Article

Citizenship rights in a surveillance society: The case of the electronic ID card in Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey's mandatory ID card system, in place since the foundation of the Republic, is an integral part of everyday day life for Turkish citizens. The country is currently experiencing a shift from paper-based national ID cards to electronic ID cards. The electronic ID card project commenced in 2007 and a pilot implementation was launched in the province of Bolu in 2008 by the Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with The National Research Institute of Electronics and Cryptology (UEKAE) and the Social Security Institution. The electronic card incorporates a chip that carries identifying information including identity number, photograph and PIN, and also includes two fingerprints and two finger vein patterns as biometric indicators. The pilot implementation in Bolu has been integrated with social and health security systems in this province and aims to cover every resident by November 2010. The ultimate goal of the system is to eventually provide coverage for all citizens and all governmental spheres in the country.

The basic justifications for the centralisation and digitisation of the identity system are to increase efficiency in government administration and to maintain security in the era of e-government projects and European Union participation process. Right of citizenship is proven by means of the identification system and the ID card; therefore, to be out of the identification system means to be out of all administrative, political and commercial spheres of society. This study examines the necessity for and the promises of the electronic ID card and discusses the potential risks of the new system for citizens in terms of privacy, accessibility and other implications. Discussion of the meaning of government identification in the context of Turkey and developments in the identification system serve as a background for the study.

Key words: electronic ID card, citizenship, privacy, accessibility

Introduction

ID card systems, particularly those based on national identification systems, are one of several significant contemporary debates surrounding citizenship, state surveillance, security, privacy, and governmentality. Although the motivation behind the deployment of ID card systems differs historically and geographically, identification and its presentation on the ID card, starting from the granting of stable names and surnames by states, has been the proof of legal existence (Lyon and Bennett 2008: 10-12; Caplan 2001: 53). However, the newer forms of ID cards, specifically electronic ID cards, have some unique characteristics. Firstly, they are generally networked with other personal information systems;

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therefore, they usually serve as multi-purpose cards in the framework of e-government and e-commerce. Secondly, they allow different levels of social sorting thanks to their searchable databases. And finally, they have strong authentication capacity due to the use of biometric verification features such as fingerprint, facial recognition and iris scans.

In Turkey, the national identity (ID) card is embraced as the primary and principle document connecting the state and citizens. The ID card system has been in place since the formation of the nation-state in the 1920s, but the roots of the system are even older, being based on the Ottoman registration system which was launched in 1904. Holding a national ID card is mandatory immediately from birth. Even though driving licenses or passports can be employed instead of ID cards for almost every official purpose, not all citizens possess those documents and an ID card is a prerequisite for obtaining them.

Today, Turkey is experiencing a shift from traditional paper-based ID cards to electronic ID cards. The new electronic card possesses a chip carrying information, including an identification number. The card also contains a photograph, as well as fingerprints and finger vein pattern recognition as biometrics, and a PIN code (password) for further verification.

This study evaluates the meaning of identification for individuals/citizens within the context of the electronic identification system in Turkey and, further, examines the necessity and the promises of the electronic ID card, as well as its potential risks for citizens in terms of privacy and accessibility.

The Turkish electronic ID card is based on the central registration system (MERNIS) and networked with other official databases such as the social security system, health and educational records. It is a multi-purpose card which, in addition to identification, is currently used primarily within the health system. The national ID card is the key component of the identification system; however, it is necessarily linked with and affected by the other components of the system.

Within the last decade, a number of new components have been introduced to the identification system. Each of these new components is a part of a larger picture: the digitisation, centralisation, and data sharing of individual identification. The first component is the identification number, which was launched in 2000. The second is MERNIS, which was formed by the digitisation of the family registration files in 2002 and has been continuously updated. Following the ID number and MERNIS, the National Address Database and the Address-based Registration System were established in 2006-2007. The ID number serves as a unique identifier of an individual's information across different population data sources. This availability of merging databases is used for the rationalisation of the Identity Sharing System² among government agencies. Finally, the electronic identity card was introduced to the public in 2007.

As in other countries, there is a conundrum surrounding the ID card system in Turkey. On the one hand, the rights of citizenship are granted by the identification system; on the other hand, state surveillance over personal data is expanding through the identification system. The system is a necessary means of obtaining citizenship rights, but, by the same token, it results in the loss of one of the most significant parts of those rights: privacy. Moreover, the universal accessibility of the system is also questionable. The system is becoming progressively more advanced which results in easier access for those who are comfortable with technology. Those who are unfamiliar with computerisation have more difficulty than ever accessing the system. The digital transformation of the system and the significance of the biometric electronic ID card cannot be properly understood unless neo-liberal state ideology and its reflection for the citizenship regime in Turkey are considered. Therefore, the development in the identification system and the potential risks of the electronic ID card are discussed within a general critique of neo-liberal state ideology.

² The Identity Sharing System was regulated by an act in 2006 (Nüfus ve Vatandaşlık İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2006).

The importance of studying ID card systems is increasingly acknowledged, especially among researchers in the field of sociology, political science, and law (Bennett and Lyon 2008; Caplan and Torpey 2001; Lyon 2009). However, the issue has not been fully addressed yet in the case of Turkey. In fact, the Turkish identification system is crucial for the citizenship regime of the country and the new ID card will have intended and unintended consequences for the citizens.

Conceptualization of identification: Neo-liberalism, citizenship, surveillance, discipline, and control

When the contemporary governing, economic, and social structures of Turkey are considered, the effects of the neo-liberal transformation are transparent. Therefore, it is worth questioning the relationship between neo-liberal transformation and the identification system in the country. On a global level, identification systems serve as a means of governance and surveillance for states (Lyon, 2009: 154). In fact, in Turkey, the ongoing transformation of the identification system in general and the electronic ID card system in particular are the consequences, as well as the facilitators, of the neo-liberal economic transformation.

The neo-liberal influence commenced in the late 1970s in Turkey. However, the institutionalisation of neo-liberal discourse came with the economic agenda of the successor governments of the 1980 military coup. One of the long-term consequences of the neo-liberal transformation is the reduction of social rights of citizens. During that period, labour unions lost their power and influence (Öniş 2011: 721). Fundamental social rights such as education, health and parenting are developed constitutionally as the responsibility of the state within welfare state ideology. Neo-liberal economic policies have resulted in an erosion of both the welfare benefits and institutions, not only at the national level in Turkey but also at the global level (Bugra 2007: 34; Isin and Turner 2007: 8). During this transformation, states leave the concern of welfare to the mechanisms of the private market. Thus, welfare is no longer universally provided to individuals as a right of citizenship. The neo-liberal discourse is obvious in the current political economy of Turkey. The leading political party in Turkey, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), has been in power since 2002. The AKP is a neo-liberal party that portrays itself as conservative democrat and supports Turkey's accession into the European Union (Özbudun 2006: 548). The AKP has realized a noticeable level of privatisation of the government assets, such as telecommunications, health, steel manufacturing, energy, and transportation (Öniş 2011: 713). Throughout this process, private enterprises have become the key actors in several social sectors, particularly those of health, education, and elderly and childcare (Özdemir and Yücesan-Özdemir 2008: 473-474). Furthermore, a number of governmental tasks have been subcontracted to private firms, including security-related tasks.

The principal aim of free market policy in the social sector is not necessarily to cover every citizen, but to manage the long-term economic feasibility of the system. As a result, the corresponding identification system would need to be smart enough to sort the eligible from the ineligible for rights and services (Lyon 2009: 46). For this purpose, the Turkish identification system initially serves as a means to differentiate citizens from non-citizens and, afterwards, it clarifies the full particularities of its citizens in order to match their eligibility for certain services, rights, and duties. In other words, both formal definition (status) and the practice of identification and citizenship permeate and inform each other (Isin and Wood 1999; Isin 2009: 369). In the neo-liberal discourse, citizens must accommodate themselves to the system. Correspondingly, the responsibility to seek coverage under the national identification system is delegated to the citizens in Turkey. Citizens of the neo-liberal era are (or are supposed to be) responsible, rational, individualistic and able to calculate the net benefits of compliance, yet fears and insecurities play significant role in their decision-making process. Due to the increasing role of fears and anxieties in the rationale of governing and action, Isin (2004) proposes a new form of subject and governance - 'neurotic

citizen' and 'neoliberalism'. As introduced by Isin, this form of governance is a continuation of neo-liberal discourse and its subject.

What is clearly observed in this continuum or ongoing process of neo-liberalism is the intensification of surveillance in many forms. In Turkey, the last two decades have witnessed a phenomenal increase in surveillance that has been influenced by the various characteristics of both disciplinary and control societies. When Deleuze describes the transformation from disciplinary societies to societies of control, he pays particular attention to the means of identification. In disciplinary societies, the means of identification are a signature and an administrative number. In societies of control, the signature or an administrative numeration is replaced by a code or password (Deleuze 1992: 4). In practice, however, some aspects of control societies have been built on the aspects of disciplinary societies.

In Turkey, the aspects of both structures are obviously visible in the web of identification. The first phase of the differentiation of the national identification system of Turkey in the last decade, namely, centralisation and digitisation of the system, follows in the steps of disciplinary societies. This phase can be represented symbolically with the identification number. In the later phases of the differentiation, particularly with the commencement of the biometric electronic ID card with a password, the features of societies of control have become apparent in the identification system. Notably, with the employment of biometrics, the body itself becomes a password (Lyon 2009: 23). Combining features of societies of discipline and societies of control advances the power of the state over its citizens in Turkey (Topal 2005: 92). It is worth mentioning that all new aspects of the identification system, digitisation of registration files, the ID number, the address-based registration, the Identity Sharing System, and the electronic ID card, have increased and deepened state surveillance in Turkey.

The classical conceptualisation of surveillance is based on Foucault's *Panopticon*. Foucault's approach is very useful in understanding the centralisation of state surveillance; however, contemporary data surveillance - dataveillance as conceptualised by Clarke (1988) - goes far beyond the Panopticon. The expansion of surveillance, in particular through identification systems, is not simply hierarchical. Although theorizing the framework of the identification system is beyond the aims of this paper, it is apparent that multiple, heterogeneous and limitless connections between different spheres of surveillance is reminiscent of the *rhizome* metaphor put forward by Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 9-10) and rhizomatic growth of surveillance proposed by Haggerty and Ericson (2000) based on Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor. There is currently a strong desire for integrating information from governance, commerce, and control (Haggerty and Ericson 2000: 610). This desire stimulates attempts to put different monitoring systems together and let them work as a complete system, creating what Haggerty and Ericson (2000) call *surveillant assemblages*. This trend can be observed both within the identification system itself and in its relations with other systems.

Electronic ID card systems permit a holistic approach to information use through their searchable and networked databases. In terms of (electronic) governance, these two features are the main promises of electronic ID card systems in contemporary Turkey. As Haggerty and Ericson (2000: 611) re-write Rousseau's words, 'Humans are born free, and are immediately electronically monitored'. In the case of Turkey, surveillant assemblages are forming in public/private and administrative/commercial spheres. The strong link between the identification system and commercial sphere can be observed in the fact that producing one's ID card, particularly the ID number, is a requirement for electronic commerce, banking and even for some discount card systems³. Involvement in the identification system is not only mandatory,

³ An ID number is mandatory for all kinds of banking processes. Moreover, for all commercial and governmental electronic processes (Nüfus Hizmetleri Kanunu 2006). Even to apply for the 'right to access information' Turkish citizens should mention their ID number along with their names and addresses.

but rather inevitable and unavoidable. Even those people who can survive other spheres without being caught up in the identification system cannot survive in the commercial sphere.

A short history of identification in Turkey

In order to examine the meaning of the ID card in the Turkish context, it should be noted that the national ID card is the most significant personal document in Turkey. The traditional word (slang) that refers to the ID card is '*kafakagidi*', which can be translated as 'head-paper'. According to folklore, Ottomans carried their identity paper in their fez, over their head. However, there is also a symbolic analogy behind the term to the effect that the ID card is as essential for official existence as the head is essential for biological existence. The ID card is a necessary tool for inclusion into modern bureaucracy and politics. In order to have legal status and any civil, social, or political rights, people must have an ID card regardless of age. Moreover, it is the symbol of inclusion in institutions of modern life such as formal school education, civil marriage, and inheritance. Traditionally, there is complete state control over identification. This capacity of control also shapes the meaning of the ID card. It is not unusual to be asked to produce one's ID card by police officers or other governmental officers in Turkey. Privacy concerning the ID card system, however, was not a notable issue in Turkey before the electronic ID card discussions.

Identification had a particular role in determining citizenship status during the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. The founding act of the country, the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, involved a special article: the Lausanne Population Exchange. This article maintained the legacy of the compulsory population exchange between the Muslims of Greece and the Orthodox population of Turkey. Among the Orthodox, only those who were the residents of Istanbul and two Aegean islands, Imbros (Gökçeada) and Bozcaada, had the right to live in Turkey, while the rest of the Orthodox population was forced to migrate to Greece.

The respective religious homogeneity of both Turkey and Greece was considered the most important achievement of the Lausanne Population Exchange. That massive population management project was based on religious identity, whereby the population was sorted according to religion and religious identity was used to allocate citizenship and residency rights. In other words, the proposed population exchange sorted Muslims from the non-Muslims in order to determine their citizenship status. During the time of the Population Exchange, people in Turkey had Ottoman ID papers (if they had ID papers). In the process of replacing the Ottoman ID paper with the first version of the Republic of Turkey's ID document, only those who were 'included' got the new ID document. Therefore, borrowing Bennett and Lyon's (2008, 13-15) terminology, the Turkish ID paper became a 'desired reward'; it was even a stronger 'symbolic reward' for religious minorities since the ID paper 'designated a status as a citizen'. When Bigo (2006: 47) conceptualizes the relationship between security, exception, and surveillance, he uses the term 'governmentality of unease' and *banopticon* to refer to the power of state to ban *inadequate* individuals. Lyon (2009: 147) also acknowledges Bigo's surveillance *banopticon* rather than surveillance *panopticon* in terms of ID systems⁴.

Differentiation of the identification system

The Turkish identification system is based on the Ottoman civil registration system. At the end of the 19th century, the first ID papers were distributed regardless of any civil registration in the Ottoman Empire. In 1904, the first population registration served as a baseline study for the establishment of the civil registration system. From that date forward, ID cards have corresponded to the registration system. The system consists of patrilineal family files involving vital and marital/civil information. The place of registration is the same for all family members and refers to the place of origin of the family. Thus, the registration file territorially belongs to the family's hometown. A woman's registration file moves to her

⁴ Even though it is beyond the promises of this article, I would like to note that identification practices during the period of the Muslim-Orthodox population exchange are worth analysing within the *banopticon* model both in Turkey and Greece.

husband's registration file as soon as she marries. If she divorces, her file goes back to her father's file. Therefore, the place of registration for a woman refers the place of her father's or husband's origin⁵. By the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the administrative logic of the Ottoman Empire was abandoned and in many spheres was replaced by the secular nation-state ideology of the new Republic. However, the main structure of the Ottoman civil registration system was kept and new arrangements were adapted to the previous structure.

In the early Republican period, following the replacement of Arabic script by Latin script in 1928, the Ottoman ID paper was replaced by the multi-page ID document. Subsequent to the Surname Law in 1934, surnames began to be displayed on the ID cards (NVIGM, 2000). Institutionalisation in the very first decade of the Republican period demonstrated the proposed geopolitical attachment of the country to be European rather than Middle Eastern. Further, the establishment of the State Statistical Office (1926) and the commencement of the quinquennial population censuses (1927) served to create the data gathering system for the young and modern nation-state (Tamer and Çavlin Bozbeyoğlu 2004: 77).

Until 1976, the ID document was not a card but a small scale, 32-page document. Changes in any civil status such as marital status or place of registration could be updated on subsequent pages of this document. Unless it was lost, citizens were supposed to have the same ID documents from birth to death. People submitted their photograph at the age of 15 and submitted their primary documents to update any change in their civil status to the Population and Citizenship Affairs, the Ministry of Interior. The ID document was akin to carrying a micro copy of one's registration file. Those ID documents were replaced with paper-based ID cards in 1976. Thereafter, citizens would change their ID cards following any change in their civil status.

Beginning in 1989, a blank space was added to the ID card for the identification number, although the identity number project had not yet been finalized. In 2000, Population and Citizenship Affairs assigned an identification number for each Turkish citizen (dead or alive). An ID number consists of an 11 digit random number. From 2000 onward, citizens would have to carry ID cards with an ID number. The ID number is necessary for all administrative and commercial fields; thus, an ID card without an ID number would no longer be sufficient for many official purposes. The official name of the ID number is the *citizenship number* and by definition it is designed for all Turkish citizens. Moreover, each foreign citizen with permanent residence status also has an ID number which is called the *foreign identification number*. The ID number is the key innovation, since it connects the identification system with the family file system and the registration system.

The preceding developments are very much in keeping with the global tendency to develop identification systems. Contemporarily, data gathering and data sharing systems are serving as an unlimited source for replicable and ubiquitous information. Hannah (2009: 69) describes the course of the existing development of data gathering systems: "it is not merely centralisation, but it makes everywhere central". The development of the identification and registration systems in Turkey also follows the same trend. During the last decade, digitisation, centralisation, and data sharing of the identification system have developed substantially (Epractice.eu 2009; Ketizmen and Ulküderner 2007). Firstly, the civil (family) registration files were transferred to electronic form in 1999-2002 under the name of 'the Central Civil Registration System' and the system was launched in November 2002. Within that period, (in 2000) the ID numbers were assigned and matched with other personal information. After the inclusion of the ID number in the Central Civil Registration System, the system has become not only central, but 'everywhere' has become the centre for the identification system. More specifically, Lyon (2005: 66, 79-80) uses the phrase "the border is everywhere" in order to emphasize the role of the ID card in generating

⁵ Rules of registration and movement of registration files are described by the Population Services Law (the last version is dated April 25, 2006 (Nüfus Hizmetleri Kanunu 2006)).

ubiquitous borders within the nation-state territory. Turkey, from its nation-state formation, has distinguished its citizens and others, not only with the physical national border, but also within the national border by employing the identification system. With the ongoing electronic advancement of the system, social sorting would be only a matter of simple effort in the networked searchable identification database.

Available information on the identity cards

Four different types of ID cards have been issued in the republican period: the Arabic script ID paper, the multi-page ID document, the paper-based ID card, and finally the electronic ID card. Whilst holding an ID card has been compulsory since 1927 when the first population census of the Republic of Turkey was conducted, the type of personal information and their presentation on the ID card has altered since this time.

It is worth commenting on how information and presentations have changed according to the type of ID card. The first generation ID document was a two-sided A4 scale paper in Arabic script. The front page included identity information such as name, sex, place and time of birth, religion, marital status, and place of family registration file. The back page was primarily for recording any change in marital status or registration information. The printed part of the form was in Arabic script, but information was recorded in Latin script after 1928 when Arabic script was replaced by Latin script in all official spheres in Turkey.

The first decade of the Republic of Turkey was the era where many of the Ottoman institutions, official papers, and implementations were replaced with the republican ones. The multi-page ID document of the new Republic was very similar to a micro registration file, rather than simply an ID card. That document included information on name, surname, sex, name of parents, place and time of birth, religion, marital status, and place of family registration file. There were also pages for updates of marital status and place of registration. Military service is compulsory for all male citizens after the age of twenty in Turkey, so as well as being a citizenship document, the multi-page ID document was also employed as a military service certificate. Thus, it enclosed pages for detailed information about military service for males, including education and occupation at the time of the first call-up of recruits and duration and position in the army. In contrast to the previous ID paper, the multi-page ID document required a photograph of the owner after the age of fifteen.

In 1976, the 32-page old style identity document was replaced by the paper-based ID card, currently in use. An individual's name, surname, gender, date of birth, place of birth, name of mother and father, marital status, religion, place of family registration, and previous surname are included on the paper-based ID card. There are two different colour cards, pink and blue. The colour of the card demonstrates the gender of the owner; pink for females and blue for males. In the 40-year period of use of the paper-based ID card, some new identity information has been added and some of the information has been modified. Besides the basic information mentioned above, there is an entry for blood type but it is not mandatory and not commonly filled in. If this information is given, blood type is not based on an official paper or test, but is based on the owner's statement. ID numbers are displayed on the card and the ID number is mandatory information since ID numbers were assigned to each citizen in 2000.

Two major modifications were soon realized in the ID card. In 2006, religion became optional information, but in practice it has not yet been treated as optional (Esen and Gonenc 2008: 579). This modification was the result of the debate about declaring religion on the ID card and its legislation was based on the current Constitution of Turkey which mandates that the state cannot force its citizen to declare religion. However, the tension about declaring religious affiliation on the ID card still continues due to the fact that leaving the religion entry incomplete is not considered common practice, but rather is assumed to be an indirect announcement of no religious affiliation (Esen and Gonenc 2008: 601-603). Another modification was implemented in the presentation of the marital status in 2006. Thereafter,

people had the right to choose the status of 'single' instead of 'divorced' or 'widowed'. This change is based on the change to the Turkish Civil Code in 2001, for which women's organisations lobbied extensively.

The last version of the ID card is the electronic ID card, which is currently being piloted. It is a type of smart card which can be used as an identification card, health card, tax card, and driving license, although during the pilot implementation, the usage of the electronic ID card is limited in terms of the health service. The electronic ID card involves fingerprints and finger vein patterns as biometrics. In addition, a 6-digit password exists for verification. The novel features for verification of the electronic ID card, other than the features for identification, will be discussed in detail in the later stages of the article. The basic identity information - name, surname, sex, nationality, names of parents, previous surname, place and date of birth, blood type, marital status, religion (optional) and ID number - are covered by the electronic ID card. Nationality is involved on the ID card for the first time in Turkey. Another novelty of the electronic ID card is the holder's signature. Thus, the card also involves a behavioural verification feature. The physical and electronic details of the electronic ID card are designed in reference to international standards (Mutlugün and Adalier 2009: 15). The size of the card fits the standard smart cards and the physical pattern and colour are the same for females and males. Besides Turkish, information categories are written in English, (for instance, '*cinsiyet/gender*'). This reflects the possible usage of the document outside of Turkey's borders. The electronic ID has an expiration date and is valid for 10 years.

One significant difference is that the place of family registration is not displayed in the new ID card, but it is included in the chip. This change in residential reference is a key differentiation from previous practice in registration and identification systems. Differentiation is found in two ways: The first is that an individual's permanent residence has become the residential reference on file, instead of place of family registration. This occurred with the introduction of the address based registration system in 2007. The second is that the ID number by itself is sufficient to follow the identification and registration web of an individual. Thus, the residential reference for identification is no longer necessary.

The pilot implementation of the electronic identity card

The smart biometric identity card is the newest phase of the identification system in Turkey. The necessity of a smart card for e-government applications of Turkey was mentioned initially in the Action Plan 2005 of the State Planning Organisation (SPO). In this plan, the National Research Institute was assigned as the institution responsible for surveying international experiences of smart cards and developing an action plan for Turkey. Following that preliminary work, the electronic identity card was declared as the only form of smart card for every official purpose by the SPO under the Information Society Strategy and annexed Action Plan 2006-2010 (SPO 2006). According to that plan, the institutional, legal, and technological infrastructures for the electronic ID card were designed and coordinated by the primary responsible state institution, the Ministry of Interior.

The electronic ID card project was initiated in 2007 by the Ministry of Interior with the collaboration of the National Research Institute of Electronics and Cryptology (UEKAE) and the Social Security Institution. The pilot implementation of the project was launched in one province (Bolu) in 2008 and was combined with the health security system there. With the commencement of the system, owners of the electronic cards are expected to use their electronic ID instead of their health cards or their paper-based ID cards. In the first phase of the pilot implementation, the necessary infrastructural changes, especially in the health services, were performed and the new ID card was introduced to the public. In the second phase, the electronic ID cards were distributed to 14,000 people in Bolu. In the ongoing last phase, as of August 2010, approximately 200,000 people have received their ID cards. The project aims to cover all residents (total population of 271,545) of the province by November 2010.

For the distribution of the electronic ID cards, residents of Bolu have been invited to attend the Provincial Office of the Population and Citizenship Affairs. The list of the prospective cardholders is based on the list of the address-based registration system in Bolu. Thus, with the commencement of the implementation, the electronic ID card system is connected to the central registration system. Identity information, however, is stored in the Central Civil Registration System and the information on the ID card comes from this system.

During this process, the paper-based ID cards of residents of Bolu are replaced by the electronic ID cards. The electronic ID card has three components for verification: photograph, fingerprints, and password. The first is the conventional means of verification based on face-to-face confirmation of an authorized person for any kind of identification purpose, whereas both the second and the third are new means of verification based on the digital confirmation of a corresponding control machine or device. In order to prepare an electronic ID card, the fingerprints and finger vein of the card owner are first scanned and installed on the card and then the card owner is asked to create a 6-digit password (Mutlugün and Adalier 2009: 15).

Since the card is intended to be the key apparatus of the health system, people from various social and economic backgrounds would use the card within the pilot implementation period. This change affects the regular practices of individuals, state institutions, and the private sector and so has necessitated several practical changes; for instance, people have changed their paper-based ID card to the biometric electronic ID card and private and public hospitals and clinics, medical laboratories, and pharmacies have installed fingerprint and password readable systems. This major infrastructural change will be expanded to the national level after the pilot implementation.

A unique application: Double digital verifications

There are two digital means of verification in the new Turkish electronic ID card: verification by body, i.e., biometrics, and intellectual verification i.e., password. The introduction of biometrics in any identity card system can be framed as transformation of body to a password (Lyon 2009: 123). According to this point of view, the Turkish electronic ID card has the unique feature of having both a conventional password and the body used as passwords in the system.

Zureik (2004: 116) details the distinctiveness of an ID card, a password, and a biometric. According to him, an ID card is ‘something one has’, a password is ‘something one knows’, and finally a biometric is ‘something one is’. The basic purpose of the traditional ID card is to answer the question ‘who is this?’ It is one step beyond the physical existence of an individual. By assigning an ID card, the official existence of an individual is also acknowledged. An electronic ID card has a further purpose. It aims to verify the correspondence of the card with the card owner, or in other words, to correlate the physical existence with the official existence. Lyon (2009: 115) mentions that the purpose of biometrics on the ID card is to enquire ‘are you really you?’. When we follow this conceptualisation of ‘existence’ and ‘verification’ through the ID card, we can see that the proposed Turkish electronic ID card is one more step forward. In the first step, the card owners identify themselves by their electronic IDs. In the further step, these cards are employed to verify the card owners both through biometrics (fingerprints and finger vein) and passwords. We can conceptualize this ‘double verification’ as biometric verification through fingerprint and logical verification through password. The card also involves signature; therefore, it can be employed for signature verification as well.

Meaning of fingerprints in the Turkish context

Unlike in the North American and West European contexts, fingerprints have less association with crime in the Turkish context. Since the adult literacy rate was low during the first years of the republican period, fingerprints were used instead of signatures by a remarkable number of people. A fingerprint was the primitive way to declare one’s acceptance for marriage arrangements, or even for bank accounts. In short, fingerprints have a strong association with lack of education in Turkey. But ironically, fingerprints will be

the modern, high-tech tool to prove one's identification. Usage of fingerprints would not be limited to ID cards but would be an option for authentication in public and private services. In 2010, a number of commercial banks introduced a fingerprint feature in their ATM cards.⁶

Legal and institutional frames

Even though Turkey has strong cultural and geographical bonds with the Middle East, in this paper, the launch of the electronic ID card is placed in the European Union (EU) context since the whole e-government project of the country has developed within the EU participation process. The legislation of the Turkish electronic ID card (called the 'electronic citizenship card') is based on the Information Society Strategy and annexed Action Plan 2006-2010, adopted by the State Planning Organisation⁷ (SPO 2006). This action plan describes the responsible institutions, biometrics features, and the project's pilot implementation⁸. According to the action plan, deployment of the electronic ID card will be conducted after the evaluation of the pilot implementation. This plan is a part of the e-Transformation Turkey Project which was launched in 2003 following Turkey's participation in the e-Europe + Initiative. This initiative was designed for European Union candidate countries in 2001 in order to spread the e-Europe notion of the EU. The technical features of the card are undertaken in accordance with European Union identification card systems standard, DS/CEN/TS 15480-1 (European Committee for Standardisation 2010; TUBITAK UEKAE 2010a).

The pilot implementation was initiated by the official notice of the Prime Minister in 2007 (Basbakanlik Genelgesi 2007). The phases of the pilot implementation and the features of the biometrics were described in this notice. According to the current legislation, prints and finger vein records are used for the biometrics of the Turkish electronic ID card and are stored only in the card, not in any other central system. The notice also mentioned that the electronic ID card would be used for the health system in Bolu during the pilot implementation. Digitisation of health systems is one of the priorities of the EU procedure. Therefore, Turkey's commencement of the operation of the electronic ID card within the health system fits the criteria for European Union accession negotiation. For the pilot implementation, the Ministry of Health has a particular position as a partner of the project in Bolu.

Necessities and promises of the electronic ID card

Two fundamental promises of the electronic ID card system are administrative efficiency and security. The Turkish bureaucracy is known for its massive, complicated, and painfully slow features. In the last decade, e-governmentalisation has been promoted as a panacea in order to accommodate both individual level and institutional level complaints about bureaucracy. The electronic ID card has a unique role in the operational side of e-government, since it is the key tool to connect to the identification system and eventually it will be deployed as a multi-purpose card among all state institutions. In fact, the unique presentation of the official identity of citizens and foreign residents has already been guaranteed by assigning ID numbers (either citizenship number or foreign identification number). The electronic ID card

⁶ Commercial banks in Turkey seem agreeable to employing finger vein records as biometrics. İşbank introduced finger vein-featured banking cards under the title of 'bio-identity'. According to this feature, customers can use banking facilities without using their bank card by simply using finger vein readable ATMs and POST machines (Türkiye İş Bankası 2011). Another national bank, Vakıfbank, promoted this feature as a 'bio-password'. At the confirmation stage, customers should use their banking card passwords and national ID numbers as well as their finger vein (Vakıfbank 2011).

⁷ It is the 46th Action under the subtitle Social Security and Welfare Services; and published on the Official Gazette numbered 2642 on July 28, 2006.

⁸ The Ministry of Interior (General Directorate of the Population and Citizenship Affairs) is the responsible institution and the following institutions are in co-operation: the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance (Revenue Administration), the Ministry of Health, the State Planning Organization, the Social Security Authority, the Social Insurance Institute, the General Directorate for Security, and The National Research Institute of Electronics and Cryptology (UEKAE).

provides a significantly different type of verification to previous incarnations of the ID card through the fingerprints and the password (Mutlugün and Adalier 2009: 15).

For the proposed national ID card projects in North America and West Europe, the issue of national security, more specifically the notion of fighting terrorism, has been used to justify the deployment of national ID card systems in the last decade. However, in Turkey, fighting terrorism is not the rationale behind proposing the electronic ID card. Terror in Turkey predominately refers to any kind of attacks by the PKK (Kurdish Worker's Party). Since most of the members of the PKK are citizens of Turkey, the issue transcends identification and formal citizenship concerns. On the other hand, the national ID card system, just like other state-monitored systems, can be used to represent the country as a secure place, to both its own citizens and other countries. This strategy is used by other countries in the region. According to Karake-Shalhoub (2008: 140) the electronic ID card projects in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are encouraged by the US and UK. Moreover, the national ID card projects serve as a means for the GCC countries to demonstrate their awareness about security to the West, particularly in regard to fighting terrorism.

Turkey's national security has become a wider geographical concern along with its EU candidate status. The land of Turkey is an important route for migrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented immigrants, and it serves as a bridge between the continents of Europe and Asia, more specifically between the EU countries, the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS), and the Arab World. While the economic necessity of migration is taken into account, the contemporary policies of the global North towards migration, even towards labour migration, are contradictory. While both the mobility of people and transactions of goods, properties and services are increasing, anti-liberal policies towards the 'others', particularly towards migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers are heightening (Isin and Turner 2007: 10-11). In this political environment, especially in the post 9/11 context, national security has become one the most highlighted concerns of contemporary society. With respect to increasing concern of security of the EU and Turkey's promises as a candidate country, electronic ID card system serves as another means of adjustment in the process. Therefore, rather than national security, fitting EU criterion and security concerns have been widely used to justify the deployment of national ID card system.

For the pilot implementation of the electronic ID card in Turkey, security concerns are centred on the security of the systems, (concern for national infrastructure rather than concern for national security) and particularly the security of the health system. The Ministry of Interior emphasized the advantages of using the electronic ID card as a means of preventing clandestine use of the health system and expediting processes in health facilities. Since the electronic ID card has the further verification feature of the fingerprints, the card can be used only by the person who owns the fingerprints. This measure is supposed to prevent any abuse of the health card by multiple users. The Ministry of Health maintains that the replacement of the paper-based health card by the electronic ID card can also stop the trafficking of medicines and medical supplies. Health insurance covers a partial percentage of prescription fees (usually 80 percent). Traffickers sell medicine or medical supplies already paid for by the health system and health insurance (generally the state health insurance). In current practice, the prescription (in terms of content and amount) is checked with the corresponding ID number. This control aims to prevent over-prescription, however, verification using the biometric ID card is also used to confirm the owner of the ID card (and the ID number) and the prescription when the medicine is dispensed.

Potential risks of the electronic ID card: Privacy and accessibility

The issues surrounding privacy and identity cards has come to light for the first time with the commencement of the electronic ID cards. The method of data storage is the first privacy concern for biometric ID cards, according to the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC), Washington, DC

(Zureik 2004: 120). There is no centralized data storage for fingerprints for the pilot implementation in Turkey, but the data storage policy after the national deployment of the electronic ID cards is not transparent in the official documents.

The level of trust in the biometric features of the card is another privacy concern. In the supporting documents, the electronic ID card is presented as zero-forgery document (TUBITAK UEKAE 2010b; Basbakanlik Genelgesi 2007). The card is designed in accordance with international standards in order to prevent any possible forgery (Mutlugün and Adalier 2009: 14-15). Since the level of trust in the electronic ID card is so high, the discovery of imitations would be more difficult than with paper-based ID cards. But every system, regardless of its high-tech features, is open to fraud, which has become increasingly more sophisticated. Moreover, the electronic ID card system is connected to other governmental bodies; therefore, any forgery of the ID card is not limited to only the identification system. Forgery of the electronic ID card would involve not just identity theft, but more generally theft of all institutional information such as social and health security information, information belonging to the education system and commercial information (Ketizmen and Ülküdenen 2007: 2).

Another concern is with regard to data sharing, which constitutes a further stage of technological evolution for e-government, following computerisation of governmental structure and administrative implementations (Ogura 2006: 283). The launch of the ID number initially allowed sharing of personal information between different state institutions, but it is limited to a couple of state institutions due to deficiency of infrastructure of the other institutions. However, with the deployment of the electronic ID card, all state institutions will update their systems. Thus, the entire government and private systems will soon be open to full data sharing. This will be an electronic floodgate opening because of the potential for data mining (Amoore 2008: 26), but, significantly, the future legal range of data sharing is not yet transparent. In particular, two domains of data sharing are very crucial and problematic. The first is security and the second is commerce, since we live in an era where privacy can be easily sacrificed for the sake of security and extension of the free market. There is no specific legislation for privacy protection of personal data flow in Turkey, however, banks have already modified their card system to fingerprint banking card at the same time of the electronic ID card's pilot period (Türkiye İş Bankası 2011; Vakıfbank 2011).

Stalder and Lyon (2003: 85) mention the extremely high cost of implementing of the electronic ID card. The material cost of covering a universal population with the new ID card as well as the technological and infrastructural costs are significant burdens for the national economy of Turkey. Furthermore, service providers in the health sector, including hospitals, pharmacies, medical laboratories and health offices have had to adapt their technologies at significant cost in order to accommodate the verification features of the electronic ID card system. The economic gains and losses of the new system is a significant issue.

The confidence level in the biometric feature has not been discussed in any related document in Turkey. However, false positive and false negative errors are currently in discussion for other countries cases (Lyon 2009: 116; Zureik 2004: 120).

It is also necessary to assess the universal accessibility of the electronic ID card. Coverage of the national ID card is another important concern for Turkey. Exclusion versus inclusion is one of the basic tensions and contradictions between state and citizens (Isin and Turner 2007: 6). In Turkey, the means for inclusion is registration with the identification system. The issue of exclusion versus inclusion is even heavier in the case of Turkey since the registration system has not been perfected in terms of coverage. Although birth registration and having an ID card are mandatory, a significant percentage of people, especially young children, are not in the registration system. The new complete system, including the ID number, the Address Based Registration and the electronic ID card, aims to increase registration.

Recent figures show that there has been an increase in birth registration and the percentage of children who are not yet registered has declined in Turkey in the last 5 years, yet children from different backgrounds still have different levels of registration. Registration in the first month of birth is compulsory; however, recent data from the Demographic and Health Survey 2008 shows that 6 percent of children under age 5 are not registered.⁹ The statistics demonstrate that female children (7.4 percent), Kurdish children (14 percent), children from the lower rank of wealth (11.2 percent), those whose mothers are illiterate or not institutionally educated (13.6 percent), and those who live in the Middle East of Turkey (12.6 percent) are more likely to be unregistered (Koç and Eryurt 2010: 116-117). Based on these figures, it is arguable that the offspring of the disadvantaged social and economic groups are also at a disadvantage in obtaining formal citizenship rights, as a consequence of being unevenly unregistered. For example, people from the lower rank of wealth are most in need of free health insurance (or the green card) in Turkey. However, registration into the identification system is compulsory for applying for this benefit.

Another issue related to accessibility is the level of familiarity with new technology. The new ID card accelerates many administrative functions. But, by the same token, the system demands at least a minimum level of familiarity with computer technology, otherwise some people will be dependent on others, and the elderly population¹⁰ especially would encounter more difficulty than before.

The definition of citizen in contemporary social and political environments is not as static as it is defined by Marshall, but, rather, dynamic. Social structures such as social class, gender, race, ethnicity and immigration are predominant in modern political discourse of citizenship (Isin and Turner 2007: 6-8). Correspondingly, citizenship regimes are not static but open to transformations within time and among social structures. Therefore, the appearances of citizenship regimes of a country, just like in the case of Turkey, might differ for various groups in the country. Although the above mentioned social structures are not formal barriers to the right of citizenship in Turkey, they turn to informal barriers due to registration and problems with inclusion in the identification system. Practically speaking, these social structures perform as indirect barriers to the right of citizenship for certain groups of people.

Conclusion

As discussed in this study, Turkey has a long history of employing an identification system as well as the national identity card. The launch of the electronic biometric national ID card with a password verification feature in 2008 is the next stage of the centralisation and digitisation of that nation's identification system. With the fingerprints and the password features, the ID card is not only a means of official identification but also means of verification.

Among European countries, electronic ID card systems are increasingly common with their ability to interoperate. Turkey, as an EU candidate country, also aims to develop a comparable identification system that allows future cross-border operations. Accordingly, the electronic ID card was proposed as a part of the e-Transformation Project which was initiated for Turkey's European Union accession negotiation process subsequent to Turkey's participation in the e-Europe + Initiative in 2003. In order to adhere to the EU standard, the technical features of the card are developed consistent to the EU identification card systems standard.

During the transition from the paper-based ID card to electronic ID card, it is important to consider the *gains* and *losses* or *promises* and *risks* of the new ID card for the citizens of Turkey. Stalder and Lyon

⁹ This figure has dropped sharply in the last 5 years from 16 percent to 6 percent (HIPS 2009: 40).

¹⁰ Although there is no empirical study on the computer literacy of the elderly population in Turkey, it is known that their high illiteracy level creates a disadvantage and digital divide. A recent nationwide study demonstrates that 43 percent of the population over 65 is illiterate in Turkey while general illiteracy is only around 10 percent in the country (HÜNEE 2010: 257).

(2003: 78) mention the problems of measuring the gains and losses for calculating the overall consequences of ID card systems. According to them, gains and losses should be evaluated separately. The case in Turkey is challenging, since the official presentation of the new ID card has focused on merely positive outcomes of the shifting process from the paper-based ID card to the electronic ID card. While administrative efficiency and security in the age of e-governmentalisation are the primary rationalisation of this transformation, the official documents and the pilot implementation of the electronic ID card project demonstrate the possible risks of this new form of identification, especially in terms of privacy and accessibility, issues which have been heretofore overlooked. The electronic ID card system is based on a digital identification database and this system is networked, or at least open to being networked, with the other databases. This allows the use of personal data for purposes other than record collection and maintenance. The electronic ID card project in Turkey as a part of other neo-liberal governmental projects seems focussed more on the benefits and sustainability of the system than the needs of its citizens.

Since citizenship rights are granted by means of the identification system, which also regulates citizenship rights and duties, the inherent issues of the identification system are transferred directly to its citizens when they participate in the administrative, political, and commercial spheres of society. Therefore, the ID card serves not only as a key to open different spheres to citizens, but, contrastingly, it becomes an exclusionary tool in various spheres and threatens privacy. Being unregistered and being unfamiliar with new technology are the main reasons of exclusion. Young children, particularly from Kurdish decent, low income families, and those from the eastern part of the country, those whose mothers are illiterate or not institutionally not educated, or the elderly have a disproportionate risk of being unregistered in Turkey. Moreover, the elderly population have a high risk of exclusion because of their unfamiliarity with the computerised features of identification system.

The significant outcome of centralisation through the identification system is the ability of the system to merge both rights and duties of a citizen. The necessary privacy protection related to electronic ID cards is beyond the current technological features of the card. There is an immediate need for a legal framework, particularly for limitation of sharing of identity information between different state institutions, and between the state and the private sector, before deployment of the new ID card. This legalisation needs to challenge the idea of accepting the state as the owner of the identity information and address privacy issues related to identification.

Although the electronic ID card is introduced as a vital part of ‘modern life’ in Turkey, it should be noted that some of the richest countries such as Canada, Japan, the UK and the US, do not have national ID cards. In these countries, ID card systems are assumed as an “unacceptable extension of state surveillance” (Lyon and Bennett 2008: 13-15, 18). There are some cards for particular services in these regions, for example the health card in Canada, which is not a national card but a service card for every person who has right of access to the health facilities. The electronic identification system of Turkey is presented as the inevitable next step of e-governmentalisation within the frame of European Union negotiation process; however, the legal frameworks have not yet been harmonized in accordance to the Data Protection Directive of the Council of Europe (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 1995).

The next two phases of the electronic ID card project in Turkey are the evaluation of the pilot implementation and the adoption of the system at the national level. The evaluation will be an important, and probably the last, opportunity for the responsible institutions, as well as scholars from relevant fields, to discuss the necessity of the card, or at least to propose the necessary modifications to eliminate suspicion about the convenience of electronic ID card for all citizens in terms of accessibility and privacy.

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