

# The ALPHA project: Active Learning Protects Heritage & Archaeology

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**A**LPHA (Active Learning Protects Heritage and Archaeology) builds on the previous Cultural Protection Fund project ‘Carved in Stone’. That earlier project piloted educational games that raised primary school children’s awareness of heritage conservation in schools across the city of Fethiye (see photographs), working in partnership with Fethiye Museum and FETAV, a local educational and environmental NGO (Greaves et al. forthcoming).

Building on participant feedback and evaluation, and in light of the experience of the COVID pandemic, ALPHA aims to deliver online heritage education resources and training for teachers, parents and community groups across Turkey. These have now started to be piloted with schools in poor urban and isolated rural areas and in camps and communities hosting migrants from Syria. The games do not require a detailed knowledge of language to play, and the accompanying website, instructors’ handbook, and supporting video tutorials for teachers and parents presume no prior knowledge of heritage conservation and will be presented in Turkish, Arabic and English.

Active Learning is a theory of learning whereby students are actively engaged in their own learning (typically this takes the form of discussion, case study, problem solving and role play) and are guided and supported in constructing their own knowledge by deepening their understanding and developing higher order thinking skills. Traditional didactic teaching methods can lean towards learning in which children are instructed or just ‘told’ what to do/what not to do, and are more focused on learning and retaining information and facts. As an example of our different approach to heritage education, in one of our games, children have found an artefact and have to navigate their pencil through a maze to return the artefact to the museum. This is a reversal of the typical children’s ‘treasure hunt’ and it embeds an ethical awareness of the correct way of dealing with heritage without being ‘preachy’. It also embeds essential skills that primary school students need to develop, including fine motor skills, logic and ‘global citizenship’. That is to say, the active learning approach to heritage education shifts the responsibility for heritage conservation from the state to the individual child and gives them a sense of personal responsibility for their actions in relation to making the world a more just and sustainable place – a message that is already familiar to them from environmental campaigns.

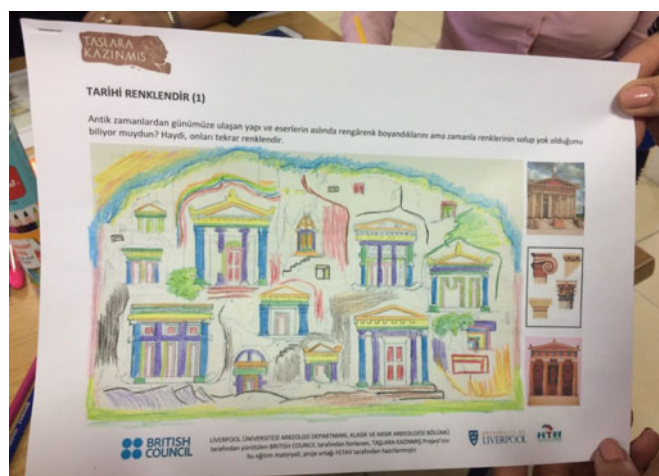
There have been three barriers to the wider adoption of heritage education in Turkey that we hope to address through the ALPHA project:

1. *Contested meanings.* Archaeology is a contentious topic in Turkey, which touches on cultural and political sensitivities. Consequently, teachers are wary of engaging with it. ALPHA’s Active Learning pedagogy supports learners to actively construct their own understandings of heritage based on their personal, educational and cultural experiences, rather than the imposed values of teachers or society.

2. *Barriers to inclusion.* Previous heritage education initiatives targeted selected museums or archaeological sites or were delivered by mobile technologies or voluntary community groups that often limited their appeal and/or accessibility to non-locals or less affluent groups within Turkish society. Our educational worksheets provide low-tech teaching resources to teachers and will be published online under a Creative Commons licence for wide circulation free of charge.

3. *Embedding heritage education.* Busy schools with limited training, time, resources or incentive to teach it often do not have time to include heritage education in their curricula. ALPHA’s educational games are therefore designed for extra-curricular or co-curricular use and complement the primary national curriculum by embedding core skills (e.g., maths, logic, literacy) alongside an awareness of archaeology and antiquities laws.

At the end of the pilot, we will conduct semi-structured interviews with our volunteer teachers to understand how well the games worked, whether they encouraged children to interact differently with their local heritage and with each other, and if there are any improvements that we need to make before we publish them online. Our hope is to produce educational resources that are freely available, easy to use and (most importantly!) fun for kids.



Raising children’s awareness of heritage conservation in primary schools across the city of Fethiye.



Primary school children in Fethiye participate in educational games that raise awareness of heritage conservation.



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## Emergency rule and democracy in Turkey

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**E**mergency rule is a tool of last resort that can preserve the democratic state in the face of an extreme threat. When facing an emergency, such as war, insurgency or catastrophic recession, ordinary legislative channels may be too slow or too cumbersome to respond adequately, causing damage to the democratic system itself. During these times, it may become necessary to empower a government or for a president to bypass parliament or the courts so it can take quick action and defend democracy. This typically entails giving a prime minister or president similar powers to those of a dictator for a fixed period of time before returning to business as usual once the emergency has passed.

The trouble is that emergency rule can be exploited by leaders to hoard unchecked power in their own hands. Emergency rule creates a legal grey area whereby leaders can claim to be obeying the democratic constitution even while passing emergency decrees that erode democracy. Emergency rule dovetails with new forms of democratic erosion observable around the world, where today's threats to democracy are more likely to come from elected leaders manipulating the political system than from coups or ballot stuffing.

Clearly there is a link between emergency rule and autocratisation, but we do not know precisely when emergency rule leads to autocratisation and when it does not. This project examined what political conditions need to be in place for emergency rule to be misused to enable autocratisation.

We used Turkey as a 'pathway' case to answer this question and explore the precise causal pathways underpinning the links between emergency rule and the erosion of democracy. Turkey was selected because of its history as a 'hybrid' democracy and its extensive experience of emergency rule. Since its foundation in 1923, emergency rule has been declared and ratified by the Grand National Assembly on 12 occasions, for a total of almost 28 years since 1923. Not all of

these episodes covered the whole country, with the large cities of Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir, and the Kurdish-majority southeast, targeted more often than other parts of the country.

We examined in depth six of these instances of emergency rule in a structured and focused comparison. We were particularly interested in cases of emergency rule declared by incumbent governments (as opposed to those declared by the military after a coup), and in those declarations made while Turkey was a multi-party regime (as opposed to those declared during the one-party era). The six instances we looked at were emergency rule in response to Istanbul Pogroms (1955), the failed coup (1963), the Workers' Rebellion (1970), the Cyprus Operation (1974), the Maraş Massacre (1978) and the failed coup (2016).

We undertook extensive archival research, reviews of the official record of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and historical newspaper reviews. We found that whether emergency rule led to autocratisation or not depended on a combination of the leader's view of democracy and whether they had the power to overcome constraints on the misuse of emergency rule. The power to overcome constraints, in turn, was determined by whether the government could by-pass potential veto players who might block their actions, whether the government's security narrative justifying the need for emergency rule was convincing, and the degree of political polarisation at the time.

Overall, the picture of emergency rule in Turkey is a bleak one. Too often governments use emergency rule to help them gain control of the political system and advance their own interests rather than using it to protect democracy. The recent erosion of democracy under emergency rule between 2016 and 2018 is nothing new to Turkey, and the precedent goes back at least to the 1950s. What is more, this is not a problem unique to Turkey, with a global rise in the use of emergency rule and a decline of democracy since the end of the Cold War. We hope our findings help to shed light on this trend.