. The multicultural project is to be understood in the light of the elaboration of an alternative political project for Kurdistan, a “proper” space in De Certeau’s understanding. However it intermingles with other projects and uses of diversity, i.e. the use of diversity as a resource for development, as fostered by national and international discourses and policy orientation.

Commodified and Normalized Cultures

The multicultural discourse and policy developed during the last 15 years have contributed to the (re)creation of ethnic or faith groups. Non-Muslim communities from Turkey and the diaspora get involved, in collaboration with the municipality, in the revitalization of the local churches for instance, bringing priests and worshipers from Istanbul or the diaspora,[[94]](#endnote-94) or an Armenian language teacher for the Armenian course offered by the local Kurdish language association. The projects that put forward the multicultural heritage also contributed to its recreation from scratch. For example, the project “Street of Cultures” that highlighted the past peaceful coexistence of faiths, funded by an EU heritage programme,[[95]](#endnote-95) was followed by the opening of the first ever *cemevi* (Alevi’s place of worship) in the city. This reconstructed diversity was used in the municipality’s application to the UNESCO that led to the inscription of the city on the list of World Heritage Site in 2015. The application documents stated that Diyarbakir has been a “refuge for many people, diverse cultures and religions throughout its thousand-year old history” and that this “vibrant intercultural tradition’ is still alive today.”[[96]](#endnote-96) Diversity and multiculturalism, highlighted in varied local tourism guides, has also become a commodity for tourism. This diversity put forward is also normalized and normative as shown in the case of the *Dom* or Eastern-Turkey’s Romani (one could also consider the case of the recent numerous migrants from Syria and Iraq, invisible in the multicultural policies). The Director of culture of Sur municipality underlined that Kurds must be open to differences and must not recreate Turkish policies; that everybody in the city should be taken care of, not only the Kurds. He underlined that these preoccupations have led the municipality to open a center for the Dom (in collaboration with national associations and international funders) who “have been discriminated against by Kurds as Kurds were discriminated against by Turks.” He also pointed out to me that he used the term Romani (instead of the “negative” one of *Çingene* – a Turkish equivalent for “Gypsies”),[[97]](#endnote-97) also underlining this appropriation of international norms (this was taking place during the decade of Romani Inclusion 2005-2015). However the Doms do not have a place in the city’s multicultural portray: they are absent in the city museum’s presentation of the peoples of the city; their language is never mentioned in the discussion or presentation of the multilingual policies. Their way of life is subject to normalization as seen when the municipality proudly noted that it has cleaned the cityscape of their nomadic tents.[[98]](#endnote-98) Multiculturalisms constructed and promoted in Diyarbakir are plural, also including commodified and normalizing versions that (re)produce strong dynamics of domination.

CONCLUSION

Through an analysis of two case-studies, this article offered some elements of deconstruction of the politics of recognition in Turkey. Taking the local as a point of departure made it possible to untangle the threads around which the politics of recognition have taken shape, and their underlying power relationship. This has first shown that the politics of recognition cannot be understood simply as the top-down application of policies designed nationally or internationally. Multiple influences as well as negotiations, compromises and conflicts among the actors, have given shape to a non-coherent, multi-layered, recognition. Indeed recognition takes various forms in various places and at various scales. Its form also shifts through time. More than shifts, one could talk about layers that have coalesced to build a non-linear and undetermined politics of recognition in the construction of which the ethno-national movements and ethnic entrepreneurs take full part. The Laze cultural movement embraced diversity and a multicultural vision of the country when it was still contentious in Turkey and even more in the Laze region. We have seen that the diversity talk may be reinforced through international connections but that these connections are not decisive. Today, the Laze movement’s vision of diversity is more tolerable both locally and at the national level since diversity has now become commonplace in Turkey, and is also valorized as a resource for local development. In Diyarbakir, like in other Kurdish cities, ethnic identity is also commodified, in line with global dynamics. However multiculturalism is not only a resource for tourism or a euphemism to circumvent bans; it has become a full part of a proper Kurdish political project of democratic autonomy. A regional, Kurdish, multiculturalism takes shape competing with the dominant vision of Turkey’s pluralism and diversity. Thus, it seems that the different layers of the politics of recognition, reinforced by its different words (pluralism, diversity, multiculturalism), do not allow for a gathering around a common ground in the country. On the contrary, it rather seems to lead to disconnection, and recognition seems to become more a battlefield around discursive and policy choices than a tool for, and a sign of, conflict resolution.

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NOTES

1. Derya Bayir, *Minorities and Nationalism in Turkish law* (London: Ashgate, 2013), 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. *Ibid*., 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. I could have used the terms “management of diversity” or “multiculturalism,” that is, according to Kymlicka, “first and foremost about developing new models of democratic citizenship, grounded in human rights ideals, to replace earlier uncivil and undemocratic relations of hierarchy and exclusion.” (Will Kymlicka, “The Rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies,” *International Social Science Journal* 199: 101-2 (2010). I prefer to use here “politics of recognition” as an umbrella term in order to distinguish the category of analysis from the varied ones used by the actors. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. #  Ibid.; Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, “Türk or Türkiyeli? The Reform of Turkey’s Minority Legislation and the Rediscovery of Ottomanism,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 43(3): 423-438 (2007); Ayhan Kaya, *Europeanization and Tolerance in Turkey. The Myth of Toleration* (London: Pal grave McMillan, 2013); Mesut Yeğen, “Citizenship and Ethnicity in Turkey,” Middle Eastern Studies 40(6): 51-66 (2004).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Kerem Öktem, “Faces of the City: Poetic, Mediagenic, and Traumatic Images of a Multicultural City in Southeast Turkey”, Cities 22(3): 245-6 (2005); Clémence Scalbert-Yücel, “Diversité culturelle et hiérarchie ethnique. L'usage des catégories dans le conflit kurde en Turquie, in Gilles Dorronsoro, Olivier Grojean, eds., *Identités et politique De la différenciation culturelle au conflit* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2015) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Kerem Öktem, “Faces of the City;” Zerrin Özlem Biner, “Retrieving the Dignity of a Cosmopolitan City: Contested Perspectives on Rights, Culture and Ethnicity in Mardin,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 37: 31-58 (2007); Ayşe Öncü, “Representing and Consuming “the East” in Cultural Markets,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*45: 49-73 (2011).  [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Charles R. Hale, “Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34(3): 438-524 (2002); Virginia Tilley “New Help or New Hegemony? The Transnational Indigenous People’s Movement and “Being Indian” in Salvador,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34: 525-554 (2002);Walter Ben Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity. How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. In reference to Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (NY, London: Free Press, Mc Millan, 1964); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); See also John O'Neill, “The Disciplinary Society: From Weber to Foucault,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 37(1): 53 (1986). Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, balancing force and consent, presents some proximity. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebook* (NY: International Publishers, 1999). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. He wrote: “I call a “tactic,” on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a “proper” (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. The “proper” is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time —it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized “on the wing.” Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into “opportunities.” Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), xix. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. *Ibid*., 37. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys. Navigating in the New International Politics of Diversity* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. See a critique and analysis by Claire Visier, “European Policies to Support “Civil Society.” Embodying a Form of Public Action,” in Marc Aymes, Benjamin Gourisse, Elise Massicard, eds., *Order and Compromise. Government Practices in Turkey from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Early 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 219-255. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Nonetheless, complexity has already been brought into the analysis by Yilmaz who has shown that although “the impact of EU conditionality remains the main impetus for legal adoption of minority rights,” the implementation is “solely influenced by domestic factors.” Gözde Yilmaz, “Exploring the Implementation of Minority Protection Rules in the ‘Worlds of Compliance’: The Case of Turkey,” *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 13(4): 421 (2012). [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Co-mayorship has been actualized by pro-Kurdish parties so as to maintain gender equality. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Nicole Watts, *Activists in Office. Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. For a critique see: Mesut Yeğen, “Citizenship;” Derya Bayir, “Minorities.” [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Derya Bayir, *Minorities*, 212, 224. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys.* [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. For details: Muhittin Ataman, “Özal Leadership and Restructuring of Turkish Ethnic Policy in the 1980s,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38(4): 123-142 (2002). [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Necmi Erdoğan and Fahriye Üstüner, “Quest for Hegemony: Discourses on Democracy,” in Nesecan Balkan & Sungur Savran, eds., *The Politics of Permanent Crisis. Class, Ideology and State in Turkey* (NY: Nova Science publishers, 2002), 199. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, “Türk or Türkiyeli?”; Baskın Oran, “The Issue of 'Turkish' and 'Türkiyeli'”, Exploring Turkishness: Rights, Identity and the EU Essay Series(London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2011) URL: <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1314.pdf> (accessed 10 Oct. 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Mehmed Uzun, *Nar çicekleri – çok kültürlülük üstüne* (Istanbul: Belge, 1995). Mıgırdiç Margosyan is an Armenian author from the city who published *Gavur Mahallesi* in 1992. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Elise Massicard, “Les mobilisations “identitaires” en Turquie après 1980: une libéralisation ambiguë,” in Gilles Dorronsoro, ed., *La Turquie conteste*. *Mobilisations sociales et régime sécuritaire* (Paris: CNRS editions, 2005), 89-107. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Necmi Erdoğan and Fahriye Üstüner “Quest for Hegemony,” 207. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Clémence Scalbert Yücel, “The ‘Liberalisation’ of Turkish Policy towards the Kurdish Language: The Influence of External Actors,” in Robert Lowe and Gareth Stansfield, eds., *The Kurdish Policy Imperative* (London: Chatham House, 2010), 79-96. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. The Promotion of Cultural Rights in Turkey Programme is divided in two schemes: “Broadcasting Support Grant Scheme” and “Cultural Initiatives Support Grant Scheme.” On one project funded in the framework of these programmes see Clémence Scalbert Yücel, “The Invention of a Tradition: Diyarbakir’s Dengbêj Project,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (2009), URL: <http://ejts.revues.org/4055> (accessed 19 Nov. 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Ayhan Kaya, “Unity in Diversity: Ethnic/Cultural Diversity in Turkey and the European Union,” *Cemoti* 36: 199–220 (2003). [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. HYD organized several meetings on the issue of pluralism and multiculturalism, for instance the meeting “A wider Europe: Modernization and Pluralism” in Istanbul in March 2000. The findings were published by İletişim in 2001, under the title *Modernleşme ve çokkültürlük. Modernity and Multiculturalism.* [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. For example: *Türkiye’de azınlık hakları sorunu: Vatandaşlık ve Demokrasi Eksenli bir Yaklaşım. Uluslararası Konferans Teblikleri, 9-10 December 2005* (Istanbul: TESEV, 2006); Civil Society Seminars organized at Bilgi University, Istanbul between 2003 and 2008. See: <http://stk.bilgi.edu.tr/siviltoplumseminer.asp> (accessed 4 May 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. For the television, see for e.g. Clémence Scalbert Yücel, “Diversité culturelle et hiérarchie ethnique.” [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. #  For instance, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, *Küresel İş Yönetimi ve Kültürel Çeşitlilik* (Istanbul: MÜ-KA Matbaacılık, 1998).

 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Attila Durak, *Ebru. Reflections of Cultural Diversity in Turkey* (İstanbul: Metis, 2006), 28. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Ayşe Gül Altınay “Ebru: Reflections on Water,” in Attila Durak, *Ebru*, 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Peters Alford Andrews, *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. T.C. Başbakanlık Kamu Düzeni ve Güvenliği Müsteşarlığı, *Demokratiklesme Paketi*, (Ankara: 30 Sep. 2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. The institute was established at the University of Thrace (*Resmi Gazete*, 28950, 23 March 2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. For example, different languages were first broadcasted on state TV stations. See Clémence Scalbert Yücel, *Engagement, Langue et Littérature. Le champ littéraire kurde en Turquie (1980-2000)* (Paris: Pétra, 2014), 60-64. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Gözde Yilmaz “Exploring the Implementation;” Cuma Çiçek, “Elimination or Integration of Pro‐Kurdish Politics: Limits of the AKP's Democratic Initiative,” *Turkish Studies* 12(1): 15-26 (2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Ayhan Kaya, *Europeanization*, 88. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. AKP Tanıtım ve Medya Baskanlık, *Soruları ve Cevaplarıyla Demokratik Açılım Süreci. Milli Birlik Ve Kardeşlik Projesi* (Ankara: AKP, 2010), 12. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Kamu Düzeni ve Güvenliği Müsteşarı, *Demokratileşme Paketi* (Ankara: KDGM, 2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Galia Saouma and Yudhishthir Raj Isar, “Cultural Diversity' at UNESCO: A Trajectory,” in Christiaan De Beukelaer, Miikka Pyykkönen, J P Singh, eds., *Globalization, Culture and Development. The UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity* (London: Palgrave, 2015), 70-72. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. On the ethnic name, see Michael Meeker, “The Black Sea Turks: Some Aspects of Their Ethnic and Cultural Background,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2(4): 318-345 (1971). See also Ildiko Beller-Hann & Chris Hann, *Turkish Region* (Oxford: James Currey, Sar Press, 2001), 198-204. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Nifüler Taşkın, “Laz mısınız? Estağfurullah!,” in Uğur Biryol, ed., *“Karardı Karadeniz”* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2012), 179-194. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Mentioned in Beller-Hann & Hann, *Turkish Region*, 204-5. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. *Ibid.*, 211. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. *Ibid*., 212-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. With the German-based activist, Selma Koçiva, in the 1980s, and later in Turkey in the early 1990s with the Laz Kültür Vakfi Girisim that published the first journal in Laze language *OGNI* in 1993. Music played a key role with Zuğaşi Berepe (Children of the sea) that also included the famous singer Kazım Koyuncu, and later Birol Topaloğlu. See Uğur Biryol, *Kazım’ın Sevdası. Kazimi*ş*i Oropa,* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. See Kamil Aksoylu, “Laz Kültürel Haraketi (93 Süreci),” in *Laz Kültürü Tarih, Dil, Gelenek, ve Toplumsal Yapı* (Istanbul: Phoenix, 2010 [2009]), 473-476. See also Ildiko-Beller-Hann & Chris Hann, *Turkish Region*, 205-208. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. The first one is *Sima Dogu Karadenizler Hizmet Vakfı*, established in 1996. The head of GOLA is also member of one and is in contact with all hometown associations of the Black-Sea in Istanbul, more for informative than for collaboration purposes. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. **Alexandre** Toumarkine **and Jeanne** Hersant, “Hometown Organisations in Turkey: An Overview,” European Journal of Turkish Studies 2: § 4 (2005), <http://ejts.revues.org/index397.html> (accessed 15 May 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. The *Laz Kültür Dernegi* was opened in 2008 in Istanbul, followed by the *Laz Kültür Dayanışma Derneği* in Ankara. The first and single organisation in the Laze region was established in Arhavi, in 2011 (*Çkuni Berepe (Bizim Çocuklar), Laz Kültür Sanat ve Turizm Derneği*). [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Alexandre Toumarkine, “Les protestations écologistes en Turquie dans les années 1990,” in Gilles Dorronsoro, ed., La Turquie conteste. Mobilisations sociales et régime sécuritaire (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2005), 69-86; **Marie Le** Ray, “Associations de pays et production de locality: la “campagne Munzur” contre les barrages,” European Journal of Turkish Studies, 2 (2005), URL: <http://ejts.revues.org/index370.html> (accessed 15 May 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. These are narratives developed for example by Selma Koçiva (*Lazona. Laz Halk Gerçekliği Üzerine* (Istanbul: Tümzamanlar, 2000),Kazım Koyuncu (See: Uğur Biryol, *Kazım’ın sevdası*) or again GOLA’s association (fieldwork, Arhavi, April and Aug. 2012). [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. See for instance Selma Koçiva, *Lazona*. At that time, Chris M. Hann had developed a similar thesis in *Tea and the Domestication of the Turkish State* (Huntingdon: SOAS, Modern Turkish Studies Programme Occasional Papers 1, 1990). [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Fieldwork, Arhavi, April 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Lazika kollektifi, *Laz Kültürü üzerine notlar* (Istanbul: Lazika yayın kollektifi, 2011). See also the movie *Bir Yudum Bekleyiş* shown at the Yayla festival in 2006 and GOLA Nature Film Festival in 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. For instance a chapter is dedicated to corn in Lazika kollektifi, *Laz Kültürü*. During fieldwork, I was able for instance to hear a lot of criticism against tea and praises for hazelnut trees. This view however may be refined and moderated as some call for a sustainable (or organic) tea cultivation and others mention songs sung by tea-harvesting girls highlighting that tea has become part of the culture. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. <https://www.christensenfund.org/about/mission-and-vision/> (accessed 27 May 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. *Ibid*. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Sevinç Özarslan, “Kültürleri kaynaștıran Laz Aktivist,” *Zaman* (4 Dec. 2010). [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. <https://www.christensenfund.org/funding/grants-search/1/?kwords=turkey&f_year=all&gregion=2&theme=all> (accessed 5 June 2015). The grants were received through two schemes: ‘Cultural expression and land” and “Sustaining and Revitalizing Cultural Expression.” [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Presentation of the 1st festival in 2006: <http://www.yaylafest.org/yaylawww/hakkimizda.asp?lang=tr&festival=festbir&durum=detay> (accessed 5 June 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. <http://www.golader.org/en/hakkimizda/> (accessed 5 June 2015). Let’s mention that the Association for Laze Culture uses similar wording (see website and interview with the director, Istanbul, Aug. 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. The key mediator with the American funders also secured a grant for a Newroz project in order to collect material in the Middle East around this fest (which is also the key Kurdish festivity in Turkey). The director of the association also states that she sees the Kurdish question as a key element to be solved in Turkey and that this vision also differentiates them from other Laze groups or activists. Fieldwork clearly underlined the tensions around this question. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Peters Alford Andrews, *Ethnic Groups*. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. A Hemşin association has also been established in Istanbul, *HADİG Hemşin Kültürünü Araştırma ve Yaşatma Derneği*. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Beth A. Conklin and Laura R. Graham, “The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-politics,” *American Anthropologist New series* 97(4): 695-710 (1995). The authors borrow the term coined by Richard White who defines the middle ground as “the construction of a mutually comprehensible world characterized by new systems of meaning and exchange.” The new middle ground they study is “a political space, an arena of intercultural communication, exchange, and joint political action” (696). [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. As in the case of the Dersim’s environmental activists (see Marie Le Ray, “Associations de pays**”).** [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. <http://lazkulturdernegi.org.tr/tuzuk> (accessed 4 Oct. 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity Inc.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009). [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Watts, *Activists in Office*, 147. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Interview, Istanbul, April 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. See Clémence Scalbert-Yücel, “Repères culture: Politiques culturelles et diversité de la scène artistique kurdes en Turquie,” *Moyen-Orient* 26: 52-55 (2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. In the Chaldean and Assyrian churches, respectively in 2004 and 2005. The performers came from Antakya and Istanbul as there is barely no local left (see *Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi Hizmet Bülteni Festival*, *4° Sanat Festivali Özel sayı* 9 (6 June 2004). [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. Interview, Diyarbakir, April 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Şeyhmus Diken, Sırrını Surlarına Fısıldayan Şehir, Diyarbakır (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002); Şeyhmus Diken, Diyarbekir Diyarım Yitirmişem Yanarım (Istanbul, İletişim: 2003). Both Uzun and Margosyan played an important role too. See note 21. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Saskia Cousin, *Les miroirs du tourisme*. *Ethnographie de la Touraine du Sud* (Paris: Descartes et Co., 2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Interviews, Diyarbakir, April 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. HDP candidates from different ethnic groups (Armenian, Rom, Yezidi, Arab) were elected. The program of the party combines the recognition of differences (*farklılıklar*), plurality (*çoğul*) and the quest for equality (*eşit*) of different cultures, languages, religion, gender, etc., on the one hand, with social equality on the other hand. The party aims for positive discrimination (regarding gender issues) and the protection of the differences in a multi-identity, multi-cultural, multilinguistic and multi faith country. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. The Basque Local Government also funded a municipality project (“A tale for each night, each house is a school” Project) resulting in the publication of children books in Kurdish, Armenian, and Assyrian languages, [http://www.medya73.com/yazdir-1-82512.htmlhttp://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/132653-yasam-hakkina-sur-ceken-adalet](http://www.medya73.com/yazdir-1-82512.htmlhttp%3A//bianet.org/bianet/toplum/132653-yasam-hakkina-sur-ceken-adalet) (accessed 30 Oct. 2015). More generally the Spanish “autonomous communities” are clearly taken as a policy model and aims to reach. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Marlies Casier, “Turkey’s Kurds and the Quest for Recognition. Transnational Politics and the EU–Turkey accession Negotiation,” *Ethnicities* 10(1): 11 (2010). [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. *Ibid*., 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. *Ibid*., 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. In the framework of the municipality’s project “Three books, three languages, three neighborhoods” (2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. Interview, Diyarbakir, April 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. “Sur belediyesi’nde Kırklar Meclisi Kuruldu,” <http://sur.bel.tr/turkce/?p=2044> (accessed on 4 Oct. 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. For details, see Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya and Joost Jongerden, “Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the project of Radical Democracy,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 14 (2012), <http://ejts.revues.org/4615> (accessed 15 May 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. Murray Bookchin, *Post-scarcity Anarchism* (London: Wildwood House, 1974), 82. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. Diyarbakir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, *Stratejik Planı 2015-2019. Rengarenk Amed* (2014), 36. [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. *Ibid*., 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. *Ibid*., 64-67. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. They come to Diyarbakir on occasional events such as the opening of the refurbished Surp Giragos church or the commemoration of the Armenian genocide on 24 April 2015. Other moments re-armenise the city such as for example the exhibition by Anadolu Kültür entitled “Eski Diyarbakır’da Kültürel Çeşitlilik – Memory of Armenians and Assyrians of Diyarbakir.” [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. Muriel Girard and Clémence Scalbert Yücel, “Heritage as a Category of Public Policies in the Southeastern Anatolia Region,” in Marc Aymes, Benjamin Gourisse, Elise Massicard, eds., *Order and Compromise. Government Practices in Turkey from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Early 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 192-218. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. Julien Boucly, Conflit de Patrimonialisation à Diyarbakır (Paris: EHESS, unpublished MA Dissertation, 2014), 97. URL: <http://ovipot.hypotheses.org/10667> (accessed 16 Oct. 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. Interview, Diyarbakir, April 2012. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. Diyarbakir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, *Amed Faaliyet Raporu 2014* (2015), 67.

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