A GUIDE TO THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN POLITICS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2022

yada

A GUIDE TO THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN POLITICS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2022

PREPARED BY

Contributed by (in alphabetical order)

Ceylan Özünel

Emine Uçak Erdoğan

Hevi Gökdemir

Rümeysa Çamdereli

Graphic Design

Büşra Yurtseven

Translation

Edibenur Üner

TABLE OF CONTENTS
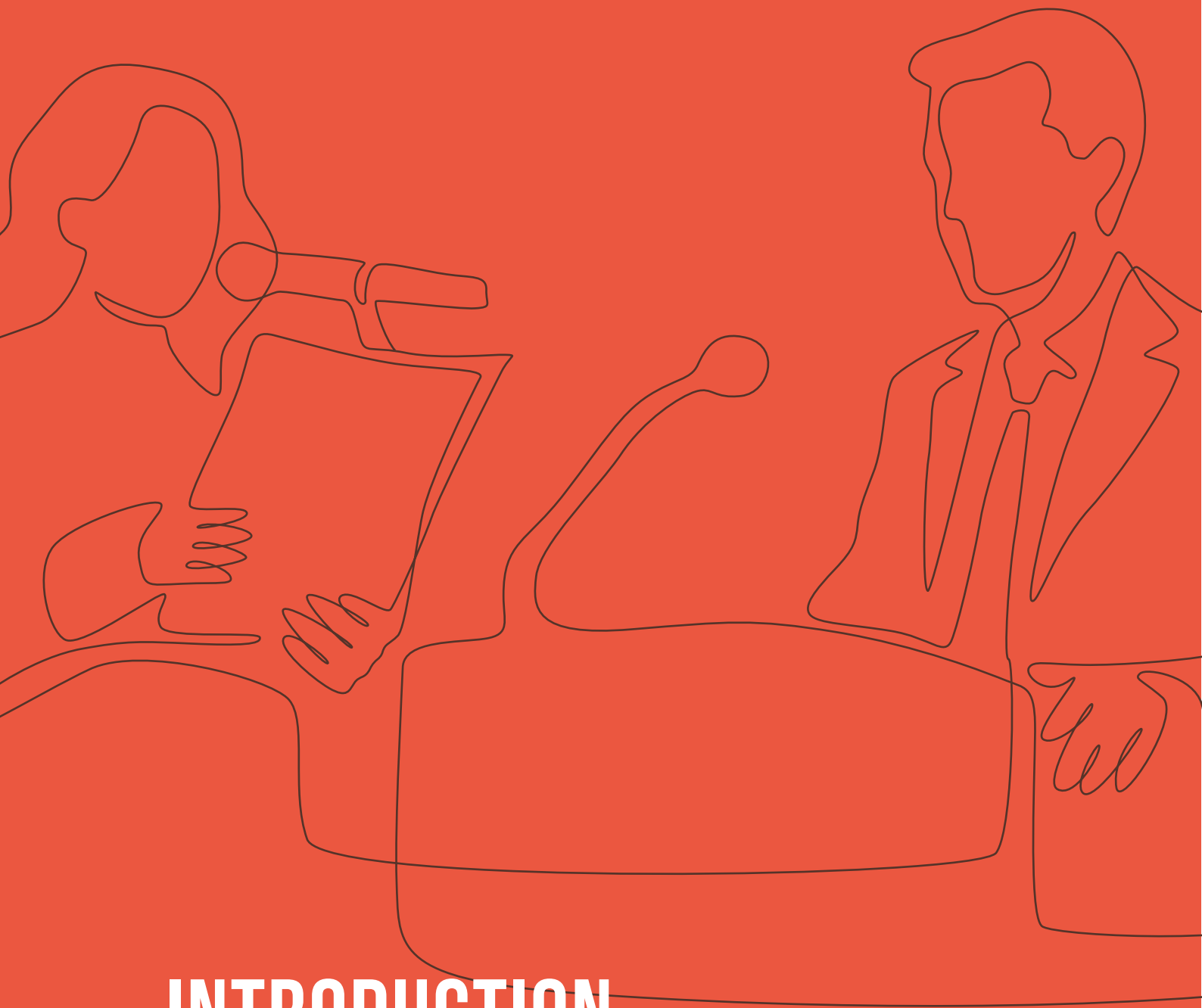
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

As YADA Foundation, we prepared **the Guide to the Dialogue Between Politics and Civil Society** in order to identify the obstacles that prevent the dialogue between politics and civil society in Türkiye from developing and to seek ways to enable cooperation. The findings we obtained in our research on **"The Relationship of Civil Society with Politics and Decision Mechanisms"**[1] conducted in 2021 formed the basis of this guide. In this direction, we backed the content of the guide with the analysis of the interviews we conducted with stakeholders, an academic literature review we conducted on the topic and a collective accumulation of the studies we carried out as YADA in the field of civil society.

When we get to the bottom of the problems, we notice that the necessary ground between politics and civil society for the continuation of democratic functions does not exist. The Guide to the Dialogue Between Politics and Civil Society was designed with the aim of reminding the formal or informal civil society organizations, their structures, and political representatives, of the possibility of cooperation by examining the relationship between civil society and politics in Türkiye from a historical perspective, of revealing the limitations on the basis of perception, of examining models from the world and making the areas of dialogue visible. In this context, in order to understand the relations between civil society and politics in Türkiye, in this guide, we both tried to present the current situation and exemplified the steps that can be taken in this sense by looking at the cases where civil society has an impact on the decisions of politics.

Türkiye's political landscape has never been conducive to an ideal level of efficiency in civil society. Although the dialogue between civil society and politics in the period of Türkiye's European Union harmonization processes developed significantly, it can be said that the process is reversed in the current state. Although it is thought that the decision mechanisms of the current political power are closed to the participation of civil society, it is possible to talk about a space where the voice of civil society can still be heard in the opposition structure that has been diversified. With this in mind, we reviewed the dynamics described throughout the guide and included some strategic suggestions that can be implemented under the leadership of candidate CSOs and politicians working on all kinds of themes and coming from different backgrounds.

We strive to create an effective negotiation environment by bringing together polarized civil society structures with different backgrounds for years through many different approaches such as the topic-based dialogue method. As an institution that always aims to act as a bridge so that civil society in Türkiye can be more influential on policy decisions and therefore on the opinions of citizens, we hope that this guide will be useful for all stakeholders who take an active role in civil society and politics.

YADA Vakfı

---

1   https://yada.org.tr/en/yayinlar/the-relationship-of-civil-society-with-politics-and-decision-mechanisms-research/

IN PURSUIT OF THE 20 YEARS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN TÜRKİYE

THE POLITICAL ARENA AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN TÜRKİYE

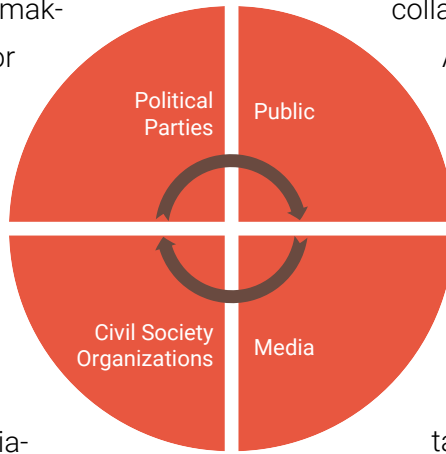# THE POLITICAL ARENA AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN TÜRKİYE

The participation of civil society organizations in decision-making processes in Türkiye has always been limited. With the transition from parliamentary democracy to the Presidential System, the already conflicting relationship of civil society with politics seems to be becoming increasingly ineffective. In the current situation, it can be said that the increasingly centralized decision-making processes make it difficult for civil society and political actors to cooperate.

During the last 20 years, the most powerful area in the decision-making processes of civil society organizations was the European Union (EU) negotiation processes. Laws enacted in 2004 that reversed the limitations on civil society provided civil society organizations a certain degree of autonomy. Increased participation and autonomy of civil society in politics have stopped in the processes of democratic regression, stalled EU negotiations, and the State of Emergency between 2016-2018. During the state of emergency, decision-making mechanisms excluded the civil society as well as the parliament. The last period, in which the processes of cooperation with the government were restricted, made certain ideological divergences clear within the civil society as well. It is possible to say that this is a turning point that not only distances politics from civil society, but also distances civil society from politics. According to the findings of the Dialogue Mapping[2]

research conducted by YADA in 2020, it can be said that civil society organizations are generally open to dialogue with political parties. While more than 70% of CSOs state that they are open to dialogue with political parties, approximately 11% state that they are distanced to the idea. However, while dialogue with political parties is generally welcomed 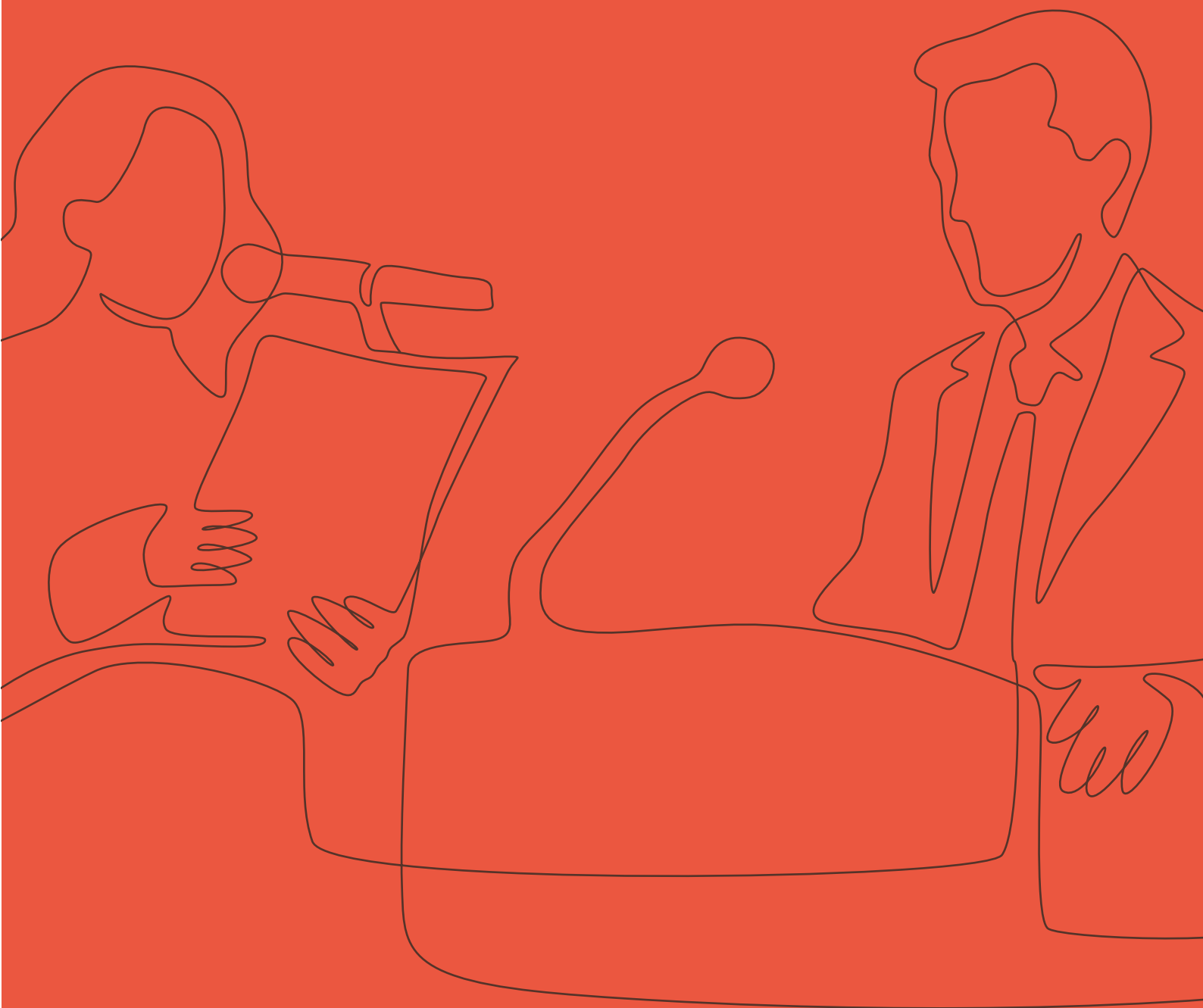by CSOs, collaboration is perceived in negative light. According to the results of the same research, half of the CSOs state that they are far from collaborating with political parties, while only 17% state that they are open to collaborate. Relations with political parties are generally considered to be hard to justify. The basic practice that establishes legitimacy is considered to be trying to reach and be in dialogue with all political parties rather than a single one. This is usually not possible.

The relationship between civil society and politics has an unequal dynamic in which politics are the constant receiver rather than the two in a mutual relationship. When talking about the influence of civil society on politics, politics is considered to be more influential on civil society[3]. It is possible to talk about a common perception that there is a one-sided give-and-take relationship between civil society and politics, rather than mutual balance and control mechanisms, where the former comes with demands for the latter. This, in turn, causes the already existing crisis in politics to reflect its relationship with civil society.

2   https://yada.org.tr/en/yayinlar/dialogue-mapping-of-civil-society-in-turkey/

3   https://yada.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/The-Relationship-of-Civil-Society-with-Politics-and-Decision-Mechanism-Research.pdf

HOW CAN THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTION ON CIVIL SOCIETY BE TRANSFORMED?

HOW CAN THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTION ON CIVIL SOCIETY BE TRANSFORMED?

It can be said that Türkiye's relationship with civil society has a certain parallelism with its relationship with democracy. The idea that the public interest in civil society is closely related to the democratic level of the country is mentioned so much in the literature that there seems to be a consensus. The perception towards civil society in Türkiye is driven either by aiming at political polarization or largely by indifference. Understanding the shapers of the public's perception of civil society is an important milestone for understanding the relationship between civil society and politics.

Media and Civil Society

The approach of media, which is one of the founding stones of democratic public opinion, to civil society is very important for understanding the conditions in which civil society acts. The media often transports the reflections of the interactions between public opinion and politics. The organic bond that the media establishes with the public influences the determination of the place where actors in politics take positions against civil society. As the public moves away from civil society, political parties keep their distance from civil society. This is also a double-sided effect. In an atmosphere where political parties fuel the polarization in society, public opinion maintains its distance from certain segments of civil society. In recent years, when democratic regression and polarization have intensified, media outlets are also affected. The media coverage of civil society organizations is mostly on political grounds.

Within the scope of the research "Representation of CSOs in the Media: Media Analysis"[4] published by YADA Foundation in 2021, the words "foundation", "association" and "cooperative" were scanned in the national printed media within a year between 2019-2020 and the representation of civil society in the media was analyzed. The findings show that the visibility of civil society in the media is quite low. However, in about two-thirds of the news, civil society is on a secondary position. In other words, civil society is a decorative subject in most of the current news. News, in which CSOs are the main actors, is only 35% of the entire CSO news arena. Two different types of positions stand out in secondary news: The first is situations where civil society organizations are not news subjects. Positioning the CSO mentioned in the news as an affected actor, not an influencing actor. An example of these news are the visits of politicians or public administrators to CSOs. The second is the news that CSOs are positioned decoratively. In this type of news, only the names of civil society organizations are mentioned, but their activities or statements are not included.

---

4   https://yada.org.tr/en/yayinlar/representation-of-csos-in-national-media_media-analysis_/

Civil society, which has difficulties in increasing its visibility in the mainstream and alternative media, cannot sufficiently attract the attention of the public through mass media. The same research also shows that the majority of news stories involving civil society have a negative tone. In other words, the way in which the news in which CSOs appear is also problematic. Most of the news have a content that will create negative thoughts about both the CSO that is the subject of the news and civil society in general. News with a negative tone directly targets civilian movements and criminalizes them. These kinds of news are not found in a single political position, but in various sources representing different political positions.

Qualitative and quantitative findings on media visibility create certain obstacles for civil society to become a stakeholder in politics. It is possible to say that there is an obstacle between the relationship between the rest of civil society and politics within this complicated relationship where the dialogue politics has with civil society is merely about electoral arithmetic. Research shows that there is an organic and complex network of mutual influence between the public, the media, politics, and civil society. These findings are of great importance in strengthening dialogue for both policy and civil society stakeholders. The reflection of the relationship between politics, public opinion and the media described in this section on civil society is visualized in **Table 1**.


IT IS POSSIBLE TO TRANSFORM THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY THROUGH THE MEDIA!

Considering the impact of media-public opinion-politics relations on civil society, there is a need for civil society actors to focus on media visibility. As a result of ideological polarizations in Türkiye, civil society can only find a place in the mainstream and opposition media in line with political agendas or 'scandals'. This low or selective visibility in the media not only makes it difficult for politics to develop a meaningful dialogue with civil society, but also distances the public from civil society or leaves it indifferent, as the data demonstrate. Accordingly, civil society actors can exert pressure on the media, especially opposition movements, in order to increase the media visibility of their activities. Simultaneously, civil society stakeholders can highlight their own media formations such as Civil Pages and use social media more effectively. Civil society activities with increased visibility both in their own autonomous media and in the mainstream and opposition media will encourage the collaboration between politics and civil society in the medium term before the stakeholders and the public.

Table 1. The reflection of the relationship between politics, public opinion and the media on civil society			
INFLUENCER/IMPACTED	**MEDIA**	**PUBLIC OPINION**	**POLITICS**
Media		The polarization of the public affects the visibility of civil society organizations in media in this sense.	In the shrinking democratic space, politics only speaks to the media in its own camp, preventing the political and civil society dialogue from being adopted by the entire public.
Public	The media's inclusion of civil society only in an ideological sense pacifies the public's relationship with civil society.		That politics ignore civil society in the period of democratic regression causes the public to perceive civil society within the restrictions of politics and consider it ineffective.
Politics	The media's inclusion of civil society in line with political agendas limits the visibility of collaboration between politics and civil society and distracts political actors from taking initiative in this regard.	The public's perception of civil society within the restrictions of the government and as politically ineffective prevents political actors from seeing civil society as democratic stakeholders.	

This table is designed for reading-across understanding. It schematizes the effect of the element in the row on the element in the column and its reflection on civil society organizations
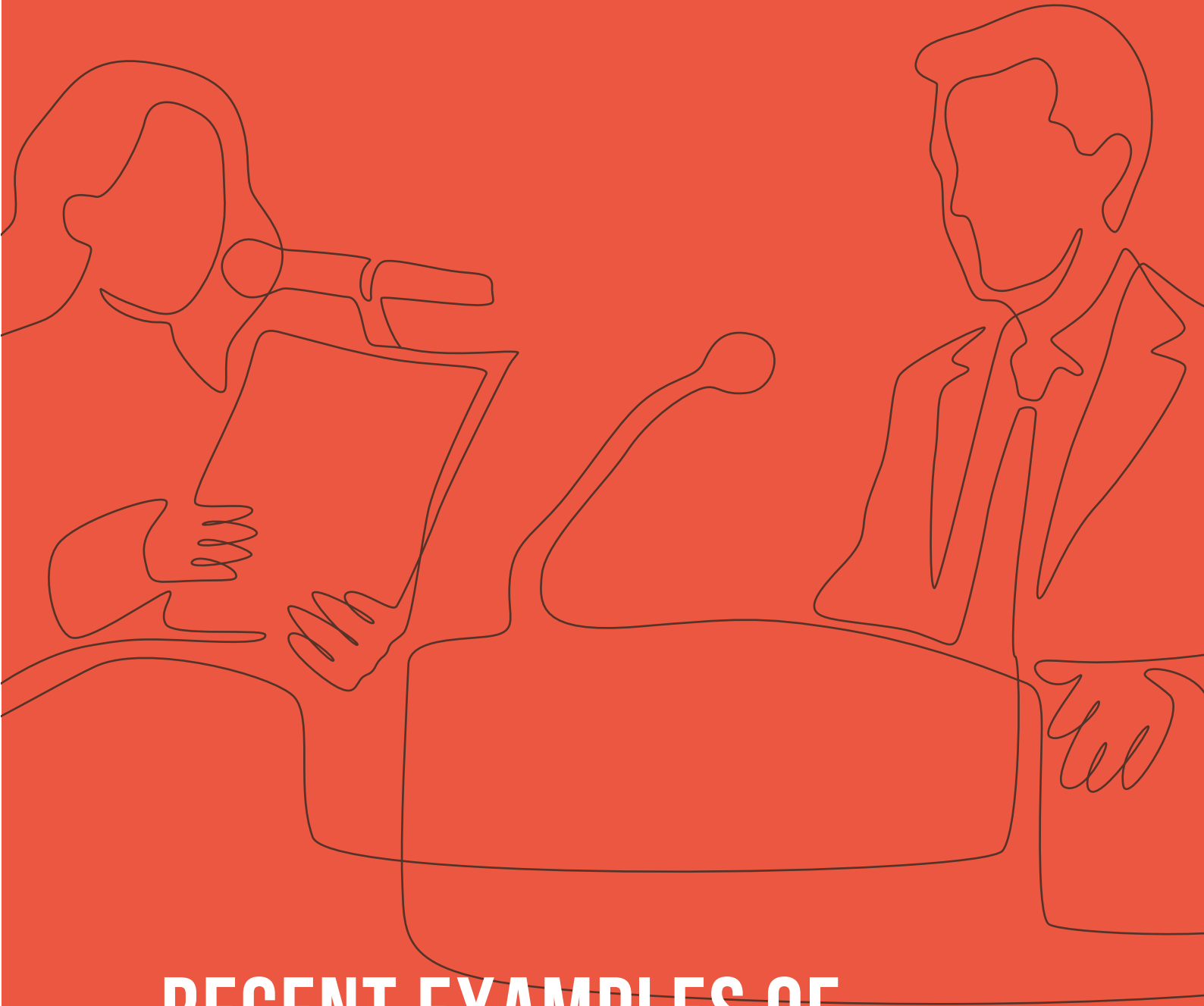
RECENT EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN TÜRKİYE

RECENT EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN TÜRKİYE

Soma Miners' Struggle for Compensation

In terms of trade unions, which are among the areas where the dialogue between civil society and politics are active from time to time, the campaign of Bağımsız Maden İş for the right of compensation of the miners from Soma can be considered an example. This struggle started after the Uyar Mining company operating in Soma did not compensate the 952 workers for a long time. The protests, which started in relation to the unpaid compensation since 2014, grew by conducting dialogue with various political institutions. While the protests were going on, the workers, who met with the decision makers, announced that they were promised a solution.[5] In their statements, the miners stated that both the opposition parties and the ruling party was approving of their legal base in their struggle for compensation.[6] This dialogue was an important step for workers to receive their compensation.[7] Bağımsız Maden İş held meetings with political parties from the ruling and opposition parties, as well as with the Minister of Internal Affairs. During this process, although promises were made to the workers about a solution from both the representatives of the ruling party and the Minister of Internal Affairs, when the promises were not fulfilled on time, Bağımsız Maden İş demanded through demonstrations and declarations that the promises be kept.[8] . With the assignment of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the responsibility for the solution of the problem was transferred to the Turkish Coal Enterprises. After that, the process of meeting the demands of the workers accelerated.[9] With this dialogue, the workers got the compensation they deserved. Therefore, the dialogue established by the union with politics both revived the public's interest in the problem and enabled effective steps to be taken towards its solution.

Ida (Kaz) Mountains Struggle

The cyanide gold exploration activity to be initiated by the Canadian mining company Alamos Gold in the Ida (Kaz) Mountains provoked an important debate. Many environmentalist civil society organizations took action, protesting the situation in various ways, with the concern that the search for cyanide gold mines would cause serious damage to the environment. Various civil society organizations such as Her Yer Kaz Dağları Platform (Everywhere is Ida (Kaz) Mountains Platform), Kaz Dağları Kardeşliği (Kaz Mountains Fellowship), Kaz Dağları İstanbul Dayanışması (Kaz Mountains Solidarity Network), Kazdağı Natural and Cultural Assets Protection Association started a vigil, claiming that the cyanide mine exploration to be carried out will cause serious damage to the natural environment. In addition, a petition campaign was organized in Çanakkale and these signatures were submitted to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources. Thanks to the dialogue developed especially with the opposition

---

5 https://www.birgun.net/haber/madenciler-soylu-ile-gorustu-323192

6 https://bagimsizmaden.org/2020/02/16/madenci-izliyor-takip-ediyor-affetmeyecek-sokup-alacak/

7 https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/suleyman-soyludan-somali-madencilere-gerekirse-kamu-kaynagi-kullanacagiz-haber-1510188

8 https://bagimsizmaden.org/2021/05/19/madenciye-soz-verdiniz-sozunuzu-tutun-takipteyiz/

9 https://twitter.com/bagimsizmadenis/status/1458430369825492995

parties, parliamentary questions could be submitted. For example, CHP Balıkesir Deputy Fikret Şahin showed the mining licenses issued with a parliamentary question about the mining activities in the Kaz Mountains and Madra Mountain. In terms of the follow-up of the company's application for renewal of the expired license, CHP Çanakkale Deputy Muharrem Erkek submitted a parliamentary question.[10] As a result of this whole process, the aforementioned company and its license for exploration activities with cyanide were revoked.[11] During this process, an activity harmful to the natural environment was prevented, thanks to the parliamentary questions submitted through the dialogue conducted by the civil society organizations with the opposition parties, and the various methods used by the civil society organizations to draw attention to the problem. Thanks to the dialogue developed by the opposition parties with civil society organizations, this problem was also on the agenda of politics, and the search for cyanide gold was prevented.

Participation of Women's Organizations in Law Making Processes

Women's organizations developed an effective dialogue with politics both during the preparation and adoption of the Turkish Civil Code (TMK) No. 8049 and the signing, entry into force and repeal of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. For example, during the preparation process of the TMK No. 8049, women's organizations not only took the lead in raising social awareness on women's rights, but also put pressure on the Turk-

ish Grand National Assembly to speed up their work on the Civil Code through various means so that this process could enter into an effective dialogue with politics. Afterwards, the submission of the new Turkish Civil Code Draft to the Parliamentary Justice Committee and the progress made there were closely followed. Representatives of the ruling and opposition parties as well as civil society organizations participated in the work of the Justice Commission. Opposing the provision in Article 10 of the TMK, "The property regime to which they are subject continues between spouses who were married before the Turkish Civil Code came into force", they demanded that the article be applied to people who were married before the law came into force. However, the solution found by the commission was that the law would be subject to the legal property regime determined in the TMK unless they chose another property regime within one year after its entry into force.[12] Therefore, the effective dialogue developed by women's organizations with politics was effective in the preparation and implementation of the TMK.

In a similar example, an active dialogue was attempted during the preparation, implementation, and repeal of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention. Although the Istanbul Convention was prepared based on the dynamics between the EU and Türkiye and therefore did not develop an effective civil society dialogue, women's organizations struggled to monitor and control the implementation of the commitments in the convention.[13] For example, women's organizations prepared a

---

10   https://www.kazdaglariistanbul.org/kaz-daglari-kronolojisi/

11   https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2021/gundem/kazdaglarinda-kanadali-sirketin-izni-iptali-edildi-6299661/

12   https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/372498

13   https://tr.boell.org/tr/2020/10/05/istanbul-sozlesmesi-bir-feminist-mucadele-hikayesi

shadow report to be submitted to GREVIO as the Istanbul Convention Türkiye Monitoring Platform.[14] This report served as the basis for GREVIO's Türkiye Evaluation Report. This evaluation report focused on the realization of the relationship between civil society organizations and politics on the basis of an effective dialogue. The report, taking into account the shadow report of the Istanbul Convention Türkiye Monitoring Platform, recommended the development of an effective dialogue with civil society organizations, especially on awareness raising and implementation.[15] However, in the face of the decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, women's organizations sought dialogue in various forms, but the policy attitude was to reduce the dialogue. However, after its withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, the government set up a new commission and implemented its own political agenda. The Women's Platform for Equality (EŞİK) rejected the invitation, as a response to the establishment of the Parliamentary Violence Against Women Investigation Commission and the invitation of various civil society organizations, both in response to the government's reduced dialogue and the lack of effective research.[16] Therefore, the dialogue between women's organizations and politics has declined in terms of government and civil society.

EŞİK platform, which is one of the important civil society organizations where both civil society organizations can stay in an effective dialogue and CSOs can influence policy decisions, sets an example in influencing decisions especially on a specific topic/issue focus. Another achievement of the THRESHOLD platform is that it contributed to the inclusion

of important commitments on the issue of gender equality in the "Six Consensus" text, where six political parties came together and made commitments.

The Struggle of Life with Celiac Association

Celiac disease is a lifelong gluten allergy of the small intestine. For this reason, the diet of people with the disease should be adjusted accordingly. Life with Celiac Association is a civil society organization that draws the public's attention to celiac disease and creates dietary guidelines for celiac patients. In addition, the association has struggled to make the fight against celiac an important topic in politics. In this way, they managed to attract the attention of politics. As a result of the meetings held by Life with Celiac Association, celiac was noted as the most important disease of the upcoming years with the joint motion of the four parties that hold groups in the parliament. [17]In this context, a research committee was established, and many celiac patients were interviewed. Thus, some solutions could be produced for the food access problems of celiac patients and politics were drawn into the agenda. The report of the Parliamentary Celiac Disease Investigation Committee was prepared without any dissenting opinion and was seen as a non-partisan study. Thus, it became one of the rare reports of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye prepared without any dissenting opinion.[18] The dialogue established by Life with Celiac Association with both the party group leaders and the Parliamentary Research Committee had an important place in solving the problems.

---

14 https://kadininsanhaklari.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Istanbul_Soz_TR_Izleme_Pl-atformu_G%C3%B6lge_Rapor2.pdf

15 https://kadininsanhaklari.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Final-draft-report-on-Turkey.pdf

16 https://esikplatform.net/kategori/basin-aciklamalari/72150/tbmm-kadina-yonelik-siddet-arastirma-komisyonu-davetine-red-yanitimiz

17 https://colyak.org.tr/4-genc-pediatristler-kongresine-katildik-3/

18 https://meclishaber.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber_portal.aciklama?p1=144458

INFLUENCING DECISIONS THROUGH ISSUE-BASED ADVOCACY AND LOBBY ACTIVITIES!

Issue-based collaborations is also an important approach to make the relationship between civil society and politics effective. Within the framework of certain issues, especially in the current important issues of Türkiye, civil society organizations can transfer their expertise to politics. It is possible to achieve this through lobbying activities to invite politicians to meetings where they announce their own work or to put certain issues on the politicians' agenda. At this point, the upcoming election process, especially in Türkiye, can create a platform where civil society can gather around certain issues and express problems and solution proposals to the politicians.

Six-Party Consensus Text and Civil Society

In February 2022, the Republican People's Party (CHP), IYI Party, Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA), Future Party, Felicity Party and Democrat Party came together and agreed on a text now known in the media as the Six-party Consensus. The text makes important references to the relationship between politics and civil society. For example:

"It will be ensured that the commission process has the most weight in the negotiation of the laws and the maturation of the texts; and that the opinions of relevant civil society and professional organizations and experts are consulted during the discussion of proposals and drafts in the commissions in order to operate a more qualified law-making process in this regard."

In fact, this text, which envisages the participation of civil society in the decision-making mechanisms in the parliament in a consultative manner, meets the expectations of the civil society from politics to a significant extent. The finding that emerged in the Dialogue Mapping Research conducted by the YADA Foundation for the purpose of monitoring civil dialogue is important for the understanding of civil society pointed out by the consensus text:

"When we compare the already existing relationships and approaches to building relationships of CSOs that generally closer to establish relationships with all institutions, we see that they have a more positive approach towards establishing relationships with parliamentary commissions while their existing relationships are relatively fewer compared to other institutions."

However, the positive attitude towards the engagement of civil society with the parliamentary commissions is not always put into practice. This aspect, pointed out by the consensus, shows an important aspect for restructuring the relationship between civil society and politics.

"Civil society is an essential element of democratic society. Discrimination and oppression against civil society organizations will be ended, and a safe, pluralistic, and favorable environment will be created in which these organizations can work freely. Regulations that arbitrarily impede the activities of civil society organizations will be lifted, and regulations will be made in accordance with the requirements of a democratic society. The participation of civil society organizations in the decision-making processes and works of public institutions will be based on the 'open door principle', and an equal, fair and transparent method will be applied for these organizations to benefit from funds such as public benefit status and tax exemption."

It can be understood that the consensus text sees civil society within democratic conventions. In addition, the text aims to overcome the ideological polarization within the dialogue between civil society and politics with the "open door principle". The commitment of organizations to benefit from supports such as tax exemption partially meets the civil society's demand for financial independence.

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE OPPOSITION CAN CREATE A NEW GROUND FOR DIALOGUE!

It is a practical fact that polarization damages the internal dialogue between civil society and politics in the long run. It is explained with examples throughout the guide that Türkiye's polarizing climate is reflected in civil society and makes it difficult for civil society to maintain its unity. Although the opposition parties, which have increased in numbers in recent years in politics, can be considered a result of polarization, the chance of civil society to turn it in their favor is just as likely. Reducing this polarization environment and ensuring the unity of civil society requires a medium-long-term strategy plan. In the short term, civil society may try to establish dialogue and collaboration with the ideologically diversified opposition on the basis of similarities in this direction.

INSPIRING
EXAMPLES AROUND
THE WORLD

INSPIRING EXAMPLES AROUND THE WORLD

In this section, there is a compilation of examples in which civil society has developed constructive dialogues and collaboration with both ruling and opposition parties in the democratization process. The compilation of examples from countries with different historical conditions around the world will provide important ideas to resolve the blockages between the civil and political sphere in Türkiye. Some of the countries in the case studies have experienced democratic setbacks, and some are examples where democratic construction has just begun.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia, one of the countries where the understanding of pluralist democracy has not settled, is classified as a "not free country" by Freedom House Index. They summarize the current situation of civil society in the country with the following statement:

"The adoption of a new civil society law in February 2019 removed many of the restrictions placed on CSOs. However, the federal Agency for Nonprofits has a broad range of authority. Also, while CSOs may legally operate more in the areas of human rights and governance, in practice most of these organizations do not have access to large parts of Ethiopia due to security issues or lack of official approval, as in Tigray. While the discourse around CSOs has been more open, many of the practical realities for these groups have not improved."[19]

Although it is a democratic country, it can be said that civil society organizations in Ethiopia have a relatively free environment. In Ethiopia, which is governed by an authoritarian regime, environmental-based civil society organizations can actively participate in decision-making processes. The conclusion reached in a detailed research[20] on the topic is remarkable in this respect:

"Environmental CSOs have an influence on policymaking under 'semi-authoritarianism', even if they are not formally invited. However, influencing policy under these circumstances requires a prudent approach and takes more complex paths than traditional policy-making steps in a democratic context. When the formal pathway for their participation in the policy-making process is restricted, these actors have enough to demonstrate innovative policy approaches by implementing pilot projects, document and communicate field evidence and the best practices, build strong networks with like-minded actors, build alliances with key decision makers, and drive adoption of a new policy. They use indirect strategies that accelerate policy processes, such as investing in human and financial resources."

According to the research, three different important roles played by environmental CSOs as a stakeholder in the production of Ethiopia's politics concerning the forests can be summarized as follows:

↘ Presenting themselves as field actors by working in collaboration with external donors and over-

---

19   https://freedomhouse.org/country/ethiopia/freedom-world/2022

20   https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X1830158X?casa_token=FZAqv41K2wgAAAAA:X4ksItLTZnMP3anNcpB9muKC-toyTLLKG2Y3AUWtZgeF5CaptYFKdbV0ZbDsosK5ieNMUfm17#b0285

seeing projects on site. Developing the best strategies based on the experiences here and presenting these strategies to the decision makers in the next stages.
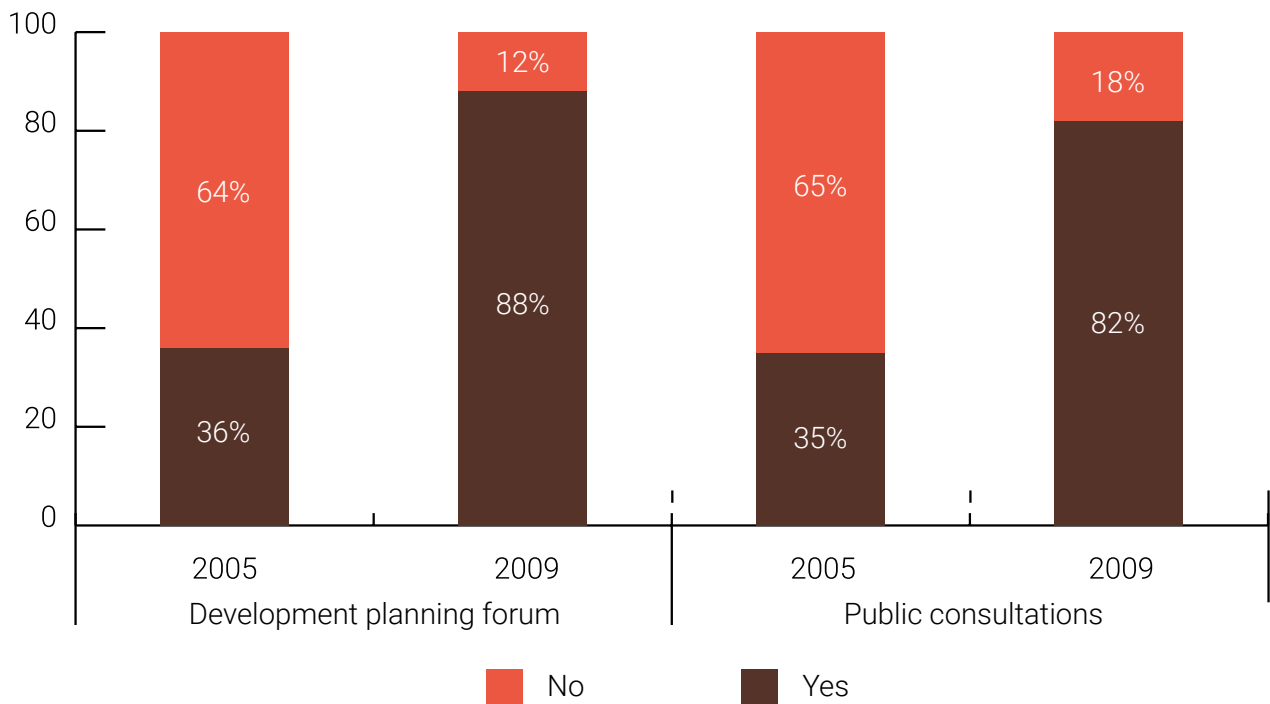
↘ To pass new forestry and environmental knowledge and values to Ethiopian society. To conduct this awareness-raising process in the absence of a free media through an elite network of officials and experts.

↘ Finally, the Ethiopian state and civil society organizations became the stakeholders of the collaborative administration. However, this collaboration should be interpreted as 'closed' co-management in an elite network of authorities, experts and CSOs. It should not be seen as an 'open' co-management that exists in European democracies. It has a rather authoritarian nature.

Indonesia

Indonesia's political scene is characterized by political divisions between ethnicities, religions, and various social groups, so the relationship between CSOs and parties reflects the country's political context.[21] Since the establishment of the republic, Türkiye has been governed by an administration understanding based on identities. This understanding causes polarization in politics and civil society as well as in the public.[22] In this respect, it is possible to say that Indonesia and Türkiye have very similar political characteristics. Suharto, who resigned in 1998, ruled the country for 32 years. Since 1998, democracy in Indonesia seems to have advanced to a certain extent. It is possible to say that the influence of civil society is important here. Not only did Muslim activists and Muslim CSOs make a successful transition to democracy in the most populous Muslim state; they

Graph 1. Civil society participation in decision-making in Indonesia

Legend: No (orange), Yes (dark brown)

Development planning forum: 2005 — No 64%, Yes 36%; 2009 — No 12%, Yes 88%
Public consultations: 2005 — No 65%, Yes 35%; 2009 — No 18%, Yes 82%

21 https://ediss.sub.uni-hamburg.de/bitstream/ediss/7164/1/Dissertation.pdf
22 YADA Foundation, The Relationship of Civil Society with Politics and Decision Mechanisms Research

both opposed Suharto's authoritarian rule and were active in creating and maintaining popular support for pluralism and respect for democratic processes.[23] As seen in **Graph 1**, only about 35 percent of CSOs said they were involved in public consultations and planning meetings (Musrenbang) in 2005, while in 2009 more than 80 percent of CSOs participated in this process.[24]

The answer to the success of this promising civil society and politics convergence is critical for all stakeholders. During Suharto's authoritarian rule, a select few civil society organizations were allowed to take part in government projects. With the collapse of the Suharto administration, civil society was able to open up more space for itself. In the democratization process, the most critical role played by civil society was their participation in accountability mechanisms. The pro-democracy activism of civil society strengthens Indonesia's cross-accountability mechanisms, emerging as an important corrective for the country's delicate vertical and horizontal accountability processes. For nearly a year and a half, civil society has been successful in enforcing cross-accountability and preserving democracy because civil society actors have overcome deep internal differences to agree on a set of democratic standards that require collective advocacy.[25] In addition to the classical vertical and horizontal accountability mechanisms, which can be defined as the relations between elections and state institutions, the media and civil society's cross-accountability and monitoring mechanisms have an important place in Indonesia's democratic culture.

CIVIL SOCIETY CAN AFFECT THE POLITICAL AGENDA WITH PILOT MODELS!

The Indonesian model can be taken as an example for civil society in Türkiye, where democratic decline is experienced and the CSOs that contribute to the decision-making mechanisms are becoming increasingly more uniform. Civil society's putting its agenda on the political agenda through establishing pilot models and innovative approaches can make it an influential stakeholder. At this point, developing pilot projects and field expertise and thus proving what civil society can achieve is an indirect strategy that stakeholders can follow in semi-authoritarian regimes.

However, the Indonesian experience shows how vital the role of civil society actors in repressing internal conflicts and acting as a collective force can be in new democracies. Despite the ideological differences between civil society actors, one of the most striking examples of collective power's dialogue with politics comes from Indonesia. Despite this inherent

23 https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23526552.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab53cac4387283a0d29a0abb20d349a69&ab_segments=0%2FSYC-6294%2Ftest_segment_1&origin=

24 https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Event/MNA/yemen_cso/english/Yemen_CSO_conf_Pres_Indonesia_ENG.pdf

25 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13510347.2020.1796649

diversity of civil society interests, a strong core of groupings remained in both the pluralist and Islamist camps that believed in the non-partisan defense of democratic rights and freedoms. On the pluralist side, for example, there were groups that fought for civic, minority and women's rights, such as the Wahid Institute or the Setara Institute, founded in the early and mid-2000s. In the Islamist sphere, there was the youth wing of Muhammadiya, which had become increasingly conservative in the 2000s but still advocated reformist political goals. Inter-voter groups such as the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), which had both pluralist and Islamist trends, were also at the scene. More importantly, the agendas promoted by these groups—if not specifically activist or liberal-oriented—were propagated and supported by a competitive media landscape that advocated the democratic status quo.[26] On the other hand, once again we can see the reflections of the relationship between civil society and media on the politics.

CIVIL SOCIETY CAN OVERCOME STRUCTURAL RESTRICITONS LIKE POLARIZATION!

As in the case of Indonesia, the active participation of civil society organizations in democratization processes will improve their dialogue with politics and establish a table of equals. It is obvious that there are structural constraints such as Türkiye's authoritarianism and polarization. However, a 'democratic core' anchored within civil society and a determined open attitude towards democratic construction is an important indicator for overcoming some of these structural constraints. Overcoming the internal polarization of civil society stakeholders due to the climate of the country is critical here. Reconciliation of minimum values and unity of civil society is an important threshold. Dialogue within civil society should also turn into a transfer of experience. As Eda Kuşku Sönmez stated, "Türkiye's changing political context requires CSOs to reconsider the channels of interaction both at the political level and among themselves. While some groups have gained a lot of experience with these processes [lobbying], others are still new to the field but are trying to find the best strategies to pursue their interests."[27] Internal dialogue between CSOs is also very important in terms of transferring experience and being a solid stakeholder.

26 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13510347.2020.1796649
27 https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/664740