

The Over-institutionalization of the Turkish State Apparatus: An Obstacle to the Consolidation  
of Democracy in Turkey

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## INTRODUCTION

With the advent of Turkey's European Union negotiation process following the Helsinki summit of 1999, a newfound interest in Turkish politics developed in the United States and Europe. For Turkey, joining the EU would herald the completion of the modernization project articulated by the early leaders of the Turkish Republic. More than one hundred and sixty years after the beginning of the *Tanzimat* reforms in the Ottoman Empire, this opportunity could constitute a momentous historical event for both parties. Indeed, it would mark the healing of what had been considered 'the sick man of Europe' in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and its return at the forefront of the emerging European system.

Concurrently, the media and certain experts have often portrayed recent developments in international affairs as evidence of a clash between "Western" and "Islamic" *civilizations*.<sup>1</sup> Whether or not one gives great credence to the Huntingtonian thesis's explanatory power, studying Turkish politics in this context becomes all the more interesting as it is a country in which both *civilizations* coexist within the framework of a relatively persistent democratic regime. In fact, Turkey is often considered "a second-wave" democracy, meaning that it has had more experience with democratic rules than most other young democracies.<sup>2</sup> However, the relative longevity of Turkey's participatory democracy did not translate into stability. Indeed, political tensions caused three outright *coups d'état* by the Turkish military in 1960, 1971 and 1980 and two other similar interventions in 1997 and 2007 dubbed *postmodern* and *e-* coups respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), . For media sources, see for instance Sabrin Tavernise and Sebnem Arsu, "Crisis averted, barely, in Turkey; Top party fights off court bid to ban it," *International Herald Tribune*, August 1, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to democratic Consolidation* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 1.

At the most basic level, Turkey's stability in a highly volatile region remains the core concern of international and domestic observers. Because democratic consolidation has tremendous impact on such an outcome, it has become a central issue for both foreign powers and Turkey's citizens. On the one hand, the EU negotiations have brought renewed attention to this process. Democratic norms have become the centerpiece of the EU's soft power. The consolidation of Turkey's democracy is therefore of vital importance because it constitutes a significant challenge to the capacity of the EU to promote these norms abroad. More importantly, it will influence the potential entry of Turkey into the EU which has broad repercussions for the stability of both parties. On the other hand, democratic consolidation has important consequences on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. The resolution or exacerbation of political tensions in Turkey depends on the result of this process. As such, it is of great interest as to the validity of the binary vision presented by the European and American media. This essay will probe deeper into the dynamics of the Turkish political system in order to qualify the common misconception that the primary impediment to the consolidation of democracy is a rift between the secular and Islamist camps.

Domestic actors have also been pondering the current state of Turkey's democracy in the context of debates on the 1980 constitution, secularism, minority rights and European Union accession. As of early August 2008, the constitutional court ruled against banning the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or AKP) which was accused by Chief Prosecutor Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya of being a "focal point of anti-secular activities"<sup>3</sup> that aimed to "[undermine] Turkey's secular Constitution."<sup>4</sup> Some observers have referred to this

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<sup>3</sup> As quoted in "Turkey's Constitutional Court accepts indictment against ruling party – more," *BBC Monitoring Europe*, March 31, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted in Owen Matthews and Sami Kohen, "Attack of the Judges; In the battle for the heart and soul of Turkey, the lines are now being drawn by the judiciary," *Newsweek*, April 14, 2008.

as a *judicial* coup by the secular elite in an attempt to prevent the ruling party from consolidating its influence on Turkish politics and challenging them on the hot-button issue of secularism.<sup>5</sup>

This event underscores the recent political tensions that have rekindled debates as to the future of Turkish democracy.

The theme of this research project revolves around the concept of liberal democracy and its limits. Within this theme, the central motivation is the following: what are the challenges faced by the Republic of Turkey in consolidating its democracy? The analysis will be organized into the following steps: first, investigating the characteristics that make a democracy liberal; second, identifying the factors impeding the consolidation of liberal democracy in Turkey; and third, determining their primary cause. With these objectives in mind, this paper will argue that the state-centered outlook underpinning the normative framework of political life in the Turkish Republic is at the core of the country's slow process of democratic consolidation. While its inception may have favored Turkey's transition to democracy, it has prevented the adoption of institutions and norms that underlie liberal democracies. Accordingly, this paper will seek to determine whether democratic consolidation can take place within the current statist paradigm.

The essay will be subdivided in four sections. The first will be used to elaborate the theoretical framework that guides the analysis. Then, the state-centered normative framework, or statist paradigm, underpinning political life in the Turkish Republic will be discussed. The third section will address the impact of this framework on the institutionalization of the different segments of Turkish society during the first twenty-seven years of the Turkish Republic, a crucial period in terms of democratic consolidation referred to as the one party era. Finally, this paper will conclude by examining five different issues currently being debated within this statist

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance "The secularists fight back; Turkey," *The Economist*, April 5, 2008.

paradigm: (1) the role of the military in politics, (2) the political party system, (3) the rise of political Islam and the associated debate on its role in the public sphere, (4) pluralism and minority issues, and (5) the EU accession process. Through this analysis, it will be shown that considerable progress towards democratic consolidation has been made in all five areas.

However, the obstacles that remain can be related to the importance of the state in Turkish politics resulting from the persistence of the normative framework discussed above and its over-institutionalization during the one party era. In the Turkish case, democratic consolidation is therefore best conceived as a continuous effort on the part of societal forces to restrict the state's influence in politics.

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION AS THE BASIS FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

Before analyzing the role and conception of the state in Turkish society, a discussion of the concepts democratic transition and democratic consolidation is needed. These two concepts have both been developed in an attempt to theorize the path taken to the establishment of a democratic regime, a process referred to as democratization. To conceptualize its end goal, a simple question needs to be answered: What is a democracy? Investigating this question will permit a differentiation of democratic transition and democratic consolidation crucial to the elaboration of the definition of a consolidated democracy.

The range of definitions of democracy in the literature is astounding. On the one hand lies what Larry Diamond coins the “minimalist” conception of democracy.<sup>6</sup> This vision is best described by Joseph Schumpeter as a system “for arriving at political decisions in which

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<sup>6</sup> Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 8.

individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.”<sup>7</sup> This notion directly informs Samuel Huntington's “two-turnover test” according to which a polity displays the characteristics of a democracy once power has changed hands twice through competitive elections, a test which aptly defines the term electoral democracy.<sup>8</sup> From this conception also derives Robert Dahl's concept of a polyarchy which stipulates that a democratic order involves both “opposition (organized contestation through regular, free and fair elections) and participation (the right of virtually all adults to vote and contest for office) ... [as well as] civil liberty”<sup>9</sup>. However, as Dahl himself admits, these conceptions of democracy are not nearly specific enough because they include a wide spectrum of regimes which satisfy these criteria but may disregard broader norms considered intrinsic to the proper functioning of a democratic order.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand lies the “maximalist” conception of democracy which involves “the inculcation of democratic values [such as pluralism, individual freedom, respect for the rule of law, etc.] among the majority of citizens through a long socialization process.”<sup>11</sup>

At issue in this essay is the midrange concept of liberal democracy. Diamond characterizes it as a system that, in addition to the elements discussed above, includes:

first, the absence of reserved domains of power for the military or other actors not accountable to the electorate... Second, in addition to the vertical accountability of rulers to the ruled, it requires the horizontal accountability of office holders to one another... Third, it encompasses extensive provisions for political and civic pluralism as well as for individual's and group freedom ... [which] can only be secured through a ‘rule of law’<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York; London: Harper & Brothers, 1947), 269.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 266-267.

<sup>9</sup> Diamond, 8. See also Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1971), 1-9.

<sup>10</sup> Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 10-11.

The preceding definition allows for a more precise conceptualization of a liberal democracy, the ideal end product of a process of democratization. It is important to note however that a broad scope for variation remains within the parameters of this definition which allows us to account for very different liberal democratic regimes. In other words, France and the United States, while being radically different, both adhere to this definition. This flexibility echoes Larry Diamond's developmental perception of democracy according to which even amongst liberal democracies, there is still room to improve the quality of these regimes as there is no such thing as a perfect democracy.<sup>13</sup>

To conceive of the continuous process by which a society creates a liberal democratic regime, Guillermo O'Donnell's two transitions schematization is particularly useful. "The first is the transition from the previous authoritarian regime to the installation of a democratic government. The second transition is from this government to the consolidation of democracy or, in other words, to the effective functioning of a *democratic regime*."<sup>14</sup> This allows students of democratization to conceptualize democratic consolidation as the second step of an ongoing process of democratization. More importantly, it allows one to equate a consolidated democracy with a liberal democracy.

According to Adam Przeworski, democracy is "consolidated when it becomes the only game in town ...when it becomes self-enforcing, that is, when all the relevant political forces find it best to continue to submit their interests and value to the uncertain interplay of institutions."<sup>15</sup> Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan build on this image to develop a comprehensive

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<sup>13</sup> Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 17-19.

<sup>14</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, "Transitions, Continuities and Paradoxes," in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 18.

<sup>15</sup> Adam Przeworski. *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press. 1991), 26.

definition of democratic consolidation that seems to be almost unanimously accepted by experts on the subject. Accordingly, this essay will adopt their framework when discussing Turkey's particular situation. For Linz and Stepan, a consolidated democracy displays behavioral, attitudinal and constitutional characteristics:

- Behaviorally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated if significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors do not spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state.
- Attitudinally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs and when the support for anti system alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces.
- Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and nongovernmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subjected to and habituated to, the resolution of conflicts within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, Linz and Stepan argue that a consolidated democracy must include five interacting arenas, alternatively referred to as spheres in this essay, each of which function according to its own organizing principle: (1) a civil society based on freedom of association and communication; (2) a political society based on free and inclusive electoral competition; (3) a rule of law steeped in constitutionalism; (4) a state apparatus operating according to rational-legal bureaucratic norms; and (5) an economic society functioning according to an institutionalized market.<sup>17</sup>

Because democracy is a form of governance of a modern state, the existence of a state is an important prerequisite without which consolidation and in fact democracy itself would not be

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<sup>16</sup> Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>17</sup> Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 7-15.

possible.<sup>18</sup> State is here defined in traditional Weberian fashion as “a compulsory association with a territorial basis” which has a monopoly over the use of force.<sup>19</sup> Without these attributes, democratic governance is not possible because, democracy requires a usable state apparatus able to levy taxes and implement regulations. Moreover, through the legal order that characterizes it, the state determines the rules of citizenship.<sup>20</sup> Because citizens constitute the polity, the state therefore plays a vital role in determining the boundaries of a democratic polity. Important problems can arise from this notion of ‘stateness’. Democracy involves a consensual agreement by the *demos* of a territory on (1) who are the citizens – who constitutes the polity – of this territory and (2) on the procedures to be used by this polity to generate a government that can make legitimate claims on the obedience of the *demos*. If the state is used by a group of individuals to exclude a significant portion of the *demos* from the polity or to impose ‘rules of the game’ opposed by a significant portion of the *demos*, democratic consolidation becomes difficult. As will be discussed below, this understanding of the state has important implication in the case of the Kurdish population.

Building on Linz and Stepan’s conception Larry Diamond argues that to consolidate, a democracy must carry out three tasks: (1) democratic deepening, making democracy more liberal, accountable, responsive and representative; (2) political institutionalization, strengthening the formal and informal structures and rules of democracy so that they become widely understood and accepted and cause actors to pattern their behaviors accordingly;<sup>21</sup> and

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<sup>18</sup> Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 12, 90; Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, ed. Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 156.

<sup>20</sup> Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Scott Mainwaring, “Transitions to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation: Theoretical and Comparative Issues,” in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O’Donnell and J. Samuel Valenzuela (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 296.

(3) regime performance, producing sufficiently positive policy outputs, both political and economic, to build broad political legitimacy.<sup>22</sup> To guarantee the satisfactory completion of these three tasks enumerated by Diamond, further elaboration on Linz and Stepan's five interacting arenas of a consolidated democracy – state apparatus, rule of law, political, economic and civil societies- is needed. The two scholars' compartmentalization of society seems quite adequate to the conceptualization of a democratic regime. They emphasize that democracy is an interacting system. As such, democratic consolidation requires not only the mere presence of these five areas, but also adequate relationships between each of these five interacting spheres because it is precisely their nature which makes a society democratic. Indeed, they provide a system of checks and balances which simultaneously constrains their actions and reinforces their interdependence. As such, Linz and Stepan give a convincing account of how a consolidated democracy functions. However, they do not provide a convincing account of the conditions which allow such 'democratic' interactions to evolve. In order to do so, more attention to the process by which these five arenas institutionalize is needed.

At this point, it seems necessary to expand our definition of institutionalization to the continuous process of "strengthening the formal representative and governmental structure of democracy so that they become more coherent, complex, autonomous, adaptable and thus more capable, effective, valued and binding."<sup>23</sup> Institutionalization is therefore taken to consist of complexity, coherence, adaptability and autonomy and exists on a continuous spectrum. Establishing democratic patterns of interaction between each of these spheres presupposes that each individual area is institutionalized to a degree that it can carry out the support functions

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<sup>22</sup> Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 74-76.

<sup>23</sup> Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 74. See also Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1968), 12-24, for a discussion of political institutionalization and its characteristics: adaptability-rigidity, complexity-simplicity, autonomy-subordination and coherence-disunity.

required of it by the other spheres for the adequate functioning of a democratic regime.<sup>24</sup> For instance, a democratic regime possessing a highly complex, coherent, adaptable and autonomous state apparatus requires: (1) a developed economic sphere to produce the surplus necessary for its sustainability and allow it to carry out its collective good functions, (2) an effective political society to manage it, (3) a rule of law to establish a hierarchy of norms that make the state's actions over other arenas legitimate and predictable and (4) a civil society to generate ideas and help monitor the state's actions. Together, these four arenas help constrain the state's institutional strength by providing a system of checks and balances. If the rule of law and political, economic, and civil societies of a given society were less autonomous, coherent, adaptable and complex than the state, the state apparatus's comparative strength would allow it to disregard some of the checks and balances provided by these arenas. The state apparatus would therefore have to be simplified or the patterns of interaction between the two spheres would fall outside those defining a democratic regime because the state's strength would allow it to acquire control over other arenas. A similar conclusion would be reached using any of the four other spheres. In short, for the consolidation of democracy, the institutionalization of these five areas needs to occur in step with one another so as to allow each of the five spheres to perform the functions required of it for the functioning of a democratic regime.

Moreover, establishing democratic patterns of interaction between each of these spheres also requires that they institutionalize in accordance with the right organizing principle. Areas failing to do so may run the risk of falling victim to what Ergun Özbudun calls perverse institutionalization. The concept results from the observation that while political institutionalization is often equated with democratic consolidation, this equation is only valid

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<sup>24</sup> Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 14.

when the institutionalized patterns of behavior are truly democratic.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, an electoral democracy may be highly institutionalized but still fall short of qualifying as a liberal democracy – for instance if, despite the election of a government to power, the military still holds undue influence over the political process, pluralism and freedom are severely restricted or office holders are not accountable to one another or to their electorate. In short, for the establishment of a functioning liberal democratic order, a society needs to meet two conditions with respect to the institutionalization of the five spheres that compose it: (1) the institutionalization of each sphere must occur in step with that of the four others to guarantee that the patterns of interaction between each sphere conform to those described by Linz and Stepan and (2) the institutionalization of each arena must be grounded in the correct normative organizing principles as established by Linz and Stepan.

In a given society, it is certainly possible to conceive of an area that is comparatively much less or much more developed than the four others. In this case, one can say that this particular area is under- or over-institutionalized with respect to the other four. Under-institutionalization seems in some ways much easier to cure than its opposite because it presupposes that agents belonging to other spheres have the necessary resources to guarantee the development of the particular area that seems to be lacking in autonomy, coherence, adaptability and complexity, provided they also have the political will to do so. On the other hand, over-institutionalization is taken to mean that a particular sphere has attained a degree of complexity, coherence, adaptability and autonomy such that it cannot be effectively constrained by other spheres *within a democratic order*. The high degree of institutionalization of this particular sphere *vis-à-vis* the other four may enable its agents to gather sufficient resources to become self-supporting outside of a democratic order – i.e. by disregarding the nature of the proper

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<sup>25</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 3.

democratic relationships between all five spheres – creating a challenge for the consolidation of democracy for two reasons. First, the agents belonging to an over-institutionalized area may not be inclined to relinquish control of resources that may enable other areas to become institutionalized to the same degree. Second, over-institutionalization may easily lead to perverse institutionalization in other spheres because the agents of the over-institutionalized sphere may acquire control over them due to their superior capabilities and in turn over the process by which they institutionalize. The framework presented in the preceding paragraphs will allow us to pinpoint some of the problems Turkish society has encountered in consolidating its democracy. To fully understand this process however, a thorough examination of the role of the state in Turkish society is necessary. It will be shown that the Turkish state apparatus has shown signs of over-institutionalization due to the state-centered nature of the normative framework underpinning Turkish politics while the other four areas identified by Linz and Stepan have remained underdeveloped. As a consequence, democracy in Turkey has progressed relatively slowly and still faces significant impediments.

## THE TURKISH STATE PARADIGM: A NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF POLITICAL LIFE

Modern Turkey was founded in 1923 from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire following a brutal war of independence. Despite the upheaval caused by the war, the new Republic displayed elements of continuity with the political and social structure of its predecessor. However, the radical modernization project formulated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the ‘founding father’ and first president of Turkey, stands out as one of the central tenets of the new regime as it informed subsequent political development from its inception until now. At its core, the creation of the

Turkish nation-state is the most important legacy of this modernization project. Moreover, Atatürk's outlook, Kemalism or Atatürkism, is of great importance because it has constituted the central operating principle of the Turkish state apparatus. Taken together, the next two sections will attempt to show that the Turkish Atatürk's modernizing outlook: (1) greatly emphasizes the importance of a strong central state, (2) constitutes the normative framework of Turkish politics and (3) led to both the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state apparatus and to its perverse institutionalization in the early years of the Republic while the four other arenas of democratic consolidation identified by Linz and Stepan remained underdeveloped.

As mentioned above, the establishment of the new Turkish Republic can best be viewed as a modernization project that sought to mark a clear break with the late Ottoman order. The rapid decline of the Ottoman Empire throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to an increasing call for reforms for which the emerging European nation-states were taken as models.<sup>26</sup> Debates at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century pitted advocates of three intellectual currents against each other: "Ottomanism, the ideal of a union of different communities around the Ottoman throne; (pan) Islamism, which sought to regenerate the empire on the basis of Islamic practices and Pan-Turkism, which sought the Union of Turkish people under the Ottoman flag."<sup>27</sup> The drastic loss of territories during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century culminating in the disastrous Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 effectively reduced the Ottoman Empire to a pocket in central Anatolia and *de facto* removed major obstacles to the development of a state based on a strong sense of Turkish nationalism. Indeed, the members of the nationalist faction led by Atatürk had come to realize that the only solution to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was "retrenchment into the basic Turkish homeland, abandonment of the imperial concept [...], concentration on developing

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<sup>26</sup> Şerif Mardin, "Center Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?," *Daedalus*, 102: 175.

<sup>27</sup> Erik Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: I.B. Tauris; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 127.

the autonomous elements of central Anatolia”.<sup>28</sup> The establishment of the Turkish Republic therefore involved a strong Turkish nationalistic component.

Having watched the demise of the Ottoman Empire, one of the central concerns of the new leaders was to catch up with their ‘modern’, European counterparts. The modernization of Turkish society as envisioned by the reformers can best be described with the following equation:

$$\text{Modernization} = \text{Westernization} = \text{Europeanization}$$

By modernizing the country, Atatürk and his followers sought to elevate the people to the level of contemporary civilization.<sup>29</sup> In doing so, they hoped to endow the nation with the capacity to generate its own goals as well as the means to realize them.<sup>30</sup> This outlook is best described by Abdullah Cevdet who exclaimed: “There is no second civilization; civilization means European civilization, and it must be imported with both its roses and thorns.”<sup>31</sup> The second part of this equation came to take an increasing relevance in the latter part of the twentieth century as Turkey’s ties with the emerging European framework intensified after it was granted the status of associate member in 1964. So much so that joining the EU would now be seen to herald the completion of its modernization project.<sup>32</sup>

The objective of the modernization project espoused by the early leaders of the Republic – importing Western or European civilization in Turkey – involved a complete reorganization of Turkish society. Most importantly, it required in the eyes of reformers “substituting reason for

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<sup>28</sup> Osman Okyar, “Atatürk’s Quest for Modernity,” in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Jacob Landau (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 47.

<sup>29</sup> Metin Heper, *The State tradition in Turkey* (Beverly, U.K.: The Eothen Press, 1985), 50.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>31</sup> As quoted in Metin Heper, *Historical Dictionary of Turkey*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lanham, MD;: The Scarecrow Press, 2002), 209.

<sup>32</sup> Barry Rubin, “Introduction,” in *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*, ed. Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003), 1.

religion”.<sup>33</sup> Reformers held fast to what has been coined the cast-iron theory of Islam which stipulates that Islam is incompatible with modern life.<sup>34</sup> As an obstacle to progress, the hold of religion on society and polity needed to be broken.<sup>35</sup> These conclusions result from a highly positivist outlook on societal and political matters which emphasized a zero-sum relationship between tradition and modernity and a monolithic view of Islam.<sup>36</sup> In effect, the reformers’ point of view constitutes an explicit rejection of anything resembling what Thomas Risse in his study of European identity calls a ‘marble-cake’ model according to which “the various components of an individual’s identity cannot be neatly separated on different levels as the concepts of nestedness and of crosscutting identities both imply.”<sup>37</sup> The belief that the Turkish people’s potential needed to be activated even against their will led them to adopt a ‘top-down’ approach to change.<sup>38</sup> Implicit in their reasoning are elements of Durkheimian thoughts which translate into “a positivist belief in the value of scientific truth [and] a great (and somewhat naïve faith) in the power of education to spread this truth” and activate the dormant potential of the people for rational thought.<sup>39</sup> As a result of this conception of the links between identity and religion and modernity and religion, Turkish nationalism was fused with a strong secularist component.

The early leaders of the Republic saw the state as the central instrument needed to achieve their objectives. Considering the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, this choice constitutes an element of continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. Indeed, Metin Heper argues that two defining features of the Ottoman polity “a strong state and a weak civil

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<sup>33</sup> Heper, *Historical Dictionary of Turkey*, 15.

<sup>34</sup> Nur Yalman, “Islamic Reform and the Mystic Tradition in Turkey,” *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 10: 41.

<sup>35</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> Metin Heper, “Islam, Politics and Change in the Middle East,” in *Islam and Politics in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Metin Heper and Raphael Israeli (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1984), 1

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Risse, “The Euro Between National and European Identity,” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10(4): 491.

<sup>38</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 50-51.

<sup>39</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 132.

society” have also trickled down to the Turkish polity.<sup>40</sup> This legacy is a direct consequence of the high degree of patrimonialism exhibited by the Ottoman regime. In patrimonialism, as opposed to feudalism, the periphery is almost totally subdued by the center because of the lack of countervailing powers.<sup>41</sup> As Şerif Mardin has noted, “the Ottoman Empire lacked [...] a part of society that could operate independently of central government.”<sup>42</sup> Even though the reformers sought to initiate a radical break from the past, they reproduced a pattern that was already exhibited in Ottoman time in creating a strong centralized state. While the political structure of a particular regime may not necessarily determine the structure of the regime that succeeds it, we are forced to recognize in Turkey’s particular case that it retains a strong influence on the structure of the new polity. This is due in large part to the fact that the architects of the new regime were socialized within the center of the preceding patrimonial system.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the victors of the war of independence, as part of the military, were heirs to one of the three pillars of the Ottoman polity.<sup>44</sup> As a result of their political culture – beliefs, values, ideals, sentiments, and evaluations about the political system of their country – it was natural for them to establish a regime whose political structure closely resembled that of the regime in which they were socialized. Moreover, the Ottoman legacy was reinforced by the emphasis placed on nation-building and the creation of a Turkish nation-state, a process which required a strong centralized state in the minds of the reformers. Together, the legacy of the patrimonial Ottoman system and the emphasis on nation-building guaranteed a central role to the state in the new Turkish polity.

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<sup>40</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Şerif Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 11(3): 264..

<sup>43</sup> Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 163.

<sup>44</sup> Yalman, “Islamic Reform and the Mystic Tradition in Turkey,” 42.

Analyzing the state as the early founders of the Republic perceived it is therefore of central importance to our argument.

In his seminal work on the role of the state in Turkish politics, Metin Heper builds on a conception of the state in political rather than legal terms to develop a theoretical framework characterizing the Turkish state. This conception of the state differs from the Weberian one in that it views sovereignty as a continuous rather than discrete variable. The sovereignty of the state is not equated with it having final authority on matters within its jurisdiction. Rather it refers “to its independence in formulating goals from society [while] its autonomy has to do with its independence in working out its internal organization.”<sup>45</sup> The state is considered an independent political actor rather than an instrument used by other political actors to attain their goals. As such, one can classify societies according to the degree to which the state attempts to dominate the social system.<sup>46</sup> From this conception of the state, Heper is able to differentiate between four ideal-typical types of states: extreme transcendental or personalistic, moderate transcendental or ideological, moderate instrumental or liberal and extreme instrumental or praetorian.<sup>47</sup> Transcendentalism refers to the belief that man primarily belongs to a moral community whereas instrumentalism refers to the belief that man belongs primarily to an interest community. As such, transcendentalism involves the imposition of a consensus on society in the form of static norms around which the state is institutionalized while instrumentalism requires the creation of a consensus on society’s goals by civil society itself through the progressive resolution of conflicts about fundamental claims. In sum, transcendentalism connotes a statist

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<sup>45</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> Pierre Birnbaum, “State, Center and Bureaucracy,” *Government and Opposition*, 16: 60.

<sup>47</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 7-10. See also Metin Heper, “The State and Public Bureaucracy: A Comparative and Historical Perspective,” in *The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Metin Heper (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 9-23.

orientation whereas instrumentalism connotes a societal orientation.<sup>48</sup> While both can be democratic, transcendentalism sees the people's sovereignty residing in their collective capacity whereas instrumentalism sees sovereignty belonging to a collection of morally self-sufficient individuals.<sup>49</sup>

Heper characterizes the state envisioned by Atatürk as a transient moderate transcendental state aiming at the establishment of a permanent moderate instrumental state.<sup>50</sup> Atatürk seemed to recognize the absence of a viable civil society identified by Mardin in *Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire*. As such, he realized that the modern Turkish polity could not be structured, at least immediately, around a moderate instrumental state because it presupposes the existence of a strong civil society. Nonetheless, Atatürk thought that the fault of the Ottoman Empire was its embrace of personal rule which led the population to adopt a negative attitude towards their government.<sup>51</sup> A central step was to restore sovereignty to the people by creating a *halkın devleti* or people's state.<sup>52</sup> However, because he observed that "when the people are not educated they can easily be won over for all kinds of undesirable end"<sup>53</sup>, Atatürk believed in the need to distinguish between "the real orientations and the collective conscience of the people"<sup>54</sup> and "artificial ideas."<sup>55</sup> Given this assessment of the current state of Turkish society, he viewed the establishment of a Hegelian state that would safeguard the general interest without overwhelming civil society as crucial to the progress of the country from

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<sup>48</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 7-10. See also R.N. Berki, "State and Society: An Antithesis of Modern Political Thought," in *State and Society in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Jack Hayward and R.N. Berki (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 2-3.

<sup>49</sup> R.N. Berki, "State and Society: An Antithesis of Modern Political Thought," 4.

<sup>50</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 147-148.

<sup>51</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 49.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>53</sup> *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, II, 1906-1938* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1959), 11.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>55</sup> *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri: Tâmin ve Telgrafları, V* (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1972), 211.

a transcendental state to an instrumentalist one.<sup>56</sup> Implied in this statement is a firm belief in the primacy of the general will as the expression of the conscience of society over that of the individuals composing society. For Atatürk, the ruler's role was to discern the general will and to implement it using the bureaucratic 'machine' of the state while preventing it from being tainted by particularistic interests. In a sense, the state came to embody the general will. This belief was to be embodied in a strong commitment to populism.

Observers of Turkish politics have often differentiated two conceptions of politics: 'politics in its widest sense' – or determination of public policy based on rational analysis, but at the same time coming as close as possible to the preferences of the voters – embraced by Atatürk's followers as opposed to 'active dynamic politics' – activities of a cadre of organization which aimed at securing and preserving political office.<sup>57</sup> It goes without saying that Atatürk gave precedence to the first kind when establishing the Turkish Republic. Political actors would be free to engage in the second type of politics so long as they respected the parameters articulated by the first one. The transcendental state he sought to establish would be structured around norms that reflected this general interest – that is around norms that would lead to the completion of the modernization of Turkish society. Atatürk's firm belief in the power of education to transform the Turkish people led him to believe that this state of affair would only be temporary, hence the notion of a *transient* transcendental state. In short, once the modernization project had been completed, Turkish civil society would have acquired the capacity to reach a consensus on the goals of the nation through rational debate without the mediation of the state. In other words, Atatürk opted for the establishment of a moderate

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<sup>56</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 56.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

transcendental state structured around norms that he hoped would enable Turkish society to reach a point where it could support a moderate instrumental state.

What are the norms around which the ideal Atatürkist state would be institutionalized? The outlook often referred to as Kemalism or Atatürkism provides a starting point despite its problematic nature. Even if it is often referred to as an ideology, Metin Heper has pointed out that Kemalism hardly can be considered an ideology proper as it is not possible to view it as a comprehensive manifesto.<sup>58</sup> Instead it is easier to conceptualize, at least in its initial form, as Atatürk's personal vision for the evolution of the modern state he helped establish. Kemalism is often portrayed as revolving around six themes or arrows: republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, statism or *étatisme* and revolutionism-reformism. Secularism is here taken to mean the removal of religion from the public sphere and the establishment of state control over remaining religious institutions. Nationalism is used as the prime instrument in building of a new national identity and safeguarding the cohesion of the Turkish Republic. Republicanism is tied with the form the new regime was to take and comprised the notions of popular sovereignty, freedom and equality before the law. Populism referred to the notion of national solidarity and the primacy of the interest of the whole before those of particular segments of society. Statism can take on two meanings. It is usually used to mean an increased role of the state in the economic sphere. However, it also denotes a paternalistic approach in which the state has responsibility for organizing the life of the nation. Finally, revolutionism-reformism refers to a commitment to continuous change along the lines of the Kemalist program.<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note that most of the concepts underpinning the Kemalist outlook were in line with the legacy of

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<sup>58</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 64-66.

<sup>59</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 181-182. Paul Dumont, "The Origins of Kemalist Ideology" in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Jacob Landau (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 25-44.

the *Tanzimat* reforms constituting yet another link between the new Turkish polity and the old Ottoman one.<sup>60</sup>

The transcendental state Atatürk sought to establish constitutes what could be deemed an ideal-typical characterization of the Kemalist order, much as Metin Heper's four different types of states. In practice, the implementation of the Kemalist outlook did not proceed as smoothly as described above. What Heper calls the bureaucratization of the Atatürkist transient transcendentalist state occurring from 1950 to 1980 is in fact the institutionalization of a permanent transcendental state as an end in itself rather than as the means to an end, empowering the bureaucracy through the use of Kemalism as an ideology.<sup>61</sup> As such, it constitutes a perversion of the Kemalist ideal. In part, this imperfect application results from the flexibility and malleability of the Kemalist outlook in that it is not, at its core, an ideology with a clear manifesto but a system of thought that can exhibit some degree of variety depending on the context in which it is called upon and the individual by which it is used. One should not however think that this adaptability detracts from its central role in the Turkish political system. Indeed, Kemalism constitutes what can be called the normative framework underpinning political debate within the Turkish polity. As the body of norms around which the Turkish state was established, Kemalism acquires a privileged position in the ideological battleground of Turkish politics in that every actor within the political system must situate itself with respect to Kemalism. This is not taken to mean that every view expressed in Turkish politics must originate from within this outlook. It simply means that all positions have to be articulated implicitly or explicitly with Kemalism as a point of departure.

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<sup>60</sup> Dumont, "The Origins of Kemalist Ideology," 41.

<sup>61</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 67-97.

In this respect, Şerif Mardin's conception of Turkish politics as an opposition between center and periphery merits attention.<sup>62</sup> The author argues that symptoms of this opposition can be observed since the Ottoman Empire. In its modern manifestation, the center is taken to mean the state and its agent, the state apparatus – the military, the bureaucracy and the judiciary – all of which firmly uphold the Kemalist vision. Additionally, the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* – CHP) continues to be seen as an elite party linked with the bureaucracy and has not yet been able to reinvent itself despite its defection from the state apparatus proper.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, the periphery is often identified with the counter-bureaucracy or groups that oppose the dominance of both the military and civilian bureaucracies. While the term periphery may mislead observers in thinking that it constitutes a coherent unit, Mardin himself points out the “evidence of new cleavages and differentiation *within* the periphery” already emerging in 1973.<sup>64</sup> Subsequent developments such as the Özal reforms of the 1980's have furthered this tendency to such a degree that the only characteristic that now unites such a periphery is their opposition to the center or the grip of the state on Turkish politics. Mardin's conceptualization is still useful today in that it gives precedence to the role of the center and allows us to see opposition to or cooptation of the state as the central motor of Turkish politics. As scholar Ibrahim Kalin mentioned in an interview with the author, the real struggle in Turkish politics is not between secular and Islamist camps. Rather, it is better conceived of as between the establishment – the state and its agents – as an autonomous actor and a plurality of ‘reformers’ who seek to contest, in a both peaceful and aggressive fashions, the

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<sup>62</sup> Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?,” 169-190.

<sup>63</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 104-105 and 109. See also Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, “The Republican People's Party,” in *Political Parties in Turkey*, ed. Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), 102-121, and Özbudun, 97.

<sup>64</sup> Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?,” 187.

established order.<sup>65</sup> Viewed in this light, a challenge against the establishment is ultimately translated as a challenge to the Kemalist legacy.

## THE OVER-INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE TURKISH STATE APPARATUS: THE ONE PARTY ERA (1923-1950)

The firm belief exhibited by Atatürk and his followers in the role of the state as the prime mover of society is problematic in the context of our discussion of democratic consolidation. Examining the period of single party rule (1923-1950) is vitally important in the context of the argument presented here because the twenty-seven-year period encompasses the years during which patterns of interaction between the different spheres of Turkish society were established and routinized. Indeed, the Kemalist outlook has directly led in practice to what I have called the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state apparatus. In turn, the institutional strength of the state apparatus had consequences on the institutionalization of the different sections of society during the crucial period of single-party rule from 1923 to 1950, particularly following the death of Atatürk in 1938.

With the importance given to the state in Atatürkist thought, it comes as no surprise that the leaders of the new Republic used what little resources they had for the construction of this new state. In their book *Sociology of the State*, Badie and Birnbaum observe that “the birth of the state creates new powers that did not previously exist.”<sup>66</sup> and that “once the state becomes an autonomous power center, with access to previously unavailable sources of power, it becomes a target for political action.”<sup>67</sup> One can surmise that the founders of the Turkish Republic were

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<sup>65</sup> Ibrahim Kalin, interview by the author, Ankara, July 9, 2008.

<sup>66</sup> Bertrand Badie and Pierre Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 55.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

eager to use the powers of the soon to be created state to impose their modernization program upon Turkish society. This view also explains why they had to defeat opposition not only from the previous order, but also from within their own ranks to earn the right to use these powers.<sup>68</sup> Şerif Mardin notes that for this very reason “the builders of the Turkish Republic [indeed] placed the strengthening of the state first in their priorities.”<sup>69</sup> This conscious policy had important effects on the institutionalization of different sectors of society and the nature of the relationships that emerged between them.

Most importantly, one sees the increasingly important role of the bureaucracy in Turkish politics emerging during this period under the leadership of İsmet İnönü as a direct consequence of the gradual and ultimately inevitable withdrawal of Atatürk from politics.<sup>70</sup> It was in fact a period during which Atatürk’s personal rule “was...routinized and supplemented by the bureaucracy.”<sup>71</sup> This process involved element of expansion both horizontal and vertical, of the role of the government in the daily life of its citizens. It also required centralization and standardization through “the increasing presence of the agents of the center in the periphery and the increasing reliance of these agents on the center.”<sup>72</sup> These developments coincided with the transformation of the bureaucracy into a career civil service in which rational decision-making and seniority became the principal organizing principles.<sup>73</sup> The bureaucracy came to be considered the *locus* of the state as they “acted as the formulators and /or carriers of the ... norms and values” around which the Turkish state was structured.<sup>74</sup> This process marked a transition

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<sup>68</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 152-160.

<sup>69</sup> Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?,” 183.

<sup>70</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 182-183.

<sup>71</sup> Dankwart A. Rustow, “Atatürk as Founder of a State.” *Daedalus*, 97 (1968), 794.

<sup>72</sup> İlder Turan, “Continuity and Change in the Turkish Bureaucracy: The Kemalist Period and After,” in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Jacob Landau (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 100.

<sup>73</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 70.

<sup>74</sup> Metin Heper, “Introduction,” in *The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative Perspective*, ed. Metin Heper (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), 4.

from a transcendental state structured in the ruler – Atatürk – to one structured in the bureaucracy. With this transition in the structure of the Turkish transcendental state came the associated emphasis on the substantive rather than instrumental quality of the bureaucracy’s rationality.<sup>75</sup> In this respect, the rational-legal order exhibited by the Turkish state apparatus did not conform to the Weberian one required for democratic consolidation as discussed by Linz and Stepan because it gave the bureaucracy the right to intervene in the political process by virtue of its role as guardian of the general will of the nation. To legitimate its capacity to intervene in the decision-making process of the country, the bureaucratic elite had no choice but to transform Kemalism into a rigid, programmatic ideology and take the responsibility to carry it out. Consequently, the goal of establishing a *transient* transcendental state disappeared and the bureaucracy became increasingly suffused with elitism.<sup>76</sup> The state apparatus was evolving into a highly complex, autonomous, adaptable and coherent unit. In a word, it was becoming highly institutionalized.

Simultaneously, the four other arenas of Turkish society came to exhibit striking evidence of under-institutionalization with respect to the state apparatus. This state of affairs becomes clear when considering the autonomy, complexity, adaptability and coherence of the four remaining arenas. First off, in fighting off challenges to the construction of a centralized state, Atatürk did not allow the institutionalization of a civil society able to generate a lively political society and monitor the state apparatus. The exaltation of the state and its role in articulating the general interest led to a negative view of associations promoting particularistic interests not dissimilar to the pejorative connotation associated with politics in the minds of

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<sup>75</sup> Heper, “The State and Public Bureaucracy,” 17.

<sup>76</sup> Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 71. Turan, “Continuity and Change in the Turkish Bureaucracy,” 116-117.

bureaucrats.<sup>77</sup> İltter Turan observes that “the bureaucratic elite resisted evolution and the legalization of a civil society ... where the socio-cultural, political and economical spheres are autonomous rather than components of an undifferentiated totality.”<sup>78</sup> In fact, “voluntary associations remained under the strict control of the state during the single party era”<sup>79</sup> and did not exceed “820 groups in 1946”<sup>80</sup>. The particular structure and state of the economy also hampered the development of a pluralistic civil society because it did not allow the economic society to provide civil society with a surplus of resources as will be seen below.

Second, the introduction of etatism as an integral part of the program of the RPP in 1931 led to the pervasive influence of the state in the economic sphere, particularly in the industrial sector, as a result of which its autonomy was severely undermined. Etatism is best summed up by Z. Y. Hershlag: “thought it left formal freedom to private enterprise, it clearly put the public interest at the center of every economic activity, using state control over the public sector and the economy at large, and preserving the option of nationalization against indemnities.”<sup>81</sup> At the end of the war of independence, one of the defining features of the Turkish economy was its heavy reliance on agriculture which guaranteed that “80% of the population lived in extreme poverty and backwardness”.<sup>82</sup> The years preceding the depression of 1929 saw the government adopt a relatively liberal economic policy, despite its strong centralizing tendencies in other domains.<sup>83</sup>

This period also marked the rapid integration of Turkey into the periphery of the European

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<sup>77</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 128-129.

<sup>78</sup> Turan, “Continuity and Change in the Turkish Bureaucracy,” 104.

<sup>79</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 129.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Bianchi, *Interest Groups and Political Development in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 155.

<sup>81</sup> Z.Y. Hershlag, “Atatürk’s Etatism,” in *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*, ed. Jacob Landau (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 177.

<sup>82</sup> Z.Y. Hershlag, *Turkey: the Challenge of Growth* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 126.

<sup>83</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* 195. William Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* (New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1981), 33-52.

capitalistic system.<sup>84</sup> As such, when world food prices dropped as a consequence of the economic crisis in 1929, Turkey's economy suffered tremendously. The problems occurring at the time in capitalist economies and the unsatisfying results of the liberal era led the bureaucracy to advocate etatism.<sup>85</sup> Conveniently enough, the prescriptions of etatism harmonized well with the political provisions of the increasingly bureaucratized Kemalism. The state was particularly intent on developing its industrial sector to reduce its reliance on agriculture and perceived itself as the only actor able to guarantee the development of this sector. For the etatist bureaucracy, "accelerated industrial development called for planning of which private enterprise was incapable."<sup>86</sup> Conversely, this emphasis on industrial development ensured that the agricultural sector remained underdeveloped.

Nonetheless, it is a common misconception that the Turkish state completely controlled the economy. The large share of output attributed to agriculture and small artisanal workshops as well as to the importance of larger private firms supports a more cautious view. In fact, the state had a virtual monopoly only in a few industries.<sup>87</sup> However, the grip of the private sector was strongest in areas of the economy that were underdeveloped which made private enterprise and capital relatively passive and ineffective.<sup>88</sup> With the emphasis placed on the development of the industrial sector, the growing influence of the state in the economy was strongly felt because of the important share of state economic enterprises in this sector. Indeed, in the sector privileged by economic policy, the state ensured it had a competitive advantage.<sup>89</sup> By 1946, the share of the

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<sup>84</sup> See Caglar Keyder, *The Definition of a Peripheral Economy: Turkey 1923-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>85</sup> Hershlag, *Turkey: the Challenge of Growth*, 126.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>87</sup> Hershlag, *Turkey: The Challenge of Growth*, 140. Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey*, 59.

<sup>88</sup> Hershlag, *Turkey: The Challenge of Growth*, 126.

<sup>89</sup> Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey*, 58-59. See also Vedat Eldem, "Milli Gelir," *Istanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 9(1-2): 89.

state in employment in large industries accounted for 58% of working days.<sup>90</sup> This presence led, in turn, to increased interference by the state in economic affairs. As William Hale observes, “the degree of political interference which the administrative system provided for meant that ... the SEEs became prey to ... the demands of political patronage”<sup>91</sup> In a way, evidence of high political patronage within the industrial sector seems to suggest the dependence of the emerging economic society on the bureaucracy for economic privileges. As Özbudun notes, in typical Ottoman fashion, political power led to economic power rather than the opposite.<sup>92</sup> In short, the degree of complexity of economic society was relatively low as evidenced by its heavy reliance on agriculture. Furthermore, its autonomy decreased as industrialization progressed because of the state’s role in this particular sector.

Third, the particular conception of politics as an area for rational debate to determine the general interest rather than a sphere for the formation of a dynamic consensus stemming from representation of particularistic interests did not allow for the institutionalization of an effective political society representing a plurality of interest. Rather, politics became the means for elite conflict.<sup>93</sup> One also assisted to the bureaucratization of the CHP, the only political party in Turkish polity, and its relegation to secondary status.<sup>94</sup> In fact, Roos and Roos note that “under the Kemalists, the official elite grew accustomed to almost unchallenged power and to the social prestige which accompanied such power. The Republican People’s Party was ‘bureaucratized’; bureaucratic and political power was largely fused to create an apparatus to impose the official’s will on the public.”<sup>95</sup> These development hints at the erosion of the barrier between politics and

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<sup>90</sup> Hershlag, *Turkey: The Challenge of Growth*, 140.

<sup>91</sup> Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey*, 58.

<sup>92</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 126.

<sup>93</sup> Heper, *The Turkish State Tradition*, 99.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 69, 71.

<sup>95</sup> Leslie L. Roos Jr. and Noralou P. Roos, *Managers of Modernization: Organizations and Elites in Turkey (1950-1969)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 31-32.

administration.<sup>96</sup> In support for this argument, Frey mentions that the legislatures which functioned during the one party era were staffed in large part by deputies of bureaucratic origin.<sup>97</sup> As such political society could not craft constitution and major laws, manage the state apparatus and produce a regulatory framework for the economic society because it was controlled by the state apparatus itself. The political arena was becoming an instrument of state power rather than a forum for the competition of ideas and interests.

Finally, as for the rule of law, the absence of a strong legal culture *rooted in civil society* guaranteed that norms legitimating actions by any given arena over other arenas could be established by the state without any opposition. First, the absence of a strong civil society itself made it difficult for a strong legal culture to originate from society in the first place. Additionally, while in Ottoman times the personal rule of the Sultan did emphasize obedience to his decrees, it also granted that the only legitimate source of authority was his will and delegation. The sovereignty of the state *vis-à-vis* the civil society did not leave any role to civil society in the articulation of laws.<sup>98</sup> In the absence of a strong political society, the state apparatus took on the duty to craft a constitution for society which resulted in the 1924 constitution. This document lacked a system of checks and balances limiting the power of elected majorities. As such, when a single-party regime, representing the interest of the bureaucracy, was established around the CHP, the constitution became an instrument for the consolidation of the state apparatus's power through the instrumentalization of the party by the bureaucracy rather than a document constraining and regulating the operations of the state.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Turan, "Continuity and Change in the Turkish Bureaucracy," 104.

<sup>97</sup> Frederick Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1965), 181.

<sup>98</sup> Heper, *The Turkish State Tradition*, 28-29.

<sup>99</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 52-53.

Three conclusions can be drawn from the last few paragraphs. First, the Turkish state apparatus was highly institutionalized. Second, the other four arenas – civil, economic and political societies and the rule of law – displayed very low levels of institutionalization. Third, the Turkish state apparatus used its relative institutional strength to acquire control over the other arenas. As can be seen from the previous paragraphs, all four arenas were subsumed under the Turkish state. The emerging Turkish state apparatus was clearly consolidated to a degree such that the other spheres were not able to provide checks on state power necessary for democratic regime. This state of affair led the state apparatus and more specifically its *locus* after the death of Atatürk, the bureaucracy, to take control of the other arenas in order for them to serve its own purpose. If one is to see the modernization of Turkish society as this goal, the Turkish state apparatus in effect monopolized all of society's resources toward attaining this one goal. During the one party era, the absence of a viable, pluralistic civil society enabled it to impose this program upon society without facing an organized opposition. Its control over political society enabled it to use politics as an instrument of the bureaucracy. Its penetration of economic society through legislation and through economic policies favoring the industrial sector which it itself controlled emphasized the latter's dependence on the bureaucracy. Finally, its control of the source of legislation enabled it to sanction the established patterns of interaction. In short, the Turkish state apparatus displayed obvious symptoms of over-institutionalization.

With its top-down approach to change and focus on the imposition of a certain order on Turkish society by force if needed, Kemalism constituted a wholly illiberal outlook bent on seeing society as it should be rather than as it was. Furthermore, its perception of the role of the different spheres of society did not conform to democratic norms. Because the state apparatus was institutionalized around such norms, the resulting regime, even if it fitted the definition of an

electoral democracy displayed striking signs of perverse institutionalization – that is, the institutionalized patterns of behavior did not conform to those required for democratic consolidation. Through its domination of society, the state acquired control over the process by which these different spheres institutionalized. This presence of the state in virtually every corner of society is well illustrated by the term ‘deep state’ or *derin devlet* used to characterize, in the words of a French diplomat, the “league of actors who have an interest in maintaining the *status quo* and who defend the preservation of certain equilibriums which describe what Turkish society should be.”<sup>100</sup> Because of state control over other arenas, the institutionalization of these spheres was also influenced by the illiberal character of the Kemalist outlook. Similarly, they also displayed signs of perverse institutionalization because their primary organizing principle did not conform to the one required for the adequate functioning of a democratic order.

The discussion presented in the previous section provided a good sense of the ideal role of the state in society as perceived by Atatürk and his followers. This section examined the effect of the pervasive influence of this outlook on the institutionalization of the five different spheres of society identified by Linz and Stepan as necessary for democratic consolidation. What has been deemed the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state is at the core of Turkey’s problems with democratic consolidation for two reasons. First, it did not allow the establishment of democratic patterns of interaction between the five interacting sphere. Second, it did not allow for the institutionalization of each of these spheres according to the right organizing principles – freedom of association and communication for civil society, free and inclusive electoral competition for political society, constitutionalism for the rule of law, rational-legal bureaucratic norms for the state apparatus and an institutionalized market for economic society. In the next section, five issues will be examined in light of the lingering influence of Kemalism and the

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<sup>100</sup> Interview by the author, Ankara, June 23, 2008.

importance of the state in Turkish politics. An analysis of these issues will show that democratic consolidation is impeded because: (1) Kemalism has remained the normative framework of Turkish politics and (2) the patterns of interactions between different sectors of society established during the one party era due to the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state apparatus have had a lingering influence. While important changes have taken place over the years in different areas of Turkish society, they have not yet been sufficient to complete democratic consolidation.

## THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN POLITICS

When discussing democratic consolidation in Turkish politics, the first area of concern is civilian-military relations. In 1980, the military intervened in Turkish politics for the third time in twenty years. As a result of this intervention, the military has come to replace the bureaucracy as the *locus* of the new Turkish moderate transcendental state – the formulators and /or carriers of the ... norms and values around which the Turkish state is structured and which are imposed on society. This process has in turn ensured the continued influence of the Turkish military in politics. While the military's good faith and commitment to democratic procedure is often put forward by scholars of Turkish politics, one is forced to recognize that its current influence is not compatible with democratic consolidation. This section will show that the problems identified in civilian-military relations are a symptom of the importance of the state in Turkish politics.

Looking back at Larry Diamond's definition of liberal democracy discussed above, a democracy cannot be consolidated if the military possesses significant powers which allow it to intervene in the decision-making process of the civilian leadership and if its attitude and actions alters the calculation of political actors. In a consolidated democracy, the military sphere of

intervention is reduced to external security and the armed forces are placed firmly under civilian control. Under the current institutional framework, the military in Turkey does not fulfill these conditions as noted time and time again in the EU's annual progress reports.<sup>101</sup> Regarding the first condition, the military operates according to a problematic definition of national security. Since the early years of the Republic, the military has seen its primary *raison d'être* as "the guardian and guarantor of national security."<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Directive states that "it is the duty of the Turkish Armed Forces to protect the Turkish homeland and the republic ... against internal and external threats."<sup>103</sup> The boundaries between external and internal security are blurred, in the process expanding the reserved policy domains of the military. With respect to the second condition, one only has to look at the tremendous political power wielded by the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu* – MGK) or the position of the chief of general staff with respect to the civilian leadership to observe the undue capacity of the military to influence the decision-making process.<sup>104</sup> Ümit Cizre notes that "in the last two decades, the [MGK] has been the most decisive leg of a dual system of executive decision making, the other leg being the council of ministers" making decisions on a variety of issues from determining the curriculum in schools to making bureaucratic appointments of the ministry of public works in the southeast.<sup>105</sup>

For the military, the crisis of the late 1970 and the extreme polarization of society associated with it resulted from "the almost complete erosion of the transcendental state in the

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<sup>101</sup> European Commission, *Turkey 2007 Progress Report* (Brussels: Commission of the European Community, 2007), 9.

<sup>102</sup> Ümit Cizre-Sakallioğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics*, 29(2): 157.

<sup>103</sup> As quoted in Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics (Adelphi Paper 337)*, (London: International Institute for Strategic Study, 2001), 45.

<sup>104</sup> Güney, Aylin, "The Military, Politics and Post Cold-War Dilemmas in Turkey," in *Political Armies: The Military and Nation Building in the Age of Democracy*, ed. Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt (New York; London: Zed Books, 2002), 174.

<sup>105</sup> Ümit Cizre-Sakallioğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," 158.

absence of intermediary structures with a moderating influence.”<sup>106</sup> More specifically, the politicization of the bureaucracy during the period preceding the coup led to the unavoidable slide of the Turkish state towards extreme instrumentalism. In a sense, the military of the 1980’s came to the same conclusion as Atatürk in the 1920’s regarding the possibility of establishing a moderate instrumental state in Turkey. It therefore took steps to reestablish the preeminence of the norms around which the early Turkish transcendental state had been established to guarantee its survival. As such, the system exhibited strong signs of moderate transcendentalism. Indeed, a non-civil-societal institution, the military, came to dominate the Turkish polity and articulate the parameters of politics around Atatürkist norms. In doing so, it replaced the bureaucracy as the *locus* of the transcendental Turkish state.<sup>107</sup>

Its firm commitment to staying outside and above politics stemming from its belief in westernizing reforms led the military to make its influence felt in a distinctive way. Rather than being involved in the day to day management of the affairs of the Turkish state, the military emphasized its role as the ‘guardian’ of the Republic by securing important exit guarantees through the 1982 constitution in the form of tutelary powers, reserved domain, manipulation of the electoral process, the irreversibility of actions of the military regime and amnesty laws.<sup>108</sup> These guarantees allowed the military to impose what has been deemed by Gilles Dorronsoro a “security regime.”<sup>109</sup> This regime has two defining features. On the one hand are the peculiar interactions between political institutions and security institutions, as exemplified by the position of the MGK, which resulted in the nearly complete autonomy and sovereignty of the armed forces. On the other lies the establishment of a meta-ideology – rules regarding what it is

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<sup>106</sup> Heper, *The Turkish State Tradition*, 124.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-137.

<sup>108</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 106-116.

<sup>109</sup> Gilles Dorronsoro, “Introduction: Mobilisations et Régime Sécuritaire,” in *La Turquie Contestée: Mobilisations Sociales et Régime Sécuritaire*, ed. Gilles Dorronsoro (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2005), 21-24.

legitimate to say and do – structured around the concept of national security or *milli güvenlik*.<sup>110</sup>

Under these conditions, “power holders can always try to use the instrument of *securitization* of an issue to gain control over it [as,] by definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so”<sup>111</sup>. As Pinar Bilgin notes, because “[the military] also has power to shape the political process” through the current institutional arrangements, its role in Turkish politics is likely to remain central.<sup>112</sup>

Fused with the military’s role as the ‘guardians’ of the Republic is what Ümit Cizre describes as its ‘vanguard’ role – propelling change in a Western direction – stemming from a strong commitment to Atatürk’s legacy.<sup>113</sup> The interplay of these two roles led the Turkish military to adopt three sets of conflicting ideals:

staying out of politics because it is harmful to professional integrity, but intervening in politics whenever it is necessary for the protection of the secular and democratic regime; safeguarding the democratic regime and contributing to the process of democratization ... , but refraining from acting as an instrument of the political government; joining the community of nations to become an integral part of it, but maintaining a guard against the West.<sup>114</sup>

The military therefore found itself in a difficult position when the intermediary structures it sought to foster precisely to take the day to day responsibility of running the country off its shoulders, facilitating its ‘guardian’ role, were used by social and political forces that represented a challenge to its ‘vanguard’ role. These challenges concretized in the form of political Islam, as exemplified in particular by the growth of the National Outlook Movement (*Milli Görüş Hareketi* – NOM) and Kurdish nationalism. The military used its powers as ‘guardian’ to tackle

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<sup>110</sup> Dorransoro, “Introduction: Mobilisations et Régime Sécuritaire,” 22-24.

<sup>111</sup> Ole Waever, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 54.

<sup>112</sup> Pinar Bilgin, “Turkey’s Changing Security Discourses: The Challenge of Globalisation,” *European Journal of Political Research*, 44: 195.

<sup>113</sup> Ümit Cizre, “The Justice and Development Party and the Military,” in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Ümit Cizre (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 142.

<sup>114</sup> Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, “Officers: Westernization and Democracy,” in *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities*, ed. Metin Heper, Ayşe Öncü and Heinz Kramer (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 32.

these two problems. Indeed, it included both political Islam and Kurdish nationalism as paramount internal threats in its 1997 National Security and Policy Document (NSPD).<sup>115</sup> These two points also figure as the dominant concerns of the most recent NSPD document endorsed in 2005.<sup>116</sup> From this strategic doctrine stemmed the military's involvement in the *e-coup* during the 2007 presidential elections during which the general staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, in a memorandum posted on its website, reaffirmed its resolve to safeguard the secular principles of the country and criticized the AKP's policies on the issue.<sup>117</sup> The last decade has also seen the military intervene in politics in more subtle ways. Indeed, the military has started to make more effective use of media outlets and emerging civil society organizations. In fact, "most secular NGO's, which are considered in theory autonomous *vis-à-vis* the state, have, in reality, been defined, structured and mobilized as the secularist frontline partisans ... against the anti-secular 'enemies' of the regime."<sup>118</sup> The example of the Association for Atatürkist Thought chaired by a retired former commander of the Turkish gendarmerie currently under investigation for plotting a coup in 2004 illustrate this new tendency. Indeed, it was one of the most prominent NGO's participating in the manifestation of 13 April and 29 April 2007 against the AKP and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, two of the largest in Turkish history.<sup>119</sup> This observation leads Dorrnsoro to question the 'civil society-mobilization-democratization' paradigm which assumes that civil societal group act as true expressions of grassroots dynamism.<sup>120</sup> The ambiguous position of the military with respect to democracy therefore stems from the interplay of its 'guardian' and 'vanguard' roles.

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<sup>115</sup> Ümit Cizre, "Demythologizing the National Security Concept: The Case of Turkey," *Middle East Journal*, 57(2): 222.

<sup>116</sup> "Turkish cabinet approves "secret" National Security Policy Document," *BBC Monitoring Europe*, 21 March 2006.

<sup>117</sup> Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Turkish Policy towards Northern Iraq Still Undecided." *Terrorism Monitor*, 5.13 (2007): 6.

<sup>118</sup> Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," 148.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>120</sup> Dorrnsoro, "Introduction: Mobilisations et Régime Sécuritaire," 13-18.

In early 2004, the implementation of legislative changes to the structure of the MGK significantly altered the composition, functioning and competence of the institution. Among other modifications, the number of officers serving on the Council was reduced to one, the MGK secretariat was stripped of its executive powers and a redefinition of its role as an advisory body on security issues.<sup>121</sup> As a result of these changes, the institutional strength of the military was reduced, undermining one of the two pillars of its security regime. However, they failed to address the second component of the military's security regime, namely the security meta-ideology underlying Turkish politics. In fact, it is likely that these changes have caused the shift in the military's strategy from a "state-centered strategy to establish hegemony to a more decentered, individual-based and informal practice of power in society"<sup>122</sup> discussed in the previous paragraph. As a result, civilian actors, despite having dealt a strong blow to the ability of the military to influence politics, have not been able to successfully challenge the military's role as the *locus* of the Turkish transcendental state.

In his book *The Turkish State Tradition*, Metin Heper states that

It is not the preference of the military to go on having a sovereign and autonomous state. It is for this reason that the military is intent upon developing those spontaneous restraints indispensable for a moderately instrumental polity.<sup>123</sup>

However, as shown in the previous paragraph, when the military realized that the construction of the necessary intermediary structures for an instrumentalist state – the institutionalization of civil, political and economic societies supported by a rule of law – would favor actors that contested the norms around which the state was established, it exhibited significant resistance to the civilian actors thus empowered. Two conclusions can be drawn from this observation. First,

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<sup>121</sup> Steven A. Cook, *Ruling but not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007), 128-129.

<sup>122</sup> Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," 148.

<sup>123</sup> Heper, *The Turkish State Tradition*, 148.

the military's role in politics stems from the fact that Kemalism as remained the normative framework underpinning Turkish politics. As the locus of the transcendental state, the military has therefore sought to defend these norms against civilian actors which has in turn undermined democratic consolidation. Second, the relative weakness of civil and political society in challenging the "monopoly of the concept, knowledge and expertise on defense, strategy threats and security issues"<sup>124</sup> of the military shows the lingering influence of the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state apparatus and its domination of society. Indeed, both Cizre and Bilgin come to the conclusion that this factor is just as important if not more important than legal-constitutional changes to establish civilian oversight of the military.<sup>125</sup> It therefore comes as no surprise that TESEV (*Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı*), one of the most prominent Turkish think-tanks has devoted an entire wing of its organization to educating civilian actors about security issues.<sup>126</sup>

## THE POLITICAL PARTY SYSTEM

Another area of concern with regards to democratic consolidation in Turkey is the state of political society. Linz and Stepan define political society as "an arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself to contest the legitimate right to exercise control over the public power and the state apparatus."<sup>127</sup> The degree to which political society is institutionalized greatly affects the quality of democratic procedure for four reasons as outlined by Larry Diamond. First, institutionalized political systems are less volatile and more enduring. Second,

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<sup>124</sup> Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," 139.

<sup>125</sup> Bilgin, "Turkey's Changing Security Discourses," 196. Cizre-Sakallioğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," 162

<sup>126</sup> See for instance İbrahim Cerrah, *The European Code of Police Ethics and the Vocational Socialization of Security Personnel in Turkey* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2008) and Ümit Cizre and İbrahim Cerrah (eds.), *Security Sector Governance: Turkey and Europe* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2008).

<sup>127</sup> Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 8.

they produce a higher quality and intensity of democracy. Third, they are more likely to produce workable, sustainable and effective economic and social policy. Finally and most importantly in the Turkish case, highly institutionalized political institutions are better able to limit military involvement in politics and assert civilian control over the military.<sup>128</sup> The inversely proportional relationship between the military's strength and the institutionalization of political society is well captured by Aylin Güney who notes that "the weakness of the political system in Turkey – undermined by petty party politics, high levels of corruption, the threat of political Islam and perceived threats to the unity and integrity of Turkey – will provide the military with arguments to continue [its] 'guardianship' role."<sup>129</sup>

Within political society, institutionalized political parties are fundamental to the successful functioning of a democratic regime because they constitute the main intermediary structures between individual member of society and their government. Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond define the key seven functions of political parties as: candidate nomination, electoral mobilization, issue structuring, societal representation, interest aggregation, forming and sustaining governments and social integration.<sup>130</sup> As will be seen in this section, political parties in Turkey, at least up until the rise of the AKP, were not able to fulfill these functions effectively.<sup>131</sup> In other words, the political party system was showing marked sign of under-institutionalization. In fact, it is in part the failures of the coalition governments of the late 1990 that facilitated the AKP's rise to power in the 2002 elections.

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<sup>128</sup> Larry Diamond, "Democracy in Latin America: Degrees, Illusions and Directions for Consolidation," in *Beyond Sovereignty: Collectively Defending Democracy in the Americas*, ed. Tom Farer (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 78-79.

<sup>129</sup> Güney, "The Military, Politics and Post Cold-War Dilemmas in Turkey," 175.

<sup>130</sup> Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond, "Types and Functions of Parties," in *Political Parties and Democracy*, ed. Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 7-8.

<sup>131</sup> Soli Özel, "After the Tsunami," *Journal of Democracy*, 14(2): 82.

The current state of the political party system in Turkey is best conceived of as a paradox. As Frederick Frey remarked in the 1950's, "Turkish politics are party politics ... within the power structure of Turkish society, the political party is the main unofficial link between the government and the larger, extra governmental group of people."<sup>132</sup> However, while "Turkish politics are still by and large party politics"<sup>133</sup>, the party system has shown a marked trend towards deinstitutionalization in recent years<sup>134</sup>. This paradox can be observed in the emergence of four specific problematic tendencies: (1) increased electoral volatility, (2) party fragmentation, (3) ideological polarization and (4) organizational weakening of parties and decreased identification ties. Electoral volatility is here taken to mean "sharp decline in the strength of some parties and increase in others between elections"<sup>135</sup>. Fragmentation refers to the tendency of Turkish party to dissolve into separate factions that lead to the continued disappearance of old parties and the creation of new ones. Ideological polarization accurately describes the increased tendency for the political spectrum to be the stage of a growing rift between the secularist, nationalist parties and their Islamic and Kurdish counterparts as a result of the increased prominence of religious and ethnic issues on the national agenda and the erosion of the centrist parties.<sup>136</sup> As far as organizational capacities are concerned, Ergun Özbudun notes that Turkish parties are characterized by weak links with party members and other civil society institutions, centralized leadership and patron-client networks leading to the use of parties as "personal fiefdoms"<sup>137</sup>, a fledging electoral mobilization capacity and a diminishing role in issue

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<sup>132</sup> Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*, 301-303.

<sup>133</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 99.

<sup>134</sup> Sabri Sayari, "The Changing Party System," *Politics, Parties & Elections in Turkey*, ed. Sabri Sayari and Yilmaz Esmer (Boulder; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 27

<sup>135</sup> Sayari, "The Changing Party System," 179.

<sup>136</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 78

<sup>137</sup> Sayari, "The Changing Party System," 25

structuration.<sup>138</sup> Taken together, these problems have undermined the three following features of Turkish democracy: (1) political stability, (2) effective governance and (3) policy continuity.<sup>139</sup> More importantly, the general weakening of party performance evident in the growing mistrust of political parties undermines the expression of the electorate's views in the political process.<sup>140</sup>

The cause of these weaknesses and the resulting alienation of the general public originate from the legacy of Kemalism and the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state apparatus. Indeed, one can recall from the discussion of Kemalism presented earlier that it did not hold political society in the highest regards. The state, as the embodiment of the general will, viewed the articulation of particularistic interests as detrimental to the progress of the country. Political society had no place in the rationalist conception of democracy advocated by Kemalism according to which the general interest was to be rationally determined by the state elite and the purpose of the sole national political party – the Republican People's Party – was to carry out the policies adopted by the state. Because the state apparatus was institutionalized around such norms, a deep mistrust of society on the part of the state elite has persisted. This vision is clearly at odds with the actual role political society and political parties should play in a democratic regime. Indeed, the role of political society is precisely to “aggregate and represent *differences* between democrats.”<sup>141</sup> Ideally, political society constitutes an area where compromise and bargaining between different political factions lead to a dynamic equilibrium regarding the goals of the country and the means to implement them. As such, Kemalism clearly does not fit that mold.

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<sup>138</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 80-87

<sup>139</sup> Sayari, “The Changing Party System,” 180

<sup>140</sup> Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 85; Sayari, “The Changing Party System,” 31

<sup>141</sup> Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation*, 10.

The over-institutionalization of the Turkish state has also had an impact on the capacity of political parties and more broadly political society to carry out its responsibilities within a democratic regime. The reader can here recall that during the one party era, the state apparatus effectively controlled political society. Following İsmet İnönü's decision to allow for competitive elections for the first time in the 1950's politics developed as a conflict between state elite and political elite.<sup>142</sup> The apparent mistrust with which state elite regarded their counterparts led the political elite to adopt an overtly confrontational stance. This attitude in turn confirmed the state elite's suspicions that the political elite were incapable of taking into account the long term interest of the country as a unified whole. The Turkish polity clearly lacked a culture of compromise vital to democratic politics.<sup>143</sup> Metin Heper identifies three particular consequences of this power configuration. First, politics in Turkey tend to revolve around 'high politics' rather than the day-to-day needs of the country and its people. Second, the salience of political patronage and clientelism in Turkish politics came to the fore. Third, in case of regime failure, politicians, rather than democracy itself, were seen as the guilty party.<sup>144</sup> However, the most important outcome turned out to be that political society did not come to a consensus on the rules of democracy, a prerequisite for democratic consolidation highlighted by Heper.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, the political actors emerging as loyal supporters of the Kemalist modernization project turned out to rely on the military and the state elite to uphold their own vision of a democratic order. As such, they did not object when democracy faced critical threats in the face of military intervention. This situation led to a pattern of dependency well illustrated by the different

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<sup>142</sup> Metin Heper, "Conclusion: The Consolidation of Democracy versus Democratization in Turkey," in *Political Parties in Turkey*, ed. Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (London; Portland: Frank Cass, 2002), 140.

<sup>143</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz and Nihat Ali Özcan, "Crisis in Turkey: The Conflict of Political Languages," in *Middle East Policy*, 14(3): 122.

<sup>144</sup> Heper, "Conclusion: The Consolidation of Democracy versus Democratization in Turkey," 141.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

attitudes regarding mobilization strategies adopted by the Republican People's Party and the Welfare party (*Refah Partisi* – RP) in the 1990's. While the Welfare Party devoted significant resources to mobilizing the local population through local networks, Jenny White quotes a CHP party official as saying: "We don't have time for that sort of thing. We are a modern party."<sup>146</sup> In short, the position of Kemalism as the normative framework of Turkish politics and the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state apparatus has had unwanted consequences on the political party system which have slowed progress towards democratic consolidation. The Justice and Development Party's capacity to use these local networks as *de facto* successor of the parties of the National Outlook Movement accounts for an important part of its electoral success and has put pressure on other parties to reinvent themselves to survive.

The AKP's rise to power does not seem to have had, until recently, much impact on the behavior of its main rivals within the political party system. Observers of Turkish politics widely acknowledge that the AKP's rise results in large part from the discredit that fell upon the coalition parties – *Demokratik Sol Parti* (Democratic Left Party – DSP), Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* – MHP) and Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi* – ANAP) – in power at the time of the disastrous 1999 earthquake and the 2000 and 2001 economic crisis.<sup>147</sup> According to a prominent EU official, the CHP in particular has slowly come to realize the need for change as outlined in its recent efforts to revamp its electoral manifesto and party program.<sup>148</sup> Historically, the CHP seems to have shied away from mass-party politics because, in Turkey's parliamentary system, obtaining 20 to 25 percent of votes is usually sufficient to be guaranteed a say in national politics. Besides, the CHP, as the party closest to, if not of, the state

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<sup>146</sup> As quoted in Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 258.

<sup>147</sup> Özel, "After the Tsunami," 81.

<sup>148</sup> Interview by the author, Ankara, June 25, 2008.

could always rely on the intervention of external actors to safeguard its interests.<sup>149</sup> Two simultaneous developments have led to pressures for changing this mindset. First, the institutional changes limiting the power of the military brought about in 2004 have limited the capacity of external actors – the military or the judiciary – to protect the interests of the state and the CHP. Cook argues rather convincingly that these changes were brought about as a direct result of EU pressures given that domestic actors had previously been powerless to challenge the institutional arrangements wrought by the state establishment.<sup>150</sup> Second, the rise of the AKP itself and its relative success in facing the challenges of the state, most importantly the *e-coup* and *judicial coup*, have led to an enduring five-year period of single-party rule. As the AKP looks like an enduring phenomenon in Turkish politics, the CHP has come to realize the need for change. Indeed, the CHP, to paraphrase a local EU official, has realized it does not possess the strength to compete with the mass phenomenon that is the AKP.<sup>151</sup> The rise of the AKP comes as an important surprise in a political system dominated by the state as the state apparatus should have, in theory, been able to limit the impact of the AKP. At its roots, the emergence of a force in opposition to the state has its root in the contradictory nature of Kemalist thought. As illustrated by Ali Karaosmanoğlu in the context of a discussion on the role of the military in politics, Kemalist thought advocates both democracy, a bottom-up system of governance, and a particular brand of modernization which involves the top-down imposition of a way of life.<sup>152</sup> Rising political actors such as the AKP were able to use these contradictions to bolster their position within the political system and protect themselves from abusive interventions.

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Cook, *Ruling but not Governing*, 127.

<sup>151</sup> Interview by the author, Ankara, June 25, 2008.

<sup>152</sup> Karaosmanoğlu, “Officers: Westernization and Democracy,” 32.

While the AKP has put created incentives for greater institutionalization of political society, one should not take this outcome is inevitable. One has to realize that the AKP's rise results from broad societal and economic changes as will be discussed in the next section. In this respect, the AKP is a symptom of the greater institutionalization of economic and civil society rather than political society. Indeed, the AKP constitutes a broad coalition of societal forces, including liberals and conservatives, rather than a cohesive ensemble. Many observers, including local EU officials, have emphasized that the AKP's success also has its source in the lack of other alternative offering a clear and coherent way forward after the debacles of the *baba devlet* or father state during the period from 1999 to 2001.<sup>153</sup> The AKP has been identified by Özel as a classic realigning party as “it appears to have swayed and motivated both new and existing voters, and represents a winning coalition that is diverse but held together by a common cultural discourse that resonates with all.”<sup>154</sup> This observation is true in that the AKP's rise has created pressures for other parties to evolve. However, this process of realignment is still occurring. Its outcome remains uncertain and depends on the continuing strength of the AKP.

## THE RISE OF POLITICAL ISLAM AND DEBATES ON SECULARISM

An analysis of Turkish politics would not be complete without addressing the importance of political Islam within the Turkish polity. While political Islam in Turkey has its source in the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi* – MNP) and National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi* – MSP) of the pre 1980 era, developments after the 1980 coup are the focus of the thesis developed in this paper. Historically, Islam has often been used as a vehicle to oppose the

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<sup>153</sup> Interview by the author, Ankara, June 25, 2008.

<sup>154</sup> Özel, “After the Tsunami,” 83.

modernization and secularization project of the state.<sup>155</sup> More specifically, it has come to represent the most important challenge to the Turkish state apparatus since its inception in 1980 as evidenced by its inclusion in the 1997 and 2005 NSPD. This situation results in part from the way the Turkish state itself handled political Islam. As will be shown in this section, one of the great successes of the Turkish state has been to tone down the anti-systemic potential of Islamist parties. However, this accomplishment came at a price as Islamist actors themselves seem to have come to realize the benefits of a functioning of a democratic order. This process has enabled them to challenge the Turkish state on its own grounds by exposing its illiberal tendencies.

When discussing political Islam in Turkey, it is important to distinguish between the two different meanings of secularism. One is secularism as a constitutional principle and the second is secularism as a sociological reality. In the first case, secularism applies to the state. It takes on a predominantly political connotation and consists of a reaffirmation of the autonomy of the state *vis-à-vis* religion. From this concept, Ahmet Kuru distinguishes between two ideal-types: passive and aggressive secularism. The first type is most similar to what is commonly implied when referring to a separation of church and state. It presupposes that the state maintains a neutral attitude towards all religious communities and allows the public visibility of religion. “Assertive secularism, on the other hand, means that the state favors a secular worldview in the public sphere and aims to confine religion to the private sphere.”<sup>156</sup> Secularism can also be viewed as a sociological reality. Rather than applying to the state, it applies to society. A society is secular if religion has little or no relevance to the lives of its individual members. Therefore, a secular state

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<sup>155</sup> White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*, 104.

<sup>156</sup> Ahmet T. Kuru, “Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey: The Case of the Justice and Development Party,” in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), 137.

cannot necessarily be equated with a secular society. In the Turkish case, while the Turkish state could be considered secular in the sense that it is not dominated by religion, it adheres to a version of aggressive secularism. Turkish society, however, is not a secular society as evidenced by the growing importance of religion to the lives of a significant portion of Turks.<sup>157</sup> From this dichotomy stems a profound problem for democracy as the state, as an autonomous actor, has in effect taken measures to secularize society against the wishes of a significant portion of citizens. With this in mind, the Turkish state's stance on secularism leads to domination of religion by the state rather than the autonomy of the state from religion. The control of religious activities exercised by the state through the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) exemplifies the aggressive secularist policies of the Turkish state.

The growing importance of the parties of the National Outlook Movement post 1980 was the prime manifestation of the rise of political Islam. In 1996, the Islamist leaning Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* – RP) led by Necmetin Erbakan came to power in a coalition with Tansu Çiller's True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi* – DSP). The policies of the RP prompted a strong reaction by the military culminating in the 1997 'post-modern' coup during which the RP government was forced to step down and subsequently banned from politics along with its key leaders. The successor of the RP, the Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi* – FP) was also banned in 2001 leading to a split between the traditional and reformist wing of the party. The traditional wing of the party regrouped around the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi* – SP) and subsequently disappeared from the political landscape. On the other hand, the reformist wing led by Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan founded the AKP and managed to capture power in the 2002 elections.

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<sup>157</sup> Ali Carkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *Religion Society and Politics in a Changing Turkey*, trans. Çiğdem Aksoy Fromm, ed. Jenny Sanders (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2007), 101.

The factors that led to this victory are numerous. However, Yavuz traces the cause of this rise in electoral support back to the era of the Özal reforms of the 1980's. After the military handed power back to the elected leadership in 1983, then Prime Minister Turgut Özal initiated a broad array of reforms aiming at depoliticizing Turkish society. Among these reforms, the most significant took place in the economic sphere where the liberalization of the economy strongly favored what is now referred to as the Anatolian bourgeoisie or the Anatolian tigers that came to challenge the established businesses of Istanbul. This group of businessmen, mainly from central Anatolia, hailed from a more socially conservative portion of society than their Istanbul counterparts. As such, their increased wealth and influence allowed for an explosion of organizations with Islamic leanings on which political parties of the NOM were able to capitalize during their electoral campaigns. Moreover, the acceleration of the rural exodus brought in a sizeable population from the more socially conservative countryside to the more liberal cities. These two factors explain in part the rise in support for parties challenging the Kemalist conception of the role of religion in society held by the state elites.<sup>158</sup>

However, the process of economic liberalization also guaranteed that the kind of alternative offered by those who sought to challenge the Kemalist order differed drastically from radical movements in Egypt, Algeria and Iran. By allowing the formation of a substantial middle class of entrepreneur and educated professionals, the Turkish state has in effect contributed to the transformation of radical Islamist voices in Turkey.<sup>159</sup> Contrasting the policies of the RP and AKP is particularly important to understand the evolution of political Islam during the last twenty-five years. The strategy adopted by the RP was highly confrontational. Indeed, it sought

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<sup>158</sup> See M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 81-101.

<sup>159</sup> Ziya Öniş, "Globalisation and Party Transformation: Turkey's Justice and Development Party in Perspective," in *Globalising Democracy: Party Politics in Emerging Democracies*, ed. Peter Burnell (New York; London: Routledge, 2006), 124.

to challenge the state elite on two issues which had been its reserved domains since the creation of the Republic: foreign policy and secularism.<sup>160</sup> The question of education also came to the fore in this period as it highlighted the profound differences between Islamists and secular forces as evidenced by the prominence of debates on the presence of headscarves in universities, *İmam Hatip* schools – vocational schools originally created to train İmams now opened to a wider public whose secular character is questioned by assertive secularist – and *Qur'an* courses.<sup>161</sup> What raised doubts in the mind of secular political actors was the party's commitment to democratic procedures. Ziya Öniş highlights the “authoritarian leanings of the party, raising doubts in the public mind about how far it would respect a pluralistic political order.”<sup>162</sup> This rather confrontational stance was a direct result of the aggressive secularist policies of the Turkish state which continued to hold on to the ‘cast-iron theory’ of Islam. Öniş, in the same volume proceeds to describe the learning process partisans of Islamist politics experienced culminating in the formation of the AKP, which “compared to its rivals, in particular the CHP ..., appeared to be forward-looking and reformist.”<sup>163</sup> In other words, the RP, although moderate compared to other Islamist parties, displayed some characteristics of what Gunther and Diamond call proto-hegemonic religious parties, arranged around a relatively strict reading of religious doctrinal principles. The learning process correctly identified by Öniş can be compared to a shift from the proto-hegemonic religious party ideal type to the denominational mass-party ideal type, which is more pluralist and incremental in implementing its agenda.<sup>164</sup> Through its promotion of aggressive secularism, the Turkish state has successfully limited the anti-systemic rhetoric of

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>161</sup> Kuru, “Reinterpretation of Secularism in Turkey,” 147-152.

<sup>162</sup> Öniş, “Globalisation and Party Transformation,” 126.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 126, 131.

<sup>164</sup> Gunther and Diamond, “Types and Functions of Parties,” 22.

Islamist parties which has undeniably been beneficial to the consolidation of democracy in Turkey.

While the Islamist faction experienced a serious learning process, the Turkish state maintained broadly aggressive secularist policies up until the election of the AKP in 2002. The transformation of the AKP put the Turkish state in a difficult position by highlighting the tensions that exist between democracy and the modernization project it embraces. Because the AKP was perceived to position itself in opposition to Kemalism, particularly during its second tenure, the state was torn between two opposing poles. On the one hand, it sought to disarm a so-called Islamic menace stemming from the AKP's more controversial policies regarding secularism, most prominently on the headscarf issue. On the other, it sought to uphold its respect for democratic procedures by not challenging the AKP. The recent verdict rendered by the Supreme Court allowing the AKP to survive seems to denote the unwillingness of the state to close a party that captured about 47% of the popular vote in the 2007 elections, a significant improvement when compared to the fate of the RP and FP. In a way, the Turkish state seems to slowly come to terms with the fact that "the AKP wants to extend the boundaries of religious freedom and encourage religious diversity rather than challenge the idea of secularism as a constitutional principle".<sup>165</sup> Whether this development result from the European Union accession process or from domestic pressures will be addressed in a subsequent section.

At any rate, such a process is crucial to democratic consolidation if we see the increasing relevance of religion to the Turkish population. Indeed, as was mentioned above, the aggressive version of secularism espoused by the Turkish state is in no way compatible with democracy. In this respect, Zürcher's assessment seems quite justified: "Perhaps the greatest success of Turkey's modernizing elite is the fact that it has lost its monopoly of the political and cultural

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<sup>165</sup> Öniş, "Globalisation and Party Transformation," 132-133.

debate. Through the spread of higher education and wealth, there has come into being a large and vocal middle class, important parts of which no longer regard a strong religious identity and modern way of life as incompatible.”<sup>166</sup> The transformation of political Islam inadvertently wrought by the state’s aggressive secularist policies, stemming from the Kemalist, has come to be its biggest challenge because it reveals the incompatibility of the normative framework of Turkish politics and liberal democracy. The progressive institutionalization of civil and economic societies can be seen in the important role of civil society organization in the February 27 process during which the country’s two largest trade unions, two largest businesspeople’s association, and the confederation of small traders and artisans protested against the government. While in this specific case the civil and economic societies banded against an Islamic party, their institutionalization has nonetheless allowed Islamic actors to challenge the norms around which the Turkish transcendental state was established in a more cooperative rather than confrontational manner. In turn, this has put the state in a position where it can no longer justify its aggressive secularist policies in a democratic context.

By providing an alternative to the state’s conception of religion, political Islam has successfully challenged the norms around which the Turkish state was established. Indeed, the liberalization of the economy emboldened a wide variety of Islamic groups, such as the political parties of the NOM, MÜSIAD, a business lobby, or Hak-İş, a labor union, to express or be associated views that did not respect the secular tenets of Kemalism. Moreover, the learning process experienced by these groups has transformed political Islam to such a degree that its demands now appears acceptable, if not desirable, to many segments of society. By demonstrating that modernity and religion should not be seen as polar opposites, it has attempted to discredit the Kemalist vision of society. More importantly, it has integrated a more liberal

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<sup>166</sup> As quoted in Soli Özel, “After the Tsunami,” *Journal of Democracy*, 14(2): 93-94.

current which has allowed some organization to challenge the state in a more constructive rather than confrontational manner. This observation leads Yavuz to claim that the AKP in particular “is not engaged in the politics of identity, which tend to be conflict-ridden and confrontational, but in the politics of services, based on compromise and cooperation.”<sup>167</sup> While this claim is often disputed by other observers of Turkish politics based on the relatively confrontational stance of the party and its inability to follow through with reforms during since the end of its first term, such a process has nonetheless made it harder for the Turkish state to respond by contesting its hallowed position in Turkish politics. As such, political Islam constitutes one of the main vehicles through which political, economic and civil societies have reasserted their autonomy from the state apparatus which has been beneficial to the consolidation of democracy.

## PLURALISM AND MINORITY ISSUES

Pluralism and minority issues are another facet of the multiple challenges facing the Turkish polity in its attempt to consolidate its democracy. Referring back to the definition of a liberal democracy presented earlier in this paper, political and civic pluralism, as well as individual and group freedom, are crucial components of a liberal democratic regime. As such, a democracy cannot be fully consolidated unless it showcases a significant degree of civic and political pluralism. Civic pluralism is here taken to mean in its form “the presence or tolerance of a diversity of ethnic or cultural groups within a society or state.”<sup>168</sup> Political pluralism can be equated with “a theory or system of devolution and autonomy for organizations and individuals

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<sup>167</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz, “Introduction: The Role of the New Bourgeoisie in the Transformation of the Turkish Islamic Movement,” in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>168</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., s.v. “Pluralism.”

in preference to monolithic state power.”<sup>169</sup> This section will show that both civic and political pluralism are impeded by the strength of the Turkish state by focusing on the treatment of Kurdish minorities in Turkey’s southeast region.

Along with political Islam, Kurdish separatism is viewed by the military as the biggest threat to Turkey’s security.<sup>170</sup> As was seen in a preceding section considering civilian-military relationships in Turkey, the particular institutional features of the Turkish polity and the presence of a security ‘meta-ideology’ stemming from Kemalism have allowed the military to ‘securitize’ minority issues. The particular stance of the security apparatus on the issue of minorities is a direct legacy of Kemalism. Indeed, Atatürk himself had observed, before the war of independence, that one of the biggest weaknesses of the Ottoman polity was the abdication of sovereignty over significant portions of the population living on its territory. The Ottoman Empire granted autonomy to an important number of minorities which significantly weakened its grip on these groups and became an important challenge with the rise of nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>171</sup> In effect, this policy amounted to granting privileges of extraterritoriality to foreign nations who were then able to use these privileges against the Ottomans themselves. The Turkish security has therefore always been influenced by what is commonly referred to as the *Sèvres* syndrome defined as “the perception of being encircled by enemies attempting the destruction of the Turkish state”<sup>172</sup>. In this context, the two guiding principles of Turkish national security policy have been the “protection of territorial and national integrity and the defense of legitimate rights and freedoms.”<sup>173</sup> Preserving territorial integrity

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> “Turkish cabinet approves “secret” National Security Policy Document,” *BBC Monitoring Europe*, 21 March 2006

<sup>171</sup> Oykar, “Atatürk’s Quest for Modernism,” 46-47.

<sup>172</sup> Dietrich Jung, “The Sèvres Syndrome: Turkish Foreign Policy and its Historical Legacies”, *American Diplomacy*, 8 (2). 26 Apr. 2008. <[http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ad/ad\\_v8\\_2/jud01.html](http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/ad/ad_v8_2/jud01.html)>.

<sup>173</sup> Şebnem Udum, “Turkey and the Emerging European Security Framework”, *Turkish Studies*, 3 (2): 73.

has been understood by the military as a mandate to protect the Turkish state “against internal and external threats.”<sup>174</sup> By securitizing minority issues, the military has acquired tremendous authority over policies regarding the Kurdish population and Turkey’s southeastern region.

In the context of this security discourse, it is easy to understand why social pluralism has had difficulty flourishing in Turkey. Because separatism is seen as a security issue, assertions of Kurdish identity have usually been perceived in a negative fashion and have encountered significant resistance from the state establishment. The logic goes that to prevent any threats of Kurdish separatism and guarantee its territorial integrity, the Turkish state had to emphasize the unitary nature of the Turkish nation in an attempt to strengthen the identification of citizens with the state. The early leaders of the Republic, “in [their] efforts to construct a new national consciousness, developed a repressive policy towards Kurdish identity: the public use of Kurdish was prohibited and the teaching of Kurdish were prohibited.”<sup>175</sup> While this strategy to protect its territory did not translate into massacres of the scale committed against the Armenians in 1915, it did signify the violation of the human and cultural rights of the Kurdish population.

More recently, after the 1980 coup, the suppression of Kurdish identity was intensified to such an extent that the use of Kurdish in private conversations was prohibited.<sup>176</sup> Using instruments such as anti-terrorism legislation or Article 301 of the penal code, which until its amendment in April 2008 made insulting “Turkishness” a crime worthy of 3 years of imprisonment, the Turkish state was able to severely punish any expression of Kurdish identity. These actions prompted an adverse reaction on the part of the Kurdish population evident in the emergence of the Worker’s Party of Kurdistan (*Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan* – PKK) and its call

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<sup>174</sup> As quoted in Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics (Adelphi Paper 337)*, (London: International Institute for Strategic Study, 2001), 45.

<sup>175</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 170.

<sup>176</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 316.

for the formation of a socialist state in southeastern Turkey through military action. In turn, the military itself responded by increasing its presence in the southeast. While the situation gradually cooled down after the arrest of PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the situation in southeastern Turkey remains volatile as demonstrated by the army's perceived need to launch raids against PKK camps across the Iraqi border in early 2008.

Establishing political pluralism has also been an important problem in Turkey for two reasons. First, the argument developed in this paper has demonstrated that the strength of the Turkish state has been an important problem in terms of democratic consolidation. More specifically, the nature of the Turkish state itself does not welcome the erosion of monolithic state power caused by decentralization necessary to accommodate an increasingly pluralistic society. The implementation of measures promoting political pluralism has been obstructed by the state. As was described in previous sections, political society itself is structured in a highly centralized and hierarchical fashion because its role has traditionally been perceived as bringing the interests of civil society to the center – the state. The reader will recall that Kemalist thought, the role of the state was to articulate the will of the nation, which presupposes its homogeneity, and protect its absolute supremacy. The strength of the state *vis-à-vis* other sectors of society allowed to carry out that function by erasing the differences between distinct factions in Turkish politics. As a result, “the fundamental rights of citizens are therefore a simple function of the state, emanating from it,” and depend on the degree to which political actors conform to the state's interpretation of the national will.<sup>177</sup> Second, political pluralism was opposed for precisely the same reasons as social pluralism. Granting political powers to region such as Turkey's southeast was as dangerous as tolerating the assertion of Kurdish identity, because it

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<sup>177</sup> Niels Kadritzke “La Société Turque entre l'Armée et les Islamistes,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2008.

could have negative consequences on the unity of the Turkish state. In turn, this would further undermine the legitimacy of the Turkish state by challenging the sanctity and appropriateness of the concept of national will. As such, the state has constantly opposed any steps towards political pluralism in Turkey.

The increasingly pluralistic nature of civil society has however started to create a challenge to the Turkish state's hold on the polity. More specifically, it becomes difficult for the state to restrict social and political pluralism in view of the evolving demographics of Turkey. This difficulty in part reflects the increasing autonomy and productivity of the economy. The spoils of economic activity have in the process of liberalization been spread to diverse sectors of society. As such, demands for social and political pluralism have made themselves more pressing as a direct corollary of the changing political economy of Turkey. In this respect, the rise of the AKP seems promising. As a highly diverse party, it has already secured tremendous successes in promoting social pluralism through less strenuous restrictions on the use of Kurdish and reforms of Article 301. The reform packages

legislated by the JDP in October 2002 and June 2003 expanded freedom of expression; education and broadcasting in the Kurdish language; abolished anti-terrorism provisions that authorized punishment for propaganda against the unity of the state; and established retrial rights for citizens whose court decisions are overturned by the European Court of Human Rights.<sup>178</sup>

The programs of economic revival engineered to improve living standards in the southeast will perhaps decrease the appeal of violent movement like the PKK to young Kurds. Perhaps recognizing the underlying causes of the problem – a poor economic situation – will serve as a show of goodwill on the part of the state enabling Turkish society to resolve the issues surrounding the Kurdish populations. In referring to a project of constitutional reform, M. Mehmet Firat, Vice President of the AKP, mentioned that “whereas the current constitution was

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<sup>178</sup> Cizre, “The Justice and Development Party and the Military,” 138.

promulgated to protect the state from the people, [an eventual] new constitution [should have] the goal of protecting the individual from the state.”<sup>179</sup> Because social pluralism and economic pluralism are rooted in the rights of individuals, such a development would serve as a welcomed step towards the consolidation of democracy. Whether it turns out to succeed or not, the comment is at any rate indicative of one of the main challenges facing Turkish society in democratizing. In short, the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state and Kemalist thought’s particular conception of national will have prevented the development of significant measures promoting political and social pluralism until recently. In the midst of the EU accession process, it is likely that the positive steps taken by the AKP over the last five years in this domain will be used as a springboard towards provisions accommodating Turkey’s increasingly pluralistic society.

## THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS

When discussing democratic consolidation in Turkey, the EU is often taken to hold tremendous influence. In fact, it is often seen as the body that anchors such a process. Qualifying this assertion is important. The EU is indeed an anchor for the consolidation of democracy in the sense that it does provide a relatively coherent model for the implementation of democratic procedures. Moreover, through concrete pressures and incentives, it has been able to force domestic actors to take steps towards democratic consolidation. However, it is important to recognize that the EU’s direct influence on democracy in Turkey is effective only if a significant portion of domestic actors embrace the goal of membership. A critical variable in determining the influence of the EU in Turkey is therefore the degree of popular and elite support for

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<sup>179</sup> As quoted in Niels Kadritzke “La Société Turque entre l’Armée et les Islamistes,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2008.

membership. As such, while the EU has effectively been able to constrain the action of both the state and its opponents in Turkey, its influence in furthering democratic consolidation in Turkey has tended to depend on the cooptation of its demands by domestic actors. To ensure this cooptation, the EU has made effective use of the conditionality principle through which it has provided sufficient incentives to both the state and societal actors to address the underlying problem of the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state.

To join the EU, Turkey must fulfill the EU's three Copenhagen criteria. They include political, economic and legal dimension. In the political realm, the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities is an important prerequisite. As far as the economy is concerned, the existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union is necessary. Finally, the acceptance of the Community *acquis* or common body of law is the last requirement for entry into the EU reflecting the ability of a candidate country to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. The implementation of the last portion is divided into thirty five different chapters, eight of which have been successfully closed.<sup>180</sup> The framework presented by the EU to guide Turkey along the arduous path of democratic consolidation is complete and extensive and has been refined following previous enlargement rounds.

The importance of the EU accession process has increased tremendously as the ruling AKP has made a central objective of its program. Soli Özel observes “the only way for [the AKP] to survive in power ... is through a liberal transformation of Turkish polity and its civilianization. This explains why the [AKP]'s drive for EU accession is genuine: it is matter of

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<sup>180</sup> Diego Mellado, interview by the author, Ankara, June 25, 2008.

enlightened self-interest, and the party clearly knows it.”<sup>181</sup> A point that is often under-emphasized is that the framework presented by the EU is useful to the degree that it is actually used by domestic actors. While the EU does provide important incentives for democratic consolidation, its actual influence is limited in that it has to rely on the political will of said actors to implement the necessary reform. During the first four years of its tenure, the AKP, buoyed by the strength its electoral support and the optimism of Turks regarding EU accession accomplished a great deal in terms of reforms towards democratic consolidation. For instance, the amendments to the structure of the MGK were a tremendous achievement. Without a domestic political actor of the strength of the AKP, democratic consolidation in Turkey, even if promoted by the EU, would not have progressed as much as it did.

On the other hand, during the period preceding the 2006 elections until now, the achievements of the AKP with respect to democratic consolidation have lagged behind. First of all, increasing skepticism regarding the motives of the EU on the part of Turks weakened the AKP’s resolve to push through with reforms. Second, the opposition forces, bolstered by unofficial state support, were very vocal in articulating their discontent with the AKP. Finally, the slide of the AKP back into controversial identity politics as exemplified by its stance of the headscarf issue created a deadlock which prevented any further progress towards EU accession. Taken together, the three factors mentioned above have diminished the will of the AKP to shoulder the political cost of implementing reforms toward the consolidation of democracy. As can be seen by contrasting the record of the AKP pre-2006 and post-2006, the EU’s influence is only felt when domestic actors decide to act upon the incentives presented by the EU. For a host of different reasons, the AKP failed to do so during the two-year period from 2006 until now.

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<sup>181</sup> Özel, “After the Tsunami,” 92.

Because of its very nature as an external actor, the EU's influence in the process of Turkey's democratic consolidation is therefore felt in a radically different way. Rather than playing what could be deemed an active role in the consolidation of democracy in Turkey, as some domestic actors have done, the EU has successfully assumed the role of a passive promoter. This term is not taken to mean that the EU has not taken action to promote democratic consolidation. Rather, it means that the EU has promoted democratic consolidation by successfully placing constraints on the actions of domestic actors that may alter the political costs they face in implementing reform. It is still up to the domestic actors to decide whether or not to follow the road of EU membership, but the EU can significantly influence that choice. As Ziya Öniş mentions, "the EU has helped to push Islamists in Turkey in a more moderate direction, by restricting the space within which they can operate"<sup>182</sup> by virtue of the fact that to gain the protection of the EU standards regarding religious freedom, Islamists would have to accept a minimal degree of secularism. Similarly, the state establishment itself has been forced to adopt a more conciliatory stance because, EU accession being a state policy, the state apparatus itself could not, at least in theory, denigrate the commitment to religious freedoms and civic liberties and that underpin such an organization. In short, the EU has made its influence felt by constraining the actions of domestic actors and by altering the costs they face in promoting democracy. However, the decision to act on these incentives remains in the hands of Turkish domestic political actors themselves.

For this reason, Turkish perceptions of the EU's attitude towards the eventual accession of Turkey are of particular importance. As was mentioned by a member of the EU commission, one can observe a strikingly directly proportional relationship between prospect for EU accession and progress with reforms towards democratic consolidation. A crucial parameter in the EU's

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<sup>182</sup> Öniş, "Globalization and Party Transformation," 134.

capacity to influence Turkish politics is the ambivalence or consensus of the EU on Turkey's eventual future in the Union. It is true that within the last few years, as progress with reforms lagged behind in Turkey, certain EU member states, most prominently France and Austria, have expressed the opinion that Turkey's future in the Union was seriously compromised. At their core, the criticisms reflect the fourth and untold portion of the Copenhagen criteria which guarantees that a country can enter the EU if and only if the EU itself has the capacity to absorb the new state within its current institutional structure. As a direct result of this ambivalence, progress towards democratic consolidation and EU accession has lagged behind in Turkey.

The EU offers interesting avenues to resolve some of the outstanding issues resulting from the over-institutionalization of the state. First off, one should remember that while EU membership is the ultimate end goal of the accession process, the accession process itself is almost as beneficial to a candidate country as membership itself. Indeed, the conditions implicit to the Copenhagen criteria guarantee that membership is only granted if the country has achieved significant progress towards democratic consolidation. As such, if democratic consolidation is considered the ultimate prize, EU membership is simply an added bonus. With this in mind, the particular dynamic of EU politics would have a particularly beneficial effect on the Turkish state and its over-institutionalization. Indeed, the EU, in a very paradoxical fashion, has traditionally caused devolution of power to Brussels accompanied by a decentralization of authority to regional polity. As such, by altering the centralized nature of the Turkish polity, Turkish membership in the EU would have quite a positive impact on the over-institutionalization of the state apparatus. It is not surprise that the most ardent supporters of the state have started to see this particular dynamic as an evil to be avoided at all costs. Quite ironically, for diehard statist, what would benefit Turkey is the EU without EU politics.

## CONCLUSION

Introducing the Turkish state in an analysis of Turkish politics yields particularly interesting results. With respect to democratic consolidation, the institutional strength of the state apparatus has undoubtedly been a key obstacle. As seen in the later sections of this paper, many of the problems encountered by pro-democratic forces can be analyzed in light of what has been called the over-institutionalization of the state and its perverse institutionalization. With this lesson in mind, two questions are left to be answered in this conclusion. First, what could be foreseen as the trend in Turkish in the near future? Second, what policies can external actors such as the U.S. and the E.U. adopt to promote democratic consolidation in Turkey? Before addressing these two questions, a short summary of the argument presented in the paper is necessary.

As Guillermo O'Donnell stated, democratic consolidation is taken to be the second transition involved in the democratization of a polity. Linz and Stepan's framework of democratic consolidation constitute a very appropriate schematization of the ways a consolidated democracy functions. A democracy is composed of five interacting arenas: political society, economic society, civil society, a rule of law and a state apparatus. The emphasis this model places on the interacting nature of the democratic system is quite adequate. However, it does not delve in great details when describing the conditions allowing for the establishment of democratic patterns of interaction between different spheres of society. For a successful institutionalization of a democratic regime, two conditions need to be met: (1) the institutionalization of each sphere must occur in step with that of the four others to guarantee that the patterns of interaction between each sphere conform to those described by Linz and Stepan

and (2) the institutionalization of each arena must be grounded in the correct normative organizing principles as established by Linz and Stepan. When these conditions are not satisfied, it is possible for one arena or more arena to display symptoms of over-institutionalization or perverse institutionalization.

In the Turkish case, the state apparatus suffered from over-institutionalization. The importance of the state in politics stems from the vision presented by Atatürk at the end of the War of Independence for the emerging republic. The state was seen as the principal agent in the implementation of a top down process of modernization aiming at bringing Turkish society to the same level of civilization as its Western European counterpart. As such, Atatürk and its followers aimed at the establishment of a transient moderate transcendental state structured around norms promoting this modernization project. In the long run, he hoped the measures taken to modernize the country would lead to the development of intermediary structures necessary to the functioning of a moderate instrumental state. The norms around which this modernization project were articulated are often referred to as the six arrows of Kemalism: republicanism, reformism-revolutionism, statism, secularism, nationalism and populism. They have formed the normative framework of Turkish politics since the beginning.

The implementation of this vision did not follow the linear path Atatürk hoped. In fact, it directly led to the over-institutionalization of the Turkish state which has had important consequences that are still felt today in many areas of Turkish politics. Because the founders of the Republic adopted a top-down modernization project and saw the state as the prime instrument of this project, the resources of the young nation were used to strengthen the state. As a result, the state apparatus displayed a high level of institutionalization which led to its bureaucratization. The bureaucracy came to be the *locus* of the transcendental state, in the

process rejecting the transient nature of the transcendental state. Conversely, the emphasis placed on state building in turn caused a low level of institutionalization of the economic, political and civil societies and the rule of law. These two conditions led to obvious symptoms of over-institutionalization of the Turkish state apparatus in the early years of the Republic. The centrality of Kemalism to the state and the bureaucracy's interpretation of it also led to the perverse institutionalization of the state apparatus. By virtue of its institutional strength, the state was able to acquire control over the other four arenas of Turkish society which led to their perverse institutionalization. Consequently, these symptoms guaranteed that the other four areas of Turkish politics remained underdeveloped.

Over the years, political, economic, and civic societies as well as the rule of law have shown marked sign of increasing institutionalization. While these have not been sufficient to confine the state to its ideal role in a fully consolidated democratic polity, it has definitely improved the nature of the democratic process in Turkey. In this respect, in the view of a TUSIAD official, one of the most beneficial events in promoting the gradual process of constraining the state has been the liberalization of the economy initiated by Prime Minister Turgut Özal after the state had realized that the a closed regime could not produce growth and meet social needs.<sup>183</sup> The liberalization surely seems to have been the point of departure as far as progress towards democracy has been made in the areas of political Islam, social pluralism, the rule of law and in general the strengthening of both civil and economic societies. These improvements have also started spilling over in the political arena in the form of the AKP. The question relevant question is therefore whether a functioning, open, private-sector driven economy can function without democracy? In other words does economic liberalization necessarily entail political liberalization? According to the vice-chairman of TÜSIAD, a

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<sup>183</sup> Interview by the author, Istanbul, July 7, 2008.

prominent business lobby, an open economy implies an open society which in turn requires constraints on the vested interest of the bureaucracy.<sup>184</sup> While it is important not to fall into the trap of economic determinism, the evidence at hand does suggest that in the Turkish case, democratic consolidation has been promoted by the increasing institutionalization of economic society which is now in the process of spilling over in other arenas such as civil society and the rule of law. This process has enabled domestic societal actors to progressively constrain the state's influence in politics.

With this in mind, the near future is likely to see the strengthening of societal actors' position with respect to the Turkish state. Challenging the state is unlikely to be an easy process particularly because it has started to make better use of civil society organizations supported by segments of society which have embraced the modernization project articulated by Atatürk. Moreover, it has placed considerable obstacles to the ruling party whether during the presidential elections of 2007, reforms regarding the headscarf, or the constitutional case against the AKP. While the AKP itself has not always been the most adequate proponent of democracy as was demonstrated by its slide in identity politics during its second tenure and the bitter debates surrounding the headscarf issue, it has nonetheless achieved much for the consolidation of democracy in Turkey. Prime Minister Erdoğan's reaction to the verdict seems to augur favorably for the future of Turkish democracy as it emphasized the need to continue with reforms.<sup>185</sup> The process of mutual adjustment on the part of the state and societal forces that has occurred since the late 1980's seems to have somewhat softened the confrontational nature of Turkish politics. Political Islam has become more liberal whereas the state has been less aggressive in protecting its interest. One can simply observe the difference between the causes and the outcomes of the

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<sup>184</sup> Interview by the author, Istanbul, July 7, 2008.

<sup>185</sup> İhsan Dağı, "AK Party survives closure case: What is next?," *Today's Zaman*, August 25, 2008.

*post-modern* coup of 1997 and the *judicial* coup of 2008 to observe this striking pattern. The evolution of constraints on state power through the institutionalization of other segments of society seems to herald a relatively optimistic future for Turkish democracy. In the long run, Turkish society still needs to come to a consensus on the role of religion, pluralism and the state in society. However, there are hopes that this process may unfold in a more peaceful manner as both sides learn to resolve conflict through compromise.

In this context, external actors can have a positive influence on the process of democratic consolidation by encouraging societal moderate forces in their challenge of the state establishment. On the European side, the EU and its member states need to clarify their position with respect to EU membership to guarantee that European ability to alter the political costs of reforms remains intact. As was noted in the previous section, increasing Euro-skepticism in Turkey reflects in part the ambivalence of the EU towards Turkish membership. Showing good faith on the part of EU leaders and giving Turks realistic expectations with regards to prospect of membership remains an important component of democracy promotion in Turkey. Indeed, higher popular support for the EU will compel the current government to push on with controversial but necessary reforms. An increase in popular support is only possible if the Turks feel that their interests are taken into account during the accession process. On the American side, the United States has seen its influence in Turkish politics diminish as the EU process has unfolded. A look at Turkey's major trading partners reveals that 52.3% of Turkish exports were directed to EU member states before Romania and Bulgaria's accession in 2007 while 42.2% of imports originated from that region.<sup>186</sup> Nonetheless, the influence of the U.S. in the region is far from negligible. Their presence in Iraq and their policy on the Kurdish populations of Northern Iraq have stirred up Turkish discontent. Moreover, military cooperation between the U.S. and Turkey

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<sup>186</sup> The Economist, *Pocket World in Figures: 2008 Edition* (London: Profile Books, 2007), 227.

has always constituted a strong bond between the two countries. The U.S. however seems to have come to terms with the tremendous strength of the EU in promoting democratic consolidation in Turkey. As President Bush said following the U.S.-EU Summit in Slovenia on June 10, 2008: "We strongly believe Turkey ought to be a member of the EU, and we appreciate Turkey's record of democratic and free market reforms, and working to realize its EU aspirations."<sup>187</sup> Similarly, Secretary of State Rice argued, in an address to the Council on Foreign Relations, that "the prospect of European Union accession has been extremely important to reform in Turkey. And without that prospect, it is going to be hard to continue."<sup>188</sup> This attitude seems to be the appropriate one to take in light of the analysis presented above. Indeed, the U.S. should avoid putting the EU in a difficult position by affirming that Turkey should enter the EU. Rather, it would be preferable for the U.S. to promote democratic consolidation by supporting Turkey in its drive for reforms toward EU membership.

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<sup>187</sup> As quoted in Matthew Bryza, "Ninth Turgut Özal Memorial Lecture: Invigorating the U.S.-Turkey Strategic Partnership", Washington, June 24, 2008.

<sup>188</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "Address to the Council on Foreign Relations's International Affairs Fellows Fortieth Anniversary Conference," New York, June 19, 2008.

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