



TRANSNATIONAL ADVOCACY NETWORKS IN PERSPECTIVE: DEMOCRATIZATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND NGOS IN TURKEY¹

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Abstract:

In a global world, foreign/international and domestic/national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) work together on many issues including democratization and human rights. This cooperation is not welcomed by all circles, and even evaluated through conspiracy theories. In the face of such suspicion, the purpose of this study is to examine the cooperation between the foreign and domestic NGOs that work in the realm of democratization and human rights in Turkey. The theoretical framework is provided by the literature on “transnational advocacy networks”. Archival research and semi-structured in-depth interviews with the representatives of both foreign and national NGOs are employed as the two main methodological approaches. The findings show that these NGOs share resources such as power, information, experience and money in order to overcome the limitations of their environments.

Keywords: Foreign/international NGOs, domestic/national NGOs, democratization and human rights, “transnational advocacy networks”.

Resumen:

En un mundo global, las organizaciones no gubernamentales (ONGs) tanto extranjeras como las propias del ámbito doméstico, cooperan juntas en muchos asuntos, incluidas la democratización y los derechos humanos. Esta cooperación no es bienvenida en muchos círculos, hasta el punto de juzgársela desde teorías de la conspiración. Frente tal suspicacia, el propósito de tal estudio es el de examinar la cooperación entre las ONGs extranjeras y domésticas que trabajan en el ámbito de la democratización y los derechos humanos en Turquía. El marco teórico proviene de la literatura sobre “redes de apoyo transnacional”. La investigación en archivos y entrevistas en profundidad semi-estructuradas con los representantes tanto de ONGs extranjeras como nacionales son empleadas como los dos principales acercamientos metodológicos. Los resultados demuestran que tales ONGs comparten recursos tales como poder, información, experiencia y dinero para superar las limitaciones de los ambientes en los que operan.

Palabras clave: ONGs extranjeras y domésticas, democratización y derechos humanos, “redes de apoyo transnacional”.

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¹ Turkish version of this article was previously published as “Ulusaşırı Yandaşlık Ağbağları Perspektifinden Türkiye’de Demokratikleşme, İnsan Hakları ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları,” *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol 6, No 21, Spring 2009, pp. 41-65. We are grateful to *Uluslararası İlişkiler* for granting us the permission to use this material here.

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1. Introduction

According to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2008* report, 72 states (around 38 percent) out of 193 independent states are ruled by non-democratic regimes. One result of the lack of democracy is widespread violation of human rights. In the absence of democratic accountability and the rule of law, the governments can get away with gross human rights abuses.³ Thus, democratization and improvement of human rights is of paramount importance.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) take an active part in the struggle for democratization and improving human rights all over the world. They educate people about their democratic rights, scrutinize the actions of governments, and inform the world about human rights violations. In a global world, domestic NGOs derive strength from their cooperation with foreign/international nongovernmental organizations (F/INGOs). Thanks to their connections with F/INGOs, domestic NGOs have access to resources such as money, knowledge and power. Thus, the cooperation between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs is very important for the consolidation of democracy and improving human rights.

However, this is not an easy relationship. The domestic NGOs derive not only strength, but they also draw suspicion from the state and the public opinion due to their connections with F/INGOs. For example, in the recent past, some of the F/INGOs were accused of trying to subvert the regime in Russia by the Putin Government.⁴

Similar accusations were directed towards some F/INGOs in Turkey, which were seen as either directly linked to foreign governments with the purposes of espionage or believed to be the agents of imperialism in general.⁵ Their activities were seen as an infiltration to the culture of the host country with the purpose of weakening its resistance towards exploitation. Furthermore, the domestic NGOs that are associating with the F/INGOs are seen by the same circles as bribed and sometimes even labeled as "traitors."

This study attempts to understand this phenomenon through the lense of a social science literature that combines the fields of international relations and comparative politics. More specifically, this study uses the theory of "transnational advocacy networks" to answer such questions as "What is the nature of the relationship between a F/INGO and a domestic/national NGO?"; "How do these NGOs establish relationships?"; "What are they sharing? Money, knowledge, power?"; "How do these relationships serve the goals of both parties?" We think that the clarification of these issues is important because of the suspicions towards that cooperation in many countries. In this context, the purpose of this study is to analyze the nature of this cooperation within the realm of democratization and human rights in Turkey.

³ Puddington, A. (2008): "Freedom in Retreat: Is the Tide Turning? Findings of Freedom in the World 2008", *Freedom House*, at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fiw08launch/FIW08Overview.pdf>.

⁴ Volk, Y. S. (2006): *Russia's NGO Law: An Attack on Freedom and Civil Society*, Accessed from <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/wm1090.cfm>.

⁵ Hablemitoğlu, N. (2001): *Alman Vakıfları ve Bergama Dosyası*, İstanbul, Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları; Mütevellioğlu, N. (2006): "Türkiye'de Yönetim Dışı Örgütlerin Demokratikleşmeye Etkisi," *Mülkiye Dergisi*, vol. 30, no. 253, pp. 59-77; Yıldırım, M. (2004): *Sivil Örimceğin Ağında*, İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları.



2. Methodology

The methods used in this study are archival analysis and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the representatives of both domestic NGOs and F/INGOs. The archival analysis is done by examining the documents published by the NGOs and those presented on the NGO web sites. We limited ourselves to the F/INGOs and domestic NGOs that have activities in the field of democratization and human rights in Turkey.

We confined our research to four F/INGOs in this field and six domestic NGOs that are cooperating with those four F/INGOs. The foreign NGOs that we study are the **Open Society Institute** of the United States (OSI), **Amnesty International** (AI), **Konrad Adenauer Foundation** (KAF) and **Friedrich Ebert Foundation** (FEF) of Germany. We determined the chosen domestic NGOs on the basis of the feedback that we received from the F/INGOs. The domestic NGOs that we chose as cases are **Liberal Düşünce Topluluğu** (*LDT, Association for Liberal Thinking*), **Türk Demokrasi Vakfı** (*TDV, Turkish Democracy Foundation*), **Sosyal Demokrasi Derneği** (*SDD, Social Democracy Association*), **İnsan Hakları Derneği** (*IHD, Human Rights Association*), **Mazlumder** (*Organization for Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People*), and **İnsan Hakları Gündemi Derneği** (*IHG, Human Rights Agenda Association*). In selecting these NGOs, we paid attention to be fair towards the main ideologies within the democratic system, namely, liberalism, conservatism, and social democracy. It is possible to make a twofold distinction among these NGOs in terms of the nature of the work that they are doing. While some of these NGOs work at a normative level, i.e. aiming at the introduction and consolidation of democracy and human rights, some others operate at a practical level trying to document, prevent, and minimize the violation of human rights principles. Thus, while LDT, TDV and SDD work at the normative level, IHD, Mazlumder, and IHG operate at the practical level. Similarly, among the F/INGOs, while AI works at the practical level, OSI, KAF and FEF work primarily at the normative level.

3. A Theoretical Framework: Transnational Advocacy Networks

3.1. The Boomerang Pattern: Transnational Advocacy Networks⁶

A good theory on transnational relations can be found in the work of Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, entitled *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, (1998). The concept of network forms the core of this theory. Accordingly, the literature on transnational relations, e.g. Rosenau, 1969; Keohane & Nye, 1970; Burton, 1972; Morse, 1976; and Mansbach, Ferguson and Lampert, 1976; Risse-Kappen et. al. 1995, Tarrow 2001; Colas 2002, brings together such various sorts of transnational actors as multinational corporations, the Catholic Church, international scientific organizations, and activist groups. Keck and Sikkink⁷ argue that all these forms of transnational relations can be analyzed in

⁶ This literature review part is a shorter version of Bican Şahin, "Conspiracy or Social Change: A Literature Review on Transnational NGO Networks," *Hacettepe University Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, vol.24, no.2 (2006), pp. 257-271.

⁷ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink (1998): *Activists Beyond Borders Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, pp.29-30.



terms of networks, which can be defined as "... forms of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange."⁸

Thus, these transnational networks are categorized in three different groups based on their aims: 1- transnational networks that are motivated by *instrumental goals* such as transnational corporations and banks, 2- transnational networks that are motivated by *shared causal ideas*, such as the groups of scientists, and 3- transnational networks that are motivated by *shared principled ideas or values* (transnational advocacy networks).

To the extent that the last form of transnational networks is motivated not by material gains and/or professionalism, but rather by shared ideas and values, they form a distinct category. Many times, they are not satisfied with policy change in their field of action but seek to reshape the institutional and ideational bases of international interactions.⁹ In Keck and Sikkink's words, "[a]dvocacy captures what is unique about these transnational networks -they are organized to promote causes, principled ideas and norms, and often involve individuals advocating policy changes that cannot be easily linked to their 'interests'."

Transnational advocacy networks can be defined expansively or restrictively.¹⁰ When they are defined expansively, they include all relevant actors, who contribute to create some sort of social change in an issue area. In this sense, international and domestic NGOs, local social movements, research and advocacy organizations, foundations, the media, churches, trade unions, consumer organizations, intellectuals, parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations, parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments are all among the major actors that form an advocacy network.¹¹

When transnational advocacy networks are defined restrictively, the members of a transnational advocacy network are limited to domestic NGOs and F/INGOs.

The most valuable commodity that the NGOs in an advocacy network share is information. They not only share information related to their relevant fields of action, but they also create "frames" through which they interpret that information, and shape the perceptions that pertain to their issue areas.¹² A second resource that the actors in an advocacy network share is funds. In response to the services they provide, the NGOs are funded by foundations in a network. However, services may also be provided to other NGOs in the same advocacy and sometimes other advocacy networks. Finally, personnel exchange is not something uncommon in advocacy networks.¹³ Thus connections are important for both sides. This is important for the resource-poor Third World actors because it provides access, knowledge, leverage and many times money. For the actors from the developed world, this cooperation provides them with information and also with the legitimacy in the society of the targeted state.¹⁴

⁸ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink: "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics," *International Social Science Journal*, no. 159 (1999), pp. 89-101.

⁹ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, "Activists Beyond Borders...", *op. cit.*, p. 2

¹⁰ Khagram, S. et al. (2002): "From Santiago to Seattle: Transnational Advocacy Groups Restructuring World Politics," in *Restructuring World Politics Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 3-23.

¹¹ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, "Transnational Advocacy Networks...", *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 92

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 92

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93



As indicated at the outset, connections between F/INGOs and domestic NGOs are not always welcomed. While F/INGOs from the developed world work in an environment that is friendly, for the most part, towards international cooperation, domestic NGOs from the developing world work in an environment that is not always F/INGO-friendly.¹⁵ As Keck and Sikkink put it, “linkages with northern networks require high levels of trust, because arguments justifying intervention on ethical grounds often sound too much like the ‘civilizing’ discourse of colonial powers, and can work against the goals they espouse by producing a nationalist backlash.”¹⁶

Transnational advocacy networks are most likely to emerge when channels between domestic groups and their governments for resolving conflicts do not exist, or where they exist, they are ineffective in doing that. Thus, such a state of affairs sets into motion what Keck and Sikkink call the ‘boomerang’ pattern of influence (see Appendix 2).¹⁷

In their efforts to tame the power of the state, international advocacy networks employ several tactics. Keck and Sikkink categorize those tactics into four groups¹⁸:

(a) *information politics*, or the ability to move politically usable information quickly and credibly to where it will have the most impact;

(b) *symbolic politics*, or the ability to call upon symbols, actions or stories that make sense of a situation or claim for an audience that is frequently far away . . . ;

(c) *leverage politics*, or the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence; and

(d) *accountability politics*, or the effort to oblige more powerful actors to act on vaguer policies or principles they formally endorsed.

As indicated above, sharing politically-relevant information is the most precious commodity of these networks. Due to their location, domestic NGOs know first-hand about the violations of rights. Getting this information quickly and spreading it credibly across the international arena occurs through the linkages that domestic NGOs establish with F/INGOs. F/INGOs may help the process of the dissemination of politically relevant information either directly or indirectly. In the case of indirect contribution, they provide opportunities for domestic NGOs to herald their news¹⁹.

Domestic NGOs and F/INGOs in a network not only share politically usable information, but also frame it in a way that it will make sense to the targeted audience. The information that is presented to the international world is not presented just for the sake of letting the world know about what is going on, but also in order to initiate action to correct

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁶ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks...”, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.93.

¹⁸ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, “Activists Beyond Borders...”, *op. cit.*, p.16; Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks...”, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

¹⁹ Martens, K.: “Bypassing Obstacles to Access: How NGOs are Taken Piggy-Back to the UN” *Human Rights Review*, vol. 5, no. 3 (April-June 2004), pp. 80-91.



some injustice. Therefore, persuasion is important. One way of effective persuasion is to use symbols and stories. According to Keck and Sikkink²⁰ many times, not just a single event but juxtaposition of several important events persuades people for action. For example, the juxtaposition of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, Vietnam War and Watergate scandal was influential in creating human rights movements in the US.

Another influential strategy in boomerang pattern of influence is *leverage politics*. In this strategy, a weaker actor, say a domestic NGO, uses its linkages to F/INGOs, in order to make a powerful actor, e.g. the USA, EU or the UN, pressure a target state. The aim is to change the behavior of a target state. A good example is provided by what Hawkins²¹ has to say about the role of the US Congress against the Pinochet dictatorship.

Accordingly, thanks to the information about human rights abuses in Chile that was provided by the international human rights network, the US Congress sanctioned Chile. These sanctions usually take the form of the suspension of military and financial aid, of the sales of weapons, and of bilateral diplomatic relations.

Finally, *accountability politics* involves the endeavors on the part of the international advocacy networks to pressure the target state to keep its promises regarding the international norms such as human rights and democracy. As Keck and Sikkink²² suggest, sometimes governments subscribe to international norms just for the sake of diverting attention. However, once they accept these standards even at the level of discourse, transnational advocacy networks can use this opportunity to show the disparity between the discourse and the practice and embarrass the target state in the international arena.

Using these four strategies, either separately or in combination with one another, international advocacy networks try to influence the behavior of the states that do not comply with international norms in the fields such as human rights and democracy. However, in order to achieve the expected results there are some conditions. These conditions can be divided into two groups: (a) issue-related conditions, and (b) actor-related conditions.

As Keck and Sikkink²³ indicate, there are two issue areas around which transnational advocacy networks emerge most effectively.

These are “(1) those involving bodily harm to vulnerable individuals, especially when there is a short and clear causal chain (or story) about who bears responsibility; (2) issues involving *legal* equality of opportunity.”²⁴ In this sense, it is easier to form an effective advocacy network when the subject of the right abuse is torture or disappearance than some other rights abuses such as property rights violations. Furthermore, when the victim of the right abuse is perceived vulnerable and/or innocent, then, the likelihood of having a successful campaign increases. For example, it is easier to campaign around torture of a political prisoner than around torture of a common criminal. Secondly, when there are open-violations of legal equality of opportunity, then, a successful advocacy network is likely to emerge. The

²⁰ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, “Activists Beyond Borders...”, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²¹ Hawkins, D. (2002): “Human Rights Norms and Networks in Chile,” in *Restructuring World Politics Transnational Social Movements, Networks, and Norms*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p.65.

²² Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, “Activists Beyond Borders...”, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²³ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.98.



best example of this phenomenon is provided by the campaign that was waged against the apartheid in South Africa that was lacking the most basic aspects of equality or opportunity.²⁵

With regards to actor-related conditions, the first thing that can be said is that "...networks are more effective where they are strong and dense. Network strength and density involve the total number and size of organizations in the network, and the regularity of their exchanges."²⁶ The second thing that can be said about actors is related not with actors that are in the network but with the actors who are the targets of those networks.

As briefly mentioned above, in order to have any impact on a target state, that state must have accepted international norms, at least at the discourse level. This provides the members of a network with a moral leverage to criticize the state. Secondly, the target state must be caring about its international image. A state that does not care about the opinion of the outside world does not have much incentive for promoting human rights when it is criticized in the international arena. Third, before an international network emerges, there must be some level of freedom in a state so that individuals can organize and communicate with others. Keck and Sikkink imply that a very strong state which does not leave any room for the flourishing of a civil society makes it very hard for an international advocacy network to emerge. Finally, if the target state itself is too powerful, or due to its geographical location, economic power, or natural resources, it is very important for powerful states, then, it is hard for the boomerang pattern of influence to have the expected result.²⁷

4. Findings

Although Turkey's experience with democracy and human rights dates back to the late Ottoman Empire period, from the days of the Tanzimat Proclamation in 1839, which initiated the idea of individual rights and freedoms, and the 1876 Constitution that created a Parliament and established the constitutional monarchy, neither democracy nor human rights have since been solidified in Turkey.²⁸

In the Republican history (from 1923 on), starting from 1946, Turkey has been experiencing a multi-party democratic system. During that time, the country has experienced three coup d'états and one "post-modern intervention" in 1997. Most recently, on the 27th of April, 2007, a statement placed on the website of the General Staff is considered as an electronic (e)-intervention.

Especially with regards to Turkey's EU accession endeavor, the country has been going through major reforms. Between 1995 and 2007, there were numerous reforms aiming at deepening democracy and improving human rights. Özbudun provides a detailed account of constitutional changes in the last two decades.²⁹ After the general evaluation of the reform efforts, including changes in the 1982 constitution, his conclusion is that there are significant

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁶ Keck, M. and K. Sikkink, "Activists Beyond Borders...", *op. cit.*, p. 206.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 206-208.

²⁸ Ortaylı, İ. (1979): *Türkiye İdare Tarihi*, Ankara, TODAİE, pp.267-270; 279-287.

²⁹ Özbudun, E.: "Democratization reforms in Turkey, 1993-2004," *Turkish Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2007), pp. 179-196.



improvements in the overall conditions but there is still much room for development,³⁰ and swift implementation of the enacted laws is also crucial.

The rest of this section presents the findings of our study in a thematic format. For all the important questions or group of questions that are linked to an important area of finding, we preferred to present the responses in a subsection. Together, these subsections constitute a detailed account of the nature of interaction and cooperation between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs working on human rights and democratization issues in Turkey.

4.1. Cooperation between Networks

One of the objectives of this study is to understand the factors which affect the establishment, maintenance, and termination of cooperation between national and international NGOs, which work in the field of human rights and democratization. The literature suggests that existence of a common ideology, a common-goal, the exchange of monetary and non-monetary resources may all be important factors in explaining cooperative behavior between NGOs. In this section, we list the findings of our study regarding why national and international NGOs cooperate, how they establish and maintain their joint efforts, and under which conditions they terminate their partnerships.

4.1.1. Establishment of Cooperation: Benefits and Costs

There is no absolute uniformity in the answers of the NGO representatives regarding the factors that determine the birth, life and death of cooperative efforts between NGOs. While some cooperations are established based on a common ideological viewpoint; for many others, a common goal is enough, and organizations ideological similarity is somehow of secondary value. It can be argued, however, that a common ideology or a common goal for cooperation is not that different, since most of the time, organizations subscribing to similar ideologies come up with similar goals. For example, it would not be surprising for a national and an international NGO with liberal ideologies to come up with the goal of a “minimal state”, independently from each other. The more interesting type of cooperation here is the one that takes place among NGOs with different ideological perspectives. When NGOs with different ideological views come together, it is due to the common goals. However, this kind of cooperation emerges more often between the domestic NGOs and F/INGOs that work at the practical level of our twofold distinction. That is to say, human rights organizations that are operating on the field to prevent human rights violations cooperate more often with one another. In fact, the most concrete evidence of this phenomenon in Turkey is the foundation of IHOP (*İnsan Hakları Ortak Platformu*, The Human Rights Common Platform) that brings both domestic NGOs with different ideologies and F/INGOs together for not a one time, but continuous cooperation.³¹ On the other hand, ideological differences among NGOs, which work predominantly at the normative level, limit the establishment of partnerships in this field.

Another factor that determines the establishment of cooperation between national and international NGOs is the length, depth and breadth of the relationship between these

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.195.

³¹ IHOP includes several human rights organizations with different ideological backgrounds. This common platform of human rights is made up of leftist (*İnsan Hakları Derneği*, *Human Rights Association*), conservative (*Mazlumder*, *Organization for Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People*) and broadly liberal (*İnsan Hakları Gündemi Derneği*, *Human Rights Agenda Association*) members, as well as Amnesty International.



organizations. When two NGOs cooperate only to share information (i.e. Doing “information politics”), a common ideology between the two is not that important. A common goal may be a good enough bond during the information-sharing activity. A common ideology becomes more important when relations between NGOs gain more depth and breadth. In other words, when the relationship is a relatively short-term, project-based cooperation, presence of a common goal may overshadow the presence or absence of a common ideology. In such cases, unless the gap between two ideologies is too wide, cooperation in order to reach a common goal is possible.

Most cooperation efforts between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs are project-based, but some others are longer-term, contract-based relationships, such as the relation between the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and its domestic partners. Their contracts usually cover a year or so, and they have been continuously renewed almost for the last twenty years. When the relationship is a long-term, contract-based relationship however, a common ideology or a world-view that bonds two NGOs closely is a much more important factor.

Sometimes, common goals are dictated by the public outrage at some shocking events. A major example is the traffic accident in the town of Susurluk on 3 November 1996, which involved a parliamentarian from the then governing True Path Party, a high ranking police officer and a wanted criminal all in the same car, that exposed the level of corruption within the state. Another high-profile example is the 17 August 1999 earthquake, which claimed about 17.000 lives according to official records, which displayed the unpreparedness and incapability of the national government in responding to a disaster at this scale and the corruption of local governments in issuing construction permits. Both of these events created mobilization on the part of the civil society, albeit for a short duration.

Exchange of monetary and non-monetary resources is also an important factor that shapes the initiation and maintenance of cooperation between NGOs. Domestic NGOs in Turkey often lack a sound financial management system that is supported by membership dues and donations. Members of the domestic NGOs in Turkey in general do not pay membership dues regularly, and donations are sporadic at best. That is why exchange of monetary resources is one of the most-needed outcomes of cooperation between national and international NGOs. In addition, while donating money to NGOs furthering democratization and human rights causes can be beneficial to the public image of large corporations in some other countries, this is hardly the case in Turkey. On the contrary, firms would rather refrain from making such donations, or make them anonymously at best.

A major point to emphasize is that, domestic NGOs and F/INGOs are both seekers of funding themselves. In other words, F/INGOs are intermediaries of funding, rather than the actual source of it. Some foreign NGOs are funded by their governments. The German foundations, for example, are funded by the German Ministry of Development. Foreign funding in general and foreign governments’ funding of international NGOs in particular creates suspicions with regard to their intentions in Turkey.³² The Open Society Institute’s funding by the Soros Foundation attracts similar fears and suspicions. Therefore, some domestic NGOs categorically reject financial and any other kinds of relations with these

³² Ateş, D. and A. Uysal: “Merkez Dışı Ülkelerdeki Ulusötesi Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları: Dış Politika, Finansman ve Meşruiyet,” *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, no. 16 (2006), pp. 63-86, pp.64;72;75; Yıldırım, İ. (2004): *Demokrasi, Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları ve Yönetişim*, Ankara, Seçkin Yayınları, pp. 250, 263-266; Mütevellioglu, *op. cit.*, pp.61, 67-68.



F/INGOs. However, some others argue that they, as long as they agree on the goals, can cooperate with F/INGOs that are under suspicion by the general public.

Non-monetary resource exchange is also common. For example, domestic NGOs use the social network ties of F/INGOs as they need speakers for their panels. The partners also share information, past experiences in other countries, and expertise. In a way, F/INGOs share their expertise and act as ‘teachers of “professionalism” vis-à-vis the domestic NGOs. They become a role-model for national NGOs regarding professional conduct of their businesses in areas such as, grant applications, proposal writing, organization of various events, financial management, and using strategic planning tools.

Finally, some national NGOs gain legitimacy in the international arena by the help of their relationships with F/INGOs. This is especially true for the human rights organizations that operate at the practical level. For example, domestic NGOs gain power in the international area by being visible in international meetings through their partnerships, and they gain legitimacy nationally when they are partners with well-known international human rights organizations. The presence of cooperation with F/INGOs also makes the state institutions think twice before taking action against domestic human rights organizations. Such an increase in legitimacy, recognition and power also compel domestic NGOs to conduct their affairs more meticulously.

4.1.2. Maintenance of Cooperation

Once some kind of common ground such as a common ideology, goal or resource exchange is found, and a collaborative relationship is established between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs, organizations divert their attention to the maintenance of cooperation. Domestic and foreign/international NGOs have slightly different priorities when they act cooperatively.

The domestic NGOs value their independence most vis-à-vis F/INGOs in these relationships. The perception of equality between the partners is a key element in maintaining these relationships. Therefore, any perception of pressure in determining the areas and nature of the joint activity -for example, in the selection of conference speakers or any other experts- or any suspicion of a manipulative behavior from the other partner is most unwelcome. Transparency of the relationship is also a critical factor, especially when the prejudices against some of the international NGOs in Turkey, such as the Open Society Institute or the German NGOs, are taken into consideration. Domestic NGOs need to concentrate on getting concrete results from their cooperative efforts and keep their relationship with the F/INGOs as transparent as possible, in order to overcome the psychological barriers of prejudice.

4.1.3. Ending Cooperation

There are several factors which cause the termination of cooperation between NGOs. First, and obviously, if the common goal is achieved, cooperation is no longer necessary and parties naturally end their cooperative efforts. Second, if one of the partners shows poor performance, after a series of warnings to recover its performance, the other party can put an end to the cooperation. The misuse of funds and non-monetary resources is a third reason to discontinue cooperation.

In addition to the circumstances under which cooperation ends; the processes by which cooperation between NGOs is terminated are important. Most of the relationships between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs are project-based; therefore, there is some kind of



legally-binding contract that puts into writing the rules of the cooperation and mutual expectations. Still, in case of any kind of breach of the contract, NGOs do not usually go to the courts to enforce the contract. Instead, they prefer not to work with the underperforming NGO directly or indirectly again.

4.2. Internalizing Values

When the NGO representatives were asked about the extent to which the Turkish government or society have internalized the values of democracy and human rights, their answers were quite heterogeneous. Many stated that things have been changing for the better for the last few years, exemplified by the enactment of the new Law of Associations in 2004³³, which is a step forward for NGOs. Some others argued that these values are internalized to a great extent, since they have been in circulation for quite a while, since the late Ottoman Empire period. Still others contended that the government pays only lip service to these values, in the expectation of moving along in the process of European Union membership. For example, human rights organizations agree that torture is practiced much less frequently than it used to be, but they argue that the unwillingness to try the torturers at courts and sentence them shows the half-heartedness of the government on this matter. The members of this rather pessimist group argue that the limited reforms are not internalized by the members of the society, the media and the government, and they can easily be reversed if things go wrong in the European Union negotiation process.

Many interviewees agreed with the hypothesis derived from the literature that ‘internalizing the values of human rights and democratization even at the level of discourse enable NGOs to push that state for actual compliance’. In this respect, it is not misleading to state that domestic NGOs and F/INGOs in Turkey are employing “accountability politics” as a tactic in their struggle against the state.

4.3. Impact of International Relations on Cooperation

Some domestic NGO and F/INGO representatives think that international developments such as Turkey’s European Union membership perspective or its relations with the United States

³³ The law that governs associations was recently changed in Turkey. The new “Law of Associations”, law number 5253, was enacted by the Turkish Parliament on November 4, 2004. Article 1 declares that the activities of foreign associations, and foundations and associations the center of which is outside Turkey, will be governed according to the rules established by this law.

Article 5 of the law, which is about international activities, states that associations may have international activities on their own or in collaboration with other parties in order to achieve the objectives stated in their charters. The same article maintains that foreign associations can function in Turkey alone or in collaboration with other parties, open representative or branch offices, establish an association, or join the activities of the already established organizations with the permission of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which will be briefed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the subject.

Article 10 gives permission to the associations for giving or receiving financial assistance to or from other associations, political parties, trade unions, and professional associations with similar objectives, in order to achieve their objectives stated in their charters.

Article 21, which regulates foreign assistance to associations, states that associations can receive financial or ocular assistance from foreign nationals, organizations and institutions, granted that they give prior declaration of this assistance to the civilian administration. Any financial assistance has to be going through the banking system.

Article 25 regulates the forming of platforms by several associations. Article 32 lists the details of the penalties, in case, rules such as using the banking system in financial transfers, or obtaining the permission of the government for any associational activities are violated.



do not have a significant impact on cooperation. Most of the NGO representatives, whom we interviewed, however, believe that Turkey's pursuit of the European Union membership or the existence and rulings of the European Court of Human Rights are making their life easier, with new possibilities and topics of cooperation emerging continuously. They believe that the European Union perspective also helped to improve the culture of discussion in Turkey. This finding reinforces İhsan Dağı's argument, which states that since 1980s, various human rights and democratization issues in Turkey are regarded as "legitimate areas of international concern,"³⁴ thus legitimizing the cooperation between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs in this field. In this process, Turkey's European Union membership perspective has been very crucial. Dağı contends that while the main nexus of the European-Turkish relations were economic matters in the 1960s and 1970s, beginning with the 1980s, international pressures for improving democracy and human rights became the main prerequisites for the normalization of the political and economic relations between Turkey and the European Community, reactivation of the association agreement, and the release of the blocked financial aid. Turkey's application for full membership to the EU in 1987 further moved the country into the sphere of European influence and increased its vulnerability against political pressures.³⁵ Some pessimist viewers of the European Union integration process, on the other hand, maintain that the reform process related to European Union membership hopes is an easily reversible trend, if things between Turkey and the Union do not proceed as intended.

4.4. Strategies Used by the Cooperating NGOs

The subject of common strategies used by domestic NGOs and F/INGOs can be understood at two different levels: At macro level, common strategies can be seen as having a strategic plan, common, or at least, similar mission and vision statements for the long-run as the sources of coordinated action. At micro level, strategies are the methods used for maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of joint action. Organizing press releases, or urgent action campaigns together are examples of these micro-level, short-term strategic partnership behavior between NGOs.

Macro level strategic planning is used intensively by some F/INGOs such as the Amnesty International. However, most of the domestic NGOs do not plan strategically as of yet. They can be defined as being 'reactive' to a series of fast-changing daily agendas, rather than planning ahead and being 'proactive'. Strategic planning and coordinated action are urgent needs for domestic NGOs. Emerging NGO platforms/coalitions in the human rights area, such as IHOP (Human Rights Common Platform) and STGM (*Sivil Toplum Gelistirme Merkezi*, Civil Society Development Center) can be venues for coordination and planning for the future. A division of labor seems to be emerging for determining both long-term and short-term strategies. F/INGOs' role is to come up with some models which were used successfully somewhere else. Domestic NGOs' role is to customize these previously-tested models and adjust them to the local needs and conditions of the specific country or region in question.

³⁴ Dağı, A. İ. (2001a): "Human Rights, Democratization and the European Community in Turkish Politics: The Özal Years, 1983-1987", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2001a), p. 17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, *Idem.*



4.5. Legal & Social Suspicions, Prejudices and/or Setbacks against Cooperation

With regard to the existence of legal and social prejudices, suspicions and/or setbacks against cooperation between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs, the cup is half full, or half empty, depending on one's perspective. On the one hand, domestic NGOs maintain that the legal problems are largely solved with the new Law of Associations that was enacted in 2004 (mentioned above in detail), and they feel that the prejudices against and/or efforts to prevent cooperation has gone down in recent years. One exception to the decreasing level of legal problems for cooperation is the mismatch between the tax systems of different countries that causes inconveniences for domestic NGOs.

On the other hand, domestic NGOs also accept that there are people, including some of their members, who approach certain F/INGOs with suspicion. Such distrust comes from the not uncommon perception that these F/INGOs use issues such as human rights and democratization as a political tool to weaken the state in question, and continue exploiting it. Accordingly, some representatives of the domestic NGOs cooperating with these F/INGOs can even be labeled as 'traitors' or 'secret agents' of some other countries. NGOs working at the practical level of human rights area seem to be the subject of suspicion and prejudice more often than those working at the normative level. Some human rights NGO executives were even killed or wounded.

These suspicions are fed by popular books, the allegedly biased media coverage and people's lack of detailed information about the cooperative efforts between domestic NGOs and F/INGOs. As an example of these suspicions, some interviewees specifically named the Open Society Institute as an organization they would neither contact, nor get assistance from, under any circumstances. Another example is the suspicion against the German foundations, which peaked a couple of years ago, in 2002, shortly after the assassination of the author of a popular book (Mr. Necip Hablemitoğlu) that documented the alleged subversive activities of these foundations in Turkey.

The main argument the domestic NGOs are making in order to overcome these suspicions and prejudices is that proper use of foreign monetary and non-monetary assistance is much more important than the identity of the donor. In other words, they maintain that the outcome(s) of the cooperation is more important than the source of funding; and as long as the outcome is in the fund-receiving society's benefit, it does not matter who gives the money.

The domestic NGOs' representatives also believe that providing more and detailed information to the public about their cooperation with F/INGOs may act as an antidote for prejudices. Another popular counterargument to the suspicions that domestic NGOs use is that the Turkish government agencies are getting much more monetary assistance, especially from the European Union institutions, than the domestic NGOs do.

5. Conclusion: The Boomerang Effect

The first thing that needs to be emphasized in this conclusion is that this study is limited to the examination of the emergence and interaction of the advocacy networks. This study does not aim at measuring the results of this interaction. In other words, we do not focus on the whole of the boomerang influence pattern which is illustrated by Figure 1 in the Appendix, but only on its section which involves the interaction between domestic and foreign/international



NGOs. We take the influence of domestic NGOs on their own states through the foreign/international NGOs which is shown on the upper part of the figure as given and do not examine it in this study.

Basically, the 'boomerang effect' explains the process of domestic actors, including domestic NGOs, deriving strength from the solidarity that they establish with the F/INGOs. An excellent example of the boomerang effect is the international human rights reports being much more effective on the Turkish government, although the content of these reports often largely come from similar reports of the domestic human rights organizations. In other words, internal dynamics are effective to the extent that they can trigger external dynamics/pressures.

The boomerang effect can be observed more strongly and more often during the cooperation of NGOs that are active at the practical level than those active at the normative level. There are two explanations for this finding, based on the literature about transnational advocacy networks. One factor that may explain the occurrence of the boomerang effect at the practical level of human rights area more vividly than the normative level is that, human rights networks are on average denser and stronger at the practical level than those found at the normative level in Turkey. In addition, widely agreed-upon and concrete basic and universal principles of human rights enable the networked NGOs to overcome ideological differences between them. However, ideological differences among the NGOs that are working at the normative level create obstacles in front of cooperation. These NGOs attribute different meanings to concepts such as democracy and human rights, which in turn disable them from establishing a dense and strong network.

Second, sanctions against the human rights violations in Turkey happen quicker, they are more concrete (e.g. a European Court of Human Rights ruling), and stronger (e.g. a heavy monetary fine) than those at the normative level. In other words, if the European Court of Human Rights finds a country guilty of violating some kind of human rights, the country has a lot to loose in terms of material compensation and/or the credibility of its acceptance of the principles of universal human rights. The sanctions against the state's rhetoric or actions against further democratization and improvement of human rights norms, on the other hand, are less swift, and relatively long-term. This is to say that the boomerang effect in regard to a human rights violations (e.g. protests of other states through their consulates or international organizations) has a stronger impact faster, as opposed to the boomerang effect concerning a problem in further democratization (e.g. any kind of slow-down or setback in Turkey's accession process with the European Union), which may be also a strong sanction, but is effective in a much longer period.

Appendix 1

Table 1: Basic Information about F/INGOs

NGO TITLE	YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT	BASE COUNTRY	ACTIVITY	FIRST YEAR OF ACTIVITY IN TURKEY	COOPERATING DOMESTIC NGOS*	AREAS OF COOPERATION
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung	1925	Germany	More than 120 Countries Worldwide	1988 (İstanbul) 1996 (Ankara)	SODEV (Sosyal Demokrasi Vakfı, Social Democracy Foundation), TÜSES (Türkiye Sosyal, Ekonomik, Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı, Social, Economic and Political Research Foundation of Turkey), DDD (Demokratik Değişim Derneği, Democratic Change Association),	Promotion of social democracy, preparation of solutions to important common public policy problems



					TESEV (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation), SDD (Sosyal Demokrasi Derneği, Social Democracy Association)	
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung	1956	Germany	More than 120 Countries Worldwide	Long-time partnerships, beginning in 1987	TDV (Türk Demokrasi Vakfı, Turkish Democracy Foundation), TGC (Türkiye Gazeteciler Cemiyeti, Turkish Journalists Association), TÖSYÖV (Türkiye Küçük ve Orta Ölçekli İşletmeler, Serbest Meslek Mensupları ve Yöneticileri Vakfı, Turkish Small and Medium Size Economic Enterprise Owners, Self-Employed and Executives Foundation), TBB (Türkiye Belediyeler Birliği, Municipalities Association of Turkey)	Democratization, Strengthening local governments, Promoting economic development via small and medium size economic enterprises, Government reform
Amnesty International	1961	N.A., it is a worldwide movement	More than 150 Countries Worldwide	2002	I-HOP (The Joint Platform for Human Rights), İnsan Hakları Derneği (Human Rights Association), İnsan Hakları Vakfı (Human Rights Foundation), Mazlumder (Organization for Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People), İnsan Hakları Gündemi Derneği (Human Rights Agenda Association), Other issue-based partners such as women's or children's associations	Promotion of human rights internationally, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination
Open Society Institute	1993	United States	Almost 60 Countries Worldwide	2001	Liberal Düşünce Derneği (Association for Liberal Thinking), Helsinki Citizens' Association, KAGIDER (Kadın Girişimciler Derneği, Association of Woman Entrepreneurs), Tarih Vakfı (The Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey), TESEV (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation), etc.	Promoting open society, supporting reforms in legal, social and economic areas such as education, media, public health, human rights, women rights, etc.

* Relevant partners in the area of democratization and human rights; thus the list is not all-inclusive.

Source: NGO websites and data gathered from interviews with NGO representatives.

Table 2: Basic Information about Domestic NGOs

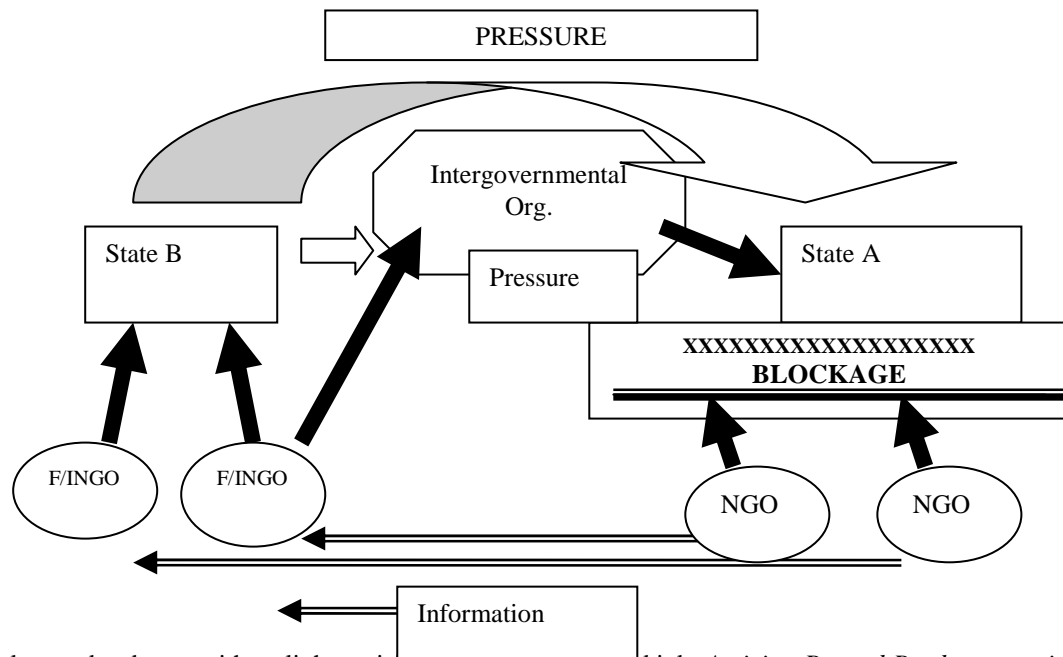
NGO TITLE	YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT	AREAS OF ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF BRANCHES & MEMBERS	COOPERATING F/INGOS*	COOPERATING DOMESTIC NGOS*	AREAS OF COOPERATION
Mazlumder (Organization for Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People)	1991	Promoting human rights	21 Branches	Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Denmark Human Rights Institute, Netherlands Helsinki Citizens' Association	IHD, Human Rights Foundation (TIHV), IHOP	Promotion of human rights
İnsan Hakları Derneği (IHD, Human Rights Association)	1986	Promoting human rights	34 Branches, 15,000 members	Amnesty International, FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights), Euro-Med, Doctors/ Lawyers Beyond Borders (Sınır Tanımayan Doktorlar/ Avukatlar)	Many national NGOs depending on the subject of cooperation	Promotion of human rights
İnsan Hakları Gündemi Derneği, (Human Rights Agenda Association)	2003	Promoting human rights	25 members, but it is not a member-based organization.	Amnesty International, Open Society Foundation, National Endowment for Democracy, European Union Organizations	Helsinki Citizens' Association, Mazlumder, IHD, TIHV	Promotion of human rights
Liberal Düşünce Topluluğu (LDT, Association for Liberal Thinking)	1994	Promoting human rights along with liberal thinking	LDT is an intellectual movement	Frederich Neumann Foundation, Open Society Institute, Amnesty International, European Union Commission Delegation in Turkey, many international organizations with a liberal worldview	Many national NGOs depending on the subject of cooperation	Promotion of democracy, liberal thinking

Sosyal Demokrasi Derneği (Social Democracy Association)	1998	Promotion of social democracy	12 Branches, 2,000- 2,500 members	Friedrich Ebert Foundation	Cooperation plans with SODEV (Sosyal Demokrasi Vakfı, Social Democracy Foundation), TÜSES (Türkiye Sosyal, Ekonomik, Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı, Social, Economic and Political Research Foundation of Turkey), DDD (Demokratik Değişim Derneği, Democratic Change Association)	Promotion of social democracy
Türk Demokrasi Vakfı (Turkish Democracy Foundation)	1987	Democracy, Human Rights	N.A. since it is a foundation, not an association	Konrad Adenauer Foundation, National Endowment for Democracy, National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute, European Union Commission Delegation in Turkey	Many national NGOs depending on the subject of cooperation	Promotion of democracy and human rights,

* Relevant partners in the areas of democratization and human rights; thus the list is not all-inclusive.

Source: NGO websites and data gathered from interviews with NGO representatives.

Appendix 2: Figure 1, Boomerang Pattern



Source: Taken and redrawn with a slight revision from Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, op. cit., p. 13