



MUSIC AS A TOOL OF PROTEST AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN TURKEY

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2021 Global Teacher Seminar: Global Protests and Social Justice Activism

Speakers

- Danielle is a cultural anthropologist with interests in migration, performance, and the politics of identity. She teaches the Turkish Studies curriculum in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at The Ohio State University, as well as courses in immigration in the Sociology and Political Science departments. Her current research focuses on the 'politics of presence' for Roma ("Gypsies") in Turkey and Turkish migrants in Europe and the United States. Danielle frequently takes advantage of professional development opportunities to improve her teaching and is an advocate of active learning and community engagement.
- Dr. Melinda McClimans is an expert in cross-cultural teamwork and learning. She is especially experienced in teaching and curriculum development for social and cross-cultural topics and global issues. Dr. McClimans has been Assistant Director of OSU's Middle East Studies Center since 2003. She manages a variety of projects with partners in and outside of the university and maintains a network of subject matter experts with whom she produces programs, curricula, and co-authored texts.

Guiding Questions

1. Why might music be an effective tool for encouraging political action and creating solidarity?
2. What are some insights we might gain about Turkish history and culture by learning about the role of music in protest and political activism in Turkey?
3. What comparisons can we make between the role of music in social movements in Turkey and other examples from different places and times?

Turkey: A Brief History

- The Ottoman Empire:
1299-1922
- 1453: Conquest of
Constantinople...
Istanbul



World War I

- The Central Powers: Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire
- Allied powers: Great Britain, Serbia, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, and the United States
- The **Treaty of Sèvres** (10 August 1920)



Treaty of Sèvres

- Included the renunciation of all non-Turkish land that was part of the Ottoman Empire, as well as parts of Turkish land, to the Allied powers
- Eastern Mediterranean land was to be divided, yielding the British Mandate of Palestine and the French Mandate of Syria
- The signatories of the treaty were stripped of their citizenship by the Grand National Assembly led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk
- Ultimately led to the Turkish War of Independence

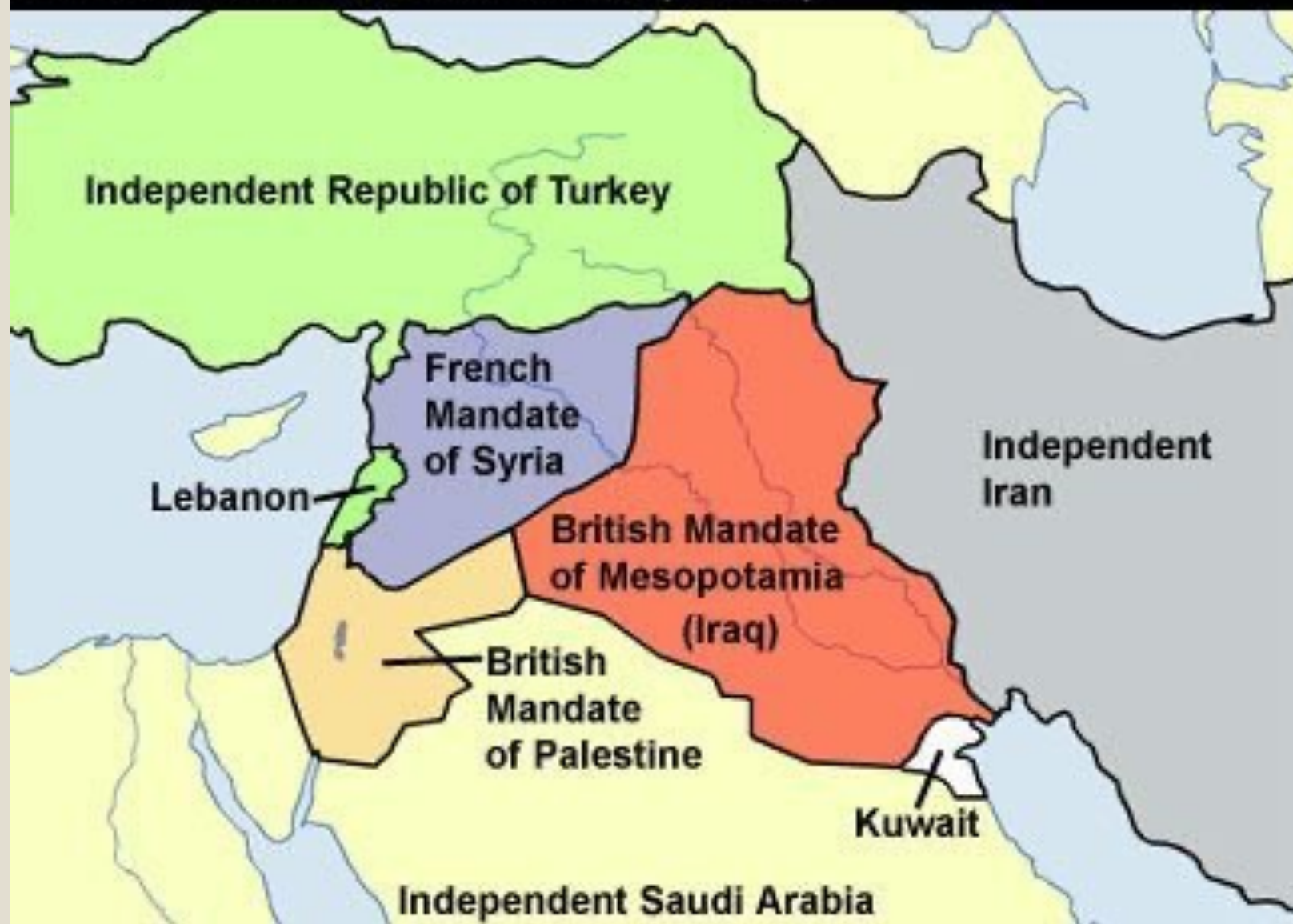


Turkish War of Independence 1919-1923

Treaty of Lausanne

- A peace treaty signed in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1923 that officially settled the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies since the end of WWI
- Defined the borders of the modern Turkish Republic
- Turkey gave up all claims to the remainder of the Ottoman Empire and in return the Allies recognized the sovereignty of the Republic of Turkey
- Provided for the protection of the Greek Orthodox Christian minority in Turkey and the Muslim minority in Greece

Post-WWI Middle East (1923)



Reforms in the Early Turkish Republic

- A series of political, legal, cultural, social, and economic policy changes that were designed to convert the new Republic of Turkey into a secular, modern nation-state
- Central to these reforms was the belief that Turkish society would have to Westernize politically and culturally in order to modernize
- 'Kemalism'



1924-1935

- Abolition of the Caliphate and millet system; adoption of a new Constitution
- **Secularization**
- The Hat Law of 1925
- Language reform (a link to the West)
- Calendar; work week; etc. Even music and dance!
- Educational reforms
- Women's rights (the veil removed)



Secularism

- *Laicism* – creation of a state religion (Sunni Hanefi Islam)
- French model
- Not just separation of religion and state, but state control and administration of religion (Ministry of Religion)
- Equated with Westernization and modernization

The “Nutuk” (speech)

- October 15-20, 1927 in Ankara to the representatives of his party (the Republican Party)
- His autobiography, but also his interpretation of Turkish history
- A military perspective
- Entreaty to the Turkish youth
- It took thirty-six hours (on a 6 day span) to be read by Atatürk
- <https://youtu.be/wQPtkbAiRrU>

The Student Oath

Türküm, doğruyum, çalışkanım. İlkem, küçüklerimi korumak, büyüklerimi saymak, yurdumu, milletimi, özümnden çok sevmektir. Ülküm, yükselmek, ileri gitmektir.

Ey büyük Atatürk! Açtığın yolda, gösterdiğin hedefe durmadan yürüyeceğime ant içerim.

Varlığım Türk varlığına armağan olsun. Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!

I am a Turk, honest and hardworking. My principle is to protect the younger, to respect the elder, to love my homeland and my nation more than myself. My ideal is to rise, to progress.

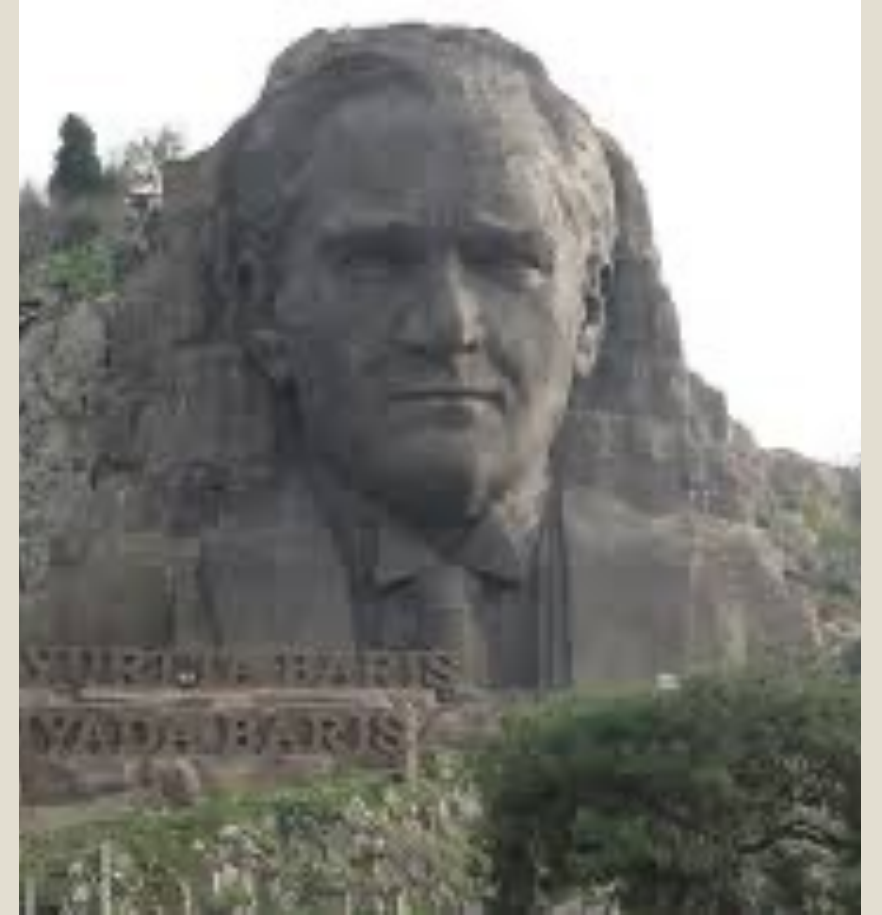
O Great Atatürk! On the path that you have paved, I swear to walk incessantly toward the aims that you have set.

My existence shall be dedicated to the Turkish existence. How happy is the one who says "I am a Turk!"

What is the message?

- Mandatory until 2013:
 - 'I am a Turk'; Happy is the one who calls himself a Turk! – accessibility of Turkish national identity and citizenship if you accept assimilation
 - Language of sacrifice: to love my country more than myself
 - Language of progress: to go forward; to walk non-stop; the path, etc.
 - The individual associated with the nation (my existence = Turkish existence)

- Reform of institutions but also ideologies
- Not radical changes for the majority of the population (rural), who were illiterate, didn't wear the fez, etc.
- Obsession with Atatürk



Turkish History... without the Ottomans



- November 10, 1938
at 9:05am in
Dolmabahçe
- Succeeded by
İsmet İnönü
- World War II starts
less than a year later

Atatürk Dies

1940s

- 1942: Non-Muslims are taxed and those who do not pay are deported
- 1945: Turkey joins the Allied forces (just symbolic)
- 1946: First multi-party elections
- 1949: Turkey becomes a founding member of the Council of Europe



1950

- Democrat Party won elections
- Prime Minister Adnan Menderes
 - 1950–1960
 - One of the founders of the Democrat Party (DP), a legal opposition party
- Brought an end to Kemalist rule

1950s

- 1952: Turkey enters NATO
- 1955: “September Pogroms” against non-Muslims; Istanbul Greeks leave the country
- 1959: Turkey applies for membership in the EEC (pre-EU)



1960

- Military coup
- New constitution
- Military power over politics
- 1961: Prime Minister Adnan Menderes is executed



1960s

- 1961: coalition government
- 1963: The Ankara Agreement sets a time frame for Turkey's integration into the EEC (same year sees major conflicts between Greeks and Turks in Cyprus)
- 1965: Democracy restored, PM Suleyman Demirel and the Justice Party

1971

- Increasing violence in the streets
- Second military coup
- Military forces PM Demirel to resign



1970s

- Early 1970s sees state violence against students and socialists – executions, massacres
- 1973: Elections result in an unstable coalition government
- 1977: Bloody May Day, 35 demonstrators are killed in Taksim Square by covert security agents



1973
First Bosphorus Bridge

1980

- On September 12, 1980, the military once again staged a coup and this time banned Demirel and the Justice Party (the party eventually reemerged as the True Path Party in 1983)
- General Kenan Evren becomes President, until 1989
- Socialists persecuted

Themes/Trends

- Violence
- Instability
- Growth, but not consistent
- Foreign relations
- Fits and starts
- Contradictions
- **Rural-to-urban migration**



Rural-to-Urban Migration

- 1950s-80s
- *Gecekond* = “built over night”
- Essential to the success of populist parties
- Villagers in the city: impressions of city dwellers and class conflicts

From “Old Istanbul” to “New Istanbul”

- Before the 1950s, the heterogeneity of Istanbul's population made it cosmopolitan – mainly religious diversity.
- The Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities were considered the “ethnic” residents of the city.
- Muslims from the Balkans.
- After the 1950s, many non-Muslims emigrated, while internal migrants immigrated to Istanbul from Anatolia. “Peasants in the city” was conceived as an urban problem. (“Peasantization”)
- Newly elected governors shifted attention from solving the “peasant” problem to accommodating the newly arrived migrants. Different types of social organizations based on localism: the building blocks of neighborhood clubs, professional associations, and even political parties.
- The gecekondu had been treated as illegal and handled by the police; but now the shantytown dwellers were fighting for their rights to municipal services and some of these neighborhoods were legalized. New ethnic solidarities: Laz, Kurdish, Alevi, Roma, etc.
- No longer an easy “peasant-urban” divide. Now they were all participating in the city.



Ecumenopolis

- Urbanization = the increase of people living in cities -- a global phenomena (New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore, Mumbai...)
- 'World city' – the world as one big city
- <https://youtu.be/maEcPKBXV0M>

Examples

- Orhan Gencebay: <https://youtu.be/2hetiQwNW5Y>
- Ibrahim Tatlis: <https://youtu.be/OyVRXdbMSZQ>
- Sibel Can: <https://youtu.be/2YLCdQtBJxs>

Arabesk Music

Music from the *gecekondu*

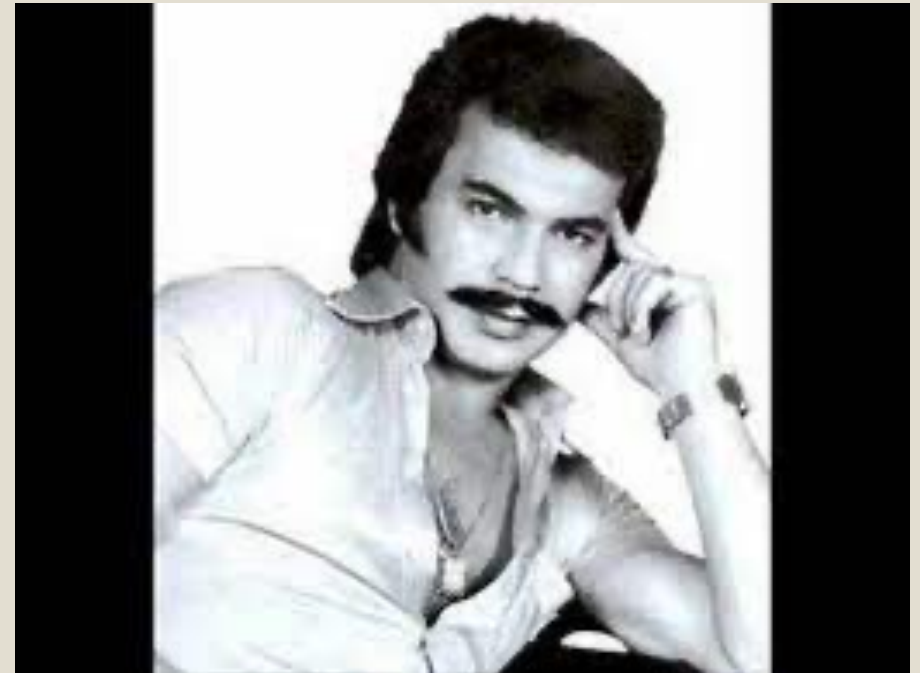
Arabic sound

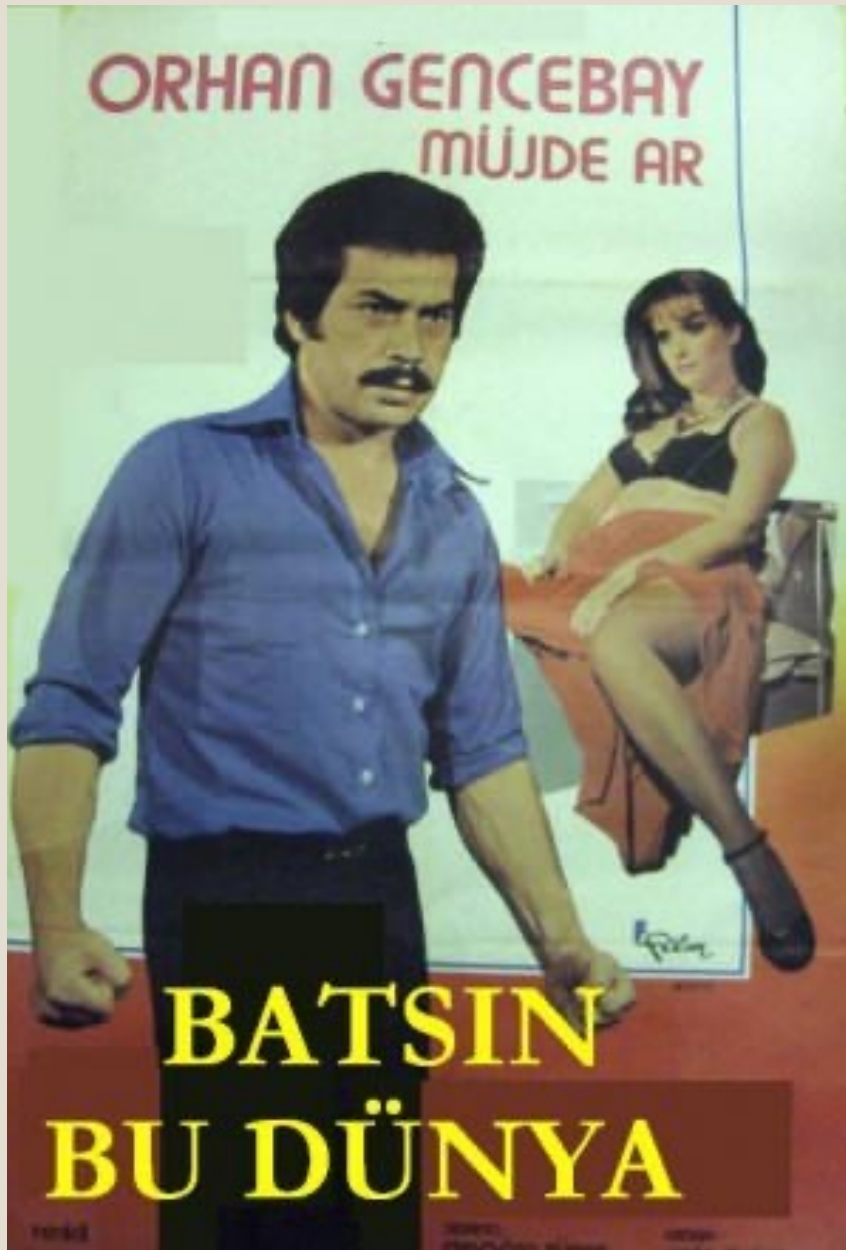
Dolmuş, cassette tapes

Banned by TRT radio and TV

Orhan Gencebay

- Music of the people
- Bağlama
- Turkish poetry and folk songs
- *Batsın bu Dünya (Damn this World)*:
<https://youtu.be/2zQEeDliNx0>
- <https://lyricstranslate.com/en/bats%C4%B1n-bu-d%C3%BCnya-let-world-sink-down.html>





1970s

- Arabesk films
- Musicals
- About resisting injustice
- Stereotypes (maganda, tesbih, mustache, mafia)
- Masculinity

Maganda



1980s to Today: Globalization, Neoliberalism, Islamism

- 1983: Motherland Party wins elections
- PM Turgut Özal
- In favor of free market, capitalism, globalization, good relations with the West. 'Neoliberal'
- 1989: becomes President





- Height of popularity
- Radio and TV liberalized
- Commercialized; collaborations
- İbrahim Tatlıses (Ibo)
- Kurds, Roma
- Female arabesk singers

1980s-90s

Sibel Can



Audiovisual Material

- Documentary on Arabesk: https://youtu.be/SI4_IVVJYvU
- *Crossing the Bridge*
- Ibrahim Tatlis: <https://youtu.be/OyVRXdbMSZQ>
- Sibel Can: <https://youtu.be/2YLCdQtBJxs>

1980s: A Decade of Contradictions

- Arrests, torture, executions, exile... The Left is essentially eliminated
- 1982: New constitution is oppressive; military law
- 1983: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus declared
- 1984: The PKK (Kurdistan Worker's Party) starts a guerrilla war against the Turkish state
- 1987: Turkey applies for membership in the EU
- 1988: Second Bosphorus Bridge inaugurated; Turkey's first shopping mall opens
- 1989: Fall of Berlin Wall

1990s: Chaos

- Violence between the state and the PKK continues; “terrorism”
- Özal dies unexpectedly and is succeeded by President Demirel
- 1993: first female PM, Tansu Çiller; Sivas Massacre of Alevis and leftists by an Islamist mob
- 1995 Gazi and Manisa events: Alevi youth killed in Istanbul and 16 teenagers arrested and tortured in Manisa
- 1997: The ‘Postmodern Coup,’ PM Erbakan resigns
- 1999: Turkey a candidate for EU accession; Öcalan captured; Marmara earthquake
- 2000-2001: Economic Crisis and World Bank intervention
- 2001: 9/11 Attacks

AK Party: 2002 to Today

- ❖ Elected in 2002 (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or Justice and Development)
- ❖ Conservative Islamist party
- ❖ Prime Minister: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- ❖ Turkey's Ottoman past and Islamic identity
- ❖ Economic and Urban development
- ❖ Pro-Western, pro-American: EU membership



AK PARTİ

The AK Party

- AKP appealed to ordinary people and their everyday needs – went into shantytowns for votes
- AKP also addressed growing concerns with Western imperialism and post-9/11 stigma of Islam. Along with this, disillusionment about the EU – Turks wanted new allies in the Middle East
- New promises, esp. to Kurds, that their voices would be heard as fellow Muslims; peace process
- A global trend toward emphasizing morality and identity – emphasis on Ottoman heritage and pride in Islamic identity

What is 'Islamism'?

- Political Islam
- Movement that advocates government in accord with the laws of Islam and the Quran as a political model
- Ideologies can vary, but share a common notion that Islam should guide social and political life as well as personal life. Range from:
 - the implementation of Sharia (Islamic law)
 - pan-Islamic political unity
 - The removal of military, economic, political, social, or cultural influences that are incompatible with Islam
- To:
 - a form of identity politics, revivalism, revitalization of the Muslim community
 - Compatible with democracy

Islamism in Turkey

- 1994: The Islamist Welfare Party wins local elections in Istanbul and Ankara; Erdoğan is elected mayor of Istanbul
- 1998: The Welfare Party is banned by the Constitutional Court and the Virtue Party is established a year later
- 2001: The Virtue Party is banned by the Constitutional Court and its succeeded by the Felicity Party and the Justice and Development Party (AKP)
- 2002: AKP wins national elections – PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

‘Islamicization’ of Society

- A matter of ongoing public debate in Turkey
- Suppressed by the military; assassinations of key Islamist figures
- Linked to rural-to-urban migration
- Mobilization in the cities; began as a politics of provocation, but became more pragmatic and appealed to the masses with good urban governance and social services
- The headscarf issue

Erdoğan

- ❖ Constitutional referendums and snap elections
- ❖ Corruption scandals
- ❖ Significantly reduced the number of elected local government positions
- ❖ Tighter regulations on Internet, alcohol sales and consumption, and abortion
- ❖ EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement
- ❖ Human rights abuses



2002-2021

- Ran on a platform of urban development: housing market drives Turkey's economic growth
- Shift of emphasis to Istanbul again – a 'global city'
- Neo-Ottoman nostalgia combined with neoliberal policies – tourism industry; TOKI (Mass Housing Administration)
- Big business, foreign investment, increasingly formal and regulated housing market
- Factories replaced by malls; gated housing communities
- Major urban planning projects (i.e. the Third Bridge) backed by the government
- Gezi Park protests in 2013
- 2015 Elections; Erdoğan becomes President
- 2016 failed coup attempt
- Breakdown of peace process with Kurds: civil war
- Increasing surveillance of citizens, arrest of academics and journalists
- Syrian refugees and renewed accession talks with the EU
- 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic

Istanbul 2010: European Capital of Culture

- Designated by the EU every year
- Like the Olympics or other event, an opportunity for a city to generate economic and cultural benefits; Urban regeneration
- “To bring Europeans closer together by highlighting the richness and diversity of European cultures and raising awareness of their common history and values.”
- <https://youtu.be/m-lh6zH74nQ>

‘Urban Renewal’

- Land speculation and redevelopment
- In high density urban areas
- Involves government expropriation and the relocation of businesses and people; demolition of current structures

Urban Renewal in Turkey: 2010-2012













Gezi Park Protests in 2013



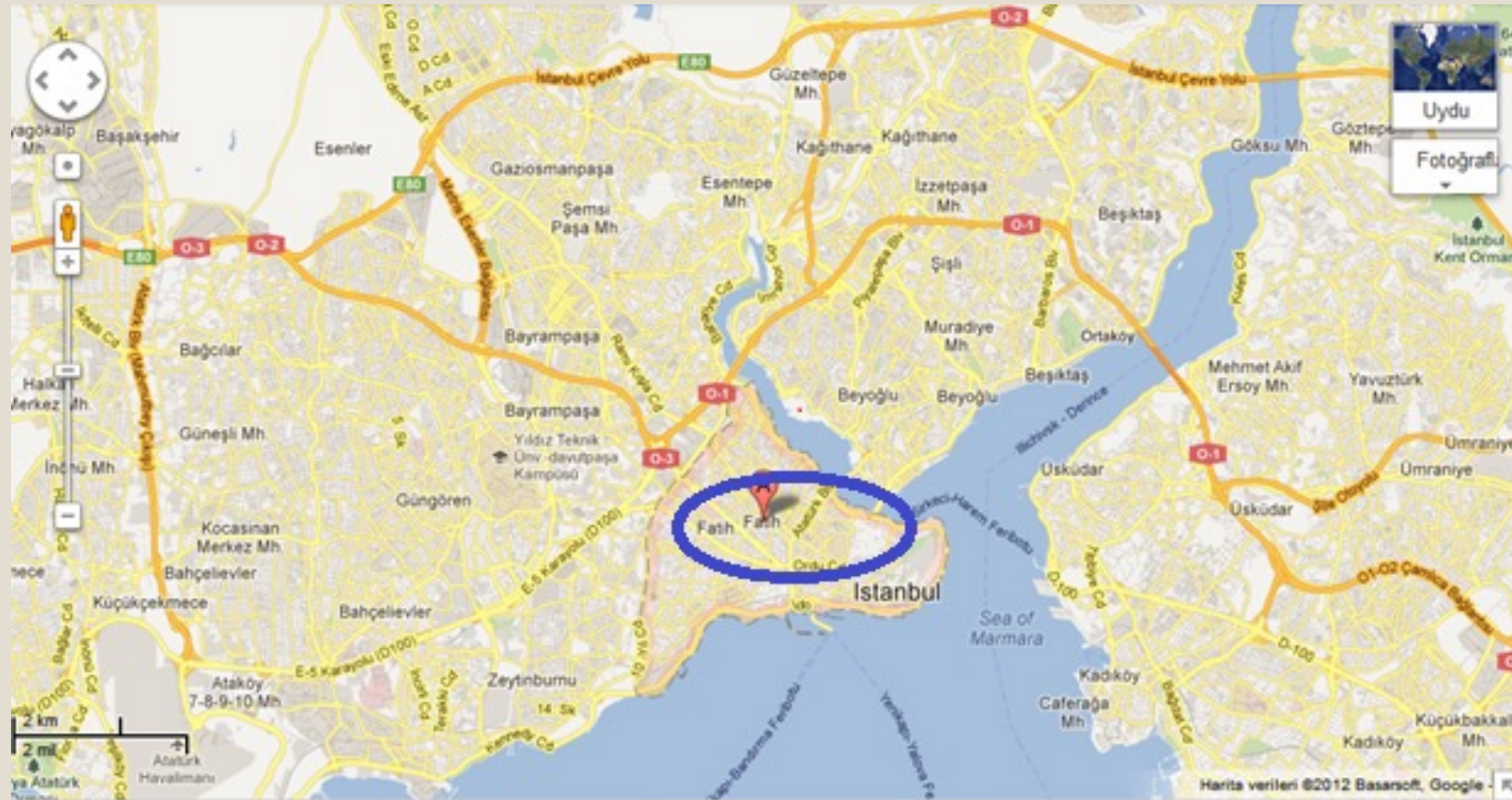
Inner-City Neighborhoods ('Ghettos')

- "Gypsies", Kurds, Trans people. and sex workers
- Since the early 2000's, NGO activism in these neighborhoods
- Disproportionately impacted by urban renewal projects in the cities
- Attracting attention in Europe, media
- Socially marginalized; stereotypes

Case Study: Sulukule

- Located in the Fatih Municipality of Istanbul
- It's believed that Roma lived there since 15th century
- Entertainment houses from 1920s to 1990s
- Several demolitions from 1950s onwards.
- Historical Site (Protection) Area
- Declared renovation area in 2005

Fatih Municipality





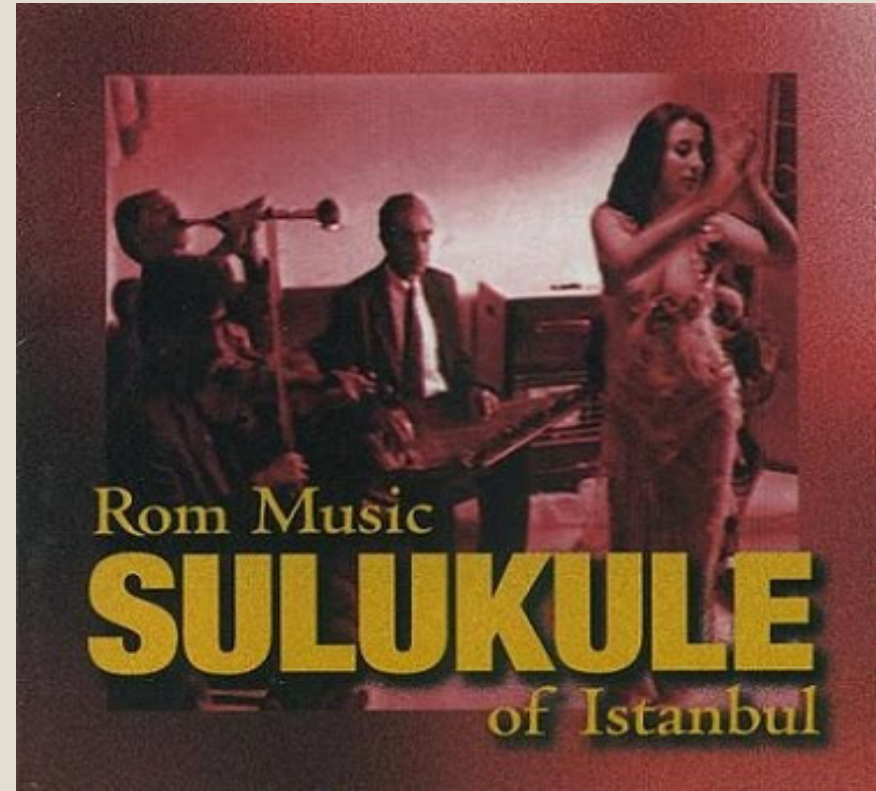
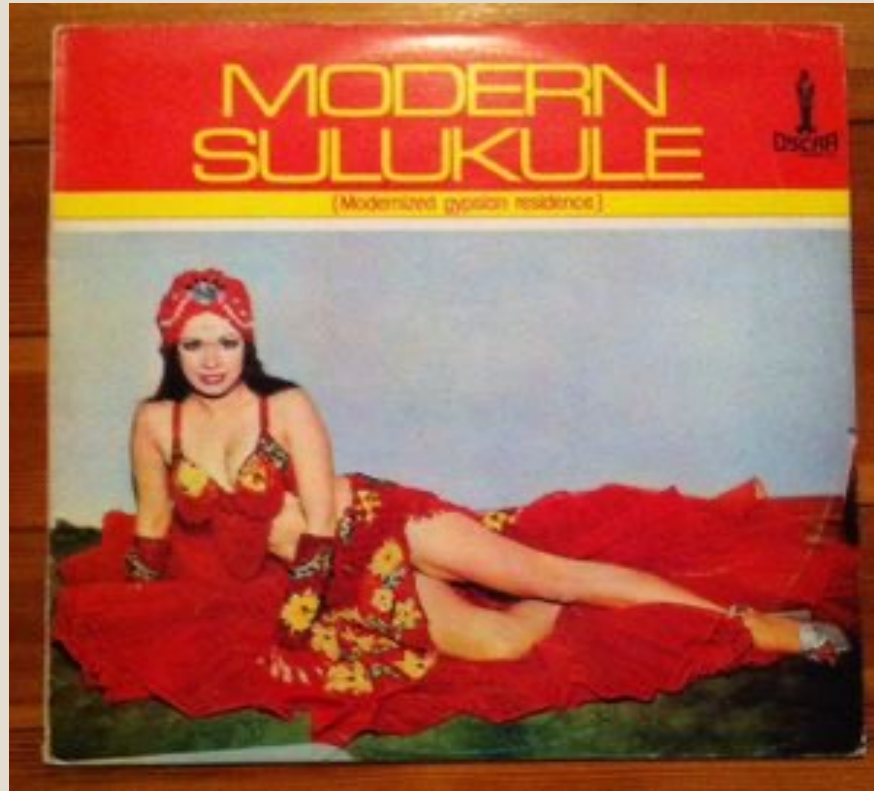
Sulukule Before



Dance and Music



Entertainment Houses



Sulukule Platform

- Coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and activists
- Tried to save Sulukule
- Attracted attention from media, academics, artists, etc.



garajistanbul'da roman geceleri



garajistanbul

NEFESİMİZİ KESMEYİN!

Tüm Klarnetçileri!

Gelin! Sulukule için tek nefes olalım!

1 Nisan 2007 Pazar Günü, 12.00-15.00, Sulukule'de
Serkan Çağrı ile Klarnet Atölyesi

- Klarnet üzerine söyleşi
- 7'den 70'e klarnet performansları
- "Klarnetkule Orkestrası" seçimleri
(burada seçilecek klarnetçilerden oluşan orkestra Garaj İstanbul'da konser verecektir)
- Profesyonel Klarnet Sanatçılarından dinletiler

23 Nisan 2007, Pazartesi, Beyazıt

Garaj İstanbul

Serkan Çağrı Yönetiminde
Klarnetkule Orkestrası Konseri



40 GÜN 40 GECE SULUKULE PLATFORMU

www.40gun40gecesulukule.com

Başlatım:
Ali Kuyak İnşaat 0542 347 6241
Çinçero Kaldırım 0532 226 1837

Ulaşım: Takım Edirnekapi otopüsleri, no:87
(Edirnekapi durağından yürüyerek 5 dakikada)









Demolition: 2010-2012

- Sulukule was demolished and residents were relocated to TOKI state housing about 40km away in Taşoluk
- Most chose not to go, or returned within a year
- Now live in area nearby called Karagümrük

Taşoluk



Karagömrük



Karagömrük and the New Sulukule

Neo-Ottoman
Condominiums







Sulukule Children's
Art Atelier
SÇSA



 **SULUKULE**
çocuk sanat atölyesi



•Ritim•Dans•Nota bilgisi
•Drama•Gitar•Keman•Viyolonsel
•Okuma Yazma Kulübü •Pratik İngilizce

Prof. Naci Şensoy Cad. No:112 Karagömrük





Objectives of the Atelier

- to keep the children together
- to keep the culture alive
- to increase self-confidence in the community so they can:
 - express their culture
 - demand their civil rights
 - communicate openly with non-Roma society
- to transmit knowledge and encourage creativity

Fieldwork

August 2011 – November 2012



Tahribad-ı Isyan (Revolt's Destruction)

- Asil Hilal Koç (a.k.a Slang)
- Burak Kaçar (a.k.a. Zen G)
- Veysi Özdemir (a.k.a. Vz)

“ Sulukule bir tabanca,
biz de onun
mermileriiz”

(Sulukule is the gun,
and we are its
bullets.)



London 2012

Workshop and Performance in Hip Hop & Rap





Amnesty International: Listen to Roma Rights



2 Videos Using Music as Protest

Before demolition:

<http://youtu.be/GJcHbNXG6aU>

After demolition:

<http://youtu.be/wx36mnZvEO0>

2013 to Today

- Hip Hop Theatre: *Revolt on Stage*: <https://youtu.be/wTuKuIVVU80>
- Istanbul Biennial 2013, *Wonderland*: <https://vimeo.com/78545350>
- Gezi Park protests: <https://www.mashallahnews.com/songs-of-resistance-gezi/>
- Turkish Kaleidoscope by Jenny White: <https://press.princeton.edu/ideas/turkish-kaleidoscope-musical-playlist>
- 2019 Female Turkish lawmakers sang a Chilean song, “The Rapist is You”, in parliament that has been taken up in demonstrations globally to protest violence against women: https://youtu.be/a_pcWg8ePfg
- Kurdish music as protest

Thank You!

- schoon.2@osu.edu
- Q & A
- Resource Review: <https://mesc.osu.edu/outreach/teachers/teaching-resources-music-tool-protest>
- Guided Questions