

CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY:  
THE CASE OF A MIGRANT ASSOCIATION

Thesis submitted to the  
Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
Political Science and International Relations

by  
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2006

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September 2006

## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to discuss the relationship between civil society and democracy by examining the case of a migrant association in Istanbul founded by people coming from a town in the Black Sea region. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore how and to what extent the association promotes or undermines broader and deeper political participation, the exercise of civil rights, socio-economic equality and the enjoyment of cultural differences. Although the membership is based on an inherited characteristic, i.e. hometown, the association differs from traditional communities in that it is justified on the basis of sharing common cultural elements rather than coming from a common lineage. The common hometown also functions as an instrument in the generation of resources and power. The prospects for the contribution of the association to democracy are analyzed by looking at the opportunities for the articulation of demands, the economic empowerment of its members, the representation of differences and the cultivation of democratic values among its members. Moreover, potential problems are also considered such as reproduction of inequalities through exclusion of non-members, maintenance of unequal power relations within the association, limitation of individual freedom of its members, promotion of undemocratic values and possibility for rent-seeking activities. The problems are argued to emerge and exacerbate depending on the degree of dependency of its members on the association, and the lack of a issue-based perspective and institutionalized relations within the association.

Keywords: Civil Society, Democracy, Migrant Associations

## KISA ÖZET

Bu tez, Karadeniz Bölgesi'ndeki bir ilçeden İstanbul'a gelen göçmenler tarafından kurulan bir hemşehri derneği örneğini inceleyerek sivil toplum ve demokrasi arasındaki ilişkiyi tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Derneğin daha geniş ve derinlemesine siyasi katılımı, medeni hakların kullanımını, sosyo-ekonomik eşitliği ve kültürel farklılıkların yaşanabilmesini nasıl ve ne ölçüde kolaylaştırdığını veya engellediğini araştırmak için derinlemesine mülakatlar yapılmıştır. Üyelik memlekete, yani doğuştan gelen bir özelliğe, bağlı olduğu halde bu dernek geleneksel topluluklardan farklılık gösterir çünkü derneğin oluşumu ortak bir soydan gelmeye değil ortak kültürel unsurlara dayandırılmaktadır. Ortak bir ilçeden gelmek aynı zamanda kaynak ve güç oluşumunda bir araç olarak işlemektedir. Derneğin taleplerin ve problemlerin dile getirilmesi, üyelerinin ekonomik olarak güçlenmesi, farklılıkların temsil edilmesi ve demokratik değerlerin yetiştirilmesi için sağladığı olanaklar incelenerek demokrasiye olan katkısı değerlendirilmiştir. Ayrıca üye olanlarla olmayanlar ya da üyeler arasındaki eşitsizliğin üremesi, bireysel özgürlüklerin kısıtlanması, demokratik olmayan değerlerin ortaya çıkması ve kişisel çıkarıya dayalı ilişkilerin kurulması gibi potansiyel sorunlar da ele alınmıştır. Bu tip sorunların ortaya çıkması ve şiddetlenmesinin üyelerin derneğe olan bağımlılık derecelerine, ve belirli konulara dayalı perspektiflerin ve kurumsallaşmış ilişkilerin gelişmemiş olmasına bağlı olduğu öne sürülmüştür.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sivil Toplum, Demokrasi, Hemşehri Dernekleri

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to people who contributed to the completion of this thesis. First of all, I am greatly indebted to my thesis supervisor, Prof. Yesim Arat, whose courses taught not only concepts and theories but also the joy of discussion and deliberation. I owe her for generously devoting her time and providing me with invaluable insights and criticisms since the very first days when I decided to work on this subject. I also thank her for her patience and understanding as well as for encouraging me to take the academic path. It was a gift to be her student at a time for important decisions about life.

I would also like to thank Prof. Mine Eder for her valuable contributions through our discussions of the issue and her recommendations on literature. My thanks are also due to the members of my thesis jury, Prof. Binnaz Toprak and Assist. Prof. Selcan Kaynak, and the other professors at the department for their precious comments during the graduate seminars. I sincerely appreciate each day of my eight years at the department of political science and international relations at Bogazici University.

I would like to thank all my interviewees for sharing their experiences with me. Without their participation, this study would not have been possible.

I am thankful to my friends Deniz, Sena and Ayşegül, for not leaving me alone on the dark as well as bright days.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my parents, and my brother (and dearest friend), Emre, for their support throughout my life.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to discuss the relationship between civil society and democracy. In recent years, the concept of civil society gained prominence. Non-governmental organizations enjoyed extensive media coverage, positive public disposition and financial support from corporations. Moreover, they were explicitly encouraged by intergovernmental organizations. Promoting economic development and furthering democracy are the two basic functions of NGOs that can be discerned in discussions on civil society.

The role of social networks in social and economic development was acknowledged by the United Nations. In June 2000, the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly was convened in Geneva to assess the progression of the action plan prepared in the World Social Summit, which was held in Copenhagen in March 1995 upon the call of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) to discuss pressing problems of social development, particularly poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. In the General Assembly, investment in social capital was recognized as a way to social development. The same year, the role of the civil society organizations and the state in poverty reduction was

discussed in an international symposium co-organized by UNESCO and the International Social Science Council.<sup>1</sup>

NGOs were also assigned an important role in economic development by the World Bank. The annual development report 1997 of the World Bank, entitled “The State in a Changing World”, brings under discussion the role and effectiveness of the state. It is argued that an effective state is indispensable for development and that an effective state can be achieved by disengaging the state from activities that exceed its capacities and improving public institutions. It is underlined not only that services such as infrastructure and health are increasingly given by providers other than the state, i.e. private sector and citizen associations, but also that such a reallocation of responsibilities brings about better results. Thus, NGOs are to undertake some of the functions that used to be assumed by the state.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the Social Capital Initiative was founded by the World Bank with the objectives of conducting studies on social capital and developing policies for its promotion.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to their social and economic functions, the significance of NGOs for democracy was also emphasized by intergovernmental organizations. Civil Society Development Program, sponsored by the European Commission, was initiated in Turkey in November 2002 with the purpose of contributing to the improvement and the strengthening of civil organizations on the basis of participatory and pluralist democracy. In September 2005 the Program evolved into an organization itself, which is called Civil Society Development Center and, whose

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<sup>1</sup> Ali Kazancigil and Else Oyen, “Introduction” in *Social Capital and Poverty Reduction: Which Role for the Civil Society Organizations and the State?*, UNESCO (2000).

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1-6.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, *The Initiative on Defining, Monitoring and Measuring Social Capital: Overview and Program Description* (1998) Social Capital Initiative Working Papers via <http://www.worldbank.org/social.development>.

activities include forming a database of NGOs, preparing guidance material for them, providing them with technical assistance and conducting courses for expanding their capacity.<sup>4</sup>

The increasing prominence of civil society was brought about by global economic and political transformations. The crisis of the welfare state beginning from late 1970s and the collapse of the Soviet Union buttressed the arguments in favor of diminishing the role of the state in the economy. The world witnessed the rise of neoliberal economic policies, which entail privatization of state-owned enterprises, reduction of state expenditure and retreat of the state from the provision of social services. Yet the economic growth promised by the supporters of such policies was accompanied by the persisting problem of poverty. Non-governmental organizations were expected to complement, if not substitute for, the state in the provision of services such as education, health and financial aid for the poor, thereby offering a solution to poverty.<sup>5</sup>

The collapse of the Soviet Union had repercussions on democracy as the Eastern European states went through a process of democratization. One of the most important political developments in the last two decades is the prevalence of democratic regimes across the globe. NGOs were attributed an important role not only in the democratization of authoritarian regimes but also in the working of consolidated democracies.<sup>6</sup>

The discussion of the relationship between civil society and democracy goes back to Tocqueville, who pointed to the need for associations for viability of

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<sup>4</sup> [www.stgm.org.tr](http://www.stgm.org.tr).

<sup>5</sup> Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1992), 15-17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

democracy. Parallel to the above mentioned developments, the issue was extensively dealt with in political science literature in recent years. It is commonly accepted that associational life is an indispensable element of democracy.<sup>7</sup> Less is said, however, on the mechanisms through which associations contribute to democracy or the problems that they may bring about.<sup>8</sup> For a better grasp of the link between the civil society and democracy, there is need for case studies examining the particular ways through which associations contribute to or weaken democracy.

In this study, I will discuss the impact of civil society on democracy by looking into the case of a *hemsehri* association in Istanbul.<sup>9</sup> Hemsehri associations are organizations founded by migrants coming from the same village, town or city. They are the institutionalized form of hemsehri networks that were formed as a result of the rural-urban migration that began in Turkey in 1950s. Hemsehri networks were explained as mechanisms for integration, which emerged because of the insufficiency of formal institutions in the solution of problems of migrants. They were conceived as transitional institutions between traditional communities based on primordial ties, and modern institutions.<sup>10</sup> However, as such networks got formalized and took the form of associations, they approached the characteristics of modern institutions.<sup>11</sup>

The analysis of a hemsehri association is meaningful as it will reveal how even an association that seems to be an extension of family ties and traditional relations might have implications for democratic participation. It is important to

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<sup>7</sup> “Within democratic theory a remarkable consensus is emerging around Tocqueville’s view that the virtues and viability of a democracy depend on the robustness of its associational life.” Mark E. Warren, *Democracy and Association* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>8</sup> For an extensive study on the democratic effects of associations see Warren.

<sup>9</sup> *Hemsehri* is a word in Turkish that means one who has the same city of origin as another. I will use this word during my paper as I could not find an exact equivalent.

<sup>10</sup> Ayça Kurdođlu, *Kentleşme Sürecinde Hemsehrilik Dernekleri: İstanbul Örneđi*, Master’s Thesis, Marmara University (1989).

<sup>11</sup> Sema Erder, “Where Do You Hail From: Localism and Networks in Istanbul” in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, ed. Çađlar Keyder (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 161-173.

remark that the association differs from kinship groups in that membership is voluntary and not based on common lineage. Nevertheless, association lacks an issue-oriented perspective and institutionalized relations on an equal basis among members, which are expected from modern civil society organizations. In that respect, the case is also promising in providing insights into the problematic aspects of associations.

I will try to find answers to the following questions through in-depth interviews with the members of the association: How does the association promote and undermine equal participation, which is the basic feature of democracy? What kind of opportunities does it provide for its members? What are the implications of such opportunities for equal political participation of its members? To what extent does the association enable broader and deeper participation? Does the association have any costs, for both its members and the society in general? The definition of democracy in the next chapter will allow me elaborate the research questions further.

The thesis is organized as follows: In chapter two, the link between civil society and democracy will be theoretically discussed. In chapter three, previous studies on hemsehri associations will be reviewed and the method of this study will be described. In chapter four, contributions and problems of the association will be analyzed in the light of the theoretical discussion presented in chapter two. In chapter five, the findings of the study will be summarized.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will present a theoretical discussion of the link between the civil society and democracy. In the first section, I will define the concept of democracy and highlight the essential elements of democratic systems, which will allow me specifying my research question. After a definition of civil society, I will underline the characteristics of associations that have implications for democracy. In the second section, I will discuss the potential contributions of associations to democracy. Finally, I will examine the possible negative effects of associations on democracy.

#### Definition of Basic Concepts

##### Democracy

Democracy can be defined as a system of government in which citizens have equal opportunity to participate in collective discussion and decision-making.<sup>12</sup> Equal

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<sup>12</sup> Warren, 60.

participation is the key term in the definition.<sup>13</sup> Democracy is often associated, or even equated, with voting. Although regular, fair and free elections are the sine qua non of contemporary representative democracies, participation is in no way limited to voting. Attending public meetings, taking part in demonstrations, signing petitions are among the various ways in which citizens are involved more intensely in politics. Democracy requires not only that nobody is excluded from the process of discussion and decision-making but also that everybody is included on equal terms.<sup>14</sup> Political equality is embodied in universal suffrage and the one-person one-vote principle. There is convincing evidence, however, that socio-economic inequalities reflect on inequalities in political power as far as forms of participation other than voting are concerned.<sup>15</sup>

As political participation is central to the definition of democracy, it is worth reflecting on why participation is important. In other words, it would be appropriate to ask what political participation is good for. Amartya Sen has a threefold answer to this question: First, political participation has intrinsic value, that is, the act of participation is significant in itself. Second, political participation has instrumental value, that is, it is through participation that interests and demands are voiced. Third, political participation has constructive value, that is, participation involves deliberation and discussion, thereby contributing to communication and formation of values and ideas.<sup>16</sup>

Basic features of democracy are regular free and fair elections, universal suffrage, government accountability, freedom of expression and association, and

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<sup>13</sup> Here and later in this chapter, participation refers to political participation, i.e. participation in political discussion and decision-making.

<sup>14</sup> Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2002), 24-25.

<sup>15</sup> Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brad, *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1995); Warren, 84.

<sup>16</sup> Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value" *Journal of Democracy* 10, no.3 (1999), 3-17.

protection against arbitrary state action. In other words, political and civil rights are the indispensable elements of democracy; however, they are not sufficient for a political system to be substantively democratic. In addition to the formal rules, political participation of different social groups, and social and economic equality are also necessary. That is to say, no social group should systematically be excluded from political participation, and a certain degree of economic and social wellbeing must be ensured for all.<sup>17</sup>

Respect for differences is an important premise of democracy. Elements of different cultures should be considered to be of equal worth so as to prevent exclusion of certain social groups from political participation because culture is closely linked with the exercise of political and civil rights.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, enjoying one's culture has become a political concern and is regarded to have a value in its own.<sup>19</sup>

A reciprocal relationship exists between political and economic equality: Economic inequality menaces the actualization of political equality; political equality can be used to overcome economic inequality.<sup>20</sup> As Amartya Sen argues, political participation is important as an instrument for expressing interests and demands, which also include economic demands. Remember the common definition of politics as authoritative allocation of resources, which implies that politics is about struggle

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<sup>17</sup> Evelyne Huber, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, John D. Stephens, "The Paradoxes of Contemporary Democracy: Formal, Participatory and Social Dimensions" *Comparative Politics* 29, no.3 (1997), 323-342. Huber, Rueschemeyer and Stephens use the concepts of formal, participatory and social democracy to point out different dimensions of democracy. The features mentioned above are essential for formal democracy; but not sufficient in guaranteeing equality in decision making. Therefore, participation of different social groups is introduced as another requirement to form participatory democracy together with the essential features of formal democracy. If social and economic equality is added to participatory democracy, then we have social democracy.

<sup>18</sup> Warren; Young, *Inclusion*.

<sup>19</sup> Iris Marion Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship" in *Feminism and Politics* ed. Anne Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 401-429.

over resources. Thus, economic equality is relevant to our discussion not only because it is a prerequisite for equal political participation, but also because one of the reasons behind citizens' political participation is to increase their share of resources.

In my study, equal participation is considered to be the essence of democracy. That is to say, my question of the relationship between civil society and democracy is constructed as the following: In which ways does civil society contribute to / impede the broadening and deepening of political participation? Broader participation refers to including all social groups in participation whereas deeper participation refers to intensifying involvement in political discussion and decision-making. What kind of opportunities does civil society provide for deeper political participation? To what extent does civil society foster a more inclusionary and equal political system? How does civil society relate to the exercise of civil rights, socio-economic equality and enjoyment of cultural differences?

### Civil Society

Michael Walzer defines civil society as “the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks – for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology – that fill this space”.<sup>21</sup> The definition is of great value in pointing out that civil society denotes the realm of voluntary collective action organized around common interest or ideology; yet, it lacks an important dimension that would give further insight into the concept of civil society, namely its relation with the state and

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Walzer, “The Civil Society Argument” in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy* ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Verso, 1992), 89-107.

the market. State, market and civil society are three distinct, yet interrelated, core institutions of the contemporary liberal societies. The state possesses legal and administrative authority; the market is the realm of economic relations.<sup>22</sup> Civil society refers to associations that are autonomous from the state yet that mediate between the individual and the state. Civil society also impinges on the relationship between the individual and market institutions.<sup>23</sup>

Having developed in Europe and the United States, the concept of civil society was used mostly with reference to associations in that part of the world. Therefore, individualism, in the sense of primacy of the individual over the community, has usually been taken for granted.<sup>24</sup> It would be pertinent, however, to make an issue of individualism in a discussion of civil society, for individualism is not a universal value and is relatively recent in Europe, dating back only to a few centuries ago. The matter of individual freedom is also particularly important for my study since the extent to which an association promotes or undermines individual freedom has serious implications for democracy. The value of participation derives from the value of the individual. Thus, participation would not make any sense in the absence of individual freedom.

Ernest Gellner brings forward individual freedom as an essential element of civil society, particularly to differentiate modern associations from their counterparts in traditional societies. Thus, communities of not only ancient Europe but also contemporary non-European and non-US world, where the individual is subjugated to the group, are excluded from the scope of civil society. Membership to such

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<sup>22</sup> Warren, 54-59.

<sup>23</sup> Cohen and Arato, ix-x; Larry Diamond, "Towards Democratic Consolidation" *Journal of Democracy* 5, no.3 (1994), 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Edwards, *Civil Society* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004), 29.

communities is based on ascriptive criteria and almost compulsory. Communities pervade all aspects of their members' lives, over which the latter have little, if any, control. Modern associations, in contrast, are voluntary and constituted for segmented and differentiated purposes; hence they leave room for individual freedom.<sup>25</sup>

Gellner's scheme of traditional communities versus modern associations does not exactly correspond to reality. Modern associations are mostly formed for specific purposes; however, they might have unintended consequences, thereby occupying their members' lives much more than they would if they served only the original purpose. Although modern associations are voluntary, the opportunity cost of exit might, in a way, force the individual for membership. Moreover, non-European world is not only composed of traditional communities that individual has no chance but to comply with. Both in Europe and non-Europe, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find perfect examples of modern associations or traditional communities in Gellner's sense. Nevertheless, Gellner's comparison is of great value for my discussion of potential problems of associations since he points out the significance of individual freedom as an essential feature of civil society.

Another variable that has implications for democracy is the nature of power relations within an association. In his work *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville argues that it is horizontal rather than vertical associations that work towards democracy.<sup>26</sup> Vertical relations of power within an association would pose a threat against equal participation. Moreover, vertical associations would be far from

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<sup>25</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (New York: Penguin Press, 1994), 8-10; Ernest Gellner, "The Importance of Being Modular" in *Civil Society, Theory, History Comparison* ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge, UK : Polity Press, 1995); John A. Hall, "In Search of Civil Society" in *Civil Society, Theory, History Comparison* ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge, UK : Polity Press, 1995); Warren, 54-59.

<sup>26</sup> Warren, 29.

promoting values such as tolerance and respect for different opinions, or skills such as deliberation and negotiation, which are conducive to democracy. Obedience to authority, loyalty to the group and hierarchy become more important in such associations. For all these reasons, internal democracy has been an important concern for the civil society theory.<sup>27</sup> Despite all the downsides, the lack of internal democracy within an association might have a positive aspect. Associations that allow internal debate and deliberation might have difficulty in forming a neat and precise agenda. Thus, there is a trade-off between internal democracy and the influence of an association in the public sphere.<sup>28</sup>

### The Link between Democracy and Civil Society

#### Interest Articulation

Democracy has been defined in terms of participation in decision-making. Since direct participation of all individuals in decision-making is impractical in contemporary societies, participation takes place through representation. Elections are the main mechanism through which the link between the government and the governed is established. For stronger democracy, however, the link should be supported by other mechanisms, among which are associations. Associations function as channels for communication between the government and the individuals, thereby strengthening the link between them. Tocqueville argues that the democratic

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<sup>27</sup> Diamond, 12.

<sup>28</sup> Warren, 80.

significance of associations derives from their intermediary role between the state and the society.<sup>29</sup>

It was argued that democracy has instrumental value in enabling individuals to voice their interests and demands.<sup>30</sup> Associations constitute a platform where interests and demands are expressed, and hence where the individuals have the opportunity to make their voices heard. The communication between individuals and the government is important because it enables responsiveness and enhances the legitimacy of governments.<sup>31</sup>

### Deliberation

Besides its instrumental value in the representation of interests, democracy has constructive value in the formation of opinions and values.<sup>32</sup> Associations are places not only where individuals have opportunity to express their demands and influence government policies accordingly, but also where demands are generated and modified through a continuous process of discussion. Thus, associations constitute part of the public sphere in the Habermasian sense, where opinions and values are debated.<sup>33</sup>

The argument that often “association precedes voice”<sup>34</sup> points out the constructive dimension of associations. Obviously, this is not to deny that associations are organized around certain interests or issues. Once in motion,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>30</sup> Sen, 3-6.

<sup>31</sup> Diamond, 5-6.

<sup>32</sup> Sen, 3-6.

<sup>33</sup> Edwards, 54; Warren, 77-79.

<sup>34</sup> Nancy Rosenblum, *Membership and Morals: The Personal Uses of Pluralism in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) quoted in Warren, 80.

however, the original purpose might evolve into new dimensions as a result of the process of discussion going on within the association. Interest articulation does not follow a simple aggregation of cut and dried interests of individuals. Instead, there is a continuous communicative process through which opinions are formed, presented, reformed and re-presented. The appealing thing about deliberation is that its end result would usually be more than just the sum of opinions that come together. Different points of view enhance individuals, who have a lot to learn from each other. Thus, associations provide channels for communication not only between the government and the individuals, but also among individuals.

### Economic Empowerment

An aspect of associations that has been emphasized in recent years is their economic function. The rise of neoliberal economy brought about the retreat of the state from the provision of welfare, increasing the vulnerability of individuals, particularly the disadvantaged. The vacuum was expected to be filled by associations.<sup>35</sup> Empowering individuals economically, associations influence economic distribution, and hence democracy. The interrelation between economic distribution and democratic participation was discussed above. Unequal economic distribution makes equal political participation difficult. And economic distribution is always a significant issue on the political agenda.

On the one hand, there are associations that give services, such as education, health and credits, available for public use. That is to say, services are not exclusive to the members of the association, although depending on the issue, a certain

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<sup>35</sup> Edwards, 29; Warren, 87.

segment of the population might be the target. Thus, the purpose of such associations is to contribute to common welfare rather than to promote the interests of its members. On the other hand, associations might provide their members with resources, whether or not they are explicitly organized for that purpose. The literature on social capital, defined as "ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures"<sup>36</sup>, helps us to understand how associations empower their members economically.<sup>37</sup> Social networks, both formal and informal, give privileged access to resources, which include business information, cheap credits and jobs. For disadvantaged groups like migrants, such resources are significant in enabling upper mobility and facilitating integration.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Alejandro Portes, 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998), 6.

<sup>37</sup> Social capital is a concept used mostly in sociology and economics literature to incorporate social relations into the study of economic action. As the word "capital" implies, the earlier definitions of the concept point its resource dimension. For Pierre Bourdieu, social capital is "actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group". (Nan Lin, *Social Capital: a Theory of Social Structure and Action* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 22.) James Coleman makes a functional definition of social capital, in which he includes all entities that "consist of some aspect of a social structure" and that "facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure". (James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 302.) The most prominent political scientist that used the concept, Robert Putnam, defines social capital as "features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit" and thus makes a change in the level of analysis seeing social capital as a resource of communities rather than individuals. (Portes, *Social*, 18.) Definitions of both Coleman and Putnam are quite broad and are criticized for including both sources, i.e. networks, and the consequences, i.e. social norms, thereby causing a tautological reasoning. (Michael Woolcock, "Social Capital in Theory and Practice: Reducing Poverty by Building Partnerships between States, Markets and Civil Society" in *Social Capital and Poverty Reduction: Which Role for the Civil Society Organizations and the State*, UNESCO (2000), 20-45.) The point in referring to social capital literature in my study is the prospects for benefiting from the good deal of work on the effects of networks on the life chances of people in general, and immigrants' networks on the life chances of immigrants in particular. There is no need for going further into definitional discussions at this point. The above mentioned definition of Alejandro Portes is the most appropriate one for the purposes of my study.

<sup>38</sup> Alejandro Portes, "Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigration: A Conceptual Overview" in *The Economic Sociology of Immigration : Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship* ed. Alejandro Portes (New York : Russell Sage Foundation, 1998), 1-41. Anirudh Krishna, *Active Social Capital: Tracing the Roots of Development and Democracy* (New York : Columbia University Press, 2002); Chris Tilly and Charles Tilly, "Capitalist Work and Labor Markets" in *Handbook of Economic Sociology* ed. Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 283-312; David Knoke and James H. Kuklinski, "Network Analysis: Basic Concepts" in *Markets, Hierarchies and Networks: The Coordination of Social Life* ed.

### Representation of Differences

In recent decades, politics is about not only resources but also identities and symbols. As salient as demands for economic redistribution became demands for recognition of different identities, which culminated in arguments in favor of group-differentiated rights. The idea of universal citizenship was brought under question. Universality means, in this context, not only the extension of citizenship to everyone but also generality and commonness as opposed to particularity and difference. As individuals have equal entitlement to rights as citizens, their particularities are transcended by their citizenship status. The inclusion of all individuals is an important step forward for equality; however, the assumption of homogeneity and the ignorance of differences would result in exclusion or disadvantage of some groups.<sup>39</sup> The discussions on citizenship are relevant for my study as they point at the significance of representation of differences for inclusion and equality, which are the important premises of democracy. Associations contribute to democracy by enabling representation of differences.

Cultural differences might constitute an obstacle against equal political participation if certain cultures are considered to be superior to others. Certain forms of self expression might be accepted as proper whereas others are depreciated, which

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Grahame Thompson (London ; Newbury Park : Sage Publications, 1991), 173-182; Evan Light and Stavros Karageorgis, "The Ethnic Economy" in *Handbook of Economic Sociology* ed. Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 647-671; Mark Granovetter, "The Economic sociology of Firms and Entrepreneurs" in *The Economic Sociology of Immigration : Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship* ed. Alejandro Portes (New York : Russell Sage Foundation, 1998), 128-165; Michael Woolcock, "Social Capital and Economic Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis and Policy Framework" *Theory and Society* 27, no.2 (1998), 151-208; Robert Putnam and Kristin A. Goss, "Introduction" in *Democracies in Flux* ed. Robert Putnam (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1-6.

<sup>39</sup> Young, *Polity*, 401-408.

would result in exclusion of some groups from participation. Thus, exclusion might be implicit through imposition of norms about ways of communication. Democracy is defined in terms of equal political participation; hence, exclusion, be it explicit or implicit, of any individual from participation is unacceptable. Therefore, representation of differences is important for the robustness of democracy.<sup>40</sup>

Representation of differences is significant not only for equal political participation but also in its own right. Justice ceased to be considered as merely a matter of distribution of material goods; issues of identity were deemed to be equally important. Constraints against the self-realization of the individual were thought to undermine justice. Experiencing cultural identity is an integral part of the process of self-realization of the individual. As the emphasis on identity increased, so did the demands for recognition. Recognition and identity are closely linked since the identity of the individual develops in an interaction with others.<sup>41</sup>

### Cultivation of Democratic Values

Associations are, potentially, places for the cultivation of democratic values. Yet it is contestable which individual values are favorable for democracy. Tocqueville emphasizes the significance of civic habits for the robustness of democracy. Through associations, individuals realize their dependence upon others and renounce their narrow self-interests for public concerns, and values of trust and reciprocity flourish, which all have a positive impact on democracy.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Warren, 77-79; Young, *Inclusion*.

<sup>41</sup> Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition" in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25-72; Young, *Justice*.

<sup>42</sup> Warren, 30.

Putnam puts the relationship between associations and democracy in a similar way. In *Making Democracy Work* he compares regional governments of northern and southern Italy. Governments are more effective in the north, where associational activity is higher and hence civic engagement is stronger. Associations cultivate trust and reciprocity, thereby facilitating cooperation and promoting public-interested behavior. Thus, it becomes easier to check the government, the propensity for patronage practices decreases and public accountability is enhanced. Putnam argues, however, that only associations that cut across social cleavages serve such purposes. Segregated, polarized or politicized associations complicate rather than facilitate cooperation.<sup>43</sup> In other words, a distinction is made between “bonding” and “bridging” associations, i.e. associations whose members have common characteristics in terms of ethnicity, religion or social class and associations that “bridge” such differences. Although bonding associations establish strong ties among their members, they are prone to provoke isolation. Bridging associations, in contrast, foster trust and reciprocity in the general population; therefore, they are claimed to be more conducive to democracy.<sup>44</sup>

In the absence of inter-community links, strong intra-community ties might result in distrust and intolerance for others, and unwillingness for dialogue.<sup>45</sup> This is no reason, however, to dismiss associations based on differences altogether. Politics is about conflict between different interests, identities and opinions. Democracy

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<sup>43</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993) quoted in Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards, “The Paradox of Civil Society” *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 3 (1996), 38-52 and Stephen Knack, “Social Capital and the Quality of Government: Evidence from the States” *American Journal of Political Science* 46, no.4 (2002), 772-785.

<sup>44</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000) quoted in Pamela Paxton “Social Capital and Democracy: An Interdependent Relationship” *American Sociological Review* 67, no.2 (2002), 254-277.

<sup>45</sup> Woolcock, *Social Capital and Economic*, 170-174.

requires enabling representation of differences rather than sweeping them under the carpet.<sup>46</sup> Associations based on differences are instrumental in putting different interests into the political agenda. They do not necessarily nourish isolation or animosity. The values fostered by the association and the way the issues are dealt with are more important.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, in our contemporary world, where individuals have multiple identities, membership in multiple associations would facilitate the dialogue between different associations.<sup>48</sup>

Paxton and Inglehart also related trust and reciprocity to democracy albeit in a different sense. Trust is considered to be indispensable for democracy because for people to abide by the rules or give up power, they should be convinced that others would behave in the same manner. Trust and reciprocity also facilitate agreement on the basic rules of the game. Using data from World Values Survey, Inglehart showed that interpersonal trust and support for democracy are correlated.<sup>49</sup> However, correlation does not necessarily imply a causal relation. In another study using data from World Values Survey and Bollen's measure of liberal democracy, it was concluded that system-level democracy has an effect on trust rather than the other way around.<sup>50</sup>

An overemphasis on public interest might blind us to that the *raison d'être* of politics is the existence of different interests, identities and opinions. Given all these differences, an incontestable absolute public interest cannot be said to exist. There is a struggle between conflicting differences and democracy is valuable because it gives

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<sup>46</sup> Foley and Edwards, 38-52.

<sup>47</sup> Edwards, 44.

<sup>48</sup> Diamond, 12; Simone Chambers and Jeffrey Kopstein, "Bad Civil Society" *Political Theory* 29, no. 6 (Dec 2001), 837-865.

<sup>49</sup> Paxton, 88-127; Ronald Inglehart, "Trust, Well-Being and Democracy" in *Democracy and Trust* ed. M. Warren, 88-120 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) quoted in Knack, 772-785.

<sup>50</sup> Paxton, 254-277.

a voice to all. Values such as trust and reciprocity might be beneficial for democracy; however, more important are tolerance and respect for opinions of others.<sup>51</sup>

### Problems of Civil Society for Democracy

#### Exclusion and Inequality

Equal participation is the core of my definition of democracy. The act of participation is valuable in its own right; therefore, nobody should be excluded from political participation. Even more important for the issue of equality, however, is the instrumental value of participation. Since participation enables communication of demands to the government, exclusion of certain individuals would put them in great disadvantage. Moreover, given the role of participation in the formation of values and opinions, exclusion of certain individuals would also mean exclusion of their values and opinions from the public discussion. This would be detriment to not only individuals as they would be considered marginal, but also the population in general as the public discussion is enhanced by different values and opinions. For all these reasons exclusion of any individual from participation or inequality in opportunities for participation among individuals is unacceptable in democratic systems.

Associations have the potential to contribute to democracy in various ways as extensively discussed in the previous section. On the other side of the coin, however, is the possibility that associations might exacerbate the existing inequalities of power. Associations require money, time and organizational skills, which are apparently not equally distributed. Therefore, social and economic inequalities reflect on the

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<sup>51</sup> Diamond, 7; Warren, 35-36.

formation and power of associations. Associations can be said to provide opportunities for the disadvantaged to make their voices heard; however, it is very likely that the advantaged groups will be much successful in forming influential associations. As important as the inequality between associations founded by individuals from different sectors of society is the inequality among members of an association. In associations where vertical relations of power prevail, some members would have little, if any, chance of having a say in decision-making within the association or of having access to the resources of the association. Thus, the problem of inequality between powerful members and weak members might be as severe as the problem of inequality between members and non-members, or between powerful associations and weak associations. Thus, associations might end up to be liabilities rather than assets for democracy as far as the issue of equality is concerned.<sup>52</sup>

### Costs for Members

Associations empower individuals both politically and economically, however, empowerment is usually not without any cost. Membership in an association demands time and energy from the individual. Moreover, the individual might go through a process of imposition of values and norms. Ernest Gellner introduced individual freedom as an essential feature of civil society. He excluded traditional communities from the scope of civil society as they controlled the lives of the individuals<sup>53</sup> but modern associations also convey values and norms to their members. The critical difference is that membership to modern associations is on a

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<sup>52</sup> Edwards, 47; Verba, Schlozman and Brad, 1-28; Warren, 47.

<sup>53</sup> Gellner, *Conditions*, 8-10.

voluntary basis and the individual has the chance to choose among a plurality of associations. Therefore, the issue of value introjection might not appear to be that much of a problem. When the opportunity cost of exit is taken into consideration, however, some associations turn out not to be purely voluntary. Especially when associations provide their members with economic resources, individuals might choose to comply with the norms and values of the associations for the sake of benefits provided. Thus, associations' undertaking of the provision of welfare services has its problems.<sup>54</sup>

#### No Guarantee for Wellbeing for All

In the last few decades those arguments and policies that favor diminishing the role of the state in the economy gained the upper hand. Associations were to overtake the function of providing welfare services. When provision of such services takes the form of charity rather than entitlement to social rights, however, it is very likely that part of the population might not reach them. Let us first consider associations that provide services exclusively for their own members. As discussed above, membership to associations requires resources such as money, time and civic skills, which makes equal inclusion of all extremely difficult. Furthermore, there might be power inequalities among members of the associations, which might reflect on the access to the resources provided by the association. On the other hand, the associations that give services available for public use might be far from sufficient due to lack of resources or organizational problems.

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<sup>54</sup> Warren, 98.

Some argue that provision of services by associations distracts the attention from the gist of the problems. In this view, associations would be more effective if they spent their resources for bringing issues into the political agenda and discussing alternative policies rather than for providing services. In other words, associations should deal with the causes of the disease rather than the symptoms.<sup>55</sup>

### Promotion of Undemocratic Values

One of the contributions of associations to democracy is the cultivation of democratic values. Associations provide opportunities for socialization of their members for sure yet there is no reason why the process of socialization should move in the direction of democracy. As mentioned above, Putnam makes a distinction between “bonding” and “bridging” associations and argues that “bonding” associations would raise distrust and intolerance for others, and unwillingness for compromise whereas “bridging” associations would develop generalized trust and reciprocity, and care for others.<sup>56</sup> This distinction might be misleading in estimating the kind of values that are promoted by an association. “Bonding” associations do not necessarily provoke hatred or isolation. Similarly, “bridging” associations do not guarantee development of tolerance and respect for others. Such values do not automatically follow from close contact of people that have differences.<sup>57</sup>

There is no easy formula for determining that such and such associations promote democratic or undemocratic values. It is much more appropriate to examine

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<sup>55</sup> John Clark, *Democratising Development: The Role of Voluntary Organisations* (Eartscan: London, 1991) quoted in David Keen, “Review Article: Democratising Development: The Role of Voluntary Organisations” *Journal of Souther African Studies* 18, no. 4 (1992), 853-854.

<sup>56</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000) quoted in Paxton, 254-277.

<sup>57</sup> Chambers and Kopstein, 837-865; Edwards, 42-45.

the purposes and the deeds of an association more closely to understand whether it promotes values that are conducive to democracy or not. For the moment, it suffices to remark that associations might well be schools for distrust and intolerance as they might be schools for trust and tolerance.

### Possibility of Rent-Seeking

Tocqueville and Putnam argued that associations are important in educating their members to put public interest over their narrow self-interests. An emphasis on public interest is a feature republican view of civil society.<sup>58</sup> In the republican tradition, politics is a process through which individuals become aware of their dependence on each other and act in accordance with the public interest, and associations that aim promotion of private interests are not morally acceptable.<sup>59</sup>

In my paper, politics is conceptualized as a struggle between different interests, opinions and identities. Associations are significant for the articulation of these differences. There is nothing inherently wrong with individual's pursuit of their self-interests. However, associations provide opportunities for rent-seeking as well. Personalized relations between individuals and the politicians might be formed for the exchange of particularistic favors. Although such relations might be instrumental in answering individual needs and incorporating the disadvantaged segments of the

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<sup>58</sup> Warren, 29-31.

<sup>59</sup> Adam B. Seligman "Animadversions upon Civil Society and Civic Virtue in the Last Decade of the Twentieth Century" in *Civil Society, Theory, History Comparison* ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge, UK : Polity Press, 1995); Jurgen Habermas "Three Normative Models of Democracy" in *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory* ed. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 239-252.

society, they are criticized for causing corruption and appropriation of public resources.<sup>60</sup>

### Overview

In this chapter, democracy is defined in terms of equal political participation; however, civil rights, socio-economic equality and respect for cultural differences are also acknowledged as features of democracy. Thus, the research question is clarified as how civil society influences equal political participation and the above mentioned features. Civil society is defined as the voluntary associational realm autonomous from the state. Individual freedom and horizontal relations of power are underlined as essential elements of civil society, which have implications for democracy.

Associations are argued to have the potential to contribute to democracy by providing opportunities for the articulation of interests and communication between individuals, empowering their members economically, enabling representation of differences and cultivating democratic values. It is stated that associations also pose problems with respect to democracy. Advantaged groups might use associations to multiply their power, which would imply deepening inequalities between social groups. Depending on the nature of relations within the association, inequalities might also occur among members. Associations might also impinge on the individual freedom of their members by obligating abidance with certain norms and values. The problem gets more severe when membership is not voluntary, that is to say members are dependent on the association for survival or the cost of exit is too high to bear.

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<sup>60</sup> Luis Roniger, "Clientelism and Civil Society" in *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society* ed. Luis Roniger and Ayşe Güneş Ayata (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner Publishers, 1994), 1-18.

Other problems are the possibility for promotion of undemocratic values such as intolerance and hierarchy, which also depend on the internal mechanism of the associations, and opportunities for rent-seeking behavior.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

My thesis is based on a case study of a hemsehri association in Istanbul. I will use a pseudonym for the association to preserve anonymity and name it Guzelpinar Culture and Social Solidarity Association. For the same reason, I will use the name of another city in the Black Sea region, Artvin, for the name of the city where Guzelpinar is placed. Guzelpinar stands for the name of the town where the members of the association come from. My aim is to discuss how the association can cultivate or obstruct the development of democratic values and behavior. I hope to generate hypotheses rather than generalize about hemsehri associations at large; therefore, a case study approach will be appropriate. In this chapter, I will present an overview of the previous studies on hemsehri associations and state how my study differs from them. Then, I will describe the method employed in my research.

#### Previous Studies

Various dimensions of the rural-urban migration, which began in Turkey in 1950s, have been studied and such research has provided a starting point for studies on hemsehri networks. The causes and effects of rural- urban migration were widely-

discussed and statistical data were examined to assess the direction and the scope of the event. For our purposes, it suffices to indicate that the urban-rural migration took place as a result of the centrifugal pressures in the rural areas emanating from mechanization in agriculture and the inadequacy of resources in feeding the increasing population.

The squatter houses and informal economic activities became subjects of study in 1970s. Informal hemsehri networks were also touched upon since they constituted important relations both in the formation of squatter houses and the continuation of informal economic activities. At that time, the immigrants were still “new” in the city and formed relatively poor sections of the population. Hemsehri networks were usually unorganized and informal institutions which served as mechanisms for survival.

Explanation of hemsehri networks as mechanisms for integration continued later and helped considerably to understand the issue. Formal institutions had proved insufficient to deal with the problems of the immigrants; therefore, they had found their own ways of coping with life in the city. Kurdoğlu made a study on hemsehri associations in Istanbul and argued that they were buffer institutions and mechanisms for integration. The family, which used to be the main institution for solidarity in the rural areas, was insufficient and its functions were assumed by formal institutions in the city; however, the immigrants could not be part of the formal institutions. Thus, hemsehri networks were formed when both family ties and state institutions proved insufficient for survival in the city.<sup>61</sup> Erder made similar points in her case study on Ümraniye. She studied how hemsehri networks operate in the job and accommodations market, and in the local politics. She argues that the institutions of a

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<sup>61</sup> Kurdoğlu, *Kentleşme*.

modern state could not be founded in Turkey and that Turkey has neither the institutions of a liberal state for market competition nor the institutions of a welfare state. Thus, she explains hemsehri networks as mechanisms for social mobility of immigrants and as institutions that result from the lack of formal institutions.<sup>62</sup>

An important remark has been made about hemsehri networks in late 1990s, when the immigrants of 1950s solved some of their economic problems and brought up their children. The continuation of migration brought about differentiation of immigrants in terms of the time for arrival in the city and stratification among immigrants. Relations of dependency were formed between the new-comers and the old immigrants. Hemsehri networks ceased to be the mechanisms for the poor but included the affluent people as well. Hence, hemsehri associations became organizations that cut across divisions based on social class. The networks continued to exist and interestingly the children of the immigrants, i.e. second-generation immigrants, who did not personally experience the migration process, also became the members of hemsehri associations. In contrast to the expectation that hemsehri networks would vanish with the integration of the immigrants, they got formalized and more organized, and increased in number.<sup>63</sup>

Another important contribution to the earlier studies was the incorporation of cultural explanations. Işık and Pınarcıoğlu argue that economic explanations would prove inadequate and they try to bring economic and cultural explanations together. Hemsehri networks have consequences for the economic life yet one has to keep in mind that they are organized on the basis of locality and thus, there is a cultural side

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<sup>62</sup> Erder, *Where*, 161-173; Sema Erder, "Kenteki Enformel Örgütlemeler, Yeni Eğilimler ve Kent Yoksulları" in *75 Yılda Değişen Kent ve Mimarlık* ed. Yıldız Sey (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), 107-115; Sema Erder, *İstanbul'a Bir Kent Kondu: Ümraniye* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001).

<sup>63</sup> Erder, *Where*, 161-173; Oğuz Işık and M. Melih Pınarcıoğlu, *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk: Gecekondulaşma ve Kent Yoksulları Sultanbeyli Örneği* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002).

of the issue.<sup>64</sup> The names of the organizations also reflect their different aspects as they are called culture and social solidarity associations. Ayata also mentions that hemsehri networks are a matter of not only economic solidarity but also identity.<sup>65</sup> In her case study on local government in Keçiören, Kurtoğlu criticizes the earlier studies for their overemphasis on the economic side of the issue and ignoring the questions of identity.<sup>66</sup>

My study differs from the existing ones in that I conceive hemsehri associations as civil society organizations and focus on their relationship to democracy. It is important to note that, although the hometown constitutes the basis for the foundation of the association in my case, the association is not a family or kinship group. Most members got to know each other after coming to Istanbul during activities in the association. The organization is justified on the basis of sharing certain cultural elements rather than coming from a common lineage. The association is based on a common hometown so as to provide a place for members to enjoy their culture. Organization on the basis of hometown can also be said to have practical reasons. It is relatively easy to organize people coming from a particular town. In this sense, the association is different from traditional communities based on kinship. Coming from a common hometown becomes a tool to get organized and to generate political and economic power.

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<sup>64</sup> Işık and Pınarcıoğlu.

<sup>65</sup> Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "Gecekonduarda Kimlik Sorunu, Dayanışma Örüntüleri ve Hemsehrilik" *Toplum ve Bilim* 51 (1991), 90.

<sup>66</sup> Ayça Kurtoğlu, *Hemsehrilik ve Şehirde Siyaset: Keçiören Örneği* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 55-57.

## Method

Guzelpinar is a town with population above 20000 in the Eastern Black Sea region, where the primary economic activity is agriculture. The reason for choosing an association of people coming from the Black Sea region is that Black Sea region associations constitute the majority of hemsehri associations in Istanbul. According to official statistics by the year 1989, they were 41% of the all hemsehri associations in Istanbul.<sup>67</sup> After choosing the region, I had to make a decision about the size of the association. A town association would be proper since a town is a place small enough to allow face to face interaction between people and large enough to have the resources to engage in different activities. Having these in mind, the reason for choosing GSCA in particular was practical. In order to facilitate convincing the members to participate and gaining their confidence, I chose the association of a town from which I could find acquaintances. They had heard about the association but they were not members. I was introduced to the association by those people and I could cite their name when I was asked how I heard about the association.

My study is based on in-depth interviews with open ended questions. The questions can be grouped into two: questions about the members' relations with the association and questions on their relations with hemsehri. First, I asked them the reasons for participating in the association and the way they participated in order not to lead them. Then I asked more specific questions about the activities of the association. In order to understand how the association contributes to interest articulation, I asked whether the association made any demands from political parties or state institutions and whether it helped them to make voices of members heard. To

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<sup>67</sup> Kurdođlu, *Kentleşme*, 64-70.

throw light on the cultural dimension of the association, I asked whether the preservation of their culture was important and why, which cultural elements should be preserved and whether the association was useful in that issue. To investigate the economic functions of the association, I asked whether the association helped them with integration, finding jobs, solving health problems. I also asked the costs of participating, whether there are any behaviors that cannot be tolerated in the association, whether such associations might bring about any inequalities between those who participate and who do not. The questions on the relations with their hemsehris were how they differentiated them from non-hemsehris and whether they would prefer their hemsehris over non-hemsehris in different occasions. Such questions were asked in order to discern the function of the association in the representation of differences and to find out whether the association might cause isolation from and distrust for non-members.

I made a pilot study in May 2004 with five members. Then, in March 2005 I added new questions and interviewed eight more members and one of the members that I interviewed the previous year. I used the method of snowball sampling. The interviewees were mostly from the directory board of the association and the most active participants, whose narratives would reflect a particular point of view. I tried to overcome this limitation with my questions on the possible negative effects of the association and my interviews with two people who did not regularly attend the association. As a matter of fact, interviewing the active participants has its own merits as they are the ones who have the most experience with the association.

In order to keep anonymity, I gave pseudonyms to the interviewees, five of which were women and eight of which were men. All interviewees were high school and university graduates, either middle-class professionals or the owner of their

businesses. Five interviewees were in their twenties, five in their thirties, two in their forties and the honorary president of the association was sixty-six years old. I also read the six issues of the Journal published by the association that I could find in the association building.

The interviews were conducted in the association tete-a-tete with the interviewees except the one in the presence of some other members. The interviews were taped and lasted around 40 minutes with the exception of one with 15 minutes and another with around an hour and a half. The one who talked for 15 minutes was a bit suspicious about the project and unwilling to talk. Apart from that interviewee, I was very much welcomed in the association. To overcome the problem of suspicion, I took them a letter from my advisor telling that I was writing my thesis on hemsehri associations and democratic participation.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CASE

In this chapter, I will analyze Guzelpinar Culture and Social Solidarity Association (GSCA). First, I will give information about the membership profile, the purposes and the members' perception of the association. Secondly, I will examine the ways in, and the extent to which the association promotes or undermines democracy. I will look at how democratic and undemocratic effects of associations, which were theoretically discussed in the second chapter, operate in this particular case.

GSCA was founded in Istanbul in 1989 by immigrants from Guzelpinar. Members include recent immigrants as well as those who came in 1950s. The association is financed by the affluent people of the town and employs two people. There are no decent records yet the director of the association told that they had over 3000 members. During my visits to the association, I observed that there were approximately as many women members as men yet only two out of ten members of the directory board were women. The families of members usually participated in the activities of the association hence there were people from all ages. They did not have exact information about the education level and the professions of the members; however, the people that I met at the association were mostly high school or university graduates. Men were either middle class professionals or had their own

small/middle scale business. Middle-aged women were housewives yet younger women had jobs.

The association has a women's branch and a youth branch and everybody seem to find something for her/himself. Women attend courses of handcraft, children take supplementary lessons for school and young people come for folk dance classes. All members come together for activities such as dinner parties and picnics or for the celebration of national and religious holidays as well as special days such as the Father's Day, the Mother's Day, the New Years Eve or the independence of the city that they came from.

During my first round of interviews in May 2004, one of the founding members of GSCA Faruk, a 66 year-old building contractor, was the president for the last ten years. The following year, he left the presidency for reasons of health and became the honorary president. Apparently one of the most influential people in GCSA, he explained the purposes for the formation of GCSA in the following words:

“Serving our hemşehris. Of course, this has various purposes: Keeping alive our culture. Supporting our hemşehris that have problems. Sharing their sorrows as well as happiness. Offering a hope for them, particularly our students, in education, health and whatever that is necessary for human life. Constituting the first place that our hemşehris would have recourse to whenever they have a problem and helping them with solving their problems, materially or psychologically, in any matter. Making our society one in which everyone likes and takes care of each other. If all regions did what we envision for our own region, the idea of people taking care of themselves would flourish. What the people want would be more important than what is wanted from the top. Over political parties, with our own independent thought rather than that of a political party, keeping the same distance towards all political parties. An understanding of associationalism with the purpose of a better Turkey, with a feeling of responsibility towards our own region as we do not have the means to address the whole country.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Hemşehrilerimize hizmet etmek. Tabi, bu çok amaçlı. Kültürümüzü yaşatmak. Sorunu olan hemşehrilerimize acılarını mutluluklarını paylaşmak. Bilhassa okuyan gençlerimize eğitimde, sağlıkta, insan hayatı için ihtiyaç duyduğu her konuda bir

The paragraph gives a pretty good idea about the way GSCA is viewed and presented by its members. As its name also implies, GSCA serves two basic functions: the preservation of the culture of the region and the generation of social solidarity, in other words the formation of a self-help mechanism, among immigrants from the region. The activities of the association target a particular region yet are justified on the basis that they would be beneficial for the country as a whole. If all the regions assume the responsibility for the solution of their own problems, the argument goes, Turkey will become a better place to live. It is asserted that the demands of the people are significant; however, the Association is denied to have any political agenda or affiliation with any political party. The emphasis of the president on social and cultural aspects, and political neutrality of the Association is discerned in the interviews with other members as well.

The motivation for membership in GSCA revolves around two themes: a longing for the culture of the region and a feeling of responsibility for the hometown. The association is seen by its members as an opportunity to make friendships, to live and keep alive their culture, and hence to “breathe the air of the Black Sea region”. The other reason for participation appears to be the hope for doing something for the hometown or helping the recent incomers to Istanbul. Thus, the social and cultural aspects of the association are in the forefront as far as the reason for membership is

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ümit olmak. Her hemşehrimizi hangi sıkıntısı olursa olsun o sıkıntıda ilk akla gelebilecek bir kurum olmak ve dolayısıyla o sorununu çözmeye ona yardımcı olmak. Bu konuda, maddi manevi, hangi şeyde olursa olsun. Toplumumuzu birbirini seven bir toplum oluşma yanında, halkın kendine sahip çıkma olayı, halkın kendine sahip çıkma olayında da tabi bu biz yöremiz için düşündüğümüz düşünceleri, her yöre aynı şekilde düşünürse her zaman Türkiye’de halkın kendine sahip çıkma gibi bir fikrin ortaya çıkmasını, her konuda yukarıdan ne istediği değil, halkın ne istediği fikrinin ön plana çıkmasını. Partilerüstü, belirli bir siyasi parti kılıfını giydirerek değil özgür düşüncemizle, bütün siyasi partilere aynı mesafede yakınlık duyarak. Tabi daha güzel bir Türkiye için, daha güzel, daha mutlu bir yaşam için bu konuda tabi bölgemizde bütün Türkiye’ye hitap edemeyeceğimize göre, bölgemizde bir sorumluluk duygusu içerisinde bir dernekçilik.”

concerned. The interviewees underlined that they did not expect any personal economic gains from membership although some admitted that they had certain benefits, which will be examined in more detail in the next sections.

The members are particularly sensitive about the nonpolitical character of GSCA. The issue popped up during interviews with different people, who made much the same points in very similar words. Upon the question whether GSCA had made any demands from a political party or the state, Mehmet, 25 years old, working for a foreign trade company, said:

“As an association, we are outside politics. We should even be over politics, in my opinion, because we do not have a political purpose. We should think about how we can provide the society with one more unit of utility. At least, this is how it should be and the Association has never deviated from this principle.”<sup>69</sup>

Thus, GCSA is thought to be nonpolitical in the sense that it does not have any political purposes. The statement that the purposes of the association were not political but to provide the society with one more unit of utility assumes as if there were an absolute truth about what is good for society and about what is the proper way to be useful for society. After all, one of the reasons why politics exists is that different people give different answers to these very questions. Moreover, as it will be described in more detail in the next section, the association does not avoid political avenues such as links with politicians, as a way to express their demands and the problems of the region.

In the journal of GCSA it is announced that the material sent for publication should be far from politics and ideologies. Nevertheless, it is not hard to find

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<sup>69</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Dernek olarak biz siyasetin dışındayız. Hatta üstünde olmalıyız, öyle düşünüyorum çünkü siyasi bir hedefimiz yok. Biz topluma bir birim fayda nasıl sağlayabiliriz bunu düşünmeliyiz. En azından olması gereken bu. Bugüne kadar da dernek hiç bundan sapmadı.”

discussion of political issues in the journal. There are quite often criticisms about the agricultural policy of the governments. An emphasis on patriotism also can be found in some articles. Ali, 39 year-old journalist, who was also in the directory board of GCSA, said:

“We do not talk about political and religious matters in this association. Everyone has a political view, a religious perspective but it is his/her own issue. When they come to GCSA, they should leave their radical attitudes at the door. Otherwise, they cannot come in.”<sup>70</sup>

Ali’s last two sentences give a clue about his definition of political. It reveals that the association is not open to “radical” political opinions.

Upon the question whether the Association contributed to the expression of the problems of its members, Veli, 37 years old, operating his own shop, said:

“GCSA has 3500 members. An association with 3500 members is not an association that can be underestimated but we do not make political use of that. We are now eleven people in the directory board and we do not know the identity of each other, I mean who is supporting which party. There is no such thing in the association.”<sup>71</sup>

The expression of political identity or discussion of political issues in GCSA was considered to be an unacceptable behavior. 23 year-old male lawyer said:

“We say: You might have different dispositions or opinions, you might be coming from a strong political tradition but the moment you enter GCSA, your political identity remains outside. We inculcate our members that the moment they stepped in, they should act considering how they could work more for Guzelpinar ... Here, when we unite under this roof, the only important thing is Guzelpinar, the problems of Guzelpinar, the future of Guzelpinar, our hemşehris from Guzelpinar.”<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Biz bu dernek içinde siyasi konuşmaları hiç katmayız, dini konuşmaları hiç katmayız. Herkesin bir siyasi görüşü vardır, dine bir bakış açısı vardır ama bu o kişilerle kısıtlıdır. Derneğe geldikleri zaman radikal tavırlarını kapının dışında bırakmak zorundadırlar. Yoksa içeri giremezler.”

<sup>71</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Derneğin 3500 üyesi var. 3500 üyeli bir dernek hafife alınacak bir dernek değildir ama biz de bunu tabi politik olarak da kullanmıyoruz. Şu anda yönetimde olan insanlar, mesela on bir kişiyiz, kimliklerini hiç bilmeyiz, hangi partiyi tutuyorlar. Dernekte öyle bir şey yok.”

<sup>72</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Diyoruz ki siz çok farklı mizaçta olabilirsiniz, çok siyasi geleneğiniz olabilir, farklı düşünce ve tavırlarınız olabilir ama bu dernek kapısından içeri adımınızı attığınız anda siyasi kimliğiniz kapının dışında kalır. Artık adımınızı

Erbil, 37 year-old executive in advertisement sector, who was in the directory board of GCSA, said:

“Our principle is: politics remains outside, everyone is the same inside. Because there might be someone from Güzelpınar in party x or any other party. We are of equal distance to all. If you want to do this job, if you want to be long-lasting, you should have such mentality.”<sup>73</sup>

Thus, open propaganda of any political party in the association is not welcomed and an equal distance with political parties is tried to be kept.

The idea is dominant that GCSA is and should be nonpolitical in its purposes and that members should be apolitical within GCSA; however, upon a closer examination, political aspects emerge both in the narratives of the members and the activities of GCSA. Moreover, I argue that an association might have political effects even if it is not organized particularly for political purposes. Politics is not limited to formal institutions but takes place in the seemingly nonpolitical institutions, which have an impact on the distribution of power and resources.<sup>74</sup>

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attığınız andan itibaren ben Güzelpınar için daha nasıl çalışabilirimi düşünerek hareket etmeniz lazım geldiğini üyelerimize, üye olmak isteyen hemşehrilerimize telkinde bulunuyoruz. ... Burada, bu çatı altında birleştiğimizde artık önemli olan, bir numara olan sadece Güzelpınar’dır, Güzelpınar’ın sorunlarıdır, Güzelpınar’ın geleceğidir, Güzelpınarlı hemşehrilerimizdir.”

<sup>73</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Bizim düşüncemiz: siyaset kapıda kalır, içeride herkes aynıdır. Çünkü x partide de bir Güzelpınarlı olabilir, herhangi başka bir partide de olabilir. Hepsine eşit mesafedeyiz. Bu işi yapmak istiyorsanız, uzun soluklu olması gerekiyorsa bu mantıkta ve düşüncede olmak zorundasınız.”

<sup>74</sup> Diane Singerman, “Where Has All the Power Gone? Women and Politics in Popular Quarters of Cairo” in *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East* ed. Fatma Müge Göçek and Shiva Balaghi, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 174-201.

## Contributions

### Interest Articulation

In chapter two, it was argued that one of the democratic functions of the associations is enabling the communication between the individuals and the state. Associations provide their members with the opportunity to voice their interests and demands.<sup>75</sup>

GCSA is not affiliated with a particular political party; however, this does not mean the absence of links with politicians. The honorary president of GCSA said that there are people from the region who have been successful in politics. When I asked whether GCSA helped them in their success, he said:

“No, these are instances of individual success. We are not yet in such collaboration in Istanbul for collective success. However, of course, we are trying support our hemşehris that are candidates. Usually, we are rivals to and compete with ourselves. From now on, we are going to pay more attention to this issue as much as possible.”<sup>76</sup>

The politicians that come from the region frequently show up in the journal of GCSA.

The photo of a former prime minister, Mesut Yılmaz, was on the cover of the third issue of the journal of GCSA with a title “Honest, Successful, Hardworking, Someone among us, The Country Expects Much from You”.<sup>77</sup> Later in March 1999 in the ninth issue, there was a detailed list of the services given in the region during the government of Mesut Yılmaz and an appreciation note. In October 2002, just before the parliamentary elections of November 2002, there was an interview with

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<sup>75</sup> Warren, 39.

<sup>76</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Hayır, o ferdi başarılarıdır. Bu konuda biz henüz İstanbul’da bir kolektif başarı için böyle bir dayanışma içinde değiliz. Ancak tabii şeylerde aday olan hemşehrerimizin yanında olmaya çalışıyoruz ama çoğu zaman bizi hep kendi kendimize rakip yaparak, kendi kendimizle yarışır oluyoruz. Mümkün olduğu kadar bundan sonra bu işleri, biraz daha yanyana olmaya özen göstereceğiz.”

<sup>77</sup> *Guzelpinar Journal*, unknown date. “Dürüst, Başarılı, Çalışkan, İkimizden Biri Mesut Yılmaz, Memleket Senden Çok Şey Bekliyor”.

the president of Artvin Foundation. It was announced that he was a candidate of True Path Party, a center right party, and the journal wished him success in the elections. In March 2004, before the municipality elections, candidates that come from the region were introduced under the title “our candidates”. Among them were candidates of Motherland Party, a center right party, Republican People’s Party, a center left party, and Nationalist Action Party, an extreme right party, for mayorship of various districts of Istanbul. In August 2004, a congratulatory message was published in the journal for the two candidates of the Motherland Party, who managed to attain the office despite the “collapse of their party”<sup>78</sup> and the “wind of the government party”<sup>79</sup>. The political success of the people that come from the region is considered to be important irrespective of their political parties.

The president of GCSA told that GCSA was neutral towards all political parties, which is insistently repeated in the journal, even in the interviews with politicians. GCSA is indeed open to people from different political parties as can be seen in the presentation of candidates from different political parties. Moreover, in the Journal there were articles written by or news on people from diverse political backgrounds, which can be understood from their life stories.

They have links with state officials and politicians from different political parties. The journal of GCSA reports that the directory board made visits to municipality presidents, the governors of Guzelpinar and Istanbul. GCSA also participated in a meeting organized between the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the associations of the Black Sea region in order to discuss the problems of the region. Members of the Parliament, municipality presidents,

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<sup>78</sup> *Guzelpinar Journal*, August 2004. “kendi partilerinin dibe vurması”

<sup>79</sup> “iktidar partisinin rüzgarı”

governors and senior state officials are also invited to the organizations of GCSA.

Ali, 39 year old journalist, who was in the directory board, said:

“There were people that I could not reach. I had hemşehris that held good positions in politics or in business. I was not acquainted with them although I am working in press and I have to know people. GCSA gave me the chance to meet such people.”<sup>80</sup>

Thus, GCSA can be said to constitute a channel of communication between individuals and the government.

The interviewees were asked whether they thought that GCSA helped them to voice their problems. The honorary president said:

“We cannot appreciate that. We do our best to express our problems in a continuous dialogue with rulers but we do not know what they understand.”<sup>81</sup>

39 year-old male journalist, who was in the directory board, said:

“Yes, I do. That is very relevant to the subject of your thesis: democracy and contribution of GCSA to democracy. Occasionally, there are cases that our hemşehris cannot express individually the difficulties that they face. At that point, their complaints are communicated to the people or institutions concerned.”<sup>82</sup>

Hence, GCSA is seen as an opportunity for the expression of problems. When the specific examples for the problems are asked, concerns about the economy of the region are expressed.

The honorary president complains that the labor power in the region cannot be used in an efficient way. The agricultural products of the region are no longer

<sup>80</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Benim ulaşamadığım insanlar vardı. Hemşehrim olup da çok güzel yerlerde iş anlamında siyaset anlamında çok güzel yerlerde olan insanlar vardı, bunları tanımıyordum mesela ben. Halbuki basın içinde olmama rağmen, tanımam gerektiğine rağmen bir şekilde tanıyamamışım ama bu dernek bunlarla beni tanıştırdı.”

<sup>81</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Bunu biz takdir edemeyiz ama biz bu konuda bütün bizim yöneticilerle çok iyi diyalog içerisinde, her fırsatta sorunlarımızı dile getirmeye çalışıyoruz ama yukarıdakiler ne anlıyor onu bilemeyiz.”

<sup>82</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Düşünüyorum. İşte orada sizin tezinizin konusu geliyor. Demokrasi, Türkiye'deki demokrasiye katkısı. Hemşehrilerimiz zorluklarını veya karşılaştıkları zorlukları, bireysel olarak dile getiremedikleri dönemler oluyor. İşte o dönemde o pozisyonlarda derneğe gelen şikayetler, tam onu söyleyecek kişiye veya kuruma iletilebiliyor.”

profitable and investments in the region are insufficient. He argues that the sacrifices made for the development of western Turkey should also be done for the Eastern Black Sea region and that making good use of the labor power in the region would be beneficial not only for the region but also Turkey as a whole. 32 year-old female chemist, who was in the directory board of GCSA, referred to the problems of agricultural production in the region. This issue is also frequently discussed in the Journal of GCSA. In a symposium organized during the Black Sea Region festival in Guzelpinar, problems of health, economy and education were discussed. The problems of the region seem to be the most salient issue on the agenda of the Association to be communicated to the government.

There is the conviction that it would be more influential to make demands as an association than as individuals. 25 year-old Mehmet, who worked for a foreign trade company, said:

“You can reach certain places conveniently because you are under the roof of an association. You are numerous; therefore, you have influence. You can easily do a lot of things that would otherwise have been impossible to do, you can reach places that you would not have been able to reach as an individual.”<sup>83</sup>

23 year-old male lawyer said:

“I have always said that: What keeps someone standing is the multiplicity of places or people that one can count on. ... We feel a power behind us by means of this Association. ... For example, say I had a problem concerned with consumer rights. I can have recourse by my own efforts or GCSA can make an institutional complaint. There is a great difference between the two. Unfortunately, this is the case. Unfortunately, this is the case in Turkey. I am saying “unfortunately” because there is a difference between how you are received as an individual and how you are received again as an individual but considering the power behind you. Because in Turkey, they look at

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<sup>83</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Bazı yerlere rahat ulaşabilirsiniz çünkü dernek çatısı altındasınız kalabalıksınız, dolayısıyla nüfuzunuz vardır. Bireysel olarak gerçekleştiremeyeceğiniz birçok şeyi, ulaşamayacağımız birçok yere rahatlıkla kolaylıkla ulaşabilirsiniz.”

how much power one has. If you are powerful, you have your job done. If you are not, you are defeated. It should not be this way but such is life. As you know, big fish eat the small fish. If you are living in this world, especially in a big metropolis like Istanbul, you have to be powerful.”<sup>84</sup>

Thus, there is a process of political empowerment going on through the links provided by GCSA. The opportunity to reach politicians and the government officials makes the association an avenue for voicing demands and problems, thereby participating in the decision-making process.

### Representation of Differences

In chapter two, it was argued that the representation of differences is important for both democracy and individual self-realization. The depreciation of certain cultural elements might pose a threat against equal political participation since that would mean valuing certain forms of self-expression over others. Moreover, lack of freedom to enjoy one’s culture is regarded as a crucial deprivation for the individual.<sup>85</sup> Associations might contribute to democracy by constituting the channels for representation of differences.

It can be inferred from its name that the Guzelpinar Culture and Social Solidarity Association is founded on a difference, namely that of hometown or the

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<sup>84</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Bunu her zaman söylemişimdir. Bir insanı ayakta tutan şey her zaman güvendiği yerlerin, güvendiği noktaların, güvendiği insanların fazla olmasıdır. ... Bu dernek vasıtasıyla arkamızda bir güç hissediyoruz. ... Benim diyelim ki bir konuda, örneğin tüketici haklarıyla alakalı başıma bir olay geldi. Ben bunu kendim çabalayıp bir yerlere müracaat etmem var bir de dernek tarafından kurumsal bir şikayet yapmak var. İkisi arasında muazzam bir fark var. Bu ne yazık ki Türkiye’de böyle. Bu ne yazık ki Türkiye’de böyle. Ne yazık ki diyorum çünkü bir birey olarak sizin karşılanmanız var, bir de arkanızdaki güce bakarak yine birey olarak karşılanmanız var. İkisi arasında çok büyük fark var, takdir edersiniz çünkü herkesin Türkiye’de ne kadar gücün var diye bir bakarlar. Güçlüysen işini yaptırırın, güçsüzsün ezilirsin. Bu böyle olmaması lazım ama hayatın kuralı da bu. Siz de bilirsiniz, her zaman söylerim, büyük balık küçük balığı yutar her zaman. İşte bu dünyada yaşıyorsanız, özellikle İstanbul gibi büyük bir metropolde yaşıyorsanız, güçlü olmanız gerekiyor.”

<sup>85</sup> Young, *Justice*; Young, *Polity*, 401-408.

place where one's family originates from. What the difference of hometown entails and where its boundaries lie are questions, however, that require and deserve more attention. When the interviewees were asked whether they thought they had differences from the non-Guzelpinar population in Istanbul, the answers were either negative or the differences were restricted to behavioral characteristics such as hospitality and friendliness. The mother tongue of the members is Turkish, which they speak with a slightly different accent and the members define themselves as Turkish. Recep, 23 year-old lawyer, said:

“The points of view might be different. I always argue that it is more important where you are looking at an event from, than what you are looking at. When something takes place I might interpret it different than you do. In my opinion, this is and should be the difference between someone coming from Ardahan and Artvin. Otherwise, we are definitely not individuals that would commit racism, or act on the basis of race. If we did, this would mean denying ourselves. We act on the principle that everyone living within the boundaries of the Republic of Turkey, including the Anatolia and the Thrace, is a Turkish citizen.”<sup>86</sup>

It is emphasized that GCSA has nothing to do with ethnic nationalism, which implies the claim of a national identity other than the Turkish one. Among the rules of the forum on the web site of GCSA is the prohibition of any argument against the indivisible integrity of the country. Thus, neither do the members differentiate themselves ethnically from the Turkish population, nor does GCSA have an agenda on group-differentiated rights.

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<sup>86</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Bakış açıları da birbirinden farklıdır bir olaya. Ben her zaman söylerim. bir olaya neye baktığın değil nereden baktığın önemlidir. Bir olay gerçekleşmiştir, siz farklı yorumlarsınız, ben farklı yorumlarım. Ardahanlı'yla Artvinli arasında benim gözümde fark budur, bu olmalıdır. Yoksa biz hiçbir zaman bir ırk temelinde, ırkçılık yapacak insanlar değiliz. Yaparsak kendimizi reddetmiş oluruz. Biz Türkiye coğrafyasında, Anadolu'da, Trakya da dahil, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti devleti sınırları içinde yaşayan herkes Türk vatandaşdır ilkesiyle hareket ediyoruz.”

Although the members did not think they had much difference from the non-Guzelpinar population, most admitted that they felt themselves more comfortable in GCSA. İlker, 26 year old graphic artist, answered the related question:

“Yes, yes. As I said, even speaking with regional accent appeals to me. Here, I can do that; I have the chance to be more natural. Outside there is a society, you have a status and you have to adjust yourself to the conditions, you might squeeze yourself into certain molds. The life outside is like a theater. Here it is more natural.”<sup>87</sup>

Mehmet, 25 years old, said:

“Absolutely. I feel comfortable because we have, our region has, certain peculiar words and patterns of behavior, which you cannot comfortably display in other places. Here, you are more relaxed. In that way, I can say to feel more comfortable.”<sup>88</sup>

The reason behind such feelings is the existence of common points. The sharing of a common culture was one of the elements that members used to define the word

“hemşehri”. Fatma, 27 year old university student, said:

“Hemşehri means, first of all, people that think like me. ... That think like me, that laugh at the same things as me, that listen to the same music, that eat same dishes, that would not say ‘boo’ when I say ‘I like black cabbage.’ - I like chatting with old women. There are witch stories in our region, about which my sister wrote a paper. – That do not say ‘I do not believe in them.’ I do not believe, either yet I like listening to them. I think the superstitious things enrich our lives. I feel like the Black Sea culture would not exist without them. They are part of the culture. People that believe in those stories or listen to them like me, people that make me feel like me.”<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Evet, evet. Dediğim gibi yöresel şiveyle bile konuşmak hoşuma gidiyor mesela. Burada bunu yapabiliyorum. Daha doğal olma şansımız var. Dışarıda çünkü bir toplum var, bir statünüz var, yaşama ayak uydurmak gerekiyor, belirli kalıplara girebiliyorsunuz. Dışarıdaki hayat sanki bir tiyatro gibi. Burada daha doğal.”

<sup>88</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Mutlaka. Rahat hissediyorum çünkü bizim yöreye has bize ait bazı konuşmalar vardır, davranış şekilleri vardır. Diğer ortamlarda çok fazla rahat sergileyemiyorsun. burada daha relaks oluyorsun. O bakımdan diyebilirim daha rahat hissettiğimi.”

<sup>89</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Hemşehri ilk başta benim gibi düşünen insanlar demek. ... Benim gibi düşünen, benimle aynı şeylere gülen, benimle aynı müziği dinleyen, aynı yemeği yiyen, ben karlahanayı severim dediğimde böö yapmayan. Eski kadınlarla oturup konuşmayı çok severim. Bizim orada cadı hikayeleri vardır, benim ablam onun üzerine de çalışmıştı, ödev hazırlamıştı. Ay ben cadıya inanmam deyip çıkmayan. Ben de inanmam ama dinlerim, hoşuma gider, birtakım batıl şeylerin varlığı hayatı zenginleştiriyor bence, ben öyle düşünüyorum. Ne bileyim,

The similarities among people, which bring them together, are also characteristics that differentiate them from others. GCSA is seen as a place for socialization where the members have the opportunity to meet people that are like themselves, and hence, where they can enjoy their differences.

One of the purposes of GCSA is the preservation of the culture of the region. All the interviewees except Erbil strongly agreed that the preservation of the culture of the region is important. Although Erbil had not openly rejected my proposal for an interview, he seemed to be unwillingness to participate. He was late for the appointment, spoke for about fifteen minutes and answered most questions negatively. That is probably the reason why he answered “No” in the first place to my question on the preservation of the culture of the region. He said:

“In fact it is not important but we have ... It is not important but preserving the culture of Guzelpınar is something like preserving the culture of Turkey.”<sup>90</sup>

His words are interesting in that they indicate the basis on which the efforts for the preservation of the culture of Guzelpınar are justified. The cultural elements of the Black Sea region are considered to be important due to their place in the Turkish culture.

Among the elements of culture that are cited are food, music and dance as well as values such as attachment to the family. In the Journal of GCSA, there are reports on crafts that are on the edge of extinction and traditions like “kadıbağı adeti”, which is a ceremony performed during weddings. The sensitivity about Turkish

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onlar olmasa Karadeniz kültürü hiç olmayacaktı gibi gelir. Kültür onlarla var. Benim gibi onlara inanan ya da inananları dinleyenler, beni benim gibi hissettiren insanlar.”

<sup>90</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Aslında önemli değil ama birtakım şeyimiz vardır. Önemli değildir ama Guzelpınar’ın kültürünü korumak Türkiye’nin kültürünü korumak gibi bir şeydir aslında.”

identity, which was also referred to above in my discussion on differences, continued while we were talking about culture. Mehmet, 25 years old, said:

“In the end, we are Turkish and we are living in the Republic of Turkey. We have linguistic and cultural unity. However, there are minor regional details, which, I think, add color to our Turkish culture.”<sup>91</sup>

Recep, 23 year old lawyer, said:

“Now, why is it important to preserve the culture of our hometown? First of all, let’s call that the preservation of Turkish culture rather than that of our hometown only. If we talk about the preservation of Turkish culture, Turkish traditions, we can look at the issue from a wider and more positive perspective. ... While I was at the university, I was faced with the following question of my friends: Why are you making discrimination? Why Artvin? Because we are from Artvin, we are from Guzelpinar. In the end, we are Turkish. We do not claim difference of origin like others. We are from Guzelpinar; therefore, we are trying to keep alive the customs of Guzelpinar. ... This is the essence. Those from Ardeşen, Trabzon, Kars and etc, they are trying to keep alive their own customs. This is a mosaic.”<sup>92</sup>

The interviewees were asked whether they faced injustice or discrimination because of their hometown or accent. The answers were negative with the exception of Necati, 41 year-old civil servant, and Faruk, the honorary president of GCSA.

Necati told that he was insulted by the jokes about the Black Sea Region people:

“There is a kernel of truth in every joke. Fifty percent of the time, this is the case. For example, it is popularly said, your brain works until

<sup>91</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Nihayetinde Türküz, TC de yaşıyoruz. Dil birliğimiz var, kültür birliğimiz var ama arada bölgesel olarak küçük küçük ayrıntılar var onlar da bizim Türk kültürüne renklilik getiriyor diye düşünüyorum.”

<sup>92</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Şimdi neden önemlidir memleketimizin kültürünü korumak? Bir kere buna sadece memleketi değil de Türk kültürünü korumaktan bahsedelim. Türk kültürünü korumak, Türk gelenek göreneklerini korumak, Türk kültürü gelenek görenek ananelerini korumaktan işe başlarsak çok daha geniş açıdan çok daha olumlu açıdan bakabiliriz olaya. ... Ben arkadaşlarım üniversitede okurken, şu soruyla her zaman karşılaştım: Neden ayrımcılık yapıyorsunuz? Neden Artvin? Biz Artvinli olduğumuz için, biz Güzelpınarlı olduğumuz için. Yoksa bizde ayrımcılık yok. Biz Türküz netice itibarıyla. Biz başkaları gibi köken farkı gözetmiyoruz. Biz Güzelpınarlı olduğumuz için Güzelpınar’ın gelenek ve göreneklerini yaşıyoruz, oraların folklorünü, folklor sadece bir oyun değil, yaşatmaya çalışıyoruz. ... Tam özü bu. Ardeşenliler, Trabzonlular, onlar da kendi, Karşılilar falan, kendi geleneklerini yaşatmaya çalışıyorlar. ... Bu bir mozaik.”

noon and then it stops. This is said as a joke, a satire but I take this as an insult, I say it definitely, an insult.”<sup>93</sup>

Faruk also referred to an incident of mockery albeit in a calmer way:

“When I was a student at Haydarpaşa, they used to make fun of us because of the difference of our accent and we used to put up with that. However, by the time, with the success of Black Sea Region people in the construction business and the achievements of Trabzonspor,<sup>94</sup> it became a source of pride to be or to have relatives from the Black Sea Region. We were of course proud of that and we want it to continue like this.”<sup>95</sup>

The interesting point is the way he relates the attitude towards Black Sea region people to their accomplishments in various areas. This might partly explain the reason why the success of the people of the region is an important concern for him. As the Black Sea region people became more successful and powerful, the problem of contemptuous behavior of others alleviated. Either the disposition changed objectively or it began to be conceived as less of a problem with increasing self-confidence. GCSA does not only empower its members economically, as will be examined in the next section, but also increases the visibility and influence of the people and the culture of the region, thereby eliminating an important obstacle against equal political participation, self-expression and self-realization. Although the perception of discrimination is not dominant and GCSA is not founded particularly for overcoming problems of discrimination, it contributes indirectly to overcoming such problems, and hence to more effective political participation.

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<sup>93</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Her şakanın altında bir ciddiyet payı vardır. Yüzde elli bu böyledir benim kanaatime göre. Mesela halkımız arasında söylenir, on ikiye kadar sizin kafanız çalışır, on ikiden sonra çalışmaz, falan gibi. Bu şaka olarak, hiciv olarak söylenir ama ben bunu hakaret olarak algılıyorum, net olarak söylüyorum, hakaret olarak alıyorum.”

<sup>94</sup> Trabzonspor is a football club of Trabzon, a city in the Black Sea Region. It has been successful in the Professional Football League in 1980s.

<sup>95</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Şimdi tabi talebelik yıllarında benim, Haydarpaşa’da okurken, Güzelpınarlı olarak şive farkından dolayı tabi bize takılırlardı, biz de bunu sineye çekerdik ama bu inşaat sektöründe Karadenizlilerin başarısı akabinde Trabzonspor’un başarıları... Karadenizlilik bir yerde özenilen, Karadeniz’de hısım akrabası olmak, akrabası olmak her insanın övünç kaynağı olmaya başladı. Biz de onunla gururlandık tabi. Bir yerde böyle devam etmesini de isteriz.”

The members, apart from the honorary president, did not recite any unpleasant experiences about their accent. Nevertheless, the issue emerged various times during interviews. Serap, the 21 year old secretary of GCSA, was talking about the influence of her family on the preservation of their culture:

“Well, my family did not say anything like ‘Look, such and such is the culture of Guzelpinar.’; however, we do what we see from them. For example, at home, my mother speaks like someone from Artvin although she has been living in Istanbul for twenty-three years. We hear from them and the way we speak changes involuntarily. My friends do not react like ‘Why do you speak like this?’ or ‘Look, she speaks incorrectly.’ People like that because it is natural.”<sup>96</sup>

It is telling that even before my question on discrimination and injustice, she pointed out that she had not encountered any negative reactions due to her accent. Therefore, I asked whether she observed any people that spoke differently in GCSA than they do outside.

“Of course. At work or during a critical interview, for communication speaking is very important but here, in the circle of friends, one does not need to think about whether s/he would be teased because everyone speaks the same language. Outside, they have to correct their language due to the requirements of life.”<sup>97</sup>

A similar instance was narrated by Fatma, a 27 year old university student, who grew up in Izmit, moved to Istanbul three years ago and visited Guzelpinar only on summer holidays. While explaining why she was going to GCSA, she talked about her sympathy and longing for the culture of the region:

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<sup>96</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Şöyle: Bana ailem ‘Kızım, Guzelpınar’ın kültürü böyledir.’ diye bir şey söylemedi ama biz onlardan ne gördüysek onları yapıyoruz. Mesela benim evimde annem 23 yıldır İstanbul’da fakat dili hala Artvinli gibidir. Biz onlardan duyuyoruz, ister istemez bizim de dilimiz değişiyor. Niye böyle oldu, niye böyle konuşuyorsun, mesela arkadaşlarım arasından da tepki toplamıyorum. Aaa şunun dili bozuk, gibi. İnsanların hoşuna gidiyor çünkü olduğu gibi yani.”

<sup>97</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Tabii ki şimdi şöyle söyleyeyim, bir iş yerinde, bir ne bileyim, önemli bir görüşmede. mesela iletişim kurmada, konuşmak çok önemlidir, Türk edebiyatı çok önemlidir ama burada herkes kendi içinde, arkadaş ortamında, şivemi değiştirsem benimle alay ederler mi, bana bir şey derler mi diye korkmuyor çünkü hepsi aynı dili konuşuyor ama dışarıda hayat şartları gereği bir yerde düzeltmek zorunda kalıyorlar tabii ki.”

“I felt myself alone when I began my studies at the university. Maybe, previously I was alone too but one feels it less when s/he is with the family. Because s/he lives that culture in the family. As I say, I sometimes want to listen to tulum or be with people that think like me, do the same mistakes as me, or have, you know what they say, “Laz mentality”. For example, the sound “-ı”. My sister is working on that. Say a word with the sound “-ı”: “ılıca”. Our people write that as “ilica” because they say it so. I was not brought up there, I never spoke with the accent of the region, I could not speak like that. My mother used to get angry and say “Speak properly.””<sup>98</sup>

To verify, I asked whether her mother warned her not to speak with an accent and she said:

“Yes. We used to go to the village and my mother was afraid that we would catch the accent, that people would tease us when we came back here and we would be sad. So she used to admonish us that we should speak properly and say that otherwise she would put pepper into our mouth.”<sup>99</sup>

Thus, the accent is regarded by some members as something to be corrected particularly when they are with people from outside the region. Rather than problematizing teases based on the accent and regarding that as a question of equality, they conceive the accent as a colorful particularity that has to be limited to informal life.

No accounts, except that of the honorary president’s, were given of humiliating behavior based on the accent, which is a distinctive characteristic of the people of the region, and in his case, the mockery was seen as an issue of the past, which no longer exists. However, there is still the feeling that the accent might be a

<sup>98</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Özellikle üniversiteye başladığımda burada bir yalnızlık hissettim. Önceleri de hissediyordum belki ama insan ailesinin içinde daha az fark ediyor. Ailede de o kültürü yaşadığı için. Diyorum ya, arada sırada canım tulum sesi dinlemek istiyor ya da bizim gibi düşünen, hani Laz kafası denir ya, öyle hakkaten, benim gibi düşünen, benimle aynı hataları yapan... Mesela ı sesi... Benim ablam onlar üzerine çalışıyor. Mesela ı-lı bir şey söyle, ılıca yazsa bile ilica yazar bizimkiler çünkü öyle söylüyorlar. Ben orada büyümedim, oranın aksanıyla hiç konuşamadım, hiç beceremedim. Annem çok kızardı konuşacağım diye, düzgün konuş diye kızardı bana.”

<sup>99</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Evet. Köye giderdik, annem şeyden çok korkardı, üç ayda biz onu kapacağız ve buraya geldiğimizde insanlar bizimle dalga geçecekler diye. Okula gideceğiz, arkadaşlar bizimle alay eder, biz de üzülürüz diye, annem korkardı. O yüzden tembih ederdi, ağzınıza biber sürerim, düzgün konuşun diye.”

source of derision. It should be remarked that the jokes on the accent are not accompanied by, or perceived to derivate from discrimination against the Black Sea region people or their exclusion from social, economic or political life. As stated above, there is not a general perception of injustice. Neither does GCSA aim to handle problems of discrimination or exclusion. Nevertheless, it operates an empowerment mechanism, thereby dealing with such problems, if any exist, in an indirect way.

### Economic Empowerment

Among the concerns of GCSA are the economic problems of Guzelpinar and people from Guzelpinar living in Istanbul. As stated in the section entitled “Interest Articulation”, problems of the region are discussed in different forums and conveyed to politicians and government officials in various occasions. In addition to such activities, GCSA also tries to contribute to both economic development of the region and economic empowerment of its people Istanbul through generation of social solidarity among members. Thus GCSA constitutes, in a way, a self-help mechanism trying to solve the problems of the people of the region, which will be the subject of this section.

The grandest project for Guzelpinar that GCSA contributed to was the construction of a hospital with the help of donations. News on the hospital appeared frequently in the Journal of GCSA, giving accounts of the latest situation in the construction. The donors were listed with an appreciation note. According to the Journal, the hospital would be completed by the state; however, the people of the

region overtook the task as no improvement was made for years. The Journal reported:

“The building of the Guzelpinar State Hospital was done by the Demirci (I am using a pseudonym) family. The Guzelpinar population displayed an instance of ‘humanity’ in cooperating to complete the other parts, which were supposed to be done by the Ministry of Health.”<sup>100</sup>

A service that was expected from the state was provided by the people of the region, with the contributions of GCSA in terms of announcing the issue. Ali, 39 year old journalist, said:

“Our Association has made great contributions for the construction of the hospital in Guzelpinar. We directed the well-to-do people from Guzelpinar to this matter. We saved the state from great expense. We carried out with our hemşehris the job that was supposed to be done by the state and spent the money that was supposed to be spent by the state.”<sup>101</sup>

GCSA is thought to assume the responsibility of the state, thereby, in a way, assisting and cooperating with the state.

A book collection campaign was organized by GCSA for the libraries of schools in Guzelpinar. Moreover, after the flood in Guzelpinar a relief project was initiated for those affected by the disaster. There is quiet an effort for the economic development of the region through such charity projects.

The members of Association, who live in Istanbul, might also benefit economically from the services provided by it. When the interviewees were asked about their expectations from GCSA, in general there was uneasiness with the word

<sup>100</sup> *Guzelpinar Journal* “ Demirci ailesi tarafından betonarmesi duvarları ve çatısı yaptırılan Guzelpınar Devlet Hastanesi nin sağlık bakanlığınca yapılması gereken diğer kısımlarını da Guzelpınar halkı bir “insanlık” örneği göstererek elbirliği ile yapmaktadır.”

<sup>101</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Guzelpınar’da hastane yapılmasında derneğimizin çok büyük katkısı olmuştur. Guzelpınarlı zengin diyebileceğimiz kitleleri o hastaneye yönlendirmişizdir. Devleti de orada büyük bir külfetten kurtarmışızdır çünkü devletin yapması gereken işleri, harcaması gereken paraları biz şeyle yaptık, kendi hemşehrilerimiz arasında gerçekleştirdik.”

expectation. They told that they did not expect anything and that they were not there for their interest; however, they admit either that they benefited in certain aspects or that members of GCSA have certain benefits. English and mathematics courses for students and sewing courses for women are given free of charge. Around 200 university students were granted scholarships in 2005. GCSA acts like an intermediary between those people that can afford giving scholarships and those students that are in need. Scholarships are based on need yet their continuation is conditional upon success. During the month of Ramadan, food and clothes aids are given to people in need.

In addition to charity activities, the links established in GCSA might provide members with opportunities. Mehmet, 25 years, told that he had found his current job thanks to the reference of a member. Aysel, 44 years old, who worked as a teacher in a “public education center” and quitted due to personal reasons, said she would have had a good job, if GCSA had existed at that times. The secretary of GCSA told that sometimes members looking for a job submitted their CVs so that members looking for an employee could reach them. The members that have their own enterprise give advertisements on the Journal of GCSA. Veli, 37 years old, operating his own shop said:

“When you start a business, your hemşehris do not leave you alone, they come to your shop, they try to buy something. ... For example, I check who is occupied with trade among the members and I definitely try to do shopping from their places.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “İşyeri açtığınız zaman, hemşehrileriniz sizi yalnız bırakmıyor, sizin yanınıza geliyor, sizden alışveriş yapmaya çalışıyor. ... Tabii. Genelde mesela, şuna bakarım, derneğe kayıtlı olan insanlar kimler var, kimler ticaretle uğraşiyor? Mutlaka onlardan alışveriş yapmaya gayret ederim.”

GCSA has a list of doctors, to whom members are referred to when there is need for that. So members would have the chance for preferential treatment in various matters thanks to the relationships they have in GCSA.

The services given or the opportunities provided by GCSA are believed to contribute to the welfare of the country as a whole. Nilgun, 32 year old chemist, said:

“Well I would like to ... the whole world. I wish there were not any boundaries and everyone were my hemşehri. But I think I will not be capable of helping everyone. When I was a child, my dream was working for UNICEF but this seemed to be utopian. Therefore, and given that there are many needy people in Guzelpınar, I decided to work for Guzelpınar as a first step. I would not like to restrict myself to Guzelpınar but my means are limited.”<sup>103</sup>

25 year old Ahmet said:

“In the end, our purpose is not the development and wellbeing of just Guzelpınar and people from Guzelpınar. Within our circumstances, we are trying our best and ultimately, we want good things for the country.”<sup>104</sup>

There is the feeling that the charity activities of the association contributes to the economic development.

### Cultivation of Democratic Values

As stated in chapter two, associations have a potential for the cultivation of democratic values. Putnam underlined the role of associations in fostering trust and

<sup>103</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Ben bütün dünyaya, aslında keşke sınırlar olmasa herkes benim hemşehrim olsa ama herkese yetemeyeceğimi düşündüğüm için. Çocuklukta benim hayalim Unicef’te çalışmaktı ama bu çok ütopya gibi geldiği için, ben de Guzelpınar’da bu kadar ilgiye muhtaç insan varken en azından onlardan başlayayım dedim. O sınır benim için Guzelpınar değil ama yapabileceğim, kendi gücümü bildiğim için.”

<sup>104</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Nihayetinde sadece Guzelpınar’ın kalkınması refahı, Guzelpınar insanının güzelliği değil bizimkisi. Sadece şu anda imkanlarımız dahilinde kendimiz üzerimize düşeni yapıp nihai olarak bu ülke için güzel şeyler olsun istiyoruz.”

reciprocity, which, in his view, are essential elements for a robust democracy.<sup>105</sup> Empirical studies provide evidence for correlation between interpersonal trust and democracy; however, the direction of the relationship is disputable. As individuals will be more willing to abide with the rules of the game in an environment of high interpersonal trust, it is reasonable to argue that trust facilitates democracy. It is also plausible that in democratic systems individuals tend to trust one another more than in nondemocratic systems.<sup>106</sup> For Putnam, trust and reciprocity are important for democracy because they facilitate cooperation against arbitrary government and promote public-interested behavior. However agreeable cooperation and concern for others might be, democracy is valuable because it enables dissent. Therefore, tolerance and respect for the opinions of others are values that are equally, if not more, important for the robustness of democracy.<sup>107</sup>

Putnam's categorization of associations on the basis of diversity of members is helpful in estimating which associations would be more prone to cultivate tolerance and respect for different opinions. As bridging associations have members from different social groups, they are more likely to provide a forum for debate and deliberation. Amy Gutmann also argues that such associations have more capacity "to cultivate the kind of public discourse and deliberation that is conducive to democratic citizenship."<sup>108</sup> Obviously, this is not the only criterion to determine whether an association enables debate and deliberation. The functioning mechanism and the power relations within the association are also very important. Even in

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<sup>105</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993) quoted in Foley and Edwards 38-52; Warren, 30.

<sup>106</sup> Paxton, 254-277; Pamela Paxton, "Is Social Capital Declining in the United States? A Multiple Indicator Assessment," *American Journal of Sociology* 105.1 (1999), pp.88-127 and Ronald Inglehart, "Trust, Well-Being and Democracy," in *Democracy and Trust* ed. M. Warren, 88-120 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) quoted in Knack, 772-785.

<sup>107</sup> Warren, 34-36.

<sup>108</sup> Amy Gutmann quoted in Warren 76.

associations with members from a particular social group, there might be points of divergence in certain issues and the way they are dealt with influence the values that are bred in members. Moreover, that the similarity between members of an association does not necessarily mean that the members would be intolerant towards differences. Members might not have much opportunity for debate within the association; however, the association might contribute to the debate in the public sphere.<sup>109</sup>

The members, at least those active in GCSA, have common characteristics. They all come from the town Guzelpinar and they are mostly high school or university graduate professionals, which, in a way, makes diversity and debate less probable. This is not to say, however, that there are no disagreements. Aysel, 44 year old housewife, told that she had not come to GCSA for some years due to a disagreement with the directory board. Similarly, during my second round of interviews in March 2005, I asked about Veli, whom I had interviewed a year ago, and they told that he no longer visited GCSA. At the time of the interview, he was a member of the directory board and had told me that he came to GCSA almost every day. Probably, he had chosen to quit after the shift in the administration at the end of 2004.

Despite the similar backgrounds of the members, there are points of divergence. However, GCSA is perceived as a place for cooperation rather than dissent by the members. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the members told that they avoided any discussion of political issues. The members regard themselves as a member of a large family and it is believed that disagreements would spoil the harmony. Friendly and familial attachments make objection and opposition more

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<sup>109</sup> Warren, 80.

difficult. Individuals might prefer silence in order not to offend others or simply to keep friendly relationships intact.<sup>110</sup> In this sense, GCSA seems not to be the perfect place for debate and deliberation, and hence, to contribute much to cultivation of tolerance and respect for different opinions. Nevertheless, in the end, it is a place where members come together, make decisions and cooperate for the achievement of certain purposes, which provide individuals with ample opportunity for developing political skills such as self-expression and negotiation.

An issue that is quite on the agenda of GCSA and has serious implications for equal participation is the place of women in social and economic life. Upon the question about the limits for the preservation of the culture of Guzelpinar, Nilgun, 32 year old chemist, who is in the directory board, talked about the deprivation of women from inheritance, which, in her view, had to be abolished. The issues of inheritance and education of women has also been discussed on the web site of GCSA. In the six issues of the Journal of GCSA that I could find, there were two articles on women. One was written by a professor of theology and asserts:

“The discrimination, distilled from patriarchal traditions of patriarchal societies, combined with the distinctive physical advantages, resulted in an element of oppression. The problem will not cease to exist unless a change occurs in the mentality.”<sup>111</sup>

The article touched upon the problems of deprivation of women from education, economic dependence of women and polygamy, which were regarded as unacceptable practices that continued under the guise of religion. In another article, written on the occasion of the Eight of March, the subjects were the need for broader representation of women in decision-making mechanisms, the problems of illiteracy

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>111</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Ataerkil toplumların pederşahi geleneklerinden süzülüp gelen ayrımcılık, fiziksel yapıdaki belirgin üstünlükle de birleşince bir “baskı unsuru” haline dönüşmektedir. Zihinsel değişimler yaşanmadığı müddetçe de bu yara kanamaya devam edecektir.”

among women, violence against women and inequality of property between men and women. The dean of Education Faculty of the Black Sea Technical University emphasized the significance of the education of women in an interview with the Journal.

As stated in the previous chapter, the active members of the association are mostly high school and university graduates. That is to say, they are more educated than the average migrant population and the chances are that they have more liberal values. I do not have quantitative data for an extensive comparison of values; however, interviewees often referred to obsolete customs among Guzelpinar people that have to be abolished, such as secondary status of women and intolerance against inter-regional marriages. Hence, they place themselves in a more progressive position than at least a certain segment of Guzelpinar population. For this reason and given that the members are also among the most influential people of Guzelpinar, the association is promising in the cultivation of progressive values that are conducive to democracy. It is important to keep in mind, however, that there might be a limit to the extent to which the association is open to progressive values. As it will be further analyzed in the next section, there are norms and values, albeit in a vague way, that the members should respect within the association. Thus, “too progressive” behavior might not be tolerated in the association.

## Problems

### Exclusion and Inequality

In chapter two, it was argued that democracy requires not only inclusion of all individuals into political participation but also conferral of equal opportunity for participation to those who are included. Associations are important avenues for participation, thereby constituting one of the most important elements of democratic systems. Given the ample opportunities, both economic and political, that associations provide their members with, inequality among individuals in ability to form powerful associations, or among members of an association in opportunity to participate in the association, poses a problem for democracy.

The Guzelpinar Culture and Social Solidarity Association is founded by and primarily for people from a particular region. The membership is, in principle, based on being registered to the town of Guzelpinar; however, the rule does not seem to operate on a very strict basis. Due to marriage with people from outside the region, registered hometown of women changes, yet they can become or continue to be members. In practice, those whose mothers or fathers come from the town Guzelpinar can become member to GCSA. The activities of GCSA, such as various courses, are open for the participation of all irrespective of their hometown. The honorary president stated that they tried not to refuse non-Guzelpinar people who asked for their help; however, Guzelpinar people have priority in access to charity. Thus, in some respects a certain part of the population is not included in GCSA.

In fact, there is nothing inherently wrong with associations that have a particular agenda and therefore target a certain part of the population. On the

contrary, such associations provide opportunities for the disadvantaged to cooperate for solving their problems themselves or for making their voices heard. Hemsehri associations were regarded as mechanisms for the integration and social mobility of immigrants.<sup>112</sup> Hence, they offer a solution to the problems of a disadvantaged group, i.e. immigrants. However, as the associations are based on hometown, city, town or even village, and as not the people of all regions have the capacity to get organized, some immigrants remain outside the solution.

According to the statistics of Istanbul Directorate of Security, by the year 1989, 41% of hemsehri associations in Istanbul were founded by people coming from the Black Sea region, followed by 24% by people coming from the Eastern Anatolia. The distribution is explained partly by the density of migration from the respective regions. The date of arrival and the nature of migration are equally important factors. The Black Sea region people were among the first comers and by time they gained the power and ability to get organized. Moreover, they were immigrants among which chain migration was common, which facilitated organization.<sup>113</sup> It can well be argued that the need and motivation also influence the difference between the multitudes of organizations of different regions. People who have more difficulty in finding their place in formal institutions would be more inclined to depend on solidarity networks. Nevertheless, forming associations in general, and influential associations in particular, is definitely a matter of capacity as it requires money, time and organizational skills.

Obviously, associations are not only for the disadvantaged; they are also instruments through which the advantaged multiply their power and influence.

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<sup>112</sup> Erder, *Kentteki*, 107-115; Erder, *İstanbul'a*; Erder, *Where*, 161-173; Kurdoğlu, *Kentleşme*.

<sup>113</sup> Kurdoğlu, *Kentleşme*, 64-70.

Contrary to expectations, the phenomenon of hemsehri associations did not end after the immigrants relatively solved their problems of integration. The so called second-generation immigrants also become members to such associations. Moreover, among the members of associations are not only the poor but also the affluent people of the region. As stated above, in my case the most of the active members of GCSA were high school or university graduate professionals.

On the one hand, hemsehri associations facilitate equal participation of immigrants to social, economic and political life of immigrant by providing avenues for communication of problems, increasing the public visibility of the culture of immigrants and offering economic opportunities. On the other hand, they are prone to breed new inequalities. Since they are based on being from a particular hometown rather than being immigrant in the city, some of the recent immigrants are excluded from the integration mechanism. When conceived as an empowerment mechanism for the more powerful rather than integration mechanism for the recent immigrants, hemsehri associations might provoke inequality for the same reasons. I asked the interviewees whether they thought they had any advantages in comparison to people from other regions that do not or cannot found associations. When the answer was affirmative, which it was most of the time, I asked whether this might cause any inequalities. Formation of associations was seen as an opportunity open for all; therefore, it was not thought to be a source of inequality or injustice.

Another aspect of the issue of equality is the equality in participation between members of an association. Power struggle is at issue not only between different associations but also between members of a particular association. As told above, disagreements between members might occur and the changes in the directory board

might have an effect on the participation of members.<sup>114</sup> The decisions about the association are made in the directory board, which is elected every two years. The previous president held the presidency for ten years and retired for reasons of health. The president seemed to enjoy great respect from the members. The interviewees asserted various times that they would go and consult their president whenever they face a problem and that the president carries most of the burden of GCSA.

The most influential people in GCSA are the members of the directory board, which is understandable and acceptable for democracy as long as they are chosen through elections. The important thing for internal democracy is that the influence does not become an element of oppression and that those who are not in the directory board also have the chance to express their opinions in GCSA. The theater teacher of GCSA narrates a story about the weight of the directory board. When he was talking with one of the members of the directory board, the theater teacher told that he would choose the plays himself. The member of the directory board replied reminding that the plays should not insult the flag, the nation, the homeland and the religion. The theater teacher found this disturbing as he thought that he was conscious enough to make such reasoning and judgment.

Among the interviewees, two were members that were not in the directory board and that have less relationship with GCSA. Thus, in a way, they have the eyes of an outsider and it would be easier for them to have a critical view. Upon the question whether membership to GCSA had any downsides, Fatma, 27 year-old university student, said:

“Any negative aspects of participating in GCSA, no, I did not experience. Maybe, this might happen if I take part more actively but even then I would retreat myself. In the end, GCSA is permanent, the

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<sup>114</sup> See page 57.

people are temporary, a new structure can be created. If you are uncomfortable with something, you form an alternative. And they are open to opinions, if you say I am not comfortable with this or I want this to be like that etc.”<sup>115</sup>

A 41 year-old government official, Necati’s account contradicts with that of Fatma.

When I asked him whether he thought GCSA contributed to democracy, he brought up the issue of internal democracy and said:

“Not everyone can say everything, not everyone can do everything that does not assault individual rights. I do not know, perhaps this is about our genetic characteristics. In such associations, Black Sea associations, only the words of the elderly count.”<sup>116</sup>

The value of participation has been discussed various times during the paper. The members’ having a say in the decision-making and the chance to voice their opinions in GCSA is important.

In the previous section, it was pointed out that GCSA served the function of empowering its members economically. Thus, another aspect of equality within GCSA is the question of whether the members could benefit equally from the opportunities provided by GCSA. When this question was asked to the interviewees, they said that everyone received what s/he deserved and that everyone got a share in proportion to her/his participation. Considered that some of the economic opportunities of GCSA are procured through personal links, it would not be realistic to expect equality in that respect.

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<sup>115</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Derneğe katılmanın olumsuz tarafını, hayır görmedim. Bilmiyorum, belki çok daha aktif şekilde içinde bulunsam olumsuzluklar olur mu bilmiyorum ama olduğu zaman da kendimi biraz daha geri çekerim. Sonuçta orada dernek kalıcı, insanlar gidici, yeni bir yapılandırma oluşturulur. Bir şeyden rahatsızsan başka bir şey oluşturursun ona alternatif. Fikirlere de açıklar. Şundan rahatsızım ben, şöyle olmasını istiyorum dediğinde.”

<sup>116</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Herkes her şeyi söyleyemiyor, herkes her şeyi insan hakkına tecavüz etmemek kaydıyla herkes her şeyi yapamıyor. Bu da bizim kalıtsal olarak, genetik yapımızda olan bir şey midir bilmiyorum. Büyüğün sözü geçer bu tür derneklerde, Karadeniz derneklerinde.”

### Cost for Members

The associations might bear costs on its members in return for the benefits they provide. The possible costs are time and energy as well as limitations posed by the association on the individual freedom of its members. Associations have different norms and values, and members go through a process of internalization of these norms and values. If the internal structure of an association is democratic and members have opportunities to raise their voices, the process of value introjection would not be a serious problem. Similarly, if the membership is on a voluntary basis and hence the members have an exit option, the costs are relatively acceptable. Voluntariness is used in the sense not only that the members are not forced to become members but also that the costs of exit are at a bearable degree. Hence, especially if members are dependent on the services or economic opportunities provided by an association, they might have to tolerate oppression of the group.<sup>117</sup>

Membership to GCSA does not have a fee for membership. Yet the members spend quite a lot of their time for GCSA. All but one interviewees said that they went to GCSA at least once a week, some went everyday, some spent their only off day in GCSA. This is not surprising as my interviewees were the active members of GCSA, some being in the directory board. It should be remarked that being an active participant was a prerequisite for having access to the resources of GCSA. Thus, in a way, the price of the benefits is the time spent in GCSA. Yet the time spent in GCSA can not be thought solely as a price. On the contrary, spending free time is the purpose of membership for most members. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the members participate in GCSA primarily for having a touch with the

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<sup>117</sup> Warren, 98.

culture and people of their hometown rather than benefiting from the economic opportunities.

The interviewees were asked whether the GSCA brought any limitations to its members and whether there are any behaviors that would be unacceptable within the Association. Erbil, 37 year-old executive in advertisement sector, answered the former question:

“Absolutely. This is a family atmosphere; people are sending their daughters and sons, sisters and brothers. We want this association to be in conformity with Turkish customs and we are making every effort for that.”<sup>118</sup>

Other members also repeated that GSCA is a place where especially women can come without any doubt and where the parents trust and send their daughters. In the Journal of GSCA, there was a call for women to join the association with the following words:

“You will see that you can come to GSCA comfortably and safely, as if it were your home and that this is a grand family atmosphere.”<sup>119</sup>

For this reason, any “extreme” behavior within the association was not tolerated. Members are expected to be careful in their conduct with their friends from the opposite sex within the association.

The metaphor of family is used very frequently and deserves attention. On the one hand, family is a place of love and affection. On the other hand, it is a place of discipline and control, where children are socialized into certain norms and values. A similar process of socialization is also going in GSCA. The honorary president said:

“We make an effort for our young people to meet their needs within GSCA without any need for the streets. Our purpose here is to

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<sup>118</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005. “Kesinlikle. Burası aile ortamıdır, herkes çoluğunu çocuğunu, oğlunu kardeşini gönderiyor. Birtakım Türk adet, örf, ananelerine uygun şekilde bir dernek olmasını arzu ediyoruz ve buna çalışıyoruz.”

<sup>119</sup> *Guzelpinar Journal*, March 1999. “Derneğe evinize gelir gibi rahat ve güvenli bir şekilde gelebileceğinizi, burasının büyük bir aile ortamı olduğunu göreceksiniz.”

inculcate love in the hearts of our young people: love for parents, love for God and of course love for the homeland and hometown.”<sup>120</sup>

Thus, he cites quite loaded values and he explicitly states that the association aims cultivation of them. The question is not about whether or not such values are good but about whether or not the members are obligated to go through such a process of socialization as a cost of participation. In the Journal of GSCA, on a report on the New Year party, it was written:

“The young people celebrated the New Year’s Eve in the GSCA in a manner that is proper for the Guzelpinar youth.”<sup>121</sup>

Hence, there is a conception of acceptable way of behavior, however vague it might be.

There is neither a written code of behavior nor strict sanctions; however, there seems to be an invisible contract between members and an invisible control mechanism. İlker, 26 year old graphic artist, said:

“There is a grand family here. The mistakes within a family would be discerned more easily; therefore, people would hesitate to make any faults. The atmosphere protects itself, here.”<sup>122</sup>

Recep, 23 year-old lawyer, told an interesting story about one of his friends who came to Istanbul for his university education and who has changed so much that he cannot even go to Artvin. He finds himself very lucky as he did not have to stay in dormitories and he could be relatively isolated from the negative influences from

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<sup>120</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, May 2004. “Gençlerimiz sokağa ihtiyaç duymadan ihtiyaçlarını bu dernek bünyesinde giderebilmesi için gayret ediyoruz. Burada amacımız gençlerimizin yüreğine sevgi koymak. Bu sevgi ana baba sevgisi, allah sevgisi ve tabi yurt sevgisi, memleket sevgisi.”

<sup>121</sup> *Guzelpinar Journal*, March 2002. “Gençlerimiz yılbaşı gecesini Guzelpinar gençliğine yakışır şekilde dernek merkezinde eğlenerek kutladılar.”

<sup>122</sup> Interview by author, tape recording, Istanbul, March 2005 “Burada da geniş bir aile var. Aile içinde birilerinin hata yapması çok çabuk göze batar, bir yanlış yapması çok daha tereddütlü olur insan. Kendi kendini koruyor buradaki ortam.”

outside. Thus, the GSCA functions as a safe place for socialization particularly for young people and women.

The existence of norms and values poses a limitation to the individual freedom of the members but only to a limited extent. After all, the membership is voluntary and the members are not dependent on the association for survival. The exit does not have any costs except the opportunity cost of being a non-member. The process of socialization into the norms and values of the association should be kept in mind as a cost of the opportunities provided by the association especially by those who offer such networks as a solution to economic problems. The more dependent the members become on the association, the more severe the limitations on individual freedom.

#### Promotion of Undemocratic Values

The process of learning in an association has the potential to go in the opposite direction to democracy. Associations might well be schools of distrust and intolerance as much as they might be schools of trust and tolerance. Putnam argues that bonding associations, i.e. those with members from a particular social class, breed isolation and distrust in non-group members.<sup>123</sup> The diversity in the group might influence the values promoted in an association; however, Putnam's argument does not always hold, particularly if the group does not have much problems with the rest of the population. Another characteristic of an association that would influence the values promoted is the internal structure. In associations, in which internal

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<sup>123</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000) quoted in Paxton, 254-277.

democracy does not work, values of hierarchy and obedience would be more likely to flourish.

GCSA is a bonding association in Putnam's sense; however, the group does not have a feeling of discrimination or exclusion from the rest of the population. The interviewees were asked questions about their relationship with Guzelpinar and non-Guzelpinar population: whether they trusted their hemsehris more than others, whether they preferred to work with their hemsehris to with others, what they thought about marriages with non-hemsehris, what percent of their friends are their hemsehris and whether they preferred particularly their hemsehris as neighbors.

Although some interviewees said that they trusted their hemsehris more, this did not mean distrust for other people. All agreed on the fact that the personal characteristics of an individual are more important than the hometown. The justification for more trust in hemsehris was that there was the chance to receive information from acquaintances. Although some members said that they would try to help their hemsehris in business, they were open to work with everyone. Similarly, most members said that they made friends with people outside the region since they have the chance to meet different people during their education or for their business or in their neighborhood. The members are not clustered in a particular district of the city. Finally, the habit of marriage with hemsehris began to dissolve. The young interviewees told that it would not make any difference. They added that their family would not object their marriage with someone from outside the region although they would prefer someone from Guzelpinar. Already, there were interviewees or the daughters and sons of interviewees married to people from outside the region.

### Possibility for Rent-Seeking

Associations are instruments for communication between individuals and the government; however, if the relations are personalized, rent-seeking activity and demands for particularistic favors might emerge. I did not ask the interviewees direct questions about this issue because this would mean confronting them and risking the continuation of the study. However, I asked whether they made any demands from government institutions as an association. Even the interviewees who answered affirmative could not give any specific examples.

GCSA gives its members the chance to meet politicians and government officials. As stated above, there are occasional visits to the governors or municipality presidents or they are invited to the organizations of the association, which provides ample opportunity for rent-seeking activity. Nevertheless, it is too difficult, if not impossible, to find out whether these links are used for particularistic favors. Two interviewees said that the association might help in issues of appointment. In one of the issues of the Journal of GSCA, it was reported that the director of one of the hospitals in Istanbul was recalled from his position in an unexpected way and that Guzelpinar people wanted the return of his position. In the next issue, the good news was given that he regained his position. Hence, there are instances of particularistic favors; however, it is not easy to estimate the multitude.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Civil society is considered to be among the most important institutions that sustain democracy. There is a consensus, both in the public opinion and among political scientists, that associations autonomous from the state are necessary for a vibrant democracy. Hence, the positive link between civil society and democracy is almost taken for granted. Less attention is paid, however, on the ways in which associations contribute to democracy. What is more, the effects of associations that are to the detriment of democracy are often ignored.

This study aimed a discussion of the relationship between civil society and democracy. Democracy was defined in terms of equal participation in political decision-making. Thus, the main question was formulated as the following: In which ways does civil society promote / undermine the broadening and deepening of participation, where broadening means including all social groups in participation and deepening means intensifying involvement in decision-making. In addition to equal political participation, civil rights, respect for differences and socio-economic equality were introduced as features of democracy and the impact of associations on all these features was also placed under question.

A case study approach was adopted because it would allow a more detailed inquiry and would enable me to see more closely how the association operates and to produce answers to my research question. The case was one of the *hemsehri* associations in Istanbul, i.e. organizations founded by people who migrated to Istanbul from a particular village, town or city . Given the abundance of such associations in Istanbul, the case is worth studying. Hemsehri networks and associations became subject to many researches; however, they were not studied in the context of the relationship between civil society and democracy.

Among the hemsehri associations in Istanbul, a Black Sea region association was chosen because Black Sea region associations constituted above 40% of all hemsehri associations in Istanbul. Guzelpinar Culture and Social Solidarity Association was founded in Istanbul in late 1980s by migrants coming from Guzelpinar, which is a town in the Black Sea region with population above 20000. A town association was more appropriate to study, since it would be small enough to allow face to face relationships and large enough to have the resources to engage in different activities. In-depth interviews were conducted by members of the association and the journals published by the association were examined.

In the theory chapter, a general discussion of the link between civil society and democracy was given. Associations might contribute to democracy by providing opportunities for the articulation of interests, forming a platform for deliberation, empowering their members economically, enabling representation of differences and cultivating democratic values among their members. On the other hand, associations might also have undemocratic effects such as exacerbating inequalities through exclusion of non-members as well as maintenance of unequal power relations within

the association, limiting individual freedom of its members, promoting undemocratic values and leaving room for rent-seeking activities.

In the case chapter, the interviews and the journals of the association were analyzed and the following results were reached about contributions of the association to democracy:

GSCA provides opportunities for its members to communicate their demands to politicians and government officials through various occasions, thereby enabling more intense participation of its members in political decision-making. The problems of the Black Sea region come to the foreground as the most salient consideration of the members to be articulated to the authorities.

The members believe that the Association has been instrumental in preservation of the culture of the region, to which they attach great importance. The association is regarded as a place for enjoyment of their cultural particularities, which is seen as a way to enhance life rather than a political issue of equality. The members define themselves within the Turkish identity and they do not have a feeling of injustice or discrimination on the basis of hometown. Nevertheless, by increasing the influence of its members and the public visibility of their culture, the association helps overcoming the problems of discrimination. Thus, it helps eliminating obstacles against equal political participation, self-expression and self-realization, that might result from the immigrant status of its members.

GSCA also offers economic opportunities for its members either in the form of services such as scholarships or through the personal links established in the association. Economic empowerment is relevant to democracy both as a prerequisite for equal political participation and as one of the reasons behind political

participation. GSCA can be said to contribute to democracy through facilitating the economic integration of the migrants.

The discussion of controversial issues is avoided in the GSCA. The association is seen by the members as a place for friendship rather than one for debate and deliberation. In this sense, it is far from cultivating values such as tolerance and respect for different opinions. Nevertheless, the association develops skills for self-expression and communication as people come together and give collective decisions for different activities. Moreover, there is quite an effort for educating the members to the importance of equal place of women in social and economic life.

It was discerned that the association posed the following problems against democracy:

GSCA might breed inequalities between its members and non-members as well as among its members. The membership to GSCA is based on being registered to the town of Guzelpinar. People from outside Guzelpinar can participate in the activities but not become members. Guzelpinar people have preferential access to the resources of the association. Given the opportunities provided by the association, exclusion of non-Guzelpinar people might put them in disadvantage. The fact that not the people of all regions have equal capacity to form associations intensifies the problem. Moreover, there is also unequal relations among the members of the association. Members are said to have access to the resources of the association in proportion to their participation in the activities.

Another issue is the cost of participation for members. There is no participation fee yet obviously it requires time and energy to be an active participant. Moreover, one should also abide with the norms and values of the association. There

are no strict written rules; however, the association is seen as a safe family environment and any “extreme” behavior is not acceptable. Hence, members are expected to be careful with their manners in the association. The costs of membership might not be seen as that much of a problem since the membership is voluntary; however, it should be kept in mind that one has to bear these costs in return for the benefits provided by the association.

GSCA does not provoke distrust for non-group members as it is claimed to be in bonding associations. On the contrary, by facilitating the integration of migrants, it might be said to prevent distrust that would emanate from a disadvantaged position. However, the association is a fertile ground for the maintenance of values such as hierarchy and obedience with authority, which are not compatible with democracy.

Finally, the links established with politicians through GSCA are prone to be personalized and used for particularistic favors. No such instance was given except a few cases of appointment yet obviously this is difficult to reveal through interviews.

In conclusion, although the association is based on a common hometown and at first sight seems to be an extension of family ties and traditional relations, it functions as a civil society organization as it contributes to equal political participation of immigrants and increases their opportunities for self-realization. On the other hand, it suffers from lack of an issue-oriented perspective and institutionalized relations between members. For that reason, it has problems such as the reproduction of inequalities, the limitation of individual freedom, the promotion of values such as obedience and the creation of possibilities for rent-seeking behavior.

## APPENDIX

### Interview Questions

Name and Surname

Age

Are you married? Do you have children?

What is your occupation?

Where are you from?

How long have you been living in Istanbul?

Where did you use to live before?

When did you become a member to the association? How did you hear about the association?

Why did you become a member?

What were your expectations from the association?

How intense is your relationship with the association?

How often do you come to the association?

In which ways do you participate in the association?

Which activities do you attend?

Do your wife/husband and children also attend the activities of the association?

What did the association change in your life?

Did you experience any negative aspects of being member to this association?

Did membership contribute to the broadening of your social milieu? What was the effect of this in your life?

Did you have difficulties in integration to Istanbul? What kind of difficulties?

Did the association or your hemsehris help you? In what way?

Did the association or your hemsehris help you with finding accommodation?

Did the association or your hemsehris help you in your professional life? Or did you help any of your hemsehris?

Did the association or your hemsehris help you with the solution of your health problems? Did the association or your hemsehris help you in the education of your children?

What do you understand from the word “hemsehri”?

How often do you visit your hometown? Do you have relatives there?

What kind of differences exist between life style in your hometown and in Istanbul?

Did you experience any differences in your life style after moving to Istanbul?

Is it important for you to preserve the culture of your hometown? Which elements?

What does culture mean for you?

Would you like your children to preserve your culture?

What kind of differences exist between your culture and others?

Do you think that this association contributes to the preservation of your culture?

Do you think that this association contributes to the preservation of values that are important for you?

Do you think that you have differences from your non-hemsehris in Istanbul? What kind of differences?

Have you ever thought that you became subject to injustice or discrimination because of your hometown or your accent?

Did you experience any advantages of being from Black Sea region?

Are you a member of any political parties?

Did the association contribute to your political career?

Do you support your hemsehris in elections?

Did the association contribute to voicing your demands?

As an association, did you have any demands from a political party or state institutions?

Which football club do you support?

Is the success of your team important for you? Why?

Does membership to the association have any costs?

Does the association bring any limitations to its members?

Are there any conditions for being accepted to the association?

Is the association open to all people coming from Guzelpinar? To those who do not come from Guzelpinar?

Are there any people who want to be members but who cannot?

How do you think should a Guzelpinar person be like?

Can people who behave in a way that would not be approved by the association be members?

Do you think that you have any advantages compared to Guzelpinar people who are not members or non-Guzelpinar population? Does this bring about any inequalities in allocation of resources?

Do you have any relationship with other hemsehri associations or non-governmental organizations?

If you find out that someone that you met recently is from your hometown, do your manners towards her/him change? How? Why?

Do you trust people from your hometown more than other people?

When you are with your hemsehris or you are at the association, do you feel yourself more comfortable than you do when you are with other people?

Is you wife/husband from your hometown?

Do you allow your children to marry someone who is not from your hometown? /

Would your parents allow you to marry someone who is not from your hometown?

Would you prefer your children to marry someone who is from your hometown? /

Would your parents prefer you to marry someone who is from your hometown?

Would you prefer your children to have friends who are from your hometown? /

Would your parents prefer you to have friends who are from your hometown?

What percent of your friends are from your hometown?

Would you prefer to work with people from your hometown to with other people?

Would you prefer people from your hometown as your neighbours?

## Mülakat Soruları

İsim ve Soyisim

Yaş

Evli misiniz, çocuklarınız var mı?

Ne işle uğraşıyorsunuz?

Nerelisiniz?

Ne kadar zamandır İstanbul'da oturuyorsunuz?

Daha önce nerede oturuyordunuz? Şehir merkezinde mi, köyde mi?

Bu derneğe ne zaman üye oldunuz? Dernekten nasıl haberdar oldunuz?

Derneğe niçin üye oldunuz?

Derneğe üye olurken beklentileriniz nelerdi?

Dernekle ne kadar yoğun ilişki içindesiniz?

Derneğe sık sık geliyor musunuz?

Derneğe ne şekilde katılıyorsunuz?

Derneğin hangi faaliyetlerine katılıyorsunuz?

Eşiniz ve çocuklarınız da dernek faaliyetlerine katılıyor mu?

Bu derneğe üye olmak hayatınızda ne değiştirdi?

Bu derneğe üye olmanın olumsuz bir tarafını gördünüz mü?

Bu derneğe üye olmak çevrenizin genişlemesine katkıda bulundu mu? Bu hayatınızı nasıl etkiledi?

İstanbul'a geldiğinizde uyum sağlamakta güçlük çektiniz mi? Ne gibi zorluklar yaşadınız?

Derneğin ya da hemşehrilerinizin yardımını gördünüz mü? Ne şekilde?

Ev bulurken derneğin ya da hemşehrilerinizin size yardımcı oldu mu?

İş hayatınızda derneğin ya da hemşehrilerinizin size yardımı oldu mu? Ya da sizin onlara yardımınız oldu mu?

Sağlık sorunlarınızı çözmenizde derneğin ya da hemşehrilerinizin size yardımı oldu?

Çocuklarınızın eğitiminde derneğin ya da hemşehrilerinizin size yardımı oldu mu?

Hemşehri sizin için ne demek?

Memleketinize ne sıklıkla gidiyorsunuz? Orada yakın akrabalarınız var mı?

Memleketinizdeki yaşam biçimiyle buradaki yaşam biçimi arasında ne gibi farklar var?

İstanbul'da yaşamaya başladıktan sonra sizin yaşam biçiminizde ne gibi değişiklikler oldu?

Memleketinizin kültürünü korumak sizin için önemli mi? Hangi unsurları korumak önemli?

Kültür sizin için ne demek?

Çocuklarınızın da memleketinizin kültürünü yaşatmasını ister misiniz?

Kültürünüzle diğer kültürler arasında ne gibi farklar var?

Bu derneğin kültürünüzün korunmasında katkısı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

Bu derneğin sizin için önemli olan değerlerin korunmasında katkısı olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

İstanbul'da yaşayanlardan hemşehriniz olmayanlara göre farklılıklarınız olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Ne gibi?

Memleketiniz ya da aksanız yüzünden size ayrımcılık/haksızlık yapıldığını düşündüğünüz oldu mu?

Karadenizli olmak size herhangi bir konuda avantaj sağladı mı?

Herhangi bir siyasi partiye üye misiniz?

Dernek üyesi olmanızın siyasi hayatınıza bir faydası oldu mu?

Seçimlerde hemşehrilerinizi destekler misiniz?

Derneğin sorunlarınızın dile getirilmesine bir katkısı oldu mu?

Dernek olarak bir siyasi partiden ya da devlet kuruluşundan talepleriniz oldu mu?

Hangi takımı tutuyorsunuz?

Takımınızın başarısı sizin için önemli mi? Neden?

Derneğe katılmanın bir maliyeti var mı?

Dernek üyelere kısıtlamalar getiriyor mu?

Dernekte kabul görebilmek için gereken koşullar var mı?

Dernek her Güzelpınarlı'ya açık mı? Güzelpınar dışından olanlara?

Derneğe katılmak isteyip de katılamayan var mı?

Sizce bir Güzelpınarlı nasıl olmalı?

Derneğin onaylamayacağı davranışlarda bulunanlar derneğe üye olabilir mi?

Derneğe katılmayan Güzelpınarlılar ya da dernek kurmaya gücü olmayan diğer gruplara göre avantajlarınız olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Bu toplumsal pastadan eşit şartlarda yararlanamamanızı getirmez mi?

Diğer hemşehri dernekleriyle ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarıyla ilişkiniz var mı?

Yeni tanıştığınız birinin hemşehriniz olduğunu öğrenirseniz ona karşı davranışlarınızda bir değişiklik olur mu? Nasıl? Neden?

Hemşehrilerinize diğer insanlara göre daha çok güvenir misiniz?

Dernekteyken ya da hemşehrilerinizle birlikteyken kendinizi dışarıda olduğuna göre daha rahat hissediyor musunuz?

Eşiniz hemşehriniz mi?

Çocuklarınızın hemşehriniz olmayan birileriyle evlenmesine izin verir misiniz? /

Aileniz hemşehriniz olmayan birisiyle evlenmenize izin verir mi?

Çocuklarınızın hemşehrilerinizle evlenmesini mi tercih edersiniz? / Aileniz

hemşehriniz olan biriyle mi evlenmenizi tercih eder?

Çocuklarınızın hemşehrilerinizle mi arkadaşlık etmesini tercih edersiniz? / Aileniz

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