

Kalabalık!

Bulletin of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul



Across from the Blind

On an uncannily warm and sunny day in the middle of November, we found ourselves, a small group from the institute, on a Sunday stroll between Üsküdar and Kadıköy.

According to legend, it was on this side of the Bosphorus that the original urban settlement of current-day Istanbul emerged. Around 667 BC, when the legendary king Byzas asked the oracle at Delphi where to build a city, he was told to do so “across from the blind” and promptly picked the hill where the Topkapı Palace is now standing. The inhabitants of the older city of Chalcedon, today’s Kadıköy, were clearly blind not to have done so themselves, according to Byzas. His own city became known as Byzantion, and later Constantinople, and today, the “city of the blind” is just a small portion of the sprawling megalopolis called Istanbul.

On this day, some of us had just returned from an eye-opening trip which you can read more about in this issue of *Kalabalık!* “Blind Spots”, an initiative from the cultural section of the Consulate General and its councilor Mike Bode, explored modernity in Turkey through the lens of early republican architecture, the many layers of constructing a new national identity after the Ottoman period, and the

often conflicted ways in which the heritage from this period is treated today. Apart from Izmir and Mersin, we had spent a day investigating some regularly overlooked features of Istanbul, including the vast İMÇ (İstanbul Manufaturacılar Çarşısı) complex on Atatürk Bülvari.

Modernity in Turkey, of course, does not begin with Atatürk. Already the Ottoman baroque period testifies to a world of change, creativity and curiosity that cannot be pigeonholed in simplistic categories of Western or Eastern. The Asian side of Istanbul has many architectural examples to offer, starting with the early 18th century Yeni Valide mosque where we had decided to begin our Sunday walk, built in the so-called “tulip era” by the Greek-born valide sultan Gülnüş (1642–1715) just around the time when Charles XII arrived in this world of dynamic contrasts and encounters.



The Yeni Valide mosque in Üsküdar completed in 1710.

“Beyond Babel” was the befitting theme of the autumn lecture series, arranged under the auspices of Milan Vukasinovic from the *Retracing Connections* project. Three online and live panels devoted to transfer, translation and transmigration of stories and people across geographical, historical and social boundaries connected speakers from other projects that have been hosted at the institute in recent years: Marianne Boquist (Our Story is Quite a Story) and Susan Rottman (RESPOND), and led up to the opening of the exhibition *Translating Worlds* at the Depo gallery in Tophane on November 29. At the end of this report, you can get a few glimpses of this encounter between historical research and contemporary art, with Istanbul at the center of global mobility.

From the Yeni Valide mosque, we proceeded to the tomb and mosque of Mahmut Hüdayi, which in its current Classicist form dates from the mid-19th century *Tanzimat* period.

It lies imbedded in greenery, tombstones and cats on the hills between Üsküdar and Doğancılar. Hüdayi (1541–1628) was the sheikh of sultan Ahmet I and founder of the Sufi order known as the Celvetiyye, and he is still popularly revered as a saint. We arrived just after the noon prayers and watched as the crowded prayer room slowly emptied itself.

Over the last two years, the institute has hosted several workshops on Islam and Muslim piety, and this fall semester was no exception. “Rethinking Anthropology in light of Muslim Worlds” took place at the beginning of September, inaugurating the *Muslim Worlds European Association of Social Anthropologists Network* and exploring everyday Muslim expressions, perceptions, and identities.

Mahmut Hüdayi is known for saying that those who pray at his tomb will never drown, suffer poverty, or lose their faith. Perhaps it has contributed to his status as one of the four Muslim patron saints of the Bosphorus. Before the introduction of the steamships, any traveler across the strait would have been exposed to the elements, and reading a *Fatiha* at his tomb would have pre-empted the tentative danger.

Waterways were the main topic of the symposium “Black Sea Crossings: Maritime Networks from Hellenistic to Byzantine Times” which took place at ANAMED towards the end of November, an independent continuation of a panel we had co-hosted at the French IFEA institute in March. The SRII took part with a panel called “Early Medieval Encounters”, arranged and moderated by our former fellow Tonicha Upham, which highlighted the Scandinavian presence in and around the Black Sea in the Byzantine period. A publication is planned under the editorship of Alexandre Baralis from the Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The highlight of our Sunday walk was the Ayazma mosque, a small yet conspicuous example of Ottoman baroque situated on the hills of Doğancılar and built under the reign of sultan Mustafa III (1757–1774). It is a veritable jewel with its slight arcades, slender minaret, corner turrets and windows that provide a light and airy interior. The gate and façade are especially notable for their many birdhouses, delicately carved “palaces” for avian residents. As its name indicates, the mosque is situated at a holy spring, what in Greek is known as a hagiasma, yet another example of a continuity across



Tombstone cat outside of the Mahmut Hüdayi shrine.

religions and historical paradigms that is so characteristic of Istanbul.

Already by the time when the city of Byzantium was transformed into the imperial capital we know as Constantinople, it encompassed and synthesized various cultural features of the wider Mediterranean area. On a seminar for our scholarship holders in September, we could hear Luigi Prada (Uppsala) talk about how the Egyptian obelisk in the Hippodrome was brought here in the 4th century. At the same seminar, Stefan Williamsson Fa (Lund) showed how devotional practices among contemporary Alevi and Sufi communities in Istanbul include elements that delimit them from mainstream Sunni practitioners, and Didem Unal Abaday (Helsinki) discussed backsliding feminist and gender policies in Turkey and their correlation with global trends of today. All three scholarship holders are presented in this issue of *Kalabalık!*.



The Ottoman baroque Ayazma mosque.

The centenary of the Turkish Republic took place in late October. During our walk, many windows featured huge Turkish flags, often with the image of Atatürk. But the question whether the national independence was a cause of celebration in the shadow of the tragedy in Gaza divided many parts of the city, and in other areas, Palestinian flags dominate the streets.

A dichotomy between empire and nation-state underlies many approaches to belonging and identity in the republican period, where the fate of the former Ottoman minorities is told as a story of displacement and marginalization. The symposium “The Archival Journey of Entrenched Post-Ottoman Minorities”, which took place at ANAMED at the beginning of October, picked a different angle, focusing on how archival research all across the former Ottoman Empire instead reveals communities with a strong feeling of commitment to the nascent nation-states, including Turkey.

At the end of our walk lay the Grand Selimiye mosque, one of the last monuments of Ottoman baroque, built under and named after sultan Selim III, who ruled from 1789 to 1807. Well-versed and perceptive, with a good grasp on both past and present, he was killed by the Janissaries after attempting various reforms, most notably military ones, leaving behind songs and poems that testify to his concern for the survival of the empire in the modern world.

Perhaps if Selim III had known, he might have felt affinity with another ruler of Constantinople, the Byzantine emperor Manuel II, who cared for the shrinking Byzantine Empire from 1391 to 1425. In December we had the pleasure of hearing Siren Çelik (Marmara University) giving this year’s Gustav Karlsson Lecture on Byzantine Culture and Literature and offer a fascinating glimpse into everyday life in the late Byzantine capital, as seen in letters written between Manuel II and his chancellor Demetrios Kydones (1324–1398).

We concluded our walk by taking the car ferry from Harem, going around the huge Selimiyye caserns that are still in use by the army. The barracks built for Selim III:s reformed troops were torched by the Janissaries, but the new ones – in stone – were erected under his successor Mahmud II and still stand on the shores of the Bosphorus as a monument to the resurgent Ottoman state in the 19th century.

We didn’t get to Kadiköy on this walk, but a few weeks later we hosted a film screening there in collaboration with the cultural section of the Consulate General and the Science Fiction Library in Moda, which we had already worked with in the spring. *UFO Sweden* was shown with Turkish subtitles as part of the Science Fiction Film Festival in Kadiköy in early December and followed by a simultaneously interpreted talk.

As the ferry steered towards the European side of Istanbul, we felt immensely grateful and privileged to be in the middle of worlds meeting – geographically and historically, but most of all humanly.



Olof Heilo / Director SRII

Blind spot - Exploring republican cultural heritage.

Blindspot is curated by Mike Bode and Aslı Yurdanur. Text and pictures Mike Bode.

Blind spot is the name of a cultural heritage project which brought together architects, historians, academics, urban planners, researchers and cultural initiatives from Sweden and Türkiye with a mission to explore and highlight architecture and spaces typical of Türkiye's early Republican (and preceding) modernism which are more often overlooked or neglected.

The project, which was a collaboration between the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul and the Swedish Research Institute, began last year with a number of online meetings together with our local partners the cultural initiatives Postane in Istanbul, Bayetav in Izmir and Kulturhane in Mersin. From these meetings we developed an ambitious program for a number of seminars taking the form of walking tours in the three partner cities. These walking tours, which were realized in November this year, were further enriched by lectures, presentations, visits to exhibitions, side events and enthusiastic and continuous discussions.

The results of the project will be published by the Swedish Research Institute next year with contributions by each of the participants. The publication will have an interdisciplinary character and include academic texts, descriptions of site visits, photo essay's, diaries and other reflections.













Mike Bode is a visual artist, researcher and organizer and is presently the Counsellor for Cultural Affairs at the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul. Aslı Yurdanur is the Cultural Affairs Coordinator at the Consulate General specialized in project management and income generation for cultural events, focusing on cultural exchanges and artistic co-productions

The Participants included:

Catharina Gabrielsson, Associate Professor at KTH, Stockholm, **Sara Brolund de Carvalho**, Artist and architect, adjunct at KTH, Stockholm, **Björn Magnusson Staaf**, Associate Professor at Lund University, **Olof Heilo**, Historian and director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul **Anders Ackfeldt**, deputy director of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, **Yaşar Adnan Adanalı**, Founder and Director of Posthane, Istanbul, **Liana Kuyumcuyan**, Urban researcher and editor, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, **Murat Tülek**, PhD student at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul, **Ulas Bayraktar**, Co-founder and coordinator of Kulturhane, Mersin, **Serkan Turgut**, Researcher and coordinator, Bayetav, Izmir, **Ferhat Kentel**, Project manager and head of research, Bayetav, Izmir and **Mine Turan**, Architectural Historian, Izmir.

Blind spot was initiated by the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul developed in cooperation with the Swedish Research Institute together with Posthane, Bayetav and Kulturhane. Blind spot is supported by the Swedish Arts Council.

Translating Worlds

A Exhibition curated by Milan Vukašinović & Nilüfer Şaşmazer. Text: Milan Vukašinović. Photo: flufoto.

Translating worlds brought together old and new works of 15 artists from Turkey and abroad, and took place at Depo, Istanbul between 29 November 2023 and 27 January 2024. The exhibition, which focused on worldmaking power of translation and the stories that do not recognize linguistic borders, took inspiration from the academic research conducted in the *Retracing Connections* research programme, at Uppsala University.

The artists engaged with the project's fundamental texts that travelled between medieval languages and created a common narrative universe, in and around Byzantium. Offering a resting place to stories that wandered across centuries and languages, the artists grappled with issues of multilingualism, experiences of displacement, borderland subjectivities and colonial legacy. Their works were inspired and framed by the notions of untranslatability, of translation as a collective and prismatic practice, as a liminal experience inspiring admiration and contempt, and as potential practice of care or violence. More information and the exhibition catalogue can be found at:

<https://retracingconnections.org/exhibition/>



Walid Siti, *Under Construction*, 2023, installation with polystyrene, bamboo canes, scrap sheets of MDF, chipboard, hardboard, paint, and timber, variable dimensions, & Annabelle Binnerts, *Mists*, 2023, hand-painted mural, variable dimensions.



From left to right: Cansu Çakar, *Rahime*, 2019, watercolor, ink and gold on paper, 70x70 cm, Pınar Tokatlı Gümüşburun Collection; Elsa Sahal, *Autoportrait en forme de grotte n°3*, 2005, glazed ceramic, 62x44x34 cm; setareh fatehi, (i) *your story of me*, 2023, multimedia installation performance video, dance-tellers: Katerina Bakatsaki, Olivia Reschofsky, Su Mi Jang, Pau(la) Chavez, setareh fatehi; background drawings: Aylar Dastgiri; research and text collaboration: Shahrzad Irannejad, Ogutu Muraya; Fikos, *Enemies*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 130x220 cm.



Stephanie Misa, *We, Islands*, 2014-2023, audio installation (14'16"), wallpaper, video and various objects.



Fikos, *Enemies*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 130x220 cm.

The exhibition was made possible by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, with the support of SAHA, Netherlands Consulate-General in Istanbul, Österreichisches Kulturforum Istanbul, Republic of Austria Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport and Mondriaan Foundation.

Participating artists: Alev Ersan, Allora & Calzadilla, Annabelle Binnerts, Cansu Çakar, Daniel Otero Torres, Dejan Kaludjerović, Elsa Sahal, Fikos, Lika Tarkhan-Mouravi, Lucie Kamuswekera, Mercedes Azpilicueta, Rehan Miskci, Setareh Fatehi, Stephanie Misa, Walid Siti.

Rethinking Anthropology at the Swedish Research Institute

Text and photo: Stefan Williamson Fa

On the 7th and 8th of September, the inaugural workshop of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) Muslim Worlds Network unfolded at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. Dedicated to fostering international collaboration and scholarly exchange among anthropologists researching Islam, the network seeks to generate fresh theoretical and methodological insights within anthropology and beyond.

Despite the picturesque weather outside, twelve anthropologists from across Europe and North America gathered within the Institute's seminar room for two intensive days of discussions. The ethnographic scope of the workshop encompassed a truly global array, spanning from diverse Sufi groups in Indonesia, Russia, and Afghanistan, to Sunni, Shi'i and alternative medicine communities in Turkey, from investigations of ancestor dreaming in Kyrgyzstan and everyday miracles in Bangladesh to new piety movements in the Gulf.

Central to the workshop's theme was the exploration of diverse forms of knowledge, encounters with transcendence and the unseen that manifest during ethnographic fieldwork. Departing from conventional anthropological approaches prioritizing notions such as belief, the focus shifted to understanding diverse Muslim modes of knowing and being. Participants reflected on personal experiences of being unsettled, puzzled, confused, and inspired by the diverse modes of knowledge encountered in their research.



The discussions delved into the challenges of navigating between different worlds, be it diverse field sites or the ostensibly 'secular' space of modern academia. This exploration culminated in a thorough examination of how experiences of transcendence from the field could be integrated into anthropological work, considering the challenges and possibilities of translation, writing, theorizing, and the impact of the environment and networks we move between. This led to wider reflection on the theme of positionality. While the positionality of a researcher is often discussed as if it were something fixed, these discussions highlighted the evolving and changing nature of an anthropologist's position in and across the field(s) and academy. The methodological implications of positionality were also discussed in relation to the posture taken by researchers when entering "new worlds".

Another crucial theme that surfaced during the workshop was the potential synergy between the work of Islamic scholars, both classical and contemporary, and the discipline of anthropology. The philosophical contributions of the great Sufi thinker Ibn Arabi (1165–1240) and influential theorist Al-Ghazali (1058–1111) were scrutinized for their potential theoretical and methodological insights for the discipline. Such an approach not only aims to 'decolonize' anthropological thought by expanding its theoretical canon beyond Euro-American perspectives but also to foster innovative directions within anthropological theory.

In addition to closed workshop discussions, a public hybrid-launch event for the network took place on the afternoon of September 7th. Over 60 participants worldwide joined online to hear a presentation by Fabio Vicini and Lili Di Puppò, which explored new perspectives on Muslim ontologies and key workshop discussions. Professor Joel Robbins from the University of Cambridge, despite joining in the early hours from San Diego, provided a response, initiating a lively hybrid discussion that underscored the enthusiasm surrounding these new questions within the anthropology of Islam and the anticipated future developments arising from this network.



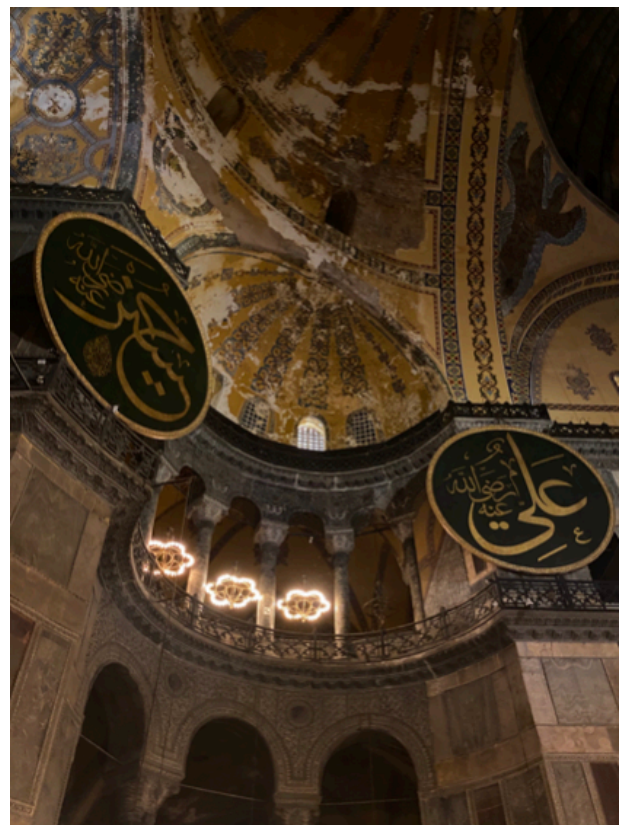
Devotional Sounds of Istanbul

Stefan Williamson Fa

Devotion to the saint-like figures of the Family of the Prophet, known as *Ehl-i Beyt* in Turkish, constitutes an important part of religious life in Turkey. While the question of who constitutes the *Ehl-i Beyt* and what role they play in theological and cosmological terms may differ, throughout Anatolia these holy figures are revered, invoked and commemorated in multiple ways in both ritual and everyday contexts by Sunni, Shi'a and Alevi alike. The Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law Ali, and their male descendants, especially their sons Hasan and Husayn are particularly honoured. Across these various branches of Islam, love and attachment to these figures is not solely an internally held feeling or belief, but rather something that is actively cultivated through a range of commemorative and devotional practices. Vocal and poetic recitation, which include laments known as *mersiye* in remembrance of Husayn's tragic martyrdom in Karbala in 680CE, are shared across communities and have a long historical record.



I have been researching these shared and diverging forms of devotion for close to a decade now. My PhD dissertation investigated practices of devotional recitation, in honour of the Prophetic Family amongst Turkey's relatively small Twelver Shi'i minority community. This work primarily focussed on the Eastern Anatolia region, where I spent over a year carrying out fieldwork in the city of Kars. Due to the Shi'i assertion that the rightful successors of the Prophet were to come from his family alone, such devotional practices are most commonly associated with Shi'a. Looking at existing and historical cognate forms of devotion to the *Ehl-i Beyt* across Islamic traditions therefore offers the potential to challenge commonly held assumptions about sectarianism within Islam, highlighting overlooked commonalities and overlaps instead of division.



I was fortunate to be able to begin this exploratory comparative research in September thanks to a three-month scholarship from the Swedish Research Institute. This initial research project focuses on documenting current forms of sung devotional poetry among Sufi and Alevi communities in Istanbul. Due to a number of different external and personal factors, however, I was only able to spend one month in the city, but I hope to return for another two months in 2024. This meant my time in the city had to be spent focussing on a single group, so I dedicated myself to gaining a deeper insight into Alevi devotional practice. This involved daily lessons with a well-known Alevi musician during which I learnt different pieces, *deyiş* and *nefes*, from the Alevi devotional repertoire on the *saz*, a three stringed Anatolian long-necked lute. We spent hours together going through archival and contemporary recordings of *mersiye*, Alevi hymns in honour of Imam Husayn, analysing and translating poetry as we went along.

In addition to these sessions, I visited important Alevi places of worship, *cem evi*, across the city where I interviewed community leaders and attended a number of *cem* ceremonies, Alevi ritual gatherings. In my attempt to deepen my understanding of Alevi sung poetry I was lucky to be in town for the *Şahkulu Dergah Annual Ozan Festival*. *Ozans* or *aşıks* are singer-poets who play a central role in the transmission of Alevi philosophy, ethics and beliefs. The festival was held over two days in the outer courtyard of the *cem evi*-shrine and featured over 50 singer-poets from across the country, as well as panel sessions discussing the lives and poetry of key Alevi *ozans*.

In preparation for the next phase of my research, I managed to squeeze in a few visits to a number of Sufi shrines, *dergah*, and *tekke*. I also met scholars of Sufism in the city and collected copies key devotional texts. This included a meeting with Yüksel Gölpınarlı, the son of one of Turkey's greatest scholars of Sufism and poetry, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, who shared important insights into his father's work with me along with his own experiences of the changing nature of Muslim devotional practice in the city throughout his lifetime. Having only scratched the surface of the devotional sounds that exist in the city today, I feel this topic requires a lifetime to truly grasp and understand. For now, another two months will have to do.



Research Stay at SRII in Istanbul in September 2023

Didem Unal Abaday

The ten-day period I spent at Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII) as part of my research project focusing on women's movements in Turkey made a tremendous contribution to both my field research and to my rethinking of my connection with Istanbul. It was important for me to gain access to the research field in the light of the new dynamics that emerged on the political scene after the general elections held in Turkey in May 2023. I interviewed feminist activists from a wide range of non-governmental organizations to explore their strategies, tactics and action plans in the context of recent crackdown on women's rights and gender equality policies. Despite increasing threats to gender equality policies, it was fascinating to see the strong will to resist, the resilience, and the spirit of hope and solidarity of the feminist movement in Turkey. As political scientists, we know that feminist movements all around the globe represent strong opposition forces especially in authoritarian contexts. On the one hand, the authoritarian crackdown on civil society generates new challenges and difficulties for feminist demands, needs and principles. On the other hand, it sharpens the political will and resilience among feminist activists to find new strategies and tactics to resist the gender backlash. My fieldwork in Istanbul provided myself with a great opportunity to observe these Janus-faced dynamics in the feminist movement in contemporary Turkey.



SRII is a unique place for researchers, academics, and scholars from the Nordic region in terms of its facilities, location, and resources. It is located on the Istiklal street in the historic Beyoglu district, which has been the symbol of the city's diverse cultural practices for decades. This district of the city is like a city within a city full of people from various cultural backgrounds, sounds and images ceaselessly in motion.

Wandering around the streets of the Beyoğlu district has enabled me not only to observe the recently changing face of the neoliberal restructuring of the urban landscape in Istanbul, but also to reflect on my rather complex relationship with this city where I have started to develop myself as a feminist scholar during my graduate studies.

Moreover, İstiklal Street is one of the main scenes of feminist protests in contemporary Turkey. Each year, thousands of women gather on Taksim Square on March 8 for the Feminist Night Walk held annually since 2003 to celebrate International Women's Day and reclaim the public sphere with the slogan "the streets are ours". Feminist demonstrations have a pluralistic structure with women marchers coming from different backgrounds in terms of socioeconomic status, religiosity, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. They are always very colourful with songs, musical instruments, whistles, humorous banners and slogans. However, in recent years in conjunction with the increasing crackdown on autonomous civil society, it has become a commonplace for police forces to fiercely disperse feminist protests by firing tear gas and pepper spray and blocking the march routes with barricades. Against this background, it was very meaningful for me to stay at SRİİ and be close to the İstiklal Street while researching the current state of feminist protests in Turkey.

Last but not least, the director and the staff of the SRİİ were extremely welcoming, supportive and helpful and made my stay even more enjoyable. As a result, I had a very productive and refreshing stay at the SRİİ during which I had the ideal opportunity to carry out my research.

Didem Unal Abaday is Academy Research Fellow at the Faculty of Theology of University of Helsinki. Previously, she was Thyssen Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies of Central European University and a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Gender Studies of Stockholm University. Her research interests focus on gender politics, right-wing populism, and women's movements. Her publications have appeared in various journals such as Women's Studies International Forum, Journal of Women, Politics and Policy, European Journal of Women's Studies, Politics & Gender, Religions, and Journal of Middle East Women's Studies.

Fellowship Report: Political Discourse and Narratives as Resistance Tools for Democracy

Seren Selvin Korkmaz

During my three-month fellowship in Istanbul, generously supported by the Swedish Research Institute, I immersed myself in a study exploring how political discourse and narratives can serve as potent tools in resisting autocratization and reinforcing democracy. On the opposite side, how it fosters polarization and autocratic tendencies. My research centered on the political campaigns in Turkey since 2002 but also includes an analysis of pre-election political environment of 2023 parliamentary and presidential elections in Turkey.

The core of my research hinged on the hypothesis that negative political campaigns deepen societal polarization and inadvertently bolster autocratic tendencies. In contrast, inclusive campaigns that champion pluralism and peaceful coexistence can effectively support democratic principles. This study involved an analysis of the types of narratives and emotions evoked and portrayed in political campaigns, focusing on how they reflect the democratic or autocratic nature of political parties.

To delve into the political fabric of Turkey, I employed a mix of methodologies including interviews, participant observation, and archival research. My interactions spanned across a spectrum of individuals - from political cadres and journalists to the general public. This multi-faceted approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the prevalent political discourse and its impact on the people.

One of the most striking findings was the pivotal role of emotions, particularly fear and anxiety, in shaping political narratives. The study also highlighted the complex role of the opposition in the autocratization process. Rather than being mere victims, opposition parties have the potential to redefine the political narrative, emphasizing pluralism, coexistence, and democratic values. This aspect of the opposition's communication style during election campaigns was crucial in understanding the broader political changes in Turkey.



I owe a debt of gratitude to the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII) for their invaluable support. Their assistance was the cornerstone of this fulfilling journey. Collaborating with a variety of researchers and engaging with the civil society in Istanbul significantly enhanced my study. These interactions offered a wealth of diverse perspectives and deepened my understanding of the complex dynamics of political discourse. The fellowship also presented a wonderful opportunity to connect with other fellows at the institute and to host them at the IstanPol Institute, where I am a co-founder. The SRII experience opened doors to a wide network of Nordic scholars, broadening the scope and reach of my research and interactions.

As I continue my academic journey, the insights and learnings from this fellowship will be instrumental in shaping my future research. I wish the findings from this study not only contribute to the ongoing debates on democracy and populism in Turkey but also offer valuable perspectives for other countries grappling with similar challenges.

Seren Selvin Korkmaz is a researcher at the Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies and currently pursuing her doctoral degree at Stockholm University Asian and Middle Eastern Studies where she teaches on politics and society in the Middle East and Turkey. She is also the co-founder and board member of the IstanPol Institute and a nonresident fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington D.C. She was a Marshall Memorial Fellow at German Marshall Fund of the US and a Fox International Fellow at Yale University.

Her research interests include populism, political parties, voter perception, election strategies and youth politics with a specific focus on alliance and campaigning strategies of opposition parties within autocratic and populist contexts. Her analyses have been featured in notable institutions such as the Washington Institute, Middle East Institute and GMF. She regularly appears as a political commentator both in Turkish and international media such as The Economist, New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, and The Washington Post, Deutsche Welle. She gave invited talks at privileged institutions including the Delphi Economic Forum, Stanford University, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), and the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) and TUSİAD.

Approaching the Treasures of the Jarring Collection

Zulhayat Otkur

During my internship at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul in the summer of 2023, I had the opportunity to approach the Gunnar Jarring Central Asia Collection. Since I have the advantage of being fluent in Central Asian languages, I engaged in helping to reorganize the research library's Jarring Collection that previously belonged to the Turkologist and diplomat Gunnar Jarring. I was also involved in identifying and compiling a list of books written in Uyghur, Uzbek, Kazakh, and other languages.

As much as the Gunnar Jarring collection is an essential resource for scholars concerning the Uyghur culture, it is also a treasure for those engaged in Turkology and various academic disciplines.

If we look back at the history of the Uyghurs over the past century and a half, the Uyghur people have lost much of their cultural heritage over the years due to war, disturbance, and development. Analyzing the situation in recent years, China has repressed the Uyghur people by destroying their culture, and language. However, despite these circumstances, a limited number of Uyghur cultural heritage artifacts preserved outside China have been giving hope and faith to the Uyghur community by proving their existence. Some artifacts are kept in museums, archives, and libraries of many countries, such as Russia, Germany, Sweden, France, England, Japan, and Turkey, and are accessible for open research.

The SRII is especially worth mentioning among them. The books and magazines conserved in the collection can be found in many languages including English, Uzbek, Kazakh, Chinese, Russian, German, French, Mongolian, Tibetan, Arabic, Persian, Japanese, and more Turkic languages. Most of the items in the collection are printed materials; manuscripts are rarely found.

The materials in the collection concerning Uyghur history, literature, and culture can be divided into three categories according to their content: collected works by Gunnar Jarring, collected works by Uyghur authors, and travelogues. The language and scripts of the materials are varied. They were written in Old Uyghur script, Chagatai script, modern Uyghur script, Uyghur Cyrillic script, and Uyghur Latin script.

Volumes published in Eastern Turkistan, China, and other countries from the 19th century to 2012 are a prominent part of the library. The "Kashgar prints" consist of books printed by the Swedish Mission Printing Press during its 25 years of existence between 1912 to 1938 in Kashgar. These publications constitute an important part of the materials in this library. I am delighted to say that almost all religious and non-religious works included in the Kashgar prints have been digitized by the SRII and are available to readers. Among these scanned books are *An Eastern Turki-English Dialect Dictionary* by Gunnar Jarring, *A Caravan on its Way to Ladakh* by Ähmäd Ziya'i, and *History of Central Asia* by Oscar Hermansson, *Eastern Turkestan, Its Towns and Rivers, Together with Some Information About the Population and Administration of the Country for the Use of the Missionaries* by G. Raquette, as well as some schoolbooks about language, arithmetic, geography, and nature.

I called this library a treasure because the library contains diverse books, newspapers, magazines, maps, and calendars that are not available anywhere else in the world or are limited in number. Additionally, these materials can be used to verify facts or as sources for analyzing a range of political, social, and cultural phenomena of certain historical periods.

One of the findings is the book *Tazkiratu l-Avliya*, a translation work written in the 11th century by Iranian writer Farid ad-din Attar. It was translated into Chagatai, the Turkic language, in Anatolia in the middle of the 16th century. The book you see is a color copy of the sole example in the world written in Old Uyghur Manuscript. Published in 1892, it is presently kept in the French National Library in Paris and is complemented by a French translation.



The book *Tazkiratu l-Avliya* and Zulhayat Otkur

Newspapers published in Kashgar between 1930 and 1950 were born after the consequences of regime changes and power struggles in East Turkestan. These newspapers exposed the dark shadow of the assimilation policies of the Chinese government for the purpose of eroding Uyghurs at that time. We may be aware that the ongoing repression in East Turkestan (Xinjiang), rooted in the 1930s and 1940s, was one of the steps of the Chinese rulers aimed to establish their hegemonic power in East Turkestan by assimilating the Uyghur people and by controlling the Uyghur press.

Some sources have emphasized that the *Ang* newspaper (*Ang Géziti*) was published in 1918, but no evidence has been shown. Based upon the contents of a few issues of *Ang* newspaper in the Jarring Collection, as well as other historical sources, it can be put forward that the first issue of the *Ang*

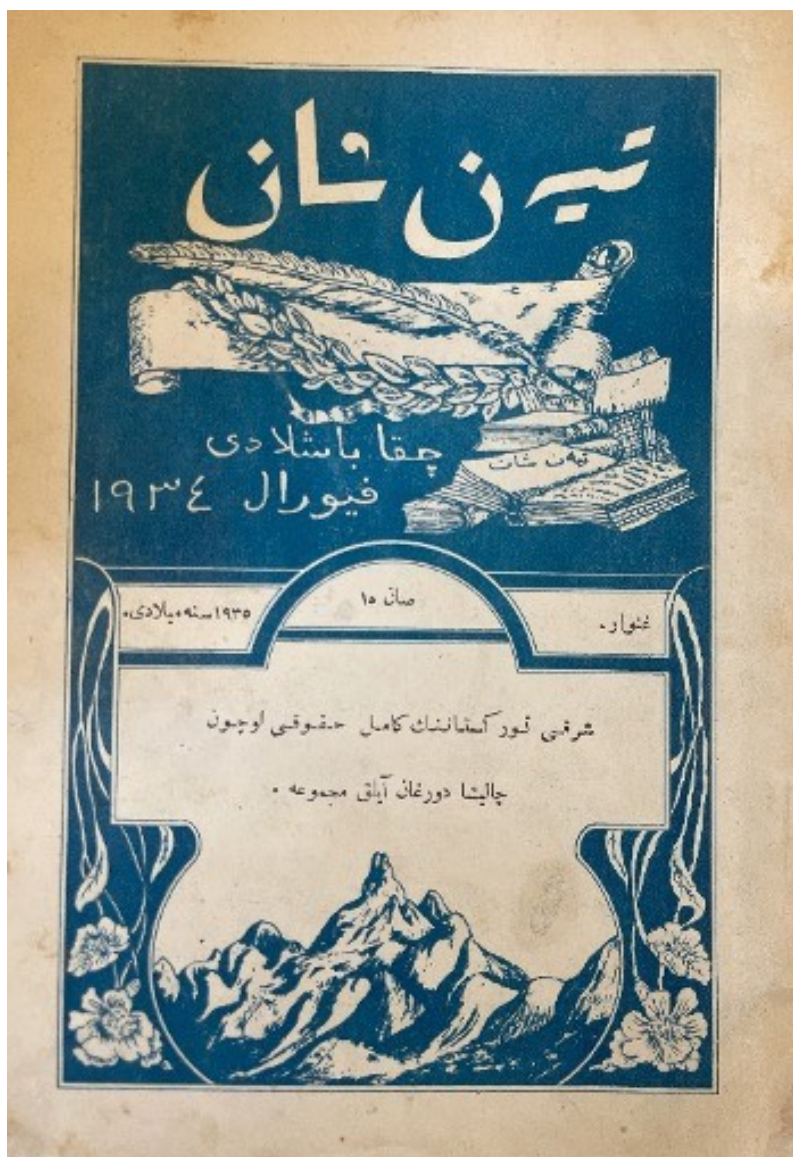
newspaper was published by local intellectuals on January 27, 1947. It lasted less than one year. However, after having experienced a series of changes, this newspaper ended its life in the fall of 1947. Because of the expulsion policy, all the newspaper supporters were arrested. The newspaper fell into the hands of the Nationalist Party of China and began to be published again under the name of Kashgar-Xinjiang Newspaper.



The first issue of Ang newspaper, published on January 27, 1947

In this collection, unique issues of Kashgar-Xinjiang Newspaper (Uyghur: Kashgar Shinjang Géziti) printed in Khotan paper from 1946 and Xinjiang Newspaper (Uyghur: Shinjang Géziti) from 1943 are also available.

Excluding some odd newspapers, some offprint journals and books in Uyghur and Chinese are also available in the collection. These include Literature Excerpts from Turkestan (1960) printed in Kahira, Three Great Principles of Nationalist Party (translation) printed in Taiwan, the Kuresh magazine (1946) published by East Turkestan Revolutionary Youth Organization and printed in Ghulja, the Tiynshan monthly magazine (1935) published by the Sympathizers Association to Chinese Turkestan and printed in Nanking, Uyghur Folklore Literature (1925) printed in Moskov, and New Shinjiang Magazine (1945) published by Nationalist Party of China.



Tiyan Shan magazine published in 1935

In conclusion, some rare materials belonging to the Jarring Collection in SRII provide evidence for analyzing the causes of some entangled movements and historical events and play an essential role in understanding the predisposition of the Chinese government's current repression and sinicization policies towards Uyghurs.

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