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GIVING MONEY TO THE POOR: THE POLITICAL PAYOFFS OF ALLOCATING  
CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS IN TURKEY

By

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Dr. Robert Kaufman

and approved by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Dissertation Director:

Dr. Robert Kaufman

This dissertation analyzes the political consequences of the Conditional Cash Transfer program (CCT) in Turkey. The purpose is three-fold: first, to investigate the political incentives and payoffs that motivate policymakers to adopt CCTs; second, to test whether political or technocratic criteria explain the allocation of CCTs in Turkey, and third, to examine whether conditionally transferring cash to the poor empowers poor citizens, or produces/reproduces pressure on the poor to reciprocate by supporting the political party that made the cash transfer.

My research draws on six months of fieldwork conducted in Malkara, Tekirdağ (with Roma beneficiaries) and Diyarbakır (with Kurdish beneficiaries), and on regression analysis of original district level data on the allocation of CCTs. I reach three primary conclusions. First, the adoption of CCTs under the coalition government, influenced and

pushed by the World Bank, led to a relatively strict formulation of the social assistance scheme in Turkey, which provides a promising attempt to make a transition to programmatic social policy. Second, although on balance, social and economic indicators guide the distribution of funds, Kurdish districts appear to receive favorable treatment. Third, due to the lack of CCTs requirements for increased social participation and active social engagement on the part of beneficiaries, the CCT program does not have a transformative impact on the enhancement of citizenship and the empowerment of women for both the Kurdish and Roma communities. Rather, more politicized groups, such as the Kurdish people, view the benefit as their social right due to state's inefficiency in creating jobs in the eastern part of Turkey and their uneasy relations with the state. Among less politicized groups, such as the Roma people, the program triggers feelings of gratitude and appreciation to the politicians providing this program, especially Prime Minister Erdoğan.

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My fieldwork in poor neighborhoods is like an opening door to the new world to me. Listening poor people's problems, their survival strategies, and their struggle with permanent poverty left me hopeless at the end of days filled with conducting interviews. However, at the end of each interview, their eagerness to share different local foods with me, our talk about life, children gave me hope about the goodness of humanity, even under difficult living conditions that no one ever deserve. This reminds me one of my favorite poet, Nazim Hikmet's poem, saying "The great humanity has no shade on his

soil, no lamp on his road, no glass on his window, but the great humanity has hope, you can't live without hope.”

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Dedication

To *Gigi & Zazo*

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## 1. Introduction

There have been accusations of clientelism during each and every Turkish election. News coverage has always been dominated by accusations against political parties, particularly the incumbent, allocating favors such as coal, food packages, and white goods to poor people in exchange of support. This is especially the case during elections. The poor have been portrayed as naïve, corrupt, and easily pleased by those who provide material benefits. The caricature of the poor is similarly stereotypical, by representing them as people who “sell” their votes for a bag of coal or food aid (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Caricatures of the poor from Turkish media.

The caricature on the right roughly translates as follows: “LEFT: We give you packages of coal for free but you have to give your vote to our party, ok? RIGHT: Of course! The one who asks [for something] has one side of his face dark; the one who refuses [to give] has both!”<sup>1</sup>

Academic research on Turkish politics has often mentioned the “specter of clientelism.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, social assistance programs and material benefits targeted at the

<sup>1</sup> The caricature on the left is taken from mamutistan.com. It was published on February 5, 2009, just before the local elections on March 2009. The caricature on the right is drawn by Sefer Selvi and published in Evrensel.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this dissertation, clientelism and patronage are used interchangeably.

poor are appealing to politicians who want to manipulate low-income voters. The dual processes of increasing rates of poverty and the widening gap between the rich and poor has facilitated the rise of poverty-alleviation programs in the developing world, where 1.4 billion people (one in four) were living on less than US\$1.25 a day in 2005.<sup>3</sup> Poverty-relief becomes the new vehicle toward a virtuous end, and consequently, it has grown to meet the needs of poor people. Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs), which provide money to poor families contingent on certain requirements, such as sending their children to school and paying monthly visits to health centers are, among an extraordinarily diverse variety of social welfare programs, one of the most innovative.<sup>4</sup> Cash transfers are not allocated as a one-time gift. On the contrary, CCTs provide monthly money transfers to poor households, and the money is directly deposited into women's bank accounts.

Currently, more than 50 governments in different regions, from all sides of the ideological scale, have adopted CCTs; including Turkey (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009), and 110 million families around the world enjoy the benefits (Hanlon et al., 2010). CCTs first emerged in Latin America. The emergence of a programmatic social policy within a region that is notorious for providing material benefits in exchange for poor peoples' electoral support has been a challenge. The birth and implementation of Turkish CCTs,

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<sup>3</sup> <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:21882162~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:469382,00.html>, World Bank Report accessed on May 2011.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Rights of Man*, Thomas Paine wrote about to very poor families of four pounds a year for each child under fourteen years old, with the requirement of sending their children to school, in addition to learning how to read and write. He discussed the possible positive effects of these payments not only on relieving poverty but also the positive impact on the next generation by making investments in their education, which will increase their abilities. Thomas Paine. "The First Welfare State", in: Christopher Pierson and Francis G. Castles (eds.) *The Welfare State Reader* p.10.

known as *Şarhı Nakit Transferi*, with a claim of being a social policy that is distributed regardless of the color of the vote has been a challenge as well. Turkey also has a notorious history of political distortion of material incentives by political parties. Therefore, there is a high hope for the implementation of CCTs, which claims to transform social welfare policies allocated through clientelistic mechanisms into a more transparent, effective and representative system in Turkey.

Despite the program's wide appeal and an interest among academicians over how patronage mechanisms work in Turkey (Komsuoğlu, 2005; Ayata, 1996; Güneş-Ayata, 1994; Ozbudun, 1981; Sayari, 1977) and their distortive capacity on Turkish democracy (Kalaycioglu, 2001; Heper and Keyman, 1998), CCTs have been the subject of few studies. Outside academia, CCTs have been the subject of many national and local newspaper articles and have been praised by development specialists, politicians and public policy makers. Although there is a great appreciation of and interest in these policies, with the exception of a recent publication (Aytac, 2013), there is no empirical study on the political impact of Turkish CCTs, which indicates an urgent need for further academic research on the matter.

## **1.2. Research Objectives & Questions**

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the political impact of distributing funds through CCTs in Turkey in a three dimensional perspective, informing both macro and micro levels of study. I will address three key questions related to three objectives of this study. The first objective is to explain intentions, *political incentives that motivate policy makers' choice* of CCTs in Turkey. What is the main driving force

behind adoption of a programmatic social policy in a country where providing material benefits in exchange for votes has become a rule rather than an exception? What is the impact of the social policy adoption process on the design features of the CCT program in Turkey? The second objective is to investigate whether *political or technocratic criteria* explain the allocation of CCT in Turkey. Does the incumbent, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi-AKP), politically manipulate the distribution of cash transfers disproportionately to some regions in order to increase its electoral support? The third objective is a response to micro level analyses of CCTs, to explain the *impact* of cash transfers on poor peoples' political behavior in terms of clientelism and citizenship. How does "giving money to the poor" shape the relationship between government and beneficiaries? Does conditionally transferring cash to the poor empower their sense of entitlement, or produce/reproduce linkages and obligations to reciprocate in terms of supporting the political party allocating the cash?

There is a handful of research literature on the potential impact of CCTs, much of which focuses on Latin America, the birthplace of cash transfers. Conversely, the literature about this phenomenon in Turkey and the research uncovering these themes in the Turkish context is immature. Therefore, I believe my research contributes to current debates on the political impact of CCTs, both on the institutional and individual level, and helps to empirically highlight Turkey's experiences with setting programmatic social policy, and the consequences for other countries, especially in Latin America

### **1.3.Theoretical Contributions**

There are 3 lines of literature that speak to a variety of questions about the impacts of CCTs on the social policymaking structures of developing countries where clientelism is perennial problem, and on beneficiaries' political behavior, both for electoral and non-electoral purposes, or for vote buying and for empowering citizens and/or fostering clientelism, respectively. The first line of studies focus on CCTs' impacts on the traditional mechanisms of clientelistic allocations of social assistance schemes, and asks whether it is programmatic or clientelistic Social Policy Making. The second line of literature is informed by micro level analysis and questioning CCTs impact on the *political behaviors of beneficiaries*, whether CCTs are making clients or citizens. Last but not least, most of the existing literature focuses on the impact of CCTs on *political party strategies* for re-election, rather than beneficiaries: whether they increase voter turnout and the vote share of the incumbent, etc. My research questions have created a dialogue with the three strands of this literature and make contributions to each.

#### **1.3.1.The Emergence and Implementation of CCTs**

Throughout policy perspective studies and reports, it is common to hear that CCTs are “magic bullets” in fighting against poverty in developing countries. They are so popular and appreciated for their roles in promoting transparency and fighting the legacies of paternalism and clientelism that the CCT program diffused first to Latin America and then other parts of the world. Although some CCT programs were designed domestically by national governments (as in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico), the involvement of international organizations, such as the World Bank, has been rising over

time as well (Lomeli, 2008; p.477). Several scholarly works have focused on the mechanisms and incentives that lead decision-makers to adopt CCTs in a given country. Policy diffusion studies analyze the role of domestic politics, international institutions, facilitators, cross-national and intergovernmental competition, negotiations, and bargaining during the CCT making process (Sugiyama, 2012, 2008; De La O, 2011; Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni, 2009; Murillo, 2009; Weyland 2006, 2005).

The ways that CCTs emerge have a significant impact on the operational rules of the CCTs, which may or may not foster clientelism. There is a body of literature examining the political consequences associated with policy designs, and their impact on whether design features of CCTs successfully overcome traditional mechanisms of clientelist allocation of social assistance provision (De La O, 2011; Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2009; Stokes, 2009). The political process behind the adoption of CCTs may lead to the design and implementation of stricter CCTs, which create more successful programs in terms of bypassing clientelist networks and being programmatic.

My dissertation contributes to this vein of literature by filling a gap on the political story behind the adoption of social policy, in this case, CCTs in Turkey. The Turkish case is unique in the sense that it has a very strong centralized system, is a unitary state in which the Presidential role is symbolic, and where executive power is dominant under single party governments. This is a setting highly differentiated from that of most other countries, especially Latin Americas. Therefore, focusing on the Turkish case helps to empirically highlight the experiences of other developing countries, and also show where the Turkish version of CCTs would fit on this spectrum. If the Turkish CCT program represents a promising attempt to make a transition to programmatic social policy, it

would have important consequences for a country where the poor emerge as an important constituency.

### **1.3.2. Political Manipulation of CCTs**

There is an increasing interest in, and emerging literature on, the political payoffs of allocating cash transfers to the poor, mainly in Latin America (Fried, 2012; De La O, 2010; Zucco, 2010; Luna and Marnodes, 2010; Grimes and Wangnerud, 2010; Zucco, 2008, Hunter and Power, 2007; Díaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni, 2006; Britto, 2005; Briere and Rawlings, 2006; Schady, 2000). Scholars have mainly focused on electoral consequences, such as whether allocating cash transfers foster pro-incumbent support (Zucco, 2011; Díaz-Cayeros et al., 2009; Manacardo, 2009; De La O, 2007), whether cash transfer payment increases voter turnout (De La O, 2007), the impact of the length of exposure to the cash transfers on incumbent vote share (De La O, 2007), and whether the program has been less subject to political manipulations than its predecessors (Díaz-Cayeros, Estevez and Magaloni, 2006; Hunter and Power 2007).

There is a consensus in the literature, with varied conclusions, that CCTs have an impact on beneficiaries' voting behavior, especially pro-incumbent support (for a contrary view see Bohn 2011). Based on these arguments, can we accept these impacts as part of "clientelistic practices?" Indeed, it is true that most countries where CCTs operate are notorious for being a clientelist democracy, in which targeting the poor is a part of a political strategy to win votes. However, these studies also find that CCTs function just like other the forms of economical voting (Zucco, 2013; De La O, 2010). Even programmatic social policies may produce payoffs for the incumbents, perhaps as a



legitimate political process (Diaz-Cayeros, Estevez and Magaloni, 2009), as in “you provide services and I give my vote.”

The contribution of my dissertation to this strand of research is to ask “what if there is a case where cash transfers are disproportionately distributed to a poor minority group, which has uneasy relations with the state?” The practices of the AKP government on poverty relief suggest that courting this minority group is a central part of the party’s political strategy. I will investigate whether CCT has played any role in this equation. There is only one very recent study that attempts to investigate whether there is a political distortion while distributing the cash transfers in Turkey (Aytac, 2013). This article explains the distribution of cash benefits in a multiparty setting rather than the two party system, and examines CCT in Turkey to support the hypothesis on the allocation of resources in a multi-party system. Apart from that article, there is no empirical study uncovering the story behind the disproportionate regional allocation of CCTs and whether the allocation of cash transfers in Turkey follows technocratic or political criteria. Answering questions is significant, especially where the political manipulation of the distribution of social benefits has a deleterious impact on the quality of democracy.

### **1.3.3. Making Clients or Citizens?**

The recent wave of literature on CCTs tends to focus on macro-level explanations. These studies have given priority to political parties’ decision-making processes in allocating benefits rather than how poor people respond to this allocation. Institutional factors, such as the nature of parties, party institutionalization, regime type, presidential versus parliamentary systems, federal versus. Unitary systems, ethno-cultural

cleavages, economic structure, and state bureaucracy are frequently used variables to explain whether the design of social policies follows the patterns of clientelism in developing world or whether they are insulated from traditional clientelistic politics (Stokes, 2009; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Calvo and Murillo, 2012). The institutional level of analysis provides an easy and manageable way of comparing different regions, which leads to more generalizable arguments than the individual level of research can offer. However, the supply level of analysis doesn't give a clue about how the poor beneficiaries, the main objects of social policies, react to CCTs, or how these programs reshape their political behavior beyond election times. Little is known about the effects of CCTs on empowering citizens and their sense of entitlement, or fostering clientelist networks (Grimes and Wangnerud, 2010; Brière and Rawlings, 2006).

The contribution of my dissertation to this line of literature is implementing a bottom-up strategy to explore the impacts of Turkish CCTs on perceptions, political thought, and behavior of the beneficiaries who are the main targets of CCTs. It is crucial to analyze the role of highly appreciated programmatic social policy in theory on shaping the political perceptions and behaviors of poor people. My dissertation looks first into whether CCTs empower poor people, and as such increase their integration into society, their sense of entitlement, and elevate women's role in society. If CCTs as the "haute couture" of social policies, manage to empower poor people's sense of rights, they may have an impact on raising poor people's voices and the demands they make of the government. In addition to the empowerment of individuals, these policies also have the potential to bring a more approachable and strong democratic state that takes poor

people's voices into account. My dissertation also contributes to the link between social assistance policies and clientelism by asking whether CCTs produce/reproduce linkages and obligations to reciprocate in terms of supporting the political party allocating cash. It is crucial to respond to this question, for in a broader sense, clientelism has deleterious effects on quality of democracy. On the micro level, it has an impact on neutralizing the system of political representation and operates as a mechanism of harming "political citizenship of the poor in exchange for low-quality social citizenship" (Piattoni, 2001). From this perspective, clientelism is inimical to the foundations of democracy, competitiveness of elections, and public accountability. It also hurts the institutional performance of administrative institutions to control "who gets what and how," by reducing its legitimacy and ability to reform, which also threaten functioning of the state.

#### **1.4. Hypothesis**

Out of this dissertation emerged the hypothesis that CCTs represents a break with the previous clientelist mechanisms of social assistance provision and social-policy making processes in Turkey.

On the institutional level of analysis, the *first hypothesis* is that the 2001 economic crisis played a trigger role, facilitating the involvement of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, on the social policymaking process. The political and socioeconomic processes behind the adoption of CCTs have an impact on the design of the operational rules of the CCT program. The existence of a coalition government in an environment of economic crisis exposed the impact of the World Bank and the stricter design features of CCTs. Since the coalition partners share the political

payoffs, they would be more likely to tie each other's hands in formulating social assistance policies. Therefore, the design features of CCTs play a critical role in weakening the traditional mechanisms of clientelistic allocations of social assistance schemes in Turkey.

The *second hypothesis* of this dissertation is that after the program is designed, the allocation of CCTs follows the objective socioeconomic development level of each region, however the geographical targeting of the program is skewed toward districts populated by Kurdish people. I hypothesize that socio-economic indicators have a greater negative effect on the distribution of CCTs in Kurdish populated districts compared to other regions.

On the societal level of analysis, the *third hypothesis* of this study is that the political consequences of receiving cash from a government may result in different behaviors, ranging from making clients<sup>5</sup> to creating citizens.<sup>6</sup> The impact of the CCT program on beneficiaries does not lead to increased social inclusion of beneficiaries into the society. This is due to the design features of CCTs, such as being centralized, and lacking the requirement of active participation of poor people. Though to some degree the CCT program is able to increase women's empowerment, it does not have a transformative impact on citizenship enhancement for women beneficiaries. A

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout this study, I will use political clientelism and patronage politics interchangeably. I borrow Auyero's definition of political clientelism, which says "the distribution of resources or promise of distribution by political office holders or candidates in exchange for political support, primarily-although not exclusively-in the form of vote" (Auyero, 1999:297).

<sup>6</sup> In this study, "citizenship" is conceptualized as a set of political and social attitudes (Bratton, 2006; Mettler and Soss, 2004) rather than as a political identity. Therefore, empowerment of citizenship includes enhance social participation into the society, empowerment, foster trust between people, claiming social rights that further agency. Agency-understood as the actions of individuals or groups and their capacities to influence events, (Allen&Thomas 2000, 189) which play a crucial role in the full exercise of citizenship.

comparison of the perceptions of two CCT beneficiary groups, the Roma and Kurdish minority, demonstrated that the CCT program has generated an understanding among Kurds of social entitlement, rather than an understanding of the CCT as a reward from an incumbent. However, the Roma people continue to feel gratefulness and appreciation to the politicians providing this program, especially Prime Minister Erdoğan, comparing it to the public provision provided by previous political parties. Poor neighborhoods are far less homogeneous than commonly assumed. Hence, the variation within the reactions and perceptions of poor people is dependent on a combination of different factors such as their level of political awareness and their previous experiences with the state.

### **1.5. Research Design**

In order to test whether my understanding on political impact of CCTs is true or not, I will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. Three types of qualitative methods are employed coming out of 6 months of fieldwork that I conducted in Turkey in Fall 2011: Participant observation, semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries, elite interviews with policy makers and resource analysis. On the quantitative side, my research draws on an original dataset of CCTs spending in 878 districts from 2006 to 2009, pulled from the General Directorate of Social Solidarity Foundation website, socio economic indicators of each district, provided by Ministry of Development, and electoral results of both national and local elections, delivered by Turkish Statistical Institution (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu-TUIK) in Turkey.

Participant Observation: I conducted my fieldwork in 4 different poor neighborhoods in 2 cities: Erenler neighborhood (Malkara, Tekirdağ), Gazibey neighborhood (Malkara,

Tekirdağ), Fatihpaşa neighborhood (Diyarbakır) and Benusen neighborhood (Diyarbakır). The former two neighborhoods are located in the west part of Turkey, close to Greece/Turkey border. Roma people populate these two neighborhoods predominantly. The latter two are located in the east part of Turkey, in the city of Diyarbakır, populated by poor Kurdish people. During my fieldwork, before conducting interviews with CCT beneficiaries, I familiarized myself with the neighborhoods, especially Diyarbakır. Though Malkara is my hometown, Roma people in Malkara live in segregated neighborhoods, and I had been there few times before my fieldwork. In Diyarbakır during my pre-dissertation fieldwork, I visited a microcredit market where beneficiaries are Kurdish women who live in Fatihpaşa neighborhood, and I became friends with them. I observed the everyday lives of these women, who are beneficiaries of CCTs. We spent breakfast and lunchtime together. I sat down in the marketplace and had conversation with them about their everyday problems, household issues, neighborhood problems, etc. I also visited a couple of local Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (Sosyal Dayanışma ve Yardımlaşma Derneği-SYDV): Kayapınar, Yenisehir and Sur Social Solidarity Foundation. I had a chance to observe the process of applying to the CCT program, the relationship between beneficiaries and civil servants working in those institutions. I repeated the same practice in Malkara as well. I visited the Malkara Social Solidarity Foundation and observed the everyday practices of poor people, who were applying to different types of social assistance programs, but mainly to CCT. Gaining access to the Roma community is not an easy task unless you are a local. However, I grew up in Malkara and several Roma acquaintances brought me into the community.

Semi-structured Interviews with Beneficiaries: The semi-structured interviews constitute the most important part of my research method, which structures my arguments. They inform micro level analysis of my research by taking into account the voices of the poor. In order to gain better insight about whether CCTs empower the poor or produce subordinate, dependent relations with the state, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 35 Roma woman and 5 Roma men. Out of the 40 Roma people, only 3 of them are non-beneficiaries of the CCT. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with 35 Kurdish women and 5 men. Out of the 40 Kurdish people, only 2 of them are non-beneficiaries of the CCT. The rest are associated with the CCT program. The interviews are conducted through the chain sampling method. In other words, the previous CCT beneficiary that I interviewed identified other people of relevance.

Through the interviews, I touched upon many topics related to poverty, CCTs, clientelism, citizenship, the incumbent, voting behavior, the opposition party, party identification, economic problems, solutions, etc. I asked CCT beneficiaries about their experiences with the program. In order to determine clientelism on the individual level, I put emphasis on their ability to access the program. By this I mean that I tried to flesh out whether there is any role assigned to the local broker by asking, “how do they have access to the program?” (Through their boss or local brokers? How did they participate in the program? Do they feel obligated to the party that distributed these benefits? To whom do they give credit? How do they evaluate conditions that they need to meet in order to get these benefits? Do they know about the conditions? How are they informed about conditions of benefits and eligibility criteria? How do they evaluate the role of the government in the area of social policies, compared to previous governments?) These

questions were supplemented with questions about other issues to find out the possible impact of CCTs on empowering beneficiaries' citizenship experiences. The questions include: do these transfers increase their inclination to participate in society? Do conditions of the programs such as monitoring/ controlling/ means-testing cause disinterest? What are the problems that facilitate their social exclusion? Do they face any discrimination while receiving the benefit or while waiting in local foundation offices?

I had specific questions targeting women and non-beneficiaries. I conducted interviews with a small group of non-beneficiaries living in the same neighborhood. The way that those who are excluded from benefits interpret the selection process is an important question that has to be delved into, as it can indicate whether the program weakens community ties or adds another dimension of inequality between poor people. The interviews with women beneficiaries constituted a significant portion of the interviews. Specifically, I asked "how do they feel about getting the benefit by themselves?" "do they feel elevated?" "How do they spend the money?" "Any positive or negative experiences with their husband and children?"

Elite interviews: Many stakeholders have a profound influence on program outcomes, and also have key perceptions into the processes and impacts with respect to CCTs both in the work of international organizations and ministries. I and my colleague Mine Tafolar conducted interviews with Yadigar Gökalp (head of Turkish CCT team, now President of Social Security Institution), Faik Öztrak (former Undersecretary of Treasury during the first initiation of of CCT program, and currently Deputy Head of Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-CHP), the main opposition party, Jeannie Braithwaite (co-team leader of Turkish CCT, World Bank), Ayşe Kudat (one of the



author of the first Impact Evaluation Report on Turkish CCTs), Terry Roopnaraine (one of the author of the first Impact Evaluation Report on Turkish CCTs), Hande Hacımahmutoğlu (Planning Expert in Ministry of Development), Fatih Ortakaya (Expert in General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity), Gamze Torun (Expert in General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity). I also conducted interviews with SYDV staff from multiple organizational levels. University Professors and experts in NGOs working on poverty and social assistance policies also constitute parts of my elite interviews.

In my fieldwork sites, I interviewed *belediye baskani* (local mayors), *muhtar* (local government officials), government officials from different ranks working in *Valilik* and *Kaymakamlık* (Governor Office), AKP's local party representatives and other sub-provincial government officials. I also contacted many NGOs working in the area of social assistance, such as Sarmaşık Derneği, Is there Anybody? (Kimse Yok Mu?), MicroCredit Foundation, Children Under the Same Roof (Çocuklar Aynı Çatı Altında-ÇAÇA), Sumerpark, Food Bank (Gıda Bankası), Development Agency (Kalkınma Merkezi) in Diyarbakır and Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (Kadın Emegini Değerlendirme Vakfı-KEDV), Community Volunteers Association (Toplum Gönüllüleri Vakfı-TOGEM) in Istanbul.

#### Qualitative Resource Analysis:

Finally, I visited the World Bank Data Center located in Ankara and I collected brochures, documents, reports, and technical descriptions of the CCT program. I also scanned the archives of four prominent newspapers, *Hurriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Radikal*, *Bianet*, for 10-year period (2002-2012). Specifically, I examined the news on CCTs, poverty, and

social assistance programs. I also visited AKP's website and scanned AKP's election speeches and manifestoes during the 2007 and 2011 national elections. By using the software program "wordle", I created a word cloud to represent most frequent words that the Prime Minister has used during the election campaigns.

#### Quantitative Method:

It is hard to find data on whether the beneficiaries reward the incumbent for receiving the benefit, as there is no mass survey on clientelism in Turkey. This question was investigated with qualitative research methods. It is also difficult to find existing data determine whether the allocation of CCTs follows objective or political criteria. The allocation of CCT money per district between 2003-2009 is available through the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity (Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Genel Müdürlüğü- SYDGM) website, however, first I requested the information from officials working in that public institution. They told me the data is not available per district, but that it is available per year. They also they requested my ID, a petition letter, and a letter from the Rutgers University Social Science Institute. Then, I searched in Google and found out the data is published in their website. Election data set is provided by TUIK and I created some of my dependent variables out of that data set. I also downloaded the socioeconomic indicators of each district data set from Ministry of Development's website. Then, putting all the data together, I created my original dataset to test the possible strategies that are followed by the incumbent.

## **1.6. Dissertation Plan**

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to situate the overall organization of the Turkish welfare system regarding social assistance policies during the AKP era (2002-present), which relied on the Esping-Andersen typology used throughout the literature: Liberal, Christian Democrat, and Social Democrat. Welfare regimes constitute well-developed points of reference, especially for a comparative reader. Based on AKP's discourses and practices on social assistance provision, the chapter reviews each welfare regime's characteristics and categorizes different features of social assistance provision under AKP. Some features represent certain welfare regime types. On the one hand, AKP's emphasis on family and conservative values and the provision of more generous state support to families is a clear reference point for a conservative welfare regime. On the other hand, the system under the AKP also embraces a liberal welfare regime, featuring an increasing involvement of non-state providers and public-private collaboration. This eclectic welfare system also includes certain features of a social democratic regime, either by substantially increasing its social expenditures in the area of social assistance or by introducing more universal benefits. The increasing clientelist social spending, especially before election times, falls completely out of these categories. The discussion portion of this chapter focuses on the question of "where do the CCTs fit under AKP's institutional welfare mix?" Indeed, for many points, the logic behind CCTs in Turkey is reflecting elements of each welfare regime, and the discourse on CCTs is mirroring the vote buying election rhetoric of AKP.

Chapter 3 deals with the emergence of the CCT program in Turkey, following policy diffusion literature. I explore the motives and incentives that motivate policy makers on

the choice of CCTs in Turkey. What is the driving force behind the formulation and implementation of such a poverty-alleviation program? Do international agencies push for a top-down process? Do domestic initiatives satisfy policy makers? Or is the policy an outcome of different, multiple directions? What are the political incentives behind the adoption of Turkish CCTs? To answer these questions, this chapter is informed by semi-structured interviews I conducted with insiders such as politicians, bureaucrats, experts, academicians, civil servant staff and team members working in the World Bank. I also explored the negotiation and bargaining process that took place within the coalition government partners, with the World Bank team, and with the Project Coordinating team. Secondary resources, such as technical reports by the World Bank have also been used. My argument gives coalition government partners and the World Bank an upper hand in CCT policy making. The 2001 economic crisis also opened a window of opportunity, which facilitated this process.

The second part of the chapter examines negotiations between the coalition government and the World Bank, and secondarily, the single party government, the AKP and the World Bank, specifically on the design features of the CCT, and investigates whether the design features of CCTs have managed to differentiate traditional mechanisms of clientelist allocation of social assistance benefits. I prepared an index of design of CCTs that show the extent of discretion by checking five factors: the targeting and selection of the beneficiaries' mechanism, the monitoring mechanism, the expansion of the program, and methods of evaluation of the impact of CCTs. I argue that uncertainties brought by the economic crisis, checks and balances between coalition partners that limit the power of one party and that also limit giving the credit of the program to one party, and the push

by the World Bank, guaranteed that the design features of CCTs are set up to dismantle clientelist networks. However, the rapid expansion of program nationwide before the official day decided by AKP, the single party government, the many revisions made to the scoring formula, and the vulnerability of the system caused by the lack of a scoring formula, reduced the level of strictness of the operational rules of the CCT program in Turkey. However, it still constitutes a promising attempt to make a transition to a programmatic social policy.

In Chapter 4, I develop the question of whether the allocation of the CCT program follows objective or political criteria by using aggregated observational data that can provide some information as to what strategies the incumbent might be following while distributing cash transfers in Turkey. My testable hypothesis came out of discussion on “whether the incumbent AKP politically manipulate the distribution of CCTs” or “which geographical section and which ethnic group benefit disproportionately from government CCT spending”. After examining an original dataset of CCT money, socioeconomic indicators, such as poverty, unemployment, literacy level, and electoral results across 873 districts in Turkey, I argue that the socioeconomic indicators have significant impact on explaining the path of allocating CCTs. However, there is a disproportionate distribution of CCT money to the districts in which there is a larger Kurdish population, which has had uneasy relations with the state since Turkey was established. Indeed, my fieldwork observations in Diyarbakır, one of the most prominently Kurdish cities in Turkey, as indicated by official statistics, suggest that diverse poverty alleviation programs targeting the poor have grown at a rapid pace in Kurdish majority regions under AKP rule. Combined with the quantitative findings of my research, the analysis suggests that there

is a disproportionate distribution of CCTs to Kurdish regions, which signals the incumbent's strategy of buying Kurdish votes. These have played an integral and significant role on 2 fronts: to make a transition to a presidential system, and to ease up popular displeasure by creating new welfare networks in the Kurdish population.

Chapter 5 develops an argument based on the poor people's, mainly CCT beneficiaries,' perceptions, interpretations, and reactions to cash transfers. I address two key questions related to two objectives of this study. The first objective is to explain the *impact* of cash transfers on poor people's political behavior in terms of clientelism and citizenship. Do conditionally allocating cash transfers empower beneficiaries' citizenship experiences? Or is there any evidence that Turkish CCTs reinforce patron-client networks in the poor neighborhoods? The second objective is to explain the *causes* of different political responses to cash transfers. Why do some poor communities take this poverty-relief program into account when giving credit to the current government? On the other hand, why and how do some other poor communities perceive and evaluate these cash transfers as entitlements, not giving credit to the government that hinder clientelism?

I investigate these questions by examining two different ethnic minorities living in Turkey, the Roma and Kurdish beneficiaries of CCT. Both constitute poor segments of society, but each has different experiences with state apparatus and citizenship. By selecting these two communities, I treat poor people not as the homogenous entity that is commonly assumed, but rather, I distinguish between their responses and their political behaviors by taking into account local processes and different identities. Informed by my fieldwork conducted with Roma and Kurdish beneficiaries, this chapter develops an argument that distributing cash transfers to the poor people does not lead to the social

inclusion of beneficiaries in society as is expected, due to the design of the program that does not push for increased participation. However, participating in the program does increase women's self-confidence to a degree, because the amount of money is so limited and because the program also does not demand increased social participation among women. Rather, it emphasized traditional gender roles, which locate woman as child bearers, and the one who is responsible of the family, and household staff. It is equally important to find out that even though it does not foster integration, it does not reinforce clientelist networks either. None of the beneficiaries I interviewed mentioned political factors or the role of brokers as mediators while receiving benefits. The impact of the CCT program on Roma and Kurdish beneficiaries does not represent a wide array of different reactions or understandings between two communities. However, the program fosters an understanding of the CCT as a social right among more politicized groups, which are more common among Kurdish beneficiaries, whereas Roma people evaluate CCTs as a "courtesy," which furthers their appreciation to the incumbent, especially Prime Minister Erdoğan. On other matters, such as impact on social integration, and the empowerment of woman beneficiaries, the impacts are similar on both Kurdish and Roma people.

## **2. Turkish Welfare Regime regarding Social Assistance Policies under AKP (2002-2013): A Liberal? Conservative? Social Democrat? Or a Mixture?**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The current welfare regime in Turkey has undergone a tremendous transformation. The new social security law enacted in 2006 transformed the institutional basis of social policy significantly. The introduction of the Social Security Institution Law put an end to the fragmented, corporatist, and inegalitarian nature of the previous regulation of social insurance. Within the new system, first, the state has to make contributions to social security funds, and second, all social security institutions are together under one roof, Social Security Institution (Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu-SGK). In the area of health service provision, the new General Health Insurance Law allows informal workers to have access to public health services. In addition to the transformation of the social security system in Turkey, which brings some positive implementations, there has been an overall increase in the state budget for social service provision not only limited to social security, but including expenses on healthcare, education, and social assistance. Social assistance schemes also have undergone a profound transformation, accompanied by the ever-increasing budget for social benefits. Throughout this chapter, the Turkish welfare system, with an emphasis on provision of social assistance programs, has been examined under the Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology (1990).

According to Esping-Andersen (1990), there are three ideal types of state welfare regimes: liberal, conservative and social democratic. He classified welfare regimes by examining their positions on a two-dimensional scale of welfare statism. The first scale



refers to the degree of decommodification, which means the state reducing people's reliance on the market for their well-being. In other words, a person can maintain livelihood without reliance on the market. The second scale is social stratification, which helps to indicate whether the social policy helps to consolidate broad or narrow divisions between classes.

Based on these dimensions, the liberal welfare state provides means-tested assistance and modest universal transfers. The social benefits are generally provided to low-income people, mainly state-dependents. For the purposes of this chapter, one of the most important characteristics of the liberal welfare state is that the role of state is limited and the state encourages market participation. There is an enhancing role for voluntary organizations to play, as service providers. Social provision services are increasingly outsourced to the voluntary sector, including charities and non-governmental organization (NGOs). Collaboration between the state and the private sector is on the rise.

The Conservative welfare regime is keen on the preservation of status differentials, attached to class and status. The more relevant characteristics of this welfare regime to my research are its commitment to the preservation of the family, family values, and traditional perceptions of gender such as the male breadwinner orientation. Parallel to its emphasis on the family and motherhood, religious doctrine is evident in social policy outcomes. Last but not least, the social democratic model of welfare regime is characterized by highly decommodified social rights based on citizenship that extend to the middle classes, which attempt to prevent dualism between classes. The state balances the market as a social service provider, which is accompanied by increase in social

spending.

Based on this background, the purpose of this chapter is to locate the Turkish welfare system with regard to social assistance policies during the AKP era. Situating the Turkish welfare regime regarding social policies into one typology requires that one ignore the current system's multidimensional characteristics, which combine elements of each typology. Instead, I will propose not an alternative but a complementary argument that the application of the Esping-Andersen' welfare state typology (1990) to the Turkish case during the AKP era regarding social assistance policies, provides evidence that Turkey is a welfare mix of three models. It is a *conservative corporatist* type due to its emphasis on family, as family benefits encourage motherhood, commitment to the preservation of the family, and philanthropic and religious oriented social assistance provision. It is a *liberal* type due to the retreat of the state by dismantling its responsibilities to third parties in the area of social policies, for example, voluntary organizations, public-private collaborations, and the growing involvement of non-state actors in the provision of social assistance. It is a *social democratic* model due to increasing state spending on social assistance and attempts to integrate the social security system under one roof. Locating the organization of the Turkish welfare system regarding social policies under the Esping-Andersen typology works, however, the AKP has also increased populist, clientelistic spending on social assistance, targeting poor constituency, which completely falls outside of these 3 typologies.

Throughout this chapter, I will be applying Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare states to the Turkish case to show that the current system combines elements of each. The first part of the chapter will explore AKP's emphasis, both in discourse and practice, on

the centrality of family and conservative values in social policies, which is a characteristic that reflects conservative type of welfare state. The second part will be on exploring characteristics that fall under the liberal form of welfare state. First, I will address the growing collaboration between public and private, which is followed by the increasing role of NGOs and the poverty reduction projects they provide, such as microcredits. Second, I will examine the rising role of local governments targeting the poor by opening soup kitchens, second hand clothing shops, and conducting municipal projects by collaborating with private companies. As a third point, I will investigate characteristics of the Turkish welfare regime regarding social policies under AKP that fall under the social democratic form of welfare state. Here, the focus will be on the expansion of state power by increasing the material benefits budget to five times the previous governments', and the rise of the more programmatic design of poverty-reduction programs such as the CCTs.

Last but not least, Esping-Andersen admits, "there is no single pure case" in categorizing countries under certain types of welfare regimes. Indeed, the Turkish welfare regime is not a pure case. Characteristics of the Turkish welfare regime fall under each category. The AKP's distribution of social benefits disproportionately into one region, and its election rhetoric emphasizing the social assistance the government is providing, serve as classic examples of *clientelism* or *vote buying strategies*, which fall out of the typology of three welfare states. The argument about the "haunting specter of clientelism," is nothing new when analyzing Turkish politics. Especially during the elections, the news coverage is dominated by accusations against the political parties, especially the governing party, allocating favors such as coal, food packages, and white

goods to poor people in exchange for support. Therefore, I will use content analysis of all AK Party publications and online documents related to social assistance, such as the party manifesto, election campaign booklets, newspaper articles, and AK party leader and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches, especially speeches on social assistance policies and poverty-reduction strategies over the last decade, to show how the new welfare regime under the AKP complemented politicized social assistance provisions with a pinch of clientelistic rhetoric. I will also employ archival research on daily newspapers such as *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Radikal* and *Bianet* during the last decade, and interviews conducted with bureaucrats during my fieldwork in Fall 2011.

The discussion part of this chapter is devoted to determining where the CCT program fits. First, under the new Turkish welfare system (whether it fits under corporatist, liberal or social democrat welfare regime typology); second, its place in the AKP's "fight against poverty" discourse and policies. The logic behind the CCT program will be explored by asking questions such as "Is it a *neopopulist solution to a neoliberal problem*<sup>7</sup>?" "Is it a *magic bullet*<sup>8</sup> in fighting against poverty in developing countries?" "Is it a *shocking therapy*<sup>9</sup> to the consequences of devastating economic crisis?" and/or "Does it decrease/increase the number of people who *depend on market*?"

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<sup>7</sup> Denise Dresser, *Neopopulist Solutions to Neoliberal Problems: Mexico's National Solidarity Program*, Center for U. S. -Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego: UCSD, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> A. De Janvry and E. Sadoulet, "Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: Are They Really Magic Bullets?," *Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California, Berkeley* (2004), [http://pocketknowledge.tc.columbia.edu/home.php/viewfile/download/55924/CCT\\_programs\\_Are\\_they\\_really\\_magic\\_bullets.pdf](http://pocketknowledge.tc.columbia.edu/home.php/viewfile/download/55924/CCT_programs_Are_they_really_magic_bullets.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Ariel Fiszbein and Norbert R. Schady, *Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing Present and Future Poverty* (World Bank Publications, 2009).

## **2.2. A Reference for AKP's Stance Regarding Social Assistance Policies: The Marriage between Conservatist, Liberal and Social Democrat typology of Welfare States**

Based on the content analysis of speeches, party programs, election booklets, newspaper archives from 2001 to 2012, in-depth interviews conducted with poverty-relief associations such as Turkish Foundation For Waste Reduction (Türkiye Israfi Onleme Vakfi-TISVA), municipality social service providers like Community Volunteers Foundation (Toplum Gonulluleri Vakfi-TOGEM), international developmental agencies such as the World Bank (WB), and local municipalities in Tekirdağ and Diyarbakır, I document three distinct characteristics of the Turkish welfare regime regarding social assistance policies under AKP. It appears to be essential to understand the interplay behind the marriage of the three distinct welfare state models and their impact on social assistance policies.

### **2.2.1. The Centrality of Family and Conservative Values in Turkish Welfare System**

The AKP's 2002 general election manifesto, titled *Hersey Türkiye için* (All is for Turkey), explicitly states, "AKP is a conservative party". Indeed, it is not surprising to discover that many of the parliamentarians are former members of the Islamist Welfare Party, in which the AKP's Leader, now Prime Minister Erdoğan, served as mayor of Istanbul, and President Abdullah Gul served as a parliamentarian elected from the very same party. Actually, AKP's ideology and rule reflects both continuity and change with earlier Islamist parties. In the new party program, they explicitly state religion as "one of

the most important institutions of humanity,”<sup>10</sup> which can be considered a continuity. However a change can be seen in the party’s statement on secularism when it states “secularism as a pre-requisite of democracy, and an assurance of the freedom of the religion and conscience.”<sup>11</sup> I will look into how blended Islamic traditions with liberal economic values display themselves in the area of social assistance policymaking during the AKP regime.

First of all, it is important to clarify what a conservative party means. The term is historically associated with right-wing parties. Gallagher et al. (2011) categorized party families in Europe under different branches. Christian democrats fall under the same party family as right-wing parties. Their values and policies have a quite significant impact on the environment of social policymaking, in which the AKP reflects some characteristics from the same party families. On the issue of moral values, the AKP party is like the Christian democrats, which seeks to apply Christianity (in this case, Islamist principles) to public policy. They are conservative on cultural, social and moral issues and emphasize the religious rhetoric of “helping the poor for God’s will.” Parallel to the AKP’s resemblance to the Christian democrats and portraying itself as a conservative party, three concepts are emphasized in their 2002 election manifesto: morality, religion and the family.<sup>12</sup> They state “[t]he society is a living organism which renews itself within the cultural environment founded by strong institutions such as family, school, property,

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<sup>10</sup> AKP’s Party Program, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>, accessed on March 6, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> AKP 2002 Election Manifesto, [http://www.akpartikecioren.org/dosya\\_eki/bildirge/e369853df766fa44e1ed0ff613f563bdak-kecioren34.pdf](http://www.akpartikecioren.org/dosya_eki/bildirge/e369853df766fa44e1ed0ff613f563bdak-kecioren34.pdf), accessed on March 6, 2013.

religion and morality.” Indeed, morality and religion are two driving forces of the Corporatist welfare regime, preserving traditional perceptions of family and gender (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Grütjen, 2007). These three layers, morality, religion, and family, constitute the backbone of social assistance policy making during the AKP term.

One of the promises made in election propaganda was to strengthen the institution of the family. The AKP acknowledges the family as one of the established welfare networks, which in times of economic and/or social crisis, the society would rely on. The party claims, therefore, “[i]n spite of economic recession and its devastating consequences, we, as a nation, still stand, thanks to our strong family institution. Especially, during the times of shocks, the importance of family is emphasized once again and the multifaceted functions performed by it make it a much-needed institution in a society. Our government will support all necessary means and efforts to protect the family, which is the main cornerstone of our nation.”<sup>13</sup>

With this statement, the AKP shows eagerness to shift responsibility in assistance from state to family. Actually, the idealization of the family as a strong institution that holds the country together, especially in times of crisis, is not new rhetoric in Turkish political culture. Indeed, extended family networks performed as welfare agencies in the past, especially for those who migrated from rural areas to urban cities starting in the 1960s. However, the family institution has been getting weaker and “family or kin network based solidarity” is no longer sufficient to alleviate poverty (Buğra and Keyder 2006:222). Poverty is not a temporary situation. Instead, it is permanent due both to

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<sup>13</sup> “AKP kuruldu”, *Hürriyet*, August 14, 2001.

changes in poverty-generating factors such as the elimination of informality in urban housing for new comers, and the inefficiency of survival strategies that the poor use combat poverty. In spite of its insufficient response to the consequences of contemporary poverty,<sup>14</sup> the AKP re-idealized the family and family values, and located the family as an antithesis to individualism in Western societies. Indeed, passionate advocate of individualism, Margaret Thatcher, accepted the role of “family” as a form of social solidarity which decreased the burden on state, infamously declaring that there was “no such thing as a society, only individual men and women [...] and their families” (Harvey, 2005:23). The only difference between the Western and Turkish contexts is that what Thatcher refers to as an ideal family is the nuclear family, whereas the AKP government emphasizes a three-generational extended family, which also carries the “Turkish nation’s genuine cultural values” (Yazici, 2012:112).

The AKP’s emphasis on the role of family displays similarities with other right-wing parties’ responses to the question of poverty and the global discourse of blessing the family as a strong provider of social provisions. After the AKP came into power, the US President George W. Bush paid a visit to Turkey to discuss options about the intervention in Iraq with the newly elected Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. During these meetings, US First Lady Laura Bush and the Turkish Prime Minister’s wife Emine Erdoğan met for tea. After the visit, an observer from the White House stated that the first ladies discussed the values of family, the education of children, and agreed on the

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importance of role of religion on family.<sup>15</sup> During the meeting, Emine Erdoğan also mentioned the *kardes aile* (family brotherhood) program, in which the AKP's woman deputy members and deputies' wives established groups to visit and support poor families in Ankara during Ramadan.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, this practice combines the "strengthen the family" argument with "charity" rhetoric, which is an example of the grassroots mobilizing tactics of right-wing parties. On the other hand, the first ladies' meeting also demonstrates the same mind-set of right-wing parties, which locate family as a sacred institution that can be a substitute for the state provision of social assistance. Meanwhile the opposition party accused the government of paying visits to poor neighborhoods for political purposes. Prime Minister Erdoğan defended these visits using the same rhetoric: "What is your point? We are providing service to *fakir fukara, garip gureba* (the poor and destitute). We are not ashamed of sharing our food with our brothers. Our religion calls us to help the poor, which is called *sadaka kulturu* (the charity culture)."<sup>17</sup>

The use of religion has an undeniable impact on the development of welfare provision in Turkey. Like previous right-wing parties, AKP often uses "Islamic morality" to promote charity culture by emphasizing that the qualities of social solidarity and mutual assistance "are expressions of our public's national and religious character, are very significant assets."<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, this charity culture led Islamic practices to take over the poverty issue and to create informal channels of welfare in poor neighborhoods, which lead to "brick and mortar" type relationships between religious

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<sup>15</sup> "First Ladies Meet", *Turkish Press Review*, January 30, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> "Ms. Erdoğan's Many Friends", *The Economist*, August 12, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Rahmi Turan, "Halk veren eli oper", *Hürriyet*, February 15, 2009. The emphasis is mine.

<sup>18</sup> AKP's Party Program, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>, accessed on March 6, 2013.

organizations and poor beneficiaries. On the other hand, keeping the Islamic rhetoric and attempting to alleviate poverty by means of Islamic practices help to keep social assistance outside the realm of social rights.

The impact of religious values on social assistance provision is not only confined to the Turkish case. The Christian democratic parties of Western Europe, which cluster in the corporatist welfare regime type, support the involvement of religious charitable organizations in social services and poor relief (Manow and Kersbergen, *Religion*, p. 265). In the developing world, this is also a concern. Islamic charity organizations, like *Hamas* and *Hizbullah* in Lebanon or the *Muslim Brotherhood* in Egypt have undeniable effects, either in terms of their impact on state capacity to regulate social welfare, or the consequences for equal access to these benefits (Jawad, 2008; Cammett and Issar, 2010). The formation and continuation of the religious stance against social assistance is also a supportive element of the corporatist welfare regime. The centrality of Islamic values to social assistance has been always on the scene. For example, the Islamist Refah Party (Welfare Party) also put emphasis on Islamic notions of the provision of social welfare. Indeed, it was part of the party's economic program called *Adil Duzen* (Just Order), which promised to secure justice in social welfare and income redistribution with Islamic undertones (Patton, 2009:442). The emphasis on religion and moral values, while promoting social assistance, is one of the backbones of the welfare regime under AKP. However, contrary to previous Islamist anti-capitalist rhetoric, AKP has embraced principles that promote a free-market economy, privatization, and International Monetary Foundation (IMF) recommended economic policies. As Hayek asserts, in order for the free-market economy to function perfectly, it also requires a moral foundation backed by

religious values (Hayek, 1948; Buğra, 2007:47). The Turkish welfare regime under the AKP coupled the emergence of Islamic charity organizations replacing the welfare state in favor of a more functional free market economy, by shrinking the cost of public spending on social assistance programs. Indeed, it is at this point that the new welfare system departs from the corporatist typology, where the state functions as the main provider of welfare services and, as such, the market plays a marginal role.

Religious factors such as Islamic values are a driving force behind the corporatist regime. Preserving the traditional perception of gender is another shaping force. For example, under the corporatist regime, labor market participation by married women is strongly discouraged, which shows itself in the formulation of gender-blind social policies. At the 2008 Celebration of Women' Day, Erdoğan claimed that Turkey's population is aging and on the decline, and called on women to give birth to at least three children.<sup>19</sup> He repeated this image of the ideal family with three children in numerous conferences and election speeches.<sup>20</sup> His statement is significant for illuminating AKP's outlook on women by locating women as child bearers and housewives. Actually, the "3 children" formula ignited discussions among many circles, and his statement has been criticized on the grounds of its resemblance to Hitler's "3K" formula, in which the 3 Ks represent *Kirsche, Kuche and Kinder* (Church, Kitchen and Children).<sup>21</sup> Within this rhetoric, the responsibilities of women are framed outside the labor market and limited to

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<sup>19</sup> Gila Benmayor, "Anadolu Ceylanlari mi yoksa evde oturup daha cok doguran kadin mi?" *Hürriyet*, March 11, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> AKP' Sultanbeyli meeting, *Hürriyet*, February 19, 2002; Berna Yazici, "The Return to the Family: Welfare, State and Politics of the Family in Turkey", *Anthropological Quarterly*, (85:1), Winter 2012, p.114.

<sup>21</sup> "Hitler benzetmeli 3 cocuk tartismasi", *Hürriyet*, April 17, 2008.

the territory of unpaid housework, which includes taking care of children, the elderly or the disabled. Indeed, the introduction of new social assistance programs under AKP rule fall in line with the discourse on the ideal family with three kids. Under the social security reform package, the Home Based Care Allowance was introduced as a payment to women who take care of the disabled in their households. In addition to this, women who take care of their elders in their house are also paid a minimum income wage according to a reform package. This policy is also in line with AKP's discourse on the "ideal family consisting of three generations, with grand family, parents and children living together" (Yazici, 2012:111). Through numerous public appearances and statements, the government takes pride in not being like a degenerated Western society, where people do not look after their elders, and/or have aging societies. They defend these social policies by invoking their powerful role in "bridging tradition and modernity."<sup>22</sup> However, on the other hand, these publicly funded social assistance programs already enforce gender inequalities, either by locating women as the main caregivers or positioning women outside of the labor market. Orloff, the scholar who introduced the "gender-based welfare regime" literature, shows that even limited social programs targeting women reproduce the same stereotypes about women's role in society. The eligibility criteria of these programs are based either on the familial role or the marital status of the women (Orloff, 2012:252-264). This locates women as a subject of social policy, rather than citizens who have social rights to the services provided by

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<sup>22</sup> "FM Davutoglu says revolution on social policies experienced in Turkey", <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/haberler/fm-davutoglu-says-revolution-on-social-policies-experienced-in-turkey/35979>, accessed on March 30, 2013.

government. A recently introduced cash transfer program for widowed women is an example of another social assistance program which reproduces gender-biased policies in the welfare state, as the women are not eligible to have a minimum income payment once they remarry or if they remain married but live separately from their husbands.<sup>23</sup>

### **2.2.2. Retreat of State in Turkish Welfare Regime: A Pinch of Liberal Welfare State Regime**

After the AKP came into power on November 2001, they drafted the “Emergency Action Plan,” which aims to respond to the consequences of the 2001 economic crisis. Seeking to formulate new social policies as a part of a new economic program, it was emphasized that new public policy reforms would be framed by giving attention to a stand-by agreement with the IMF.<sup>24</sup> The IMF fiscal program not only brings strict controls on public spending, but also reinforced privatization, which Prime Minister Erdoğan was proud of, announcing “the most comprehensive privatization plan ever” which will be conducted under “God’s will.”<sup>25</sup> The impact of this doctrine on the area of social policy finds its place in AKP government’s program. Under the title “Our Perception of Social Policy,” the party claimed, “[f]inancial discipline shall be observed when public authorities will be spending funds for special purposes. However, this spending will not be allowed to interrupt the functioning of the economy, disrupting

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<sup>23</sup> Final Report, “Research Project for the Development of Cash Transfer to Widowed Women”, February 2011, [www.spf.boun.edu.tr/content\\_files/SYDGM\\_NihaiRapor\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.spf.boun.edu.tr/content_files/SYDGM_NihaiRapor_ENG.pdf), accessed on March 30, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Acil Eylem Planı, on November 16, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

confidence or causing instability.”<sup>26</sup>

The AKP government program and “Emergency Action Plan” are two informative sources of evidence of new governmental support for liberal economic policies. The projection of proposed economic policies on social policy-making makes the new welfare regime closer to the liberal type of welfare state, in which the market plays a significant role. The election propaganda also included only in-kind benefits and poverty-reduction packages to the needy, and excluded any discourse on the redistribution of income. The Prime Minister explicitly stated that they would rely on the market to provide for the social needs of poor citizens. Like in the liberal welfare regime, a closer look at the content and implementation of the programs for the poor, especially the deserving poor such as the disabled, widowed, the elderly, or children, for example, makes the state’s sub-contraction of social services to private actors visible. In the case of providing special education for handicapped children, the state provided financial assistance so that they could enroll in private health and education centers (Eder, 2011). Another favor provided by the AKP government appreciated by many people is the distribution of free textbooks to students by the Ministry since 2003. However, the Ministry publishes only forty percent of these textbooks. The other sixty percent are bought from private publication companies (Metin, 2011:196). The campaign for raising private donations to support education, entitled *Egitime Yuzde Yuz Destek* (Full Support for Education), was initiated by the Ministry of National Education (Milli Egitim Bakanligi- MONE). Through the program, tax rebates are available to private donors. These favors to private companies

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<sup>26</sup> Excerpt from AKP’s Party Program on Social Policy Section titled “Our Perception of Social Policy”, which can be accessed at <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/akparti/parti-programi#bolum>

also demonstrate how the state shifts its responsibility to provide education onto private agencies.

The retreat of the state in the rights-based social service provision is accompanied by the growing involvement of non-state providers (NSPs) in social service provision, encouraged by state. Here, I will draw particular attention to the retreat of the state amidst the growing role of NGOs in the area of social service provision, and how the AKP government transfers some of its responsibilities in social service provision to the private sector. Indeed, liberal welfare regimes encourage the private sector to provide welfare with a low degree of state penetration. The AKP program explicitly states, “[o]ur party shall make sure that central government cooperates with local administrators, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to ensure productivity, speed and resource capacity are increased in the social services rendered the State.”<sup>27</sup>

Encouraging cooperation with the private sector, 100% tax rebates to private donors, growing numbers of NGOs in the area of poverty relief provision, and also the introduction of several “development” projects conducted with cooperation between the state and the private sector, like microcredits, are significant indications of how the AKP’s rhetoric, which favors subcontracting social service provision to the non-public sector, turns into practice during their term.

Shifting social service responsibilities to non-state actors and cooperation between the public and private sectors are global trends. With the gradual demise of the welfare state, non-state providers such as international development organizations, faith-based or

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<sup>27</sup> AKP’s Party Program, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>, accessed on March 6, 2013.

NGOs, ethnic based organizations, and community organizations have started to play an important role in providing and facilitating access to resources for the poor. These organizations have emerged as new outlets, especially for poor populations in situations of scarcity, social exclusion, and lack of empowerment. Following Cammett's (2010) definition, non-state providers are the actors outside of the public sector that either deliver or facilitate access to social services, such as education, health, and poverty alleviation. They can be local or international, for profit or non-profit based, such as international developmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, political parties, faith based organizations, families, and local brokers.

The introduction of the Turkish microcredit program is a great example of the increasing role of NGOs in social service provision, which is backed by public and private actors and institutions. In June 2003, Nobel laureate Muhammed Yunus, founded the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to give credits to the poor who lack sufficient means to start up a business. Since the poorest people do not have the ability to get loans from a bank, he created a separate bank that gives low interest loans (Yunus, 1998). According to Yunus, this new "social business" put poverty in museums by turning the poor, especially poor women, into entrepreneurs, generating financial returns by increasing the income of poor families, and also generating social returns by empowering the poor women. The program created enthusiasm among AK party elites, for on the one hand, it has the potential to decrease the dependence of the poor on the welfare state, on the other hand, and it can create jobs that increase self-sufficiency of the poor. Through the International Conference on Poverty Reduction through Microcredits on 9-10 June 2003, organized by the TISVA, the introduction of the microcredit program in Turkey was



appraised by many researchers, bureaucrats, and politicians. Prime Minister Erdoğan attended this enthusiasm by saying “[g]iving in-kind aid to the poor doesn’t solve the problem of poverty. However, we need to activate models, which make those individuals productive and financially self-sufficient individuals. The microcredit is a noble mean that is serving for this end.”<sup>28</sup> The emphasis on self-sufficient individuals and individualism represents a very typical form of the liberal welfare regime. Not only the government, but also experts such as the former head of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Kemal Dervis credit this project with the potential to create opportunities for self-employment, which increases human development scores.<sup>29</sup> Following the conference, Aziz Akgul, who is the president of TISVA and an AKP parliamentarian elected from Diyarbakır, a Kurdish populated city, signed an agreement with Grameen Trust and started the pilot project in Diyarbakır. Since 2003, 138 million TL (approximately \$76 million) in credit has been given to more than fifty eight thousand clients in 43 out of 81 provinces.<sup>30</sup> This is one of the most comprehensive spending programs, which uses NGOs to target the poor in Turkey. The target group is mainly women. Indeed, being a woman is one of the criteria for eligibility, along with forming a group of five women, which is supposed to create “peer pressure” to pay back the loans.

There are many research projects done on the pros and cons of microcredit projects, however this is not the biggest concern of my research. Rather, I will highlight how this program relates to the liberal form of welfare state, under the AKP. First of all, microcredit programs definitely promote the main mantra of “teaching how to catch a

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<sup>28</sup> *Hürriyet*, June 10, 2003.

<sup>29</sup> *Hürriyet*, September 12, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> “Yoksul Kadınların Umudu Mikro kredi”, *Hürriyet*, January 5, 2011.

fish, rather than giving a fish”. The goal is to increase people’s marketability on the job market and to turn them into more “productive,” “self-sufficient” individuals. That is why the program is appreciated in AKP circles, where it is understood that the state can not provide jobs or social assistance to everybody, and that the market can take care of people’s needs. On the other side, most of the businesses started by women that are supported by microcredit loans are jobs such as knitting, carpeting, and preparing foods in the house to be sold in the market place. This also resonates with the liberal welfare regime, in which survival of the individual is contingent upon the sale of their labor (Scholnick, 2005). In this case, women are commodified. At the same time, creating income-generating jobs for poor communities, especially poor women, will make poverty statistics look better.<sup>31</sup>

There are many other fully functioning microcredit programs conducted by different NGOs. For example, another NGO, KEDV has been allocating microcredits in poor neighborhoods of Istanbul, three cities (Izmit, Adapazari and Duzce), which were effected by the 1999 earthquake, and also the Southeast Anatolia region, which is populated mostly by Kurdish people. The organization was established in 2002 and is funded by Catholic Relief Services in US. Though this association is funded by a different agency and does not have a relationship with the AKP, it is interesting that this NGO shares a similar liberal rhetoric with the state on the solution of the poverty problem: “The State can’t provide everyone a job so we need these types of organization, which implement different programs to create jobs make the market economy more

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<sup>31</sup> Ayşe Buğra, “Asil Mesele Sadakanin Politik İktisadi”, *Milliyet*, February 24, 2009.

efficient. Then, we won't have problems of terror or poverty anymore. This is our, not state's responsibility."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the findings of the first comprehensive study on civil society in Turkey, the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) project also supports the argument that NGOs act as an extension of the state<sup>33</sup>.

Apart from haute-couture poverty-relief projects that put the NGOs on the job, there are also Islamist civic organizations, which have been expanding primarily in the poor quarters of metropolitan cities in the last decade.<sup>34</sup> Though NGOs still play a very limited role in social service provision compared to other developing countries such as Lebanon and India,<sup>35</sup> they have an impressive record on providing in-kind benefits, such food, clothes, durable household goods, and scholarships to poor students. Among them, *Deniz Feneri*, known as an Islamist charity organization, has been far more successful both in providing services to thousands of poor and needy people, and by expanding its budget from \$2 million in 2000 to \$25 million in 2005.<sup>36</sup> They recruited more than 300 full-time employees and 40,000 volunteers, of whom 1,000 can be considered active full-time volunteers, mainly university students. In 2005, the Council of Ministers authorized *Deniz Feneri* to collect donations from the public without any prior special permission.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Aylin Hanim from KEDV, on August 11, 2010. Istanbul.

<sup>33</sup> Civicus Civil Society Index Team, Civicus Civil Society Index: Preliminary Findings, Phase 2003-2005, June 2006, can be accessed at <http://www.civicus.org/new/media/ICSI%20paper.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> See White, Jenny B. *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> See Cammett, Melani and Issar, Sukriti. "Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: The Political Geography of Welfare in Lebanon." *World Politics* 62, no. 3(July 2010). And also Thachil, Tariq. "Embedded Mobilization: Nonstate Service Provision as Electoral Strategy in India", *World Politics* 63, no.3, (July 2011), 434-69.

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Grutjen "The Turkish Welfare Regime: An Example of the Southern European Model" *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 7(1):112-129.

<sup>37</sup> Mine Eder, "Retreating State? Political Economy of Welfare Regime Change in Turkey." *Middle East Law and Governance* 2, 2009, p.180.

This easing of the bureaucratic process shows the government's eagerness to subcontract poverty-relief to private charities.

Other examples can be drawn from foundations or organizations, which support or are supported by either specific Islamist orders and/or the Feytullah Gulen movement. Apart from the transparency issue, access privileges are also open to question. Who gets benefits, for what reasons, and under what eligibility criteria, are another subset of unanswered questions. In sum, who gets what and why remains unclear in the case of introducing NGOs to the area of social assistance. The government's unconditional support via easing bureaucratic procedures is, first, a clear indication of its willingness to transfer these social responsibilities to subcontractors, in this case, NGOs. Second, and more importantly, the benefits that are provided by these organizations shift the area of social assistance from rights-based universal benefits to a more exclusive and excluding practice for the poor. In addition, regular visits to or attendance at the opening ceremonies of new branches by AKP parliamentarians clearly indicates the appreciation and support of these organizations in government circles.

The role of the NGOs in poverty alleviation is still quite limited compared to their roles in gender equity and environmental sustainability (Civil Society In Turkey: An Era of Transition Report, p.6). However, combating poverty through contributions from philanthropists for this end is an essential part of the provision of social assistance in Turkey. Based on the Civicus Civil Society Index data, 80% of those interviewed gave different forms of aid, such as bags of food, clothes, meat, and money, and 86% of them have a proclivity toward making small donations directly to needy individuals and their close circles, while only 18% make donations to NGOs (Civicus Report, 2007:9).

In summation, it seems that by formulating and implementing poverty-reduction programs, NGOs are greatly appreciated by AKP, as they covered deficits of state welfare provisions to the poor. They also take on the role of the state by distributing the most desperately needed resources, which is also supported by the AKP, as the NGOs ask for no redistribution of income within this type of welfare regime.

In addition to findings related to social assistance policies, we also observe an eruption of potential for the gradual privatization of the welfare regime with the initiation of a new social security reform package. The new structure of the social security system is criticized for creating a trend towards privatization and marketization of the health sector (Eder, 2009; Cosar and Yegenoglu, 2009; Adar, 2007). Healthcare reform also paves the way for the spread of private insurance schemes and arrangements with private hospitals. One can easily demonstrate the mushrooming of private healthcare centers just after the law passed (Eder, 2010:170-1).

Indeed, regulations in the healthcare system increased eligibility requirements and premium payments. In this regard, the new regulations are far from providing the universal coverage as was depicted in rhetoric. It introduced means-tested access to health services, which depend on household income. The people who can afford it, whose incomes are above 1/3 of the official minimum wage, have to contribute to the healthcare fund out of their budget, and other groups, whose incomes are below this threshold, may have access after controlling for eligibility criteria. This application has the potential to increase already existing inequalities between the “poor who are eligible” and the “working poor,” that miss the threshold by a small margin but can still not afford to make a contribution.

### **2.2.3. Expanding the role of state as a “regulator”: Count for Social Democrat Form of Welfare State?**

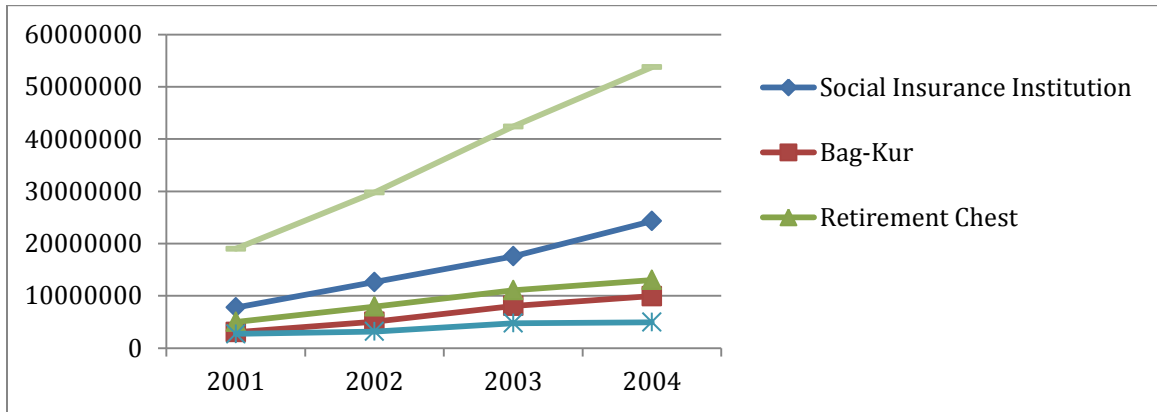
During AKP term, we observe the state’s involvement in regulating the provision of welfare and the increasing share Gross Domestic Product (GDP) used in social spending, resembling elements of the social democratic welfare regime. The State’s growing involvement, such as proposing to restructure the social security system under the welfare reform package, is notable. The previous organization of the social security system was criticized for being too fragmented. Three different kinds of institutions were responsible of regulating social security for people working in different sectors. Retirement Chest (Emekli Sandigi) was for the civil servants, The Organization of Social Security (Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu-SSK) was for blue-collar workers in the public sector and for blue and white collar working in private sector, and Social Security Organization for Artisans and the Self-Employed (Bag-Kur) was for the self-employed, mainly craftspeople and trades workers, for example. These insurance schemes only cover people who are formally working, and there are no regulations, like citizenship income payments, targeting unemployed people. The three-tiered social security provision furthered the fragmentation of health insurance. Also, due to the corporatist welfare regime in Turkey, the civil servants have far more benefits than the other groups. The discussions on retirement age and the contribution period for retirement funds also push the necessity of reform (Adar, 2007).

The package is composed of four different parts. The first is to integrate three social security institutions under one roof. The second is to create a new retirement insurance program. The third establishes a general health insurance scheme to cover the majority of

the population. Last but not least, the package assembles a new structure for the social assistance system, which allocates social benefits to the needy (Ozdemir et. al., 2008: 474). The new social security law enacted in 2006 significantly transformed the institutional basis of social policy. First of all, all social security institutions are placed together under one roof, SGK. The introduction of the Social Security Institution Law put an end to the fragmented, corporatist, and inequalitarian nature of the previous regulation of social insurance. Within the new system, the state has to make contributions to social security funds. In the area of health, the new General Health Insurance Law allows informal workers to have access to public health services. In addition to the transformation of the social security system in Turkey, which made for some positive policies, there has been an overall increase in the state budget for social service provision not only limited to social security but also including expenses for healthcare, education, and social assistance. With the introduction of the new law, the state began to contribute to the social security system, along with employers and employees. Figure 2 illustrates the increase in social spending from the state budget since AKP came into power in November 2011.<sup>38</sup>

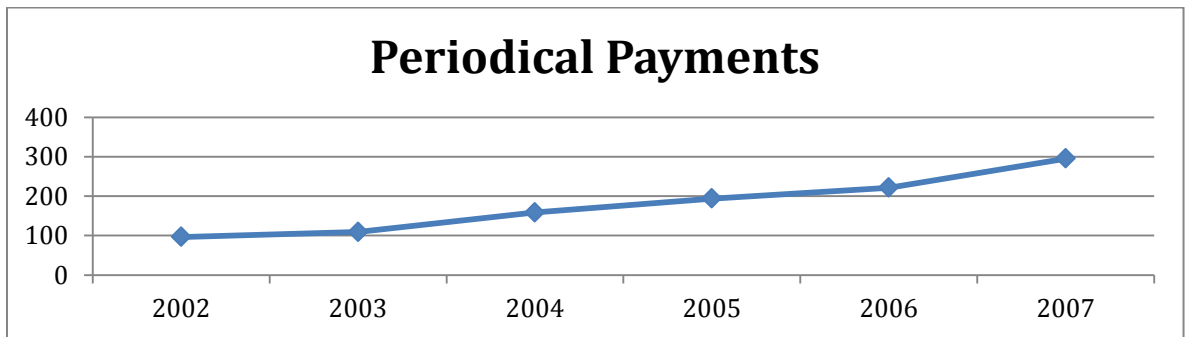
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<sup>38</sup> Indeed, there is an increase on state social spending at an average of 5 percent, however it is still very low compared to OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries, which spend on social services at average of 20 percent (Buğra and Adar 2007).



**Figure 2.** Social Protection Spending out of the State Budget (2001-2004)<sup>39</sup>

**Source:** The figure was constructed by the author, based on the data provided by Buğra, Ayşe and Adar, Sinem. “An Analysis of Social Protection Expenditures in Turkey in a Comparative Perspective”, prepared for Social Policy Watch at the Social Policy Forum, April 2007.



**Figure 3.** Periodic Payments to Local Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (2002-2007)

**Source:** [www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr](http://www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr)

Figure 3 demonstrates the increase in state expenditures in social assistance provision by displaying the increase of periodic payments to social solidarity foundations, which is the primary institution responsible for the management of social assistance

<sup>39</sup> Retirement Chest (*Emekli Sandığı*) is for the civil servants, The Organization of Social Security (SSK) for blue-collar workers in public sector and blue and white collar working in private sector and Bag-Kur: Esnaf, Sanatkarlar ve Diğer Bagimsiz Calisanlar Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu (Social Security Organization for Artisans and the Self-Employed) for the self-employed, mainly crafts, tradesworkers, etc.



allocation to the needy in Turkey. The budget for CCTs is also under the control of these local SYDVs.

The increase in these numbers may not be sufficient enough to claim that state social assistance provision at targeted groups plays a significant role in welfare provision. It only constitutes 1.3 per cent of the GDP. This is extremely low, especially when compared to OECD average, which is 7.9 per cent (Buğra and Adar, 2008: 96). Another controversial point about the reform and the role of the state in restructuring Turkey's social security system is the role that the IMF played during the process. Indeed, IMF is the main force behind this reform initiative. One of the IMF's loan conditions for Turkey was the enactment of a social security law, which may indicate that the main reason for the reform was the state's own financial worries rather than the necessities of social citizenship.

In addition, the increase in social spending does not automatically guarantee the provision of egalitarian, universal and social citizenship based welfare benefits to the people. Surprisingly, policymakers, bureaucrats and AKP parliamentarians seem to embrace rights-based social policy rhetoric, which resembles the social democratic welfare regime where entitlement to the benefits is based on citizenship. However, the actual execution of the program is far behind the promises made by the AKP government. Throughout the "Turkey Debates its Social Policies" conference in June 2012, the proposals offered by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy (Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı- MoFSP) indicate the way that policymakers use "rights-based social policy" rhetoric, but in practice shift to the "deserving poor" model, which increases the dependency of the poor on the market. An example can be drawn from the

recent proposals on the feasibility of the income assistance program (Yakut-Cakar et al., 2012; Unal, 2010; Buğra and Sinmazdemir, 2005; Buğra and Keyder, 2003).

The program offers a guaranteed regular payment for every family below a certain income level, set “objectively” by the Ministry. There are certain other conditions one must meet in order to be eligible for this income. The proposal mentions “the assistance may be conditional on the efforts of the beneficiary to participate in social life by seeking employment” (Alniacik and Ustubici, 2012). The employment requirement may lead poor people to accept bad working conditions, and may make poor people more dependent on the market and more vulnerable to market failure.

Through the AKP years, many regulations targeting “the poor, senior citizens needing care, needy children, the unemployed and the citizens who are facing hardship” were documented as having been introduced in the party’s program. According to the party program on social policy, these benefits include pensions for the families of the disabled and elderly on the condition that they are being taken care at home, cash transfers to widowed women, CCTs, financial assistance for handicapped children’s families to get special education, are the conditions of being a “Social State.” Most of these social assistance programs share the problems identified with the minimum income payment benefit. The conditions and eligibility criteria that make the poor more dependent on the market and that locate women as the main caregivers are the negative aspects of the regulations, which weaken claims that Turkey is behaving like a “Social State.” Moreover, the working poor are excluded from these benefits, whose earnings are insufficient to support them.

The state’s role in social service provision is expanded by the power given to

municipalities during the AKP years. In 2006, the AKP government amended the “[l]aw on the Associations of Local Governments,” which allows villages, municipalities and social provincial administrations to undertake joint projects (European Commission, 2006: 7). These projects lead to greater responsibility of municipalities in social services and similar social matters. Candan and Kolluoglu’s summary provides a useful overview on how these amendments expand local government’s power (2008). They write, “[m]unicipality laws introduced in 2005 and 2006 made the already influential office of the mayor more powerful. These new powers include: broadening the space under the control and jurisdiction of municipality, defining new responsibilities of the municipality in dealing with “social risks”, etc.” The AKP’s program also acknowledges significant transfers of political and institutional power to the local governments, emphasizing collaboration with local administrations “to ensure productivity, speed and resource capacity in the social services.”<sup>40</sup> The state expands its regulation in the area of social assistance policies through local governments. Most of the social assistants programs provided by municipalities are generally similar, increasing the visibility of the state in the area of social benefits through local governments.

The introduction of the new social security regime, which collects all social security institutions under one roof, was the main reform action of the AKP government. The state’s provision of social assistance programs targeting the poor and its growing visibility via the provision of a variety of social benefits carry out elements of the social democratic welfare regime. Indeed, state spending on social benefits has increased under

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<sup>40</sup> AKP’s Party Program, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>, accessed on March 6, 2013.

the AKP term, and there has been a growing collaboration between state and local governments. Under the social democratic welfare regime, entitlement to the services and benefits is also based on citizenship. However, as discussed above, though most of these social programs are provided to the eligible poor, they are not universal benefits like those under social democratic welfare states.

#### **2.2.4. Falling Out of Categories of Welfare Regimes: “Vote for Social Services We Providing You, not for an Ideological reasons”<sup>41</sup>:**

Populism has been an enduring feature of Turkish politics. Discretionary distribution of in-kind aid, construction pardons given by the municipalities for illegal settlements in urban areas before elections, promising and providing employment to party supporters, for example, have been the hallmarks of Turkish populism. In return, the regulators of the Turkish economy, such as the IMF and the WB, have criticized populist policies in Turkey on the basis of its contribution to fiscal problems, rather than diminishing the quality of democracy. The standard practice of employing public resources arbitrarily, and primarily for electoral purposes, did not go along with neoliberal economic policies that dictate strict budget austerity and fiscal control over public spending. Under the decline in real wages, the decrease in agricultural subsidies, and increases in inflation, “compensatory benefits from the visible hand of the state” no longer generated public support. The 2001 economic crisis, the most devastating economic crisis in Turkish history, was the tipping point demonstrating that classic

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<sup>41</sup> “Erdoğan’dan Karanlık Oda Çikisi”, *Hürriyet*, 19.06.2007 in his talk targeting independent political candidates in 2007 general elections, Erdoğan said “Please, don’t waste your vote. The vote has to be casted for service provision, not for ideological purposes.”

populist policies no longer worked. Since the AKP came into power, the party has emphasized several times that they would not let populist politics conquer the Turkish political setting as they once did.<sup>42</sup> Has populism lost its viability with the introduction of neoliberal economic policies? Is it no longer a viable option for the parties hoping to catch the votes of the poor? Or as Weyland claims, have parties' efforts to remedy the negative consequences of market driven economic policies resulted in unexpected opportunities for the reemergence of populist policies?

At first glance, neoliberalism and populism appear to be unlikely partners, because the survival of the former depends on diminishing the latter. As Armony (2005) argues, in their classical forms, liberalism and populism are ideologically opposed. While the former supports the principles of liberty and equality, which has an impact on free and fair elections, the latter advocates a political strategy based on a calculated appeal to the interests of ordinary people, creating an unequal relationship. Populism is also treated as complementary to the earlier period of socioeconomic development, which was replaced industry with imports (Roberts, 1996). However, in the late 1990s, several academic works indicated the emergence and coexistence of neoliberal economic policies and populist policies in the developing world, which are accompanied by the rise of personalist charismatic leaders with broad based support (Roberts, 1996; Weyland, 2003; Armony, 2005).

The coexistence of neoliberalism and populism in the Latin American setting has been described as an "unexpected affinity" (Weyland, 2003), the "Solution to Neoliberal

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<sup>42</sup> Acil Eylem Plani, 16.11.2002

Problems” (Dresser, 1991) and a “novel paradox” (Roberts, 1995), that is, a connection between two political and economic strategies that would seem to be fundamentally at odds. The reemergence of populism under new realities and new parties, and its impact on the distribution of social assistance, calls for a new interpretation. The conceptual clarification of classical populism and classical populism is also needed.

Indeed, in the Turkish context, both Erdoğan of AKP and Ozal of Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) represent the main characteristics of “charismatic leadership,” which employ populism both on the discursive and practical level by positioning themselves in contrast to the status quo of the elite establishment. Both leaders present themselves as “men of the people,” who breakfast with the poor during Ramadan under the *iftar cadiri* (breakfast in the tent) and by occasionally having direct contact with ordinary people. Both also have strong faith in the neoliberal market economy. However, during the ANAP and AKP terms, populism and neoliberalism coexist together in different ways. Ozal era populism can be classified as “classical populism,” which furthers a “wild” type of patronage politics. In order to eliminate the social “risks” brought by the transition to a market economy, Ozal preferred to propose emergency relief as a type of social assistance, which is more temporary, discretionary, and based on “extra-budgetary” funds, making politics more open to political manipulation. The current form of populism under the AKP is distinguished from classical populism. According to Armony (2005) this new form of populism (neo-populism) functioned as a “superstructure” that facilitated the application of neoliberal economic policies, and soothed societal tensions created by the reforms. Whereas populist policies were mainly targeting the working class, the rural poor, and farmers, the main target group of neo-

populist policies is the informal working class, which is composed of the unorganized urban poor at the national level. This is the case in Turkey, which resembles the Latin American cases, in that the negative consequences of neoliberalism are often alleviated by neo-populist social policies. Therefore, I will display the impact of neo-populist policies in the area of social assistance on the discursive and material level, and analyze how neo-populism became one of the features of the AKP's approach to poverty and social assistance along with neoliberalism and conservatism.

Consecutive coalition governments, the fragmented party system, economic collapse, and weak institutions all provided ideal conditions for the emergence of a new party in Turkey, the AKP. Urgent problems confronting a country such as poverty, unemployment, and inflation often trigger the rise of neopopulist parties (Weyland, 2001: 14). To this end, the 2001 economic crisis provided the conditions for the emergence of the AKP. This acute crisis discredited the established "political class," which had obviously failed to fulfill minimal performance expectations. The AKP used this opportunity as a "critical juncture" to replace Turkey's established political class and institutionalize their own rule. Like Latin American equivalents, such as Argentina's Menem and Peru's Fujimori, the AKP made promises to alleviate poverty and overcome unemployment in order to gain support from the urban informal working class. They were the newcomers, untested by the constituency.

As Weyland (2001) argues, crises bring forth neo-populist policies and neo-populist leadership, which lack a promising track record. By all means, the government under Tayyip Erdoğan could be categorized as classic example of neo-populist leadership. Prime Minister Erdoğan emerged as a neopopulist and charismatic leader of the recent

decade in Turkey. According to a survey conducted by Adil Gur, 40% of AKP party supporters voted for the AKP due to Erdoğan's leadership.<sup>43</sup> The AKP government under Prime Minister Erdoğan has employed neopopulist strategies, especially before elections. The main target group of these neopopulist policies is the poor, mostly the unemployed and/or those working in the informal sector, the unorganized, the less educated, and the more conservative segments of society, who live in the suburban neighborhoods of the big cities. He frequently uses the means of mass communication, especially television, to reach out to his target group and assure them that he and his party are the ones who are providing social services and in-kind aid.

The AKP came into power in November 2002 by establishing their election propaganda on the fight against poverty. It can be observed that overcoming poverty, providing in-kind aid such as food, coal, durable white goods, and also delivering social services such as granting green cards, which allow access to free health services, became the most important part of their election propaganda. Both in the general election in 2007 and in the local election in 2009 the AKP made those types of promises, including house visits. Prime Minister Erdoğan explicitly states in many platforms that the party would continue distributing in-kind aid due to the necessity of being a "social state." When the ruling AKP government was confronted with accusations of using state funds to win votes, the Prime Minister defended himself and his party by saying "[d]istributing benefits to the needy is the duty of a social state. That's written in our Constitution, isn't

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<sup>43</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/adil-gure-gore-erken-yerel-secimde-hangi-faktor-etkili-olacak/212579> accessed on December 3, 2013.



it?”<sup>44</sup> Besides using propaganda on “social services” by means of mass communication, he and other party members have become more visible in poor neighborhoods. It gives them a chance to have direct contact with poor people, which reinforced Erdoğan’s image as “man of people” and his party as an “inclusive and social” party rather than an “elitist” one. Erdoğan called for AKP parliamentarians and their wives to pay visits to the homes of poor people and to break their fast with them during Ramazan.<sup>45</sup> He also called for state officials, mainly governors, to distribute the bags of coal by themselves.<sup>46</sup> This also shows AKP’s logic of welfare distribution, which opens a door to a “bricks and mortar clientelism.”<sup>47</sup>

Especially in the Kurdish region, the amount of social assistance has increased under AKP rule. However, according to TUIK’s Income and Life Standards Research, the poverty rates have decreased 2.2%, whereas in Istanbul, located in “developed” side of Turkey, the poverty rates have been increasing.<sup>48</sup> During the last local elections in 2009, one Kurdish city, Tunceli, made news headlines. Many newspapers published pictures of officials from the Tunceli Governor’s Office distributing new refrigerators, washing machines, desktop computers and furniture in poor neighborhoods. This has also gotten the IMF’s attention. The Turkish government and the IMF have already delayed

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<sup>44</sup> “1.5 milyon ton komur dağıtılacak”, *Hürriyet*, January 5, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> *Hürriyet*, June 29, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> “Erdoğan: Sosyal Demokrat Biziz”, *Hürriyet*, March 26, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Cammett and Issar used the term “bricks and mortar clientelism” in their article titled “Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon”, where they addressed the question of “under what conditions do parties serve out-group communities?” In order to address this question, the scholars compare the welfare programs of the predominantly Sunni Muslim Future Movement and the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah in Lebanon.

<sup>48</sup> “İstanbul’da Yoksulluk Artıyor, Güneydoğu’da Azalıyor”, *Hürriyet*, January 25, 2012.

the standby agreement with the fund due to differences of opinion over public spending.<sup>49</sup>

This profligacy contributed to the troubles between the IMF and the AKP government.



**Figure 4.** A caricature on the impact of social aid on voting behavior.

The caricature roughly translates as follows: LEFT: You will vote in this cabin. Hope it reminds you something. RIGHT: ?!

Source: Girgir- <http://www.vekarikatur.com/beyaz-esya/>

Turkey's Supreme Election Board (Yuksek Secim Kurulu-YSK) filed a criminal complaint against the AKP and foundations that give handouts to the electorate to attract their votes. Indeed, just one day after the elections, on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1050 needy people in Diyarbakır were in line in front of the bank and a parliamentarian, Ali Ihsan Koruturk, filled a bill of complaint asking “why those people were waiting in front of the bank just after the elections?”<sup>50</sup> During my fieldwork in Diyarbakır, I also came across claims of AKP's sending a letter thanking for the people of Diyarbakır for supporting the AKP and letting them know that their money is waiting for them in the Ziraat Bank and/or Post Office. After the Election Day, they only needed to present this letter at the bank, and

<sup>49</sup> “The Enduring Popularity of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan”, *The Economist*, March 5, 2009.

<sup>50</sup> “Soru Onergesi Verildi”, *Hürriyet*, April 8, 2009

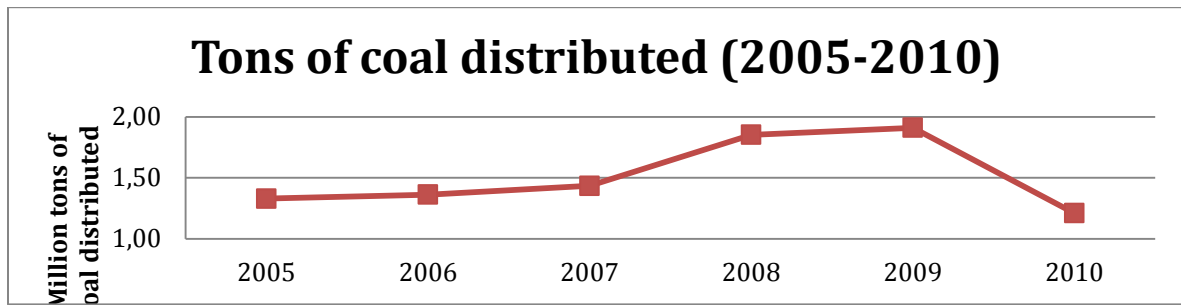
they would receive their money.<sup>51</sup> The next day, many poor Kurdish women remember receiving an SMS message from Prime Minister Erdoğan in appreciation of their support for the AKP. This pattern has been demonstrated time and again. The Prime Minister's speeches included ordering governors to distribute in-kind aid, calling party members to visit poor neighborhoods with their wives, claiming that it is not populism but a requirement of a "social state."

Indeed, populist spending has increased enormously before each election. Figure 5 shows the tons of coal distributed between 2005 and 2010 and it is demonstrated that in 2009, there was an enormous increase, followed by a stark decrease in 2010. Local elections were held in 2009, the year in which YSK filed the criminal complaint against the AKP mentioned above. There is another element behind these forms of in-kind aid as well. Whereas AKP justified in-kind aid as a "duty of being a social state," Turkey Coal Enterprises (Türkiye Kömür İşletmeleri-TKI) announced that the state borrowed 270 million TL and the government has not yet paid them back.<sup>52</sup> According to the TUIK data, in 2003 one in every twenty families got a bag of coal, whereas in 2008, one of every nine families got this benefit.

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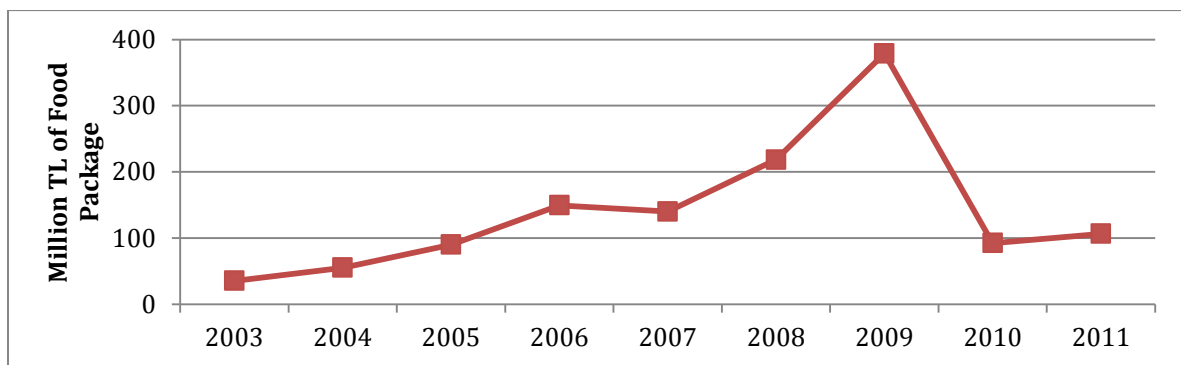
<sup>51</sup> Interview with beneficiaries, Fatihpasa neighborhood, Diyarbakır, November 2011.

<sup>52</sup> "Ateş: AKP Girtlagini Yolsuzluklardan Temizlesin", *Hürriyet*, September 13, 2008.



**Figure 5.** The tons of coal distributed (2005-2010)

Source: <http://www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr/tr/html/11845/Yakacak-Yardimlari>



**Figure 6.** The Food Packages Distributed (2003-2011)

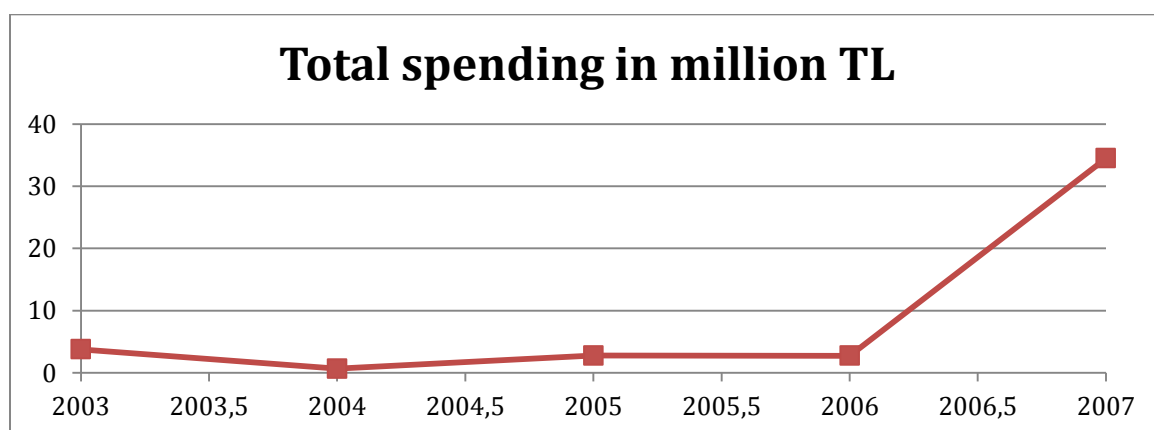
Source: <http://www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr/tr/html/11844/Gida-Yardimlari>

Figure 6 shows the distribution of food packages to the needy families by the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation. Note the high figure in 2009. The allocation of food packages was raised immensely in the wake of the 2009 local elections. There are two reasons for this. One is the timing of the local election in Turkey. The second is that Social Solidarity Foundations typically only distribute food aid twice a year, however between June 2008 and April 2010, this aid was distributed four times a year.<sup>53</sup> 2010 also coincided with the year of the Constitutional referendum in Turkey. The Turkish parliament adopted a series of constitutional amendments. The amendments did not achieve the required two-thirds majority to immediately implement the changes, due to

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr/tr/html/11844/Gida-Yardimlari>, accessed on December 5, 2013.

the polarization between the government and the opposition party. The AKP government wanted to pass the reform package directly, however main opposition party, CHP, claimed that the constitutional package included unconstitutional reforms, and that it was passed with procedural violations. The referendum turned out to be an election between the AKP and the CHP. This referendum is also interpreted as changing the rules of the game in Erdoğan's and the AKP's favor. Just before the referendum, the Social Solidarity Foundation made a new amendment numbered 2010/3 and returned to allocating food aid just twice in a year as it had in the past.<sup>54</sup>

Figures, tables, and numbers can sometimes be misleading. However, Figure 7 also shows how food aid per person has increased enormously, this time for the 2007 general elections. The elections took place in July 2007 and a 1000% increase in the number of people taking advantage of food aid is observable.



**Figure 7. Food aid distributed between 2003-2007.**

**Source:** Hande Hacimahmutoglu, *Türkiye'deki Sosyal Yardım Sisteminin Değerlendirilmesi* (The Evaluation of Social Assistance System in Turkey), Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (State Planning Organization, DPT), Uzmanlık Tezi (Expertise Thesis) 2009, Ankara.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

In addition to the increase in in-kind aid spending, Green Cards, which provide access to free healthcare for the poor, began to provide full healthcare insurance (Cosar and Yegenoglu). Prior to this change, only in-hospital treatment expenses were covered. The timing of the announcement of the amendment coincided with the 2007 general election. It is surprising, then, that after the July 2007 general election; the access to free healthcare for five million beneficiaries was blocked. The authorities justified cancellation on the grounds that the Green Cards had expired for these people. However, by coincidence, it overlapped with the end of the election (Metin, 2011:197).

Following the 2009 local elections, a parliamentary research motion regarding the increase in social assistance was proposed and discussed in Turkish Parliament. AKP parliamentarian and Minister of State Hayati Yazici's response demonstrated how social assistance spending just before the election became populist. On February 2008, the amount of spending out of the Social Solidarity and Assistance Foundation's funds was around 124 million TL, whereas in February 2009, there was an increase of up to 317 million TL. Even more surprising is that in March 2009, the time of the local election; 300 million TL was spent on social assistance. The regional allocation of this aid was also indicative of how the election was considered, The most benefits went to Istanbul, followed by Diyarbakır, one of the metropolitan cities in the Eastern part of Turkey, where the majority of the population is Kurdish.<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, it is claimed that state's spending on social welfare has been increasing during the AKP government. However, a closer look to the figures above indicates that

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<sup>55</sup> *Milliyet*, May 10, 2009. Onur Metin, "Sosyal Politika Acisindan AKP Donemi:Sosyal Yardim Alaninda Yasananlar", *Calisma ve Toplum*, 2011/1, p.197.

there is an increase in populist spending only. That is, this spending is still far from reflecting a “rights-based” approach to the poor and poverty. It would be inaccurate to claim that state is becoming a “social state,” referring to its increasing role in welfare provision in Turkey. On the other hand, it could be accurate to claim that the AKP’s election rhetoric has been constructed on social services. Drawing on Prime Minister Erdoğan’s speeches in the 2011 national elections, the software program called *wordle* gives us a map of which words are used most heavily during the election campaigns. First of all, it seems that the election speeches were constructed not on what the AKP did, but on what the center left CHP, the main opposition party, which is the successor of the founder of the Turkish Republic Ataturk, did in the past. It was also a reflection of electoral results, which were based on the Islamist versus secular debate. However the issue of secularism, religion, and identity politics did not dominate the AKP’s 2011 election campaign. Rather, social assistance, in-kind goods, healthcare benefits and education benefits including CCTs, are a recurring theme in the AKP’s campaign meetings during 2011 national elections. This also shows what Prime Minister Erdoğan meant by saying “Please, don’t waste your vote. The vote has to be casted for service provision, not for ideological purposes.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “Erdoğan’dan Karanlık Oda Cikisi”, *Hürriyet*, 19.06.2007





government during their term. These included an emphasis on the distribution of free textbooks to students, the delivery 30 and 35 liras to boys and girls who attend primary school, respectively known as CCTs, and also the provision of notebooks and smart boards in schools. I also grouped the services related to education and coded them as “education.”

Indeed, education, health, and highways all can be categorized under “social services” and are the most frequent words in the election speeches of Erdoğan. This displays the logic of voting behavior in Turkey. Especially these days, when corruption accusations against the Erdoğan government are widely common in Turkey, the talk on the street is different, especially if the speakers are supporters of the AKP. The common rhetoric is that “yes, these guys are corrupted but which party, government, incumbent is free of corruption in Turkey? At least, these guys provide services and social benefits.”<sup>58</sup>

### **2.3. Discussion: How CCTs fit within the three worlds of welfare?**

The question now revolves around where the CCT is making its place in the expansion of social assistance projects under Turkish welfare regime. The system embraces the coexistence of a liberal welfare regime with a growing involvement of non-state providers, and the conservative welfare regime with a commitment to the preservation of the family, but at the same time, a social democratic regime with a growing role for the state by increasing social expenditures tremendously in the area of social assistance. In addition, clientelist spending on social assistance, combined with the

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<sup>58</sup> <http://video.sozcu.com.tr/2013/video/haber/sozcu-tv-fatihte-sokagin-nabzini-tuttu.html>, accessed on December 26, 2013.

vote buying rhetoric, also falls outside of these categories entirely. Indeed, for many aspects of the Turkish Welfare Regime, the logic and implementation of CCTs reflect elements of each of the welfare regime types, fed by the vote buying election rhetoric of the AKP.

The rise of CCT programs in developing countries can't be represented by one type of welfare state. The logic of CCTs is compatible with the provision of the liberal welfare regime. The main goal of the CCTs is to raise levels of education and health, which create a more employable workforce, transforming individuals into productive and self-sufficient people, financially and otherwise. It can be evaluated as an investment in human capital, which is one of the means of production that drives liberal economies. Therefore, this marginalized segment of society becomes less reliant on the state and will reduce the burden of social spending on state as well. This is one of the desirable traits of the liberal welfare regime.

The cash transfer is given directly to the woman, which also carries the potential for women's empowerment. Indeed, participation in the program has created opportunities for the increased participation of women in the public sphere, at least in Social Solidarity Foundations during the application process, and paying regular visits to the bank or post office while withdrawing money. However, the program locates women as primary care providers and as a subject of social policy rather than as citizen with rights. The conditions for cash allocation, such as sending children to the school, making sure that they are attending the school, and paying monthly visits to health centers become the duties of the women of the house. The conservative ideology reveals itself by locating the woman as the caregiver, the person primarily responsible for the children, which is the

one of the main driving forces behind the conservative welfare regime. The CCTs reinforce and preserve traditional gender roles in society.

On the other hand, CCTs are funded and allocated by Social Solidarity Foundations, which are public institutions supported by the state budget. It is the first time that the government has reached out to the most vulnerable part of the society and has given cash to the poorest of the poor. This also reflects one of the main duties of the social democratic welfare regime. By allocating cash transfers, the state has expanded its role in spending with regard to social assistance policies.

The conditional cash program also serves the purpose of buying votes due to its financial appeals to voters. As previously indicated, throughout the 2011 election speeches, the educational and health benefits of CCTs are the two words that were most frequently denoted by Prime Minister Erdoğan. Indeed, it is not only specific to the 2011 elections. The distribution of social benefits has a great potential to attract the votes of the poor by marketing these policies as exclusionary to those communities and by using clientelist rhetoric. It is no coincidence that the brochures containing information about the conditions and requirements of CCTs include Prime Minister Erdoğan's picture on the front page, followed by his speech representing CCTs as a governmental favor rather than a social right. The language of the short note by Erdoğan is philanthropic, rather than egalitarian and inclusionary. The CCTs and other social assistance programs are represented as indicative of the generosity of the AKP, rather than as based on rights and the provision of decent access to services on the basis of equal membership in society. In sum, CCTs cut across some features of the different types of welfare regimes, and also have an electoral dimension, which appeals to politicians. It is a micro example showing

that the new welfare regime under the AKP government, with its institutional welfare blend, has an impact on the AKP's social policy making agenda. This new welfare regime, complemented by clientelistic social assistance provisions, falls outside of these categories entirely.

### **3. The Birth of Conditional Cash Transfers in Turkey: The Interplay between Domestic Politics and International Agencies in Social Policy Making**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

CCTs first emerged in Latin America. They were designed to invest in human capital, while tackling poverty simultaneously. In order to get cash transfer, the beneficiary (and her family) needs to fulfill certain requirements, such as sending their children to school or paying monthly visits to the health centers. CCT money is not a one-time gift before or after election cycles. On the contrary, it provides monthly money transfers to poor households with certain conditions. Within a region notorious for providing material benefits in exchange for getting poor peoples' electoral support, the emergence of a programmatic social policy has been a challenge. Nowadays, CCTs are appreciated as being "magic bullets" for breaking a long intergenerational cycle of poverty. At the same time, if the implementation of the CCTs fit their design, they also offer potential for breaking the history of *clientelism* in the region.

In addition to the Latin American region, a CCT program has also been implemented in Turkey since 2002. Turkey also has a notorious history of the use of material incentives by political parties. Indeed, Turkish right-wing parties have been accused of being experts in structuring their relationship with the periphery by providing material benefits in exchange for votes. Therefore, there is high hope for the implementation CCTs, which claim, "to transform public policy into a more transparent, effective and representative one in Turkey."

The adoption, design, and implementation of CCTs vary greatly among the

countries that have the program. On the one hand, the adoption of CCTs offers insights about the government's willingness to expand the scope of a truncated welfare state by regular, programmatic social assistance provisions to the poor. At the same time, social assistance programs--material benefits targeting the poor--are appealing to the politicians who want to manipulate low-income voters in most parts of the developing world. Therefore, it is important to investigate the various circumstances and incentives that motivate the choice of CCT programs in developing countries. Indeed, there are studies attempting to investigate the decision-making process when social policy makers adopt and implement programmatic social policy. Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2009) find that on the political front, strong state capacity that can carry the administrative burdens that CCT programs may bring and the government's ideological tendency constitute the main determinants of adoption of CCTs in the Latin American region. On the economic front, widespread income inequalities and poverty are most important.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, economic factors, especially financial crises, are also treated as one of the main reasons behind the implementation of CCTs (World Bank 2009). The desire to cushion the impact of worsening economic conditions on the poor has been at the center of the World Bank's poverty-alleviation strategy since the 2000s.<sup>60</sup>

Another strand of literature offers explanations by tracing the process of social policy making. Centered on the roles of bureaucrats, it seeks to explain the decision process by which policies come to reflect the interests and ideologies of technocrats

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<sup>59</sup> Alberto Díaz-Cayeros and Beatriz Magaloni, "Aiding Latin America's Poor", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 20, Number 4, October 2009, pp. 36-49.

<sup>60</sup> World Bank, "Financial Crisis Highlights Needs for More Social Safety Nets, Including Conditional Cash Transfers". Press Release No. 2009/220/DEC.

(Geddes, 1994).<sup>61</sup> This approach assumes the independence of bureaucrats' actions within the state, ignoring the socioeconomic factors that shape the political environment and also ignoring the role of politicians and/or the power of the legislature. Calculating electoral payoffs may play an important role in social policy-making, and CCT policy is no exception to that (Murillo, 2009). Political institutions and conditions may also have an impact on the way the countries create and execute CCTs. Ana L. De La O Torres' study investigates the causal mechanisms and consequences of the spread of CCT programs in Latin America from a different angle (2011). She argues that the reduction of clientelistic discretion depends on the extent to which executives require the support of opposition parties in order to pass legislation. The more the influence of the opposition over the bill, the less discretion it accords to the executive. In other words, the strictness of CCT's design and operation is based on the electoral strength of the executive power. Whether or not the executive's power is divided is the main indicator of whether the adoption and implementation of CCTs is successful or not (De La O, 2011).

Each theory is constructed on one determinant behind the proliferation of CCTs, such as the role of bureaucrats, socio-economic factors, international development agencies, political incentives, political institutions, etc. However, these theories are missing an account of the interactions between these factors. International institutions may have an impact on domestic politics, or vice versa; alternately, they may affect each other. The relationship, tensions, and interactions between bureaucrats and politicians

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<sup>61</sup> Barbara Geddes, *Politician's Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1994.

may have an impact on variation in design between developing countries. Actually, the theories on policy diffusion provide causal mechanisms behind the birth of CCTs, drawing upon both vertical and horizontal pressures on policy-makers (Sugiyama, 2012 2008; Weyland, 2006, 2005). In other words, by examining subnational politics, as well as international and cross-national mechanisms, they detail the causal story behind CCT emulation by different Latin America countries. Sugiyama (2012) argues that vertical pressures such as competition within the government and professional norms are the main forces behind the adoption of *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil.

All the strands of literature partially explain the causality behind the proliferation of CCTs, referring to the role of bureaucrats, international mechanisms, state administrative capacity or politicians. They all are important factors for our understanding of the conditions under which we will observe policy shifts from clientelist to programmatic social policy programs. However, all of these studies make an attempt to explain the cases in Latin America. Actually, Latin America is the birthplace of CCTs, but Turkey--a middle-income country with a population of 80 million people, and has an issue with attendance in secondary schools, particularly of girls from the eastern regions--also constitutes an interesting case, where income inequality is high and the poor are emerging as an important constituency. Focusing on the Turkish case also helps to highlight the empirical check the experiences of poor democracies offer to extend the conclusion of this study to other countries in the region.

Therefore, the main goal of this chapter is to explore the motives and incentives that motivate policy makers in their choice of CCTs in Turkey. What is the driving force behind the formulation and implementation of such poverty-alleviation programs? Is it a



top-down process that international agencies push for? Or is it rather domestic initiatives that satisfy both the public and policy makers? Or is the policy an outcome of different, multiple directions? What are the political incentives behind the adoption of Turkish CCTs?

Investigating these questions is of crucial importance in determining the consequences of CCTs, since political actors' decision-making processes may lead a program towards either clientelism or programmatic policy-making. By carefully tracing the political process (George and Bennett, 2005) and influence of insiders such as political leaders, bureaucrats and international organizations during the course of designing and implementing programs, it is possible to find out how cash transfers make it onto the agenda in Turkey and the political processes behind them. Following the literature on the diffusion of social policies, the role of the public, civil society organizations, bureaucrats and politicians (domestic politics), international development organizations (international politics), and their overall impact on formulation of CCTs in Turkey will be examined respectively.

Field research in Turkey led me to conduct interviews with key actors associated either with CCTs or social policy decision-making. To understand the political and social motives behind the formulation of Turkish CCTs, insiders' views are especially important. Therefore, the findings of this chapter rely on interviews that I conducted with sets of actors, such as national-level bureaucrats in the Development Ministry (formerly the State Planning Institute), the Ministry of Treasury, the Ministry of Social Policy and Family, as well as Turkish CCT team members, World Bank CCT team members, and technocrats working in the World Bank, who took an active role in negotiating with the

government, making decisions about CCTs, and poverty monitoring. I also interviewed team members who worked on the CCT's Impact Evaluation Report, and experts and staff both at the SYDGM, Ankara, and the local SYDV in the provinces of Tekirdağ and Diyarbakır. The elite interviews are of great importance in understanding the meaning behind their actions and its reflection on policy making. Other than insider's views, I will use data collected during the fieldwork, such as CCT program brochures giving detailed technical descriptions of how the service is provided, CCT application forms, information booklets, flyers, and posters informing the people about the program, etc. I also collected and analyzed all the documents the World Bank prepared for the Social Risk Mitigation Project, such as the Project Appraisal Document, Project Information Document, Project Implementation and Completion Report, Loan Agreement, and the Amendment of Loan Agreement. In addition, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) collaborated with the Turkish research company Agriculture and Agroindustries Engineering Consultancy (AGRIN) and prepared an Impact Evaluation report of the CCTs Project dated March 2006. Some of their survey results will be used in supporting this study's argument. Surfing through newspaper archives also helped me to follow the process of CCT enactment and illuminate how parties, both coalition and AKP, attempt to get credit from cash transfers in Turkey.

### **3.2. The Role of Domestic Politics in CCT-Making in Turkey: A Precaution to “Social Explosion”?**

There are several domestic factors that can offer explanations for the adoption of Turkish CCTs. The timing of the adoption of Turkish CCTs as a consequence of the 2001 economic crisis (the most destructive one in Turkish history), competition between political parties, relations between the executive and legislative, and the role of the bureaucrats stand out as important building blocks for understanding the role of national politics. Contrary to Latin American cases such as Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, Turkey is a highly centralized unitary state and within that system, as expected, decision-making mechanisms are highly centralized as well. In terms of national functions, the largely ceremonial president is elected for a seven-year term by a popular parliament round of votes. Since the President has a largely ceremonial role, the executive power is vested in the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, while the legislative power is vested in the unicameral parliament. Therefore, the political constraints are different than in most of the Latin American cases I will consider when explaining the impact of bottom-up processes on policy-making. First, I will examine the role of socioeconomic factors and the 2001 economic crisis as an important player in the adoption of a national CCT program in Turkey. Then, I will analyze the role of technocrats, politicians, and local politics in the shift to more programmatic social policy.

### **3.2.1. 2001 Economic Crisis as a “Window of Opportunity”**

On April 4th, 2001, two months after Turkey had confronted the most destructive economic crisis in its own history, a man threw an empty cash-register down in front of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, who was just about to get into his car, shouting: “My

esteemed prime minister Ecevit, I was a tradesman yesterday but I'm a poor man today.”<sup>62</sup>

Ahmet Cakmak was one of the many who were hit hard by the crisis. His debt – which was \$6000 before the crisis – tripled due to the soaring foreign exchange rate. He claimed he had to sell his properties and belongings to pay back his debts. The cash register became the symbol of the greatest economic depression in the republic's history.

The Turkish economy had never confronted an economic crisis as severe as the one witnessed on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001. The crisis strongly affected every segment of the society, costing Turkey around 53 billion dollars' worth of loss in its gross national product and creating over one million unemployed.<sup>63</sup> Unlike the economic crisis of the 1990s, highly educated and skilled employees also lost their jobs in large numbers. The crisis led to a major increase in the number of people living below the \$400 per month poverty line and the \$200 per month subsistence line.<sup>64</sup> According to surveys, 80 percent of the population had drastically changed its consumption patterns of food by cutting back on meat and fresh vegetables.<sup>65</sup>

Following the 2001 economic crisis, inevitably, poverty became a widespread problem. The gap between the poor and the well-off was widening and getting more visible, bringing Turkey to the edge of “social explosion”. The media reinforced the “threat of social destruction” with an image showing a struggling poor man pushing a cart heavy with materials collected from garbage, just next to a street of luxury shopping

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<sup>62</sup> “They threw an empty cash register in front of Ecevit”, *Milliyet*, April 5, 2001

<sup>63</sup> Jon, Gorvett. “IMF to the Rescue”, *The Middle East*, February 01, 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Fikret Senses, “Economic Crisis as an Instigator of Distributional Conflict: The Turkish Case in 2001”, in Barry Rubin and Ziya Öniş eds., *Turkish Economy in Crisis*, (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 103.

<sup>65</sup> “Kisi Basi Milli Gelirde 7 yıl Geriye Gidiyoruz”, *Hürriyet*, March 19, 2001.

mall.<sup>66</sup> As a response to the deteriorating economic conditions, there were widespread protests in the streets. Labor and trade unions called for nationwide protests to push the government towards taking urgent measures to ameliorate the social and economic conditions as soon as possible.<sup>67</sup> The leading figures in the protests were artisans and craftsmen, who were deeply hurt by the invisible hand of the market. As in previous protests, the poor were largely invisible (Koyuncu and Senses, 2004: 35). As the protests took place in several provinces, the immediate negative repercussions of the economic crisis on poor peoples' lives were the main discussion point among academic circles, bureaucrats, and media columnists. Unions, non-governmental organizations and the international development agencies had been warning the authorities about the risk of a "social explosion" like the one going on in Argentina.<sup>68</sup>

In the aftermath of the economic crisis in Argentina in December 2001, repeated waves of protests of several hundreds of thousands of unemployed and semi-employed, trade unionists, and social movement activists turned into social chaos. This became a topic of discussion for Turkish intellectuals and politicians: Why didn't Turkey become Argentina under the same circumstances? The most violent form of protest in Turkey consisted of chanting "Government, resign" or "Ecevit quit".<sup>69</sup> The common themes of the answers given by Turkish intellectuals were based on "religion", "family" and "solidarity"--which were far from being objective estimations. World Bank Turkey's director, Ajay Chibber, has also added that "The Turkish society is very resilient and

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<sup>66</sup> Douglas Frantz, "Great Divide Widens As Economy Worsens", *New York Times*, July 21, 2001.

<sup>67</sup> "Kamu-Sen: Emekcinin Yas Gunu", *Hürriyet*, February 22, 2001.

<sup>68</sup> *Hürriyet*, July 1, 2001.

<sup>69</sup> Douglas Frantz, "Economic Protest in Turkey Turns into Melee", *New York Times*, April 12, 2001.

there's still a strong sense of community".<sup>70</sup> Surprisingly, these evaluations were often reiterated in the interviews with academicians and experts I conducted for this research. It was argued that the institution of the family is strong in Turkey and that the poor people are taking general incentives in doing "imece"<sup>71</sup> (collective works) instead of seeking to survive on their own.<sup>72</sup>

Along with the discussions among intellectuals and politicians, the National Security Council also presented a report on the "burden of economic crisis on poor peoples' shoulders" in their regular meeting in June 2001. The report focused on their concern about a "social explosion" which would lead to a drastic rise in pickpocketing, burglary and other types of crimes. They warned the government to take every necessary measure against the imminent danger of the destruction of Turkish society.<sup>73</sup> Along with the meeting, the survey conducted of people in urban cities indicated that 59.7% of the population was expecting an eruption of social outrage in the days that followed the crisis (Koyuncu and Senses, 2004: 35).

To mitigate the impact of the crisis on the poor neighborhoods, upon the request of the Turkish government, the World Bank (WB) offered a \$500 million loan in social funds to be used in reducing the "negative" effects of economic crisis on poor people

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<sup>70</sup> "Their lost gets worse but the apathy still outweighs anger", *The Economist*, August 30, 2001.

<sup>71</sup> İmece means, collective work. The term is used to describe villagers' collective work, for handling a common work of the village or helping each other's work. Villagers of Anatolia usually fight with tough conditions, farms have not very good physical conditions, water sources were far away, there we no roads etc. The only way to challenge these vital problems was imece's collaborative approach.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Fikret Toksoz from TESEV's Good Governance Program by author, Istanbul, November 24, 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Bekir Coskun, "Bir patirti duyarsanız", *Hürriyet*, July 24, 2001.

under the *Social Risk Mitigation Project* (SRMP).<sup>74</sup> Table 1 shows the four different components of the project.

**Table 1. Sections of the Social Risk Mitigation Project**

<b><i>Rapid Aid:</i></b> Reducing the effects of the crisis on the poor population
<b><i>Institutional Development:</i></b> Increasing the capacity of the State's institutions which render service for and social assistance to poor people
<b><i>Conditional Cash Transfers:</i></b> Helping the poorest six per cent of the population (approximately two million families that fell below the poverty line), contingent upon the investments on the children's education, health and nutrition
<b><i>Local initiatives:</i></b> Increasing part and full time employment opportunities for the poor people

**Source:** Project Appraisal Document, World Bank

Whereas Rapid Aid constitutes the adjustment portion, which provided emergency aid to the poorest, CCTs fit into the investment portion of the program, which targeted the poorest 6 per cent of the population conditional on improving the use of education and health services. The main goal of the program is on two ends: first, to mitigate the social explosion risk in the society; second, to mitigate the consequences of an IMF-backed strict economic reform package.<sup>75</sup> As it was stated in the Project Appraisal Document prepared by World Bank, “the coalition government is moving quickly to expand targeted social assistance to the groups, who are most affected by the crisis.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> For further information on Social Risk Mitigation Project see Filiz Zabci, “A poverty alleviation program in Turkey: the Social Risk Mitigation Project”, *SEER SouthEast Europe Review for Labor and Social Affairs*, Issue: 01 / 2006: 109-125.

<sup>75</sup> Fikret Senses. “Economic Crisis as an Instigator of Distributional Conflict: the Turkish case in 2000-2001”, *Turkish Studies*, 2003, (4) No.2, pp: 92-119.

<sup>76</sup> World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Hybrid Investment/ Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*. Report No: 22510-TU. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001.p.17-18

The 2001 economic crisis triggered the government's response and has clearly helped to facilitate the process. The economic crisis has also emerged as a critical stimulus for strengthening the institutional structure of social assistance provision. The rationale behind the World Bank's compliance with the government's request for assistance to the most needy was also based on the severity of the economic crisis of 2001.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, worsening economic conditions created a proper social and political environment that pushed the government to adopt CCTs more rapidly.

### **3.2.2. Domestic Politics**

There are different influential actors in designing and implementing social assistance policies in national politics. Among them, bureaucrats--in other words, technocrats--and politicians are the leading players that have a say in the adoption of new social programs. The competition between political parties, legislative and executive, in which each party advances its political self-interest--in this case, election and/or reelection bids--could also create a stimulus to adopt national CCTs. Indeed, the reelection of Lula da Silva in Brazil in 2006 awakened an interest among academicians and helped to explain the adoption of *Bolsa Familia* (Hunter and Power 2007; Zucco 2008), as Vicente Fox's reelection in Mexico did the adoption of *Oportunidades*, Mexican CCTs (Rocha Menocal, 2001). The rapid diffusion of CCTs in Latin America has also led scholars to focus on the role of domestic politics as well as the role of international institutions (Borges Sugiyama, 2009). Redistributive programs provide

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<sup>77</sup> World Bank, *Implementation, Completion and Results Report in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey* Report No:ICR0000306, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001.p.13.



room for political manipulation since political leaders can utilize them as a means of gaining votes. How all these political factors actually played out in Turkey presents an interesting case since a coalition government adopted Turkish CCTs in the aftermath of the most destructive economic crisis of Turkish history. The ideological range of parties in the coalition also makes the Turkish case noteworthy.

The coalition government established after the April 1999 national elections contained the center left Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP) under Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, the ultranationalist Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetci Hareket Partisi, MHP) under Devlet Bahçeli, and the center right ANAP under Mesut Yılmaz. Electoral competition in Turkey is very well established, and since the 1990s successive coalition governments have been in power. This three party coalition government survived the August 1999 earthquake, which destroyed the most industrial part of Turkey, as well as the November 2000 and February 2001 economic crises. Just as the federal and decentralized system allows for more intergovernmental competition, the highly fragmented multi-party system in Turkey, which led establishment coalition governments through 1990s, also fosters lively debate, conflict and competition while making policies and enacting laws. On the other hand, this fragmented system also decreases the capacity and incentives necessary for undertaking economic and social reforms. However, the 2001 economic crisis acted as a trigger to facilitate adoption of a reform package both on an economic level, as supported by the IMF, and on a social level, as supported by the World Bank.

Public debates about the threat of “social explosion” and social discontent pushed the coalition government towards taking an immediate measure to mitigate the impact of

the economic downturn on the poor segments of the society. Therefore, the government took into account the “warnings” and published a statement known as the “Argentina Statement”. The Minister of Interior Affairs, Rustu Kazim Yucelen, promised the efficient, proper execution of social services, which included the determination of dependent, deprived people in each district and the provision of in-kind aid immediately.<sup>78</sup> However, successive fiscal crises showed that old-style clientelist spending had reached its limits, forcing politicians to rethink its feasibility (Onis 2003, 10).<sup>79</sup> Signing the new national economic program “Transition to a Strong Economy” under the IMF’s strict fiscal recommendations also showed the coalition government’s compliance with market-based reforms in line with the IMF.

Following the announcement of the program, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit from the DSP held a press conference, together with coalition leaders and the leaders of the other parties in Parliament announcing that the government stood fully behind the economic program.<sup>80</sup> Although the coalition government seemed to agree fully on complying with the new economic program under pressure from the IMF, this does not mean that there was no split among coalition partners. The ultranationalist side of the coalition represented by MHP, especially, had great concerns about the program. This is not surprising at all since the political parties that formed the coalition government have different ideological stances. Serious disagreements emerged between the radical nationalist MHP and the other two over significant aspects of the economic program.

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<sup>78</sup> *Hürriyet*, 5 January 2002.

<sup>79</sup> Ziya Öniş, “Domestic Politics versus Global Dynamics: Towards a Political Economy of the 2000 and 2001 Financial Crises in Turkey”, in Barry Rubin and Ziya Öniş eds., *Turkish Economy in Crisis*, (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003)

<sup>80</sup> Tesev Electronic Newsletter, March 21, 2001.

MHP was mainly opposed to the reduction of agricultural subsidies, which the IMF described as a “burden on the state,” and the sale of state enterprises. This position was not puzzling at all, since electoral payoffs were at stake. First of all, supporters of the MHP are nationalist; therefore, its voting base would disagree with the sale of state assets. Second, and more importantly, the MHP drew its support from the low-income part of society, mainly the rural poor. The ANAP has no concerns as such since it represents the interests of the business class, which is in favor of neoliberal globalization. In the case of the DSP, it drew support from secular, middle class people and the low-income urban population. Consequently, it also had different concerns, at least on the electoral level. The MHP, however—the second dominant partner of the coalition--opposed those elements of the economic program targeting the rural poor that would compromise its electoral objectives.

This split in the coalition is also pointed out in the World Bank’s Project Appraisal Document: “While the government has implemented an array of reform measures, both macroeconomic and structural, the Government was late in meeting certain commitments for the 8<sup>th</sup> program review due to the internal debates within the Cabinet, which have spilled over into the public quarrels.” (p.11) Indeed, civil initiative groups, including presidents of labor unions and trade unions, announced that they would not support any program which ignores the views of the public.<sup>81</sup>

The political risks that the internal debates brought within the cabinet ended up with the resignation of several Cabinet members. Social pressures arising from the strict

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<sup>81</sup> *Hürriyet*, 22 February 2001.

adjustment program brought the necessity of alleviating the social impact of the economic program with minor contributions out of the budget. The Social Risk Mitigation Project offered a window of opportunity: first, to decrease the tension within the cabinet, and second, to show the government's commitment to protecting social expenditures and providing benefits to the poor.

As stated above, the CCTs are also in the investment part of the project. Indeed, in a country where the economic crisis strongly affected the informally employed and unemployed poor, where income inequality and poverty have been rising, and where the poor have emerged as an important constituency, pro-poor programs like CCTs could have an important effect on electoral politics. Thus, what are the political incentives that motivate politicians within a coalition government to adopt CCTs? What is the electoral payoff? Who gets to claim credit?

The ideological distance between the coalition partners was wide, and each party addressed the interests of different segments of the society. While the DSP as a center-left party represents the interests of secular the middle class and partially the urban poor,<sup>82</sup> the MHP addressed the needs of the rural poor and nationalists. The ANAP is on the other end of the ideological spectrum, center-right, and the current government, the AKP, also sees the ANAP as a successor party. The ANAP did not have an explicit concern with income redistribution and served predominantly urban and high-income

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<sup>82</sup> Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "The Center-Left Parties in Turkey", *Turkish Studies* Vol. 8, No. 2, 211–232, June 2007.

groups.<sup>83</sup> Within this picture, how did coalition partners agree on adopting CCTs, and what were the factors that motivated them?

First of all, the design of the CCTs does not demand major redistribution or constitute a major item in the social expenditures budget. The post-crisis environment, in which the economic crisis became more of a pressing problem and there was a threat of social explosion, motivated the political parties in power to adopt CCTs to decrease the burden of adjustment programs on vulnerable populations. Establishing a popular program targeting both the urban and rural poor was appealing for both the DSP and MHP, whose electoral bases are low-income groups. With the emergence of the crisis, there was an increase in the proportion of the informal sector in the economy. As Mares and Carnes (2010) argue, when the size of the informal sector expands with an economic crisis, “the size of the political coalition supporting non-contributory programs increases as well”.

Potential electoral payoffs for both the DSP and MHP motivated both parties. The program also suited the interests of the ANAP, a center-right party, since it was funded by the World Bank and did not ask for major redistribution in providing regular minimum income assistance to the poor. The State Minister in charge of Social Funds, Hasan Gemici, stated in an interview that other types of social assistance provision are not financially feasible and also may lead people to remain idle (Buğra and Keyder, *New Poverty and Changing Welfare Regime of Turkey*, 44). Even the coalition partners have different ideological orientations—for example, the State Minister is from the

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<sup>83</sup> Ziya Öniş and Steven Benjamin Webb, “Political Economy of Policy Reform in Turkey in the 1980s”, Policy Research Working Papers, 1 (2), p.15

Democratic Left Party, which was supposed to support major redistribution of income, universal benefits, but was concerned to avoid social programs which may generate public costs while “encouraging laziness”. This is not a surprising outcome if the parties make electoral calculations that serve the interests of the middle class, which is paying taxes, as well.

Second, education and health care are two key areas that the CCT program targets. Coalition partners were aware of the fact that human capital will suffer in the long term due to the economic crisis, and the CCT, as a program calling for investment in human capital, seemed attractive for a country that wished to restore sustained economic growth. In the long run, CCTs are expected to promote human capital development and raise labor productivity, which may also increase Turkey’s competitiveness in international markets. This rationale was more appealing for the center-right ANAP party. Consistent with the parties’ appreciation of the design of CCTs, which makes contributions to education and health services, the government also guaranteed and approved the budget for social spending for health, education and social protection (PAD, 20).

Third, as stated in the World Bank document, CCTs were designed to target the poorest of the poor. In other words, the allocation of CCTs does not demand serving the interests of broad segments of the society. CCTs target the poorest 6 per cent of the population based on conditions related to health and education.<sup>84</sup> Serving the interests of

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<sup>84</sup> World Bank, *Implementation, Completion and Results Report in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey* Report No:ICR0000306, p.6.

a narrowly based segment of the society rather than the interests of broad populations was more plausible and feasible for political parties in the coalition.

Due to the fragmented structure of coalition governments, they have been associated with a slow process of legislation and a lack of commitment to undertake economic programs and social reforms. On the other hand, the advantage of a coalition government is that it introduces an effective system of checks and balances, and coalition partners have to take into account all views and interests in order to make and execute laws. Therefore, during the three-party government in Turkey, heated debates and splits within the cabinet were frequent, but on the other hand, it also prevented each party from getting sole credit for a poverty-alleviation program. This also prevented them from forming new patronage networks based on the distribution of cash transfers (De La O, 2011). Turkey has a notorious history of political distortion of material incentives by parties, which prevented them from playing a more progressive role in terms of programmatic social policy making. However, since each party claimed recognition for an innovative, “haute couture” poverty alleviation program, competition over the design led to lively debates, which ended up tying the hands of the parties by leading to a programmatic social policy program. According to the World Bank Appraisal Document, the government has made key decisions about the CCT (p.58): first, it is designed as one national benefit, rather than different benefits to each region. This can prevent the political manipulation of funds towards one region that would result in one coalition partner gaining most of the votes. Second, the method of payment was structured as becoming available through the banking system so that the government prevented

alternative ways of making payments, which might have opened room for political manipulation.

Last but not least, Terry Moe's (1989) argument on the impact of political uncertainty on policymaking gives insights about the motivations of coalition partners when adopting CCTs. Due to the destructive impacts of an economic crisis on society, the fate of the parties in the coalition government for the next electoral cycle was uncertain. Following Moe's argument, and as also stated in De La O's study, "the more uncertain politicians are that they will control the political process in the future, the more likely they will be to tie the hands of future politicians by insulating policies" (De La O, 2011). Indeed, the threat of "social explosion" which led to political instability and an increase in uncertainty about the next elections' outcomes had an impact on politicians and resulted in a design for the CCTs that were less prone to political manipulation.

Apart from political parties and their leaders, a new political actor, Kemal Dervis, has emerged from the crisis. He was previously the head of the UNDP, Vice-President of the World Bank, and he was appointed as Minister of Economy with the objective of pulling the economy out of recession. He was the one who played a critical mediating role between the national political sphere and the international financial communities, the IMF and the World Bank. The government, especially the DSP and MHP, had concerns that adopting the IMF's policies would deepen the negative effects of the crisis, such as unemployment, and that increasing poverty and inequality would continue to hurt the majority of the population.<sup>85</sup> On the other hand, these concerns were also shared by the

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.



international organizations; the WB was more concerned about the political risks that the social risks might bring. The main concern in the WB's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) report (June 2001) was:

“The economic program is subject to significant risks, which must be mitigated. Among the most important risk factors are sustained political support for the program and macroeconomic vulnerabilities, notably those linked to public debt sustainability. Political risks are heightened by the social pressures arising from the crisis.”<sup>86</sup>

However, where the interests of the government and the World Bank overlapped is hidden in the second part of the WB's CAS report (June 2001):

“Going forward, increased emphasis on the social dimensions will be essential to sustaining political support for what is in the end a painful stabilization and adjustment program.”<sup>87</sup>

The political parties in the government that had electoral concerns were eager to move on as rapidly as possible to alleviate the negative impacts of the economic crisis on the population with pro-poor programs that would not demand too much from the budget. According to the Project Appraisal Document, overall costs would be contained at around 0.17 percent of GDP. The main objective of the SRMP project was to strengthen institutional capacity and allocate cash transfers to the poor, which was appealing for all parties.

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<sup>86</sup> World Bank, Country Assistance Strategy Document Fiscal Years 2001-1003(FY 01-03 CAS) (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2000)

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

### 3.2.3. Any Role for Local Politics?

In the Latin American cases, the system is decentralized and provides room for the involvement of local politicians and civil society organizations. Federalism also increases the influence of local politics on a national level, as is the case in Brazil. Local issues can be ideal candidates for claiming credits for the parties in national elections (Sugiyama, 2011:35). However, local politics do not have an impact either in social policy-making or in national elections in Turkey. In an interview with an expert on local politics from the TESEV foundation, the expert said he was concerned about the ineffectiveness of local governments and/or civil society organizations in pushing governments to formulate an immediate poverty-relief program. Exclusion of local politics from the political arena leads to centralization of poverty-relief allocation, which opens up a space for political manipulation. He added, “if these social programs are motivated by local incentives, this may create pressure on the government, and citizens would learn to make rights-based social policy demands. It may also empower the society.”<sup>88</sup>

Due to several reasons, such as the experience of depolarization in the society after several coups, constitutional pressures, etc., the impact of civil society organizations has been historically limited in Turkey as well. John Innes, the task team leader of SRMP, also confirmed this by saying:

“Turkey is a country with some of the least well-developed systems of involving ordinary citizens in policy-making and implementation. It is not a very participatory

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<sup>88</sup> Interview with Fikret Toksoz, Tesev, October 2011.

system...such a centralized top-down state which is inheritance of the structure of the Republic as it was created. In many ways it has changed a lot, but in some ways we still have the basic structure, even now.”<sup>89</sup>

A contributor to the 1<sup>st</sup> Impact Evaluation Report on CCTs, Terry Roopnaiere, also confirmed the highly centralized structure of CCTs in Turkey, as compared to cash transfers in Latin America, which makes the Turkish verification procedure quite complicated.

Besides 8 public institutions, 5 voluntary associations: Mother Child Education Foundation (Anne ve Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı- AÇEV), Support for Modern Life Association (Çagdas Yasami Destekleme Derneği-ÇYDD), Foundation for the Support of Women’s Work (Kadın Emegini Değerlendirme Vakfı-KEDV), Turkey Education Volunteers Foundation (Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı-TEGEV) and Anatolia Development Foundation (Anadolu Kalkınma Vakfı -AKV) were the members of a Consulting Board for the Project to SRMP.<sup>90</sup> The same type of consulting committee also took place in Mexico to finalize the structure of their program (De La O, 2011:17). However, during my fieldwork, I was surprised to find that most of the civil society organizations share the same liberal rhetoric that politicians and public servants shared about the poverty programs, and this was the case for the CCTs as well. A well-known businessman, who was also a member of the Consulting Board for SRMP and known for his contributions to

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<sup>89</sup> Interview with John Innes in Ankara, 8 November 2004 reported in Ozlem Zehra Tastan, 2005, “A Critique Of The Poverty Alleviation As Soial Policy: The World Bank’s Social Risk Mitigation Project In Turkey”, unpublished dissertation, Middle East Technical University, p. 183.

<sup>90</sup> Filiz Zabcı, “ Sosyal Riski Azaltma Projesi: Yoksullugu Azaltmak mi, Zengini Yoksuldan Korumak mi?” Ankara Universitesi SBF Dergisi. 2003, 58/2:215-241

the voluntary sector, wrote a letter to World Bank President Wolfensohn indicating that the types of programs that the World Bank implements, such as CCTs, discourage people from looking for jobs, and instead creates extra public costs (Buğra and Keyder, 2005:67).

#### **3.2.4. Any Role for Technocrats?**

This section will investigate the role of bureaucrats behind the birth of CCTs in Turkey. It will examine, first, whether or not state autonomy is evident in the sense that bureaucrats act in a way which is decisive and autonomous, and second, whether there is any clash between politicians and technocrats when adopting CCTs.<sup>91</sup> This led me to get in contact with bureaucrats from different state departments, such as the Ministry of Treasury, the World Bank headquarters and its Ankara office, the General Directorate of Social Assistance, the Ministry of Social Policy and Family, and the Ministry of Development, all of whom were either involved in the decision making processes of the CCTs or have been working on social policy making but not necessarily on the CCT program.

One part of the SRMP under the investment section is to strengthen the existing structure of the General Directorate of Social Assistance and 931 local SYDV. This was a critical portion of the project, since CCTs require fully operationalized and efficient systems that keep the program from clientelist allocations and also ask for a certain degree of bureaucratic autonomy. The institutional strengthening component also includes TurkStat since it was the public institution that conducted surveys and produced

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<sup>91</sup> Throughout this chapter, “bureaucrats” and “technocrats” are used interchangeably.

data on household income, inflation, poverty, unemployment, etc., which are all useful in monitoring poverty. Targeting mechanisms based on correct estimators is essential for the CCT program, since they are one of the determinants of making programmatic social policy. It is also essential to prevent involvement of the political processes in the allocation process. Therefore, the level of bureaucratic capacity and the degree of autonomy of bureaucrats can determine whether the design, implementation and distribution of the program follow technocratic criteria rather than political ones.

Indeed, Huber and McCarty's (2004) analysis of bureaucratic capacity and policy reform also points out that, in their words, "low bureaucratic capacity diminishes incentives for bureaucrats to comply with legislation, making it more difficult for politicians to induce bureaucrats to take actions that politicians desire" (p. 481).<sup>92</sup> In Turkey, bureaucratic capacity is high, since in order to be an official working in state departments, people need to take a nation-wide exam and oral exam, followed by a written one. After this procedure, based on their score, they are placed in a public institution of their own choice. Each department has demanded a different score: where the Ministry of Development asks for more points, for example, the Ministry of Social Policy demands less. The officials, if they have a university degree and a high score, start to work as experts, and they need to write an expertise thesis—a kind of master project-- in order to be promoted. Thus, the bureaucratic capacity is strong enough to do the mechanical work. As a World Bank co-team leader of the CCT team indicated in an

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<sup>92</sup> J.D. Huber and N. McCarty "Bureaucratic Capacity, Delegation, and Political Reform", *American Political Science Review* Vol. 98, No. 3 August 2004.

interview: “I did not find Turkey to be a hostile context in any way. Turkey had done a magnificent job with the earthquake benefits that the World Bank gave in 1999 and very low leakage or infusion in those. Turkey had a bureaucracy and infrastructure in the Social Solidarity Fund that many developing countries completely lack.” Indeed, she gave an example from the Transparency International index, where Turkey ranks 53 out of 177 countries in corruption. However, we cannot claim that the officials in bureaucratic organizations in Turkey are independent of political authorities or higher bureaucratic authorities that they work under. An interview with Hande Hacimahmutoglu, a social policy expert from the Ministry of Development, pointed in the same direction<sup>93</sup>. Even if the experts working in the ministry are convinced of the effectiveness and usefulness of a social policy program, they need to seek legitimacy from peers and the highest level, their Ministers. Then the Minister tries to convince political authorities and politicians who are the most influential at the top of the Ministry of Finance and/or the Ministry of Treasury. My interviewee also suggested that nowadays, Ali Babacan, former Minister of Economy and current Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, is one of the most influential in the cabinet.

My interview with a bureaucrat in the Ministry of Development yielded insights about how bureaucrats get involved in the social policymaking process. The experts recruited for the state department writes expertise theses and become experts in one of the issues related to social service provisions (if they are working in a related department). Then, this becomes their area of interest and expertise, and they attend international

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with Hande Hacimahmutoglu, Ministry of Development, conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, October 2013.

conferences on the topic and exchange thoughts with other policy-makers from different countries. Participating in professional networks has an impact on bureaucrats, since it may lead them to think from different perspectives and see the main paradigms and new trends for addressing the problem.

Throughout this policy learning process, they also exchange norms and emulate decisions when a social policy program convinces them. The World Bank co-team leader of the Turkish CCTs also called this process “south-south learning”. She said that she took a delegation of people from Turkey to Mexico to see the CCTs in Mexico, and that “it was a strictly technocratic exchange—South-South—learning where you put together people from two developing countries”. The group included people from the Social Solidarity Fund and a bureaucrat from the Treasury, and one person each from the Education and Health Ministries. She pointed out the person from the Treasury who needs to be persuaded, since in the Turkish legal system, the Ministry of Treasury has to approve every loan. An expert from the Ministry of Development also confirms the central role of the Ministry of Treasury, since the institution is the one, which is the most effective on budget issues.

Based on the semi-structured interviews that I conducted with national-level bureaucrats, if the formulation, implementation and negotiations with the World Bank took place today, the impact of Turkish technocrats on the adoption of a new social policy would be more efficient. Within the SRMP project, the strengthening of institutional capacity was one of the investment legs of the project, and most bureaucrats that I interviewed evaluated that portion of the project as the most important one. The institutional strengthening takes time, but interviewees all agreed that SRMP created a

window of opportunity for strengthening the institutional foundation of social service provision and increased the bureaucratic capacity within the Social Assistance Foundations, which is the main state institution responsible for allocating cash transfers.

However, besides the General Directorate of Social Assistance, the bureaucratic capacity of Ministries, especially the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Treasury have been strong, as a co-team leader of the SRMP project put it. In an interview with the Undersecretary of Treasury, he also confirmed that they successfully negotiated with the IMF and the World Bank to keep the social assistance part, especially assistance to the most vulnerable, which may have the potential to decrease social spending. One of the contributors to the Impact Evaluation Report, Terry Roopnaiere, who has taken part in evaluating the impact of CCTs in many countries, especially in Latin America, also confirmed that the supply side of Turkish CCTs is stronger than Latin American CCTs, with the exception of Brazil and Mexico. What he means by “supply side” is the governance of CCTs and the institutional side.

Although the bureaucracy has the capacity to make or adapt an innovative social policy and/or make negotiations with international partners, the draft bill that they prepare has to be approved by the parliament. This is where the politicians show their influence over bureaucrats. In an interview with a bureaucrat working for the Ministry of Development, she mentioned that after the Ministry passes the draft bill to the cabinet, it might take a longer time to make a law out of the bill. A special budgetary commission does detailed work on each article, and if the draft bill coincides with an election, depending on the cabinet’s interests, the executive may or may not pass the law. Therefore, even though the technocrats have power and the bureaucracy is strong enough



to work on a project, suggest policy changes, design innovative policies, and make detailed plans on each article of the project; politicians in power have the final say in Turkish politics.

### **3.3. The Role of International Agencies in CCT-Making in Turkey: The World Bank is on the Stage**

In the aftermath of “Black Wednesday”, the Turkish government delivered their concern about “social explosion” to Jim Park, who was stationed in the World Bank’s Ankara office and demanded a report on the possible impacts of the economic recession on Turkish society. In an interview with co-team leader of the SRMP project, Jeanine Braithwaite<sup>94</sup>, she mentioned that the Turkish government did the same previously, when the 1999 earthquake hit the most industrial part of the country and the World Bank put together two loans, the Marmara Earthquake Reconstruction Loan and Marmara Earthquake Recovery Loan, consisting of a set of cash transfers for survivors’ benefits and disability benefits. The World Bank report warned the government that the most destructive impact of the economic crisis would be on younger people with many children and listed five poverty-alleviation programs that are replications of what other developing countries have done to deal with economic shocks. CCT was one of them.

Indeed, by the late 1990s, the World Bank was actively promoting CCTs to developing countries. CCTs served the interests of both the government and the international financial institutions as well. On the IMF side, the “Transition to Strong

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<sup>94</sup> Interview with Jeanine Braithwaite, World Bank co-team leader. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Economy” program not only emphasized macro-economic concerns such as intensifying privatization, more fiscal controls, etc., but also the inclusion of social assistance that demands “small state” targeting of the neediest in the new economic program. On the government side, they wanted to respond to the economic recession by providing immediate support to the poorest of the poor, which was doable through cash transfers. There were already established Social Solidarity Foundations in every district (even though they were not so efficient at that time). Thus, there was an agreement between the World Bank and the government that CCTs were the best way to alleviate the risk of social explosion in a society that conforms to a “small state” and does not demand major redistribution. This exerted a significant influence on the adaptation of CCTs in Turkey.

According to the Bank’s risk assessment report, this project is an important step towards preventing social pressures from turning into political ones that would jeopardize the ongoing structural transformation of the political economic context.<sup>95</sup> World Bank Turkey Director Ajay Chibber confirmed the main concern by saying “The SRMP is very important in terms of supporting Turkey’s economic program”.<sup>96</sup> The Minister of Economy, Kemal Dervis, also shared the World Bank’s concern. In the loan agreement ceremony, he added “one of the state’s most important tasks was to keep an eye on income distribution and aid most needy social groups, implement a social policy within the framework of market economy and maintain communal solidarity.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> World Bank, *FY 04-06 CAS*, p. 37, reported in Ozlem Zehra Tastan, 2005, “A Critique Of The Poverty Alleviation As Soial Policy: The World Bank’s Social Risk Mitigation Project In Turkey”, unpublished dissertation, Middle East Technical University, p.80.

<sup>96</sup> *Turkish Daily News*, 15 September 2001.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

Indeed, the intense exogenous pressure, mainly from the IMF, and followed by the World Bank, was quite explicit, especially during the periods following the economic crisis throughout the 90's (Tsarouhas and Bolukbasi, 2007:17). The most direct form of pressure came with the IMF's conditionality for releasing loans to the Turkish government. This time, the condition of disbursement of loans was enactment of a law on strengthening the Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund and the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations in districts that enable the implementation of long-run poverty-alleviation projects and mitigate social risks<sup>98</sup>. Under these circumstances, the coalition government signed the loan contract with the WB on September 2001 with the condition of the enactment law and continued determination over implementing the new economic program.

The SRMP started in 2002 under the Social Solidarity and Assistance Institution.<sup>99</sup> The main content of SRMP is represented as follows:

“A key goal of the SRMP is to create social assistance system in Turkey that is targeted towards the poorest, and which will provide not a “safety net” for the poor, but also a trampoline to help the poor escape poverty—a system which not only mitigates social risk but also helps to protect and manage it.<sup>100</sup>”

As indicated, the SRMP project is intended to: “mitigate” the social risk by providing immediate support (cash transfers) to the poor who were adversely affected by the February 2001 economic crisis; “manage” the social risk by strengthening the

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<sup>98</sup> World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Hybrid Investment/ Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*. Report No: 22510-TU, p.27.

<sup>99</sup> World Bank, *Loan Agreement #4638 between Republic of Turkey and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, September 14, 2001.

<sup>100</sup> World Bank, *Project Info Document*, Report No: 10515, p.5.

capacity of state institutions responsible for the distribution of these cash transfers; and last but not least, “prevent” social risk by supporting income-generating projects.<sup>101</sup> The CCTs constitute the most important part of the project, both financially and socially.<sup>102</sup>

Although the Turkish government requested assistance from the Bank to mitigate the impact of the February 2001 crisis on the poor<sup>103</sup>, it was known and announced as a “World Bank” project. The media contributed to this display by making headlines such as “From World Bank to the Poor”<sup>104</sup>, “Prevention of Social Risk By World Bank”<sup>105</sup>. However, the officers in the WB expressed their concern about labeling the CCTs as a “World Bank Project”. Rather, they preferred to refer to it as a project by the Turkish government, which the Bank financed.<sup>106</sup> How it turns out to be in practice is a different story. As George and Sabelli (1994: 42) also point out, “Theoretically, the World Bank was supposed to finance projects requested by a borrowing government. In practice, the Bank sent out its flying squads to find bankable projects”. Although the WB officials insist that “WB project” is a misleading term, Turkish government officials also framed the project as the “World Bank’s Social Risk Mitigation Project”.<sup>107</sup> In every platform, the coalition government has underlined appreciation to the WB which approved a \$500 million loan aimed at helping social groups that were most hurt by the economic

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<sup>101</sup> World Bank, *Implementation Completion and Results Report*, ICR0000306, p.2.

<sup>102</sup> Estimated Loan disbursement of US\$ 261.3 million reported in World Bank, *Implementation Completion and Results Report*, ICR0000306, p.3.

<sup>103</sup> World Bank, *Implementation Completion and Results Report*, ICR0000306, Washington, D.C.: World Bank, p.2.

<sup>104</sup> *Hürriyet*, 7 September 2001

<sup>105</sup> *Milliyet*, 16 September 2001.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with World Bank officer in Ankara reported in Meltem Yilmaz-Sener’s unpublished dissertation, “The World Bank’s Risk Management Approach to Poverty As a Form of Neoliberal Governmentality? The Case of the “The Social Risk Mitigation Project” in Turkey”, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, 2010 p.64

<sup>107</sup> “World Bank: We can give extra loan to Turkey”, *Hürriyet*, October 12, 2001.

program.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the name of the program itself lacks originality. The program is called *Şartlı Nakit Transferi*, which is a word-by-word translation of Conditional Cash Transfer, whereas the cash transfer programs in Latin America such as *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil or *Oportunidades* in Mexico coined new names for their programs. There is another story behind Peru's CCT's name, which President Alejandro Toledo changed, since the program's initials shared the same initials with the name of the incumbent party (De La O, 2011:17). This is due to the direct role and participation of national governments in designing the programs in those countries, whereas in Turkey, the World Bank played the role of an “enzyme”<sup>109</sup> that accelerated the ongoing process behind the social policy. Indeed, in countries like Turkey, which is notorious for its clientelistic politics, pushes from external actors are necessary conditions for undertaking major reforms.

### **3.4. The Consequences of Interaction between Domestic and International Players in Designing CCTs**

The story of the birth of CCTs has a great capacity to illuminate the main driving forces behind social policy adoption within a developing country. The political and socioeconomic processes behind the adoption of CCTs have an impact on the design of operational rules of the CCT program. The negotiations and bargaining process within national politics may lead to the formulation of a CCT program; its features follow technocratic rules or political ones. Based on the rigorousness of operational rules, it may

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<sup>108</sup> “World Bank signs \$500 million loan with Turkey”, *Hürriyet*, May 26, 2001.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Hande Hacimahmutoglu, Ministry of Development, conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, October 2013.

give a way to programmatic social policy or a clientelistic one. Therefore, the design features of a social policy play a critical role in weakening or strengthening traditional mechanisms of clientelistic allocations of social assistance schemes.

In the Turkish context, the World Bank has an impact not only on the emergence but also on the design of the Turkish CCTs, which set the rules of programmatic social policy making in Turkey. During the negotiation process, the World Bank first held meetings with the coalition government. However, the parliamentary elections of 3 November 2002 brought to power a single-party government, AKP with 34.28 percent of the votes and almost two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. For the first time since 1987, one party secured a clear majority in Parliament and a single-party government formed. Then, the team led by the World Bank worked with the AKP party government after November 2002. This provides the opportunity to compare the effects of two different political settings within domestic politics (coalition government vs. single party government) on then social-policy making process. The comparison also has the power to show the political consequences that are associated with the design of CCT.

CCTs have a reputation for being non-political, being successful in eschewing intermediaries like local brokers, having more transparency in the selection process, including extensive needs-testing, offering automatic delivery mechanisms, and being strictly-monitored and evaluated by third parties as to whether they create a desired change in social and human capital. However, they can be designed in ways which make them more vulnerable to clientelism, such as when their selection process of beneficiaries is non-transparent, when they have no monitoring mechanisms, when they include less targeted and more biased delivery mechanisms, when they are more political in nature,

etc. Table 2 discusses the determinants of programmatic and non-programmatic ways of distributing social assistance policies. I will examine the impact of the negotiations and collaboration between Turkish governments (coalition and single party) and the World Bank on designing features of CCTs and whether the final outcome weakens clientelism or not.

**Table 2.** Determinants of the Programmatic vs. Non-Programmatic Distributive Policies

<b>Şarh Nakit Transferi (Turkish CCT)</b>	<b>Programmatic Policies</b>	<b>Non-programmatic Policies</b>
<b>Targeting</b>	Objective criteria lead the selections, such as proxy-mean tests, scoring formula	Political criteria lead the selections
<b>Selection of Beneficiaries &amp; Monitoring Mechanisms</b>	Not contingent on political behavior of beneficiary, transparent Beneficiaries meet the conditions and requirement of the program	Contingent on political action of beneficiary, non-transparent
<b>Expansion of the program</b>	Non-election periods Step by step	Election periods
<b>Methods of evaluation</b>	Outsiders, objective 3 <sup>rd</sup> parties	Insiders, funded by Ministry

### 3.4.1. Targeting Mechanism

The World Bank was closely involved in the initial design of Turkish CCTs. In a country where clientelism has been an enduring phenomenon of politics, the World Bank team was extra cautious when designing the Turkish CCTs. In the CCT Project Appraisal document, the World Bank also confirms “there is no systematic methodology for targeting and allocation of resources, to ensure that the most needy will be the final

beneficiaries.”<sup>110</sup> Indeed, the eligibility criteria set by Law 3294 is vague and open to subjective evaluations. According to this law, the objective of the solidarity fund is formulized like this:

“To help citizens in the state of poverty and destitution, or, when necessary, to help non-citizens who are in Turkey legally or otherwise, to take measures that will enforce social justice by ensuring the fair distribution of income, to encourage social aid cooperation. (The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 1986)”

It is obvious that in order to be eligible to benefit from funds, the person needs to be in a state of poverty. However, it is not clear what “in a state of poverty” means, or what the criteria indicating poverty is. Thus, even while the law refers to “social justice” in a verbal sense, it is not referring to “social citizenship”, which is “more than a simple safety-net that refers to the universal provision of education, health, social security and welfare benefits available as attributes of citizenship” (King and Waldron, 1988: 418). The use of funds has been mostly discretionary, which means that the determination of poverty has mostly been left to the subjective judgments of local personnel in the foundations. This also furthers the belief that distribution of resources was manipulated politically.

For these reasons, the co-team leader of the project in the World Bank informed me during my interview, the World Bank team was extra cautious about the targeting mechanism. The World Bank designed and set it up in a way that couldn’t be manipulated by the government. As the co-team leader put it, “Either the government

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<sup>110</sup> World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Hybrid Investment/ Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*. Report No: 22510-TU, p.127.



took the targeting as part of the package, or the loan would not have been made.”<sup>111</sup> The World Bank’s concern makes sense in a country where social assistance policies used to include a high level of discretion since there are no written procedures or monitoring mechanisms capable of following whether the deserved people benefit from social assistance. The World Bank’s Project Appraisal Document states that setting up a strong targeting mechanism based on a proxy scoring formula might constitute a written record that can’t be manipulated by governments (p.25). Therefore, the World Bank team designed the formula based on a household survey that they co-sponsored with local consultants drawn from the Middle East Technical University (Ortadogu Teknik Universitesi-ODTU).<sup>112</sup>

The World Bank imported the idea of “CCTs” to Turkey. Both the loan agreement between Turkey and the World Bank and the Project Appraisal document indicated that a scoring formula is a must, which “would help bring more objectivity in the criteria used to allocate social assistance and thus reduce the scope for possible discretion and inclusion of the non-poor”<sup>113</sup>. Since getting the loan was based on a strict targeting mechanism, the coalition partners did not have much space to involve technical requirements. On the other hand, the same document also indicates that once the crisis was over, and as economic conditions and budgetary resources allowed, the government

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<sup>111</sup> Interview with Jeanine Braithwaite, World Bank co-team leader. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>112</sup> World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Hybrid Investment/ Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*. Report No: 22510-TU, p.27.

<sup>113</sup> World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Hybrid Investment/ Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*. Report No: 22510-TU, p.58.

had the chance to expand the CCT by making adjustments to the formula, which increased the size of the population included in the program.

Indeed, in a crisis-free environment when the single-party AKP government has administered the allocation of CCTs, the scoring formula was changed several times, increasing the number of beneficiaries. The number targeted in the original document was around one million. After the AKP government initiated payments through state funds, as of March 2009, approximately three million people benefited from the program. I interviewed experts about the scoring formula after it was set by the World Bank, and although they were not eager to talk about the formula, they kept telling me that the scoring formulation of the previous terms--indicating World Bank --was problematic and failed to measure poverty<sup>114</sup> Currently, the Scientific Research and Technological Council of Turkey (Turkiye Bilim ve Teknik ve Arastirma Kurumu-Tubitak) is working on a new, very detailed formula applicable to any kind of social aid, including CCTs. According to their plan, the formula will also be revised on a yearly basis. The revisions are being made according to the nationwide impact assessment study conducted with 30,000 new households, carried out by Gazi University.<sup>115</sup> Feedback from local *vakifs* is being taken into account as well.<sup>116</sup> The selection is vulnerable to manipulation, especially between the periods of introducing a new formula. The AKP government has also never published the scoring formula based on the reasoning that people can manipulate their application forms in order to be eligible. The World Bank disagreed with the government on the ground that this would decrease the transparency of the

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<sup>114</sup> Interview with Fatih Ortakaya at SYDGM, Ankara, October 18, 2011.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Fatih Ortakaya at SYDGM, Ankara, October 18, 2011.

<sup>116</sup> Interview with SYDV personnel, Tekirdağ, September 2011.

program,<sup>117</sup> but the Turkish government was hesitant, and they still haven't published the scoring formula.

### **3.4.2. Selection of Beneficiaries and Monitoring Mechanisms**

In order to get CCT benefits, the official criteria set specific requirements that seek specific statuses (i.e. being unemployed, not already benefitting from any social security resources) that explain whether that person is eligible to receive the benefits. The entire selection mechanism is set up by the World Bank's team, which is based on their social assessment findings. They found out that eligible beneficiaries should be people who are lacking any type of property and not employed in the formal sector<sup>118</sup>. These eligibility criteria worked in the interests of the MHP, which gets its electoral support from the poor rural population, as well as in the interests of the DSP, which gets its support from the urban poor, who live mostly in houses in suburban areas and work in the informal sector. The criteria do not exclude them from the program.

Monitoring also constitutes a very significant part of the design features of Turkish CCTs. With the initiation of the *butunlesik sosyal yardım sistemi* (social assistance automation system)<sup>119</sup> in October 2011, staff in SYDV have the ability to check whether the applicant is covered by any social security institute and whether the applicant receives

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<sup>117</sup> Interview with Jeanine Braithwaite, World Bank co-team leader. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>118</sup> World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Hybrid Investment/ Adjustment Loan in the Amount of US\$500 Million to the Republic of Turkey for a Social Risk Mitigation Project/Loan*. Report No: 22510-TU, p.60.

<sup>119</sup> It started first in 2009 as a pilot project in Ankara. Then on October 2011, all SYDVs have been able to use it.

any other type of social aid distributed by state,<sup>120</sup> such as bags of coal or a food package allocated twice a year. At the last stage, the board of trustees in each local SYDV approves it and the last approval is given by SYDGM in Ankara.<sup>121</sup> The introduction of the automation system is promising as programmatic social policy. The introduction of the automation system led personnel to get children's attendance data from schools. Personnel in one of the Diyarbakır's SYDV confirm this by saying "In previous years, it was hard to have access to attendance data from the schools. It was especially hard if the school was located in the village, considering the mountainous structure of the eastern part of the Turkey. That's the reason why we couldn't monitor whether the beneficiaries fulfilled the conditions. As of today it is much easier because of the automation system."<sup>122</sup> Before 2007, the SYDV staff checked the applicant's social security position by preparing a CD of data on behalf of the applicant and sent it to social security institutions to verify the data.<sup>123</sup> However upon interviews with several SYDV staff members, it became clear that this mechanism wasn't working perfectly. Institutional weaknesses, rather than clientelist purposes, also played a role in this equation. The recent transformation of the social security system under the AKP government includes several key actions to strengthen the institutional base of social safety nets in response to powerful external pressures, especially the IMF's fiscal recommendations and a push by the World Bank. These are key indicators of the steps taken by the AKP government to

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<sup>120</sup> They can't view any other social aids by different institutions such as municipalities, local NGOs, etc

<sup>121</sup> Through the interviews, another common point among local experts is that if they approve the application and select the beneficiary, there is little probability that Ankara would disapprove their decision.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with a SYDV staff member, Diyarbakır, Fall 2011

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Fatih Ortakaya at SYDGM, Ankara, October 18, 2011.

abandon operational rules of previous traditional mechanisms of social assistance provision.

### **3.4.3. Expansion of the program**

The implementation of the program first started as a pilot project in 6 provinces (Kecioren, Ankara; Merkez, Cankiri; Goksun, Kahramanmaras; Eregli, Zonguldak; Yavuzeli, Gaziantep; Duragan, Sinop) in 2002. The pilot districts were selected non-randomly by the World Bank, for the reason that they would roughly represent the diversity of conditions that the CCT would encounter upon its expansion throughout the country.<sup>124</sup> Following pilot districts, the program has been expanded to other districts, which were selected randomly by a lottery observed under public notary in July 2003. According to this expansion plan, one province from each of the 7 regions in Turkey would have been included within the program every two months. However, in an interview with CCT Turkish team leader, Yadigar Gokalp, she mentioned that since the program was so much appreciated by the beneficiaries and the pace of strengthening of the institutional capacity was faster than was expected, by May 2004, the program was implemented in all districts of Turkey.<sup>125</sup>

However, the schedule of the countrywide expansion of the program coincided with the local elections that took place at the end of March 2004. However, in Mexico, program expansions were disallowed six months prior to federal elections (De La O, 2007:17). This operational rule in Mexico guaranteed that beneficiaries would not be

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<sup>124</sup> Interview with Jeanine Braithwaite, who is the co-director of Turkish CCT program from the beginning until 2006. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, September 2013.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Yadigar Gokalp, head of Turkish CCT team. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, September 2013.

subjected to political manipulation. However, in Turkey, we observed that the largest payment increases took place during election years. In other words, there is an overlap between the cash transfer payment increases and election years. The local elections took place in 2004 and 2009, and we can see a huge increase in payments through those years, compared to previous years.

**Table 3.** Cash Transfer Payments (2003-2011)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Education payments</b>	<b>Health payments</b>	<b>Birth payments</b>	<b>Total (YTL)</b>	<b>% CCT money allocated</b>
2003	1.594.609	810.806	0	2.405.415	0.11
2004	66.768.258	16.679.477	0	83.447.736	3.73
2005	180.133.680	61.296.127	784.860	242.214.667	10.85
2006	240.270.712	103.579.014	728.647	344.578.373	15.44
2007	225.343.671	95.943.906	665.615	321.953.192	14.42
2008	293.582.896	118.322.236	526.348	412.431.480	18.48
2009	345.050.000	137.810.000	960.460	483.820.460	21.67
2010	267.110.000	73.400.000	330.880	340.840.880	15.27
2011	397.480.000	142.290.000	1.011.050	540.781.050	24.23
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Source: [www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr](http://www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr) (The table is built by the author)

Table 3 also responds to the question of why the AKP did not dismantle the CCT after the World Bank's loan had finished. The electoral payoffs played a significant role on that end. Regardless of the strictness of the CCT's design features, the program's success in serving 1 million families since its establishment and its popularity with recipients gave it the power to shape the beneficiaries' voting behavior. Thus, if they

dropped it, there would have been strong political backlash for the AKP as well. Indeed, the AKP publicized and appreciated the program on many occasions. The media also represented the program as an achievement of the AKP. On the other hand, it can be a legitimate process wherein incumbents find it appealing to maintain social assistance programs operations, which are very popular among the poor segments of society. Furthermore, the initial design set by the World Bank leaves the door open to play around with the existing scoring formula so that as the budget allows, the government can fix another set of lines, which increases the number of beneficiaries along with an increase in spending.

#### **3.4.5. Methods of evaluation and oversight**

The Board of Directors at the World Bank had some reservations about whether Turkey could handle such a large amount of cash payments, so the World Bank team based in Ankara pointed to evidence of how Turkey handled the disbursement of loans responding to the 1999 earthquake. They also audited the CCT program both with the General Audit of Turkey and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to show that the number of errors was quite low.<sup>126</sup>

Although the results of the audits were pretty good, it took some time to persuade the Ministry of Social Policy and Family to do the impact evaluation measuring the impact of the program on beneficiaries and the institutional capacity of Social Solidarity Foundations. As co-team leader, Jeanine Braithwaite recalled the third one that agreed to

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<sup>126</sup> Interview with Jeanine Braithwaite, World Bank co-team Leader. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, September 2013.

do the impact evaluation. The other two had been very hesitant about the impact evaluation since conducting an impact evaluation demands almost a million dollars of funding from the CCT budget. The first impact evaluation report on CCTs, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods, was conducted by collaboration between the IFPRI, Washington D.C., and the AGRIN company, Ankara (Ahmed et al, 2006). The results were pretty positive and found evidence that CCT had been highly effective in Turkey.

**Table 4.** Distribution of CCT beneficiary households and non-beneficiary, by expenditure deciles

<b>Per capita expenditure decile</b>	<b>Education Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Health Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Non-beneficiary applicants</b>
(percent of all households)			
1	35.3	50.4	13.0
2	27.1	27.1	21.4
3	20.3	14.0	24.4
4	10.4	6.3	20.5
5	4.9	1.7	11.8
6	1.8	0.6	5.8
7	0.3	0.0	1.8
8	0.0	0.0	0.9
9	0.0	0.0	0.4
10	0.0	0.0	0.0
All	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Based on data from “Evaluating the Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Turkey: 2005-06 Household Survey.”

Based on the data from “Evaluating the Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Turkey: 2005-06 Household Survey”<sup>127</sup>, Table 4 shows that 83 per cent of education

<sup>127</sup> The survey and the quantitative analysis are conducted by collaboration of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with Agriculture and Agroindustries Engineering Consultancy (AGRIN) company, Ankara.



beneficiaries and 92 per cent of health beneficiaries are poor and are efficiently targeted as main beneficiaries of cash transfers.<sup>128</sup>

It is quite a reflection of Turkish political culture that Turkey has never publicly published the results of the first impact evaluation, even though they were positive. When conducting interviews with the World Bank team, the team was surprised to hear that I got access to the document, since they were not allowed to distribute it. The World Bank was also satisfied by the results; however, when we conducted interviews with a team member working on the report, Ayşe Kudat, she found the timing of the report problematic. The impact evaluation was conducted in 2006, but the program had only expanded nationwide in 2004. She finds it “too early to assess the impact of the program” based on several reasons, such as the fact that the mechanism wasn’t working properly, the allocations weren’t allocated regularly and on time, and the majority of beneficiaries had no information on the program’s requirements.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, the main concern of the World Bank was to assess whether there is leakage on fund usage and to check the targeting mechanism, both of which show the extent of discretion of the funds. The World Bank was also satisfied with the outcome of the evaluation.

During the AKP’s term, they also demanded another impact evaluation. The General Directorate of Social Assistance under the Ministry of Family and Social Policy coordinated it. Rather than subcontracting to more objective international agencies, the Ministry subcontracted the project to academicians working in universities located in

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<sup>128</sup> The percentages are based on the authors’ agreement on “who is the poor”. The bottom of 30 percent of all households is taken as poor.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Ayşe Kudat, one of the author of 1<sup>st</sup> Impact Evaluation Report of Turkish CCTs. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, September 2013.

Ankara. I had a chance to attend the meeting on October 2013 in Ankara where the research team disseminated the outcome of the research. The impact evaluation team mentioned mostly positive impacts of the program, such as increasing girls' attendance at schools, empowering women, and improving the general level of health among beneficiaries. The surveys and interviews that they conducted with beneficiaries did not include any questions about whether there was any political manipulation of the program. This time, the AKP government published the results publicly with a conference. The positive outcomes coming out of evaluation reports is one of the contributing factors to why the AKP did not dismantle CCTs after the loan period ended with the World Bank.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

The 2001 economic crisis, the most destructive one in the republic's history, brought the risk of social explosion, which facilitated incentive creation and pushed the coalition government to take immediate action on alleviating the consequences of the economic crisis on poor segments of the population. The economic crisis had a trigger effect on the adoption of CCT project. The agreement between the World Bank and the coalition government on designing a social program, which kept the cost limited by targeting only the poorest 6 per cent of the population, also complied with economic adjustment programs that reduce social assistance expenditures. Divided power between three coalition partners constituted checks and balances, which limited the coalition parties' claims for taking sole credit for the CCT program. The targeted constituency of the program, mainly the rural poor and the urban poor, either unemployed or working in

the informal sector, formed the electoral base of two parties in the government. This political consequence also facilitated the adoption of CCTs in Turkey.

The design features of the CCT program were meticulously shaped by the World Bank's crews with a claim of reaching the poorest segment of the society. However, the involvement of the World Bank in financing the program and designing features of the CCT does not mean that it was the main driving force behind the adoption of the program. The efforts of the World Bank also interacted with domestic politics. The Turkish team leader, Yadigar Gokalp, recalled no great tension in designing the general framework of the program with the World Bank team. The World Bank co-team leader, Jeanine Braithwaite, also recalled no great tension. However, this does not mean that no debate or disagreements during the negotiations between the government and World Bank ever occurred. One of the innovative features of the program was to pay more to girls attending school than boys. The World Bank co-team leader told about their efforts to structure the loan so that girls in secondary school would get a higher CCT payment than boys. However, she recalled the coalition government's resistance based on the reasoning that "everyone is a Turkish citizen, and we should not treat people differently." When there was a government change via national elections in 2002, the AKP acknowledged that the education of girls is a big problem in Turkey so that the World Bank amended the loan document to make a higher payment to girls than boys.

However, when the loan period ended in 2006, the program started to be administered and funded by state resources under the AKP government. Indeed, there were minor changes in the operational rules of the CCT program. The scoring formula was revised four times, and currently there is no scoring formula, although the Research

Council of Turkey is working on formulating a new one. There is still a criterion--being unemployed--set for being eligible for cash transfers, which is controlled by an automated computer program. The rapid expansion of program nationwide before the official day scheduled by the AKP has signs of loosening the strictness of the operational rules set by the World Bank. With a strong executive power under a single-party government and a less efficient opposition party, and in the absence of coercion and restraints by an international actor, the CCTs have more potential to be manipulated by a political party. However, the CCT program still represents a promising attempt to make a transition to programmatic social policy in Turkey compared to previous social assistance programs.

#### **4. The Politics of Conditional Cash Transfers in Turkey: Is there evidence of deliberate distortion towards the Kurdish Minority?**

##### **4.1. Introduction**

In the 1990s several countries in the developing world began to introduce conditional cash transfer programs. These programs have varied substantially in terms of their size, scope, and goals. Governments on both the left and the right have often introduced these programs in response to episodes of economic crises (e.g., Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni, 2009). CCTs have arisen as a popular new policy tool in the fight against poverty. Governments make regular payments to needy families in exchange for meeting certain requirements, such as sending children to school or paying monthly visits to health centers. After Mexico began implementing its cash transfer program, *Progres*a, in 1991, more than two dozen developing countries have adopted CCTs regardless of the ideological position of the governing party (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009). In an interview on *Theory Talks*, James Ferguson said “If I would have told the World Bank to give the poor some money twenty-five years ago, they would have laughed me out of the house.”<sup>130</sup> However, current reports prepared by the World Bank are much in favor of cash transfers (World Bank, 2010). Due to its positive impact on breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty (Lomeli, 2008; Levy, 2006), reducing poverty (Soares, Britto and Mederios, 2008) and increasing human capital (World Bank, 2008), CCTs represent a new “magic bullet” in the fight against poverty.

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<sup>130</sup> Interview with James Ferguson at Theory Talks. Full interview can be found at <http://www.theory-talks.org/2009/11/theory-talk-34.html>.

Even though this type of program has the potential to push for programmatic social assistance policies and facilitate the redistribution of wealth, it also carries the risk of political manipulation. After all, resources under government control targeting the poor can enable politicians to manipulate low-income voters. Turkey is by no means an exception to this phenomenon.

Turkish political parties have a negative record of manipulating distribution of material benefits to mobilize poor voters (Komsuoglu, 2005; Güneş-Ayata, 1994). However, there is little empirical research that investigates the political consequences of distributing material benefits and in-kind aid to poor people in Turkey.<sup>131</sup> With 3 million beneficiaries as of May 2009 (Esenyel, 2010), the relatively large scope of CCTs, combined with the online availability of CCT money allocation and election data, offers an opportunity to test for evidence of political manipulation, affording new insights into the interplay between social assistance programs and political power in Turkey.

Indeed, empirical evidence on the politics of CCTs is mainly drawn from Latin American countries. This is not surprising since Latin America is the birthplace of cash transfer programs. Turkey, in contrast, has been the site of limited research on CCTs. Existing research has analyzed the World Bank's poverty discourse on the case of the Social Risk Mitigation Project (Sener, 2010; Zabci, 2006), and reported on the impact of the social program on education and health benefits (Adato, 2008; Ahmed et al, 2007; Ahmed et al, 2006). A recent study investigates whether political distortion occurs in the

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<sup>131</sup> See for exceptions: Erdem Yoruk, "Welfare Provision as Political Containment: The Politics of Social Assistance and the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey," *Politics and Society* 40 (4), December 2012: 517-547 and Selim Erdem Aytac, "Distributive Politics in a Multiparty System: The Conditional Cash Transfer in Turkey", *Comparative Political Studies*, XX(X), Summer 2013: 1-27.

distribution of cash transfers in Turkey (Aytac, 2013), explaining the distribution of cash benefits in a multi-party setting, rather than a two party system.<sup>132</sup>

The politics of redistribution has far-reaching implications for democracy and development beyond Turkey's borders. The electoral returns calculation of welfare spending is one of the most important concerns in the minds of politicians, and one of the key components of politics in the developing world as well. Poverty relief programs, such as CCTs, if allocated inefficiently, potentially leave the door open to various kinds of political interference and manipulation. On the other hand, if implementation leans towards programmatic distribution, it has the capacity to make public policy more transparent, effective, and representative. This shift also provides better allocation and redistribution of public resources, a necessary condition for economic growth in developing countries. Although there is a negative correlation between poverty reduction and economic growth and redistribution, the positive effects of economic growth on poverty are more than an offset by an unequal distribution (Amann et al., 2002). However, by reducing or even negating the costs of redistribution, mean-tested income transfer programs like CCTs have the potential to reverse the adverse consequences of growth on the distribution of income, enabling poorer segments of society to benefit from economic growth (Bourguignon, 2004).

CCT programs also carry the promise of investment in human capital (Britto, 2005; Rawlings and Gloria, 2005). Moreover, they may facilitate poorer citizens' participation in politics by dissolving established patron-client networks and

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<sup>132</sup> Selim Erdem Aytac, "Distributive Politics in a Multiparty System: The Conditional Cash Transfer in Turkey", *Comparative Political Studies*, XX(X), Summer 2013: 1-27.

strengthening citizenship, which is also a necessary condition for the success of democracy (Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni, 2009).

This chapter investigates the programmatic distribution of public resources against the history of political clientelism in Turkey. In theory, CCTs are designed as a targeted poverty-relief program, which is aimed at the poorest six percent of the population. Between 2002 and 2006, the program fell under the World Bank's Social Risk Mitigation Project and was funded by World Bank loans. Upon receiving substantial support and positive evaluations in March 2006, the AKP government decided to pursue the program. After the World Bank loan period expired, the government began to fund the program with the budget of the Social Solidarity Fund (SYDTF).<sup>133</sup> Whereas the original coverage targeted around one million people, once the government brought the payments under the control of the state, coverage increased to approximately three million (Esenyel, 2010). Parallel to the increase in the number of beneficiaries, the total amount of money allocated for CCTs nearly tripled, as shown in Table 5.

The enormous increase in the amount of payments after 2006 coincided with sharp changes in the geographical distribution of funds. Benefits are made disproportionately to eastern provinces, especially parts of the country where the majority of the population is Kurdish. Considering the armed conflict between the Turkish military and the PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*, or Kurdistan Workers' Party) that has been ongoing since the early 1980s, along with the AKP government's approach to poverty problems in the Kurdish region, the allocation of CCTs and the huge increase in the

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<sup>133</sup> Interview with Yadigar Gokalp in International Poverty Center, Executive Director of Social Risk Mitigation Project in Turkey. Full interview can be found at [http://www.ipc-undp.org/publications/cct/Interview\\_Yadigar\\_Gokalp\\_Turkey.pdf](http://www.ipc-undp.org/publications/cct/Interview_Yadigar_Gokalp_Turkey.pdf).

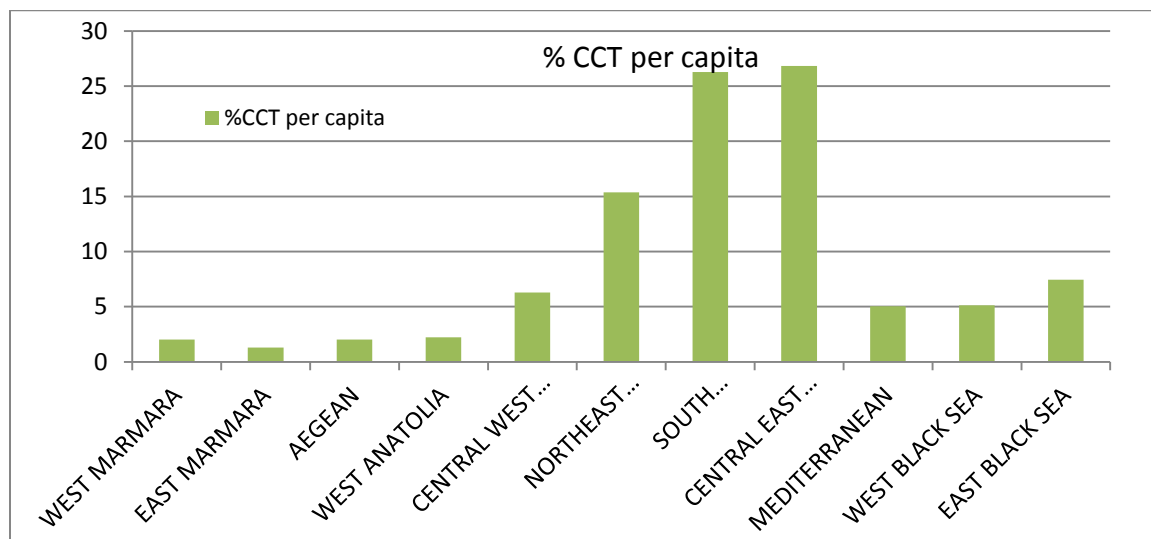


amount of social assistance allocated to Kurdish regions deserves some scrutiny. Figure 9 shows the allocation of CCTs according to regions between 2003-2009.

**Table 5.** Conditional Cash Transfer Payments in Turkey by Year (2003-2011)

Year	Education payments	Health payments	Birth payments	Total (YTL)	% CCT money allocated btw 2003-2011
2003	1.594.609	810.806	0	2.405.415	0.11
2004	66.768.258	16.679.477	0	83.447.736	3.73
2005	180.133.680	61.296.127	784.860	242.214.667	10.85
2006	240.270.712	103.579.014	728.647	344.578.373	15.44
2007	225.343.671	95.943.906	665.615	321.953.192	14.42
2008	293.582.896	118.322.236	526.348	412.431.480	18.48
2009	345.050.000	137.810.000	960.460	483.820.460	21.67
2010	267.110.000	73.400.000	330.880	340.840.880	15.27
2011	397.480.000	142.290.000	1.011.050	540.781.050	24.23
				2.231.692.203	100

Source: [www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr](http://www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr) (The table is built by the author)



**Figure 9.** The Allocation of Conditional Cash Transfers per capita according to Regions (2003-2009 March)

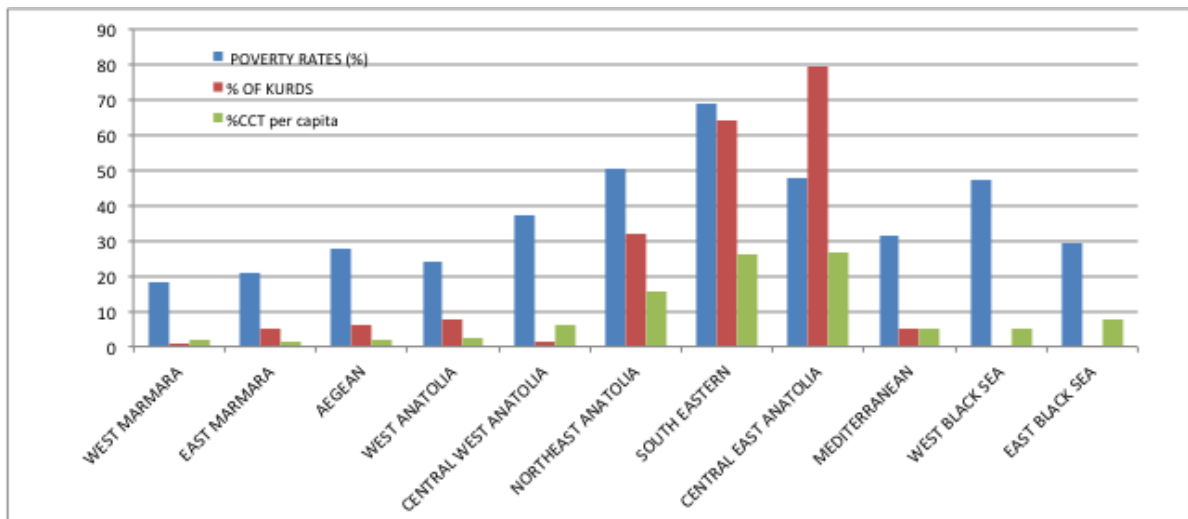
Source: [www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr](http://www.sosyalyardimlar.gov.tr) (The figure is built by the author)

The descriptive statistics show that 65% of the CCT money per capita is distributed to South East, Central East and Northeast Anatolia, where Kurdish citizens make up substantial proportion of the population. However, the Kurdish southeast also copes with high unemployment and poverty rates. According to a World Bank report, the highest percentage (39%) of people living on under US \$2.15 per day is in Southeastern Anatolia.<sup>134</sup> Hence, it might very well be the case that the high poverty levels in Kurdish regions might explain the disproportionate distribution of cash transfers. However, other regions suffer from poverty rates just as high as those with a majority Kurdish population. According to Turkey's State Planning Institution, the poverty rate for the West Black Sea region (47.4%) is close to that of Northeast Anatolia (50.2%), which is populated primarily by Kurds (Figure 10), but its share of CCT benefits is substantially lower (Figure 9).

In this chapter, I investigate whether the incumbent party politically manipulates the distribution of cash transfers in Turkey by testing different hypothetical strategies that the incumbent may follow. Using an original dataset of allocation of CCT money, socioeconomic indicators, and local and national electoral results across 857 districts in 81 provinces in Turkey, I test for the effect of socio-economic indicators such as unemployment level, literacy level, population, and urbanization, by district on the allocation of CCTs. I will also test for political dynamics while adapting the core versus swing districts hypothesis into current political setting in Turkey.

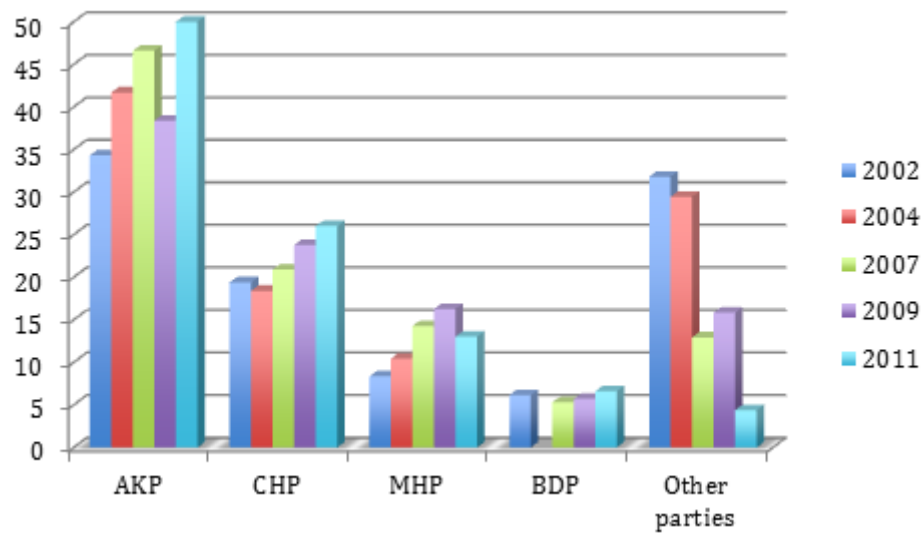
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<sup>134</sup> World Bank. 2003. *Turkey: Poverty and Coping After Crises*. Report No. 24185. [http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2003/08/20/000160016\\_20030820130639/Rendered/PDF/241850TR0SR.pdf](http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2003/08/20/000160016_20030820130639/Rendered/PDF/241850TR0SR.pdf). Accessed on October 2012.



**Figure 10.** The rates of poverty, the percentages of Kurdish people and percentages of CCT allocated to each region

**Source:** TUIK (Turkish Statistical Institute) and Sosyal Yardimlar (The figure is built by the author)



**Figure 11.** Parties' Vote Shares in 2002, 2007 and 2011 general elections and 2004 and 2009 local elections

**Source:** YSK (Yuksek Secim Kurulu-Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey) available at [www.ysk.gov.tr](http://www.ysk.gov.tr), accessed on October 2012. (The figure is built by the author)

Indeed, the core voters versus swing voters argument works better for explaining the politics of distribution in a two-party setting. As shown in Figure 11, the Turkish political system allows more than two parties compete in getting votes in general and local elections.

The increasing political polarization between the conservative right incumbent party, the AKP, and the secular left CHP may provide similarities to a two-party setting. The mean of the effective number of parties over the last three Turkish elections is 2.3. Thus, even though there are more than two parties, the competition in districts indicates footprints of two-party competition. The Kurdish party, Peace and Democracy Party (Partiya Aştî û Demokrasiyê, Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi-BDP) has placed the main competitor CHP in Kurdish populated provinces in the east and southeast part of Turkey.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, in addition to the core versus swing argument, I will also test whether the allocation of cash transfers favors the Kurdish ethnic minority, controlling for the poverty level of the cities populated by Kurdish people. The Kurdish ethnic minority more squarely falls under this “opposition” category rather than the “swing” category.

The chapter is organized as follows. I start with a review of the politics of distribution literature by showing possible venues for the incumbent to turn programmatic distribution into politically manipulated social policy. Under the subsection of the distributive politics, I also present a short review of the AKP’s approach

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<sup>135</sup> BDP succeeded another Kurdish party Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi-DTP) following the latter was banned and closed by the Constitutional Court on December 2009. Actually, DTP was the continuation of the Democratic People’s Party (Halkin Demokrasi Partisi-DEHAP), which was also banned on March 2003 by the Constitutional Court.

to poor Kurdish constituencies, and its practice of distributing social assistance in the Kurdish region, to provide a background for explaining the incumbent's strategy towards Kurdish minorities. Then, I present the original data on the allocation of CCTs in Turkey, explaining where and how the data was obtained. I will test hypotheses empirically and will discuss the results of the regression analysis.

I find that socio-economic indicators such as unemployment rate, literacy level, and urbanization have a more significant effect on the allocation of funds than political indicators. However, socio-economic indicators have a greater negative effect on the distribution of CCTs in Kurdish populated districts, which have a similar development level. The disproportionate distribution of CCTs to Kurdish districts signals the incumbent's strategy of easing popular displeasure by means of creating new welfare networks among the Kurdish population. At the same time, these networks could serve to create a new voting bloc for the AKP, which helps the AKP to get the support of Kurdish voters needed to make a transition to a presidential system.

#### **4.2. Political Returns of Cash Transfers: Analytical Framework**

In theory, the characteristics of the CCT program represent programmatic redistribution. First, the beneficiary of the program is selected by using a proxy means scoring formula calculated by a computer program. Second, continuation of the benefit from the program is based on fulfilling certain conditions, which curbs the possibility of coercion. However, in practice, each government program targeting poor population has an undeniable potential to mobilize low-income voters in most parts of the developing

world. Indeed, if the objective rules of cash transfers are implemented the other way around, this creates fertile ground for the manipulation of the program for political ends.

There are certain features of CCTs that have the potential to the space needed for political manipulation. First, the ways in which beneficiaries of the program are selected may lead to clientelistic practices, as discretion is vital for clientelism. The absence or existence of discretionary choice is a clear indicator of whether the program is politically manipulated. Since the SYDVs are the main authority to select “who is eligible”, local staff may manipulate the selection process. Based on interviews with the civil servants during my fieldwork, it is suggested that room for making manipulations is very limited. The computer program decides “who is eligible” after submitting a very detailed form demonstrating the demographic socio-economic, life-quality of household members, such as their current employment situation, the number of children they have, their education level, whether they have consumer durable products, property ownership (whether the house belongs to them, is rented, and whether they have agricultural assets), and the provision of electricity and water, for example.<sup>136</sup> Then, the foundation’s social service personnel pay a visit to each applicant’s house to check whether the application matches the living conditions of the family. Each step is conducted as a part of a selection procedure, which keeps any discretionary selection limited.

Second, the scoring formula used by SYDVs that identifies beneficiaries has the potential to be manipulated. The World Bank (WB) prepares the scoring formula and the WB sets an eloquent line of “who constitutes as poor” that designates beneficiary

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<sup>136</sup> Conditional Cash Transfer Application Form

eligibility. If an applicant is just above the set point, then she is not eligible for the transfers. Though the formula has been changed four times, the data from “Evaluating the Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Turkey: 2005-06 Household Survey,”<sup>137</sup> demonstrate that 83 per cent of education and 92 per cent of health beneficiaries are *efficiently* targeted as the main beneficiaries of the program.<sup>138</sup> These two previous points are investigated through my fieldwork and have been the subject of another research project. However, my third point identifies a possible area for political manipulation and is the main inquiry of this paper: whether the distribution of funds through cash transfers follows the technocratic criteria for “need” or the political criteria “rewarding the *core*, building up electoral support among *swing voters*, or creating a new voting bloc by favoring opposition groups such as the *Kurdish minority*.” Political calculations are always present in the case of distributing social funds in the developing world. Especially in a country like Turkey, the large Kurdish minority (roughly 18% percent of the population)<sup>139</sup> living in areas of concentrated poverty, and with an uneasy relationship to the state, stands out as the main target group, in which the incumbent party may have an interest in mobilizing voting support. Moreover, the AKP is the main competitor of the Kurdish Party, the BDP (successor of DEHAP), especially in the Kurdish populated poor neighborhoods. According to survey conducted by KONDA, 14.7% of those who voted

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<sup>137</sup> The survey and the quantitative analysis are conducted by collaboration of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with Agriculture and Agroindustries Engineering Consultancy (AGRIN) Company, Ankara.

<sup>138</sup> The percentages are based on the authors’ agreement on “who is the poor”. The bottom of 30 percent of all households is taken as a poor.

<sup>139</sup> It is predicted by survey on “Who Are We?” conducted by KONDA company and also see Koc et al. 2008. “Demographic Differentials and Demographic Integration of Turkish and Kurdish Populations in Turkey.” *Population Research and Policy Review* 27 (4): 447-457.

for the Kurdish Party, DEHAP, in the 2002 elections changed their voting preference to the AKP in the next general election in 2007.<sup>140</sup> The shift between AKP and DEHAP voters and the great disparities in the amount of cash transfer money distributed between Kurdish regions and non Kurdish regions also reinforce the probability of the political manipulation argument.

CCT was first initiated on September 2001 with \$500 million from the World Bank under SRMP, and a \$580,000 grant from the Japanese government spent on preparations for developing a social assistance program.<sup>141</sup> After March 2006, the current government, the AKP began to administer the program. According to the original program designed by the WB, the targeted population for cash transfer is bottom 6 percent of the poor population. However, after the administration unit changed, the targeted population exceeded the original goal. Commensurate with this change the amount of funds skyrocketed. It is less clear how the government allocates the cash transfer funds for each city. Based on my interviews with experts in the General Directorate of Social Assistance,<sup>142</sup> there is no consensus on the main criteria that determine the amount of funds distributed to each city.

Theoretical models of the political impact of distributing resources to the poor through social programs draw insights from two strands of research. The first literature is arranged to examine the electoral payoffs of cash transfers, primarily in Latin America (Bohn, 2011; De La O, 2010; Zucco, 2011; Manacorda et al, 2010; Diaz-Cayeros,

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<sup>140</sup> KONDA. 2007. *Survey of Political Trends*, Istanbul: Konda, reported in Yoruk, Erdem. 2012. "Welfare Provision as Political Containment: The Politics of Social Assistance and the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey," *Politics and Society*, 40 (4).

<sup>141</sup> "World Bank signs \$500 million loan with Turkey", *Hürriyet*, on May 1, 2001.

<sup>142</sup> Interviews conducted with experts in General Directorate of Social Assistance, Ankara, October 2011.



Estevez and Magaloni, 2006). There is a consensus in the literature, with varied conclusions, that CCTs have an impact on beneficiaries' voting behavior (for a contrary view-Bohn 2011). De La O's study on *Progresa*, the Mexican CCT program, argues that cash transfers both foster pro-incumbent support in Mexico and increase voter turnout among recipients. She also finds a correlation between the duration of exposure to the program, pro-incumbent support, and levels of voter turnout. Being a recipient of cash transfers for a longer time is responsible for the increase in turnout and incumbent vote share (De La O, 2007). Zucco's work on *Bolsa Familia*, the Brazilian CCT, also investigates the impacts of cash transfers on voting behavior (Zucco, 2011). Different from De La O's study, he tested the correlation between support for Lula among cash recipients and the development level of each region. He finds that support for an incumbent is high among recipients everywhere, but inversely; the program gives incumbent party presidential candidates access to poor people in richer districts, as it was not able to do in the past. In addition, the program serves as an economic stimulus that increased support among non-recipients. Subsequent work using a more advanced statistical analysis corroborated the basic finding that CCTs increase support for the incumbent among beneficiaries and noted that this result is observable over three different elections. The study also found that CCTs have benefited incumbents from different parties, and there is no evidence suggesting that CCTs have helped create deep partisan attachments. In this sense, CCTs function just like other forms of economic voting (Zucco, 2013). Another study on the electoral impact of *Bolsa Familia* agrees that support for Lula is high among recipients, but suggest that beneficiaries of cash transfer were already Lula supporters (Bohn, 2011). This particular study diverges from

mainstream findings, and has been questioned by subsequent works pointing out that it was based on survey respondents recalling who they voted for more than five years into the past, and is completely incompatible with electoral results (Zucco & Power, 2013). Diaz-Cayeros et al. also examine the electoral payoffs of cash transfers in Mexico by comparing the impact of *Oportunidades* (formerly *Progresa*) and *Seguro Popular*. Their study suggests poverty-relief programs following technocratic criteria like cash transfers also tend to produce significant payoffs for incumbent parties (Diaz-Cayeros, Estevez and Magaloni, 2009). These results are also corroborated by Manacorda et al's work on Uruguay (2009).

This strand of research argues that CCTs have electoral returns for the incumbent party associated with the program. Based on these arguments, can we accept these impacts as part of “clientelistic practices?” The evidence of electoral payoff is not sufficient enough to draw insights about whether the programs generate political manipulation. Magaloni also states that it could be a legitimate process by which beneficiaries of the social programs pay back the parties for their services that they provide.<sup>143</sup> Analyzing the way that cash transfers are distributed to the poor districts will allow us to draw insights as to whether the incumbent party makes political distortions by distributing benefits. The disproportionate distribution of cash transfers to each city and/or region is valid evidence indicating political manipulation of poverty-relief assistance through cash transfers. This is an understudied component of the distributive

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<sup>143</sup> Magaloni, Beatriz “Assessing Political Returns of Social Spending Strategies: Mexico 1988-2006, Talk at Center for Latin American Studies, University of California, Berkeley, March 16, 2009 (can be accessed at <http://www.clas.berkeley.edu/Events/spring2009/03-16-09-magaloni/index.html>)

politics of CCTs. There are few studies (Fried, 2012; Zucco, 2008), which analyze the political implications of the ways of distributing the cash transfers to the poor districts. For example, Zucco's earlier work on *Bolsa Familia* shows that Lula's administration specifically distributed cash transfers to some regions in order to build up electoral support (Zucco, 2008). Conversely, another study finds some evidence that the incumbent politically manipulated the distribution by comparing the difference between the number of poor people living in a district and the number of beneficiaries in the same area (Fried, 2012).

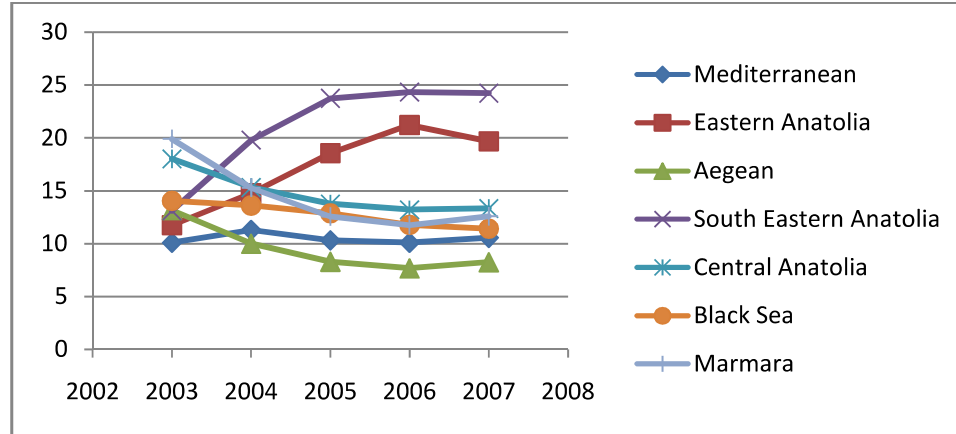
The main focus of this paper is to investigate the cash transfer distribution practices of the incumbent. However, rather than focusing on the coverage-targeting performance, I will follow the actual "cash" distribution of the CCT, and ask when cash transfer allocation can be evidence of political distortion. This question also draws insights from the *core versus swing voter* literature (Cox and McCubbins, 2001; Cox, 2006; Nichter, 2008). The findings of these studies support that the incumbent distorts the distribution of public resources either to favor core or swing voters or to increase voter turnout. The incumbent may favor swing or core voters depending on its "investment rationales." Politicians may prefer to invest in core voters in order to extend their already established links between these constituencies and reward those who already show their support for the same political party. Alternatively, the party in power may decide to favor swing voters for a variety of reasons, such as to create new networks, expand voter support, and/or to ease popular displeasure, depending on the specificities of the case. Luna and Mardones (2010) analyzed investment motivations of political parties in the distribution of social policy programs, independent of electoral consequences. Their

study supports that the presence or absence of machine politics, and the level of the state's bureaucratic and oversight capacity, led to the political manipulation of the distribution of the social programs.

In the Turkish example, the incumbent, AKP may favor its core voters by rewarding them, it may choose to reward swing provinces to gain their voting support, or it may target minority groups such as poor Kurdish constituencies to ease up popular displeasure and create a new voting bloc among them. One could expect that the distribution of money favor regions in where there are tense relations between the Kurdish population, an ethnic minority group, and the Turkish state. On the other hand, the government may prefer programmatic ways of implementing the program and allocating resources on the basis of need. These are hypothetical political strategies that the incumbent may follow while allocating cash transfers.

#### **4.2.1. Poverty Reliefs Targeting Poor Kurdish in Turkey**

CCTs are distributed disproportionately in the eastern provinces, especially Turkey's southeastern and eastern Anatolian regions, where the majority of population is Kurdish. Along with CCTs, the amount of social assistance allocated to Kurdish regions has significantly increased under AKP rule (Figure 12).



**Figure 12.** Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation's expenditures per region between 2002-2008.

**Source:** Erdem Yoruk generated the graph<sup>144</sup> with the data from the State Planning Institution, 2009.

During the last local election in 2009, one Kurdish city, Tunceli, made news headlines. Many newspapers published pictures of officials from the Tunceli Governor's Office distributing new refrigerators, washing machines, desktop computers and furniture in poor neighborhoods. This phenomenon is not something new. Indeed, the ruling AKP government has been long accused by opposition parties and the media of using state funds to win votes. Actually, before the local elections in 2009, social assistance in the amount of 300 million TL, mostly as in-kind aid, was distributed. Istanbul got 32 million TL out of this budget, followed by Diyarbakır with 17 million TL (populated by Kurdish people), and then by Sanliurfa (also a Kurdish populated city) with 11 million TL.<sup>145</sup> The country's Supreme Election Board filed a criminal complaint against the AKP and foundations that gave handouts to the electorate to attract their votes. Following the Election Day, many Kurdish women who benefited from these programs remember

<sup>144</sup> Erdem Yoruk. 2012. "Welfare Provision as Political Containment: The Politics of Social Assistance and the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey," *Politics and Society*, 40 (4): 517-547.

<sup>145</sup> Onur Metin, p. 197.

receiving an SMS message from Prime Minister Erdoğan thanking them for supporting AKP.

Various poverty alleviation programs targeting the poor, such as microcredits and diverse “development” projects conducted by public-private collaborations have grown at a rapid pace in the Kurdish majority regions under AKP rule. One of the civil servants working for Diyarbakır Municipality summarized the poverty-relief programs hike in the region by saying “Cities like Diyarbakır, and other Kurdish towns, have been turned into a laboratory, where poor Kurdish people become the objects of social experiments embedded in the state’s mushrooming poverty relief programs in the region.”<sup>146</sup> According to many people, such as the beneficiaries, civil servants, experts, and academics I interviewed during my fieldwork, none of these social assistance programs addresses the root causes of poverty. Instead, they reduce poverty to simple economic terms, purposefully ignoring the historical and political origins of the problem, especially in the Kurdish regions.

Parallel to the rise in the number of poverty relief programs, the AKP has enjoyed a gradual increase of support among the Kurds. According to survey conducted by KONDA, 47% of those who voted for the Kurdish Party DEHAP in the 2002 elections changed their voting preference to the AKP in the next general election in 2007.<sup>147</sup> The

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<sup>146</sup> Interview with civil servant at Diyarbakır Municipality, October 2012.

<sup>147</sup> KONDA. 2007. *Survey of Political Trends*, Istanbul: Konda, reported in Yoruk, Erdem. 2012. “Welfare Provision as Political Containment: The Politics of Social Assistance and the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey,” *Politics and Society*, 40 (4): 523.

trend that displayed itself in the 2007 election was followed by the 2011 election, where Kurdish voters either voted for the Kurdish party or the AKP<sup>148</sup>.

Beyond the AKP's uneven distribution of social assistance programs and mushrooming Islamic charity foundations, political reforms towards Kurds, which have been designated as the Kurdish Opening (*Kürt Açılımı*), and are backed by negotiations for European Union membership, may also explain this voting shift. The proposed reformist approach for reducing tension between the Turkish government and Turkey's Kurdish population includes allowing Kurdish language classes to be taught in schools, allowing the Kurdish language to be used in the broadcast media, and a partial amnesty for many members of the PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*/Kurdistan Workers Party) who surrendered and pledged to no longer take up arms against the state. Some of these compromises by the AKP-led government have even brought about the opening of the first state-run Kurdish language TV channel, TRT 6.

However, this reform process came to a halt with the renewal of conflict between the Turkish military and PKK guerillas, which has resulted in a growing number of casualties on both sides and the arrest of Kurdish local mayors, journalists, trade unionists, human right defenders, and university students accused of being members of the Union of Communities in Kurdistan (Koma Civakên Kurdistan-KCK).<sup>149</sup> At the

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<sup>148</sup> Mesut Yegen. 2011. "The 2011 Elections and Kurdish Question", *Insight Turkey*, 13 (4): 148.

<sup>149</sup> There are many rumors on what the KCK means. Cengiz Candar, who is a journalist working on Kurdish issue for at least three decades defines the KCK as an "executive organ within which the parties and organizations, including the PKK and others that are associated with the PKK in other regions populated by Kurds (Iraq, Syria, Iran) are coordinated. It is found within the democratic confederalism principle of Abdullah Öcalan by re-organizing the PKK. The concept of democratic confederalism developed by Öcalan is suggested both as an alternative to nation-state and as a model for the solution to problems in the Middle East." <http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/131077-iki-bucuk-yildir-gundemdeki-kck-nedir> accessed on February 28, 2013.

beginning of October 2011 the number of those detained since April 2009 had reached 7,748 Kurds, of whom 3,895 suspects were placed in pre-trial detention.<sup>150</sup>

The stagnation of political reforms and the increased repression in Kurdish regions was followed by the recent “peace process” (aka “solution process” *Çözüm Süreci* in public) between the PKK and the AKP government starting in December 2012. Tim Arango’s interview with Mr. Ulgen, the former diplomat and now chairman of the Center for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies, inspired a view of the peace process that answers why a party that has been incumbent for more than a decade needs Kurdish votes. Mr. Ulgen claims that winning Kurdish voters is Prime Minister Erdoğan’s only chance to make a shift toward a presidential system.<sup>151</sup> The peace process and the AKP’s practice of providing social assistance targeting Turkey’s Kurdish minority would attract enough support among Kurdish people to alter the Constitution and the system altogether. Under this framework, I will investigate whether the AKP manipulated distribution of a social assistance, in this case, CCTs to the districts, which heavily vote for Kurdish party.

#### **4.3.Hypothesis**

The findings of my fieldwork (Chapter 3) support the interpretation that CCTs differs from other types of poverty relief programs in terms of its design and implementation. However, the allocation of money for CCT program to each district remains obscured. In an interview Fatih Ozkaya, an expert from SYDGM, he informed

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<sup>150</sup> <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/133216-30-ayda-kckden-7748-gozalti-3895-tutuklama> accessed on December 12, 2012.

<sup>151</sup> Tim Arango “Turkey Renews Focus on Peace with Kurds”, *New York Times*, March 5, 2013.



me that it is a demand-based allocation and that the money spent on the program comes out of periodic share of the SYDV's budget. Another interview with an expert from Ministry of Development, Hande Hacimahmutoglu, indicated that there is a specific formula used to determine the amount of money for each district, but SYDGM is hesitant to share the formula. This opens a door for political manipulation.

In the case of *Chile Solidario* (the CCT program in Chile), for example, the funds, through cash transfers, are allocated to each city after the population census. The authorities in Chile first determine the conditions of each district, and then allocate the money according to the poverty level of each city (Amior et al., 2010). The demand-based criteria for distributing the CCT call for at least some skepticism, especially in a country like Turkey, where the “specter of clientelism” is haunting the political preferences of poor people. Research delving into the question of whether the allocation of *Şarhlı Nakit Transferi* follows the objective criteria of “need” or the political criteria of “voting behavior” is essential, especially in a country where income inequality is high, the poor are emerging as an important constituency, and where there are ethnic cleavages.

Therefore, the testable hypotheses that come out of the discussion on “whether politics influenced the distribution of government spending” and “who benefits from government spending” are:

H1. The socioeconomic indicators have a significant impact on explaining the path of allocating CCTs.

H2. The districts that voted predominantly for the AKP in previous elections (core constituencies) are more likely to receive more cash transfer money per capita than similar swing districts.

H3. Districts in which there is a larger Kurdish population will receive more cash transfer money than similar states with smaller Kurdish populations.

The first hypothesis is the “technocratic” allocation. The last two are different forms of “political” allocation that might be happening in Turkey, benefiting core constituents and targeting the Kurdish population, which corresponds to a variant of the swing voter strategy particular to Turkey. It is very well possible that all of these process hold, to some extent.

Before testing hypotheses, the next section will provide information on how data is provided and collected, the justification of selection of independent and control variables, how they are coded, and specification of the empirical model.

#### **4.4. Empirical Investigation of Politics of Distribution**

Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007:322-9) argue that it is especially challenging to follow the footprints of clientelism in countries where there is lack of comparative and historical data and mass surveys that are dedicated to measuring the political consequences of distributing public resources both on institutional and individual levels. Moreover, data collection by a researcher is also challenging due to the civil servants’ reluctance to provide it. The tradition of political skepticism is like “thinking [the patrons] are watching,” and Turkey’s highly politicized setting and polarized politics create suspicion towards a researcher.

In the case of CCTs, it is harder to find the data needed to test whether the beneficiaries reward the incumbent for receiving the benefit, since there is no mass survey on clientelism in Turkey. This question will be better investigated through qualitative research methods. In this section, however, rather than analyzing the beneficiaries' rationales, I search for patterns in aggregated observational data that can provide some information as to what strategies the incumbent might be following while allocating cash transfers. First, I describe the data and discuss each independent variable and their significance in the analysis, how they are coded, and where I collected the data. Then, I describe the statistical models I use and discuss the results.

#### **4.4.1. Variables and the Empirical Model**

In order to investigate diverse hypothetical cash transfer distribution strategies, we need to “follow the money”<sup>152</sup> and determine the amount of the money that is distributed to each district. As it is mentioned above, the allocation of CCT money per district remains obscured. Informed by the interviews with experts, there is a specific formula that takes into account certain indicators, but they are unwilling to share, which creates space for political manipulation. All I was able to determine regarding the allocation of funds is that they are application based, and that payments are made periodically to each SYDV. Under the MoSPF, SYDGM is the main unit responsible of planning the budget of each SYDV and the money allocation for each poverty-relief program. On SYDGM's website, data on the allocation of cash transfer money to each city (2003-2009) is available and easily accessible. However, while trying to access the

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<sup>152</sup> An excerpt from the *All President's Men* movie

data in person, the civil servants with whom I conducted interviews seemed to be reluctant to talk about how the money is allocated, and they were reluctant to release the data.

Despite the possibility of obtaining the data through the website of SYDGM, the hesitancy to provide information was true for the SYDV as well. In one of the foundations, the researcher's ID was requested, and the intent of her research was questioned. On the other hand, the SYDGM's website provides data on allocation of money to each city, and also the number of beneficiaries according to each category of the program, until 2009.

**Dependent variable:** Based on data availability at the district level, the dependent variable is the allocation of CCT per district, divided by the population of each district, which is coded as *cctcapita* (in Turkish Lira-TL). The data on each district's population is easily accessible on the *Turkiye Istatistik Kurumu* (Turkish Statistics Institute or TurkStat) website. The district level data on the distribution of the CCT money between 2003-2009 is available through SYDGM's website. The CCT program was started in 6 pilot cities (Kecioren, Ankara; Merkez, Cankiri; Goksun, Kahramanmaraş; Eregli, Zonguldak; Yavuzeli, Gaziantep; Duragan, Sinop) on February 2002. The pilot districts were selected non-randomly by the World Bank, in which these six pilot districts would roughly represent the diversity of conditions that the CCT would encounter when expanding the program throughout the country.<sup>153</sup> Indeed, the program was expanded to

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<sup>153</sup> Interview with Jeanine Braithwaite, who is the co-director of Turkish CCT program from the beginning until 2006. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, September 2013.

cover all districts after 2004. Thus, in the year 2003, there is data missing for 75 out of 81 provinces and districts as well.

For 2009, I was only able to obtain data for the first 6 months of the year, making it hard to compare figures with previous years. For this reason, I focus only on the allocation of *cctcapita* in 2008, which is contrasted with electoral outcomes of 2007 national elections. As I am seeking to explain the AKP's strategy in allocating CCT money, I am using the distribution of money following the national elections to understand whether the incumbent rewarded "core" districts or "swing" districts. The first year of distribution after the election is crucial in Turkey, since parties give promises to the constituency throughout the election, especially right parties like the AKP target poor people, and promises revolve around poverty-relief and social benefits.

**1. Independent variables:** The independent variables are composed of two categories, political variables and need variables. The reason for categorizing independent variables is the need for different variables while finding supporting evidence for each strategy that the incumbent may follow in the allocation of the CCTs. While testing for political criteria, I will also control for socioeconomic variables.

**1.a. Need Variables:** First of all, the Ministry of Development (Kalkinma Bakanligi) published a number of district-level socioeconomic indicators in 2004, three of which will be utilized as indicators of the district's well being. Among them, the unemployment rate of each district (*unemployment level*), literacy percentages of each district (*literacy level*), and *urbanization level* of each district are the most suitable for the purposes of this study. They all have possible explanatory power on the dependent variable but after conducting the regression, I may have an idea about which one is a better indicator. As I

mentioned above, in order to be eligible to get CCT money, the applicant should not be registered to any social security institution, which indicates whether the applicant is informally working (temporary and/or low-wage jobs) or unemployed. Thus, the *unemployment level* of each district seems a relevant indicator of eligibility. *Literacy level* has the same explanatory power. Where the city becomes poorer, the literacy level drops as well. Thus, there is significant correlation between being poor and illiterate. I also introduce control for “*urbanization*” under the assumption that if the money allocation is based on the number of applications, and the selection follows technocratic criteria such as not being covered by any social security plan, poor people living in rural area are exposed to the risk of poverty more than urban poor people. In addition, 85.2% of informal workers are in the agriculture sector (TurkStat Household Labor Force Survey Data, March 2009), which gives rural people a better chance of being a beneficiary of the CCT program.

Poverty rates at the subnational level are based on a survey of Income and Living Conditions (2006-2010), provided by TurkStat. Within the survey, estimations are produced on the NUTS 1 level from annual cross-sectional data and panel data for the whole country. I refer to this variable as *poverty level*. This is also referring to eligibility criteria to get the CCT benefit. The poorer the districts are, the better the chance of getting CCT money.

The Ministry of Development has also aggregated each district’s well-being indicators to composite socioeconomic development levels for each district, only excluding three metropolitan cities (Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir) and their respective

districts.<sup>154</sup> Since it is available for 853 districts, I utilize the socioeconomic development level, which I coded as *socio-eco development level*, using it as an alternative proxy for development and poverty. Human Development Index (HDI), which is a composite score of education, life expectancy and income, could be a good indicator of the well being of a district. However, current HDI values are available in on a country level. Based on the interviews conducted at UNDP in Ankara, TurkStat has not provided province-based information since 2004. The data is prepared on NUTS (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics)<sup>155</sup> 1 level, which is the main reason why national human development reports on Turkey do not include province-based data. The last time the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s Ankara office provided HDI numbers in province level was 2001.<sup>156</sup> Thus, I will use a composite score called socio-eco development level (SED) that is aggregated by the Ministry of Development. It is a district level measure comprised by more recent data, which were compiled in 2004.

**1.b. Political Variables:** The second category of independent variables is based on the data provided by TurkStat and comprises election data per district. The data covers two general elections (2002 and 2007) and two local elections at the district level (2004 and

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<sup>154</sup> Bulent Dincer, Metin Ozaslan and Taner Kavasoglu, "Ilcelerin Sosyogelismislik Siralamasi Arastirmasi", Devlet Planlama Teskilati (DPT), 2004. [www.kalkinma.gov.tr/DocObjects/Download/8142/ilce.pdf](http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/DocObjects/Download/8142/ilce.pdf), accessed on March 30, 2013.

<sup>155</sup> NUTS 1 level region is listed as follows: TR1 (Istanbul), TR2 *West Marmara* (Balikesir, Canakkale, Edirne, Kirklareli, Tekirdag), TR3 *Aegean* (Afyonkarahisar, Aydin, Denizli, Izmir, Kutahya, Manisa, Mugla and Usak), TR4 *East Marmara* (Bilecik, Bolu, Bursa, Duzce, Eskisehir, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Yalova), TR5 *West Anatolia* (Ankara, Karaman, Konya), TR6 *Mediterranean* (Adana, Antalya, Burdur, Hayat, Isparta, Kahramanmaras, Mersin, Osmaniye), TR7 *Central West Anatolia* (Aksaray, KAYSeri, Kirikkale, Kirsehir, Nevsehir, Nigde, Sivas, Yozgat), TR8 *West Black Sea* (Amasya, Bartin, Cankiri, Corum, Karabuk, Kastamonu, Samsun, Sinop, Tokat, Zonguldak), TR9 *East Black Sea* (Artvin, Giresun, Gumushane, Ordu, Rize, Trabzon), TRA *North East Anatolia* (Agri, Ardahan, Bayburt, Erzincan, Erzurum, Igrid, Kars), TRB *Central East Anatolia* (Bingol, Bitlis, Elazig, Hakkari, Malatya, Mus, Tunceli, Van), TRC *South East Anatolia* (Adiyaman, Batman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Sanliurfa, Siirt, Sirnak).

<sup>156</sup> <http://www.undp.org.tr/publicationsDocuments/NHDR2004engfinal.pdf>

2009). A wide variety of variables could be used as indicators of a *core voter versus swing voter* or *ethnic vote* targeting strategy. Three types of strategies are going to be tested:

As a **core voter targeting strategy**, I would expect that the incumbent, AKP, allocates more money to the districts, which are stronger supporters of the incumbent party. The core voter strategy can be best captured by *vote share of the incumbent* in each district in 2007 elections. I also created a dummy variable, *local mayor*, which assigns 1 to the provinces where the mayor is from the incumbent party, and 0 to those in which the mayor is from a different party. If the incumbent continues supporting its core voters, it is expected that the district, which is led by a AKP mayor, has a better chance of getting more CCT money.

However, if the political party would like to create new voting bases, it would be expected that the swing provinces benefit disproportionately from cash benefits. According to Cox-McCubbins' (1986) model of voting strategies, a certain amount of social benefits may divert swing voters' voting choice easier than core or opposition groups' party choice. If the incumbent decides to follow a swing strategy, I would expect districts that show less support to be more likely to get more money.

The effective number of parties (ENP) in 2007 national elections will give us the level of competitiveness in each district. If there are more parties in each district competing in elections and if the incumbent follows the swing strategy, then I expect that the district would be more likely to benefit disproportionately from the CCT program. *Change in the support for the incumbent party* is another variable, which has capacity to show the loyalty level of the district. The greater the change in vote share of the



incumbent party across the two general elections (2002 and 2007), the more likely the province is a swing one. Thus, if the swing strategy is in play, a high level of change in support indicates that a district will receive a larger amount of cash transfers.

Although I have mentioned many times that the cash transfer money is allocated disproportionately to the districts that are substantially populated by Kurdish people, it is actually a challenge to find the exact number of Kurdish people living in Turkey due to the lack of reliable census data. There is no question indicating ethnicity in Turkey's population census. Within the last decade, however, there has been an increasing interest in the Kurdish question, and parallel to this interest there have been a number of surveys conducted in order to examine perceptions and expectations on the Kurdish question in Turkey. KONDA Research and Consultancy Company, which is a source of information on society, conducted surveys. They collected data on the Kurdish population through mother tongue and ethnicity questions asked in the survey,<sup>157</sup> and estimated the percentages of distribution of the Kurdish population by 12 different regions following TurkStat's NUTS codes. This regional level, however, is much more aggregated than the district level data, so I had to search for an alternative indicator.

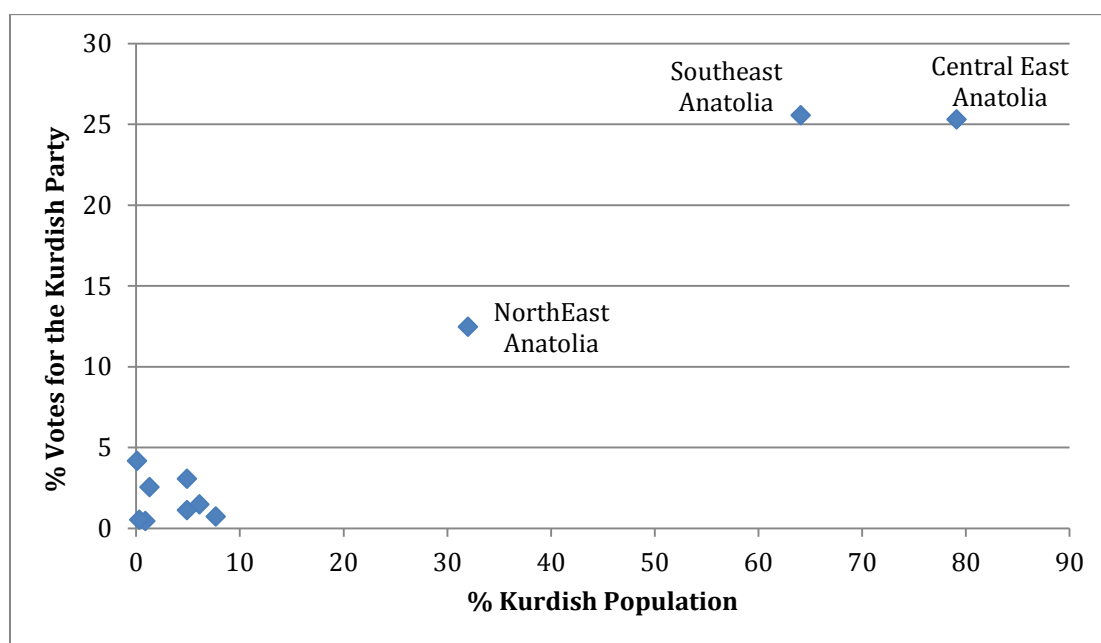
The choice relied on using the voting percentages of the Kurdish party in each district as a proxy for the Kurdish population. This choice relies on the plausible supposition that Kurds are more likely to vote for Kurdish parties than non-Kurds, and that this difference is roughly stable for Kurds everywhere. However, it is also

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<sup>157</sup> KONDA. 2011. *Perceptions and Expectations in the Kurdish Issue*, Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari

conceptually sound in that it highlights the “swing voter” nature of focusing on the Kurds, who are the natural constituencies for parties that compete with the AKP.

Empirically, the vote for Kurdish parties correlates with the estimates from the KONDA survey. I aggregated electoral data up to the same level of KONDA survey estimates of Kurdish population in regions, and the two data line up well (Figure 13).



**Figure 13.** Correlation of Percentages of Konda Estimates of the Kurdish Population with Percentages of Votes for the Kurdish Party in 2007 National Elections

**Source:** KONDA estimates and Elections Results TUIK (The table is built by the author)

Although KONDA estimates that only 0.1 percent of the Kurdish population is living in the East Black Sea region, votes for Kurdish party look rather high at an average of 5%. However, this can be explained by the fact that the Kurdish party went into election with independent candidates due to the 10% electoral threshold in Turkey. Then, once in parliament, they formed their party group inside the parliament. Therefore, in very few districts, especially in the East Black Sea region, are there independent candidates that they are not from the Kurdish party. With exceptions, they are reflecting

the Kurdish vote share. Figure 13 also shows a strong uphill linear pattern. When I calculate the correlation between the Kurdish population and the Kurdish party vote share, the correlation is +0.64.

Using votes for the Kurdish party as a proxy for the Kurdish population in each district allows me to control for whether the incumbent is distributing the money to the districts, which heavily support Kurdish parties in an attempt to gain their votes. The proxy had the added advantage, to the extent that share of vote of Kurdish parties deviates from the actual size of the Kurdish population, that it still reflects the “political power” of the Kurdish population, and their attractiveness as a “swing voter” strategy for the AKP. If I find that cctcapita is higher in districts populated by Kurdish people, it would be indicative of a swing voter strategy. Table 6 shows descriptive statistics of each variable used in this research.

Table 6. Summary Statistics of District Level CCT Data

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b><i>Dependent Variable</i></b>					
cctcapita in 2008 (TL)	923	8.53	13.38	0	79.60
<b><i>Independent Variables (I)-POLITICAL-</i></b>					
AKP National Vote Share (%)	923	47.89	15.67	3.7	87.4
Change in Support	923	15.08	10.29	-15.2	69.3
Local Mayor	923	.5612134	.4965078	0	1
ENP	923	3.026002	.8495092	1	5
Kurdish party 2007 (%)	916	5.99	13.22	0	75

<i>Control Variables</i> (II)-NEED-					
Poverty Level	923	35.65872	14.61623	10.3	68.6
Urbanization (%) in 2004	854	43.69	18.48	8.04	100
Unemployment (%) in 2004	854	6.25	4.13	.88	32.02
Literacy (%) in 2004	854	83.32	8.34	39.61	97.64
Socio-Econ Dev level(SED)	866	-.027	.922	-2.01	5.075

The following is the empirical strategy to estimate whether need or political criteria is in the play:

$$CCT_{2008} = \alpha + \beta_0 (\text{political criteria}) + \beta_1 (\text{need criteria}) + \varepsilon$$

*CCT* is the amount of money allocated to each district. *Need criteria* are the variables to be tested to investigate whether the socioeconomic level of each district determines the money allocation. *Political criteria* are the variables that will be tested to estimate whether there is manipulation in the distribution of cash transfers and  $\varepsilon$  is the error term. I consider four different types of statistical models to follow whether political manipulation (core versus swing versus opposition minority group) or technocratic criteria (need—socioeconomic development level) leads the allocation of cash transfers in Turkey, using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression in STATA.

#### 4.5. Regression Results

I estimated 4 different regression models<sup>158</sup> in order to explain whether the main criteria (political versus technocratic) behind the incumbent's allocation strategy are biased. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Model, I regress the effect of the technocratic criteria such as *poverty level*, *urbanization*, *unemployment*, and *literacy level*, on the allocation of cash transfers per capita per district. Out of the need criteria, all socioeconomic indicators have significant explanatory power. The directions of signs are in the expected way. While *poverty level* and *unemployment level* of each district are positively correlated with the allocation of CCTs, *urbanization* and *literacy level* have negative correlations with CCT distribution, as is expected. Among all socioeconomic variables, *unemployment* has the most explanatory power. For example, if there is a one percent increase in the percentage of unemployment in the district, the AKP government will give 8 TL more to that district per person than the average 64 TL payment.. In short, Model 1 suggests that the socioeconomic indicators play an important role in distribution of CCTs and that they are all significantly correlated with CCT per-capita spending.

In the next model (2<sup>nd</sup>), I included political variables while controlling for socioeconomic indicators, such as poverty level, unemployment, urbanization, literacy level and SED. Here, I find out that whereas the need variables are still significant, the political variables vary. Electoral competitiveness, which is measured by the effective number of parties in each district and the AKP's vote share in the 2007 elections, is not

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<sup>158</sup> I analyzed other simple models, omitting control variables one by one, which help me to estimate their effect. I used probit regression, which reports marginal effects, however, substantive findings remain unaffected by our introduction or excluding these variables one by one.

significant (Table 7). While change in support for the AKP from the 2002 to 2007 elections is significant at the 1% level, the coefficient is small. An “average” size swing of 15 percentage points (Table 6) would imply an increase of just over 1.3 TL in expenditures per capita. Although not negligible, this increase is small under any metric, as it corresponds to 15% of the average and just 1.5% of the maximum observed value across districts. Indicators both for core and swing strategy are either non-significant or show that AKP increases the amount of CCT only by 5 cents in a swing district, where the AKP increased its vote share from the 2002 to 2007 national elections.

**Table 7.** Regression Estimates of the Impact of Political and Need Variables on Amount of Conditional Cash Transfers Per Capita in 2008.

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>
<b>Need Explanation (Control)</b>		
Poverty level	0.2256 ***	0.159***
	(0.0313)	(0.033)
Unemployment (%) in 2004	0.8322 ***	0.582***
	(0.1224)	(0.120)
Literacy (%) in 2004	-0.7743***	-0.440***
	(0.0627)	(0.070)
Urbanization (%) in 2004	-0.0961***	-.0861 ***
	(0.0318)	(0.030)
SED	-0.2490	-0.692
	(0.5718)	(0.552)
<b>Political Explanation</b>		
AKP National Vote Share (%2007)		0.041

		(0.036)
Local Mayor (in 2007)		-0.833
		(0.653)
Competitiveness (ENP)		-0.344
		(0.583)
Change in Support (%)		0.096**
		(0.038)
(proxy for) Kurdish population (%)		0.301***
		(0.036)
<b>N:</b>	854	847
<b>Adjusted R square:</b>	0.5440	0.5852
Asterisks indicate statistical significance: $p < 0.01^{***}$ , $p < 0.05^{**}$ , $p < 0.1^{*}$ .		

Among the political variables, what stands out is the strong and significant correlation between the Kurdish population and the allocation of CCTs. Bearing in mind that the distribution of Kurds is heavily skewed, a shift from the mean level (6%) to the highest level (75%) is associated with an increase in CCT expenditures per capita of almost 30 TL, which is more than twice the average expenditure across districts.

Of course, the possibility remains that Kurdish districts receive the most cash due to their poverty level, and not because it is the AKP's strategy to deliver the largest number of cash transfers in order to distract Kurdish votes and shift them to the AKP. The next two models seek to distinguish between these two possibilities. In the Model 3, I included the interaction term between the vote share of Kurdish parties and the

socioeconomic development level of each district for measuring the “Kurdish effect” at different levels of socioeconomic development (Table 8).

**Table 8. Regression Estimates of the Impact of Political and Need Variables on the Amount of Conditional Cash Transfers in 2008 with the interaction term.**

<b>Model 3</b>	
<b>Need Explanation (Control)</b>	
Poverty level	0.180***
	(0.030)
Unemployment (%) in 2004	0.691***
	(0.118)
Literacy (%) in 2004	-0.341***
	(.0700)
Urbanization (%) in 2004	-0.086***
	(.0297)
HDI-DPT (SE) in 2004	-0.215
	(0.543)
<b>Political Explanation</b>	
AKP National Vote Share (%2007)	0.0554
	(0.035)
Local Mayor (in 2007)	-0.943
	(0.637)
Competitiveness (ENP)	-0.223
	(0.568)
Change in Support (%)	0.080**
	(0.037)

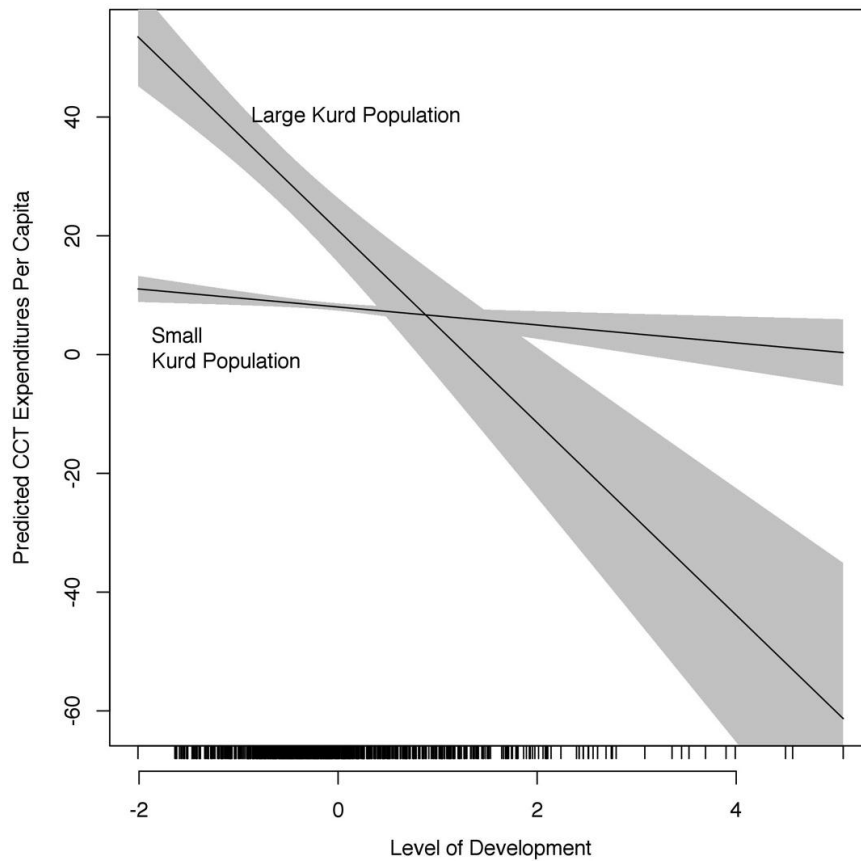


(proxy for) Kurdish population (%)	0.182***
	(0.039)
Kurdish proxy*SED	-0.210***
	(0.0313)
<b>N:</b>	846
<b>Adjusted R square:</b>	0.6061
Asterisks indicate statistical significance: $p < 0.01^{***}$ , $p < 0.05^{**}$ , $p < 0.1^{*}$ .	

Accompanying the previous results, most political strategy indicators are not significantly correlated with the allocation of CCTs, except change in support for AKP remains significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level. The coefficient is still small compared to Kurdish vote share. The negative coefficient in the interaction term suggests that the Kurdish effect is larger at lower levels of socioeconomic development, and that it virtually disappears at higher levels. Note that the HDI measure compiled by the Turkish Ministry of Development varies from negative to positive values (mean=-0.03). By implication, at average values of development, a 1 percentage point increase in the Kurdish population leads to a 2 TL increase in per capita spending, and a shift from the mean to the highest level of Kurdish population leads to an increase of just over 18 TL per capita. However, this effect increases markedly at low levels of development and declines (becoming negative) at high levels of development.

Figure 14 reports the results of the interaction term graphically. What I see is that at low levels of development (left side of the graph), the predicted CCT expenditures in a hypothetical district with a large Kurdish population (75% Kurds) with all other variables

set to their mean values, would be around 50 TL per capita, whereas in an identical district with the average Kurdish population (6%) expenditures would be just over 10 TL per capita. The predicted expenditure with higher Kurdish population is observed up until about the level of development that corresponds to 1 in the scale used, and which includes almost 80% of the districts (the density of districts along the development scale is shown by the ticks under the horizontal axis). At higher levels of development the predicted relationship is actually negative.



**Figure 14.** Predicted CCT Expenditures per capita, based on Model 3

A few caveats apply to these results. First, the most obvious point is that the relationship is positive over the range where the overwhelming majority of the districts

are located. Second, and most importantly there is no real district with a large Kurdish population and average levels of poverty, literacy, etc. Districts with large number of Kurds tend to be poor and there is no Kurd district with high levels of development. For this very reason, even with the inclusion of controls, our regression analysis might still be driven by the strong covariance between the variable of interest and other social-demographic variables.<sup>159</sup>

In an attempt to zero in on the Kurdish effect, in model 4 I compared only two regions (West Black Sea region and Central East Anatolia), which have almost identical high poverty rates (47.4% and 47.9%, respectively) (Table 9). KONDA estimated the percentage of Kurdish people living in the Black Sea region is only 2.35, whereas in Central East Anatolia is populated by Kurdish people at 61.49 percentages. This is akin to “informally” matching districts on economic indicators (i.e. poverty) while letting the other variable of interest (i.e. Kurdish population) vary.<sup>160</sup>

Understandably, in this analysis the socioeconomic indicators lost their significance levels, as there is very little variation across these two regions. In fact, this suggests that the informal matching did a good job in increasing balance in the dataset (see Ho, Daniel E. and Imai, Kosuke and King, Gary and Stuart, Elizabeth 2007 for an accessible discussion of matching). The main result here is that the Kurdish population is

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<sup>159</sup> Stephen Morgan and Christopher Winship. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>160</sup> Formal matching was not attempted because the “treatment” variable (Kurdish population) is continuous, making the procedure much more involved. See Imai K. and D.A. van Dyk (2004), “Causal Inference with General Treatment Regimes: Generalizing the Propensity Score,” *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 99, 854- 866.

still a significant indicator of receiving CCT benefits. This more direct test of the hypothesis supports the interpretation that even when the poverty levels are similar, being from a Kurdish populated district means that the applicant has a greater chance of being selected to receive benefits.

**Table 9.** Regression Estimates of the Impact of Political and Need Variables on the Amount of Conditional Cash Transfers Per Capita in 2008 in Poor Districts (West Black Sea-populated by non-Kurds and Central East Anatolia-populated by Kurds)

<b>Model 4</b>	
<b>Need Explanation (Control)</b>	
Poverty level	5.019
	(4.870)
Unemployment (%) in 2004	1.199*
	(0.340)
Literacy (%) in 2004	-0.311*
	(0.130)
Urbanization (%) in 2004	-0.179*
	(0.070)
<b>Political Explanation</b>	
Incumbent Vote Share (%2007)	0.036
	(0.105)
Local Mayor (in 2007)	-0.064
	(1.581)
Competitiveness (ENP)	-2.259
	(1.519)
Change in Support (%)	0.249**

	(0.097)	
(proxy for) Kurdish population (%)	0.260***	
	(0.084)	
Kurdish proxy*SED		
N:	176	176
Adjusted R square:	0.5761	0.5908
Asterisks indicate statistical significance: p < 0.01***, p < 0.05**, p < 0.1*.		

#### 4.6. Conclusion

Patronage politics and clientelism have been enduring problems of the Turkish Republic since its establishment in the early twentieth century. Agricultural subsidies given to farmers, legalization permits to irregular settlements given to the urban poor, allocation of coal packages, food aid, provision of contractor jobs in municipalities during and after elections to supporters are a few of the many examples. The incumbent AKP has also shown signs of increasing populist spending on social benefits, targeting the poorest segments of its constituency. However, CCTs differ from other social assistance programs in terms of their design and implementation, which operate against traditional forms of clientelistic politics.

In this chapter, I tested whether the allocation of CCTs in Turkey follows technocratic, objective “need” criteria, or political criteria. Out of these four models, the regression results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between technocratic criteria and allocation of cash transfers, which provides strong evidence that CCTs in Turkey are being distributed in a programmatic way. On the political side, however, it seems that the incumbent AKP rewards districts where support for the AKP

increases. Although the coefficient is small, it is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). On the other hand, the impact of voting for Kurdish parties is positive and significant in all five models, which means that pro-Kurdish districts receive more CCTs than districts of similar poverty levels. The comparison between Kurdish populated and non-Kurdish populated districts with similar poverty levels shows that the vote share of the Kurdish party is still a significant predictor of CCT levels.

Comparing the coefficients of the political variables, the size of the coefficient of pro-Kurdishness outpaced any other political variables. Does that finding matter? If so, what is the causal mechanism behind the AKP government's unequal distribution of the CCTs to the Kurdish districts? The AKP needs a two-thirds majority in order to make a transition to a presidential system, as Prime Minister Erdoğan has hinted at in his election campaign speeches. Kurdish voters have been playing an integral role to that end in providing the AKP the electoral support it needs for the transition. Beyond the pragmatic calculations of the incumbent, the AKP's unequal distribution of CCTs to the Kurdish districts also resonates with their pragmatist solution to the military conflict in the region. By reducing poverty to a purely economic question, however, they ignore the historical and political origins of the ongoing conflict in the Kurdish region. The AKP's solution of providing more social assistance is thus an effort to kill these two birds with one stone.

## 5. Voices of the CCT Recipients in Diyarbakır and Tekirdağ: Making Clients and/or Citizens?

### 5.1. Introduction

Feride is a thirty-two year old woman, who is living in the squatter settlements of Diyarbakır, which is a city in the very eastern part of the Turkey known as the “Paris” of the East. Even though the city is recognized as “developed” compared to surrounding cities, the poverty rate in Diyarbakır has increased sharply in recent years. Every four families out of five needs social assistance and the monthly income of every three families out of five is under 350 YTL (approximately \$170)<sup>161</sup>. While the rate of poverty is increasing, the government’s spending on public programs is boosting as well. Feride told me in her interview, “You asked me what we talk about when women get together. It is about who gets what. It is whether we get money for children, food packages, bag of coal, clothing support, etc.” Her response reminded me of how these social assistance programs and benefits directly affect the everyday lives of the poor people. It also has effects on their relationship with the provider, and in most cases it is the state. Beneficiaries are the main objects of these social assistance programs; however they are treated as the subject of these programs as if their social, political and economic life hasn’t been affected by the consequences of these policies. They are caricatured as ignorant, greedy people who are selling their votes for the sake of benefits (Figure 15). There are few studies conducted on how they evaluate the whole process, their feelings as citizens, their views of the state as a provider, their evaluation of social assistance. The

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<sup>161</sup> *A Map of Urban Poverty in Diyarbakır*. Yerel Gundem 21 Association conducted the research in four neighborhoods of Diyarbakır in 2011.

questions on how they create links between these benefits and the ruling party, to whom they give credit, and how it affects their citizenship experiences go unanswered.



**Figure 15.** A caricature of how social aid impacts voting behavior. The caricature translates as follows: “WOMAN: Did you find a job? MAN: NO. WOMAN: Did you sell your organs? MAN: No, I sold my vote.”<sup>162</sup>

The local dynamics and perspectives of the beneficiaries are largely ignored. However, the microanalysis of politics of distribution is as important as the macro level analysis of implementation and design patterns of the social policies. Political Science Studies on poverty in Turkey have not sufficiently focused on the voices of the poor. Such voices are treated as the reserved place for sociology and/or anthropology studies. On the other hand, if we check the comparative studies, the micro level analysis of politics of distribution funds is largely focused on the policies’ impacts on voting behavior. The main drawback of this focus is its analytical separation of social policy and

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<sup>162</sup> The caricature on the left is taken from mamutistan.com. It was published on February 5, 2009, just before the local elections on March 2009.



society into two distinct spheres. However, it is equally important to explore how poverty-alleviation programs influence perceptions, political thought and also behavior in the public and how it shapes/reshapes the relationship between the government and the citizen. Thus, this chapter is a contribution to fulfill the gap in the literature.

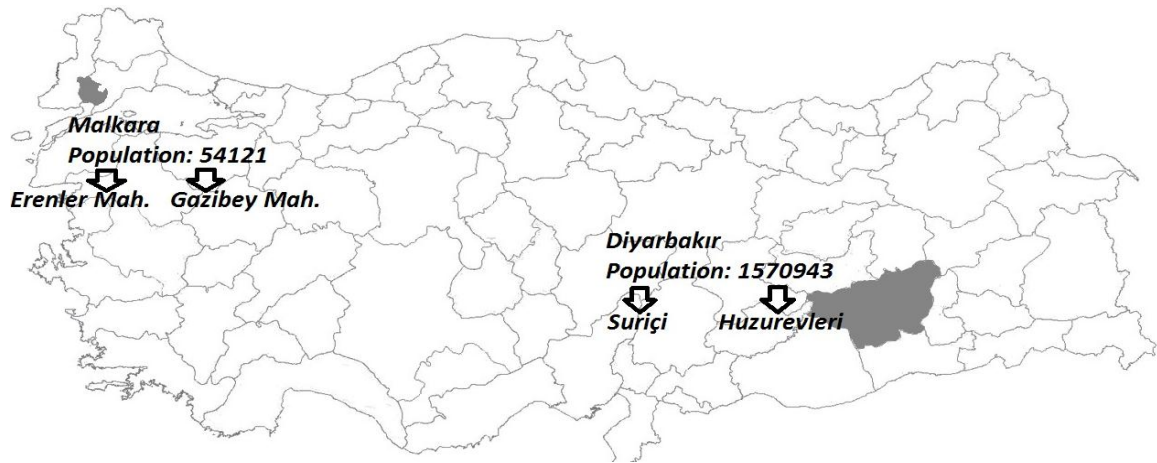
Drawing on a fieldwork carried out in two localities of Turkey, the purpose of this chapter is to investigate the political impacts of CCTs on beneficiaries. I ask whether transferring cash based on conditions to the poor empower social citizenship among Turkey's poor or produce/reproduce linkages, obligations to reciprocate in terms of supporting the political party allocating them. Hereby, I borrow Auyero's definition of political clientelism, which puts forth: "the distribution of resources or promise of distribution by political office holders or candidates in exchange for political support, primarily-although not exclusively-in the form of vote" (Auyero, 1999: 297). Susan Stokes also puts forth a similar understanding of clientelism, by adding that clientelism is necessarily a relationship over time (Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics, Stokes). The *time* addition also helps me to examine whether CCTs bolsters pre-existing subordinate relations for the poor, especially in a country where clientelism has long been an enduring problem that has deleterious effects on Turkish democracy. Even if we don't find evidence supporting the argument of the political manipulation of CCTs, it doesn't necessarily and automatically means CCTs empower citizenship among the poor and strengthens their social integration. The "empowering citizenship" is operationalized in this study by examining how the recipients view and perceive this social program—whether as a social right or as a favor and how they react to it—whether they claim this right from the state as being citizens of this country or they appreciate and feel gratitude

to reciprocate in terms of supporting the political party or its leader. The execution and implementation of social rights is part of social citizenship, and beneficiaries' practices of social citizenship is one of my entry points toward understanding whether getting social benefits, in that case CCTs, strengthen their notions of rights and entitlements.

I will investigate this dilemma by examining two different ethnic minorities living in Turkey, the Roma and Kurdish minorities, who vary in terms of politicization (OR political orientation), experiences with the state apparatus, and inhabitancy (in the countryside vs. urban suburbs) and geographical region (west vs. east). To answer my research questions, I set up a comparative case study and conducted fieldwork carried out in Turkey with the two minority communities for 6 months. I ask how different poor communities perceive, understand and react to cash transfers. Adding an ethnic dimension into the research is also an attempt to fill the gap that T.H. Marshall (1957) has been criticized for leaving open, namely, of giving no attention to cultural, racial and ethnic divisions while conceptualizing social citizenship (Turner, 2001:191). On that matter, the Kurdish people's struggle with the state for more than three decades can provide us with insight into how political struggle produces active citizens and how it reflects on claiming social citizenship in the case of social service delivery, especially social assistance.

My research was carried out in Diyarbakır and Malkara (Figure 16). Diyarbakır is a city located in the eastern part of Turkey and populated by Kurdish people. Malkara is a small town located in the western part of Turkey, which is a part of the larger Thrace region. It is a district of a larger city, which is known as Tekirdağ. The majority of the Roma population lives in Thrace, in which Malkara is one of these districts. Two

localities were selected within each sample: *Fatihpaşa* neighbourhood (populated by more nationalist poor Kurdish people) and *Benusen* neighbourhood (populated by internally displaced Kurdish people) in Diyarbakır and *Gazibey Mahallesi* and *Erenler Mahallesi* in Malkara (Roma populated area), a total of four communities. The selected localities are: 1) from districts with high levels of poverty and those identified by the government as high priority areas and populated by cash transfer receivers; 2) help checking ethnic diversity as well as different levels of religiosity. Even though the scope of the study is limited to four localities (despite the fact that CCTs are allocated in 973 districts and thousands of neighbourhoods) this chapter is an attempt to make a transition from “thin description” to “thick description” of transaction, interactions between state and the poor citizen and to provide interpretation of poor people’s political and social considerations in the case of CCTs.



**Figure 16.** The fieldwork map.

During my field research, I conducted semi-structured interviews with foundation staff members (the Social Solidarity Foundation is the main institution which allocates cash transfers), muhtars (district officials), local party representatives, community

leaders, and government officials in those specific districts. I also engaged in participant observation in a SYDV to observe the people's interaction with the civil staff and their experiences during the application process. It is the best way to investigate beneficiaries' experiences with the state bureaucracy. In-depth interviews were conducted with Roma and Kurdish poor people who benefit from the program. These interviews provided answers to my research questions on whether these social benefits enhance the citizenship experiences of the beneficiaries or replicate the existing patterns of clientelism. Their answers painted a more complete picture of their responses, and I got a sense of the attitudes that were shaped within the process of application and reception of benefits. Participant observation in those neighborhoods also helped me to observe the everyday lives of poor people and their interactions with other community members and higher authorities.

During my pre-dissertation fieldwork experience in 2011, I had already become familiar with different poor communities. Therefore, I didn't have an access problem, but the two obvious risks that I encountered were these: some of the participants thought I was the one who was sent by the government to evaluate their living conditions to decide whether or not they needed more money, and the other problem was people's belief that I could solve their problem of poverty and make their living conditions better. In order to overcome this risk, I made it explicit that I was only a researcher, a student, analysing "who gets what, and how this transaction is perceived by the recipients" rather than being a civil servant working for a social service provider.

Throughout this chapter, first, I will provide clarification on several concepts: What does social citizenship mean? What does claiming social citizenship mean? Then, I

will provide some concept clarification for clientelism. What do we really mean when we say that relations of clientelism are strengthened,” or that people have a sense of obligation to reciprocate? After giving a literature review on these two concepts, then I will give some brief information about the case study localities and explain why they are good fits for the purposes of this chapter. Learning from in-depth interviews that I conducted with CCT beneficiaries, I will answer the main research questions of this chapter. The main focus of this chapter is not theory testing but making an analysis out of recipients’ interpretations, perceptions, and attitudes, in short, micro-level experiences of poor people receiving CCTs by using qualitative methods. Therefore, learning from beneficiaries constitutes a significant part of this study.

In this chapter, I argue that the political impact of cash transfers on beneficiaries is determined by the beneficiaries’ perceptions on social citizenship, social rights and benefits, their level of politicization, and their previous experiences with the state. More politicized groups among Kurdish people, due to their struggle with the state, view the benefit as a social right. However, this doesn’t automatically mean that claiming CCT as a social right empowers poor people or strengthen women’s sense of rights versus the state. For example, some Kurdish women see it as a charity for which they are thankful and praise the “boss”, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Among less politicized groups, such as the Roma people, this program creates new loyalties, and furthers a type of “welfare clientelism.” Roma recipients continue to feel a debt of gratitude and servitude to Prime Minister Erdoğan for providing this program. In a country where clientelism has long held the poor in its grip, feelings of reciprocity could be felt toward either a national-level patron or local political authorities that mediate the program. In Turkey, the gratitude is

directed almost exclusively toward Erdoğan, rather than any other person, institution, or political party. Based on the evidence collected from my interviews, I conclude that the recipients generally feel that the local solidarity foundations, civil service staff, and the mayor—not the Prime Minister—are responsible for any wrongdoing or irregularities concerning the allocation of CCTs.

## 5.2. Case Study

First of all, I would like to explain my motives in choosing my four different localities. The research was carried out in two cities, and two localities were selected in each of these two cities, a total of four communities. I used six criteria to select my sites:

- 1) Fieldwork sites are from districts with high levels of poverty (this resulted in the selection of Diyarbakır, which is in Southeastern Anatolia);
- 2) Fieldwork sites help check for geographical diversity (this resulted in the selection of Tekirdağ, which is in the Western part (Thrace) of Turkey). Since I'm working on Turkey only, I would like to add a comparison dimension into my dissertation. Diyarbakır is located at the eastern side of Turkey and populated by Kurdish people, whereas Malkara is a district of Tekirdağ, which is located at the Western side of Turkey (Thrace), and Thrace is the region where Roma people live in large numbers.
- 3) Fieldwork sites also reflect ethnic diversity and host large minority populations, such as Kurdish or Roma population. Diyarbakır's population is composed of Kurdish people and Tekirdağ also is composed of a Roma minority population.
- 4) Fieldwork area covers rural and urban areas. The localities selected in Tekirdağ, namely the *Gazibey* and *Erenler* neighborhoods in Malkara, represent rural areas, and the

localities selected in the center of Diyarbakır, *Surici and Benusen*, display slums in an urban context;

5) Fieldwork area has a relatively large number of CCT program beneficiaries, enabling acquisition of a large enough sample of qualitative studies and ensuring the selection of areas with high levels of poverty and ethnic diversity. In terms of the number of CCT beneficiaries Malkara ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> among the 9 districts of Tekirdağ, most of who are Roma people. Diyarbakır ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in its region and majority of the population are Kurdish people.

### **5.2.1. Malkara and its Roma People**

I grew up in a town called Malkara, one of the 9 districts of Tekirdağ province and the largest one due to the area it covers. It is located in the Northwest of Turkey called Marmara Region and Eastern Thrace. The urban population is approximately 28.000; however, the whole population including villages and neighborhoods is around 50.000. Its population is not growing compared to its surrounding cities. It is 190 kilometers (100 miles) away from Istanbul. During the Ottoman Empire, it was populated by Greek and Bulgarian people, and after independence, due to the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey; it was inhabited by *göçmen* or *muhacir* (migrants, who migrated from provinces in Greece to Malkara after the exchange of population treaty signed between the two countries). My family is one of them: my grandfather migrated from Thessaloniki, Greece, and my mother's father from Kavala, Greece, and my husband's elders followed the same route when they were making their way to Malkara. The majority of its population is Turkish and Muslim, but secular-minded. Except for a few local elections, the majority of votes casted in all national

elections are for the center-left secular party, the CHP. Only 4 per cent of its population is illiterate and most of its population living in the center of the district is educated, at least to a high-school level.

Even though the majority of Malkara's population originated in the Balkans, the town has a Roma population as well. Roma people live in different parts of Turkey but inhabit heavily the Thrace region of the country. According to the Lausanne Treaty signed in 1923, just after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the Roma community was not recognized as "ethnic minority" officially.<sup>163</sup> The estimated number of population is 500.000<sup>164</sup>, however the population census doesn't include a question about ethnic origin, so there is no official number of Roma people living either in Turkey or in Malkara. There is no official party that represents the Roma's interests nationwide. Due to their social exclusion, they are mostly illiterate or graduates from primary school; most of them are unemployed or work as low-level workers such seasonal workers, porters, garbage collectors, flower-sellers, etc.

In our town, there are two coal mines, and Roma men work as seasonal workers in one of those two coal mines for long hours and get very low wages, about 9 TL per day (\$4). They also use horse carriages to help move and/or carry goods and coal to their houses. Some Roma women work as cleaning ladies and Türkan Abla (sister): for example, a Roma woman has cleaned my parents' house once a week for more than 20 years. Most of the well-off people living in town have Roma women in their houses helping them with domestic chores.

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<sup>163</sup> Baskin Oran, *Minorities in Turkey*, Istanbul, TESEV, 2004.

<sup>164</sup> Ana Oprisan, Overview on the Roma in Turkey, *Kuri Journal*, Vol 1 No 7 Fall/Winter 2002



They are often called *Çingene* (Gypsy), or the more derogatory term, *Esmer Vatandaş* (brunet citizen). They live in two neighborhoods, *Gazibey* and *Erenler*, and my interviewees did not hesitate to tell me that none of the Turkish residents in Malkara are willing to rent to Roma people due to their ethnicity, so their communities are segregated. Most of their children go to schools in the segregated districts, so that there is an unofficial division of Roma and Turkish people in the small town, even though the people of the town are proud to be leftist, liberal-minded and secular.

Due to the high unemployment rate in the Roma community, in addition to the Roma's habit of having large households (they have many children), most of the CCT beneficiaries in town are of Roma origin. The fieldwork in Malkara took place in *Gazibey* and *Erenler* neighborhoods, both populated by Roma people. Two neighborhoods are located ten minutes by car, thirty minutes by foot away from the town center and located at the border of the town. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 35 Roma woman and 5 Roma men. Out of 40 Roma people, only 3 of them were non-beneficiaries of the CCT. The rest were associated with CCT program. Only two of these interviews are recorded by tape, the others were recorded by handwriting since the people are suspicious of recording tapes. The interviewees' names are confidential and they were given nicknames throughout the chapter and the dissertation as well.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> The information gathered during this study will remain confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the study data and information. There will not be any identifying names on the written form, and participant's names will not be available to anyone. The written version of interviews, discussions will be destroyed at the completion of the study. The results of the research will be published in the form of a paper and may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings. The information will help others better understand the experiences of poverty-relief recipients.

### 5.2.2. Diyarbakır and its Kurdish people

I had never been in Diyarbakır before conducting my dissertation fieldwork. My family and friends worried about me due to the slowing down of political reforms directed towards Kurds, which have been designated as the Kurdish Opening (*Kürt Açılımı*), and backed by negotiations for European Union membership. The renewed conflict between the Turkish military and PKK, has resulted in a growing number of casualties on both sides, the arrest of Kurdish local mayors and journalists, trade unionists, human rights defenders, and also of university students accused of being members of the KCK (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan*-Union of Communities in Kurdistan). At the beginning of October 2011 the number of those detained since April 2009 had reached 7,748 Kurds, of whom 3,895 were placed in pre-trial detention.<sup>166</sup> Twice in a week, I came across a funeral, and usually the deceased were very young people, and once a week, I came across a detention scene, where policemen with kalashnikovs took people suspected of being members of the KCK into custody. During that time, one of my professors from Marmara University, Busra Ersanli, also got arrested for the very same reason. The government accused her of being a member of a terrorist organization. At that time, she was serving as a member of the constitutional commission of the Kurdish Party, BDP. Even American Political Science Association (APSA) published a public statement indicating that she is an academician and poses no threat of violence and pushed for her release.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/133216-30-ayda-kckden-7748-gozalti-3895-tutuklama>, accessed on December 12, 2012.

<sup>167</sup> <http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/GovDept/PublicLetters/Ersanli2011Nov.pdf>, accessed on March 20 2013.

My fieldwork area comprises *Fatihpaşa* neighborhood, which is a part of Sur Municipality and *Benusen* neighborhood, which is part of Yenisehir Municipality of Diyarbakır. One of the important characteristics of these neighborhoods is that unemployment and poverty are much more visible than in any other parts of the city: this is one of the reasons why I selected these two neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods are inhabited by well off people, but poverty and unemployment are characteristics of the many parts of the city. The neighborhoods I studied belong to the poorest.

Fatihpaşa is located in the oldest quarter of the city, which is surrounded by remaining ancient city walls and homes for internally displaced Kurdish people (IDPs). Internal displacement took place in southeast and eastern regions of Turkey during the course of conflict during the 1990s between the Turkish security forces and the PKK (Kurdish Worker's party). The eviction of Kurdish people from their rural homes created mass immigration to metropolises. This led to a transformation in the slums of big cities, created "segregated communities" most notably Istanbul in the west and Diyarbakır on the southeast. Sassen argues that inner-city geographies contribute a critical infrastructure for a new global political economy, new cultural spaces and new types of politics (Sassen, 2009). Indeed, these urban slums prove to be valuable places for tracing the signs of transformation of social policy environment in Turkey and mushrooming of poverty-relief NGOs, programs, projects in the southeast. Also, Kurdish IDPs, the newcomers to the cities, constitute as a new-targeted community for gaining political support.

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In the Fatihpaşa neighborhood, there is a Women's Cooperative that teaches women how to weave carpets. It is supported by the Governor's Office. Another independent Women's Cooperative, *Umut Isigi* (Ray of Hope) serves 60-70 children. Yenisehir municipality has also provided free second-hand clothes to the people of Fatihpaşa in a store located in the same neighborhood. There is one health clinic, where most of the women take their kids to get regular health check-ups and one primary school. As of 2003, the population is 12,575 and the average household size is 6.9. This is another reason why I selected this neighborhood as one of my field sites: the higher the level of poverty and the larger household's size, the more chances we have to come across CCT beneficiaries.

Benusen is a neighborhood located in the south of Diyarbakır, just out of the ancient city walls with population of 10.000 people, where its population outgrows at the end of 1990s with the intense conflict and also forced migration from villages to city centers. As a result of insufficient infrastructure, the neighborhood reflects every characteristic of urban slums, which suffers from long water shortages or electricity cuts and the roads are steep and bumpy. Poor Kurdish people, most of them IDPs, are the residents of Benusen. There is also a gentrification project going on in the neighborhood. This is one of the famous poor neighborhoods that Noam Chomsky visited, and most of the men I interviewed talked about his visit. The neighborhood has a laundry called "Beyaz Kelebekler" (White Butterflies) which is a get-together center for women which provides literacy classes for women and computer classes as well. There is also a ÇAÇA initiative that has been active since 2006 in the neighborhood, providing children extra-curricular activities outside the school and mentorship. The number of children who work

in the streets is pretty high in Benusen. There are many families whose children are selling tissue paper or cleaning car windows. Men are mostly engaged with illegal animal slaughtering and distributing to nearby butchers. The reason for selecting this neighborhood is its high poverty rate and large number of children, which means more CCT beneficiaries, and the fact that it is surrounded by some initiatives such as the education support center and the children support center. At the same time, there is an ongoing urban transformation plan that increases the tension between the residents and the state.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 35 Kurdish women and 5 men. Out of 40 Kurdish people, only 2 are non-beneficiaries of the CCT. The rest is associated with CCT program. None of the interviews was recorded on tape; all were handwritten after the fact since the people are suspicious of recording tapes and do not trust a person coming from outside of their neighborhood. The people that I met in my predissertation fieldwork and continued our friendship through Facebook, and other social media vehicles helped me to get into these neighborhoods and interview the people. The interviewees' names are confidential and they were given nicknames throughout the chapter and the dissertation as well.

### **5.3. CCT and its Potential to Strengthen Citizenship**

A growing body of literature underpins the argument that the design of welfare programs can affect citizenship in terms of political behavior and attitudes (Wichowsky and Moynihan, 2009; Garay, 2009; Kumlin and Rothstein, 2005; Mettler and Soss, 2004). There are few studies investigating the impact of providing cash transfers to the poor on their citizenship experiences. A substantial number of studies on CCTs are devoted to

finding out the impact of CCTs on voting behavior, voting turnout, support for the President or a party (Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni, 2009; Nichter, 2008; Zucco, 2008; Hunter and Power, 2007). This strand of literature focuses on the impacts of CCTs on exercising political citizenship, thus their right to political participation. The question of “If the conditions and eligibility criteria are implemented properly; can this social policy serve to empower citizenship of CCT beneficiaries?” largely went unanswered. Little is known about the effects of CCTs on strengthening of citizens and citizenship (Grimes and Wangnerud 2010; Brière and Rawlings 2006). Therefore, it would be a contribution to assess the issue in Turkey, where CCT has been implemented since 2003.

In this chapter, following following T.H Marshall (1950), citizenship can be defined in a more comprehensive way and include (1) civil citizenship, which empowers an individual to become a unit in the economic struggle, (2) political citizenship, which gives right to participate in the exercise of political power, and (3) social citizenship, which includes the right of having access to an educational system and social services. In his classical and highly referenced study, T.H. Marshall defines “social citizenship” as “the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society” (Marshall, 1950). According to the concept of full citizenship, which provides citizens with a safety net and social service delivery as a social right, low-income people are not obligated to sacrifice their political or civil rights to have a share of social services. Moreover, the lack of social citizenship means that the full citizenship is absent, and thus the concept of political citizenship is hollow. In short, having full citizenship—civil, political and social—guarantees citizens’

right to have access to social services without sacrificing their political and civil rights (Lazetta, 2004; Fox, 1994).

Even though Marshall's description of social citizenship is vague, as it asserts the rights of citizens "to live the life of a civilized being" (Marshall, 1950:94), it is still one step further than limiting citizenship to political and civil citizenship. It is possible to go even further. Turner (2001:189) claims that focusing on social rights is no longer sufficient due to technological and economic change. Currently, he observes, people are often asking for environmental and/or cultural citizenship. Some people argue that due to the retreat of ethnicity and nationality; "social citizenship" has been losing its significance. However, other recent works on social citizenship challenge this assumption and posit that it is still relevant, as many citizens of the post-colonial world and post-socialist states have claimed rights to state support, social security, and social assistance (Yalcin-Heckmann, 2011; Mataradze, 2011; Buğra, 2007; Roche, 2008).

The category of social citizenship described by T.H. Marshall helps us in understanding perceptions and reactions of poor Kurdish and Roma beneficiaries towards CCTs. Social citizenship includes social rights that each member of the society should have (Buğra, 2007) and practice of claiming, executing and implementing these social rights are the evidence of heightened citizenship. Delivering a social benefit as a social right at the institutional level and/or perceiving that benefit as a social right embedded in a specific culture informing the individual's worldview, challenges the top-down, philanthropic understanding of providing social benefits. As a result, it also weakens the idea that the delivery of social benefits is a form of pacification of the poor, and reduces their dependence on the state. It is also expected to strengthen poor people's notions of

rights and entitlements. Then, I operationalize the concept of *strengthening of citizenship* and measure the impact of Turkish CCTs on beneficiaries by delving into questions that provide us evidence of heightening social inclusion, empowerment, and claiming the benefit as a social right or lack thereof.

First of all, I will look into the impact of CCTs on social inclusion/increased marginalization of beneficiaries by focusing on the question of whether getting CCTs make poor beneficiaries more marginalized, such as whether there is a rise in discrimination against beneficiaries in the society, or whether with a rise of income, poor people's views of their place in society are elevated.

Second, a study of how the poor view the CCTs is crucially important to figure out whether they construe cash transfers as their social right or as a charitable gesture that may increase their appreciation of state, party, party leader, prime minister, etc. and therefore, reinforce their dependence on whom they give credit to. The response is also based on how the MoSPF and SYDVs frame the program. People may feel a debt of gratitude toward the politicians that set up the program, but they will also have more independent resources and security to act as *citizens*. This will lead to some level of citizenship enhancement for the recipients of the program.

Last but not least, the practice of applying for and receiving social benefits construed as a social right may have a stronger impact on turning women, rather than men, from being passive citizens to active ones. Paying visits to SYDVs, filling out the forms, getting the cash transfers from bank accounts in their own names, and making plans to spend the money on their own, might have impacts on women's empowerment. However, another scenario can be as follows: it may increase exhaustion on the side of



women since all the conditions have to be met in order to get the benefit such as sending your children to school and controlling their attendance, and paying regular visits to health centers. Meeting all of these requirements may increase stress on the mother, since if any of them remains unmet, the family may lose the regular monthly payments.

Now, based on evidence from fieldwork, I will go one by one to investigate each question above and find out whether Turkish CCTs have the potential to build and heighten citizenship and turn poor beneficiaries into more active and engaged citizens.

### **5.3.1. Social Inclusion or Marginalization?**

A strand of the literature supports the argument that the way of modeling social assistance programs has an impact on citizenship in terms of political attitudes and behavioral change (Grimes and Wangnerud, 2010; Lomeli, 2008; Briere and Rawlings, 2006; Mettler and Soss, 2004; Adato, 2004; Fox, 1994). The findings of this research suggest that the welfare programs that ask for extensive information and include detailed means-tested, such as CCTs, tend to increase marginalization of vulnerable populations, rather than enhance their social inclusion (Grimes and Wangnerud, 2010). It is suggested to integrate these programs into more universal welfare programs to overcome these negativities, thereby cultivating citizenship among the poor segments of the society, which has an indirect effect on the quality of democracy (Lomeli, 2008).

One of the indicators of strengthening citizenship is the design of the social program; such as the way the program selects its beneficiaries. The selection process is key to creating a transparent, political-manipulation-free program, which makes positive returns in terms of empowering citizenship of beneficiaries. However, the selection

process is necessary but not sufficient to prevent discrimination, marginalization and/or contribute to social inclusion of the beneficiaries. By keeping this in mind, the way the CCT program selects its beneficiaries in Turkey is that the woman has to apply to the program and household members have to submit a very detailed application form that includes several variables. The form is designed to help demonstrate demographic, socio-economic, life-quality of household members such as current employment situation, number of children they have, education level, having consumer durable products, property ownership (whether the house belongs to them/rent/whether they have agricultural assets), provision of electricity and water, etc.<sup>168</sup> Then, the Foundation's social service personnel must pay a visit to each applicant's house to check whether the application matches the living conditions of the family. While this may seem to be a efficient measure to prevent the political manipulation of the program, the implementation of the house check puts pressure on the beneficiaries as they need to show off their poverty to the SYDV staff. Indeed, if you pay a visit to any of these houses to conduct an interview for your research purposes, the beneficiary takes the same attitude towards you by showing you the miserable conditions of the house and trying to make explanations as to why they own a TV or insisting that the dresses their children wear are donated. Contrary to expected social inclusion that CCT program may bring, these house checks and getting information from neighbors makes beneficiaries feel more isolated and/or makes them show off that they are different from others.

On the other hand, house check experts find this "house check" step very useful

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<sup>168</sup> Conditional Cash Transfer Application Form

and add, “You have never known whether they are telling the truth or lie. Sometimes they are hiding their washing machines, refrigerator, televisions, etc. You need to be careful while investigating. Otherwise, there is a danger to approve social aid to someone who doesn’t *deserve*”.<sup>169</sup> If this step is not sufficient, according to experts, the staff has the right to ask a neighbor how well-off the applicant is. This has the potential to erode intercommunity bonds if the informant portrays their neighbor as not being “poor enough” to get the benefit. Those not selected for the CCT program may give false information. This division between those selected and those not selected has given rise to tension, jealousy and resentment among the community members. Lack of information about the selection criteria, the amount of money received, the conditions that should be met have also contributed to resentment as well. Unlike CCT programs in Latin America, there are no informal courses on eligibility criteria, conditions and/or the criteria for the amount of money you receive. Indeed, it gives way to many misunderstandings. You can hear many complaints of why one neighbor gets a certain amount, while another gets a different amount. This also decreases their trust to the state, which provides this social benefit and makes them feel more isolated.

On the other side, the Foundation staff is also judging people while conducting the house checks. One staff member complained about beneficiaries’ not telling the truth and she found the morality of the household wanting. She reported that “once we got into the house, I saw a men’ trousers on the hanger even the mother of the house told us that she is a widow. I have suspicions about whether the woman has an illegal relationship

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<sup>169</sup> Interview with a Social Solidarity Fund Staff member, Ankara, October 2011

with another man. It is against our religion.”<sup>170</sup> You can hear similar stories while doing the fieldwork. The foundation staff sees themselves as a higher authority that can judge applicant’s private life. Here is another example from yet another house inspection. This time, the problem was the hair color of the applicant. He added “if the woman doesn’t have money, how did she find money to change her hair color from brown to blond? It is an expensive process.”<sup>171</sup> While the house checks, applicant forms, all detailed application process are designed to differentiate CCTs from politically manipulated programs, the way they are planned and the way they are implemented are two different things. Interviews with both Roma and Kurdish beneficiaries show that the supervision methods all weaken community ties and increase resentments towards civil service staff. Another feature of the CCT program is that the money is deposited into a bank account in the name of the mother of the family. Payments are also deposited through General Directorate so that there is no broker, mediator in between while you have an access to your money. It is yet another institutional feature designed to strengthen citizenship that comes along with the implementation of the program. However, the experiences of the beneficiaries are not that much positive in practice. When I was walking around the poor neighborhoods of Diyarbakır, I came across hundreds of people, who waited in front of the Central Post Office. After a while, I found out that this was the time of getting cash transfers for that month. Beneficiaries formed long lines and waited in line for more than 4 hours stating that they are waiting without knowing how much cash they will take, complained about the officials had insulted them. The line of social assistance turned to

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<sup>170</sup> Interview with a Social Solidarity Fund Staff member, Ankara, October 2011.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

line of discrimination. I also came across same complaints from Roma people as well. Since Roma people live in a small town in Tekirdağ, there is already established discrimination against Roma people, whether they are beneficiaries of CCT or not. Roma beneficiaries that I interviewed told me that there is discrimination in the post office, where they get their money. Necmiye, 33, mother of 6 children by stating that even she had waited in line and didn't make any noise, the security officer of the post office constantly insult them, "I don't know where does he find this right to insult us? I'm guessing it is because we are poor or we are Roma or both".

Waiting in lines in the center of the town once in a two months row also confer social stigma on beneficiaries, not among their community since they share the same destiny but among the society they live in. Program participants often hear well-off people' whispers judging them, accusing of having too many children that they couldn't take care of, criticizing their dependency on state, criticizing the state's support via taxes they are paying, etc. Therefore, it also exacerbates already established antipathies against poor people among middle class people and it makes poor beneficiaries feel marginalized, isolated from the rest of the society.

Waiting in lines has another consequence too. Ruken, 25, who has 4 children, forcing a smile on her face stating "We have been waiting in a line since 6 a.m. to get our *cocuk parasi* (child money). I have no idea about the amount of money I will get or the amount of time I will have to wait. Tell Erdoğan (Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan) to fix this situation. You ask what the poverty is. I'll tell you. Poverty is waiting, waiting along for all of your life." Ruken is one of the hundreds of poor Kurdish women who waited in front of Surici Post Office in Diyarbakır to benefit from CCTs. Ruken's

understanding of poverty, reminded me of Javier Auyero's piece (2012) titled *Patients of the State*, which is an ethnographic account of poor people's waiting while applying, obtaining, benefiting from social assistance. Auyero describes poor people's experiences waiting in the welfare office as a site of "*intense sociability amidst pervasive uncertainty*". This vertical exchange between the poor and the state "persuades the destitute of the need to be patient, thus conveys the implicit state request to become compliant clients" (Auyero, 2012). Therefore, waiting in lines, to be exposed to discrimination while getting a benefit, regular house checks conducted by poor skilled civil service staff, they all contribute to enhance not feelings of social inclusion but contrary, of social exclusion of beneficiaries of CCTs, both in the West and in the East. On that matter, it doesn't matter whether you are Kurdish or Roma. One of the beneficiaries summarizes the point very succinctly by saying "we feel like we keep taking never ending exam. We are the student and the state is the teacher. We can't fail so we need to prove we are poor enough, we have to wait in lines, etc."

CCT in Turkey is implemented in a way following centralized model, which means that there is no role for local government and/or non-governmental organizations. Therefore, their impact on social inclusion stays limited. After a while, it turns out to be a routine for a beneficiary to go, wait in line and get the money. They never talked about socializing with other beneficiaries by attending information seminar together or even talking each other. The only thing on their mind is to get the money and go back home, where they leave their kids.

### 5.3.2. Perceiving CCT As a Social Right or a Reward ignited Appreciation?

The way in which social assistance provided by the state is presented to the poor people - as a reward or as a social right - is crucial. It is another base of enhancing citizenship and plays significant role in shaping the perceptions of the poor. When the CCT provider adopts a right-based approach in terms of discourse and in practice, poor people's notions of their own rights and entitlements is strengthened. If the government defines providing the CCT as a philanthropic, charity-minded action, then it would diminish poor people's standing in society, at least in their eyes, and increase their dependency.

To examine whether participation into the CCT program heighten their awareness about right-based social policy, first we need to define what we mean by the term. In the World Bank's website, right-based social policy should incorporate at least two elements:

“1.The definition and widespread communication of rights, entitlements and standards which enable citizens to hold public policy makers and providers to account for the delivery of social policy.

2. The availability of mechanisms of redress where citizens can go if they are unable to enjoy specified entitlements or social minimums.”<sup>172</sup>

Therefore, based on the definition above, right-based social policy making should provide an access to the services on the basis of equal membership in the society and creates entitlement that replaces dependency and frees the beneficiary from any reciprocal, vertical relationship.

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<sup>172</sup><http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEV/0,,contentMDK:21504953~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:3177395,00.html>, accessed on March 30, 2013.

Drawing on my fieldwork experience and interviews that I conducted, I conclude that the construal of this policy by two ethnic groups, Kurdish and Roma, is somewhat different. Moreover, intra group, have different perceptions on whether they deserve it as their social right or whether they evaluate it as charity and express their appreciation due to their identity, their previous experiences with the state, level of conservatism and politicization. The Turkish state's biased, intolerant and violent policies towards Kurdish people have had a decisive influence in shaping the current relations between Kurds and the Turkish state. The long denial of Kurdish identity, forbidding Kurdish names and the language, not recognizing them as a minority group and conflict between Turkish army and PKK and all the repressive and violence politicized the Kurdish community throughout the years. Therefore, it is not surprising to find out that when interviewing with Kurdish beneficiaries, they are more politicized and mobilized around their nationalistic claims, compared to Roma beneficiaries.

While politicized Kurdish beneficiaries, especially Kurdish IDPs perceive getting CCTs as their social right that state need to provide, most of the Roma beneficiaries' approach is somehow different, appreciating what the AKP is giving them. This is understandable taking into account Kurdish people experiences with the state. In one of the interview with a Kurdish woman, whose husband is in the jail for being a member of PKK, she was saying, "Of course, the state has to give us this cash transfer benefit, this is our right to have it. The state has to look after us."<sup>173</sup> The mother of 4 children, Mumine, 31 years old and living in the same neighborhood and supporter of Kurdish nationalism

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<sup>173</sup> Interview with the CCT beneficiary in Fatihpaşa neighborhood, October 2011.



also said that getting cash transfer is their right. However, she has different reasoning for this. She added “They are giving this benefit since we are Kurds. They try to get our votes”. Hasan, who is beneficiary of CCTs for more than 6 years, and supporter of AKP, also believe that this is their right to have it, this time he added “of course Prime Minister Erdoğan should transfer this cash. Without Kurdish people, how could he win the elections?” Even he is the supporter of AKP, he didn’t appreciate or assess them as rewards, rather necessity that AKP has to fulfill.

However, in the Roma neighborhood, they seem to assess them with appreciation and don’t use the “This is my right” rhetoric. They made comparison with previous governments and say “God bless Erdoğan! He is offering every social benefits with an ease”. More or less, the same frame is repeated with different wordings such as “Thanks to Erdoğan! Even we are poor, he knows that we are worshipping the same God” or “God bless him. He supports us with child money. He has done everything, he was shouting on TV screens. How can I do wrong to them?”

### **5.3.3. Empowering Women?**

The problem of poverty is indeed more severe for women, given the impact of patriarchy and their unequal access to social and economic resources. Hence, development specialists, government and public policy makers have applauded CCTs for locating woman at the center of tackling household poverty. CCTs are given to families under poverty line and directly to the woman in the family. The website of General Directorate explicitly states that the purpose of giving cash transfers to the mother of the

family is to empower woman's status both in family and society.<sup>174</sup> Along with the website, Prime Minister Erdoğan also repeated the importance and possible contribution of giving money directly to mothers by saying "Do you know why we deposit the money in mother's bank account? We know that mother's tenderness and compassion to their children is much more different and also more intense than father's affection to their child."<sup>175</sup>

During AKP era, women have been at the center of discussions about social policy. Politicians' actions, based on the assumption that the woman is the main caregiver of the family, have helped to reinforce the existing established gender inequalities. However, the impact of this new poverty-reduction strategy on poor women's political and social life is still understudied (Yilmaz, 2012; Molyneux, 2009). The patriarchal family structure that is still predominant in Turkey excludes women from political and social participation into the society. Therefore an academic investigation on the gender dimension of "development" policy is necessary. Does transferring cash directly to women on certain conditions reinforce familial dependency and the gender division of labor in the domestic sphere? Does it foster their social inclusion into the society and elevate their social status in the family?

I'm not expecting sudden change in women status in the society, which has unequal relations between spouses, the problem especially pronounced in patriarchal societies. What I study here is what the women is going through, her experiences, feelings during the process, and how the meaning she attaches to her experience. Based

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<sup>174</sup> <http://www.svdgm.gov.tr/tr> accessed on December 2013.

<sup>175</sup> <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haber/4764/3-sartli-nakit-transferleri-konferansi-basbakan-Erdoğan-dun-krizlerin-pence> accessed on December 2013.

on my observations in both localities, the woman is the one, who is dealing with the whole process and making communications with civil servant officials, health providers, school administrators, teachers, officials in the post offices, where they take their money from, etc.

Both Kurdish and Roma women that I interviewed argue that giving money directly to them gives them some autonomy in the household, at least strengthens their position as a mother and gives them some voice on the allocation of resources within the household economy, they are the ones who decide how to spend the CCT money. The designers of the CCT program suggest that women are much more likely to spend this additional money on their children's needs and family needs, such as kitchen costs, rather than personal consumption than men<sup>176</sup>. Indeed, both Roma and Kurdish women strongly endorsed it and the survey conducted with women beneficiaries also confirmed that 81 per cent of the beneficiaries find transferring cash to women positive and empowering (Yilmaz, 2012). The experts, parliamentarians from the Kurdish region also confirm that even the amount of the money is limited; it has developed self-consciousness among Kurdish women that they never experienced throughout their life.<sup>177</sup> This is the first time they became aware of economic incentives. A Kurdish parliamentarian woman added "Women didn't want their spouses to be with them while they were voting. After these

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<sup>176</sup> Michelle Adato, Benedicte de la Briere, Dubravka Mindex and Agnes Quisumbing. The Impact of Progresá on Women's Status and Intrahousehold Relations. Final Report. Washington, DC: International Food Research Policy Research Institute. 2000.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Leyla Zana, former Kurdish parliamentarian, *Hürriyet*, June 14, 2012.

incentives, it is now vice versa, men don't want women to be with them in case women may persuade them to change their mind.”<sup>178</sup>

Women are the ones, who take care of the whole process, such as application to the CCT, they are the ones who deal with the civil service staff who pay a visit to the houses to check whether they are telling the truth about its condition, belongings in the house, etc. This also can be counted as a new thing for a poor woman to get communication with the civil servant staff, have a bank account, go to the bank, health centers by herself.

Men and women are playing different roles in benefiting from poverty-relief programs. The conditions that should be met become a burden only on woman. Therefore, inequality that derives from gender roles is reproduced again, this time through the share of labor while benefiting from a poverty-relief program. Since the woman gets the payment, they are the main responsible person to meet the conditions. Along with the program, the father of the family is located only as a person who meets eligibility criteria by being unemployed. After that stage, men don't seem to have any interest or responsibility for the working of the program. However, for the beneficiary women that already heavily burdened with the housework, benefiting from the program imposes extra obligations. Orloff (2010), who is the leading scholar on gender-based welfare regimes, shows that even limited social programs that target women serve to reinforce stereotypes about women's domestic role in society, especially since the

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

eligibility criteria of these programs is usually based either on the woman's familial role or marital status.

Munire, 29, with five children complained about the increase in the responsibilities that the CCT brings. She needs to go a health check-up with her daughter once in every 6 months and she has nobody to leave other children while paying a visit to health center. And in most of the cases, one needs to take a vehicle to go to the health center, which constitutes significant amount of money for those people. "I'm always thinking of my children when I leave them at home alone and I'm afraid if something goes wrong in the check up process. What if they cut the payment down?" In that case, there is no difference at all between Roma and Kurdish woman beneficiary; their anxieties are similar. Since beneficiaries don't get information on the situations when there would be a cut or total loss of CCT money, they look anxious when they are talking about conditionalities. There is no scheduled informational meeting that women beneficiaries should attend. Contrary to the Turkish case, health information forms an integral part of the CCT program in Latin American countries. Women beneficiaries of CCT program in those countries benefit directly from reproductive healthcare and improved obstetrical. However, in Turkey, many interviewees asked my advise about birth control as an educated woman, even though they paid regular visits to health centers.

In some of the Latin America countries, such as Nicaragua, El Salvador the program is designed in a way to provide as much information as possible to the women, who didn't use to communicate with the state officials and were not out of the house that often. A woman called *promotora* provides the key link in the communication system

between the office and the beneficiary. The inclusion of *promotora* is design feature of Progres<sup>179</sup>. They act as community liaison, however there is no such role in Turkey. The *promotora* is elected by beneficiaries and represented 20 women. The group members travel together to municipal offices to receive their payments. Another role for *promotora* is provision of guide to women to buy a right food from the market. They only work for CCT program and they would be one who could read and write, articulate when dealing with bureaucracy and authorities. The role of *promotora* is essential to create a group feeling, an identity that the women, who shared the same problems get together and it may trigger their social inclusion into the society. However, under Turkish context, the design of the program individualized the all process and the program doesn't have an impact on creating community feeling.

What I understand from empowerment is a true increase in the women's equality or autonomy in the house. However the design of the CCT program is not targeting elevation of this generation of women status. Rather it is meant to make an investment on second generation of girls, who made to the school by the help of the CCT program. The CCT is making investment on girls' attendance to secondary and high school that's why incentives to keep girls in school are higher than those for the boys. This is a good opportunity, which broadens girls' opportunities in their future, however for their mothers, who secure these improvements for their girls by applying to the program, meeting the conditions, the program doesn't offer opportunities that elevate women's status in the society.

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<sup>179</sup> Interview with Terry Roopnaire, one of the author of 1<sup>st</sup> Impact Evaluation Report of Turkish CCTs. Conducted by Gokce Baykal and Mine Tafolar, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Overall, I find the picture somewhat more mixed. On the one hand, it seems that CCTs do not increase women's equality in the house; on the contrary: they reproduce unequal gender roles. On the other hand, the program strengthens women as mothers, caregivers and increases their authority in the household economy, which boosts their self-esteem. However, their answers to the question of why they find transferring cash to women empowering, reveal that the CCT program is consolidating the status of the woman as caregiver, a person responsible for unpaid housework, and "sacred" mother, thus the roles in which patriarchal societal order routinely locates women. The answers included: "men doesn't know the need of the house," "men can't take care of children as mothers can," "mothers sacrifice more than fathers," "women are more fond of their house and children than men do," etc.<sup>180</sup>

Exogenous factors, such as political environment, political will also have an impact on social programs' ability to empower women. Prime Minister Erdoğan has repeatedly described ideal image of Turkish family with three children in numerous conferences and his continued reiteration of this vision is indicative of the state's outlook on women by linking the status of women with maternal roles and familial duties, not as individual citizens in the society. This also situates women outside of labor market, which is also explicit in the reports showing the female labor force participation level in Turkey is currently very low, at 27%, compared with the OECD countries' average of 61%.<sup>181</sup> According to the World Economic Forum's 2013 Global Gender Gap Report,

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<sup>180</sup> Interviews with women beneficiaries of CCT program, both Roma and Kurdish women, September-October 2011.

<sup>181</sup> Arzu Uraz, Meltem Aran, Muserref Husamoglu, Dilek Okkali Sanalmis, Sinem Capar. "Recent Trends in Female Labor Force Participation in Turkey", Working Paper Number 2, Welfare and Social Policy

Turkey ranks 120 out of 136 countries in terms of the gender gap between men and women.<sup>182</sup> Conservatism, persisting family attitudes, locating women outside labor market, limiting realms to unpaid housework, such as taking care of children, dealing responsibilities of the house and children by herself perpetuate women's economic and social disempowerment and without true drives for women, the prospects for impacts of CCTs will remain limited.

#### **5.4. CCTs and its Potential to Push for Clientelism?**

While there are strong reasons to see CCT program as different from other social policy programs, as it is more transparent, less arbitrary, relies on a discretionary method of allocating benefits, and potentially, at least, contributes to social citizenship, it does however have a potential of becoming a mechanism fostering clientelistic dynamics. Distributing benefits to poor constituencies in exchange for their political support have always provided appealing for politicians. In this study, I define clientelism as “the distribution of resources (or promise of) by political office holders or political candidates in exchange for political support, primarily-although not exclusively- in the form of vote” (Gay 1990, 648; Auyero, Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Magaloni, Díaz-Cayeros and Estévez, 2007; Stokes, 2007). Indeed, political clientelism is undoubtedly asymmetrical, vertical and reciprocal form of political control of poor constituencies upon their support

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Analytical Work Program, Ankara, March 2010.

<sup>182</sup> The Global Gender Gap Report World Economic Forum (2013) [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GenderGap\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf) *The Global Gender Gap Report*, introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006, provides a framework for capturing the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities around the world. The index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education- and health-based criteria and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparison across regions and income groups and over time.



and subordination (Muno, 2010; Fox, 1994). On that end, it is a contradiction to the basic notions of citizenship, which is free from personal, discretionary and arbitrary rewards, which eliminate entitlements of the poor citizen.

In the case of CCTs, if it is distributed in a transparent way according to a set of official criteria and conditions that shape the actual distribution of the transfers, is based on a clearly specified scoring formula, and has no role for brokers or mediators, the social assistance programs can be seen as right-based institution that can improve sense of social citizenship. Otherwise, there is a potential on having more negative and contradictory impacts on constructing and/or strengthening citizenship of the poor, while increasing their dependency on patronage networks.

During my fieldwork, semi-structured interviews include certain questions for unpacking the issue of clientelism. First of all, there should be a broker, someone who is acting as intermediary in allocating the benefit, which provides unequal access to a social program. If there is any role given to a broker, which is well known figure in political clientelism, then, there is probability of unequal distribution of resources, which unleashed factors that contribute to strengthening social citizenship but contrary open a door for political distortion. *How beneficiaries become aware of the program and whether there is anybody help them out during the process* are the two related questions, which helps us to determine the possibility of brokerage.

Second set of questions targeting to unpack the issue of misinformation about the conditions is the requirements of the program, which have an impact on the perceptions of the beneficiaries. The answers towards *how well they are informed about the program' eligibility criteria and conditions* will help us to determine whether beneficiaries know

the conditions and if they don't fulfill the conditions, they will be out of a programmatic social policy. The other scenario, if they mention the impact of political factors like supporting the incumbent make them to stay in the system, will give us leverage to conclude that based on perceptions' of beneficiaries, CCTs give way to further clientelism.

Third set of questions is designed to find out *whom they give credit to*. This question is crucial to understand what the beneficiaries think about the source of the program, which may reinforce attitudes more typically associated with clientelism. Based on my interviews with the beneficiaries, I observed that the rhetoric of AKP, especially Prime Minister Erdoğan's, on social services has shaped beneficiaries' perceptions towards the program. That's why I will also investigate how the Prime Minister frames the program and his way of framing, the language he is using, does have an impact on beneficiaries' perceptions of to whom they give credit to.

These questions are indicators of showing whether the CCT program help the poor beneficiaries release from the "politics as usual" that is recurrent theme when the case is about social assistance programs in Turkey. By asking these questions to both Roma and Kurdish people, I try to figure out whether the program serves to reinforce attitudes related to clientelism and combining the way of implementation of the program with the insights from the beneficiaries will definitely give us a clear picture on to figure it out. Thus, based on evidence from fieldwork, I will go one by one to investigate each question above.

#### **5.4.1. How do they become aware of the program? Any help from the outside?**

The channel of information for having an access to a social assistance program is an important indicator of finding out the probability of involvement of the brokerage into the process, which may make the CCT program discretionary, arbitrary and clientelistic. Based on the interviews I conducted with both Kurdish and Roma beneficiaries; social networks play very important role in notifying the existence of the cash transfer program to poor families. The poor people themselves serve as an information releaser. After being asked the source of the information, the quote is one of the most repeated one frequently followed by laughter: “Everybody is poor in this neighborhood. If somebody tells that the state is giving something, there is no chance not to be informed about who is giving what and where you can get it. If it is given to one of us, others will be informed within a minute. At the end of the day, we are all poor.”<sup>183</sup>

The outcomes of a very recent survey on CCTs conducted by Ministry of Family and Social Policy also confirms that approximately 40 per cent of beneficiaries report that they have heard CCT from their neighbors. The rest of the population has indicated relatives, school/teachers, and health staff as main source of information.<sup>184</sup> Media is another source of information that is also mentioned but less often compared to social networks throughout my interviews. During the house visits, it is observed that most of the poor household own television. When they are asked about the source of information, they mention television as source of information by saying “Prime Minister on TV says

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<sup>183</sup> Interviews with CCT beneficiaries, Fall 2011.

<sup>184</sup> Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Impact of Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Turkey Project Report, December 2013, Ankara, p.32.

we will be given *child money*<sup>185</sup>”.<sup>186</sup> Another one added “but with a condition: if we make 3 children. Our Prime Minister on TV said every family need to have at least 3 children”.<sup>187</sup>

It is quite surprising point that none of the respondents indicate “brokers” and “*muhtar*” (neighborhood elected official) as a main source of information as it is expected when the case is about allocating social assistance in poor neighborhoods. Actually, it can be thought that people, who receive benefits, may be reluctant to acknowledge the role of brokers. Therefore, during face-to-face interviews, this question is asked from several different ways. However, none of the beneficiaries assign any role to brokers either as a source of information or give them credit making them CCT beneficiaries. On the other side, they verify that “brokers” may help them to have an access to in-kind, not regular benefits, such as bag of coal, food aid, clothes, and other materials allocated by local municipalities. And also brokers are still given credit for playing of an intermediary role to provide an access to temporary, seasonal jobs.

There is also a general belief in the society that *muhtar* also plays an important role as a source of information and also give privilege to the poor people who they know by easing their access to social benefits. Every *mahalle* (neighborhood) has *muhtar* and they are elected during local elections, however they are independent candidates, no official links with any political party. They know the neighborhood very well and besides handling registration of residents, etc. they also prepare and provide *fakirlik kagidi*

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<sup>185</sup> Şartlı Nakit Transferi (Conditional Cash Transfer) is widely known as “child money” or “school money” among the poor household.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with CCT beneficiary in Tekirdağ, October 2011

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

(document certifying poverty), which is necessary document to apply for Social Solidarity Fund to provide assistance. However, in the case of CCT, the officials in funds don't request for *fakirlik kagidi*. Therefore, based on interviews that I conducted with muhtars in 5 different *mahalle* confirm that they don't have any function in providing access to CCT programs and beneficiaries also don't indicate *muhtars* as one of the source of information about CCT programs.

In Kurdish neighborhoods, another source of finding out CCT program is local municipalities, which is administered by Kurdish Party, BDP. Some of the beneficiaries indicated BDP as a source of information. Hevin, 32 year old with 5 kids echoed voices of some other Kurdish women by saying “When we pay a visit to our municipality center asking for bag of coal, food packages, etc. we are informed that *Kaymakamlık* is giving child money and it is our right to have it. Then municipality directs us to SYDVs”.<sup>188</sup> However, none of the beneficiaries mentioned a political candidate or local politician had ever talked them to inform about benefit and helped them to get in. The people they refer to are civil servants working in municipalities, who are working in social services department. There is no difference between Kurdish and Roma beneficiaries' experiences are observed on that matter. The quote above explicitly summarized this resemblance “At the end of the day, we are all poor”.

#### **5.4.2. How well they are informed about the program' eligibility criteria and conditions?**

Based on the findings of quantitative assessment (Ahmed et al, 2006) and

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<sup>188</sup> Interview with CCT beneficiary, Benusen neighborhood, October 2011.

qualitative and anthropological study (Adato et al, 2007) conducted by IFPRI via AGRIN Research Company, beneficiaries of cash transfers have very little information about the eligibility criteria and selection process. 91 per cent of the education beneficiaries and 92 per cent of health care beneficiaries of the program knows little to no knowledge about the programs' eligibility criteria (Adato et al., 2007:46). The recent survey conducted by Ministry of Family and Social Policy also confirms low level of awareness regarding the structure, both conditions and eligibility criteria, of the CCT program among the beneficiaries.<sup>189</sup> When we compared two surveys' findings on awareness of conditions, the findings are similar even former survey was conducted in 2006, the latter one was in 2012. Even with the time lapse between the two surveys, the findings are telling us that there are problems with letting people know about the conditions of the program, which may have created a room for political manipulation in beneficiaries' minds.

When compared with Latin American cases, the major reason for not having sufficient information is the lack of information sessions about the program. Indeed, experts at headquarter also confirm the necessity of information sessions. Their legitimization is based on the increasing number of beneficiaries, which makes it impossible to find a venue to have these sessions. And also lack of personnel is another contributing factor.<sup>190</sup> However, in Latin America, the birthplace of CCTs, there is a regular informative seminar on the conditions, eligibility criteria, and application procedure of the cash transfers. Furthermore, informative health talks are one condition of getting benefits in Mexico (Handa and Davis, 2006). Since the applicants and

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<sup>189</sup> Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Impact of Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Turkey Project Report, December 2013, Ankara, p.31.

<sup>190</sup> Interview with Gamze Torun at SYDGM, October 2011.

beneficiaries don't have information about how the CCTs are regulated, there is quite a tension between the foundation officials and the poor people. Officials are considered to be the *access controllers*. As local official said: "Once they tried to beat me when I was going back to home. They thought that I'm the one who let them be excluded from the program. I'm a regular guy trying to verify whether they are telling the truth by making regular house visits."<sup>191</sup> An official, who was accused of being a "discriminatory" against Kurdish people, also raised another point. The official added that: "There was a young couple immigrated from Diyarbakır (located in Eastern part of Turkey and populated by Kurdish people). They don't have kids but they made an application to CCT program. When they found out that they are not eligible, they accused our employee of being biased against Kurdish people."<sup>192</sup>

There is also no difference between Kurdish and Roma neighborhoods on that matter. None of these two groups seemed to be more informed than the other. Most of the beneficiaries that I interviewed are illiterate and that may be another cause for unawareness of program's conditions. The brochures about the program or other materials don't help them to learn more about the CCT or the process. In most of the houses, children fill the application forms and deal with the process of getting social assistance. This process makes the children of the house as head of household, who "make the social work." Therefore, mother and father of the house has no idea in most cases, when they need to submit the application forms, since they are illiterate, they told their experiences about discrimination situations in the Social Solidarity Foundations.

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<sup>191</sup> Interview with SYDV official in Malkara, September 2011.

<sup>192</sup> Interview with SYDV in Malkara, September 2011.

Raziye, a Roma woman, stated, “There is no need to humiliate us because we are poor. We didn’t prefer to be in that situation. The personnel in Foundation is trying to get rid of us and didn’t talk much. They thought that we couldn’t understand what they told us. Actually, we can. We are human beings in the end.”<sup>193</sup> On the other hand, the number of civil servant staff is not sufficient at all and limited number of staff couldn’t deal with the increasing number of applicants and they don’t have time to provide information sessions to the beneficiaries.

During the interviews, people offered variety of answers to the question of awareness of conditions. None of the responses of participants of the CCT program involved political factors. However, the lack of information may lead to beneficiaries thinking of clientelistic relations, especially in cases of cut off their benefits.

#### **5.4.3. Whom they give credit to?**

The lack of information about the conditions and eligibility criteria also leads to misunderstandings about *who to blame* and *whom they give credit to*. If their benefits are cut off due to not meeting the conditions, their lack of awareness about the program basic conditions may make them think about political factors are on the play. It is also equally important to find out *whom they give credit to*. It may not lead to clientelism basically and we can think about it as a legitimate process of people’s willingness to reward the political party and/or leader for supporting them. Based on the interviews with people who used to be beneficiaries, I concluded that they tend to see local civil servants as the culprits when who can remove them from the CCT program. For example, one previous

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with CCT beneficiary in Malkara, September 2011.



beneficiary say “Tayyip (Prime Minister) says “go and get your money” but *kaymakamlik*<sup>194</sup> (district governor) don’t lend us.”<sup>195</sup> After asking couple of questions, it becomes apparent that the reason behind cutting out of the program is the beneficiary’s son quit the school recently.

During the interviews conducted both in Roma and Kurdish neighborhoods, the majority of the program participants credited Prime Minister Erdoğan as the deliverer of the program. Neither government, nor a local mayor or President is given a credit. Some of them also mention that CCT is allocated by state. When I asked what they mean by state, it is either AKP or Prime Minister Erdoğan. Most people noted that they knew who was giving this benefit since they heard Erdoğan’s speech on TV saying “We are delivering 30 and 35 Turkish liras to boys and girls who attend primary school, respectively. You can go and get this benefit from your SYDV. We don’t forget our poor brothers.” In the poor neighborhoods, conditions of the houses are predictable, they don’t have any luxury goods but I have never been into a house located in those poor neighborhoods lacking a TV. Each house has one. Media is very dependable source of information for poor families and TV is always on.

Actually, the program brochures also give a signal to the poor that Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan is the leading figure and making the allocations. In the first page of the brochure, there is a picture of Prime Minister (Figure 17) saying “. We are always ready to lend our hand to our most needy people, especially women and children.” In the Latin American CCT brochures, there is nothing that one can relate to the political parties in

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<sup>194</sup> Each SYDV is working under its own district governorship. That’s why most of the beneficiaries use the term *kaymakamlik* when referring to SYDVs.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with CCT beneficiary in Malkara, October 2011.

their advertising the program. This may create a venue for political distortions, especially in a country like Turkey, where people have a memory of clientelism.



**Figure 17.** A section from the CCT brochure.

The popularity of Prime Minister Erdoğan is undeniable among poor neighborhoods and the first reaction among many people to the question of which they give credit to be “Tayyip Erdoğan is a devout Muslim and according to our religion, helping the poor is a good deed. God bless him!” One of the Roma men with 3 children noted: “I am pro-Erdoğan because he has supplied “children money.” For years, no one in the government offered us anything. Erdoğan was the first.”<sup>196</sup>

The AKP’s popularity, especially that of its leader, Prime Minister Erdoğan, is very high particularly between both Kurdish and Roma women. One local volunteer working in *Gunisigi Store*, a local government association, which donates second hand

<sup>196</sup> Interview with CCT beneficiary in Malkara, September 2011.

clothing to the needy, shared the observations she had during the elections. “If a woman wants to vote for AKP party, they want to cast their vote alone, I mean without their husband’s knowledge. Many of them do so.”<sup>197</sup> In Roma neighborhoods, it is also common to hear comments like, “I love Erdoğan like my father,” or “He is the father of the poor,” or, “By the way, he looks like my beloved uncle.” Remziye, who gets benefit from CCT and state’s social assistance programs, says, “I can’t deny the assistance AKP provides. I can’t betray Erdoğan.” She added without any hesitation “He is also the one who named us “my Roma citizen”, not Gypsies. None of the previous politicians honored us in the way he did. God bless him!”

Along with people fond of Erdoğan, when they were asked which party they would support and in any how if the social assistance plays a role, majority of people denied the impact of social assistance on the color of their vote. However, it is clear from the interviews that they really appreciate the way Erdoğan “protects the poor in contrast to any other previous government.” When the discussion is about politics, elections, women go silent and don’t seem to have any interest in talking politics. The reaction of most women about the elections is “Who cares us? They are coming to our doors from elections to elections.” However, when they are talking about Erdoğan, they talked about him as a TV figure, as a charismatic man, not a politician. Men have more willingness to talk about politics since they socialize in coffee houses, where politics and football games are the two main topics that people talk a lot on. However, women get together in houses, talking mostly about their children, their husbands, and their poverty, social benefits.

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<sup>197</sup> Interview with a volunteer working in Gunisigi Store, which provides second hand clothes to the poor in Diyarbakir, November 2011.

Indeed, they are the one who apply and deal with all the stages of CCT as well. It is very parallel to Auyero's findings on Argentina about the poor people "men do politics, women do social work" (p.139).

The rhetoric that Erdoğan is using on TV or during the election speeches also furthers the response that beneficiaries give credit. Some of the quotes from his election speeches:

"What will happen next? Hear our voice Anatolia! If you don't have information about CCT, go and get your benefit from your SYDV."<sup>198</sup>

"We don't forget our poor brothers. They can benefit from CCTs free from the number of children they have."<sup>199</sup>

"We are giving 28 Turkish liras for boys and 39 Turkish Liras for girls, who attend middle school. If the poor mothers don't know about this benefit, they can go and get their money."<sup>200</sup>

Erdoğan's speeches instruct poor people to think that this is Erdoğan himself who is giving this money, and anybody that feel themselves poor can get that money. There is no indication of conditionality, eligibility so this may lead-actually it leads people think that if they don't get money, this is not about the program's criteria but because *kaymakamlik*, solidarity foundation's fault. The quote from one Roma beneficiary summarizes it well: "We get direct information from Erdoğan. He said make three children and you will get the money. It is based on luck whether you get it or not because *kaymakamlik* don't lend the money but God Bless Erdoğan, we are getting the money, this is not *kaymakamlik* which lend the money but Tayyip is giving money from government's bank vault."<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> "Basbakan Erdoğan'dan 3 mujde", *Hürriyet*, December 28, 2010.

<sup>199</sup> "Erdoğan Hakkari'de", *Hürriyet*, November 2, 2008.

<sup>200</sup> "Egitimde Kurtulus Savasi", *Hürriyet*, September 12, 2005.

<sup>201</sup> Interview with a CCT beneficiary in Malkara, September 2011.

## 5.5. Discussion

Throughout this chapter, I tried to determine whether benefiting from CCT program increases social inclusion and empowers the poor or reinforces vertical, unequal relations between the beneficiary and the provider that may create a sense of appreciation and obligation rather than an understanding that such form assistance is the right a poor person is entitled to as a citizen. I examined these questions by focusing on two different minority groups, Roma and Kurdish people in Turkey. Kurdish people have uneasy relations with the state, on the other hand, Roma people don't have problematic relationship with the state, not because they are treated very well by state but they try to remain outside of state's control and jurisdiction. It is clear in the narratives they provided while responding to questions throughout the interviews. It is a common experience, it seems, as their accounts of the CCT program's impact on them are alike.

First of all, the implementation of the program doesn't lead to social inclusion of beneficiaries since it is centralized and lack of civil society involvement and the program requirements don't demand active participation of the poor people. There is no condition within the CCT program that asks for people's participation in any specific activities that would help to build civil society. Rather, participants of the program complained about discrimination during the application procedure and also allocation time. They complained about waiting in lines, obscurities about the timing of the deposit during the interviews however they didn't talk about taking any action against.

Women's central role in CCTs has potential to make contribution to "empowerment of women". Poor eligible women have bank accounts and extra income, which they spend for their children or kitchen expenses for the first time in their life.

Most of the beneficiaries report that it increases women's decision making power within their households, at least they are the one who spend the cash transfer money. This is more common in the families, where women have a voice. However, we can't talk about transformative effect of CCT on women empowerment since the amount of money is so limited that it doesn't create meaningful difference on household budget. The program also doesn't demand active participation of women into the society. It is valid for both Roma and Kurdish women.

Another indicator of heightening of citizenship that I examined is whether the cash transfer creates sense of entitlement that replaces dependency with a reliable social benefit. The chronological sequence of story of citizenship in developing countries is different compared to Western context. In England, for example, civil rights came first, then political and social ones. However, in developing countries context, they are aware of their political rights but citizens don't have long experience with civil and social rights. In my view, this has also an impact on poor people's perceptions on social benefits, even the one like CCT, which is allocated in a more programmatic way. Especially among Roma communities, majority of them perceive CCTs with a sense of appreciation rather than sense of entitlement. They report that CCTs or known as "child money" increases their appreciation to Prime Minister Erdoğan. Prime Minister Erdoğan's speeches and its content targeting poor people during the election times, his picture on CCT program's brochures, his use of monopoly over information by saying "go and get your child money", even he doesn't have power to influence the outcome are the decisive factors that have an impact on beneficiaries' perceptions of "whom they give credit to".

It doesn't lead to clientelism basically and it can be a legitimate process of people's willingness to reward the leader of a political party for supporting them. Actually, when people are asked in public surveys, the main reason behind supporting the incumbent Fujimori in Peru, majority of them in poor neighborhoods pointed out his "public works".<sup>202</sup> However, among Kurdish community, they perceive it as a social entitlement, rather than a reward by an incumbent. Their legitimation is mostly based on state incapacity of creating jobs in the eastern regions and therefore state need to payoff its poor citizens. Their responses are also reflection of uneasy history of Kurdish people with Turkish state.

Summarizing the impact of CCT on creation or strengthening citizenship of the poor, it doesn't create a significant impact on social inclusion, sense of entitlement or women empowerment. However, it doesn't reinforce clientelism either. The beneficiaries lack information about CCT's requirements and eligibility criteria, however none of them mention about political factors behind their cut off from the program or becoming eligible to get the cash transfer. No participation by political brokers was observed in the neighborhoods for getting CCT or none of the people I interviewed talked about the role of some intermediary to get the benefit. In sum, based on my interviews with beneficiaries, I find consistent evidence that CCT program in Turkey provides benefits to the poor people without subjecting them to clientelistic networks, local patrons, brokers, etc. However, it is still weak in increasing participation of poor people into the society, empowering women and create sense of entitlement.

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<sup>202</sup> Kurt Weyland, "The Rise and Decline of Fujimori's Neopopulist Leadership" in Julio F. Carrion eds., *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Peru*, (Penn State University Press, 2006).





## 6. Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the political consequences of CCTs in Turkey. Within the broader range of social assistance programs, CCTs signal new trends in the field of poverty alleviation. Development specialists, government officials, and public policy makers have applauded this program for several reasons. CCTs have been successful, especially in Latin America, the birthplace of CCTs, in eliminating clientelism, a perennial problem in the region. The adoption and implementation of CCTs in Turkey has also promised a major break with the clientelist mechanisms of social assistance schemes of the past.

The design features of CCTs in Turkey have been meticulously shaped through interaction between the World Bank and the coalition government following the 2001 economic crisis. The program was aimed at reaching the poorest six percent of society, the segment most affected by the crisis. Setting a target served the interests of both the World Bank and the Turkish government. On the one hand, by targeting only the most vulnerable, it limited the cost of social expenditures, which aligned with the priorities of the economic adjustment program. At the signature ceremony of the SRMP, Economy Minister Kemal Dervis stated: “One of the state’s most important tasks is to implement a social policy within the framework of the market economy and maintain communal solidarity.”<sup>203</sup> On the other hand, the initiation of a poverty alleviation program with a limited budget was appealing to politicians in the aftermath of the most destructive economic crisis in Turkish history, which brought about the risk of social collapse.

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<sup>203</sup> “The World Bank signs \$500 million loan to Turkey”, Turkish Daily News,

However, the many uncertainties brought about by the crisis and the political risks that were heightened by the mounting social pressures led the coalition government to formulate a programmatic social policy that could tie the hands of any future government seeking to modify the allocations.

Second, the designers of the program from the World Bank team initiated a scoring formula that makes CCTs fundamentally different from the traditional clientelist mechanisms of social assistance provision in Turkey. Law No. 3294 (“Encouraging Social Assistance and Solidarity”) regulates access to any type of social aid in Turkey. The eligibility criteria for a person benefiting from the funds consist of “being in a state of poverty,” but the definitions of the terms “in a state of poverty” and “criteria indicating poverty” are both broad and vague. Although the district committees of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations have the final say in selecting the beneficiaries of the social assistance programs, the scoring formula has eliminated the central role of the committee in deciding who gets what. The committees have limited power in selecting the CCT beneficiaries since the program eligibility threshold is set by the scoring formula. Strengthening the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations and setting up a scoring formula are the two conditions of the disbursement of loan for the CCT program, giving limited room to the coalition partners to determine the technical requirements.

Third, the program invests in two components of human capital: education and health. By improving the health of poor people, and making them more employable in the near future, the poor become less dependent upon and less costly to the state. Although the program targeted six percent of the population, the overall budget of the program constituted only 0.17 percent of GDP. This also increased the appeal of the program both

to the coalition government and to the World Bank. This study on the origins of the adoption of CCTs in Turkey demonstrates how the coalition government and the World Bank complemented each other in pursuing the same policy objectives and ideologies. It also shows that the social and political risks brought about by the financial crisis and the restraints imposed by an international actor, the World Bank, impacted the coalition government's decision making process when negotiating for and adopting a programmatic social policy, which has firmer design features to ensure it is less vulnerable to clientelism.

However, strict regulations of a policy do not guarantee the continuation of the CCT program when the government has changed. Indeed, in Turkey, a country where the executive power is dominant, the cabinet can easily override or loosen the stricter rules of the CCTs for political payoffs, especially after the program began to be financed through the Social Assistance and Solidarity Encouragement Fund (SYDTF) instead of through the World Bank. When the loan period ended in 2006, the program continued to be administered and funded with state resources. This opened opportunities for changes in the operational rules of CCTs that can increase payoffs to the governing party. Indeed, the scoring formula has been revised four times, and the General Directorate of Social Assistances is collaborating with the Research Council of Turkey on a new scoring formula. As of today, being without other social security benefits is one of the primary preconditions of eligibility for the CCT program. The program was also expanded nationwide before its official start day, which coincided with the local elections that took place in March 2004. With the countrywide expansion of the program, the number of

beneficiaries has increased. Whereas the targeted population was around 1 million people, 3 million poor people have benefited from the CCT program by 2009.

Due to easing of the restraints placed by the World Bank, as well as the strong executive power of the single party government and weak political opposition, the CCTs had a greater potential to lean towards clientelism and/or to be dismantled. On top of this, clientelism and corruption have been enduring problems since the founding of Turkey. However, despite more flexible targeting rules fashioned under the single-party AKP government, the program continues to represent a promising attempt to make a transition to a programmatic social policy.

First of all, the AKP found it appealing to maintain the operational rules of the CCT program with minor adjustments, which has led to the expansion of the number of beneficiaries. While the World Bank set the technical requirements, it left open the door for Turkey to play around with the scoring formula as long as the budget allows, so that the government can change the cutoff line, without making the program clientelistic. Therefore, the number of beneficiaries has increased while the cost for the government has remained the same, since the CCT program does not require major distribution amounts. Second, Turkey's experience with successive economic crises has made it explicit that the discretionary control of funds and clientelist social policies are no longer possible under the IMF's fiscal program.

Third, being aware of the program's positive impacts through the impact evaluation reports, the AKP saw the value of the CCT program. The program was so well established—having served 2 million children at school and been quite popular with the recipients—that there would have been a strong political backlash had the party decided

to drop it. On the one hand, Turkish CCTs could be accommodated by the AKP due to its limited budget needs, which complies with the economic adjustment programs and the AKP's support for the "small state" argument. On the other hand, the AKP, especially Prime Minister Erdoğan, has been campaigning on social programs, targeting the education of children and women. In the end, it is a program with low costs for the government but a high political return on investment.

The implementation of CCTs in the field does not follow the strict operational rules of the program. During my fieldwork, I observed that various poverty alleviation programs targeting the poor and diverse development projects are on the ground along with the CCTs in Diyarbakır, which is populated by Kurdish people. This observation is also complemented by statistics showing that the amount of CCTs allocated to districts populated by Kurds has significantly increased under AKP rule. The Kurdish people are the main ethnic minority in the country, and have had uneasy relations with the state throughout history. However, the practices of the AKP government regarding poverty relief suggest that courting this minority group is a central part of the party's political strategy for gaining their electoral support.

Drawing on an original dataset of CCT allocations between 2004 and 2008, I ask whether the government allocates CCT money according to the socioeconomic development level alone, or whether it is distributed to politically mobilize poor Kurdish people in Turkey. Testing this argument was challenging since it might very well be the case that the high poverty levels in Kurdish districts are responsible for the disproportionate distribution of cash transfers.

In an attempt to address the high correlation between the poverty level and the Kurdish population effect, I added matching to my model by comparing two regions, the Western Black Sea region and Central East Anatolia, which have almost identically high poverty rates. Only the latter is home to a large Kurdish population. I find that even though the socio-economic indicators have a significant effect on the allocation of funds, they have an even greater effect on the distribution of CCTs within the Kurdish districts. The analysis suggests two things: First, the disproportionate distribution of CCTs to the Kurdish districts is a strategy of building up a new voting bloc by soothing widespread disaffection among the Kurdish population. Second, Kurdish voters have been playing an integral and significant role in helping the AKP get their support for the transition to a presidential system.

Regardless of the strict operational rules, CCTs can shape beneficiaries' political and social understandings, their perceptions on social rights and benefits, and their levels of social participation and empowerment. Drawing upon my fieldwork, which consisted of 6 months of research conducted in Malkara, Tekirdağ (with Roma beneficiaries) and Diyarbakır (with Kurdish beneficiaries), I examined whether transferring cash based on certain conditions to the poor enhances their sense of entitlement or produces/reproduces linkages and obligations to reciprocate by supporting the political party that allocates the funds. My research indicated that the program does not have a significant impact on the social inclusion of these two minority groups into the society. Since the program does not demand social participation or active citizenship, which may empower the poor, the CCTs do not have a transformative impact on the beneficiaries' everyday lives. According to my interviews with the beneficiaries, the majority of the recipients lack

information about the program requirements and selection mechanisms. Although the distribution system of the CCTs follows objective and non-clientelist criteria with minor glitches, failure to inform the poor about the details of the program allows Prime Minister Erdoğan to use his monopoly over this information. Most beneficiaries blame the staff working at the SYDVs when they cannot get their money on time, since Erdoğan said “go and get your money” on TV. Amongst the Roma community, Prime Minister Erdoğan is seen as a popular and charismatic leader. His image as the father of the poor and his clientelist rhetoric use reinforces their perception of CCTs with a sense of appreciation rather than a sense of social right. Among the Kurdish community, they perceive it as a social entitlement, rather than a reward by an incumbent. However, this perception is not due to the program’s impact on the empowerment of citizenship, but is legitimized mostly based on the state’s inability to create jobs in the eastern regions, and need to payoff its poor people.

This dissertation presents significant findings, because it is important to understand if the government is politically manipulating the distribution of poverty-reduction funds, especially in a region where income inequality is high and the poor are emerging as an important constituency. I believe research delving into the question of how the government distributes social benefits and how the distribution of these benefits influences the political and social behavior among the poor communities is essential, especially where the political manipulation of social benefits distribution have deleterious impacts on the quality of democracy.

In addition, my dissertation helps to extend the empirical scope of the analysis of CCTs beyond Latin America. There is great variation in how CCTs are designed and

implemented across developing countries. In Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, the CCT programs were designed domestically by national governments; international institution, however, has shaped the programs in Turkey. Whereas in those countries, services are delivered through state and municipal governments in Turkey, the process is much more centralized, with local governments having no role. Since those programs have been in place much longer than the Turkish CCTs, the beneficiaries are better informed about the program requirements, benefits, and resources that fund the cash transfers. Yet, unlike their Latin American counterparts, beneficiaries in Turkey seem to know less about the features of the program, which has led to misunderstandings and misperceptions about its non-political nature.

Cross-country comparisons within Latin America are prevalent in the political science literature, yet there are no studies to date that include the Turkish case. This dissertation serves that end, by offering arguments about the politics of CCTs in Turkey, at both the societal and institutional level.

Studies on the political impacts of these programs on their main target (i.e. the poor) are also limited. This dissertation presents a micro-level analysis of the politics of distribution, whereas the literature has mainly focused on the policies' impacts on electoral behavior. The main drawback of this perspective is that it analytically separates social policy and society into two distinct spheres. However, it is equally important to explore how poverty-alleviation programs influence the perceptions, political thought, and behavior of the public as well as how it shapes/reshapes the relationship between the government and citizens. Experiences with vulnerable populations show that acquiring insights about this social program through semi-structured interviews is not just a



methodological contribution to the existing literature. The impacts of a social policy on beneficiaries may also tell a great deal about the non-electoral dimensions of democratization.

Further academic research on the politics of social policy can contribute to the formulation of better social policies aimed at poor people in developing countries.

## Abbreviations

AÇEV: Mother Child Education Foundation (*Anne ve Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı*)

AGRIN: Agriculture and Agroindustries Engineering Consultancy

AKP: Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*)

ANAP: Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*)

APSA: American Political Science Association

BDP: Peace and Democracy Party (*Baris ve Demokrasi Partisi*)

ÇAÇA: Children Under the Same Roof (*Cocuklar Ayni Cati Altinda*)

CAS: Country Assistance Strategy

CCTs: Conditional Cash Transfers (*Şartlı Nakit Transferi*)

CHP: Republican People' Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*)

CSI: Civil Society Index

ÇYDD: Support for Modern Life Association (*Çagdas Yasami Destekleme Dernegi*)

DEHAP: Democratic People's Party (*Halkin Demokrasi Partisi*)

DPT: State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*)

DSP: Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*)

DTP: Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*)

ENP: Effective Number of Parties

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HDI: Human Development Index

IDPs: Internally Displaced Kurdish People

IFPRI: International Food Policy Research Institute

IMF: International Monetary Fund

KCK: Union of Communities in Kurdistan (*Koma Civakên Kurdistan*)

KEDV: Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (*Kadın Emeğini Değerlendirme Vakfı*)

MHP: Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)

MONE: Ministry of National Education (*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*)

MoSPF: Ministry of Social Policies and Family (*Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı*)

NGOS: Non-governmental Organizations

NSPs: Non-state Providers

NUTS: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

ODTU: Middle East Technical University (*Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi*)

OLS: Ordinary Least Squares

PKK: (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, or Kurdistan Workers' Party*)

PWC: Price Waterhouse Coopers

SED: Socio-economic development level

SGK: Social Security Institution (*Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu*)

SSK: The Organization of Social Security (*Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu*)

SRMP: Social Risk Mitigation Project (*Sosyal Riski Azaltma Projesi*)

SYDGM: General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Genel Müdürlüğü*)

SYDV: Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Vakfı*)

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