

## Perceptions and Mentality Structures

# "Let Us Reign the State Forever": State and Citizens in Democratization Process"



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### Summary

The subject of this research was to analyze the mental/perception-bound roots of the passive position of citizens against the state, which constitute a fundamental obstacle on their way to becoming political subjects by blocking their political participation and intervention into political processes. This passivity may be said to stem from a special habitus of sorts, creating "subordinated individuals" against any forms of authority shaped through an entire process of socialization/accluturation.

The findings of the report largely confirmed two main hypotheses:

(1) The fact that Ottoman Empire/Republic of Turkey is demographically shaped by complex, interwoven and successive waves of migration and their associated traumas is one of the main shaping factors of the state-citizen asymmetry; and, (2) In the popular mentality, the state and government stand as separate entities whereby the state is viewed as an almost "holy," unchanging/unchangeable body whose existence is "naturalized," while the government is at once a locus of more "mundane" issues ridden with petty politics, and a functional area that breeds clientalistic relations.

The findings of the report also show that the relationship between the citizen and the state is one determined by the dual expectations/requirements of fear and security whereby the state is perceived and conceptualized as a body mimicking the role of the patriarch (or in Turkish, aile reisi). Many citizens also view the state as a body that needs protection from "threats," including those internal, ideological ones. In this mentality, further democratization is viewed almost as being "dangerous" before first attaining a formal increase in educational access and quality. Additionally, the report proves that such a perception and mentality of state/citizen could not be understood separate from the state's efforts to administratively construct and continually mould its own citizens.

The report attempts to enrich our understanding of the state and authoritarianism and to do away with simplistic assumptions pitting powerless citizens against an oppressive state by aiming to show how in a far more complex reality, administratively constructed mentalities are highly internalized, functionalized and operationalized by individuals.