THE EVOLVING STATE – THIRD SECTOR RELATIONS IN TURKEY:

From subservience to partner status?

Korel Göymen*

INTRODUCTION

The Third sector (TS) is made up of all those entities that are not for profit and not part of government, together with volunteer activities which sustain them. These entities, nowadays, are major players/partners in different sectors and areas of service provision, such as health, education, culture, housing, rural services, sports and recreation. It should be emphasized from the start that there is no agreed upon single term or definition to refer to these entities. Among others, the terms civil society, non-profit sector are frequently used interchangeably. In this study, though acknowledging the extensive discussions on the subject and recognizing the important nuances/differences in the content and coverage of the various terms, nevertheless, for sake of convenience, the terms third sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society will be used interchangeably. The main justification for this approach is that the interaction of all these entities with the state can be handled within the same conceptual framework and generalizations.

* Dr. Göymen is professor of political science and public administration at Sabancı University in Istanbul (goymen@sabanciuniv.edu).

Two things are certain concerning the third sector. One, they are gaining further recognition in most countries and that their centrality to the well-being of society, economy and polity is now widely accepted. Two, their relationship with the state is most ambiguous and generates most concern and debate. The type of interaction of the third sector with the state has varied historically in different societies, and still does. This does not mean that the topic does not yield itself to certain generalizations and commonalities. For instance, many claim that, historically, free associations have been integral to the conceptualization of citizenship, social solidarity and collective action in Western European societies (Harris, 1990; Lewis, 1995; Lewis 2004). Lewis (2004: 170-171), further suggests that the interdependence of the third sector and state is crucial for the understanding of European welfare regimes now. He adds that "in the more recent period of welfare state structuring, TS organizations have once more come to the fore in many countries as potential employees, and providers of welfare to the state (Lewis, 2004: 171).

The same type of development is also observed in Turkey, although she comes from a different state tradition and cultural context. It is the aim of this paper to study the evolving state-third sector relations in Turkey, both to determine where Turkish civil society stands on the subservience-autonomy scale and interrelate these observations/evaluations to trends else where.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS ON STATE-THIRD SECTOR INTERACTION

While one can easily talk about the recent resurgence of the TS, it is still generally portrayed as being subservient to the state, delivering services at the behest of, and often under contract,

to the state (Lewis, 2004: 171). Some, like Şimşek (2004: 46) even believe that concepts such as civil society and the notion of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been overused, causing ambiguities, misunderstandings, stereotypical judgments and oversimplifications. Yet another "….. oversimplification has often described the state and civil society as belonging to completely opposite spheres. This implies that the state is a gigantic and pervasive power the normal functioning of which is at least authoritarian, if not totalitarian. In modern societies, especially in non-western settings, ……. such a stark binary opposition is neither necessarily correct or helpful ….." (Beller-Hann and Chris Hann, 2001: p.32, quoted in Şimşek, 2004: pp. 46-47).

Şimşek (2004: p. 47), further, warns us that civil society is not homogeneous and consists of different types which may have variegated interests; and that they often have internal contradictions and may exhibit authoritarian tendencies. This warning is in order because neither the state (the various institutions representing it over different issues, often exercising 'bureaucratic politics') nor civil society are monolithic structures and should not be treated as such.

Şimşek underlines two basic approaches within the wealth of diverse literature on civil society, namely "the liberal paradigm", and "the critical paradigm" (p. 50). According to Larry Diamond, a proponent of the "liberal paradigm" (1994: 5), which Şimşek quotes (p. 50), civil society "is the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order and a set of shared values. This definition of civil society only partly fits the Turkish scene. Some third sector organizations in Turkey, such as chambers of trade, handicraft, industry and professional bodies of medical doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, engineers, etc. have compulsory

membership. Furthermore, some restrictive rules of civil service (particularly the punitive ones) also apply to them. These so-called "para-statal professional bodies" are good examples of 'hybridity'. Also, most Turkish third sector organizations are not even 'largely' self-supporting, but are dependent either on the state, international organizations, and/or northern NGOs for funding (Skip Report, 2006a: 15,19).

A proponent of "critical paradigm", Bjorn Beckman (1997:3), again quoted in Şimşek (2004:50), argues that "the concept of civil society needs to be disengaged from its incorporation into a liberal theory of state-society relations, where state and society are juxtaposed as separate and conflicting spheres and suggests that it should be possible to talk about "patriarchal, Islamic, communist and fascist civil societies" (Beckman, 1997:2). It is only a step away to hypothesize, based on these views, that different organizations of civil society, or the same organizations at different times may be supportive of different regimes, including non-democratic ones. Recent Turkish history and history of the third sector in Turkey is supportive of this hypothesis. During the two military interventions, between 1960-1980, almost all of the third sector in Turkey, at least in discourse, sided with the state, as then, represented by the military. Many 'secular' NGOs applauded when the military forced out of office the Islamist government of Necmettin Erbakan in 1998.

Keyman and İçduygu (2003) also stress that "it would be a mistake to attribute an ipso facto manner 'positivity' to civil society, insofar as it involves not only democratic discourses, but also essentialist identity claims, voiced by religious and ethnic fundamentalism, and arguing for reconstructing the state-society/individual relations on a communitarian basis".

Hampson (2003:8) draws our attention to yet another sore point in state-third sector relations and suggests that "state regulation of institutions of civil society is problematic everywhere" and adds that "….. areas of activity most susceptible to illegitimate interference by the state are the media, human rights organizations, religious groups and organizations based on a common nationality/ethnicity.

Akarcalı (2003:11) on the other hand, maintains that "activities of NGOs should not be perceived as a threat to the state because their activities are not against the state but complementary to it".

Carothers (2000:4) after refuting the idea that NGOs will one day replace the state, advocates that "civil society groups can be much more effective in shaping state policy if the state has coherent powers for setting and enforcing policy. Good non-governmental work will actually tend to strengthen, not weaken state capacity". But, Akarcalı (2003:11), in resigned manner, believes that the Turkish state is not yet ready to involve civil society in policy and decision-making, and pinpoints the problem as lack of transparent administration and difficulties in accessing information.

THE GENERAL MILIEU OF STATE-THIRD SECTOR INTERACTION

The gist of that argument is that there is a marked statist orientation (*étatism*) in Turkey, which stresses community over its members, uniformity rather than diversity, and an understanding of law that emphasizes collective reason instead of the will of membership (Heper, 1985: 8, quoted in Kalaycıoğlu, 2002a :67). Such a statist orientation tended to view politics as leadership and education of the 'uncivilized' masses through the intervention of

state or bureaucratic elites. The 'State' is suspicious of social groupings, associations and organizations of all kinds that are not under its close surveillance. Hence, the reservoir of goodwill for freedom of association has been shallow. An interventionist and distrustful 'state' often leaves little room for any kind of vigorous social activity and associability to flourish (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002 a:68).

Nevertheless, it is possible to refer to '*the legitimacy crisis of the strong-state tradition*' in Turkey since the 1980s. Turkish modernization, since the beginning of the Republic, has been characterized by and has given rise to the 'strong-state tradition'. This tradition means, first, that the state has assumed the capacity of acting almost completely independent from civil society; second, that the state, rather than the government, has constituted 'the primary context of politics'; and third, that the state has been involved in the process of the production and reproduction of cultural life. However, since the 1980s, the emergence of new actors, new mentalities and the new language of modernization, as well as democracy as a global point of reference in politics, has made culture and cultural factors an important variable in understanding political activities. Thus, the call for democratization as the main basis for the regulation of the state-society has become the global/local context for Turkish politics. This means that new actors acting at the global/local levels and calling for democratization have confronted the privileged role of state at the national level (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003: 223).

In spite of this confrontation, due to the remnants of the state tradition, Turkey still does not nurture a fertile environment for civil society. Under the circumstances, one does not necessarily expect to find much evidence of associability and civic activism. However, the ideal typical representations of state-civil society relations often do not match the complexity of the socio-political reality. What is meant by this is that although traditions matter, political

structures and behavior tend to change over time (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002 a:68). This is what is happening in Turkey now.

Kalaycıoğlu (2006:251) , claims that although there is a strong state tradition in Turkey, the actual strength of the state is at best dubious. A better way of defining the state according to him, is as coercive (*ceberrut*), and even arbitrary, rather than strong. It seems as if it is not the strength, but the relative weakness, of the Turkish state that constitutes an impediment to the development of civil society. This weakness leads to a lack of regulation, extraction and distribution capabilities of the state, which renders the state elite (Centre) somewhat vulnerable and fearful of the dissatisfaction of the masses (Periphery).

The image of the state in Turkey is ambivalent, both punishing and rewarding. It is small wonder that the Turkish state has come popularly to be referred to as the 'Papa State'. When challenged, it turns into a nasty and cruel (*ceberrut*) mechanism of suppression; but when socio-political forces co-operate with it, there is much to be gained from its benevolence (Heper, 1985:103, quoted in Kalaycıoğlu , 2006b:250).

Sunar enriches the discussion by stating that Turkey seems to demonstrate the outlook of a 'passive-exclusive state', defined as a state that 'resists the entry of disadvantaged groups in the official domain of the state regime but neither combats nor promotes civil society. He further argues that the passive-exclusive state does not have the same attitude towards all groups in civil society. For instance, the Turkish state allows organization of economic groups, or associations based on gender; but it is watchful of religious associations and actively resists associability on the basis of cultural ethnicity. The passive-exclusive nature of the state reinforces its relative weakness. A weak state extends its resources and boosts its

capacity by ignoring large swathes of civil society, which it is not, in any case, able to regulate and control. Accordingly, only those associations that are perceived as bent on sedition and radical conspiracy, and hence deemed to be security risks, are seriously monitored, prosecuted or suppressed. The rest are either simply left alone or co-operatively engaged (Sunar, 1998:370).

Evidently, a problem emerges for ethnic and religious nonconformists who would like to have recognition, respect and representation within the political system. The problem is that they want these on their own terms, without adapting to the rules of the political game. The Kurdish nationalists, for example, demand a political voice and recognition in the fullest sense. Religious radicals demand representation and respect in all institutions of the political system, however much they contest and condemn the rules and regulations of the institutions they operate under. The state, on the other hand, demands that the 'nonconformists' first accept and fully internalize the principles of the Republican system, the constitution and the laws, and the related rules of the political game. So there ensues a crisis in the political participation to which a compromise solution is nowhere in sight (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002b:262).

Kalaycıoğlu, like Sunar, also stresses the differential treat of the state. The dramatic experiences with the earthquake of 1999 clearly indicated that various civil initiatives and especially the self-help associations enjoy widespread popular support in Turkey. There is scant evidence that self-help organizations are considered with suspicion either by the authorities, or by the people at large. Solidarity associations (such as the beautification organizations (güzelleştirme dernekleri), regional solidarity associations (hemşehri dernekleri), mosque building societies (cami yaptırma cemiyetleri) and the like are hardly at risk. Although advocacy groups seem to receive rough treatment from the law enforcement

authorities as they challenge their authority, or suggest ways to limit them, such treatment seems to give the impression of being sporadic rather than systematic. Even among the advocacy groups, those that seem not to be perceived by the law enforcement authorities as challengers of the *raison d'être* of the republican regime and/or the indivisibility of the state, do not seem to be necessarily harassed. In essence civic initiative and activism seem to be gaining acceptance, rather than being brushed aside by the state institutions or by the populace at large as Turkey nears the European Union (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002 a:60).

The tragic and devastating events of 1999 have also led us to think of civil society organizations seriously. The Marmara Earthquake on 17th August destroyed a large portion of the most developed industrial region of Turkey, causing almost 20,000 deaths and thereby creating one of the most tragic events of the century, and then there was the Düzce Earthquake on 12th November. These two disasters made it very clear to Turkish people the strong state is in fact very weak in responding and coping with serious problems. This failure of the Turkish state to respond quickly to crisis situations have given rise to a common belief among people that civil society organizations and a more participatory political culture are necessary for the efficient and effective solution of various problems confronting Turkish society (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003: 227).

There are also a number of problems associated with the culture, values and self-image of civil society entities. Although, in discourse they seem to have a universal outlook, "paradoxically, most of the civil society organizations in Turkey, in fact, see globalization as 'a process to be resisted in the long run' or as 'a problem to be seriously dealt with in order to make its impacts positive for Turkish society". In other words, the general intellectual discourse of civil society, which sees globalization as one of the contributory factors for the

development of civil society organizations in Turkey, does not correspond to the way in which civil society organizations themselves speak about the utility of globalization. In other words, "civil society organizations appear to be 'quite skeptical' in the way in which they approach the question of the long-term impacts of cultural globalization. This skepticism sometimes operate in a strong fashion, to the extent that globalization is seen as nothing but a new form of imperialism creating undemocratic power relations in the world on behalf of rich countries. Sometimes, it takes the form of seeing globalization as an objective reality that produces both positive an negative impacts; positive in the sense of confronting the power of the strong state and creating a platform for the protection of civil rights, and negative in the sense of supporting the liberal hegemonic vision of the world, based on free market ideology" (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003: 228).

Keyman and İçduygu claim (2003:228), this is a 'boundary problem'; that is, to what extent civil society organizations in Turkey are in fact operating as a 'civil society organization' in terms of the scope and the content of their activities, their relation to the state, and their normative and ideological formations. The general definitional discourse on civil society in Turkey finds the institutional distinction between the state and society as a 'sufficient condition' for thinking of organizations taking place outside the boundaries of the state as civil society organizations. However, this definition does not involve two important criteria, used in the literature to define civil society organizations, namely, that they are issue-specific organizations, and that they are not interested in creating or supporting ideological societal visions. In fact, most of the democratic civil society organizations in Turkey (as they are popularly referred to by the 'left' of the political spectrum), have an ideological platform and are active in the political sphere.

"When we approach civil society organizations in Turkey on the basis of these two definitional criteria, we see that most of them act to the contrary, that is, their activities are not issue-based in scope and content; instead they are embedded in big societal visions. First of all, there are civil society organizations whose activities are framed, to a large extent, by big societal visions, such as, Kemalism, a modern Turkey, the protection of contemporary civilized life, the secular-democratic Turkey or Islamic order, Islamic life, a socialist Turkey, and Kemalist Women, to name a few. Second we see that while civil society organizations institutionally are situated outside the state, they can have strong normative and ideological ties with state power" (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003: 228).

We had mentioned that traits of culture and individual/institutional values are of great importance. Cooperation and solidarity among members of civil society organizations emerges only if they can trust each other, and show civic tolerance towards one another. A minimum of interpersonal trust is needed for total strangers to become partners in an economic corporation, a philanthropic organization, a self-help group, or a neighbourhood watch group. Interpersonal trust is the cement that holds a gathering of individuals together in a voluntary association. Social tolerance for dissenting opinions, views, ideas and even life-styles is required for different groups and gatherings to differ yet co-exist in a competitive or even a conflict-ridden milieu, which is the case in most societies. Therefore, it is essential that, members tolerate other associations and groups of which they disapprove, dislike, or oppose (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002 a:63).

When we examine the level of interpersonal trust it seems as if nine out of ten people in Turkey do not trust their fellow human beings. It is probably no coincidence that, since the rapid development or capitalism in the 1950s most of the successful corporations in Turkey

have been 'family firms'. Under these circumstances primordial ties (lineage, regional bonds, marriages etc.) emerge as the only bases on which partnership can be established. Consequently, civic associations come to be marred by the cultural impediment of lack of interpersonal trust in Turkey (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002 a:64).

Associational life in Turkey, therefore, is still influenced by blood ties (*akrabalık*), marital religions (*hısımlık*), and local or regional solidarity (*hemşehrilik*) bonds created among men in military service (*askerlik*) and through religious orders (*tarikat*). Successful partnerships appear mostly to stem from such primordial or traditional ties. Moreover, effective linkages to institutions of political power are still activated through ties of this kind. Urbanisation and social mobilization have eroded some of those primordial/traditional ties, yet their presence is still widely noticeable (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002b:269).

Turkish culture also appears to be characterized by lack of social tolerance for dissent. Values surveys indicate that most respondents do not express tolerance of neighbours who seem to have a lifestyle that deviates from their own. Such shallow social tolerance induces voluntary associations to function with few members, who 'look and act alike'. A plenitude of voluntary associations emerges with low participation and a proclivity for viewing the rest of society as untrustworthy, and intolerable. Nor do voluntary associations evince an eagerness to engage with other voluntary associations, deliberate issues with them or co-operate and co-ordinate their activities to promote joint goals (Esmer, 1999: 87-90).

On the other hand, values surveys indicate that feelings of political efficacy are rather strong and widely distributed in Turkey. Some effective associations, like the Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists Association (TÜSIAD), the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-

Is), and the Turkish Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges (TOBB) often benefit from their co-operation with the state, rather than co-operation with other voluntary associations to pressure the state. What Turkey is experiencing is not only a fragmented civil society, but one consisting of voluntary associations that are better at rivalry than mutual co-operation. As a rule, voluntary associations do not seem to consider the state as an adversary, but rather an ally to be mobilized against their competitors. So, voluntary associations tend to campaign for state attention, subsidies, and assistance, while seeking to eliminate or eclipse their closest rivals (Kalaycıoğlu, 1995: 61-63).

Only a few associations however, have such capacities, or access to sizeable political resources like votes, wealth or information. The vast majority are too small and under-resourced to matter to most political parties and elites. Their principle opportunity to exert influence depends on the willingness to form enduring coalitions with other voluntary associations, and thereby enhance their access to political resources (from finance to public participation in civic initiatives and elections). However, this brings us to another debilitating hurdle: civil society seems to be made up of fragmented and fractionalized voluntary associations involved in constant rivalry among themselves. This allows the state to have a passive-exclusive attitude towards the associations (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002b:269).

IMPEDIMENTS TO STATE-THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

Other than obstacles in the path of state-third sector collaboration, emanating from the political/administrative culture and legacy, there are also structural, institutional, management impediments which also have to be overcome. Therefore, there is a lot to be done, on the part of Turkish third sector entities and state institutions to prepare them for meaningful and

effective collaboration. A recently conducted survey (Skip, 2006a, 2006b), attests to this need. Major findings of this comprehensive survey has been summarized below.

Present State of Civil Society Organizations (CSO)

- The situation generally reflects a low level of communication and cooperation between CSOs both within Turkey and with other international counterparts and networks. In terms of connectedness, 90% of CSOs report limited connections with outside Turkey, and limited connections with other Turkish CSOs. Existing connections are largely based on personal relations between the leaders of CSOs.

- While an increase in the number of networks of CSOs is observed, for example, among disabled persons' groups, women's groups, environmental groups, and most recently, human rights groups, there are very few registered CSO 'umbrella' organizations. Only trade unions and chambers and professional associations are fully organized under umbrella organizations, and they are quite active.

- CSO networks advocating policies regarding freedom of thought and expression are perceived to be the most active and successful.

- Alternatives to umbrella organizations are flexible alliances or platforms. Such platforms exist e.g. environmental platforms, women's groups platform, the 'Democracy Platform', youth platforms and various union federations/confederations representing common interest.

- CSOs fulfilling some social charity functions such as education campaigns, disaster-related search and rescue activities, health scans, child care/fertility studies, etc., are better supported by the authorities, media and the people.

- The third sector of Turkey generally seems to be rather dispersed and disorganized. There are some exceptions like the platforms on social dialogue, human rights, disabled persons' rights, ethnic culture, environmental and women rights, and some mostly charitable foundations.

Observations Related to Legal Developments and State Practices

- The Law on Associations and ensuing regulations were modernized and a similar modernization of the Law on Foundations has just been concluded. As a result, convergence has taken place, reducing the difference between an Association and a Foundation, in legal status.

- In terms of representativeness, there remains a perceived difference, with government officials lending a higher degree of representation to a Chamber or Foundation, not, least due to the social and historical status. The establishment process of Foundations is also seen as making this organization form less prone to political influence.

- In relation to the legal framework for decentralization, the Laws on Municipalities, Metropolitan Municipalities as well as Provincial Special Administrative Units now contain provisions for collaboration between municipalities and CSOs. However, overall, it is a fair assessment that the government is basically still functioning through

the central control of the ministries and the Prime Ministry. Government representation through their extensive regional and local structures (at district and sub-district level) is still by far the most dominating element in local health, education, labour, social care, and economic development.

- There is a lack of single governmental strategic focal point regarding civil society development in Turkey. The absence of a programmatically based strategic approach largely leaves the extent and practice of civil society inclusion up to the individuals in the responsible directorates and ministries, without a set of rules as to terms of collaboration.

- In terms of relations with civil society, pivotal are the State Governors at the provincial level. Not only do the Governors play a role in policy execution, for example, registering trade unions, chairing the Foundations for Social Assistance and Solidarity, but in several instances the Governor is instrumental in even convening regional civil society platforms.

- The relative weakness of national CSO structures has led to a dilemma concerning civil society autonomy. It seems that some CSOs and key foundations seem to exist to justify government policy. On the other hand, human rights organizations pull the other way, maintaining a critical attitude regarding governmental policies. The risk emanating from both attitudes is of course, that mutual trust can not be established and civil dialogue cannot be maintained, in this atmosphere.

CSO Perceptions of the New Milieu

- Many CSOs are cautiously optimistic about the emerging legal environment for civil society. A majority of respondents to the survey claim that the registration process of CSOs is generally fair, inexpensive, fast, easy and according to law.

- CSOs are less satisfied with the level of government interference with their activities. A majority report that Government continues to meddle into CSO affairs and activities (36% report these are somewhat common, 33% report that they are quite frequent). Among the most common complaints was the point that CSOs, particularly trade unions, are often prevented from organizing protests and/or boycotts, and strikes.

- In addition, laws and regulations continue to include vague language, increasing the discretionary powers of Government authorities. Although CSOs continue to highlight positive political will, they are skeptical about implementation. Many complained that state officials do not treat CSOs equally. It is frequently noted that oppositional CSOs, which are not in parallel with State policies and, ideology, are ignored or marginalized whereas those sympathetic benefit from positive discrimination. Therefore, most CSOs do not find the State reliable and accordingly healthy communication cannot be developed.

- On the other hand, it should be noted that CSOs generally find collaboration with local government easier. Organizations active in fields such as environment have better relations with the general and local public authorities.

Limited Policy Impact of CSOs

According to recent case studies deficiencies in impacting public policy can be ascribed to:

- Few CSOs have this aim; narrow and short term policies supplant strategic planning engendering lack of citizen respect and trust of CSOs.

- CSOs lack skills and capacity to launch and pursue successful campaigns to influence and inform public opinion.

- CSOs are ineffective in organizing coalitions for joint advocacy initiatives, which weakens their ability to be effective, and they lack mechanisms to disseminate information.

- The State has rarely provided CSOs with the space or the opportunity to influence policy and as such, even successful attempts and campaigns have rarely had any impact on joint policy-formulation.

Constraints For Cooperation Between the State and Third Sector

Major findings of the Training Needs Assessment Skip Report (2006a: 6-7) are as follows:

- Firstly, there is a big gap in the willingness for cooperation expressed by Public Sector managers in public speeches and the actual levels of cooperation in reality. This means that there is a difference between policy and practice.

- Secondly, although there is plenty of evidence of informal arrangements for cooperation, there are only a few examples of formalized cooperation. It would appear that the driving attitude of the Public Sector is to encourage and support informal cooperation, but to avoid entering into any legally binding forms of partnership or arrangements that may lead to the authorities being held publicly accountable.

- None of the NGOs contacted for this study had any experience of being directly involved in policy development or the prioritization of local development planning. Their main preoccupation is with service delivery, rather than one of advocacy.

- In the instances where the informants remarked on evidence of organized civil society participation in setting local development plans, they also reported that the mechanisms for such cooperation are purely advisory and are lacking in any authority. Thus, local development committees tend not to be taken very seriously as their decisions are usually not binding.

- The public sector tends to sign up to partnership projects with CSOs working at mostly national level and only with well-known reputable ones.

- Public sector officials are often suspicious of the 'real motives' of CSOs, attesting to the general problem of the lack of trust in Turkish society.

- There is a mutual problem of unfamiliarity, on the part of CSO representatives with state practice and conversely about 'CSO culture' of government officials.

Recommendations for Better Cooperation

- At the local level, to establish a single contact person or focal point to assist in the coordination of inter-sector partnership. This person/unit would help to build

relationships between NGOs and the Public Sector, as well as providing a database of partnership opportunities.

- The concept of NGO should be clearly defined to those in decision-making positions within the public sector. Similarly, NGOs themselves should make a concerted effort to both explain their missions and actions to the Public Sector and to encourage the Public Sector to get involved in any communication networks that they set up.

- NGOs with different, but related objectives should try to come together in a larger coalition.

- Organizing workshops where different NGOs and Public Sector (both in local and central level) can come together for sharing experiences related to project assessment, project design and preparation, joint proposal writing and resources mobilization, and implementation.

- Activities should be undertaken to ensure a better understanding amongst grassroots organizations of the local frameworks of NGOs and the laws effecting cooperation.

The following select cases of state – third sector collaboration in Turkey have been realized within this milieu.

SELECT CASES OF STATE-THIRD SECTOR COLLABORATION

CASE 1: Community Centers for Social Care and Child Protection

Community Centers under the Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK) are designed to address social problems of selected localities. Rapidly modernizing urban areas are the focal points. Participation of municipalities and CSOs in the establishment and the planning and execution of the activities of the Community Centers is governed by regulations, requiring that they carry out their activities in collaboration with local governments, public authorities, universities and CSOs.

Typically, Community Centers deal with a large number of care and social integration problems. Sensitivity creation and training is an important activity of the Centers. Courses on prenatal and post-natal care, home economics, literacy, gender rights are central activities as well as counseling of different groups at risk. The Centers typically also have special programs for children and youth, they also organize, self-help and solidarity networks in the local communities for the promotion of social integration.

Community Centers are usually formed through a protocol between at least three parties. For example, for the Ankara Şafaktepe Community Center, a three-party protocol between SHÇEK, the Mamak Municipality and Union of Turkish Women has been signed. The same formula is used for the Antalya Şafak Community Center between SHÇEK, the Antalya Rotary Club and Kepez Municipality. In this arrangement, SHÇEK, representing central government, and municipalities, representing local government provide legal legitimacy and

funding; whereas the CSO provides local insight, volunteer personnel and sometimes, also funding.

CASE 2: Urban Housing – The Batıkent Project

The very rapid rate of urbanization in the aftermath of the Second World War (averaging around 7% per annum), besides creating severe inadequacies of infrastructure and services in cities, also led to the emergence of unplanned, irregular and illegal squatter-type of housing (called gecekondu in Turkish, literally meaning built over night). This emergency situation necessitated quick and practical solutions in the form of planned mass housing. One pioneering project was the Batıkent Project (meaning the city in the west) in Ankara. This gigantic project (targeting construction of 55.000 units), had three main components/partners; the municipality responsible for acquisition of the land and its planning; housing cooperatives to mobilize and organize the demand; and private enterprise responsible for actual construction. In this cooperative scheme, the municipality provided legality and legitimacy; the cooperatives mobilized the savings of their members (which naturally proved to be inadequate since the project targeted low-income residents, so "bridge-credits" were obtained from the European Resettlement Fund); and private enterprise, which provided technology and know-how. The project was successfully concluded three administrations later (approximately 15 years, between 1978-1993), creating an integrated urban region with a population of 300.000. The union of cooperatives (Kent Koop), developed into a national structure, initiating several similar mass housing projects in different parts of Turkey. Most of the participating private companies, based on the prestige and experience that came with Batıkent grew into the most prominent developers in the country. The role of private enterprise (construction companies), and civil society (housing cooperatives formed with the

active participation of labour unions, associations, professional bodies) included participation in the decision-making processes of the project. Decisions pertaining to density, type of housing, services on site, credit conditions and management of the site, were taken jointly. Another novel aspect of the project was that housing cooperatives were transformed into management units of neighborhoods once their members were settled in their new homes. Thus, Batıkent became a successful example of public/private enterprise/civil society collaboration, which has been frequently replicated since (Göymen, 1981).

CASE 3: Dikmen Valley Urban Regeneration Project

A good example of deliberative democracy and public-private collaboration has been provided by the Dikmen Valley Urban Regeneration Project, implemented in the capital city of Ankara, in the 1990s. In certain parts of Ankara, a type of dualism manifested itself with irregular, unplanned, lower quality dwellings (gecekondu) encroaching prestigious sections of the city. This situation not only meant lower living standards for "gecekondu" people, but serious shortages of infrastructure (no land available for new schools, hospitals, parks, childcare centers etc.) and degraded environmental standards for all. So, the metropolitan municipality initiated a participatory planning / implementation project under the concept of "project democracy". The then mayor, Mr. Karayalçın described "project democracy" as the "involvement of all those to be affected by a particular project" in all aspects and stages of the project, not only in a requesting/demanding position but actually as a decision-maker (Karayalçın, 1990). The main instrument utilized to facilitate such participation was a "joint decision-making committee", bringing together planners, municipal officials, neighborhood muhtars (elected headmen), representatives of housing cooperatives and other civil society organizations in the area and private construction companies (Bademli, 1990; Karayalçın,

1990; Bademli, 1992; Kuntasal, 1993). The stakeholders in this case (around 10,000 inhabitants living in the gecekondus, in rather primitive conditions) were represented by housing cooperatives formed for this purpose. The main idea of the project was that gecekondu dwellers would consent to the tearing down of their single-storey houses to be replaced by new modern semi high-rise, larger apartments. Until the new buildings were completed, they would move away (with support from the municipality, in cash or in kind) and agree not to seek expropriation compensation. The new buildings, as well as some social and physical infrastructure, would be built by private enterprise, which would recover the cost by selling on the market the additional apartments allocated to them after all former residents of the area were settled. The project was completed in the early 2000s; former residents are settled in their new homes; private enterprise has sold most of their allocated apartments; green areas have been extended considerably, creating a "green corridor" in the heart of Ankara; service standards are social infrastructure have vastly improved, eradicating the social/physical duality in this part of the city. During this process, true to the spirit of deliberative democracy, all stakeholders fully participated in different phases of the project, preparing the agenda, initiating debate, contributing to both plans, construction, landscaping and managing conflicts. The success of the project led to initiation of similar projects and reinforced faith in public-private - CSO collaboration (Göymen, 2002).

CASE 4: Role of Turkish NGOs in Turkey's Integration with the European Union

Civil society organizations have started playing important roles also in international relations. One such case is their contribution to EU – Turkey relations.

In candidate countries, civil society organizations act in two different ways. On the one hand, they transmit the major economic, political and social dynamics of the EU to their countries and create the necessary environment for the transformation of the state and society in line with the values of European integration. On the other hand, they try to influence EU decision-making mechanisms and lobby for the acceleration of the process from the EU side. However, it is important to note that these functions are not valid for the euro-skeptic and anti-EU civil society organizations (Seyrek, 2005:198).

Relations between Turkish civil society and the EU actually have two dimensions. On the one hand, the EU has been supporting the development of civil society organizations in Turkey as an important element of a working democracy. On the other hand, since many Turkish civil society organizations see EU membership as a catalyst for a more democratic and modern country, they have been supporting the integration process of Turkey to the EU. In this sense, there is a reciprocal collaboration in the nature of this relationship (Seyrek, 2005:199).

The integration process and the EU itself have played a significant role in the development of Turkish civil society. Changes in the legal framework, social structure and mentality throughout the integration process have created the necessary environment for such a development. Taking into consideration the recent enlargement process, such a development has become more visible in the case of Turkey (Seyrek, 2005:200).

Civil society organizations have influenced the integration process in two different ways. Firstly, while working in their own specific area, such as human rights, they also use European standards, namely the Copenhagen Political Criteria, as a base for their efforts. Within this context, reforms in Turkey were strongly supported by civil society organizations

campaigning for progress not just for the EU integration process itself but also for socio-political development of Turkey. Secondly, various civil society organizations have started to play a role in putting pressure on the government, in monitoring the integration process in a comprehensive way and in giving technical assistance in some instances.

Turkish civil society has a significant role as independent sources of information on the socio-political situation of the country, implementation of the reforms in compliance with the Copenhagen Political Criteria and other problems dealing with the integration process. The European Commission finds it easier to evaluate a situation and implement relevant policies if it has access to several different perspectives. Consultations can thus be said to contribute to the efficiency of the system and civil society organizations are thus important tools. Sometimes, critical views expressed by these organizations during such consultations create conflicts with the government, accompanied by accusations of 'betrayal of national cause'. Nevertheless, there are more cases of collaboration between the state and third sector related to EU issues than conflict.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusion, which comes out of this study is that although Turkish third sector has made considerable progress on the subservience-autonomy scale in its relations with the state, partnership status, quantitatively and qualitatively has not been reached. It is also an open question for other countries whether full autonomy vis-à-vis the state has been achieved, is possible and, for that matter, desirable. On the other hand, there is no denial that, countries which come from a more liberal political/administrative tradition, have succeeded in

establishing a variety of mutually beneficial partnerships with the state. There are a number of inhibiting factors and impediments for Turkish third sector in achieving an antonomous position and dealing with the state, on equal footing. The main obstacle is the political/administrative culture, which does not seem to nurture a fertile environment for civil society. The centralist, etatist tradition stresses community over free citizens; favors uniformity rather then diversity; exalts the almost 'holy' state and expects conformity and subservience (Heper, 1985; Kalaycıoğlu, 2002a).

This state is suspicious of social groupings, associations and organizations of all kinds that are not under its close surveillance. Admittedly, state dealings with and response to various CSOs are differentiated, depending on their 'trustworthiness' and proven loyalty. In the debate, whether the state in Turkey is strong or in reality weak but suppressive and arbitrary because it is weak, the latter position seems to be more valid (Kalaycıoğlu, 2006). But, whichever the case, a 'passive-exclusive' state resists the entry of certain 'suspicious' groups in the official domain of the state regime, but neither combats nor promotes the rest (Sunar, 1998). To make matters worse, various surveys show that, a major ingredient of healthy civil society, interpersonal and interinstitutional trust, is low in Turkey, constituting a major obstacle to associability, except among those with primordial or traditional ties (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002a). Turkish culture also appears to be characterized by lack of social tolerance for dissent and deviation from standart lifestyles and behavior. This results in CSOs with limited 'look and act alike' type of membership; with a tendency to view the state and the 'other' with suspicion; not exhibiting an eagerness to cooperate with the state or other CSOs, only on the basis of common goals (Esmer, 1999). Thus, it is possible to claim that some basic conditions for the healthy development of the third sector do not fully exist in Turkey. Furthermore, one can add that some societal values and aspects of political culture, as mentioned above, are not

fully supportive. On the other hand, there is no denial that considerable progress has been made since WWII. The transition to a multi-party system and pluralization of polity and society; the emergence of a dynamic local government system, partially counter-balancing the etatist 'center'; speedy economic development and creation of a middle class and an entrepreneurial culture; budding of CSOs; and last but not least, conferral of candidate status of the European Union, thus making Turkey open to this potent impact, have all contributed to the dawning of a more conducive atmosphere for the third sector. Recently, there has been a proliferation of new legislation, generally affecting the third sector positively. Thus, some of the technical hurdles seem to have been eradicated on paper. But, these positive changes in legislation are not fully reflected in practice. There is considerable opposition and 'foot dragging' on the part of the bureaucracy, responsible for implementation. Once again, this shows that institutional culture is slow to change.

The new relatively 'open' and liberal atmosphere in Turkey has given rise to a type of 'legitimacy crisis' of the state. Formerly, there was one type of 'modernity', as expressed and represented by the state, but now in the new 'discursive space', as Keyman and İçduygu (2003) label it, there are alternatives. Turkish third sector organizations feature prominently in this 'discursive space', and propagate their own versions of 'modernity'. They frequently challenge the 'statist' tradition in the process and voice their own democratic /religious / etnonationalist / essentialist identity claims. The point to underline here is the sometimes anti-democratic nature of these claims, expressed by some of these circles, in denial of the basic constitutional tenets, not accepting the 'basic rules of the game'.

On the third sector scene, there are more problems to be solved, and to facilitate better collaboration between state and third sector organizations more hurdles 'to jump over'. First

of all, there seems to be a lack of clarity in the mission, purpose, and priorities of many CSOs. Several of them do not exhibit all the features usually associated with CSOs; and are para-statal or hybrid at best. Most of them, have a weak financial base and can mostly survive thanks to various forms of state, international organizations, EU, and/or Northern NGO support. This is hardly an atmosphere conducive to 'autonomy'. Furthermore, there seems to be more rivalry than cooperation among third sector organizations; therefore, networking is limited. These characteristics do not make Turkish third sector organizations ideal potential partners of the state. On the state side, there is a general reluctance to collaborate with the TS, unless it is absolutely necessary. This is largely due to the institutional culture which has been discussed, but also due to lack of knowledge of opportunities, possibilities, and the synergy that can be created. Another contributing factor is lack of clarity which regards respective responsibilities and accountabilities. All these seem to have been partially surmounted at the local level, as most of the cases presented illustrate. There is now added incentive to form partnerships, through EU funding, which envisages collaboration of various stakeholders, toward common goals.

This study is an attempt to 'photograph' the present-day scene in Turkey, regarding state-third sector interaction. Needless to say, this is a 'moving' picture, set in a dynamic, ever-changing milieu. It is difficult to prophesize in which direction, on the subservience-autonomy scale things will develop, although, for the time being, there is reason for optimism. The future orientation of the third sector in Turkey will much depend on the inculcation of new societal and institutional values supportive of it, through socialization, the educational system, and extensive training.

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